

## SEPARATION

The most consistent complaint we hear in the country against bicultural partnership is the fear that it might create further separation and division between Maori and Pakeha.

The fear is expressed more often by Pakeha than Maori, more often in areas where historically contact and shared community between the two groups has not been strong and confident, and more often where the social role of Maori people in Pakeha society is either invisible or tightly defined and controlled.

As a committee charged with developing understanding of bicultural partnership, we believe this accusation of separatism begs several questions.

1. It ignores the overwhelmingly monocultural nature of the ~~Institutions~~ that has required Maori people to belong on Pakeha terms, forcing them to "separate" themselves from their own culture.
2. It forgets the bicultural history of \_\_\_\_\_ N.Z.
3. It avoids the sociological reality that any cultural group needs space and freedom, socially, spiritually, economically, to reclaim and develop the music of its own identity and voice which can't emerge if the dominant group insists on calling the tune.
4. It avoids the lesson from communication theory that says the messages are not received and accepted unless there is a relationship of mutual trust and respect between sender and receiver. Without that relationship and the sharing of power and mana it requires, complaints by the more to the less powerful group will go unheard or easily misheard.
5. It overlooks the commitments already made by \_\_\_\_\_

What the fear of separation does address is the fact that we can't be sure where bicultural partnership will lead us. All we know is that our present monocultural assumptions create anger, alienation and pain, that the Maori is asking for space and trust and that the experience of Pakehas who respond positively to the bicultural challenge is one of greater understanding and deeper community between Pakeha and Maori. That has been our discovery as a committee and we wish to offer it as our testimony.