



Doc. 6032

## Les édifices religieux désaffectés

Rapport  
de la commission de la culture et de l'éducation  
(Rapporteur: M. Pino Rauti)  
et autres documents



Quarante ans  
Conseil de l'Europe

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## R E P O R T

on redundant religious buildings (1)

(Rapporteur: Mr RAUTI)

### I. DRAFT RESOLUTION

presented by the Committee on Culture and Education (2)

The Assembly,

1. Having noted the report of its Committee on Culture and Education on redundant religious buildings (Doc. 6032), and welcoming in particular the preliminary survey of all European countries;

1. See Doc. 5599 and Reference No. 1535 of 17 September 1986.

2. Adopted unanimously by the committee on 10 April 1989.

Members of the committee: Mr Tummers (Chairman), Mrs Pack, Mr de Puig (Vice-Chairmen), MM. Beix (Alternate: Bassinet), Berti, Mrs Brogle-Sele, MM. Burke, Cem, Conceição, Deyannis, Esteves, Faulds (Alternate: Parry), Fillon, Mrs Leni Fischer (Alternate: Mrs Pack), Mr Lars Gustafsson, Mrs Hammarbacken, Mrs Hennicot-Schoepges, Mrs Hubinek, MM. Hunault, Jessel, Sir Russell Johnston, MM. Kontoyannopoulos, Lyssarides, Malfatti (Alternate: Mezzapesa), Møller, Monfils (Alternate: Noerens), Mrs Morf, MM. Andreas Müller, Günther Müller, Núñez, Mrs Offenbeck, MM. Özarslan, Péciaux, Rauti, Robles Orozco (Alternate: de Puig), Scovacricchi, Soell, Thorarinsson (Alternate: Arnalds), Thoresen, van der Werff (Alternate: van der Sanden), Zammit Dimech.

NB: The names of those who took part in the vote are underlined.

Secretaries of the committee: MM. Grayson and Ary.

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2. Aware of the very considerable number of religious buildings throughout Europe that no longer fulfil their original function and are therefore vulnerable through neglect to demolition or inappropriate transformation;
3. Noting that this continues to be the result of historic factors such as population shifts, changes in religious practice and habits, or even the construction of new buildings for religious use;
4. Recalling the Council of Europe's statutory duty to safeguard the ideals and principles which are the common heritage of member states and to which religious buildings bear witness;
5. Asserting also the importance of freedom of religion and religious expression, as set out in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
6. Pointing out that religious buildings are often of architectural and historical significance, and recalling its longstanding concern for the integrated conservation of this heritage and to ensure a future for our past;
7. Believing that, when a religious building is no longer viable as such, efforts should be made to ensure a future use, whether religious or cultural, as far as possible compatible with the original intention of its construction;
8. Noting that a church or any other major religious building is often the focal point and central feature of a community and a local landmark, and believing that sufficient time and encouragement should be given to such communities to rediscover a common interest and future role for such buildings;
9. Welcoming the successful examples throughout Europe of the preservation and protection of redundant religious buildings, through their sensitive adaptation to new uses,
10. Calls on the responsible authorities (Church, government and local) to co-operate with interested organisations and experts with a view to:
  - i. taking effective measures to preserve redundant religious buildings and secure wherever possible their appropriate future use;
  - ii. consolidating (in compatible computerised form) surveys of redundant religious buildings, of their architectural and historical significance, and of their current use, and regularly updating such surveys which should also reflect contemporary interest and include 19th and 20th century buildings;
  - iii. ensuring effective protection for the survival of the original fabric and fittings of such buildings pending future readaptation;
  - iv. avoiding, except in cases of exceptional architectural, historic or commemorative interest, the preservation of religious buildings as ruins;

- v. promoting projects for re-use and readaptation, where not incompatible with the original function of the building and without irreversible alteration to the original fabric;
- vi. providing funds or tax benefits for the restoration, repair and maintenance of religious buildings, whether in use or redundant, in order to ensure they are not abandoned;
- vii. encouraging a more imaginative use of existing religious buildings;
- viii. assuring the supply of appropriate building materials, and encouraging the research, crafts and support work necessary for the continuing upkeep of religious buildings;
- ix. encouraging inclusion of redundant religious buildings in the redevelopment of cultural itineraries throughout Europe, and ensuring that the proceeds of cultural tourism are channelled into preservation of the buildings tourists visit.

## II. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

by Mr Rauti

The aim of this report is to assess the situation of redundant religious buildings in Europe, to draw attention to the scale of this problem, and to advance certain considerations about how it might be resolved. The Rapporteur has been assisted in this task by a consultant expert, Mr Angus Fowler of the Committee of the "Förderkreis Alte Kirchen" in Marburg, Federal Republic of Germany, who is responsible for the preliminary survey and general comments reproduced in the appendices to the report.

For the first time in an Assembly report, an attempt has been made to cover the whole of Europe, both East and West. The result is inevitably uneven in a subject of this broad scope. In certain cases considerably more information has been assembled than could be reproduced here. This material has been deposited with the committee secretariat in the Council of Europe. In other cases, such as Andorra, little or no information has yet been obtained. In several countries the question is politically sensitive. It should be pointed out that a description of the situation in Romania has been submitted by the Romanian Embassy in Paris and can be obtained on request to the secretariat of the Committee on Culture and Education in Strasbourg.

To avoid overlap we have decided to devote this explanatory report to a consideration of the specific situation in Italy and shall deduce from that general considerations applying to the situation in Europe as a whole.

\*

The subject of this report is of special relevance to Italy, a country with an exceptionally large number of religious buildings which are redundant, or likely to become so through neglect or deterioration. Even if the field is restricted to "monuments" of some artistic or historical importance, this still leaves at least 10 to 12 thousand cases for intervention. The first requirement is a proper census (none has ever been carried out) but this may be a while in coming.

The situation in Italy is somewhat unusual, arising from the historical conditions prevailing prior to and during political unification and the creation of the Italian state; even today, 70% of Italy's immense artistic heritage is church property. As Monsignor Attilio Nicora, Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Legal Affairs, said in April last year during preparations for a national Conference on the Italian Church and Cultural Property (Milan, 4-7 May 1987), more attention should be paid to "religious" cultural properties and steps taken to protect, develop, and possibly "re-utilise" them.

During the conference, it emerged that not only were huge quantities of furniture, decorations, paintings and antiques involved, but "churches, sanctuaries and monasteries as well". Although many of

these buildings were "still used regularly for services", their condition was steadily deteriorating, to such an extent that this exceptionally rich heritage (in quantity and in quality) could eventually suffer serious irreversible damage.

The legal situation in Italy is as follows: the terms of the new Church/State Concordat, finally signed in 1984 after 40 years of negotiations, envisaged greater co-operation; however, the meeting noted that there had been no contacts in this area at all due to other, more pressing political-legal problems. The general consensus seemed to be that there should indeed be more "co-operation" between Church and state to help resolve a problem rendered even more difficult by the sheer quantity of endangered "property" - a valuable artistic heritage to be conserved and restored.

In Italy, the phrase (concept, even) "redundant religious buildings" (meaning buildings that are no longer used for their original religious purpose), should usually be understood as including the libraries, museums and archives which have grown up around them over the last 2 000 years. Indeed, leaving aside their specific religious function (which has become less important recently), such buildings are in many cases just the "tip of an iceberg" concealing more important structures such as the museum, the archives, the library and so on. Over the centuries, therefore, a "cultural area" has been created embodying the historical memory of a whole district and acting as its spiritual and cultural focus down the ages.

Even sacristies, although sometimes little more than storerooms, often contain, particularly in the main Italian churches, items of such value that they are as much cultural properties as places of religion.

These days, there is far greater awareness of the situation. After the last war, however, and particularly during the '50s and '60s, much of this heritage was "sold off" virtually unopposed and secretly exported abroad (much of it to the United States) or else ended up in the labyrinthine channels of the country's secondhand antique markets before finding its way into private hands.

Although the tide has now turned in favour of preservation and restoration there remain several constraints which can be summarised as follows:

- a. lack of real co-operation between Church and state - this should be properly programmed on a continuing basis;
- b. inadequate protection against further degradation, damage, theft or misuse;
- c. shortage not only of qualified staff but also of attendants to keep the "property" on view (it is extraordinary how many culturally important religious buildings, especially redundant ones, have to close in summer due to staff shortages at a time when the number of tourists and visitors is at its peak; a notable example of this was when the Palermo ecclesiastical authorities closed the Palatine Chapel in 1986-87);

- d. insufficient information concerning the large number of properties to survey, protect and find alternative uses for (not to mention all the legal aspects), to help those responsible for the heavy financial outlay required to meet current expenditure and the cost of the inevitable long-term structural repairs.

In October 1987, a Conference was held on the "Re-use of Religious Buildings" at which a lively discussion took place between the Italian state and Vatican representatives. According to the then Minister for Cultural Property, "it is not just the Italian state's fault if part of this artistic heritage has suffered". In reply to the observation that after the unification of Italy some of these properties had been inappropriately converted without authorisation into warehouses, depositories and even prisons in addition to some churches becoming shops or supermarkets - Italian state experts and representatives said there had been long neglect on the other side as well due to the very concept of "cultural property" being ill-defined and poorly understood.

Although in more recent times, the concept of cultural property had come to be better appreciated, the situation had worsened rather than improved and this, according to the Director General for Cultural Property, Mr Sisinni, was "the fault of the Vatican". The Joint Commission envisaged under Article 12 of the new Concordat was still inexistence after four years although the Italian state had invited the Holy See on several occasions to help set it up.

Meanwhile, huge amounts of money have been set aside for these "cultural deposits" and for restoring Italy's historical and cultural heritage generally; religious buildings (even redundant ones) and anything of artistic value which surrounds them obviously come high up on the list.

However, despite the sharp discussions, frequent delays, and the continuing legal uncertainties briefly referred to above, this conference was the first occasion on which a document on the subject was presented and approved. Entitled "Charter for the Re-use of Ancient Ecclesiastic Buildings", it is detailed and practical, and makes repeated and explicit reference to the work, initiatives and achievements of the Council of Europe. It is therefore printed in full at the end of this explanatory memorandum.

The Charter contains sixteen "rules of behaviour" which the Vatican intends to observe in the future; obviously, in the eyes of the Church what is valid for Italy should also be valid elsewhere. Monsignor Amato, Chairman of the Central Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art and one of the Holy See's most highly qualified and respected experts with an international reputation, has referred to the Church's "new philosophy on the restoration and re-use of religious buildings, which seeks to ensure that they remain in keeping with the original spirit".

According to Monsignor Amato, "the religious architectural heritage is what is most striking and characteristic about Italian cities and urban centres; it represents the community's cultural roots, providing it with a broad cultural base and embodying its historical memory"; thus conservation (which is closely linked to re-use) involves "recognising that the building is a physical and spiritual whole". To ignore or underestimate either of these components (and Monsignor Amato regrets that it is the spiritual and cultural one which suffered most), "gives an imbalanced view of the building and a false idea of its contents".

If restoration or "transmission" of the object is emphasised "without any regard to its references", then, however successful the work, the building will be "devitalised, uninspiring, sterile, and incapable of contributing to the quality of life".

Monsignor Amato has made other remarks about religious buildings (churches, convents, monasteries, missionary centres) which are no longer being put to their original use:

1. an increasingly large number of religious buildings are no longer used for the purpose for which they were intended and, for various reasons, are threatened with demolition or unsuitable conversions;
2. the present situation is the product of factors such as population movements, and changing religious customs and practices;
3. the religious architectural heritage often has social, historical or architectural significance for towns and urban centres or districts, and is therefore in line with Recommendation 898 (1980) on memorials, concerned by attempts to ensure a future for our past;
4. leaving aside ownership issue, a use ought to be found for religious monuments which "does not conflict with the intentions of those who built them";
5. in view of the architectural importance of these buildings, an effort should be made, in the community interest, to give them back a "significant role";
6. conservation and re-use within the same framework of cultural identity is only feasible if those responsible (Church, government and local authorities) all work together on behalf of the community;
7. unused religious buildings should be listed and proposals made for their re-use which would still be binding after subsequent disposal;
8. re-utilisation and readaptation projects should take as much account as possible of the original function, "without introducing any irreversible changes".

Finally, re-use should not be decided solely according to economic criteria; priority should be given to cultural activities, as they "represent a real investment in the spiritual and social

development of the community". Furthermore, in view of the large number of properties in question, a realistic financial approach is needed. The costs of restoring such an extensive heritage for re-use are enormous and "is a matter not only for the public authorities but also for private individuals - indeed their contribution is crucial".

At least some of these "concepts" are likely to give rise to considerable cultural controversy in Italy and in the rest of Europe (not to mention national parliaments once they start trying to decide what needs to be done). In Italy, the debate began immediately after the above-mentioned conference, in response to the "Charter" and the Vatican's "16 rules". "It is a tricky problem", said the Ministry's Director of Cultural Property, Dr Francesco Sisinni, at the time. "What happens once a religious complex has lost its religious function? Obviously, it will have to be turned into a museum or cultural centre, and provide some opportunities for lay culture as well".

As we were recently reminded, the problem still remains of how to prevent a brewery operating behind the façade of a mediaeval convent (between a magnificent cloister and a no less magnificent refectory). Something similar occurred in York, England, where a gaudily-lit pub was set up in a Gothic church, the bar taking up the centre of the nave.

But the future use need not be so completely different from the original one, or from the "spirit" which inspired it; the "historical memory" should be recognised, defended, and presented as a "value" which is still relevant today, even if society has changed in the meantime.

To return to the debate referred to earlier, the Superintendent for Environmental Property in the province of Salerno (Campania), Mario Antonio De Cunizo, quoted the example of the noble old Charterhouse of Padula which is "now restored, open to the public, and used as a cultural conference centre". The huge San Michele complex in Rome has been put to equally worthy use, becoming a detention centre for minors.

Some experts advocate using these buildings "for social purposes": for example, the convent of San Salvatore Maggiore at Concerviano in Lazio's Rieti province, not far from Rome, is to be converted into a multi-purpose centre for the disabled.

This, possibly, is the direction in which to look for a natural organic solution to the problem discussed recently in Milan by Cardinal Martini. New churches, he said, were needed as only "living stones" were capable of facing up to today's different social requirements, particularly the "new or existential poverty" which increasingly marked our consumer and hedonistic age. Perhaps "old stones" can be made to live again meaningfully; after all, the historical memory they have brought down to us is one of finest creations of a complex past, not only in the cultural sense, but in the European one as well. Consequently, they still have the potential to fulfil a noble function - that of giving a future to our past.

## CHARTER FOR THE REUSE OF ANCIENT ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS

The Central Pontifical Commission for  
Sacred Art in Italy

Rome 1987

The assembly of participants of the working group on "The reuse of religious buildings: remembrance, continuity, transformation", held in Rome, 12-14 October 1987;

### HAVING CONSIDERED

That sacred buildings have, in general, a prestigious role in the urban environment and a polarising function in urbanistic terms;

That the singularity of the aforesaid, composed of historic and artistic values along with other more delicately symbolic and religious values, is threatened by misuse, often disqualifying if not vulgar;

That in the evolutionary dynamics of urban and regional structures, inherent in the profound transformation of modern society, the so-called "reuse" of existing architecture structures is becoming particularly relevant, especially with regard to religious buildings;

That the purpose or change of function of the aforesaid structures, if concerning buildings of historic and artistic interest, requires scientific criteria of restoration which have been proclaimed also internationally by specific statutes and charters;

### IN REFERENCE TO

The Venice Charter (1964), and in particular the articles 4 ("It is essential to the conservation of monuments that they be maintained on a permanent basis") and 5 ("The conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. Such use is therefore desirable but it must not change the layout or decoration of the building. It is within these limits only that modifications demanded by a change of function should be envisaged and may be permitted");

The Italian Charter for Restoration (1972), particularly the first and second sub-paragraphs of the "Guiding policies for architectural restoration" ("Given that maintenance work, if carried out opportunely, ensures greater longevity and circumvents further damage to the monuments, we recommend the greatest possible care by continuous supervision to provide the necessary preventive measures and avoid more serious interventions ... Along similar lines, it is necessary to evaluate possible new functions for ancient monumental buildings, as long as these are not incompatible with historic and artistic interests ...");



The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975), adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in particular the articles 3 ("The architectural heritage is a capital of irreplaceable spiritual, cultural, social and economic value"), 5 ("The architectural heritage has an important part to play in education"), 6 ("This heritage is in danger"), 7 ("Integrated conservation averts these dangers" when "integrated conservation is achieved by the application of sensitive restoration techniques and the correct choice of appropriate functions");

The Declaration of Rome (1982), and in particular those observations regarding the "'sparse', if not deficient co-ordination between the different organisations entrusted with the protection (of the architectural patrimony) at all levels, from the local and regional, to the national and international";

The Declaration of Rostock-Dresden (1984), in particular the observations regarding the importance of the cultural, educational and social role of monuments - which must be able to meet the demands of contemporary life - and on the need for an appropriate legal apparatus, essential for good preservation and use of the monuments in question;

The conclusions of the Fifth European Meeting of Historical Cities (Seville, 8-10 May 1985), advanced by the Council of Europe, in particular on the merits of a "dynamic conservation" of historic monuments rather than a merely limiting one;

The subsequent Convention of Granada (1985) "for the protection of the architectural heritage of Europe", and in particular the articles 6 ("Each party undertakes: 1. to provide financial support by the public authorities for maintaining and restoring the architectural heritage on its territory, in accordance with the national, regional and local competence and within the limitations of the budgets available; 2. to resort, if necessary, to fiscal measures to facilitate the conservation of this heritage; 3. to encourage private initiatives for maintaining and restoring the architectural heritage"), 10 sub-paragraph 4 ("facilitate, whenever possible in the town and country planning process the conservation and use of certain buildings, whose intrinsic importance would not warrant protection ... but which are of interest from the point of view of their setting in the urban or rural environment and of the quality of life"), 11 ("Due regard being had to the architectural and historical character of the heritage, each Party undertakes to foster:

- the use of protected properties in the light of the needs of contemporary life;
- the adaptation when appropriate of old buildings for new uses;

and at the same time to respect the architectural and historical characteristics of this heritage"),

#### HAVING DECLARED

That thorough and continuous maintenance of an ancient building ensures its preservation and transmittance to future generations;

That this maintenance is guaranteed when the building acquires a functional purpose;

That this purpose must never conflict with the character and the meaning of the building itself, especially if the aforesaid is of religious or ecclesiastic origin;

That all damage to the traditional heritage of the church also damages the spiritual education and elevation of mankind;

That the sense of historical continuity is a precious legacy of a life of faith and of a mature concept of human existence;

That the existing architectural structures of the Church are of great historical importance, as prominent symbols not only of religiosity but more generally of civilisation. In this sense the centrality of sacred structures in the life of organised societies has for centuries constituted a particularly significant point of reference not only in relation to expressions of spirituality but also to the exigencies of daily life;

That, beside these important factors, others currently considered less important should not be forgotten; their underlying presence must be recognised as an essential part of the cultural and spiritual image of the civilisation as precious, unique and unreproducible evidence;

That, from the economic point of view, ancient buildings represent a conspicuous resource - both for the raw materials, energy and labour employed, as well as for the urban surroundings created to serve them - in addition to specific values deriving from incidental attributes of various nature (artistic, etc);

That the rehabilitation of ancient buildings can generally be carried out in less time than that required for the demolition and reconstruction of a new building, also considering the risks involved in these operations which may not be permitted by the authorities in question or may be hindered by the local communities;

That the preservation of already existing buildings must, after all, be considered correct management of the existing economic heritage;

That only a small number of historical building can be conserved as museums or "ruins", but that this solution does not suit all buildings;

That restoration of ancient buildings compared to the industrial construction procedures for new buildings, encourages the use of more numerous and skilled workers organised in small associations or corporations of artisans, important from a social point of view as well;



That the conservation of monuments is not just an "expense", but on the contrary, may be profitable and generate considerable medium and long-term economic flow;

That, regarding the patrimony of the Church as well as others, one may appeal to various forms of spontaneous collaboration and youth voluntarism;

That in societies of mixed economies, like those of Europe, it is certainly more economical, for the correct use of national resources, to encourage the preservation and maintenance of buildings instead of their renovation and waste;

That the reuse of ancient buildings is probably the most effective and economical way of ensuring the long-term conservation of the historical heritage;

That European countries have by now abandoned most of their large-scale urban renewal projects, in favour of the restoration and rehabilitation of the existing architectural heritage;

That an "active urbanism" is ever diffusing, based on the respect of traditional use of space and on the certainty that various integrated functions in the ancient city were a source of equilibrium that we have yet to find;

That conservation does not only mean "the restoration of the stones" but also the ability to adapt the fundamental characteristics of every regional and urban milieu, whose historical identity must be respected, to the entire city and to its changing needs;

That the value of traditional and historical features, both regional and urban, has shown an unexpected capacity to continuously adapt to the growth of the entire architectural environment;

That most of the hazards that threaten the historic and artistic heritage, both civil and religious, derive not only from motives of economic interest and profit but also from ignorance and indifference, from misunderstood notions of progress and the apparently irreconcilable needs of modern society, from the mania to beautify and renovate, and from the lack of aesthetic and cultural education of many responsible officials;

That the protection of ecclesiastic monuments and the preservation of their identity (religious, historical and, more generally, cultural) is a duty of the clergy, as well as of the civil authorities and the entire community;

#### PROPOSES

1. That every effort be made for the protection of the ecclesiastic monumental heritage;
2. That this protection avail itself of a fundamental method of correct integration, and of practical use, of the aforesaid heritage in today's society;

3. That the laity, the clergy and the religious orders be instilled with a "conservation culture" and a sense of participation and respect, still lacking today; thus the need for educational activities at all levels. Herein lies the conviction that the architectural heritage will only survive if appreciated by society and especially new generations;
4. that local authorities - sensitive to the needs of society - take this problem to heart, in the conviction that this protection should be preferred (by legal, financial, fiscal, promotional, cultural means, etc.) over the construction of new buildings, or worse, demolition and reconstruction;
5. That be made public by means of computerised information systems the lists of threatened or unprotected religious buildings, also because unused or in bad condition; that these lists should be sufficiently detailed to allow prospective buyers or users to orient their choices (list of historical ecclesiastic buildings for sale, rent or offered on other grounds, with enclosed specifications of compatible functions);
6. That clauses protecting ancient buildings against improper use, adaptation and intervention be included in the deeds of sale, to be favoured in financial and fiscal terms. It is necessary to remember that the best use of a historical building is the use for which it was originally built; whenever this cannot be done today, the adaptation should consider the "vocations" suggested by the building after historical investigation;
7. That the new or different uses assigned and their respective standards, besides being compatible with the architecture of the buildings in question, must not obliterate the primary significance, the previous image and the original functional distribution of the above. The external and surrounding spaces of the building must also be carefully considered by harmonising them with the environment in a mutually advantageous and respectful exchange;
8. That the authorities in question should guarantee specific financial aid: subsidies "to the stones" and to the persons involved, financial support and credit facilities for foundations of private enterprises which agree, with the necessary guarantees and expertise, to undertake the most difficult cases or those which are commercially less profitable;
9. That all form of patronage are favoured;
10. That public and widespread promotion be carried out; this undertaking will be more effective if it may demonstrate good examples of completed architectural conversions;
11. That the local, central and ecclesiastic authorities create joint commissions to deal with all matters regarding the religious architectural heritage in a spirit of full collaboration; these commissions should be entrusted with the preliminary definition of the new programmes of restoration and use;

12. That the criteria adopted for the intervention be based on modern, scientific restoration and historic and critical criteria that guarantee both the defence of the cultural property and its insertion in contemporary life, without adopting dangerous shortcuts or operational simplifications, which often lie behind the common ambiguous term "salvage";
13. That restoration treatments be entrusted to scholars and specialists of acknowledged experience and qualifications, especially those with post-graduate training in specialised schools;
14. That bureaucratic procedures be simplified by assigning the approval and verification of projects and subsidies to appropriate offices;
15. That the Ministry for the BB.CC.AA (or other), together with the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art, resume once more the task of controlling and standardising the criteria and methods of intervention, in order to avoid dangerous dispersion and inopportune waste of energy;
16. That regarding criteria for intervention, close reference should be made to the instructions of the internationally recognised "Venice Charter" (1964), to the "Italian Charter for Restoration" (1972) and, for an integrated view of forms of preservation planning associated with a specific urban or regional environment, to the "European Charter of the Architectural Heritage" (1975).

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## PRELIMINARY SURVEY

by Mr Angus FOWLER  
Consultant expert

(member of the Committee of the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen,  
Marburg, Federal Republic of Germany)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In many parts of Europe in towns and cities and in rural areas various types of buildings, old and even modern ones, have become redundant and now stand empty or have received another use, having lost their original or even secondary use. In urban areas and in the countryside agricultural buildings are particularly in danger as a result of agricultural policies and changes in the methods of production. Redundant buildings include railway stations, schools, post offices and most visibly religious buildings: churches, chapels, monasteries, synagogues and mosques.

There are many thousands of redundant religious buildings, many also standing now only as ruins, scattered throughout Europe. Many buildings are decaying rapidly and if they are to be saved, work must soon be carried out to repair them. The problems of redundant religious buildings are therefore often pressing and require urgent attention. They exist in Eastern and Western Europe. There are considerable numbers of redundant religious buildings in France, Spain and Italy and in some areas of Yugoslavia. At the moment there are few in Scandinavia, many however in Northern European countries, particularly in Great Britain and the Netherlands and some in parts of the Federal Republic of Germany. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches are affected, also some Orthodox buildings, Jewish synagogues and some Islamic buildings. There are many redundant religious buildings in the Soviet Union, many however now used for other purposes. There are also quite a number in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland. Recently some religious buildings have been destroyed in Romania as a result of urban development there in Bucharest and other towns and the number of redundant religious buildings in Romania which will decay or be demolished is likely to increase if plans to restructure rural settlements are carried out. In Ireland the former Anglican Established Church of Ireland (disestablished 1870) is likely to declare a considerable number - perhaps some hundred - of its churches redundant over the next few years. If alternative uses are not found many will be left to decay, turned into ruins or demolished.

In several other countries the problem is likely to develop and numbers increase in the future. The problem also exists in the USA and probably elsewhere in the world (see "Underused church properties: a variety of solutions", report on the First International Conference on Underused Church Properties at the Cheswick Center, Cambridge, Mass, USA 1975).

As a result of redundancy many religious buildings have already been demolished and a considerable part of the architectural heritage lost forever. In some countries more churches have been demolished since 1945 than were destroyed in the Second World War. Many buildings stand empty and are vulnerable through neglect to decay and demolition. Others have received uses which are not compatible with their original use or character and have been subjected to inappropriate transformation often resulting in the destruction of important architectural features and interior furnishings (see the article by P Scarpellini, *Consacrare al ballo - Vita Notturna/Le Chiese Discoteca*, in: *Panorama*, 3 May 1987, p. 186f). Many religious buildings which are not yet redundant are underused and

often do not receive sufficient maintenance or protection. In some countries the cost of repair work is increased unnecessarily by fiscal burdens (Value Added Tax eg in the United Kingdom and in Hungary). Even large modern churches built since 1945 are now often underused and those which are concrete buildings are often difficult and costly to maintain. Churches in use have also often been seriously impaired by inappropriate alteration, "restoration" or by major change to their interior arrangement as a result of short-term liturgical needs, for instance both Protestant and Catholic churches, the latter particularly as a result of extreme interpretations of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s (see A Knöpfli, *Denkmalpflege gestern und heute*, in: *Das Münster* 27, 1974, p. 90ff; K Powell, *The Church and Conservation*, *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, New Series 30, 1986, p. 122). Many redundant religious church buildings are now only preserved as ruins; these do not always receive sufficient protection or maintenance.

Religious buildings are generally of architectural, historical and social importance for towns and cities, villages and local communities. They are also the main focal points and central features of such communities (often also still the largest rooms in many places and which in the past have served many purposes). They are also local landmarks. Many are already listed as historic monuments or buildings of historic and architectural interest. Others, however, still have to be listed or should be listed and do not yet receive adequate protection. If religious buildings are redundant or become redundant, stand empty and are in danger, it is important that they receive as much protection and care as soon as possible as they may represent a major and central part of the historical and architectural heritage of many communities. In some countries where the problem is most serious (and particularly in England and the Netherlands) attempts have been made to provide solutions to save at least the architecturally most important buildings; many other buildings however have been lost through demolition. In other countries where the number of redundant religious buildings may increase in the future the problem has yet to be realised and recognised.

The problem of redundant religious buildings is not a new one. However as the number of redundant religious buildings has considerably increased within the last 30 years the problem has become more serious. With the rise and fall of civilisations, with changes in religion and belief (conversion etc) and politics, religious or cult buildings have lost or changed their purposes (see for instance the ruins of temples in Egypt and of Greek and Roman temples in many parts of the ancient world). In the Middle Ages some religious buildings in the countryside were abandoned as a result of depopulation by epidemics (in western Europe, particularly from ca 1300 onwards). Rationalisation of parochial organisation in towns also led to redundancy in mediaeval times (a feature common now in towns and cities for instance in Great Britain, the Netherlands and elsewhere). At the Reformation in states and territories which became Protestant (England, Wales, Scotland, many German states, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, parts of Switzerland, etc) monasteries were dissolved and also other religious buildings (churches, chapels etc) abandoned where they were not needed - many were destroyed, many now survive only as ruins, others were converted to other uses and have so been preserved. In some Catholic countries

secularisation of church property followed the dissolution of monasteries and abandonment of superfluous religious buildings in the late 18th and 19th centuries (in the Austro-Hungarian territories under Joseph II 1780-1790). In Protestant countries, particularly in Scotland and the Netherlands but also in some German states, further redundancy of religious buildings has resulted from the reunion of denominations (for instance of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in German states in the 19th century, or the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland in 1929). In Russia the effects of the Revolution in 1918 have been very similar to those of the French Revolution in France 1791 ff - many monasteries and churches have been closed, some have been demolished or many are now used for other purposes. There have been similar developments but on a smaller scale in some other East European countries as a result of political changes 1945 ff. In the course of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis there was considerable destruction of synagogues in Germany in 1938 and later in many states occupied by the Germans. Many synagogues have also survived - they were closed down, often used for other purposes or still stand empty.

In some countries the increase in the number of redundant religious buildings within the last 30 years is quite dramatic compared with earlier cases of redundancy (for instance in England, Scotland, the Netherlands and even in the Federal State of Hessen in West Germany where some 200 religious buildings apart from synagogues have faced redundancy since 1945 and particularly between 1955 and 1975). The causes of this recent redundancy are various and often quite different from one country to another. A common factor seems however to be the increasing secularism of society. There is either too little money for the maintenance of churches or in some cases too much and this is sometimes spent wrongly. In many countries congregations and church revenues are declining. In both urban and rural areas there may be too many religious buildings for the declining numbers of those attending religious services. In some countries there is a tendency in modern theology to see older religious buildings only as a burden - unnecessary "ecclesiastical plant" which should be replaced by modern purpose-built edifices (and now many of these are underused and difficult and costly to maintain). Quite a number of older buildings have already been swept away or have become redundant as a result of a policy of new building, especially where religious authorities were (West Germany) or still are (Republic of Ireland and even in Poland) rich enough to afford ambitious programmes of new building. Both in western and eastern Europe the demolition of religious buildings has also occurred as a result of the clearance and modernisation of urban areas.

In some countries (notably in France and Germany) the problem of redundancy was already being recognised when the results of the secularisation of church property (particularly in Catholic areas) became clear. In France it was recognised after the separation of Church and State in 1905. In the period after 1945, it was recognised probably first in England (1948 ff), then in the Netherlands (in the 1960s and 1970s) and in the Federal State of Hessen in West Germany in the early 1970s. In 1975 the first major international conference on the subject of "Underused church properties" was held at the Cheswick Center in Cambridge, Mass, USA (with English participation). In 1980 the seriousness of the problem in England was reflected by the appearance of an article on a

fictitious redundant church in the well-known satirical magazine "Private Eye". In 1977 a major exhibition on the whole range of problems associated with churches "Change and decay - the future of our churches" was held in the Victoria and Albert Museum and a small conference on the subject of redundant churches was organised in Marburg.

Serious attempts to solve the problem by the preservation of redundant religious buildings as historic monuments or buildings of historic and architectural interest were first begun on a major scale by the English voluntary organisation "Friends of Friendless Churches" founded in 1957 specifically to save redundant churches; then on a much larger scale by the Redundant Churches Fund in England, financed largely by grants from the English Government and the Church of England and founded in 1969; in the provinces of the Netherlands by trusts (Stichtingen) from 1969 onwards; in West Germany by the voluntary organisation "Förderkreis Alte Kirchen" from 1973 as well as by many other local voluntary organisations, interested private individuals and also in individual cases by state and local authorities. In several East European countries there has been a growing interest and more state support for the preservation of historic buildings including religious ones in recent years and there appear to be better chances for religious buildings particularly in the Soviet Union (also a result of developing national consciousness) with the 1000th anniversary of the conversion to Orthodox Christianity in 1988.

The problem of redundant religious buildings should not be underestimated. In many countries it may well become serious in the future. The problems involved are often also quite complex. It is not always clear who is actually responsible for the maintenance of the buildings which have become redundant, and those actually responsible are not always willing to fulfil their obligations (these may be state, local or religious authorities). Problems can also arise from the division of responsibility for various parts of the same church buildings. In many countries civil authorities are often responsible for the maintenance of the tower (used for defensive purposes, as a watchtower, its bells or clock to keep the time), the ecclesiastical authorities for the choir and the nave, the patrons also for the nave. Legal and financial problems have to be solved and legislation reviewed or changed. Responsible or interested authorities, voluntary organisations or individuals have to be identified. In short there is much scope for activity within this field in the coming years.



## II. NOTES ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

### 1. Underuse of religious buildings

It is often presumed, incorrectly that religious buildings have always been and must still be used regularly. Although many were certainly erected as a result of a need for a building, we must remember that in most cases they were above all built as acts of faith and that their use was governed by various factors. Many religious buildings are today used on 52 days in the year out of a possible 365. This 15% use is considered regular even though the buildings stand empty and unused for the remaining 85% of the year. In Roman Catholic and Orthodox areas and before the Reformation in Protestant areas, parish churches for example were used more frequently, often with services held daily. However chapels-at-ease, which were legally subordinate and held an inferior status, might well have been used only once a month or even only once a year. Many chapels throughout Europe (for instance in Spain, Italy, France, Austria, Greece and the Balkan countries etc) may have from the beginning have only been used as now once a year on the festival of the patron saint or some other special occasion, when they will be cleaned and decorated. Many will be in poor condition, some often ruinous and regular maintenance not carried out. In the Steiermark in Austria there are some 209 chapels-at-ease (Filialkirchen) which are not often used and it is estimated that there are altogether some 500 churches and chapels in the Steiermark which are hardly or seldom used and this is considered representative for Austria as a whole.

In Protestant areas churches and chapels have formerly been or may still be used only on a few occasions in a year. In the rural areas near Marburg in the state of Hessen in the Federal Republic of Germany churches which were formerly chapels-at-ease (Filialkirchen) were often only used once a month for sermons up to this century, their congregations having to go to the parish church for major services. In one case, Niedereisenhausen, the quite sizeable building was only used once a year from 1770 to about 1955, it then being given up completely; even now the congregation goes to the parish church, which is no larger, in the next village. In the United Kingdom there are also many churches in rural areas which are rarely used and many have already become redundant. It is also probable that there are underused churches in rural and remote areas in Scandinavia, however up to now these are usually well maintained by church and state authorities. In West Germany and even in the Republic of Ireland and Poland however churches and chapels in rural areas have become redundant, not because they are necessarily underused, but because they have been replaced by new buildings by a society which was or is able to afford this luxury.

The problem of underuse is not however only a rural one. It also exists in the older centres of towns and cities, where there are now often too many churches for modern needs, the population now mainly living in the suburbs. In the United Kingdom and in the Netherlands (and elsewhere) parish reorganisation has often taken place in towns and cities to create more viable congregations; this has often left churches redundant. In some cases whole areas have been cleared as a result of modern development, old churches have been demolished and new church centres built. In rural areas the pressure from development usually hardly exists so that most churches, if underused from a modern point of view or even redundant, are still standing.

Many large modern churches which were built after 1945, for instance in the Federal Republic of Germany, are now often underused and are presenting problems of maintenance which is often costly and difficult particularly for concrete buildings.

As pointed out above the use of churches is relative - some may have been or still are used 52 times a year (or more), others perhaps monthly, others perhaps only once a year. They were built first and foremost as acts of faith and they are now monuments of that faith and should have a right for this reason, as well as for being often monuments of historical and architectural interest, to be preserved.

### 2. Finance and maintenance

Continued use and good maintenance can often prevent religious buildings becoming redundant. Many religious buildings are often monuments of historical or architectural interest so that their maintenance is also a matter of public importance. State aid in varying forms (for instance grants from conservation authorities) is often necessary as the religious authorities are not always in a position to finance the maintenance of the buildings sufficiently. As there is a public interest in the maintenance of religious buildings often as historical monuments, there is at least a moral obligation for the state to assist with the costs, which are often high, of maintenance. In some countries (particularly in the United Kingdom and since 1 January 1988 also in Hungary) value-added tax (VAT) is levied on repairs to historic buildings. Considerable relief and a further form of financial help for the maintenance of churches could be given if this tax charge was waived. In England as much as 15% VAT is charged on repair and maintenance work, see letters to "The Times", 25 and 30 September 1986. The unjustness of this fiscal burden has also been pointed out by the Liturgy Commission of the Roman Catholic Church in England. In Hungary value-added tax has existed since 1 January 1988 and is imposed on building works but not however for instance on the restoration of wall paintings which is considered culture and therefore not taxed whereas the repair of the masonry behind is.

In Scandinavian countries religious buildings are usually well maintained by church and state with considerable revenue from church taxes. In West Germany the situation is similar, churches in use being well maintained. In England there has been state aid for repairs on churches since 1977. In 1984-85 English Heritage gave grants totalling £4,942,054 for 720 churches including Roman Catholic and Nonconformist ones.

In several countries finance from the private sector also plays a very important part in the maintenance and repair of churches. In England much money has been raised by appeals for particular buildings. Much private sector finance is channelled through voluntary organisation, particularly trusts. At the national level the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and the Incorporated Church Building Society together give up to £600,000 yearly in grants and loans for repairs to churches and there are also active county trusts and also organisations for individual buildings.

For repair work and the maintenance of redundant churches of the Church of England (but not of other denominations) the State contributes 60% and the Church 40% towards financing the Redundant Churches Fund which also receives some donations, in all the Fund



gives about £900,000 yearly towards repair work on the 250 churches vested in it. The voluntary organisation Friends of Friendless Churches pays about £35,000 yearly for repairs on the churches it looks after (at the moment 20). Some redundant churches are maintained by English Heritage, others by local authorities and also by local voluntary organisations, so that in England at least £1,000,000 is paid yearly towards the maintenance and repair of redundant churches.

In Hungary good work is now being done by the state conservation authorities to restore and maintain redundant or underused synagogues and Serbian Orthodox and Reformed churches.

In the Netherlands the provincial trusts which look after redundant churches receive a substantial contribution from the State towards the costs of repairs, also smaller contributions from provincial and local authorities and considerable amounts in private donations. In West Germany the voluntary organisation Förderkreis Alte Kirchen has received considerable grants towards repair work on the churches it owns or for whose restoration it is responsible. It has also received considerable sums in the form of subscriptions, donations and the proceeds of publications and events like bazaars, easter egg and herbal markets organised to raise finance for its work. It has itself given grants to aid local societies and organisations restoring redundant churches and there are now quite a number of such local organisations in West Germany responsible for individual churches. In all, the Förderkreis has spent over 800,000 DM on restoration of churches and grants since 1977. As yet there is in West Germany no overall scheme for the maintenance of redundant religious buildings, either by State or Church. Much could be learnt from the models set by the Redundant Churches Fund in England and by the provincial trusts (Stichtingen) in the Netherlands.

Much money can often be saved if help for repair work on churches in use and redundant churches comes quickly and without fiscal burdens, as this can often prevent further decay and ultimately demolition. It is important that the most basic and urgent repairs should first be carried out rather than thorough restoration. This last should take place in stages so that the money available can be fairly spread out. If buildings are allowed to deteriorate their repair becomes all the more expensive and this often gives weight to the arguments of those who claim they can no longer be repaired and should be demolished.

Considerable problems for religious buildings in use and redundant ones alike are presented by stone decay which has increased on an alarming scale in recent years as a result of the pollution of the atmosphere. The repair work and finance needed to make good the damage is enormous, in the Federal Republic of Germany the Federal Ministry for Research has already for several years been carrying out a large research programme to tackle the problem.

### 3. Modern theology and liturgy: redundancy, alteration, demolition and destruction through rearrangement

In many western countries modern theology and liturgical requirements have led to the building of new churches or so-called church centres, resulting in the redundancy and demolition of older churches, or to the rearrangement of existing churches with alteration and sometimes partial demolition, distortion by alterations,

extension or abbreviation, division in two (either vertically or horizontally) of the buildings and the removal, dispersal and destruction of church furnishings (see also note on church furnishings). In some areas of cities in western and eastern Europe clearance and modernisation have also taken place resulting in the demolition of churches and in western countries in the building of new churches or church centres. Modern church centres have been built particularly in England, the Netherlands, Switzerland and in West Germany. In two cases in the Federal State of Hessen church centres were built between villages leaving four old churches redundant. The church authorities in Hessen have now because of the lower level of income from church taxes (partly a result of people "leaving" the church = Kirchenaustritte) stopped the building of new churches. However the same process and mistake has been planned for Rush near Dublin: the local clergy and their parish committee with the support of the church hierarchy in Dublin plan the building of a costly modern church centre to suit their liturgical requirements, claiming that it is not worth restoring the old church of St. Maur (dating from 1760 in the "Penal Times" when Roman Catholic worship was still greatly restricted), leaving it redundant to be demolished or to become a "preserved" ruin. It is likely that the restoration of the old church is considerably cheaper than the building of the new church centre. (Due to the efforts of a preservation society founded to save the old church of St. Maur, it has now been agreed in negotiations with the parish Committee and the Roman Catholic hierarchy that the old church should be preserved. The new one will however be built.

It has already been pointed out above that modern large churches built since 1945, for instance in the Federal Republic of Germany, are themselves now often underused and being concrete buildings, often difficult and costly to maintain. Some have even had to be demolished and rebuilt as a result of structural problems or because this was easier than to attempt to repair the buildings.

Liturgical rearrangement has taken place both in Roman Catholic churches (as a result of Vatican II) and in Protestant churches (in England, the Netherlands, Germany and elsewhere). As a result furnishings have often been removed, dispersed and destroyed. As a result of "ecclesiastical exemption" church interiors have not been sufficiently protected and the contents of churches not listed and not protected by planning control. Similarly destruction of furnishings has also taken place as a result of modern "restoration".

The liturgical changes by the Second Vatican Council under Pope John XXIII in 1963 included the injunction that the main altar had to be in a central position in the church and that the priest had to officiate behind it so that he faced the congregation. Greater participation by the congregation was to be encouraged along with the use of the vernacular language. The cult of the Virgin Mary was also somewhat restricted and the use of side altars limited. As a result of extreme interpretations of these changes, many fine altars have been swept away and destroyed. In churches in Naples the effects are said to have been particularly disastrous and the whole culture of cribs associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary has disappeared. These changes also inspired reforming clerics of the Anglican Church of England. K Powell writes: "Though ultimately inspired by the reforming spirit of the Second Vatican Council, the reformers in the Anglican Church were almost as cavalier in their interpretation of the Council's edicts as their Roman Catholic brethren" (K Powell, The Church and Conservation, Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society New Series 30, 1986, p. 122) (see also A Knöpfler, Denkmalpflege gestern und heute, in: Das Münster 27, 1974, S.90ff.)

Various documents issued by the Second Vatican Council (11 October 1962- 8 December 1965) refer to liturgical rearrangement and reform: the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (4 December 1963), the Instruction on the Celebration and Veneration of the Eucharist and later the General Introduction to the New Roman Missal (26 March 1970). The injunction placing the main altar centrally between congregation and celebrating priest appears for instance in the Instruction II.art. 24 and V.art. 91, the restriction of the number of side altars in the General Introduction V.art. 267, the restriction of the number of pictures and statues in the Constitution VII.art. 125 and General Introduction V.art. 278. Rearrangement was supposed to take place under the supervision of ecclesiastical authorities and a Council was appointed to supervise the carrying out of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. [Source: Johannes Fellerer: Kirchliche Dokumente aus und nach dem II. Vatikanischen Konzil, in: Kirchenbau in der Diskussion, Katalog zur Ausstellung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für christliche Kunst aus Anlaß ihres 80 jährigen Bestehens, München Stadtmuseum, 1 June-26 August 1973].

#### 4. Secular use and new uses of religious buildings

In the Middle Ages, and indeed often until the 18th and early 19th centuries, religious buildings (churches) at least in western Europe were often used for many other purposes than for solely religious ones. For instance church feasts (agapes), music and dance, sales of goods at fairs, meetings of various sorts (councils, elections, discussions, audits), legal proceedings, publishing of notices, storing of goods, defence in times of war or feud, guidance as landmarks, distribution of poor relief, games (Feast of Fools), acting (mystery plays), school teaching and as libraries. Churches were often (and may still be) the largest buildings with the largest rooms in villages and towns and the nave of a church belonging to the parishioners was practically the mediaeval village hall. (See J G Davies, The Secular Use of Church Buildings (SCM Press, London 1968)).

As a result of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation the uses of churches both in Protestant and Roman Catholic areas were gradually restricted so that by the 19th century they were only used for exclusively religious purposes and their former multifarious use often for secular purposes forgotten. In both Protestant and Roman Catholic areas a stiff, almost puritanical attitude developed as regards the use of churches characterised by the opinion in many rural areas (for instance around Marburg in West Germany) that a church is a church (only to be used for services) and when it is no longer used as a church, it had best be demolished. This development in the attitude towards the use of religious buildings has in many cases furthered redundancy and demolition. Ironically in the new church centres which have often replaced the old churches precisely those other secular uses have been developed again since the 1950s. Many churches have also probably been saved from underuse and redundancy through their use for other purposes in recent years. In the United Kingdom, in Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere many churches are often used for concerts as they are often still the largest and acoustically best rooms in towns and villages. Other uses include readings, drama and dance, flower festivals and various community purposes. Modern theology in the Netherlands (associated particularly with Pastor Hans R Blankensteijn, Hilversum) has also stressed the multipurpose use of churches as "agorai" - markets - with various possibilities. These positive developments point to various ways in which redundancy of religious buildings might be prevented.

A more liberal attitude may sometimes be needed to the use of churches. Recently there have been some restrictions by the Vatican on the use of Roman Catholic churches for other purposes, restricting the type of music for instance in concerts to serious music only and limiting other cultural uses. There is some concern that this will lead to a further limitation to the use of churches, a first step towards redundancy in some cases. In this light the Vatican should perhaps reconsider its decision and allow some relaxation. On the other hand one can respect the desire to prevent unworthy use of church buildings, especially remembering the use of some redundant churches in England and the United States as discotheques as reported by P Scarpellini in his article "Consacrate al ballo" (Panorama, 3 May 1987, p. 186f.)

The use of redundant religious buildings for new purposes has an old tradition. At least from the time of the Reformation in the 16th century in Protestant territories and then with the secularisation of church property in Roman Catholic territories in the 18th and 19th centuries (in Portugal also in the early 20th century) many religious buildings which had become redundant were preserved by being used for other purposes. Churches became schools, libraries, town or village halls, even barns and monasteries were used as hospitals, prisons, university buildings, as agricultural buildings, factories, etc. Some of these uses would now be regarded as questionable but they have meant that the buildings have been preserved, sometimes with little change to their original structure. In some cases the old new uses have been given up and the buildings have once again become redundant to find better uses now (for instance the monastic buildings of Brauweiler in North Rhine-Westphalia in West Germany).

"New Life for Old Churches" is the title of a publication of the English Department of the Environment, the Scottish Development Department and the Welsh Office. It gives details of the conversion to new uses of churches which have recently become redundant and which otherwise might have been demolished. The new uses include centres for architectural interpretation, centres for arts, music and drama, theatre, concert and rehearsal halls, libraries, museums and archives, old peoples' day centres and bookshops. These are uses which may be considered not incompatible with the spirit of the buildings. More controversial are the uses for industrial purposes, as craft workshops, offices, for residential use, residential youth centres or as shops or for storage. Further uses are shown in the analysis of the fate of Anglican redundant churches in the Report of the Church Commissioners 1985, p 33:

Of 1053 churches declared redundant between 1969 and 1985: 266 were demolished, 200 preserved by the Redundant Churches Fund, 4 by the Department of the Environment, a further 94 have been preserved as monuments, 79 have been reused for worship by other Christian bodies and 1 by a Sikh community, 19 as private and school chapels, 135 for civic, cultural, and community uses, 31 for arts and crafts, music and drama, 17 for educational purposes, 15 for museum or archaeological purposes, 8 for sports, 10 as adjuncts to adjoining estates, 111 for residential purposes, 28 for light industrial use, as offices or for shops, 30 for storage and 6 for other miscellaneous purposes.

Problems arise both with secular use and with new uses where major alteration takes place, for instance involving irreversible rearrangement or subdivision which may completely destroy interior features of a building and where secular use or new uses are not compatible with the character or the spirit of the building. The issues are well stated in the Introduction to "New Life for Old Churches":

"The extent of the adaptation ... falls into three broad categories. There are those ... where only a very small amount of easily reversible structural work has been necessary to equip the former church for its new function, and many would regard these as the most satisfactory solutions. The second category is where the main lines of the former interior remain but more extensive structural work has been undertaken - often involving the insertion of galleries ... This may, however, be considered no more intrusive than the existing gallery which has been retained in the conversion at ... The third category ... whilst retaining the exterior of the buildings largely unaltered has involved the complete abandoning of the former interior. Which of these approaches can be adopted clearly depends on the particular circumstances, but the interior of a building should not be lightly abandoned unless its structural state makes it impossible to retain it. It may sometimes be necessary to make the difficult decision of sacrificing an interior to secure by alternative use the preservation of an outstanding feature.

In almost every case of conversion the change of use requires planning permission and may require listed building consent. It is hoped that local planning authorities will co-operate to the full in considering applications for change of use where this may be the best way or indeed the only way of retaining an historic building as part of the local scene.

One further point to be noted is the great variation in the costs involved in these schemes. Some ... have been relatively expensive and consequently achieved a highly finished result. In other cases ... the cost of adaptation was far less than the cost of erecting a new building or purchasing a more conventional property to house the same quantity of storage facilities. In yet other cases only the initial major structural works have been carried out, leaving the conversion to be completed over a period. In every instance, however, the costs of acquiring and adapting a former church have undoubtedly been less than that of erecting a new building for the same purpose."

The best publication and indeed a handbook on the subject of the use and conversion of redundant churches for various purposes is now that by K Powell and C de la Hey, Churches - A question of conversion (SAVE London 1987). Various proposals as well as successful examples of conversion are presented, also the problems involved with many photographs and plans. Other photographs illustrate the fate of many other fine redundant churches in Great Britain - demolition and decay.

In general it must be urged that the future use to which religious buildings are put should not offend against the intentions in which they were built and that re-use and readaptation should where possible not be incompatible with the original function of the building and without irreversible alteration to the original fabric.

On these particular issues Article 5 of the Final Declaration of the 5th Symposium of Historic Towns (Sevilla 1985) relating to the reutilisation of historic buildings underlines "the importance of finding imaginative new uses as one of the more important approaches to positive conservation and in certain cases the only way of saving many historic buildings and town quarters". In the Appendix in Section I with regard to the reutilisation of historic buildings, it was recommended that the relevant authorities at national, regional and local levels should "act on the principle that the new use (particularly in the case of churches) be compatible as far as possible with the character and original use of a historic building and that wherever feasible the conversion process should be reversible".

5. Transfer of churches from one place to another:  
"translocation"

Just as it has been suggested by some that redundant religious buildings could be turned into "preserved ruins", it has also been seriously proposed that they could be removed to other places for reuse and better preservation. This has been already carried out in quite a number of cases: a London church and a Spanish monastery have been rebuilt in the USA, also parts of a Greek Orthodox monastery removed illegally from Cyprus to the USA, some religious buildings have also been transferred to other places in the Soviet Union and recently in Bucharest in Romania. In earlier times, particularly in areas where timber-framed building was common, removal of buildings including timber-framed churches was often practised. However this is no argument for the removal of religious buildings today either to other places for reuse or to open-air museums. Through the removal of their churches, villages can often lose their most important and oldest monuments as well as landmarks and centres. As a result of removal, particularly with stone buildings and especially rubble ones, much original material is often destroyed and in most cases the removal is more costly than restoration on the spot. Although timber-framed buildings were legally considered as removable goods and chattels, their removal was being prohibited quite early in various states (1495 in the imperial town of Frankfurt, 1633 in the Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel) to preserve timber supplies and housing (Förderkreis Alte Kirchen, Zum Thema "Versetzung", 1981).

Since 1970 8 churches have been transferred in the Federal State of Hessen, 6 of them are now in open-air museums, 5 in the "Freilichtmuseum Hessenpark" (which has almost become a collector of churches) - of these only two have yet been rebuilt, one of them built of rubble has lost most of its original material. Two villages which did not prevent the removal of churches in 1974/75 now want them back. The Förderkreis Alte Kirchen was able to prevent the removal of two further churches. One timber building, erected as a "Notkirche" in Heilsberg, a settlement of refugees from the former eastern parts of Germany near Bad Vilbel in 1949, has just (March 1987) been taken down on the insistence of the church authorities despite being listed as an historic monument.

The transfer of the church of St Teilo, Llandeilo/Talybont, West Glamorgan, Wales, which has recently been carried out to prevent further destruction by vandalism has also been severely criticised by the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and by other organisations. Although the building was properly investigated



and the important wall paintings removed professionally (though at considerable cost and with difficulty), the building itself was transferred in a less professional way and it is likely that much original building material will have been lost in the process.

The working group on legislation at the Brussels Conference on the Architectural Heritage in 1980 made a recommendation that transfer of buildings should only take place in the most exceptional circumstances as a last resort for its better preservation and that conservation should take place on the spot (paragraph 8).

(An example of removal being justified in order to preserve a building: the timber-framed chapel in Hommertshausen near Marburg was moved back one metre from the road in 1956 to enable necessary widening of the road. In other cases timber-framed churches have been lifted up on jacks and better, drier foundations built to prevent dry rot and damp, see Förderkreis Alte Kirchen, Blaues Buch "Fachwerkkirchen in Hessen", pp 55-57. Some villages with their churches have been removed to preserve them when reservoirs have been built).

#### 6. Distortions

Considerable damage has often been done to religious buildings by partial demolition/abbreviation, sometimes to make way for traffic, and by replacement or addition with modern construction. Interior arrangement has in some cases been destroyed by horizontal or vertical division (for instance in the case of the 19th century Lutheran church in Limburg/Lahn in the state of Hessen in the Federal Republic of Germany).

#### 7. Synagogues

In many European countries there were and still are considerable Jewish populations. These had synagogues and schools in the Middle Ages until they were destroyed or converted to other uses at the height of persecution in the 13th and 14th centuries in western Christian countries. When toleration and emancipation was granted in the 18th and 19th centuries synagogues were built in most countries. There were many synagogues especially in central and eastern European countries.

In towns and cities they were often buildings of considerable size and architectural interest (for instance in Neo-Romanesque, Byzantine or Moorish style). In Germany and Austria many synagogues were destroyed or badly damaged in the pogrom of the "Reichskristallnacht" 9/10 November 1938 and in other countries later during Nazi occupation. However especially in rural areas where synagogues were often little different from the surrounding houses - a considerable number are for instance timber-framed - many still survive. In the Federal State of Hessen in West Germany some 450 synagogues are recorded and of these 200 still survive. (See T. Altaras, Synagogen in Hessen - Was geschah seit 1945, Königstein/Taunus 1988). To judge from this figure there are probably several thousand synagogues still surviving in central and eastern Europe most of which are now no longer used for their original purpose. Many for instance still survive in Hungary (see report on that country: a detailed inventory is being completed by Dr. Ancko Garda and others). Some stand empty, others are used for other purposes often unsuitable and unworthy - as workshops, storerooms, granaries, etc.

Some steps have been taken to restore and better use synagogues. In 1986 synagogues restored as museums for Jewish culture and history in Rendsburg/Schleswig-Holstein and Eisenstadt/Burgenland - Austria were entered for the Europa Nostra award scheme. The fine 18th century synagogue in Gelnhausen has also been restored and for Hessen documentation has been compiled. (See Altaras, Synagogen in Hessen). The fine neo-classical synagogue in Apostag, south of Budapest in Hungary, rebuilt in 1822, profaned 1944/45 and then used as an agricultural store and which had become very dilapidated, has been saved and now excellently restored for use as a community centre for the village (including use as the village library). The Europa Nostra diploma was awarded in 1988 for this restoration.

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#### 8. Mosques

Mosques exist and are still used in Balkan countries besides Turkey (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia - particularly in Bosnia and Hercegovina and Macedonia and in the province of Kosovo), in Cyprus and the Soviet Union and a few in Hungary, Spain and Sicily. A considerable number are however redundant and either stand empty or have been converted to other uses (often unsuitable and unworthy - in Albania and Greece for instance to cinemas: this particular form of use may however be considered a public one and perhaps not so far removed - though for strict Moslems quite immoral - when one considers that churches with their wall paintings

and representations of saints, etc, were the "cinemas of the Middle Ages"). Some mosques are being protected as buildings of architectural and historical interest and in Yugoslavia, as well as Greece and Albania, some action has been taken to preserve the more important of such monuments. Many others are however neglected and are in disrepair and decaying. In Bulgaria (from where the Turks have been driven out since 1945 and particularly in recent years) many mosques, particularly in the areas of Turkish settlement in the south of the country have been closed, and stand redundant and decaying. Koran schools (medresi) may also be redundant, standing empty, decaying or have received other uses in some countries.

In Spain (and Portugal) churches were often converted into mosques with the Moorish occupation of 711 ff. After the Reconquista (11th century to 1492) mosques, where they were not destroyed or converted to other uses, became churches (for instance in Cordoba - where there is today also a redundant synagogue).

#### 9. Ruins

A considerable number of religious buildings are preserved as ruins. Some are looked after by state conservation authorities. After 1869 the Irish Office of Works took over the responsibility for the preservation of over 137 ruins that had been church property prior to Disestablishment. In Denmark the state looks after all ruined churches. In Brittany the Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques has since 1963 restored over 60 small ancient chapels often in ruinous condition and which may be used only once a year on the feast day of the patron saint. This work has been financed 50% by the state, 25% by the Departement and 25% by the Commune also with funds from the Ministry of Agriculture for rural renewal. The basic aim has been to consolidate the buildings using the simplest and cheapest of methods - industrial tiles for roofing and simple carpentry. In the United Kingdom a considerable number of ecclesiastical sites (mediaeval monasteries, etc) as well as some redundant churches are preserved and maintained by state conservation authorities (English Heritage, formerly Department of the Environment), also some local authorities have taken over the responsibility for ruins.

Many ruins of religious buildings, although listed as monuments of historical and architectural importance are not, however, sufficiently protected or maintained and others are not even listed. It is therefore important that all existing ruins (including also towers where the rest of the church has been demolished) should at least be listed, protected and maintained and if possible an assessment made of their archaeological potential.

It has been seriously suggested that one possible solution for redundant religious buildings is to turn them into "preserved" ruins. For instance it was suggested for the old church of St. Maur, Rush near Dublin (this church has now been saved as a result of the efforts of a preservation society founded to preserve it); just as it was foreseen as a possible solution for the redundant church in Bürgeln near Marburg in the mid 1970s; it has also been envisaged as a possibility by East German church authorities but admitted to be expensive, because of the costs of maintenance. Most recently the (former Anglican Established) Church of Ireland has recommended that churches which are declared redundant - and there are likely to be a considerable number in the next

years - should be turned into ruins to prevent unworthy use or vandalism. This hardly seems a sensible or indeed worthy solution of the problem. Even despite the argument that it is better that a church "become a ruin - with all the romance and association this can imply - rather than kept a frozen mausoleum" (see Binney/Burman, p 179), it has been forcefully argued, for instance by the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches in England, that the costs for insurance premiums for third party liability for ruins is high (Reports 1972 and 1976) and up to now the Redundant Churches Fund has on the advice of the Advisory Board not accepted the responsibility for ruined churches. In some cases these have been taken over by the Department of Environment (now English Heritage). Many architects also argue that ruins are difficult and costly to maintain and that it is cheaper to maintain a building which remains complete with a roof.

There is a limited case in favour of the preservation of some churches as ruins - for instance those destroyed by natural catastrophes (there may for instance be some cases of destruction from the recent earthquake in Armenia) or by war. The church of the "Carmes" in Lisbon was never rebuilt after the earthquake of 1755 and stands as witness to the destruction by that earthquake. The ruins of the mediaeval church of Coventry Cathedral, the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche in West Berlin, the Frauenkirche in Dresden and other churches in Germany and elsewhere stand in ruins as eloquent memorials to the destruction in the Second World War.

In short: list and protect existing ruins, which are costly enough to maintain properly; do not let intact churches become ruins - the best insurance for their maintenance and proper preservation is continued use.

#### 10. Church furnishings, works of art

As a result not only of the redundancy of religious buildings (in this case mainly churches) but also through their rearrangement for liturgical reasons (particularly in Roman Catholic countries as a result of Vatican II, but also in Lutheran and Anglican churches), or as a result of alteration or "restoration", many church furnishings and works of art have been dispersed or destroyed. Whereas the buildings themselves may often be listed and protected, their furnishings do not always receive the same protection. As a result of "ecclesiastical exemption" in some countries church authorities are free to dispose of the contents of churches as they wish.

Some steps however have also been taken by liturgical experts and architectural historians by the publication of handbooks to persuade clergy and congregations to maintain and preserve their heritage including the furnishings of churches, for instance the handbooks published by the Council for the Care of Churches in England or the book by F Skunca, A Badurina and B Skunca, Sakralni prostor tijekom povijesti i danas/The Sacred Space throughout history and today (Zagreb 1987). Attention is drawn especially to the need for the proper maintenance and correct restoration of organs, for the proper maintenance of belfries and bells and to the dangers inherent in adding too many new bells which can affect the stability of belfries and bellframes.

Some attempts have also been made to preserve and store important objects (the Church of England for instance has a store for stained glass in a disused church in Ely). However it is also known that furnishings where they are not destroyed, wander into private "stores" and collections or appear on the art market.

Better protection must be given to furnishings and works of art both in churches which are still in use and in those which have become redundant as indeed recommended by the working group on legislation at the Brussels Architectural Heritage Congress (1980): see paragraph 8. They must be properly listed and recorded and if necessary safely stored in depots created for the purpose.

#### 11. Chapels and wayside crosses, statues, etc

In Roman Catholic and Orthodox countries there are often a great number of small chapels especially in country areas. Many are perhaps still in use, often perhaps only once a year on the feast day of the patron saint. Some may be well maintained and most will be cleaned and perhaps decorated with flowers etc for the patronal festival. Others may be hardly ever used and not maintained, decaying or even in ruinous condition as a result of underuse in an increasingly secular world. Many are not even listed as buildings of architectural or historical importance and are not recorded or documented in any way by the responsible church or state conservation authorities (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Roman Catholic areas of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, other East European countries, Balkans, Greece). In France there are many unused chapels, decaying or in ruinous condition. In Brittany the Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques began in 1963 a campaign to restore numerous small, very ancient chapels most of which are only used on the feast day of the saint to whom they are dedicated. This campaign is carried out with funds from the state (50%), the Departement (25%) and the Commune (25%) with special funds from the Ministry of Agriculture for rural renewal. So far emergency repairs have been carried out at over 60 chapels in Brittany (all listed). The aim is consolidation through the use of the simplest methods - industrial tiles for roofing and simple carpentry. Repair work on chapels in Brittany has also been carried out in some cases by youth groups organised by Chantiers "Breiz Sartel".

In the Steiermark in Austria there are some 209 Roman Catholic chapels-at-ease which are little used and it is estimated that there may be some 500 churches in the Steiermark which are no longer regularly or are only seldom used. These figures are considered representative also for other parts of Austria. The church authorities, as owners of the buildings, are responsible for their maintenance and preservation, but their financial resources are limited and grants from the Austrian state conservation authority (Bundesdenkmalamt) are limited, so that there are considerable problems in maintaining these chapels. (Compare also Protestant chapels-at-ease in Germany formerly used only once a year eg Niedereisenhausen 1770-1955, then abandoned).

Wayside crosses and statues are not always recorded and documented or listed as historical monuments. Preservation and maintenance varies considerably and in some areas the condition is alarming - they may be the objects of vandalism or even theft (see particularly the report on the Federal Republic of Germany and the article referred to there). In Yugoslavia (an atheist state) the army is responsible for their repair and maintenance if they have been damaged, as they have strategic importance and are marked on maps.

#### 12. Graveyards/cemeteries

Often in close relation to the problem of the maintenance of religious buildings and particularly those redundant, is the protection and maintenance of adjacent or nearby graveyards or cemeteries. In recent years there has been considerable destruction both of whole graveyards or individual graves, monuments etc due to clearance, modernisation, speculative development etc and often

considerable neglect of important sites throughout Europe. Better protection and maintenance, recording and documentation is needed. Some steps have been taken. In the United Kingdom the Council for British Archaeology has issued booklets with recommendations for recording graveyards. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe itself adopted a recommendation on memorials (Rec. 898 (1980)) but there seems to have been no direct follow-up. In Poland, where concern is great about the protection and maintenance of graveyards, various groups have been formed to help protect them. In Denmark good state legislation exists to protect graveyards, memorials and tombstones. Many graveyards are well kept - a good example is the main cemetery in Varazdin in Croatia, in northwest Yugoslavia on the border with Hungary, with well-kept topiary modelled on the Central Cemetery in Vienna. In West Germany the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Friedhof und Denkmal/Zentralinstitut für Sepulkralkultur" (Kassel) has done considerable work to record and ensure the protection of graveyards. Various initiatives have been taken and are increasing to record and document Jewish cemeteries (for instance in the state of Hessen in the Federal Republic of Germany by the Historical Commission for the History of the Jews).

Where church/religious building and graveyard are adjacent or comprise one piece of property is as important that they are seen as a whole and not separated (as is the case in the procedure for redundant churches of the Church of England).

Protection and recording and documentation must apply equally to memorials and gravestones within religious buildings.

The ecological importance of graveyards and cemeteries - plants, herbs, wildlife - should also be recognised. In several instances initiatives have been taken to plant traditional plants, herbs and flowers in graveyards, for instance in the graveyard of the redundant church of St. Mary-at-Lambeth in South London by the Tradescant Society (named after the family of royal gardeners to the Stuart kings in the late 17th century buried in the churchyard) and which has now become apparently the world's first Museum of Garden History, or by members of the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen and the Arbeitskreis dörflicher Kultur in the churchyards of Bellnhausen and Bürgeln near Marburg.

#### 13. Other religious buildings

In many Roman Catholic countries and also in Orthodox ones there are monasteries which have become redundant or are in danger of becoming redundant because the number of persons entering the monastic profession has drastically declined. In Protestant countries most monasteries were dissolved at the Reformation in the 16th century, and were demolished or have gradually decayed, being used as quarries for building materials and are now ruins or were converted to other uses. In some Roman Catholic countries monasteries were also dissolved in the 18th and 19th centuries. Quite a number of these redundant monasteries now present problems of maintenance, preservation and proper use.

In various countries at different dates and even today denominational/confessional/church schools have been closed and become redundant. Some have often been turned to other uses but others still stand empty. However in rural areas particularly this must also be considered within the context of the general problem of the use of schools. This also applies to Koran Schools (medresses).



Similarly clergy houses (rectories, vicarages, Pfarrhäuser) have also been given up for various reasons especially where there is a shortage of clergy; and not every parish has a priest (for they are often too large for modern needs and too expensive to run). In some cases they have been demolished; elsewhere they have however found new owners. In some areas, for instance in West Germany where church authorities are financially well off, quite a number of clergy houses have often been ruined by excessive alteration or "restoration".

In the United Kingdom and elsewhere there are also many church halls and it is likely that some will have become redundant. However many are also now used for community purposes so that they are sufficiently used. In this field the Village Halls Advisory Service (Village Halls Forum) within "Action with Communities in Rural England" (ACRE, Village Halls Office) is particularly active.

#### 14. Voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations and individual persons play an important part in helping to preserve churches both used and redundant as in conservation generally. In England many country trusts and groups of friends or societies look after churches in use. The Friends of Friendless Churches founded in 1957 was the first organisation which expressly concerned itself with the preservation of redundant churches. It has a large and influential membership, has helped preserve directly or indirectly over 100 churches and looks after some 20 churches in its own possession or on long lease. The Redundant Churches Fund is helped greatly by local societies (for instance All Saints Society for the redundant church of East Horndon, Essex), groups of friends and individuals (for instance key-holders in looking after the 250 churches vested in it (the Fund is itself a church/state organisation). The provincial trusts (Stichtingen) which look after redundant religious buildings in the Netherlands are basically voluntary organisations although they receive considerable financial support from the State, the provinces and the communes. They rely much on the voluntary labour and on the help of their individual members. A voluntary organisation very similar to the Friends of Friendless Churches is the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen based in Marburg in West Germany. It has some 300 members, now has four redundant churches in its possession and is responsible for the restoration of another two and has helped in the preservation and restoration directly or indirectly of many others. Local groups and individual persons have also fought to preserve and restore redundant churches in France, Switzerland, East Germany (for instance a group of artists on the island of Rügen and staff of the University of Greifswald) and elsewhere. There are now also quite a number of local societies in West Germany which care for individual redundant churches (eg Altenvers, Friedensdorf, Allendorf/Eder, Hassbergen, Niedernhausen, Weetzen, etc).

The role of voluntary organisations and private individuals in preserving redundant churches in terms both of sheer labour (voluntary help for restoration), administrative work and finance cannot be underestimated. In many cases they do the work which in theory should be done by the State, church authorities, local authorities and communes.

Several local groups have also been formed to look after redundant synagogues. In Poland there are also groups which are concerned with the preservation of cemeteries and graveyards (Burman).

#### 15. The tourist potential

Modern theologians and clergy often see religious buildings as "ecclesiastical plant", much of it being in their opinion superfluous. A major factor in helping the preservation of churches in use and also redundant churches is however the role of tourism and a not inconsiderable amount of financial support is given by tourists in the form of donations. It is significant that the book of M Binney and P Burman, Chapels and Churches: Who cares?, was published by the British Tourist Authority which has done considerable work in supporting conservation. In many countries considerable revenue comes from tourism and much more could be done to turn this revenue to the conservation of the monuments and historic buildings which the tourists go to see.

Visitors to churches vested in the Redundant Churches Fund include members of the British Royal Family (Report of the Redundant Churches Fund 1985). The Förderkreis Alte Kirchen has carried out round tours in various areas in Hessen to historic buildings and particularly redundant churches and has issued three guide-pamphlets for such tours. This has also been done by the provincial trusts in the Netherlands particularly in Friesland.

A major cultural route which is being revived under the patronage of the Council of Europe is that along the mediaeval pilgrimage routes to the grave of St. James in Santiago di Compostella in Spain on the routes or near them and might be used for meditation as pilgrimage churches, as suggested by P Burman for modern pilgrims or travellers to Santiago (P Burman, A Word for Holy Places).

In Hungary the organisation "Tájak Korok Múzeumok" (Regions, Epochs, Museums, Könyves Kálmán korut 40, Budapest VIII) has done much work to activate cultural tourism in rural areas, organising cultural routes which also include religious buildings and clergy houses (with plaques on buildings) and competitions and publishing useful guidebooks to historic monuments.

It could indeed be suggested that some of the proceeds from tourism might be used to maintain the historic buildings and monuments, including redundant religious buildings, which often represent the main tourist attraction.

#### 16. Traditional crafts and employment

Traditional building crafts - carpentry, masonworking, joinery, tilemaking by hand - and the use of traditional materials - wood, slate, bricks, tiles and local stone - should be encouraged and where necessary given financial support or incentives. Timber roofs of churches for instance should be repaired or replaced with wood and not be steel girders, carpenters should be encouraged to repair them with traditional methods and using traditional joints. After storms in Great Britain in 1987 there was such a demand for second-hand handmade tiles that in Kent small firms supported by financial incentives started remaking Kent peg tiles by hand again. There is so much repair and restoration work to be done that the encouragement of traditional crafts and materials can do much to help reduce unemployment particularly in rural areas. More training courses should also be offered in the traditional buildings crafts and more financial support given to existing training centres and for creating further ones where possible.

# 17. Listing

The listing, or inventory, of historic buildings and monuments is very uneven throughout Europe. The following comparative list was produced in 1985 by the Hungarian Inspectorate of Historic Monuments.

	no. of listed buildings	per 1,000 km <sup>2</sup>	per 10,000 inhabitants
England	362,800	270.0	74.6
FRG: Bavaria	109,000	154.6	100.9
Netherlands	40,012	96.4	27.8
GDR	48,000	44.4	26.6
Czechoslovakia:			
Bohemia	33,000	41.8	33.0
Slovakia	8,500	17.8	17.9
Hungary	9,576	10.3	9.0
USSR: Estonia	1,000	2.2	7.7

In England lists have been updated and there are now some 500,000 buildings listed as being of historic or architectural importance. In the Federal Republic of Germany lists are being revised and enlarged - in the Federal State of Hessen nearly all churches, including those redundant, are now listed as historic monuments and even some churches of the 1950s are included. In France on the other hand there are only some 35,000 buildings (including some 10,000 religious buildings) on the main category of historic monuments, which is less than the number for the Netherlands. There are still many buildings to be listed in the Republic of Ireland. Hungary has only some 9,500 buildings listed as historic monuments and perhaps some 30,000 buildings could be listed there. This would however involve considerable financial responsibility for the state, regional and local authorities. Listing however does not always necessarily mean that buildings also enjoy complete protection; in England for instance buildings in Grade 2 (Grade 3 has now been abolished) can be demolished if consent is given.

In some countries lists and inventories are now being computerised or there are plans to computerise such lists. This is being done for France; for Spain there exists a computer list with files on almost 800 redundant religious buildings. This should be a good model for assembling material on redundant religious buildings elsewhere. It is recommended that lists and inventories be made more

complete and brought up-to-date so as to reflect increasing interest in architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries. Listing should imply protection. The computerisation of lists and inventories should be encouraged so as to create easily accessible databanks.

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### III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

1. Religious buildings in use should be properly maintained. This can often prevent redundancy taking place. Repair work should be carried out as soon as possible to prevent further deterioration taking place which will then be more costly to repair. If necessary, financial and fiscal help should be given by the state for repair work. Repair and restoration work should be freed from VAT or similar taxes. Regular inspection of buildings should take place (see note on Finance and maintenance). Continued, even if only infrequent, use is the best insurance for the future. Additional secular uses which are compatible with the spirit and character of the buildings and do not lead to irreversible alteration or change might be encouraged where possible to enhance the use of buildings. In some cases a more liberal attitude to the use of churches and a relaxation of strict regulations are needed as a means to prevent future redundancy.

The historic arrangement of religious buildings including their furnishings should be better protected against the effects of modern, often short-lived needs. Furnishings and works of art which have to be removed should be carefully listed, recorded, documented and stored (see note on Church furnishings, works of art). Listing of religious buildings as historical monuments should take place where this has not yet been done. If necessary existing lists or inventories should be enlarged and brought up-to-date reflecting greater concern also for architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries. The computerisation of these lists should be encouraged.

Wherever possible, even infrequent use should be encouraged.

2. The heritage of religious buildings should not be lightly abandoned. Satisfactory and effective procedures for properly dealing with religious buildings which become or are declared redundant should be established. Panels of competent advisors such as the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches in England (including independent architectural historians, historians, architects and representatives of the responsible and interested voluntary organisations) should be created to advise on proper treatment of redundant religious buildings. The procedures and work of such panels should be sufficiently funded.

A survey should be made of existing redundant religious buildings in all European countries and a questionnaire sent to all responsible authorities and interested organisations. The survey should be documented as far as possible with plans, photographs or drawings. Adequate funds should be provided for such a survey. The material gathered should be computerised.

Religious buildings which become or are declared redundant should also be surveyed and carefully documented and recorded. Redundant religious buildings should be listed as buildings of architectural and historic interest or as historical monuments where possible or necessary and listing should also reflect greater interest now in architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries (listing should be computerised).

The fabric and fittings of redundant religious buildings should from the start be given effective protection, if necessary by adequate legislation, to prevent further decay, neglect, misuse or demolition. Basic repair work should be carried out as soon as possible where necessary to prevent further deterioration. Regular inspection should take place to assess the structural condition and need for basic and immediate repair work.

There should be adequate finance for the documentation of redundant religious buildings, for their listing as historic monuments etc and for their protection and immediate maintenance and for programmes of urgent repair work to prevent further decay where necessary.

Possible solutions: (for redundant buildings)

Many redundant religious buildings are often historical monuments or buildings of historic and architectural interest and most have been public buildings or buildings used by the general public. The public has therefore an interest in their preservation and some form of financial involvement by state authorities should be forthcoming. In many countries more attention to the problems of redundant religious buildings must be given both by church and state authorities. In addition the tourist potential of such buildings is considerable and should be exploited (also financially).

1. Preservation and (re)use by the responsible church authorities.
2. Where preservation and use by the responsible church authorities is not possible, preservation as monuments/buildings of architectural and historic interest:
  - a. in the guardianship of the state or local authorities, for instance as in England by English Heritage or by County Councils. (It is to be hoped that religious buildings including redundant ones will also receive greater protection and help from state authorities in east European countries, particularly the Soviet Union, as a result of the commemoration of the 1000th anniversary of the conversion to Orthodox Christianity in 1988)
  - b. by official trusts, for instance as in England by the Redundant Churches Fund or in the provinces of the Netherlands by the Stichtingen, financed by the state, religious authorities, local authorities and private donations.
  - c. by voluntary organisations at national, regional or local level as for instance by the Friends of Friendless Churches in England and Wales or by the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen in West Germany and by many other local organisations.
  - d. where considered feasible by reliable and responsible private owners.

Even where buildings are redundant or declared redundant, the possibility of re-use of the buildings, even if only occasional, for religious purposes (for instance as pilgrimage churches as suggested by P Burman) should always be kept in mind, as well as occasional public cultural use which does not lead to irreversible alteration or changes.

Existing efforts to preserve redundant religious buildings should be encouraged by all possible means, including more effective financial help where necessary.

For the preservation of redundant religious buildings there should be the greatest possible exploitation of existing financial and manpower resources or such resources should be created.

Possible sources of support are therefore:

- a. Financial grants from state, local and religious authorities

Tax relief and exemption (eg from VAT, Corporation Tax, etc)

Subscriptions, donations, legacies, receipts from legal fines which can be allocated to voluntary organisations working for the preservation of redundant religious buildings

Organisation of money-raising events such as bazaars, markets

Profits from publications.

- b. Use of job creation and manpower service schemes - employment of unemployed architects, historians, secretarial staff, local craftsmen, labourers, etc.
  - c. Use of traditional materials and crafts (carpentry, masonworking, tilemaking by hand) and where necessary financial support and incentives for them, training courses etc.
3. Where neither continued use for religious purposes nor preservation as monuments with occasional use for religious or public cultural purposes is possible, new uses should be found for redundant religious buildings. As the use of religious buildings has usually been public, new uses should as far as possible be for public cultural purposes. Moreover as the buildings are often focal points and central features of communities and local landmarks, sufficient time and encouragement should always be given to communities to rediscover a common interest and future role for these buildings. The new uses should always be compatible with the spirit and character of the buildings and not offend against the intentions in which they were built nor should they result in irreversible alteration to the fabric and interior arrangement of the buildings (see Final Declaration of the 5th European Symposium of Historic Towns, Seville 8-10 May 1985, paragraphs 3 and 5, Appendix Section I).
- Encouragement of imaginative, suitable and compatible projects for new uses and adaptation (which do not result in irreversible alteration to fabric or interior arrangement) with the necessary funds and resources.
- Suitable new uses might include: arts and crafts, music and drama, museums, libraries, archives, centre for architectural or archaeological purposes, educational uses, civic and community purposes, centres for old people and youth (see note on Secular use and new uses).
4. The development of cultural routes (as that to Santiago di Compostella) on larger and also on smaller scales, and including redundant religious buildings, should be encouraged. Proceeds from tourism should be used to help maintain historic buildings and monuments, including religious buildings.

The transfer, "translation" or "translocation" of religious buildings as a solution for redundancy is not recommended. This results often in the loss of major buildings of historic and architectural importance for a community and the destruction of much original material and is usually more costly than the preservation, restoration and re-use on the original site. Transfer should only take place in exceptional circumstances. (See note on Transfer of churches).

The preservation of redundant religious buildings by turning them into ruins is also not recommended. Ruins are usually more costly and difficult to maintain than intact buildings with roofs and also may involve considerable problems of liability and insurance. Existing ruins should where necessary receive better protection and documentation. (See extra note on Ruins).

Information on activities for the preservation and use of redundant religious buildings throughout Europe should be made widely available and the holding of an international conference on the subject might be encouraged, in which those institutions and organisations which have played or are playing a leading role in the preservation of these buildings (for instance the Redundant Churches Fund, the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches, Friends of Friendless Churches, the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen, the Stichtingen in the Netherlands, as well as many local organisations) should take a leading part. A central institution should be set up, possibly in association with an already existing organisation, for the documentation of these activities, with material and literature on responsibility for maintenance, finance and legislation, the addresses of responsible religious and state authorities, conservation authorities, voluntary organisations and interested persons, etc and with sufficient funding for the maintenance of such a documentation centre.