

KEERTHANAI FESTIVAL 2013

I am of the opinion that Coimbatore is a blessed city for, it is here that Christians are being motivated to sing keerthanai in churches. Keerthanai have not only rich meaning, but also have music that transcends human comprehensions. I am extremely happy that some people are involved in the process of bringing keerthanai singing once again to the fore. I hope young people also will take to the heart keerthanai singing in churches. I commend the transliterated keerthanai particularly to the younger people, who cannot read and write Tamil script.

Some of the main line churches, instead of encouraging keerthanai singing, are trying to promote 'praise and worship' with American tune. Keerthanai like "*Vaarumaiyapodhagare*", "*thothiramseivene*" etc. can be easily sung as part of Christian worship. I remember, about 20 years ago, a child of 7 year old sang by heart "*thothiramyesunaadha*," We want every parent to teach their children to sing lyrics. More than keerthanai singing, I wish the children to be taught the meaning contained in them. How many of our children are taught "*sathainishkalamaai*."? I am of the opinion that our friends in Coimbatore, should not only promote keerthanai singing, but inculcate in the children the deep meaning contained in them. For example "*sundaraparamadheve*" can be sung easily and its meaning also can be taught to the children.

The friends in Coimbatore, particularly Late B.Thangasamy and friends deserve our congratulations on the fine efforts in promoting keerthanai singing in the churches. I hope their efforts will kindle many churches in Tamil Nadu to sing keerthanai. This is very important as keerthanai singing will not allow itself to go into oblivion. I am not suggesting that keerthanai should be replaced with new songs. (Psalm

96:1). I realize that pressure of key board / guitar / drums culture will not push keerthanai singing out of precincts of churches, who have already succumbed to organ – piano singing replacing keerthanai singing.

J. Egbert Samraj

General Secretary (Rtd) of YMCA in India
36, Shankar Enclave,
Old Bowenpalli, Secumderabad – 500011