

**Opening** - When I was born my parents agreed that my father would not physically discipline me - grandfather abusive - strap.

+ We all have stories - things that "formed" us... from our beginnings-

...and we have grown to be who we are: because of, through, and in spite of them.

And we carry **BAGGAGE**... the good and the helpful we pull out and use to our benefit and for others;

[2] the bad and the ugly, sometimes crawls out and bites us... ..and others. **We make choices which "Way."**

**Matrix** - At this time in TCC's life, it is important to: 1) reflect on, 2) celebrate in, and 3) discover the emerging forms of the "More Excellent Way."

**Key Point #1** - We need to reflect on the "Emerging Ways" in our "formation":

[3] - plumb line

a. Our personal histories, the Bible, our faith, our traditions are "Emerging Ways" in our "formation."

Illus. - last Sunday, Ann talked about how the Bible was part of her "formation." How many?

[4] Amos 7:7-8 NRSV) This is what the Lord God showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in hand. And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." "See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..."

A Plumb Line is used to build up a straight wall - straight up.

+ a Stonemason's "eye" becomes trained to "building straight up" Ken? + bricks, blocks overlap/engage one another to make a strong wall - v. "stacked" square on top of each other.

b. That's the "Emerging Way" of the early Church... listen!

[5] Colossians 1:4-7 NRSV) For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven...etc

+ Bible, faith, traditions, a plumb line... "...the "Emerging More Excellent Way" of love... building straight up!"

**Key Point #2** - We need to celebrate in the "Emerging Ways that are part of our TCC formation today:

[6] - tuning fork

a. We resonate with the "Emerging More Excellent Way" of love whenever we encounter it.

Illus. - (volunteer) - tuning fork to head

+ Once we are touched by, nurtured in the love of God in Jesus Christ... we - never be the same - we resonate with the "Emerging Way

[7] Matthew 25: 37b-39 NRSV) Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?

when was it that we saw you? + hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned...?

Emmaus Road disciples - "...did not our hearts burn within us as we walked, talked...?

+ Whenever there is "a situation" - that reflects..., or calls for "Emerging Way of God's Love" "...our hearts burn within us!"

+ We are a part of so many "situations" in which our hearts resonate with God's Emerging Way of Love - Celebrate!!

**Key Point #3** - We need to discover the "now-Emerging Ways of God's Love!

[8] - fishing net

a. All things are connected in God's Emerging Way of Love.

Illus. - (volunteers - 4 corners, diverse)

+ when one suffers, all suffer; ...when one rejoices, all rejoice!

b. The "touch" of God's Emerging Ways of Love... Radiates Out - through ALL!!! + me, us, them

+ we re-member, "resonate" ...DISCOVER God's ever-Emerging Ways of Love - - - when we: + encounter a call to Love... (hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, Imprisoned...) + witness God's ever-Emerging Ways of Love ...at work!

[9] 1Corinthians 12: 4-7 NRSV) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**Closing** - [10]

**Matrix** - At this time in TCC's life, it is important to: 1) reflect on, 2) celebrate in, and 3) discover the emerging forms of the "More Excellent Way."

"I Feel the Winds of God Today" [11]

**Tag** - Engage..., Activate..., because God's Love has been poured out into our hearts!!