Creating Community Through Story-Telling and Story-Listening

"Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. He told many stories in the form of parables…"
Matthew 13:1–3 NLT

We have an expression in Hawaiian, "talk story," which is valuable in building bridges and deepening friendships and relationships among family, friends and strangers. "Talk story" is a way of sharing the spirit of Aloha. When we come to talk story, we understand that everyone's story is important, valuable and contains wisdom. I have come across many who say, "I don't have a story" or "my story isn't important," which is not true. Your stories are valuable and important, and others' stories are just as valuable and important as yours.

I have spent many years ministering as a facilitator and speaker in the area of racial righteousness and reconciliation, and talking story has been an effective means of bringing about healing. In addition to knowing the importance and value of everyone's story, stories also reveal trust, and stories are gifts when shared. I have been blessed to have been entrusted and gifted the stories of African-American, Native American, Hispanic, Euro-American, Asian-American and Pacific-Islander peoples' stories. Talking story has been an integral part of my pastoral ministry whether in pre-marriage counseling, visiting the sick, building generational bridges, developing legacy stories, or preparing sermon messages.

Being Native Hawaiian and a co-learner in the Indigenous community (I received an MA in Intercultural Studies from the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies), my oral tradition and story has included all of God's creation and not only humans. An equally important piece in talking story is not only the story-telling, but also the story-listening.

If you want to learn more about the Creating Community Through Story-Telling and Story-Listening initiative, contact Pastor Jim Sequeira at jim@cacadeview.org