THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT IN AMERICA


43 The great depth of evangelical animosity towards 'artificial' birth control was revealed in a Christianity Today symposium, 'Is Birth Control Christian?', 11 Nov. 1991, pp. 34-45.


45 Copy of the letter in the author's possession.


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HISTORIC CHAPELS TRUST

The Historic Chapels Trust was officially launched by the National Heritage Secretary, Peter Brooke, on 15 June at a reception in London. It has been set up to preserve non-Anglican places of worship in England which are of outstanding architectural or historic interest but are no longer in regular religious use. While the Redundant Churches Fund has cared for Church of England buildings since 1969, there has until now been no equivalent for other denominations and faiths. The new trust is an independent registered charity, formed with the help of a grant from the Department of National Heritage. The Secretary of State has given further practical help by easing the legal transfer of redundant chapels to the Trust. Grants from English Heritage will be available for repair work in some cases.

Peter Brooke welcomed the formation of the Historic Chapels Trust, both for its preservation objectives and its public education role: 'These buildings are important to our history both for their architecture - in the case of Nonconformist buildings very often the rich interior lying behind a modest and deliberately self-effacing exterior - and also as a symbol of the large number of eminent figures in all walks of life who have sprung from this background and made valuable contributions to our country's history.'

Among the first four chapels which the Trust proposes to take into ownership is the eighteenth-century Baptist meeting-house at Cote in Oxfordshire. This stone chapel still has the box pews installed in 1859, together with a table pew above the baptistry. Its burial ground contains many eighteenth-century headstones with elaborate carving. The church was formed in 1656 and acquired its site at Cote in 1703-4. The Trust's other initial acquisitions are Walpole Congregational Chapel, Farfield Friends Meeting-house, and Todmorden Unitarian Chapel. All these buildings are graded I or II on the Statutory List. Once they have been repaired, the Trust hopes to make them accessible to the public.

When the church moves on in its mission, leaving empty buildings, at least the finest examples of its architectural past now have a chance of protection by a Trust sympathetic to the chapel tradition.

ROSEMARY TAYLOR