

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August 203

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

### Auntie Lehua Kekahuna

Amid the horrific fires in Hawaii, I read today of acts of kindness, bravery and generosity. The [BBC article](#) focuses on the Hawaiian town of Lahaina, where volunteers improvised as they raced to respond to the horror that was unfolding. " In convoys of trucks, they delivered supplies and were some of the first to witness the devastation in the place many of them called home."

Auntie Lehua Kekahuna, was one such person. The article continues:

"She and her friend, Duke Sparks, devised their own response within hours. Sparks shut down his central Maui restaurant, calling in staff to make hot meals for shelters and emergency responders, and the two collected donations for evacuees. And - within a day - they had organised an impromptu team of truck drivers to transport that aid to Lahaina, moving in and out of the devastated town more than a dozen times even when official routes were closed.

"Auntie says it all the time, when the kāhea comes, we'll be there," said Koa Gomes, a nephew of Kekahuna, using the Hawaiian word for 'call'. "We're our own soldiers."

Their efforts are part of a wider network of support run by locals outside the formal channels of government agencies and NGOs. According to dozens of people here, that grassroots aid has been crucial in the face of governmental bureaucracy and delays.

"Honestly we don't disrespect our government," Kekahuna said. "But we're not waiting."

Human beings have the capacity to show incredible kindness to strangers and friends alike.

Who has been kind to you recently?

Something to celebrate and give thanks for.