



VISSER 't HOOFT
His assistant has no illusions

people patronising it! Well, if Christianity is going to be chucked overboard—and the fact is that New Zealand seems in effect to be abandoning it—we must ask whether there is anything to put in its place; and whether the religion of science and materialism which we are more and more following will bring a real love of humanity as such, a sense of world brotherhood, and that quietness of spirit which is to be found along with Christianity.”

“You certainly seem to find our spiritual climate depressing. Do you see much chance of an improvement?”

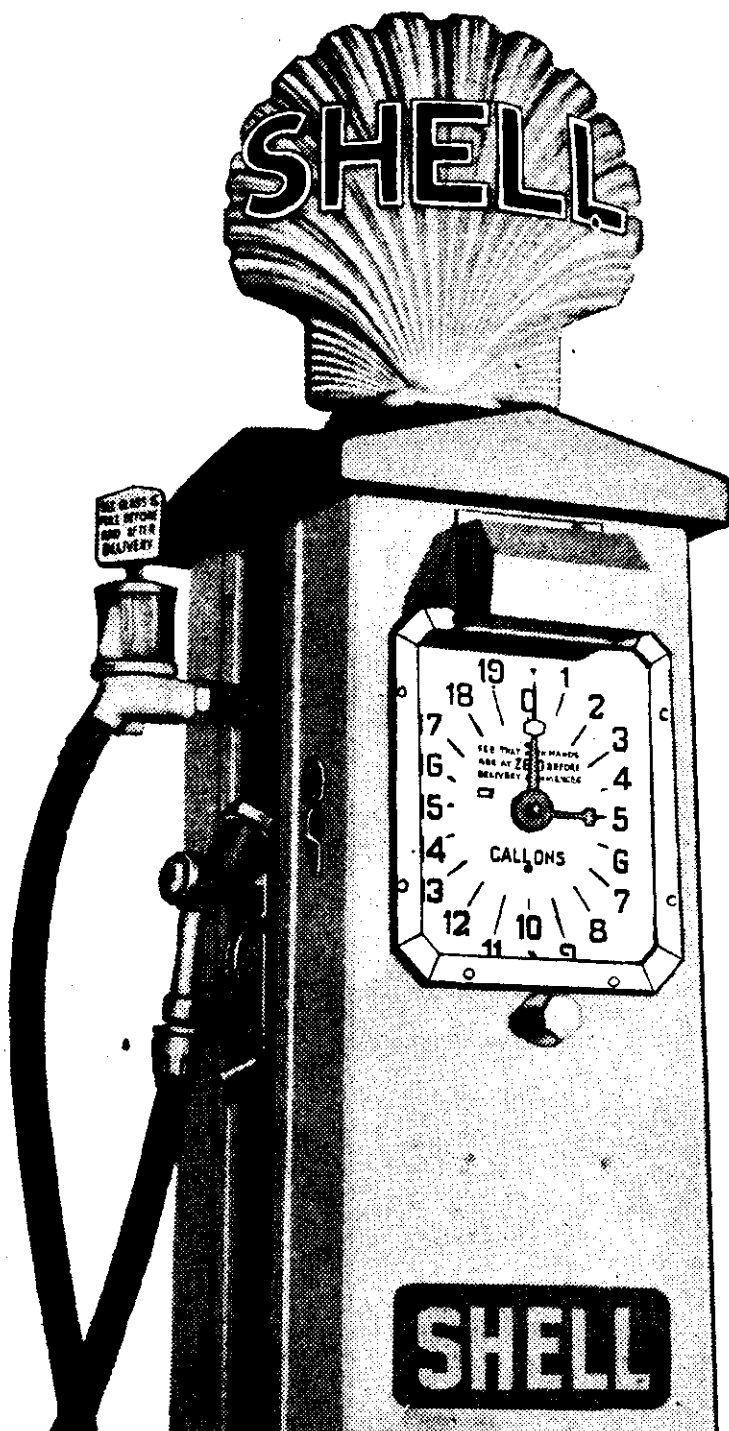
“Well, it is no use becoming pessimistic about the situation. The Churches must, I think, get together in order to gather together and preserve the valuable things which do remain. And this is probably a good point at which to say something about the World Council of Churches.

Two Parallel Movements

This council, Mr. Newell explained, was still only in process of formation. In fact, whenever it officially mentioned itself by name it put those words, “in process of formation,” in parentheses after the title. The whole idea of the Churches’ working together arose out of two parallel movements. One had been started by Archbishop Söderblom of Sweden, who had seen clearly that the Churches were living in a world apart and who had therefore taken steps which resulted in the formation of the Universal Christian Council of Life and Work, the purpose of this body being to examine the relationship of the Christian ethic to the life and work of the modern world and to seek its application to the problems of the day. Then, under the leadership of Bishop Brent of America, the Faith and Order Movement developed, this being concerned more with the internal problem of unity among the Churches and an examination of their common ground. Bishop Brent was followed by Archbishop Temple; but the latter had been interested in both these aspects of the ecumenical movement and thanks largely to his inspiration the World Council of Churches, combining them, was set up.

In 1938 the machinery of the World Council of Churches started moving in Geneva, under Archbishop Temple and Dr. Visser 't Hooft, the present general secretary (the man with whom Mr.

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