

“PERISH EDUCATION”/ “THE S.S.”

Christian Ed. Sunday

Pentecost14-Sept. 18 2011 A

Free Text

Emmanuel’s –Bellevue

‘THE S.S.’---- THE S.S.---- ‘THE S.S.’ MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

-TO THOSE OF US WHO CAN REMEMBER THE ‘DARK DAYS’ OF W.W. II----

-“S.S.” MEANT ADOLPH HITLER’S DREAD---‘STUTZ-STAFFEL’----

THE ‘MILITARY POLICE’ OF THE THIRD REICH.

-THE ‘S.S.’---THE ‘STUTZ-STAFFEL’ WAS FEARED BY FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE.

TO THOSE OF US WHO LIVE IN THIS COUNTRY ---THAT HAS SEEN THE ‘ASSASSINATIONS’ --AND ‘ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATIONS’ OF A NUMBER OF OUR PRESIDENTS--- “THE S.S.” MEANS ‘THE SECRET SERVICE’ –

-THAT PORTION OF THE U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT---

THAT HAS THE SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT OF PROTECTING THE LIFE OF THE PRESIDENT---HIS FAMILY AND OTHER NATIONAL LEADERS.

THOSE OF US WHO---- WHEN WE BECAME ‘OF AGE’----(NAMELY 18) AND HAD TO REGISTER FOR ‘THE DRAFT—CAN REMEMBER THE ‘S.S.’-- ‘THE SELECTIVE SERVICE.’----- THAT ORGANIZATION IN THIS COUNTRY THAT, OVER MANY YEARS, HAS PROVIDED MEN (AND IN SOME INSTANCES) WOMEN---FOR MILITARY SERVICE.

AND OF COURSE---FOR ALL WHO “WORK”---AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE EITHER ---‘NEARING’ RETIREMENT AGE OR ‘HAVE ALREADY ---REACHED’ RETIREMENT AGE----- “S.S.” STANDS FOR ---SOCIAL SECURITY----

-THAT AGENCY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT---THAT HAS ‘PROMISED’ AT LEAST-----TO ‘SUPPLEMENT OUR INCOMES’ IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS “THE GOLDEN YEARS”---WHEN WE RETIRE.

HOWEVER----- FOR THE MAJORITY OF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE—LIKE US---‘S.S.’ STANDS FOR ---SUNDAY SCHOOL----SUNDAY SCHOOL---

-ONE OF ‘THE GREATEST INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD.

-THE SUNDAY SCHOOL—TO WHICH MANY OF US ARE ‘DEEPLY INDEBTED’---FOR --‘MOST’--- IF NOT ‘ALL’--- OF WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE.

**YOU ‘MAY’ OR ‘MAY NOT’ KNOW ---THAT THE S.S. (THE SUNDAY SCHOOL)---IS NOW MORE THAN 200 YEARS OLD.
-AND, ON THIS DAY---KNOWN AS ‘RALLY DAY’ --- OR ‘CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY’ IN THE CHURCH---
-WITH THE OFFICIAL BEGINNING OF THE 2011-2012 PARISH EDUCATION PROGRAM HERE AT EMMANUEL’S---
-WE REMEMBER----NOT ONLY THE ‘GREAT TREASURE ‘ WE HAVE IN GOD’S WORD---THE BIBLE-
-BUT----THE ‘SOLEMN OBLIGATION’ WE HAVE OF ‘PASSING’ THE SAVING WORDS OF THAT HOLY BOOK---
-AND THE ‘GREAT SPIRITUAL RESOURCES IN IT’—TO OUR CHILDREN—TO COMING GENERATIONS.**

**ANY OF YOU KNOW –HOW—THE ‘SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT’ BEGAN?
-SOME YEARS AGO, ENGLAND WAS INVOLVED IN WHAT WAS KNOWN AS ‘THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.’
-THERE WERE ‘NO CHILD-LABOR-LAWS’ ---LIKE WE HAVE TODAY. AND MUCH OF THE ‘MAN-POWER’ FOR THE MILLS AND FACTORIES OF INDUSTRIAL ENGLAND---WAS PROVIDED BY CHILDREN—BOYS AND GIRLS---WHO WORKED SIXTEEN HOURS A DAY, SIX DAYS A WEEK.**

**THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF A MAN NAMED ‘ROBERT RAIKES’---- (A DEDICATED CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IF EVER THERE WAS ONE)
-A NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN ---VOLUNTEERED TO TEACH THOSE ‘EXPLOITED-WORKING-CLASS-CHILDREN’----ON SUNDAYS, HOW TO READ AND WRITE. HENCE THE TERIM “SUNDAY SCHOOL.”
-AND---THE BIBLE---GOD’S WORD----WAS THEIR TEXTBOOK.**

**SOON THE ‘SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT’----(AS IT BECAME KNOWN) -‘CAUGHT ON’ AND ‘SPREAD’ TO ALL THE ‘MAINLINE CHURCHES’ OF THE DAY.
-THE CURRICULUM—OF THOSE-- ‘SUNDAY SCHOOLS’—WAS, OF COURSE, THE BIBLE.
-TODAY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONTINUES TO BE--- ‘THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT’ HOUR OF THE WEEK---
-DURING WHICH ---CHILDREN (AND ADULTS---YES! ADULTS!) HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY –TO REGULARLY ---READ, --STUDY --- AND BECOME FAMILIAR WITH---GOD’S WORD, THE BIBLE.**

**ALL PARENTS (AND GRANDPARENTS)----- LOVE ‘TO DO THINGS’ FOR THEIR CHILDREN.
-WE ENJOY ‘GIVING GIFTS’ TO OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN-**

**SO MUCH SO---THAT SOME OF US ‘OVER-DO’ ---GIFT GIVING A BIT.
-WE ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE OUR CHILDREN WITH ‘THE VERY BEST’
THAT MONEY CAN BUY –IN TERMS OF FOOD, CLOTHING, MEDICAL
CARE AND EDUCATION.**

**HOWEVER----- ‘DOING THINGS’ FOR OUR CHILDREN IS NOT LIMITED
TO SIMPLY--- ‘GIVING’ THINGS TO THEM.**

**-SOME PARENTS TRY TO ‘THINK’ FOR THEIR CHILDREN,
-‘MAKE DECISIONS’ FOR THEIR CHILDREN,
-TRY TO ‘ARRANGE’ THEIR CHILDRENS LIVES FOR THEM---
-AND, IN SO DOING, ‘DEMONSTRATE’ THAT THEY WANT—NOT
ONLY TO ‘CONTROL’ ---BUT TO ACTUALLY ‘ LIVE’ THEIR CHILDRENS
LIVES FOR THEM---
-BY DECIDING FOR THEM SUCH THINGS AS:
-WHAT JOB OR PROFESSION THEY’LL PURSUE-
-WHAT COLLEGE THEY’LL ATTEND-
-AND OFTEN----WHAT SPOUSE THEY’LL MARRY----
-‘ALL’ UNDER THE GUISE OF ---‘WANTING WHAT’S BEST’ FOR THEIR
CHILDREN.**

**WHILE THERE ‘ARE’ MANY THINGS THAT WE, AS PARENTS ---
‘WANT’ TO DO---AND ARE ‘EXPECTED’---TO DO FOR THEIR
CHILDREN----
-AND--- ‘THE LIST’ OF ‘PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES’ IS
ENDLESS---AND ‘OVERWHELMING-- AT TIMES---
-THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN LIFE WE ‘CANNOT’ DO FOR OUR
CHILDREN---NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE MIGHT WANT TO.
-YOU CANNOT ‘EAT’ FOR YOUR CHILD.
-YOU CANNOT ‘SLEEP’ FOR YOUR CHILD.
-YOU CANNOT ‘THINK,’ ‘STUDY,’ ‘LEARN,’ OR ‘BELIEVE’ FOR
YOUR CHILD.
-YOU CANNOT ‘GET SICK’ FOR YOUR CHILD---OR ‘SUFFER’ FORYOUR
CHILD—NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU MIGHT WANT TO.
-HOW MANY TIMES, OVER THE YEARS ---HAVE
I HEARD PARENTS SAY—IN REFERENCE TO THEIR SICK SON OR
DAUGHTER---- “IF ONLY I COULD GO THROUGH THIS FOR THEM!”
-SOME TIME AGO NOW I BURIED A CHILD,-- KILLED IN A TRAGIC
ACCIDENT. AND THE GRIEVING MOTHER SAID, AS WE STOOD THERE
BY THAT TINY CASKET----“IF ONLY IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME INSTEAD
OF HER!”**

THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN LIFE A PERSON 'HAS TO DO FOR THEMSELVES----- 'GO THROUGH' FOR THEMSELVES--- AND 'DYING' IS ONE OF THEM.

THERE'S NOT A PARENT IN THIS SANCTUARY (REGARDLESS OF YOUR AGE)---

-WHO WOULD NOT 'WILLINGLY' DIE FOR THEIR SON OR DAUGHTER—

-WHO WOULD NOT 'TAKE THEIR PLACE IN DEATH' ---WERE IT A MATTER OF 'THEM' OR 'US.' BUT ---WE CAN'T! WE CAN'T!

-HOWEVER----WE CAN 'TEACH OUR CHILDREN'----TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST----AND TO 'UNDERSTAND'---THAT THEY CAN 'FACE DEATH WITH FAITH AND CONFIDENCE'---BECAUSE OF HIM.

- WE CAN TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO 'KNOW,' 'LOVE' AND 'FOLLOW' JESUS----SO THAT NOT ONLY CAN THEY FACE DEATH WITH FAITH AND CONFIDENCE----

-BUT ---FACE LIFE----THE SAME WAY ---AND BE 'FULLY EQUIPPED' TO LIVE, 'HAPPY,' AND 'REWARDING LIVES' OF FAITH AND TRUST!

-AS PARENTS---AND GRAND-PARENTS---WE NEED TO TEACH OUR OFF-SPRING NOT ONLY HOW TO 'DIE'----BUT ALSO HOW TO 'LIVE.'

THAT---YOU SEE, IS WHAT 'PARISH EDUCATION' IS ALL ABOUT.

-NOT ONLY IS THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN--- AND GRANDCHILDREN---SOMETHING WE 'CAN' DO FOR THEM.

-IT IS 'OUR SOLEMN OBLIGATION' AND 'RESPONSIBILITY.'

-WHEN OUR CHILDREN WERE BAPTIZED----WE, AS PARENTS, SOLEMNLY PROMISED GOD---THAT WE WOULD "RAISE THEM IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"----

-PROMISED TO 'TEACH THEM THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, CREED AND LORD'S PRAYER.

-WE PROMISED TO PLACE IN THEIR HANDS THE HOLY SCRIPTURES---

-BRING THEM TO THE SERVICES OF GOD'S HOUSE----

-AND TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

-THAT'S WHAT WE AS PARENTS PROMISED GOD WE'D DO!

-HOW MANY OF US, AS PARENTS, HAVE DONE THAT?

- 'THIS' ---YOU SEE, IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF WHAT PARISH EDUCATION, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION--- 'SUNDAY SCHOOL' (IF YOU WILL') IS ALL ABOUT.

I WORRY ABOUT SO MANY PARENTS---WHO SEEM TO HAVE A 'MIXED SENSE OF PRIORITIES' IN LIFE.

-THEY'RE WILLING TO 'GIVE' THEIR CHILDREN ALMOST ANYTHING.

-AND MAY EVEN BE WILLING TO 'DIE' FOR THEIR CHILDREN, IF NECESSARY----

-BUT ARE 'NOT' WILLING TO 'TAKE THE TIME,' AND 'MAKE THE EFFORT'---TO BOTH --'TEACH' -THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE---AT HOME---THEMSELVES---

-BUT-- ARE NOT WILLING TO 'HAVE THEIR CHILDREN --TAUGHT'--- HERE AT CHURCH, IN SUNDAY SCHOOL---ABOUT JESUS CHRIST AND 'THE WAY OF LIFE' TO WHICH HE CALLS US.

-I WORRY ABOUT PARENTS---WHO FIND IT ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THEIR CHILDREN NOT ONLY TO SUNDAY SCHOOL REGULARLY---BUT--TO 'PRE-COMMUNION-CLASSES'----AND 'CONFIRMATION CLASSES.'

-THANK GOD, LITERALLY----FOR YOU PARENTS---WHO 'TAKE THE VOWS YOU MADE FOR YOUR CHILDREN—IN BAPTISM, SERIOUSLY.

I WORRY TOO---ABOUT MANY ADULTS (PERHAPS EVEN SOME OF YOU)---WHO 'WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD' IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS.

-KNOW WHAT ONE OF THE MANY HERESIES IN THE CHURCH TODAY IS?

-“SUNDAY SCHOOL IS FOR KIDS!”(2)

-SUNDAY SCHOOL --'IS'-- FOR KIDS! BUT IT'S ALSO FOR ADULTS---- 'GOD'S CHILDREN' OF ALL AGES.

-I SALUTE YOU PARENTS WHO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE AT HOME----AND 'GET THEM' HERE TO SUNDAY SCHOOL REGULARLY.

-I SALUTE YOU ADULTS—WHO COME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL BIBLE CLASSES---

-AND I SALUTE YOU S.S. TEACHERS WHO GIVE GENEROUSLY OF YOUR TIME AND DEVOTION.

ALL OF YOU YOUNG FOLKS HERE TODAY---12 YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER----'PUT YOUR FINGERS IN YOUR EARS! THAT'S RIGHT! PUT YOUR FINGERS IN YOUR EARS--- I DON'T WANT YOU TO HEAR THIS!

- THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF CHILDREN HERE AT EMMANUEL'S---

-AND---THOSE OF YOU WHO 'DON'T HAVE CHILDREN'—OR 'WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE (LIKE MINE)—'GROWN AND GONE'----

-EVEN YOU FOLKS WHO ARE NOT MARRIED----

-ALL---HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY ---TO ALL THE CHILDREN IN THIS CONGREGATION.

-ALL CHILDREN ARE INQUISITIVE—THEY WATCH THE ADULTS AROUND THEM IN CHURCH----

-TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT THEY'RE 'PAYING ATTENTION'---HERE IN WORSHIP.

-THEY WATCH TO SEE-- WHETHER OR NOT THEY SING THE HYMN AND LITURGY---

-OR—JUST --‘STAND GRUMPILY SILENT’-- DURING THE HYMNS---- NOT EVEN BOTHERING TO ‘CRACK A HYMNAL’----AS SOME OF YOU DO HERE AT EMMANUEL’S ---I’VE NOTICED.

-CHILDREN WATCH TO SEE IF THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM PUT IN AN OFFERING WHEN THE PLATE GOES ROUND.

-THEY EVEN ‘SNEAK A PEEK’—TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT DURING THE PRAYERS-- THOSE AROUND THEM ‘BOW THEIR HEADS, FOLD THEIR HANDS,’---AND ‘CLOSE THEIR EYES’---DURING THE PRAYERS----

-OR—THEY LOOK TO SEE IF WE ---‘SNEAK A PEEK’ AT OUR WATCHES--- DURING THE SERMON---AFRAID THE PASTOR WILL GO INTO ‘OVERTIME.’

-WHAT KIND OF AN EXAMPLE ARE----Y-O-U SETTING FOR THE CHILDREN WHO SIT AROUND YOU IN WORSHIP HERE AT EMMANUEL’S?

YOU PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN---DO YOU ‘SAY A TABLE GRACE’ BEFORE MEALS?

-YOU PARENTS----HAVE YOUR CHILDREN EVER SEEN YOU—MOM OR DAD---GRANDMA OR GRANDPA---DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AT HOME--- IN PRAYER?

-DO YOU KNEEL BESIDE THE BED YOUR CHILD’S BED AT NIGHT--- LISTEN TO THEIR PRAYERS—AND THEN TUCK THEM IN WITH A HUG AND KISS?

-O.K. YOUNG PEOPLE! YOU CAN TAKE YOUR FINGERS OUT OF YOUR EARS NOW.

QUICKLY NOW! A CHANGE OF PACE!

-AS YOU KNOW, THE ‘NFL’ SEASON HAS BEGUN----THAT STRANGE, STRANGE SPORT OF ‘FOOTBALL.’

-I ASSUME MOST,-- IF NOT ALL OF YOU ARE ‘STEELER FANS.’

-THE ‘FOOTBALL SEASON’ DIDN’T BEGIN A FEW WEEKS AGO.

-ACTUALLY----IT BEGAN LAST YEAR---AS THE 2010 SEASON ENDED—

-AND THE COACHING STAFF BEGAN TO ‘PREPARE NOTES,’ ‘PLAN STRATEGIES’---AND ‘LOOK FOR NEW TALENT’ FOR THIS YEAR’S GRID-IRON SEASON.

-THERE WERE ‘WEIGHT LIFTING’ PROGRAMS FOR THE PLAYERS—

-LOTS OF RUNNING, EXERCISING AND BODY-BUILDING.

-THERE WAS ‘THERAPY’ FOR ‘SURGICALLY REJUVENATED’ SHOULDERS, HIPS, ARMS AND KNEES.

-THIS YEAR'S FOOTBALL SEASON HAD ALREADY BEGUN---LONG BEFORE 'TRAINING CAMP' OPENED—AND TEAM MEMBERS ARRIVED TO 'DRAW THEIR PADS' AND 'BEGIN SCRIMMAGE.'
-THINK OF ALL THE MONEY SPENT HERE IN THE UNITED STATES ON FOOTBALL!
-THINK OF THE TIME, EFFORT, BLOOD, SWEAT (YES) AND EVEN TEARS—SPENT ON-- PREPARING FOOTBALL PLAYERS FOR THE NFL, COLLEGE, AND EVEN HIGH-SCHOOL GRID-IRON SEASON.

COULD YOU IMAGINE—AN ORGANIZATION LIKE 'PITT' OR 'THE STEELERS'-----
-GOING OUT ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT—SOMETIME IN AUGUST, -AND COLLECTING A 'RAG-TAG' GROUP OF 'VOLUNTEER PLAYERS'---
-‘STUFFING’ THEM INTO PADS, HELMETS AND JERSEYS----
-AND THEN,-- WITHOUT BENEFIT OF ANY 'PREPARATION,' 'PRACTICE' OR 'TRAINING'---
-THROWING THEM INTO HEINZ STADIUM----TO FACE A POWERFUL, TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED OPPONENT LIKE 'THE DALLAS COWBOYS'—THE 'DENVER BRONCOS' OR THE 'CLEVELAND BROWNS?'
-HOW UTTERLY 'UNTHINKABLE' THAT WOULD BE!
-THAT WOULD BE ---- SHEER INSANITY!

HOW EQUALLY UNTHINKABLE AND INSANE---IT WOULD BE--- FOR US---AS CHRISTIAN PARENTS-----AS A CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION----
-TO PUT 'OURSELVES' AND 'OUR BELOVED CHILDREN'----INTO 'THE GAME OF LIFE'-----
-TO FACE A POWERFUL, POLISHED, EXPERIENCED OPPONENT-----
NAMELY 'THE POWER OF EVIL'--- 'SATAN,' --- 'THE DEVIL'-----
(CALL 'HIM' OR 'IT' WHAT YOU WILL)---
-WITHOUT A 'KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD'----
-WITHOUT 'ANY CHRISTIAN TRAINING'---
-WITHOUT AN 'UNDERSTANDING' OF – 'GOD'S GAME PLAN' FOR OUR LIVES—
-WITHOUT AN 'AWARENESS' OF 'THE POWER OF GOD' AVAILABLE TO US---
-AND WITHOUT THEM---BEING 'FULLY EQUIPPED' TO FACE LIFE AND WHATEVER LIFE HAS IN STORE FOR THEM.

'WE' NEED AND 'OUR CHILDREN' NEED –AND 'OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN' NEED—AND 'ALL THE GENERATIONS YET TO COME' NEED--
-TO BE 'TRAINED' AND 'FULLY EQUIPPED' AS CHRISTIAN PEOPLE
-TO FACE ALL LIFE HAS IN STORE FOR US—

-CONFIDENTLY TRUSTING IN HIM—WHO IS---- (IF YOU'LL PARDON THE METAPHOR)--- ‘THE DIVINE CAPTAIN OF OUR TEAM.’

YOU FAITHFUL PARENTS---WHO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE VOWS YOU MADE FOR YOUR CHILDREN IN BAPTISM---GOD BLESS YOU!

-YOU FAITHFUL GRANDPARENTS---WHO MAKE A CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO YOUR GRANDCHILDREN-----GOD BLESS YOU!

-YOU FAITHFUL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS---THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND EFFORTS---GOD BLESS YOU!

-AND-- TO ALL YOU HERE AT EMMANUEL’S---WHO TAKE YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST AND YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THIS CHURCH SERIOUSLY---GOD BLESS AND KEEP YOU!

-ALL OF US HERE AT EMMANUEL’S---NEED TO --‘REALLY GET SERIOUS’ ABOUT ‘PARISH EDUCATION’--- ### P-A-R-I-S-H EDUCATION.

-AFTER ALL----IT’S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN KEEP US FROM PERISHING---###P-E-R-I-S-H-I-N-G!