

Friday, February 16, 2018

It was a day of working with Professor David Castillo here at UBL to learn the theory and the steps to using Contextual Bible Reading to address the challenges in the world today. Professor Castillo chose a theme from one of the four identified at the Ocean View Presbyterian Leadership Retreat last month: Economic Justice and Faith.

The first step in using this strategy is to begin speaking from our own context. We identified interest in equal opportunities for everyone, fair wages, and a safe workplace.

The second step we learned was turning to the Bible to help us think about these challenges. Professor Castillo directed us to Mark 11:11 to Mark 13:2 beginning where Jesus encounters the money changers in the temple and ending after he witnesses the widow giving her coins to the temple treasury and then prophesying that the temple would fall. We spent a great deal of time examining the critical characters, actions, and themes within these passages.

The final step is asking how the text speaks to our own issues and deciding what actions we can take in response to this.

Professor Castillo left us with this quote: "When I give food to the poor, they called me a saint; when I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist". It is a warning about trying to get to the root causes of the challenges we face in society, but getting to the root causes and doing something about it at that level is the only way to make lasting change.

Tonight we had our last dinner together and reflected on our time together. It's been a life-changing week.