

# POROPOROAKI

## Harry Dansey

Harry Dansey died on 6 November 1979 in the coronary care unit of Auckland Hospital. He was fifty-nine. He had been ill for some time, and had retired less than three weeks before. He is much grieved, not only by his family, not only by his people of Ngati Tuwharetoa and Te Arawa, but by all of us. In a busy career which ranged from war service with the Maori Battalion to his post as Race Relations Conciliator and a Human Rights Commissioner, he was also a distinguished journalist, author, playwright and illustrator, amongst many other activities and achievements. His wisdom, humility and good humour made him countless friends in every sphere. Two of those friends pay tribute to him here.



NEW ZEALAND HERALD

Jesus said, "Where your wealth is there will your heart be also." There is no doubt where Harry Dansey found his riches or where his heart was. Listen to the words which Te Whiti spoke in Harry Dansey's play, *Te Raukura*:

E Wi, my brother, my friend, I promise you no miracles as Te Ua promised you miracles. All I can do is to declare to you and to all men the love of God for all his children. Behold, I declare again to you the word of God as the angels did, as I have shown you in our sign of the raukura.

If they are Te Whiti's words they are also Harry's words. As a journalist, artist, poet, playwright, soldier, or one who simply loved his fellow beings he listened, he wrote about us and showed us more of ourselves. Harry did simple things simply, he worked quietly and he gained our respect. We shall miss that deep resonant voice which seemed so perceptive and yet so understanding.

And then in these last few years his task as Race Relations Conciliator called for all the patience, sensitivity and firmness he could summon up. He had an ideal of New Zealand as a country which belongs equally to all of its citizens. He had the sense to know that what we are faced with is much less than the ideal. He had the courage to work for something much better than what we have got.

Our unity is a precious and fragile possession. It is always at risk. The forces which would either build it up or break it down are always present. Unity means being one with God; our lives are centred in a search for God; our calling is to know God and to be one with Him. Unity means being one with ourselves. It has been said that if we wish to know God we must first know ourselves. By knowing who we are we can appreciate what it is that we have to offer. Unity means being one with each other. No one can be whole without other people. We learn that true fulfilment is found in sacrifice, in giving ourselves away. Unity means being one with those in need. True Christian growth always involves a growth in compassion especially in reaching out to the forsaken and the needy. And lastly unity means being one with all the nations. To live together in peace takes sacrifice and love. The reward is to be like Jesus — the man who came to be one with all the nations of the earth.

Parting is never easy. We have our sorrow because Harry, who gave so much, had much more to give. We thank God wholeheartedly for what Harry has done to enrich us all.

Lastly, we can resolve to commemorate Harry's death by sharing his hopes for a charitable, realistic and compassionate society where we share what we have in common and yet rejoice at those distinctive things which God has given us.

THE RT REV PAUL REEVES  
BISHOP OF AUCKLAND  
(From his address at the Memorial Service,  
Holy Sepulchre Church, Auckland)