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## The World and the Church

(continued from previous page)

Newell will now be directly associated, in his position as assistant secretary). The plan had been to hold a big conference of the Churches in 1942 to ratify and formally establish the Council, but the war had intervened.

"So the Council—still 'in process of formation'—had to carry on during the war under great difficulties," continued Mr. Newell. "Yet in spite of these difficulties, it has done and is doing remarkable work, particularly in dealing with displaced persons and the enormous task of reconstructing the devastated churches of Europe. It is, in fact, probably the

biggest thing of its kind since the days of the Crusades, this present getting together of Christian people all over the world, regardless of denominational affiliations, to assist in reconstruction. There is a real feeling of solidarity and corporative endeavour, and huge sums of money are being given without consideration of which particular denomination may be getting the benefit of any particular contribution.

"And now at last the time has come for this tentative organisation of the World Council to be given formal shape. That step will be taken at a world conference planned for August, 1948, in Amsterdam. This will be the first General Assembly of the Council, and my particular job will be to help organise it—it is under way already, of course.

"To administer the World Council of Churches, a Christian Civil Service is assembling in Geneva. The present Archbishop of Canterbury has taken the late Archbishop Temple's place as one of the vice-chairman, and there are four others—French, American, Greek Orthodox, and Scandinavian. A Scotsman, Dr. Cockburn, is head of the Department of Reconstruction; a Scandinavian, Dr. Ehrenstrom, is head of the Study Department; and an Englishman, Francis House, is head of the Youth Department. There are branches of the Council, with secretaries, in London and New York. Altogether there are something like 75 members of a staff which, as you can see, is truly international.

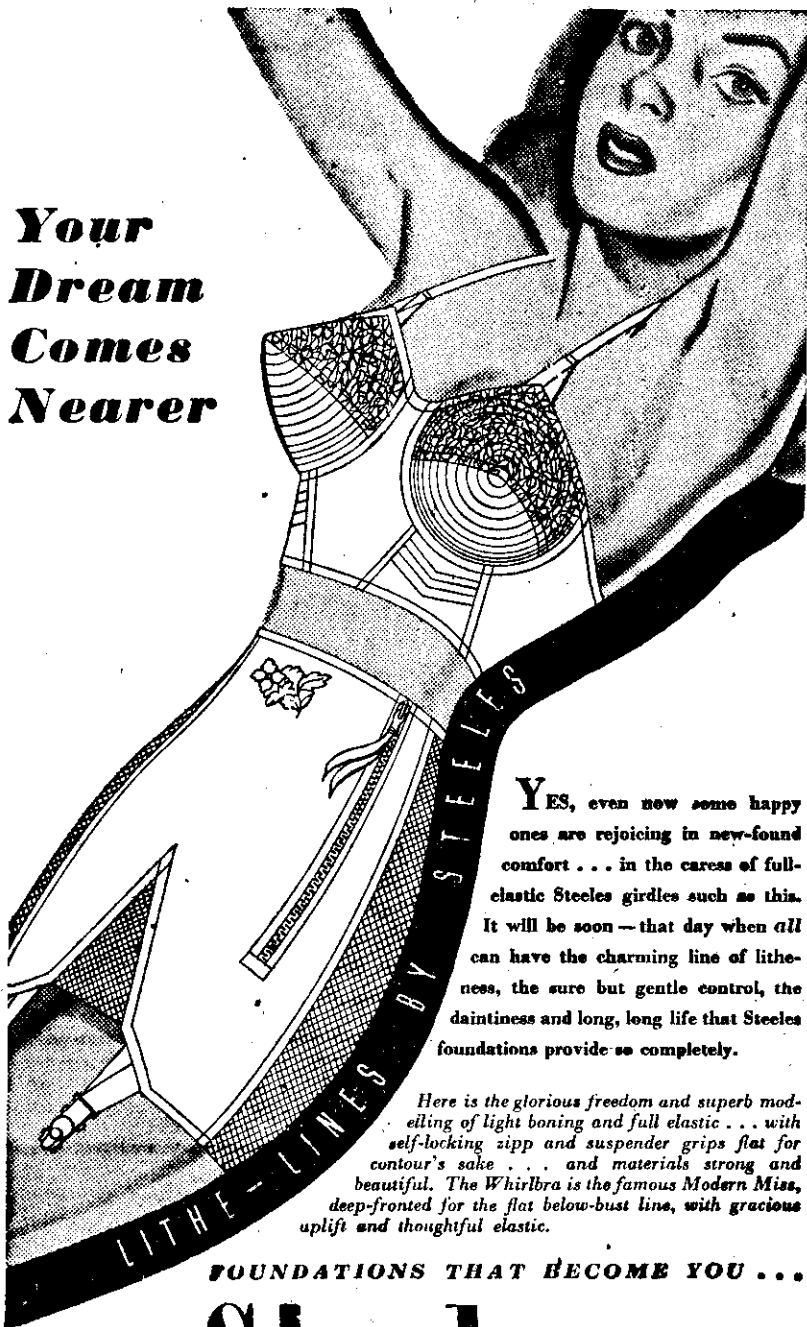
"All denominations of the Christian Church except the Roman Catholic are united in the World Council. It is interesting to notice the important part being played by the Greek Orthodox Church. My own feeling is that this Church may act as a bridge and perhaps do a great deal towards reconciling, some day, the two great sections of the Christian world. For the Greek Orthodox Church has a strong sense of solidarity with tradition but at the same time it is not bound by the dead past; it is not too tied up by organisation."

### Still a Long Way to Go

"So you are really not so pessimistic after all?" we asked.

"Well, the ecumenical movement has a long way to go yet. The aim of the World Council is to bring the Christian Churches together, but it is a matter of getting together with a purpose, not just getting together. The Church cannot hope to speak to the world and be listened to unless it has itself a clear conception of its own faith, and unless it can demonstrate that that faith has relevance to the needs of the day. Perhaps our biggest problem in New Zealand, as elsewhere, is the great gap that lies between the select and comparatively small section of Christians who are aware of the ecumenical movement and seized with its significance, and the large—and in their way no doubt equally good and valuable—section who find satisfaction in the Church as it is and are not aware of the need for change and development. The World Council is not by any means taking itself too seriously. It is an instrument rather than an end in itself. It is not in the least intended to be a kind of super-Church, but rather the hand-maiden of the Church as it is, working for it and within it, and not trying either to sidestep or control it."

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