IRSH 55 (2010), pp. 1–27 doi:10.1017/S0020859009990605
© 2010 Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis

"Out in the Open in a Threatening World": The Scottish Churches' Industrial Mission 1960–1980

RONALD JOHNSTON AND ELAINE MCFARLAND
School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University
E-mail: Ronnie.Johnston@gcal.ac.uk; e.mcfarland@gcal.ac.uk

SUMMARY: By combining archival research with the oral testimony of ex-industrial chaplains – and others with direct experience of industrial mission – this article explores a neglected dimension of religious outreach, and attempts to provide a nuanced interpretation of the interrelationship between de-industrialization and secularization in post-1960 Britain. By 1965, over 100 industrial chaplains operated throughout industrial Scotland across a range of industries. Functioning at the cutting edge of the Kirk's efforts to halt what was clearly identified as a slide in faith, the chaplains were also perfectly placed to bear witness to Scotland's traumatic and painful process of de-industrialization. Historians agree that the correlation between falling church attendances and religious belief is problematic, and this case study presents clear evidence that "discursive Christianity" remained significant in Scotland well into the 1980s. However, this research also highlights that institutional religion was far from passive in the face of secularization, and that the very presence of chaplains in the workplaces helped bolster the credibility of religion in a secularizing society.

One of the problems of specialization in the study of history is that historians tend to focus their research within their own particular professional niches. In this article we take a more expansive approach by bridging the normally distinct areas of labour history and the history of religion. Our period is the 1960s and 1970s and we explore two important themes: secularization and de-industrialization. The basic contours of both these processes have been illuminated by a range of commentators in recent years, but despite close parallels in the timing, magnitude and speed of change in both cases, their interaction has not been systematically explored in the literature.[1] Both of these processes impacted on British

1. For a survey of coverage of de-industrialization in Scotland see Richard Findlay, *Modern Scotland, 1914–2000* (London, 2004); C.H. Lee and G. Peden (eds), *The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2005); William Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800–Present* (Edinburgh, 1999).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

society concurrently, resulting in a painful realignment of accepted norms and values. This was especially so in working communities serving the heavy industries where the work ethic was deeply ingrained and where religion – although not always manifested in church attendance – was an important social norm. Utilizing the Scottish Churches' Industrial Mission as a case study allowed us to explore the complex interface between these two processes.

Crucial to our understanding was the interviewing of several individuals with experience of industrial mission – which we combined and corroborated with a range of documentary evidence. This involved the recruitment of retired industrial chaplains facilitated in cooperation with the Church of Scotland's Mission and Discipleship Council and its Glasgow Presbytery. A total of eight such individuals were interviewed, using a semi-structured questionnaire. The study also featured "elite" interviews with two of the Church's former industrial organizers. However, we realized that reconstructing the history of industrial mission through interviewing chaplains alone was problematic. Consequently, we decided to triangulate the oral evidence by interviewing eight respondents who had direct experience of the industrial chaplains' scheme, either as trade unionists in the workplace (six interviews) or as employers/managers (two interviews). This cohort was recruited using existing networks established in previous oral history projects. All the interviews took from one and a half to two hours on average and were conducted between September 2007 and June 2008. The oral history phase of the research culminated in a witness seminar held at Glasgow Caledonian University.

While much work on secularization to date has concerned the public and behavioural aspects of religion, focusing on formal indicators of adherence such as membership statistics, this new oral history research material has proved of particular value in probing subjects' interior narratives. The degree of corroboration in the oral testimony provided a striking illustration of how industrial mission was given much of its legitimacy by a shared understanding and general acceptance of a Christian view of the world amongst the workers to whom it was targeted. Indeed, it can also be argued that as active agents in this process, the chaplains helped frame workers' collective identities in the same way as that identified amongst "popular intellectuals" in changing societies in other parts of the world. Like similar "articulate knowledge specialists" their success would ultimately be shaped by the wider society and culture of which they were a part, as well as by their personal backgrounds and professional networks.[2]

2. See Michiel Baud and Rosanne Rutten's introduction to *IRSH* 49 (2004), Supplement 12, "Popular Intellectuals and Social Movements: Framing Protest in Asia, Africa and Latin America", pp. 1–18.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There have been a limited number of studies on industrial mission in the UK. Michael Northcott's research on industrial chaplains in the north-east of England examines their input into industrial relations at company level. Northcott found that the chaplains in this study tended to be closely identified with management, and that their pastoral function was frequently compromised by their involvement in organizational and technical issues.[3] From the perspective of business management, Emma Bell has also examined the experiences of chaplains involved with industrial mission in England. Viewing chaplains as "actors" within industrial relations, Bell also found that they frequently had great difficulty maintaining a neutral position between workers and management, that many were perceived to be radicals by local parish clergy, and that de-industrialization resulted in a loss of identity for industrial mission in general.[4] Further afield, Michelson's study of workplace chaplains in Australia draws similar conclusions. Here the workplace chaplains filled a "representation gap" which had opened up when collective bargaining channels narrowed under trade-union membership decline. Other studies have concluded that the main rationale for industrial chaplains in the workplace was the counselling services they could offer workers.[5] The evidence from our own study broadly supports Bell and Michelson's findings. However, as we will illustrate, industrial chaplains in Scotland were much more successful in maintaining a formally neutral relationship between workers and management.

Callum Brown highlights the importance of "discursive Christianity" in defining codes of behaviour based on religious identity. Christianity in this sense is defined as a general acceptance of Christian-based protocals of personal identity – such as rituals, customs, speech, dress, economic activity, etc.[6] Drawing on modern cultural theory, Brown sees a widespread acceptance of such protocols as the bedrock upon which all other institutional and theological forms of Christianity lie. Consequently, secularization can only take place when the popular acceptance of discursive religiosity begins to fade.[7] This, according to Brown, happened in the UK in the early 1960s when a "profound rupture" or "moral turn"

3. Michael S. Northcott, *The Church and Secularization: Urban Industrial Mission in N E England* (Frankfurt, 1989), p. 71.

4. Emma Bell, "Whose Side Are They On? Patterns of Religious Resource Mobilization in British Industrial Mission", *Management and Organizational History*, 1 (2006), pp. 331–347, 332.

5. Grant Michelson, "The Role of Workplace Chaplains in Industrial Relations: Evidence from Australia", *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 44 (2006), pp. 677–696, 678. See also Graham Elkin, "The Industrial Chaplains: the Low Profile Counsellors at Work", *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 4:3 (1992), pp. 17–25.

6. Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harrow, 2006), pp. 29–44.

7. *Idem*, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization 1800–2000* (London, 2001), pp. 12–14.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

occurred.[8] Hugh McLeod, on the other hand, locates the early indicators of religious decay in the 1950s, and suggests that a range of factors coalesced in the 1960s to accelerate this. These included rising levels of affluence, political and theological radicalization, and a general decline of collective identities within society.[9] Our case study of religious industrial outreach in Scotland allowed us to assess such theories at ground level. While we accept Brown's argument regarding the importance and longevity of discursive Christianity, as far as the timing and causation of religious decay is concerned, our research broadly supports the more nuanced multi-factored approach purported by McLeod.

THE CHURCH'S NEW FRONTIER: SCOTTISH INDUSTRY FROM 1945

One constant throughout Scotland's economic and social history is that patterns of industrial and urban change happened later here – normally a generation later – than in comparable industrial areas in England and Wales. When change did occur, though, it was normally rapid and sweeping. This was the case with Scotland's industrialization and urbanization processes in the nineteenth century, and with de-industrialization and secularization in the twentieth.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Scottish economy had remained fully committed to what would later be labelled "the declining industries": coal, iron and steel, shipbuilding, and heavy engineering. By the 1950s a commitment to producing high quality spec-built goods for overseas markets resulted in a harsh boom-and-bust business cycle and a highly skilled but relatively low-paid workforce.[10] The social consequences of this economic development were strong workplace and community-based identities, sectarian allegiances and a hostile environment of industrial relations. By the mid-1950s there were twenty shipbuilding yards in Scotland employing 27,000 workers – the same number as had been employed in 1900. At the same time the railway engineering industry was employing over 10,000 workers, 5,000 of whom worked at the 3 plants owned by the North British Locomotive Company.[11] The nationalized coal industry was also a big employer in Scotland, with

8. Peter van Rooden presents a similar argument regarding the changing place of religion in Holland. See "Secularization, De-Christianization and Re-Christianization in the Netherlands", in H. Lehmann (ed.), *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im Neuzeitlichen Europa* (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 131–153.

9. Hugh McLeod, *Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 6–10.

10. Peter Payne, "The Economy", in T.M. Devine and Richard J. Finlay (eds), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 22.

11. T. Dickson (ed.), *Scottish Capitalism: Class, State and Nation from before the Union to the Present* (London, 1980), p. 293.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

major coalfields in Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, and the Lothians. The buoyancy of the economy at this time, though, was partly the result of limited international competition in the postwar economic climate and masked serious structural flaws in the Scottish economy.[12] From the end of the 1950s, then, the "glacial slowness" of change, which had characterized the Scottish economy for so long, began to accelerate. This manifested itself in the rapid decay of heavy industry, the concomitant decline of Scottish ownership of industry, and an increase in state assistance for Scottish industry.[13]

Several commentators have argued that Britain as a whole moved towards being a corporatist society in the twentieth century.[14] Keith Middlemass in his classic study, *Politics in Industrial Society* argues that by 1945 in the UK the trade unions, the employers, and the state were operating as virtual "estates of the realm".[15] Tangible government-led corporatist strategies emerged in the early 1960s, firstly under Harold MacMillan's economic initiatives – such as the National Economic Development Council (NEDC) and regional planning policy.[16] The 1961 Toothill Report by the Scottish Council (Development and Industry) advocated that regional indicative planning should be targeted at the problems of Scottish industry. The 1964 Labour government extended the Conservatives' policy of intervention in private industry and adopted most of its regional policy measures. Under such initiatives Scotland benefited substantially, with 30 per cent of all UK regional assistance distributed here by the end of the 1960s.[17] There were also several government plans aimed at revitalizing specific Scottish industrial areas.[18] The locating of a new steel strip mill at Ravenscraig and the introduction of motor manufacturing at Linwood and Bathgate occurred between 1958 and 1959.

12. G.C. Peden, "The Managed Economy: Scotland 1919–2000", in T.M. Devine *et al.* (eds), *The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy Since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2005), p. 247.
13. John Foster and Charles Woolfson, *The Politics of the UCS Work-In: Class Alliances and the Right to Work* (London, 1986), p. 21.
14. See Keith Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society: The Experience of the British System since 1911* (London, 1979); see also Alan Booth, "Corporatism, Capitalism and Depression in Twentieth-Century Britain", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 33 (1982), pp. 200–223.
15. Middlemass, *Politics*, pp. 365–366.
16. Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good : A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London, 2005), p. 368; Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland since 1914* (Edinburgh, 1981), p. 62.
17. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 144; Foster and Woolfson, *The Politics of the UCS Work-In*, p. 33.
18. D. Newlands, "The Regional Economics of Scotland", in Devine, *Transformation of Scotland*, p. 173. The Scottish Council for Development and Industry also advocated its Oceanspan project in 1969, in which Scotland was to act as a "land bridge" between the Atlantic Ocean and continental Europe; see J. Phillips, "*Oceanspan*: Deindustrialization and Devolution in Scotland, c.1960–1974", *Scottish Historical Review*, 84, no. 217 (April 2005), pp. 63–84.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This was the industrial landscape within which the Scottish Churches' Industrial Mission operated. Yet, as we shall highlight, despite secularization and de-industrialization, industrial mission still managed to survive into the 1980s and beyond. This survival was due in part to the project's flexibility to react to changing circumstances. However, it was also the result of the tenacity of religious values and identity within Scottish public life.

THE CHURCH IN THE SCOTTISH WORKPLACE: THE 1960S

"God is not brought into the factory by the industrial chaplain. God is there all the time."[19] Debates over the appropriate methods of engagement between the Christian Church and modern industrial society had gained ground in western Europe and North America in the decades after World War II. Viewing itself as a vital part of the world church, the Kirk was well aware of these developments, with the experimental Iona Community serving as a particularly effective mechanism for the exchange of ideas and personnel across national boundaries.[20]

Initially, stimulated by successful entrepreneurial involvement in Atlantic trade in the eighteenth century, Scottish industrialization rapidly progressed to textile manufacture, followed by a strong emphasis on heavy engineering and shipbuilding. However, the argument that working-class alienation from religion was an automatic by-product of industrialization has limited applicability in Scotland.[21] The historic religiosity of the predominately Protestant Scottish working class has been well documented: by the interwar period this was still a deeply religious society, with a large number of Sunday schools, Bands of Hope, girl guides and Boys' Brigade (BB) companies – the latter had almost 36,000 members in 1939 – constituting an integral part of the social fabric.[22] This high degree of religiosity was sustained after World War II. The Sabbath was strictly observed, with pubs closed on Sundays until the late 1950s. By this time 37.6 per cent of adult Scots were members of the Church of Scotland – although, as in most parts of the UK, it was increasingly the women who made up the majority of the congregations.[23]

19. *Life and Work*, November 1964.

20. R. Morton, *The Iona Community: Personal Impressions of the Early Years* (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 101–109; S. Paradise, *Detroit Industrial Mission: A Personal Narrative* (New York, 1968).

21. For a succinct outline of this argument see Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, pp. 9–10.

22. T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700–2000* (London, 2000), p. 387.

23. Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, pp. 156–161; John Highet, *The Scottish Churches: A Review of their State Four Hundred Years after the Reformation* (London, 1960), p. 59. Membership in 1958 stood at 1,315,466 – 63.5 per cent of those claiming formal church affiliation.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The roots of industrial outreach in Scotland can be located in World War II, when the Church of Scotland identified the dislocation of wartime industry – which placed many people beyond the normal catchment areas of the Kirk – as a cause for concern.[24] Consequently, several part-time industrial chaplains were placed in industrial locations beyond the reach of parish ministers. However, although intended as an exercise in wartime expediency, the scheme continued into the postwar period, and by the early 1950s over 300 part-time industrial chaplains were operating throughout Scottish industry. In 1962 the Church of Scotland's Home Board reflected on the modest success which had been achieved up to that point, and acknowledged that a stage had been reached when "few dramatic developments can be expected".[25] However, although the excitement of the pioneering days of industrial outreach seemed to be over, this was replaced by a new determination to consolidate the crucial but still precarious toe-hold which the church had gained in the world of work. Consequently, what up until now had been a moderately successful informal workplace visitation scheme became a well orchestrated campaign. Very quickly industrial mission – now the accepted term for the industrial chaplains' project – became a distinctive and important aspect of Scottish religious outreach.

Several factors had coalesced to re-energize the movement. Firstly, from the 1950s there had been a gradual change in the background of new applicants to the ministry, with a drop in the number of ministers coming from rural Highland backgrounds, and a concomitant rise in men from the Lowlands and from urban areas.[26] There was also an increase in the number of "late entrants" to the ministry, and many of these individuals brought with them valuable secular work experience as well as a background in military service.[27] This brought to the ministry a cohort of younger, frequently politicized, ministers who could more easily identify with the roughness of the male-dominated industrial landscape. The second factor was the influence which the Sheffield Industrial Mission increasingly exercised on the Iona Community by the late 1950s – itself the initial seedbed of industrial chaplains in Scotland. The founder of the Sheffield initiative, E.R. Wickham, published his book *Church and People in an Industrial City* in 1957, portraying a situation in which the church had lost touch with modern industrial society because it had failed to

24. For a full account of the early development of the Scottish churches' industrial outreach initiative, see E. McFarland and R. Johnston, "Faith in the Factory: The Church of Scotland's Industrial Mission, 1942–1958", *Historical Research*, available at http: www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/122246802/abstract; last accessed 13 December 2009.

25. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1962), p. 240.

26. Madeline Maxwell-Arnot, "Social Change and the Church of Scotland", in D. Martin (ed.), A *Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* (London, 1968), pp. 92–103, 96.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 1. The Revd Cameron Wallace in his "working clothes" at the Port Glasgow shipyards. He was the first full-time industrial chaplain to the Clyde shipyards.
Photograph: Scotsman Publications. Used with permission.

sever its rural roots. T. Ralph Morton – deputy leader of the Iona Community – reviewed the book and fully endorsed Wickam's appeal that the church had to initiate a "radical overhaul" of the way it presented itself.[28] For industrial mission in Scotland the "radical overhaul" took the form of a much more tightly organized outreach project.

The initial important step was the decision to appoint full-time industrial chaplains, the first of whom was the Revd Cameron Wallace in 1962.[29] The Home Board enthused about Wallace's appointment to the main shipyards of Greenock and Port Glasgow, seeing this as the church capitalizing on an opportunity to "display the nature of Christian living throughout the whole range of industry".[30] The plan was for full-time chaplains such as Wallace to operate in tandem with the established part-time chaplain system. Their role was to combine site visits with education, and the dissemination of knowledge gained about the world of work back

28. Review of E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City*, by T. Ralph Morton, *Coracle* (March 1958), p. 17.
29. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1962), p. 240.
30. *Life and Work*, December 1961, p. 295.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

out to the wider church.[31] Wallace's designated duties are worth quoting in full, as it is one of the few times that the "job specifications" of an industrial chaplain were articulated. He was expected:

(1) To act as a catalyst in a crisis situation where much is inimical to the Gospel and many are apathetic to the organized Church.
(2) To fulfil his ministry in and to an industrial community, by seeking out Christians and alongside them discovering the full meaning of Christian obedience and responsibility in working life [...].
(3) To develop relationships with trade unions, management, youth employment committees, apprentice schools, assistance boards, schools, men's groups, Kirk sessions, congregations, ministers, and priests.[32]

Referring to the Scottish workplace as a "crisis situation" illustrates how the Church perceived the male-dominated industrial landscape as a black hole in its sphere of influence. Wallace's own thoughts on his appointment also indicate how the workplace was still seen as a dangerous place of moral bankruptcy: "It takes a brave soul to even think of Christian values and standards in a situation where there are no absolute standards of moral integrity."[33] The Church and Industry Committee fully realized that the most challenging task facing Wallace and his team of three part-time chaplains was to cultivate the level of trust necessary to allow the Church to be accepted as a useful but neutral player by the men and management.[34] It was assumed that this "relationship in depth", which the Church was trying to foster between itself and industry, would take some time to come about.[35] However, this trepidation proved to be unfounded. The general acceptance of the place of religion in Scottish society in the early 1960s ensured ministers were easily accepted in the workplace. Moreover, a widespread experience of wartime service or National Service meant many workers simply equated workplace minister with army padres – and, indeed many industrial chaplains were referred to as "the padre" for some time to come. This factor undoubtedly contributed to their acceptance by both sides of the sectarian divide.[36]

A further example of the Kirk's new commitment to industrial outreach was the organizational improvements and more sharply focused theological direction introduced by the Revd George Wilkie, who took over as Industrial Organizer in late 1962. Wilkie had been a minister since 1945 and had served at the Iona Community, where he had been inspired by the

31. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1965), pp. 201–202.
32. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1964), p. 262.
33. *Life and Work*, December 1961, p. 295.
34. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1964), p. 262.
35. *Life and Work*, December, 1961, p. 296.
36. Interview with Mr David Cooper.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

incarnation philosophy of its founder, George MacLeod. For Wilkie the task of industrial mission was nothing less that to bring all of industrial life "to the touchstone of Jesus Christ".[37] Like other members of the Iona Community he was profoundly influenced by Wickham's approach to industrial mission in Sheffield, and enthusiastic about Wickham's ideas regarding the place of the Church in industrial society. Wilkie believed that the Church of Scotland parish system, once the basis of the Christian community, was failing to serve modern industrial society. With the church concentrating on the domestic and the local, the "unwholesome divisiveness" which working men had to experience in industry was not being addressed. A related problem, though, was that the Gospel was irrelevant to industrial life. One part-time chaplain expressed this eloquently in *Life and Work*:

> My difficulty is the obvious difficulty of taking the Gospel, set as it is in a rural, agricultural metaphor, and applying it in a situation which is as far removed from the sylvan bliss of the rolling hills as a situation could be [...]. The truth, however unpalatable, is that the only Christian doctrine of work we have is the medieval one. And that it is as much use as the medieval doctrine about witches [...].[38]

As well as steering the course of industrial mission firmly along the path of Christian organiscism, Wilkie initiated a "selected-areas" policy, identifying six industrial concentrations as targets for future mission activity.[39] Along with the Clyde shipyards, these were the Lanarkshire steel industry, jute and flax production in Dundee, engineering in Edinburgh, car and truck manufacturing in Linwood and Bathgate, and the hosiery industry around Hawick. The mix of the old and the new illustrates how the Church was attempting to connect with Scottish industry in its widest sense. Although mindful that chaplaincy in other industrial activities would not be neglected, these six areas were identified as prime "growth points" from which the initiative would continue to develop – and the intention was that every industrial area of Scotland would eventually be covered by industrial mission.[40] One common denominator was that the targeted industries mostly operated on large worksites which were all suitable for chaplains' un-chaperoned visits.

The relationship between industrial mission and industrial relations was potentially problematic. In 1979 a working party was set up within the Home Board to study the role of Christians in trade unions, and this resulted in Wilkie writing a guidance pamphlet on this subject. As would be expected, his main conclusion was that compromise was the most

37. Revd George Wilkie, *Christian Thinking about Industrial Life* (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 11.
38. *Life and Work*, July 1962, p. 160.
39. Revd Donald M. Ross, *God It's Monday: Some Reflections on the History of Industrial Mission* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 8.
40. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1964), p. 264.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

important strategy.[41] Wilkie later reflected on how the Church's reputation for reconciliation meant that it was normally expected to bring special insights to areas of industrial conflict. However, he was also aware that care had to be taken that the Church did not give the impression that it had "a bag of solutions" for the resolution of conflict, or that it was out for peace at all costs. The proper course was for Christians to introduce compromise and reconciliation into any debate between conflicting groups.[42]

This belief in the power of compromise underpinned the setting up in 1966 of the Scottish Churches' Industrial Council – again initiated by Wilkie. By this time there were four full-time industrial chaplains, and they, along with representatives from employers and trade unionists, made up the industrial council. The initial employer members included the shipbuilder, Sir William Lithgow, the managing director of Colville's, Tom Craig, and James Anderson of the engineering company Anderson and Boyce. Rolls Royce Ltd, who had an extensive aero engines works at Hillington Estate in Glasgow, were also represented on the council. Amongst the trade unions involved were the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Boilermakers' Union, and the Bakers' Union.[43] The director of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry was also a member.

Although only meeting on a six-monthly basis, the Scottish Churches' Industrial Council was a unique discussion forum for both sides of the industrial relations' divide – and it is interesting that an important objective of the council was to advise the Church on its work in industry and guide its future lines of action. A point to note here is that this was the product of probably the last generation of industrial employers whose religious beliefs dovetailed with their management policies. This was certainly the case with Lithgow, who had been an early supporter of the industrial chaplains' initiative – indeed he had bankrolled the original Iona Community project. Craig, for his part, was also a devout Christian, a Church Elder, and Church Treasurer.[44] The Church fully realized, though, that such Christian hands-on employers were being replaced by faceless human resources departments and branch plant management systems. A personnel manager writing in *Life and Work* in 1960 commented on the swiftness of the change:

> A generation ago it was somewhat different. There are men here who will tell you that they were taught in their Bible classes by their then bosses. As bosses they were in many ways less enlightened than we are; rigid in their discipline

41. Revd George Wilkie, *The Role of Christians in Trade Unions: A Church of Scotland Working Party Report* (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 34.
42. Wilkie, *Christian Thinking*, p. 36.
43. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1967), p. 409.
44. *Life and Work*, March 1968, p. 10.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and in their rightness, hard task masters; but they obviously cared for the souls of their employees.[45]

The early 1960s was the beginning of what Brown categorizes as a "membership catastrophe" for the Church of Scotland.[46] Membership peaked in 1956, following a growth period from 1941.[47] However, from this point onwards decline accelerated sharply. Most worrying was the fact that the Church was losing touch fastest with the younger generation. Sunday school and Bible class attendance rates had been dropping from the late 1950s. Moreover, the rising levels of affluence, which were slowly beginning to be felt in industrial Scotland, combined with the increasing availability of commercial leisure pursuits, undermined Church-provided leisure opportunities. By now the Church was beginning to appreciate that prosperity was a potential problem. Certainly, the low-wage nature of Scottish industrial society had tended to act as a bulwark against its spread. However, from the early 1960s, rising wages within a more confrontational system of collective bargaining were bringing increased prosperity to sections of the workforce. One clerical commentator in *Life and Work* welcomed the greater comfort and enjoyment that higher earnings were giving parishioners, but urged restraint as such prosperity was not based "firmly and squarely on conscientious and intelligent work and enterprise".[48]

However, the Church did not adopt a passive approach to its challenges. For one thing, the new peripheral housing schemes were effectively being targeted as "missionary fields" for extension programmes.[49] Some of the chaplains we interviewed had worked in Church extension parishes before becoming involved with industrial mission, and one reflected on the excitement of the late 1950s: "the Church went like a bomb [...] there was a BB company of over 130 officers [and boys] and so on [...] and I thought when I went there I'd be there all my life [...] the Church extension was about 40 lunatics like me starting congregations all over Scotland".[50] At the same time *Life and Work* was trying desperately to adapt to the changing environment. With a new editor from 1965 the journal attempted to become more readable and popular in both its presentation and subject matter. A further indication of how determined the Church was to keep pace with changing society was the initiation of the Society, Religion and Technology project in 1968. This initiative was an attempt to understand and keep abreast with the "white heat" of technological change of the period, and involved

45. *Life and Work*, June 1960, p. 171.

46. Callum Brown, "Religion and Secularisation", in A. Dickson and J. Treble (eds), *People and Society in Scotland, III, 1914–1990* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 53.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Life and Work*, May 1962, p. 117.

49. Brown, "Religion and Secularisation", p. 61.

50. Interview with Revd Donald Ross.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the appointment of a scientist as its first director and the initiation of a three-year study into ecology, computer technology, communications, and biochemical technology.[51]

Importantly, despite its membership decay, even by the mid-1960s the church could still take heart from the fact that personal Christian belief was holding up in Scotland. Moreover, although frequently perceived as inconsequential by many workers, there was still little hostility in the work places to the presence of industrial chaplains. One of the main reasons for this was the strength of discursive Christianity in Scottish society at this time. A good example to illustrate this strength was a survey taken of 369 male apprentices in 1963 at a west of Scotland technical college. Only 27 of the boys had been devoid of religious education throughout their childhood, 342 had attended Sunday school, and 243 had gone to Bible class. More importantly, 288 declared that they believed in God.[52]

Access to apprentices such as these gave the Kirk an excellent opportunity to engage, or re-engage, with youth. In the year 1962 alone 12,600 apprentices entered Scotland's engineering and allied trades, and industrial mission was ideally placed to exert an influence on them.[53] In 1961 a part-time industrial chaplain, the Revd Peter Houston, drew the General Assembly's attention to the lack of preparedness of children entering the world of industry, "an area by and large cut off from the influence of the Gospel of our Lord":

> There is no emotional shock, no outrage of childhood standards of morality, no staggering challenge to whatever self-discipline they may have, when they leave school to go to work in industry […]. There is a great gap between education and the demands of a stable Scottish economy; and a great gap between our parish-based church and industry.[54]

The solution was for the church to bridge both gaps by being in the shipyards and engineering shops to influence young people during their transition from the "moral righteousness of the home environment", to the "amoral terrain of the workplace".[55] The Revd Donald Ross recalled his regular talks to the 100 or so new apprentices entering Govan Shipbuilders annually in the early 1970s: "I was very welcome at the training department […]. I could take classes of maybe 30 at a time and we talked about community matters, how they feel about this and that."[56]

The Lanarkshire steel industry got its full-time industrial chaplain in 1968. Like many of his fellow industrial chaplains, the Revd Sandy Ryrie

51. *Life and Work*, November 1968, pp. 18–19.
52. *Life and Work*, July 1964, p. 260.
53. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1962), p. 238.
54. *Life and Work*, July 1962, p. 159.
55. *Life and Work*, January 1963, p. 38.
56. Interview with Revd Donald Ross.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 2. The Revd T.B. Stewart Thomson visits the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Govan, Glasgow.
Photograph: Merlyn Severn and Francis Reiss/Picure Post/Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Used with permission.

felt that one of his main challenges was to make the Bible relevant in an industrial setting: "Sitting at my desk, again I feel how far apart these two worlds seem to be. God's dealings with Israel, the Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection, our very belief in God – what have these to do with the busy world of industry?" His views on the importance of compromise echoed Wilkie's: "Anything one can say by conversation to help some people to understand the outlook and motives of others can surely be a small gesture, or piece of service, in the name of the Gospel of reconciliation."[57] In this spirit Ryrie initiated monthly "meeting points", in which dialogue was encouraged between men and management. Shop stewards were frequently present at these meetings.

By the end of the 1960s there were full-time chaplains in Clyde shipbuilding and engineering and in Lanarkshire steelmaking, and part-time industrial chaplains operating across the whole of Scottish industry. Therefore, for many workers the minister had become an accepted figure at the workplace. However, whereas up until now the project had been preoccupied with the Church getting accepted in the world of work, the next decade was to see the movement losing ground, as the constituency which it had determinedly sought to be part of began to collapse.

57. *Life and Work*, October 1969, pp. 30–31.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

THE CHURCH IN THE SCOTTISH WORKPLACE: THE 1970S

Historians are normally cautious about dividing history into decades. However, for industrial decline in Scotland there was a clear watershed around 1971. This was vividly articulated in the Church and Industry Committee report of the following year:

> 1971 was a year of breathtaking change and agonising reappraisal on the Scottish industrial scene. It was a year of growing long-term unemployment; of the rundown of traditional industries; of the "technological shake-out"; of a major piece of legislation in industrial affairs – the Industrial Relations Act; of the discovery of North Sea oil; and of growing concern about the effects of industrial expansion in terms of pollution and the using up of scarce resources. Old familiar landmarks were rapidly disappearing, and men began to feel the insecurity of being out in the open in a threatening world.[58]

When the Church of Scotland's industrial chaplains first established a presence on the lower Clyde in the early 1950s, over 77,000 men worked in shipbuilding throughout Scotland – 42 per cent of these on Clydeside alone. However, by 1978 this number had shrunk to 41,000 – and was to plummet to 14,000 by 1991.[59] Between 1960 and 1975 an average of 10,000 production jobs were lost every year, with the main fall in coal production, iron and steel, and shipbuilding.[60] This rate doubled between 1979 and 1987, and by 1980, 61,000 manufacturing jobs had disappeared.[61]

The climate of industrial relations had also been changing since the early 1960s. Cameron Wallace in 1962 had spoken of a "Cold War" going on in the yards between men and management – clear evidence of what William Knox refers to as the "mutual loathing between both sides of industry".[62] By the mid-1970s the ownership pattern of Scottish industry was unrecognizable, with older more paternalistic forms of management which had hung on in some companies now replaced with professional human resources departments.[63] This produced an even colder climate in which compromise was more difficult to achieve. It was not just disputes between the workers and management that were causing the chill. Collective bargaining in the shipyards was riddled with demarcation disputes between trades. Both the 1965 Geddes Report on the future of shipbuilding and the Donavan Report of 1968 into industrial relations,

58. *Report of the Home Board* (1972), p. 352.
59. Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 255.
60. T. Dickson (ed.), *Scottish Capitalism: Class, State and Nation from before the Union to the Present* (London, 1980), p. 294.
61. Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 254.
62. *Life and Work,* May 1963, p. 134; Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 289.
63. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 151.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

criticized demarcation restrictions in shipbuilding.[64] Consequently, when government corporatist policies intensified in the late 1960s, this already volatile system of industrial relations became politicized.[65]

The Kirk's democratic and inclusive governance structures, its emphasis on lay empowerment and its tolerance of a variety of theological positions – including those who would term themselves conservative and liberal in their doctrines – made it particularly conducive to the growing strength of corporatist ideas and initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s. George Wilkie wrote in *Life and Work* in 1977 how it had only been through "corporate efforts that the true liberty and dignity of men have been upheld".[66] The Church's involvement in the Fairfield's experiment in 1966 was a precursor of its support for future corporatist initiatives. This new enterprise put into play a consensual partnership style of industrial relations, and local Church of Scotland ministers and Roman Catholic priests contributed to discussions with management and trade unionists.[67] The Kirk's Home Board was very enthusiastic about the Kirk's emersion in this exercise.[68]

The Fairfield's experiment was the harbinger of more intense change in industrial relations in industrial Scotland. Increasingly, government-led rationalization aimed at creating larger-scale industrial units, began to have an effect. The Geddes Report criticized employer short-termism and a general inability to improve industrial relations – including the serious problem of demarcation disputes – and suggested that shipbuilding be rationalized into larger more cost-effective groups. Following these recommendations, the structure of Clyde shipbuilding was transformed. In 1967 the firms of Scotts and Lithgows merged on the lower reaches of the river to constitute one grouping; with the upriver yards amalgamating the following year to form Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS).

1974 was even more traumatic for the Scottish economy with the introduction of the three day week intensifying the hardship in the industrial areas. From this point on the church's involvement with industry and industrial society became even more intense. The church now identified this as a crisis period for the economy and for itself. Membership continued to slide, and especially so amongst the young. Attempts by the church to stem the flow were, in retrospect, out of step with the pace of social change – a

64. Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 283; See also Bo Strath, "Redundancy and Solidarity: Tripartite Politics and Contraction of the West European Shipbuilding Industry", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 10 (1986), pp. 147–163, 156.

65. Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 292.

66. *Life and Work*, November 1977, p. 27.

67. J. McGill, *Crisis on the Clyde: The Story of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders* (London, 1973), pp. 14–15.

68. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1962), pp. 242–244; Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1967), pp. 408–409.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

good example being the introduction of a Sunday afternoon of "Kirk a Go-go" at a church in Cumbernauld in the late 1960s.[69] A parish minister writing in *Life and Work* in 1975 clearly sensed the changing attitudes:

> The general outlook of youth today towards the Church is one of indifference, more than that of unbelief. Our services are dull and boring and only for the very young and for the older generation. *They*, are neither children nor elderly and they are left out, with little to attract, challenge, appeal or even demand of them: so they just stop coming [...] and that is that![70]

However, industrial chaplains were shielded from the forces of secularization to which the parish ministers were being more and more subjected. Indeed, their constituency was to disappear for economic rather than cultural reasons. They did, though, fully appreciate the difficulties which conventional Sunday worship faced in being viewed as out of touch. The Revd Andrew Wylie, a chaplain in the shipyards and then to the offshore oil industry, gave a critical appraisal of this: "It was like being in a Victorian railway compartment [...]. The rigidity of the seating, the antiquity of the music, the incomprehensibility of the preacher. I mean, why go?"[71] The Revd John Potter also commented on the way parish ministers were perceived:

> Whilst people may in Scotland have this regard for the Church of Scotland, ministers were dim and distant characters. Not well known, not known as friends. You might bump into them on formal occasions, sadly funerals you see or weddings, but seldom would you meet a minister with his feet up, with time on his side and time for you, and I think that's sad, but in industrial mission we did have that luxury.[72]

As Bell found in her study of industrial mission in England, there was sometimes conflict between the industrial chaplains and the ministers within whose parishes the industrial sites were located.[73] The Revd Cameron Wallace, for example, fell foul of parish minsters by performing baptism and funeral ceremonies for shipyard workers. One minister was so disgruntled that he opposed Wallace's replacement in 1974.[74] However, workers, managers, and trade unionists alike all pledged their support for the continuation of full-time chaplaincy, and one manager expressed how important the Church's presence in the yards was: "For God's sake don't you pull out too. Everything seems to be going against us and it would create the worst possible impression if the Church pulled out at this stage."[75]

69. *Life and Work*, March 1968, p. 21.
70. *Life and Work*, July 1975, p. 28.
71. Interview with Revd Andrew Wylie.
72. Interview with Revd John Potter.
73. Bell, "Whose Side Are They On?", p. 329.
74. Interview with Revd Colin Anderson.
75. Church of Scotland, *Report of the Home Board* (1975), p. 250; also, *Life and Work*, April 1975, p. 17.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Far from pulling out, the efforts of industrial mission intensified, and much of this was due to the enthusiasm of the individuals involved. One similarity that all our respondents shared was an enthralment and fascination with the whole idea of work and for the working man in general. For example, the Revd Colin Anderson recounted his first impressions of the shipyards:

> It was a very exciting scene [...]. I use the word exciting because you know it's very powerful first of all to produce these amazing creations [...]. It's a basic human activity [...] and it's absolutely essential and you know how theologically understood the human life is. You know work's an important part of that. Work is the curse of Adam [...]. On the other hand it's part of the given of the human being in the world that we've got to struggle [...].[76]

Several respondents testified to the widespread acceptance of the place of the minister within Scottish society, and how this assisted their assimilation as part of the workplace environment. The Revd Colin Anderson, for example, replaced Cameron Wallace on the lower Clyde. He was well aware of the Church's standing: "The ministry has this place in Scottish culture [...] you're given a flying start by people, they tend to trust you [...] they do give you the benefit of the doubt [...] it's a very precious thing."[77] The Revd Hugh Ormiston had similar memories regarding his work in the coal industry of the Forth Valley:

> Well, by and large they were quite sympathetic and that surprised me. I thought there would be hostility to the Church, but it was almost as though they wanted the Church to be there [...] There was a basic goodwill there, and that was a surprisingly easy aspect of the job as it were.[78]

Crucially, though, there is also evidence that this polite goodwill was underpinned by something bigger: an ingrained respect for, and a belief in, the word of God. The Revd Ernest Scott was made aware of this when conducting launch services in the shipyards in the mid-1970s: "There would be all the noise and the hammering getting away and then I would say 'Let us worship God' or something, and there was utter absolute quietness, and [...] if you'd been in a cathedral it wouldn't have been quieter. It was quite incredible".[79] The fact that the uttering of a single phrase by a minister could initiate such an instant response from a working-class community, demonstrates the strength of religious-based protocols of personal and collective identity at this time. Clearly, the currency of religion was still being accepted and widely circulated despite a decline in formal church attendance.

76. Interview with Revd Colin Anderson.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Interview with Revd Hugh Ormiston.
79. Interview with Revd Ernest Scott.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Another important strength of industrial mission was that, although predominately drawn from the Church of Scotland, it was ecumenical in scope. The Revd John Potter, for example, was a Methodist minister affiliated to the Church of Scotland. This ability to function unrestrained by any demonstrative allegiance to a particular brand of Christianity gave industrial mission the means to deal with sectarianism in the workplace. Sectarianism frequently divided workforces along skilled and unskilled lines, with Protestant workers allegedly dominating skilled trades and Catholics blocked from taking up apprenticeships.[80] Only with the decline of heavy industry and the breakup of the old close-knit industrial localities did the strength of sectarianism begin to fade. A good example of how industrial mission dealt with sectarianism comes from the Govan shipyards in the early 1970s. The Revd Donald Ross persuaded a Roman Catholic Priest, Father Frank Kennedy, to assist him in his work in the upper Clyde – the Catholic Church had no industrial mission of its own. Kennedy subsequently concentrated on visiting shipyards on the north side of the river, while Ross focused attention on those on the south bank. However, an important part of their week involved them walking together through the yards in friendly conversation. In an area with such a strong sectarian divide, the sight of a minister and a priest engaged in friendly banter was a powerful image – and their message was underlined by the priest wearing a blue safety helmet and the minister a green one.

For many industrial chaplains the daily routine involved simply being seen by as many of the workforce as possible. The Revd Angus Turner reflected on the importance of keeping on the move in the shipyards:

> […] while you were going through the "sheep runs" you would meet people on different shifts and so on, and they get to know you and the fact that you'll be in […] and you know they would have a chat with you […]. I mean, certainly in a sheep run you had places where you could guarantee you'd get a cuppa, and if it was tipping rain you had a place you could spend half an hour just chewing the fat.[81]

However, industrial mission had to be tailored to the characteristics of different workplaces. Certainly, the idea of walking through the "sheep runs" of the shipyards could not be applied to coal mining. The common denominator, though, was that the chaplain had to win the trust of the men. The Revd Hugh Ormiston was full-time industrial chaplain to the Forth Valley from the mid 1970s. After completing a NCB training course he, along with a Roman Catholic Priest, was allowed to visit the men underground.[82]

> […] the job generally for me was to speak to as many guys as I could underground […] and of course they would have tea breaks, so you just sit there on a nice pile of

80. Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 283.
81. Interview with Revd Angus Turner.
82. Ross, *God It's Monday*, p. 85.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 3. The Revd Dr White Anderson talks to Ronald Nash, an apprentice at the North British Rubber Company's works in Edinburgh.
Photograph: Merlyn Severn and Francis Reiss/Picture Post/Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Used with permission.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> coal usually a little worn and you could chat to several guys. First there was a lot of hilarity, what's a nice guy like you doing down here? [...] but I've often got very theological discussions, much more so than ever in a Parish funnily enough from the guys underground. And that was the basis of the job, just rotating round.[83]

A manager at Ravenscraig steelworks remembered the plant's industrial chaplain in this way:

> I used to let him go round the plant and he had quite good chats, and I mean a lot of these people had problems, marital problems, they had debt problems, and they had alcohol problems. And one of the biggest scourges in Ravenscraig in the early days was money lenders.[84]

Chaplains saw part of their achievement as countering traditional male stoicism on personal issues such as these. Consequently, money advice and redundancy and alcohol counselling formed an increasingly important part of their work by the 1970s and early 1980s – this was viewed as an expression of their underlying theological concerns rather than a shift from clericalism into the secular mainstream. It has been noted how private involvement with social welfare in the UK declined as state involvement increased.[85] In Scotland, however, the Church of Scotland grew to be a major national provider of social work services and residential care for vulnerable groups.[86] Although not ostensibly established for such a "social service" purpose, industrial mission can be set within this context, with several chaplains enthusiastically taking on social welfare responsibilities.

Sometimes counselling duties resulted in initiatives that produced long-lasting results. The Revd Angus Turner, for example, set up a credit union in the shipyard to deal with the problem of loan sharks. Around the same time Donald Ross set up an industrial alcoholism unit. This initiative, which later became the Employee Counselling Service, was quickly recognized as a valuable asset by companies throughout the west of Scotland and around 40 workers a week were being referred to the unit within months of its launch.[87] Another important issue for industrial mission was that of redundancy. With around 1,000 redundancies a week occurring in the west of Scotland alone in the early 1970s, the industrial chaplains provided workers and management with a much needed

83. Interview with Revd Hugh Ormiston.
84. Interview with Mr Jim Curie.
85. For a comprehensive account of religion and social security in Britain see F. Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain* (Oxford, 2006).
86. In 1904, the Kirk had 3 men's lodging houses, a farm colony, and a women's employment office. By 1954 its social service portfolio included 21 homes for the elderly, 18 homes and hostels for men, women, and young people, as well as targeted social welfare provision for young offenders; *Life and Work*, April 1954.
87. Ross, *God It's Monday*, pp. 54–55.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

"familiar landmark" in a rapidly changing industrial landscape. *Life and Work* attempted to bring to the attention of a wider audience in the Kirk the personal and social impact of closures and was also adding its voice to the idea of "the right to work". In 1971 churchmen throughout Scotland took part in several redundancy rallies, while the Glasgow Church and Industry Committee began publishing pamphlets on redundancy.[88]

Worsening industrial relations also presented a challenge for industrial mission. In the Ravenscraig steel plant – which had a bad reputation for industrial relations – the Revd John Potter increasingly found himself acting as a mediator in disputes between management and workers. He recalled how he was able to capitalize on the influence he had with management and the respect he had from the men:

> The informal was the most important area of all, 'cos in the informal I could drift in and see the personnel manager and I could say, you know, "That was a miserable affair wasn't it? What were you doing?" And he knew me, see? And he knew me well enough to say "Get lost" [...] or "Aye it was an awful do that wasn't it?" [...]. The informal was a rich seam to tap [...] you could give a push and you could say to somebody "that should be on the agenda".[89]

To a great extent such activity reflected the Church of Scotland's broader "rediscovery" of industrial issues from the mid-1970s. An editorial in *Life and Work* in 1978 entitled "The Kirk Must Lead" reflected this new awareness:

> The issues of social peace and industrial harmony matter infinitely more than the morality of raffles and even more than the dangers of drink; and they raise questions of human rights in our society that we must face if we are to dare offer advice to other countries. The Kirk must lead.[90]

In the shipyards the Revd Ernest Scott frequently performed a similar "brokerage" role: "If I was invited into a shop stewards' meeting they might say 'what do you think, Ernie', or something you see, and I would say 'well, I know I'm not in the situation but what I feel is this', and they would listen."[91] This is further evidence that industrial chaplains in the Scottish workplace were neither mistrusted by management nor viewed simplistically by workers as tools of management. Indeed, the idea of being there for the management as well as the men was important to industrial mission. The Revd Angus Turner, for example, firmly believed that the bosses required as much attention as the workers: "I didn't feel uncomfortable about knocking on the doors of the Managing Director or you know, of the Finance Manager or whatever, because he was just a guy

88. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
89. Interview with Revd John Potter.
90. *Life and Work*, January 1978, p. 201.
91. Interview with Revd Ernest Scott.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

who was in there in a big office and quite lonely perhaps, and in fact they'd like to see you."[92]

From the mid-1970s several industrial chaplains became drawn into the politics of industrial rationalization. Ironically, after establishing a presence in the workplace, industrial mission increasingly had to deal with the painful disappearance of its industrial congregation. For most chaplains the prospect of industrial closures encouraged a growing social awareness, while some were actively politicized and enthusiastically adopted new "secular" leadership roles. For their part, trade-union campaigners frequently made use of individual chaplains in their public campaigns, not only as conduits to key opinion formers in Scotland and the UK government, but also as representatives of the wider "community" who could emphasize the "humanitarian" impact of closures – characterized by one chaplain as "representing Christendom". George Wilkie described the declining industrial situation in 1975 as being "confused, turbulent and threatening", and argued that the Kirk had to be fully engaged and play a role in ensuring that those experiencing difficult situations could "get it right".[93] One shipyard shop steward remembered how he and the Revd Colin Anderson were radicalized by the events of the period:

> [...] he and I were both politicized by the decline that we faced in shipbuilding by the Thatcher government at that time, who were cutting jobs and we both realized the impact of that [...] He took a side. I think that's why [...] he was so welcome. He was forced off that middle line and shared our concerns about our jobs, our families and our communities.[94]

In a similar way the Revd Hugh Ormiston became actively involved in campaigns to stave off pit closures, although he was fully aware that not everyone in the Church would have appreciated his involvement:

> I was several times in London with them on these deputations. It allowed them to say that they had the support of the Church, capital C you see. So I represented Christendom in a sense at these meetings [...]. A number of people in the Church of Scotland didn't like that. Actually, in reformed Christianity we are very nervous about anyone representing Christendom like that [...] only the Pope really does that kind of job in the world of Catholicism.

With the Scottish steel industry also disappearing, the Revd John Potter found himself compelled to join the fight against closures:

> The Church you see, on occasions appeared to be on the touchlines and it's easy to criticize; we're not supposed to be there, we're supposed to be on the park of

92. Interview with Revd Angus Turner.
93. *Life and Work*, April 1975, p. 17.
94. Interview with Duncan McNeil.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

life and when you go on the park, you're into the hard reality [...] difficult decisions made by businesses and individuals and managers and unions. It's tough, hard environments for them, but you're better there, and that's where we should be, not pontificating from the sidelines [...]. Industrial mission gave us an opportunity to be in and of it, not apart from it.

However, although communities of work and communities of faith appeared endangered by similar forces, the relationship between de-industrialization and secularization was complex. These processes did not simply provide "mutual reinforcement" – indeed in the experience of most of our respondents the former threat almost eclipsed their own internal challenges. What is clear is that by the 1970s the tide was running against industrial chaplains in heavy industry. Notwithstanding the enhanced profile of some as workplace counsellors or public figures in the struggle against de-industrialization, an important underlying factor was that discursive Christianity – according to Brown a vital precondition for secularization – was rapidly losing its potency.[95] Some of the chaplains recalled how quickly the once widespread general knowledge of religion evaporated:

When I started in the Ministry [...]. There was at least some familiarization, familiarity with the language you were using [...]. I mean a Minister in the '50s and '60s could allude to some biblical character and you could assume that the people in front of him knew who that was. Now I'm not so sure that a Minister can even do that on a Sunday morning.[96]

Moreover, although still accepted in many worksites as part of the landscape, as the forces of secularization began to grow, the industrial chaplains increasingly had to deal with a less respectful younger generation of workers. This was articulated by a shipyard shop steward:

After the '70s [...] we were starting to see the breakdown of an old culture, and younger workers [...] well we used to call it "wacky baccy". There were guys on pot and you started to see more people taking too much to drink [at work]. The older generation wouldn't have done any of these things. They were a more disciplined type of people, yeah [...]. The older workers had a respect for the chaplain, although they didn't possibly concur with the chaplain's view [...]. But younger workers I felt were beginning to move away from that [...]. I can never remember anyone being overtly rude to a chaplain [...] but nevertheless there was a more dismissive attitude.[97]

And another shipyard shop steward endorsed this: "Younger people, younger apprentices [...] it's a feral community, a group of apprentices. And a group of young men in that environment probably didn't have

95. Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, p. 175.
96. Interview with Revd Ronnie Johnstone.
97. Interview with Mr David Cooper.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

much time for considering the role of an industrial chaplain or shop stewards or whatever."[98]

CONCLUSION

By the end of the 1970s the number of Church of Scotland communicants had fallen to below one million.[99] However, although historians are in general agreement that church membership decline did not mirror a drop-off in personal religious belief, there are other aspects of secularization that need to be noted. Firstly, there is an assumption that the conservativeness and passivity of institutional religion helped precipitate its decay. Our study suggests that such an argument requires re-evaluation. The Church of Scotland was kept fully informed of the nature of the problem by numerous committees, commissioned studies and inquiries, and frequently made valiant attempts to keep abreast of a rapidly changing society – a prime example here being the Society Religion and Technology Project. The sheer extent of Church extension activity is another marginalized aspect of the Church's efforts to respond to demographic change, and this was largely successful up to the late 1950s.

However, by far the most neglected dimension of the Kirk's outreach efforts was its industrial mission. Although initially established as a wartime measure, in the 1950s this became an attempt to claim a stake in the new postwar order by taking the Church into the workplace. Unlike in Northcott's study of industrial mission in the north east of England, workplace chaplains in Scotland did not become closely identified with management, nor was their pastoral role compromised by involvement in organizational matters.[100] The Church's increasingly active engagement in industrial issues from the 1960s was important in its retention of moral authority.

Much of this rested on the historic mapping of national and religious identity which had been characteristic of the Scottish experience. Despite membership losses, the Kirk managed to retain a symbolic significance in public life, witnessed in the continuing ability of Presbyterian values to shape collectivist and corporatist perspectives. The role of the Kirk in opposing industrial closures and mass unemployment during the 1970s and early 1980s, spearheaded by its industrial outreach arm, actively served to further strengthen this public position. At another level the importance of industrial chaplains as workplace counsellors has also gone unrecorded. At one level, for Christians and non-Christians alike, the sight of a minister in a hostile working environment was reassuring in itself; at another level, having access to a professional with whom a range

98. Interview with Duncan McNeil.
99. Brown, *Religion and Society*, p. 25.
100. Northcott, *The Church and Secularization*, p. 71.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of personal issues could be discussed was an important service, and remarkably ahead of its time in the 1960s and early 1970s.

By the 1970s the industrial landscape in which the Kirk had hoped to play an important role was disintegrating in the face of closures, inflation, stop-go policies, industrial disputes, and job creation schemes. This formed the backdrop to economic and religious decline. De-industrialization in Scotland resulted in a loss of identity for the industrial mission in its initial form – and it is interesting that Bell came to similar conclusions in her study of industrial chaplains in England.[101] Although moving in to the oil industry in the 1980s, devoid of easy access to men in large worksites and a roving commission to allow chaplains to "loiter with intent", industrial mission lost the wide impact factor of the approachable minister in hard hat which heavy industry had accommodated.

The importance of declining collective identities as a variable in shaping the fate of institutional and discursive Christianity is borne out by evidence from our Scottish study. The tenaciousness of these during the 1960s and 1970s, contributed to a slower and more uneven end for "Christendom" here. Testimony on workplace experiences revealed, for example, the strength of other forms of collective identity rooted in large industrial workplace units. These included sectional identities, but also reflected membership of broader occupational communities in shipbuilding, steel-making, and mining. The period even witnessed the growth of new collective workplace identities, such as the "brotherhood" of offshore workers.

Another crucial factor related to this was the church's ability to retain a measure of public influence. This was complemented by continuing moral authority and reserves of "passive goodwill" in individual workplaces on which chaplains could draw from the 1960s to the early 1980s. This suggests the persistence of an informal Christian discourse in workplace culture which found expression in a continuing respect for the role of "the collar", not least in times of personal and collective crisis. Indeed, the very presence of chaplains in industrial settings may have had an active contribution to blunting the complete erosion of personal religious identities, at least among older workers. As one trade-union respondent expressed it, the chaplain, "kept people near the fold, if not in it", when their personal experience of religious practice had otherwise faded. Here the efforts of industrial mission in projecting "trust", "independence", and "openness" as its key values were important, coupled with a more flexible attitude towards issues of personal behaviour in contrast to the censoriousness which had previously coloured industrial chaplaincy and the ministry in general.

Ultimately, however, all this proved to be a temporary reprieve from the decentring of religion from Scottish life. Our research underlines the

101. Bell, "Whose Side Are They On?", p. 332.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press

impact of material prosperity and the associated rise of individual choice, particularly among the young, as solvents of religious adherence. As in the case of slowly fading collective identities, this process was partial and uneven. Traditionally a low-wage society in the UK context, even in the postwar boom, the expansion of leisure opportunities may initially have affected the Church in Scotland less than in the affluent south. Yet, the chaplains' testimony is particularly vivid on how the failure of youth socialization had already become increasingly apparent in the later 1970s, evident in the difficulties of communication they experienced with "feral apprentices". In retrospect, they viewed this as early intimation of the broader and more fundamental gap "in language and understanding" which would develop as a major barrier facing the Church in contemporary Scotland. For, while the onset of mass unemployment had initially cast the Church as a point of continuity in a period of sweeping economic and social change, de-industrialization would eventually undermine the familiar neighbourhoods, peer groups, and family networks from which it had traditionally drawn its support.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990605 Published online by Cambridge University Press