

Tihei Mauri Ora!

People who understand

Te Ati-awa o runga o te rangi

Te Ati-Awa descended from the sky

(Tamarau-te-heketanga-a-rangi, the ancestor of Ati-Awa, first saw the attractive, uncovered Rongoueroa, bathing her child in a stream. Tamarau approached her, but Rongo did not see him at first until she noticed his reflection in the water. She looked around to enquire only for the bold Tamarau to move forward and embrace her. Afterwards, Tamarau suggested that should she give birth to a son, she was to name him "Te Awa-nui-a-Rangi", after that stream at which he had landed after his descent from heaven. Hence the origin of the saying "Te Ati-Awa descended from the sky or heaven" – or Te Atiawa, the sons and daughters of Heaven)



Sir Paul Reeves ONZ, Anglican Archbishop and New Zealand's first Māori Governor-General, aimed to bring people together, to listen to people at the edges and to speak out on social issues, where appropriate. Never satisfied with the status quo or shying away from controversy, the great leader, statesman and role-model was of the view that 'society should be driven not by economists but by people who understand pluralistic, multicultural society'.

Valuing diversity is a critical competency for leadership in today's society. It's more than tolerating differences, it's about recognizing the benefits of those differences, building trusting and sustainable relationships, and acknowledging others' valuable contributions to society. Sir Paul understood that well and with his keen sense of social justice and goodwill to all men and women, worked assiduously towards that end in all his varied endeavours. That, and being an exemplar for church, Māori, education and community, was his lasting legacy for us all to emulate, so that the futures of our tamariki and mokopuna are assured. Kia pai tō wiki!



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