



Carrying is Caring

Kahu Kalani Wong, KS Maui

E hali kekahi o 'oukou i nā mea
kaumaha a kekahi, pēlā 'oukou e
ho'okō ai i ke kānāwai o Kristo.-
Galatia 6:2

Carry one another's heavy loads. If you
do, you will fulfill the law of Christ.-
Galatians 6:2

In Kalaupapa, there are two categories of people- patients and kōkua. Patients are those who were afflicted with Hansen's Disease. Kōkua were everyone else who were there to kāko'o the patients. When the first "colonists" arrived on January 6, 1866, the kōkua were those who called the peninsula home. These loving people knew the new arrivals would need assistance and opened their hearts to them. Later, relatives and friends were allowed to accompany those who were exiled to the settlement to serve as kōkua and were expected to live with and care for them, and to provide social, emotional support.

For five days each year, a group of haumāna and kumu are honored to be considered as kōkua to those who remained in this bucolic community. And while we thought we would be the ones providing the care, it was actually the patients who did the caring, allowing us to heal- heal from the overwhelming pull of a world that draws us away from heartfelt pilina and towards a self-indulgent attitude. The gift they gave us by opening their hearts to us, allowed us to learn to put others first, to see how we can be a part of the 'ohana they had formed over the years.

How do we do that today? We do it by following Iesū's commandment that he passed on to his disciples at his final meal with them, "This is my commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another." Iesū demonstrated his deep love for us by dying on the cross so that we might have life eternal. We need to learn to die to self and open our eyes to see the real person that is hidden within those before us. This opens doors and hearts so we may carry their burdens.

Let us open our eyes to see beyond the outer shell that would limit our willingness to kōkua those in need. Let us share ke aloha o ke Akua so the hurting may be healed, the weary be refreshed, and the lonely to know that they are a part of a loving community. In doing so, may our burdens be lifted and we be healed as well. Ua ola loko i ke aloha – Love gives life within.