

Hermon Marthoma Church

MIDLANDS

Sept 2008

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Next Service: (4-6pm)

27 Sept 08 -Holy Communion

11 Oct 08 -Holy Communion

At

**St. James Hill Church
Mere Green Road
Four Oaks, West Midlands
B75 5DD**

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From Achen's desk

'Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, "but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised"' - Proverbs 31:30

'Gray hair is the crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.' – Proverbs 16: 32

This month in September, the Mar Thoma Church celebrates Suvisesha Sevika Sangham Day and Senior Citizens Day. It is important that we realize the importance of these two groups: women and the elderly. Both groups are an important part of our society and our church, but both groups are often not given the respect they deserve.

The Mar Thoma Suvisesha Sevika Sangham was founded in 1919, as a result of the vision of our mothers; that the women should also participate in spreading the Gospel.¹ With the motto, '*Service and Evangelism in the life and mission of the Mar Thoma Church,*' the Mar Thoma Sevika Sangham has spent years trying to uplift women as they serve God through serving people. They have supported: missionaries, established Bible schools and other educational and training facilities, worked to help the needy (orphans, poor, etc...), helped medical missionaries, and in many other ways helped to change the world.

The Senior Citizens Fellowship is for members in the age group of 65 and above. The Senior Citizens Fellowship was formed for the retired members of our church to have fellowship, share their life experiences, stay active and above all to praise and worship God.

A proper understanding of the Bible teaches us that elders and women should be respected and honored.

Women:

In order to understand the Old Testament view of woman, we have to start with Genesis. When God created mankind, He created both "male and female." Both were created in God's image and both were given the responsibility of exercising authority over God's creation. The man was created first but he needed companionship and a helper, so God created a woman. Man is incomplete without woman. Because she is called a "helper" does not imply that she is inferior to man. The same Hebrew word translated as helper is used of God in His relationship to Israel (Ps 33:20; 70:5). Even though ancient Israel was a male dominated culture, some of the finest leaders in Israel were women: victories were sometimes won because of the courage of one woman (Judges

4-5; 9:54; Est 4:16). God revealed His Word through prophetesses (Judges 4:4). The heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 include Sarah (v. 11), Moses' mother (v. 23), and Rahab the harlot (v. 31).

But it is Jesus that exemplified God's view of women. He allowed women disciples to accompany Him and His male disciples on their journeys (Luke 8:1-3). He talked with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well and led her to a conversion experience (John 4). It was the apostle Paul who wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Elders

In ancient times authority was given to older people with wider experience. These were often considered the most qualified to hold places of leadership. The basic meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words for elder is "old age." In the Old Testament those leaders associated with Moses in governing the nation of Israel were called "the elders of Israel" (Ex 3:16; 24:1), "the elders of the people" (Ex 19:7), or the "seventy elders" (Ex 24:1). Once the Israelites reached the Promised Land, groups of elders ruled in each city. These elders were viewed as the representatives of the nation and its people. These leaders were responsible for legal, political and military guidance and supervision. A similar approach was followed in the early church. Elders were associated with James in Jerusalem in the local church's government (Acts 11:30; 21:18) and, with the apostles, in the decision of the early church council (Acts 15). Elders were also appointed in the churches established during the Apostle Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). Paul addressed the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20:17-35). Elders played an important role in church life through their ministry to the sick (James 5:14, 15). They were apparently the teachers also in a local congregation. In addition to ministering to the sick, their duties consisted of explaining the Scriptures and teaching doctrine (1 Tim 5:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

This month as we celebrate Sevika Sangham Day and Senior Citizens Day, let us remember that it is the will of God that all his children, regardless of race, color, age, or sex should be loved, honored, and respected. Women and elders have contributed greatly to the advancement of God's Kingdom here on earth. Their knowledge, experience, and love have changed the world.

Rev. Shibi Abraham

DECEPTION AND COUNTERFEIT REVIVAL - Zac Poonen

Jesus and the apostles repeatedly warned that the last days would be characterized by widespread deception and a multitude of false prophets (Matt.24:3-5, 11, 24; 1 Tim.4:1) – and we have seen plenty of them in the last few decades.

Why are millions of Christians deceived by these false prophets and these counterfeit "revivals"? And why are so many preachers falling prey to immorality and greed?

Here are what I see to be some of the main causes:

1. Most Christians today are not aware of what the New Testament teaches, because they have not studied it carefully; and so they follow the teachings of their leaders and not the teachings of the New Testament.
2. Miracles (supernatural gifts) have become more important to them than their character (a supernatural life).
3. Material wealth has become more important to them than spiritual wealth.
4. They are unable to distinguish between soulish frenzy or psychological manipulation, and the genuine moving of the Holy Spirit; the cause again is ignorance of the New Testament.
5. They are unable to distinguish between psychosomatic healing (healing that comes by right attitudes of the mind), and supernatural healing in Jesus' Name.
6. Emotional excitement and strange physical manifestations have become more important to them than the inward joy of the Lord.
7. For the leaders, their ministry to people has become more important than their inner walk with God.
8. The approval of men has become more important to these leaders than the approval of God.
9. The number of people attending the meetings has become more important to these leaders than whether those people are totally committed to Christ.
10. Building their personal kingdoms and their financial empires has become more important to these leaders than building a local church and making themselves servants in that local church (Jeremiah 6:13).

All this is the VERY OPPOSITE of what Jesus taught. The opposite of Christ is called the "anti-Christ" in the New Testament. If Christians do not see this clearly, then when the Antichrist turns up on the world's stage, with his false signs and wonders (2 Thess.2:3-10), they too will blindly accept him. To be led by the Spirit of Christ is to have the very opposite spirit to that mentioned in the points above

Here is a paraphrase of Jesus' words in Matthew 7:13-27
(read in the context of Matthew Chapters 5 to 7:

"Both the gate and the way to ETERNAL LIFE are very narrow -as I have just described (Matt. 5 to 7). But false prophets will come along and tell you that the gate and way are not narrow but easy and broad. Beware of them. You will be able to identify them easily by observing the fruit of their character:

Do they live a life free from anger, free from lusting after women, free from the love of money and free from anxiously seeking after material wealth (as worldly people seek)? Do they preach against these things as I have done here? (Matt.5:21-32 and 6:24-34).

These false prophets may exercise many supernatural gifts and do miracles and actually heal people in My Name, but I will still send them all to hell in the final day, because they did not know Me (as THE HOLY ONE) and they did not give up sin in their private lives (Matt.7:21-23). So if you want to build a church on a rock that will never shake or fall in time or eternity, be careful to do all that I have just spoken to you (Matt. 5 to 7) and teach your people to do all that I have commanded you too. Then I will be with you always and My authority will always back you (Matt.28:20, 18). But if you only hear what I say and don't do it, then what you build may look like a large and impressive church to men, but it will surely crumble and fall one day (Matt.7:25)."

How then shall we build an unshakeable church in these last days?

1. We must live the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 to 7) and preach it constantly.

2. We must live in the new-covenant and not in the old-covenant. For this, we must know the difference between the two covenants clearly (2 Cor.3:6). We must also preach the new covenant.

When preachers fall into serious sin today, they justify themselves by (and find their comfort in) the examples of Old Testament saints who also fell into sin. And then they re-commence their ministry after a period of silence. They quote the examples of David who committed adultery, and Elijah who got depressed, and they say "But God still used them"! But they won't quote the example of Paul who lived in victory and purity until the end of his life.

What these preachers (and most Christians) have not seen is that the Old Testament saints are NOT our examples today. We have been given much more in this age of grace – and "to whom more is given, more is required" (Luke 12:48). Jesus is the Mediator of a NEW covenant and HE is our Example and the Author of our faith today – not David or Elijah.. The distinction between the Old Testament saints (listed in Hebrews 11) and Jesus is made very clear in Hebrews12:1-4.

But very few live in the reality of this. Very few have seen that "God has provided something BETTER for us" in the new covenant (Heb.11:40).

Any of us can fall in the way that many preachers have fallen, if we are not watchful and alert – for Satan is a cunning enemy. Our safety lies in obeying New Testament teaching exactly and in submitting to godly leadership. (And by "godly" leadership, I mean those who do not have even one of the wrong values listed in the ten points I mentioned earlier).

If we learn from the mistakes of others, we can avoid making the same mistakes ourselves.

So let us keep our faces in the dust before the Lord at all times – for it is there that we will receive Divine revelation, as John did (Rev.1:17). If we humble ourselves, we will receive grace to be overcomers (1 Pet.5:5). And when the Holy Spirit shows us the truth in God's Word and the truth about ourselves, let us be totally honest and "love the truth, so as to be saved" from all sin.. That way we will be protected by God Himself from all deception (2 Thess.2:10,11). Amen.

Tips to better living

1. Take a 10-30 minutes walk every day. And while you walk, smile.
2. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day.
3. Sleep for 7 hours.
4. Live with the 3 E's -- Energy, Enthusiasm, and Empathy.
5. Play more games.
6. Read more books than you did in 2007.
7. Make time to practice meditation, yoga, and prayer. They provide us with daily fuel for our busy lives.
8. Spend time with people over the age of 70 & under the age of 6.
9. Dream more while you are awake.
10. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants.
11. Drink plenty of water.
12. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
13. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip.
14. Forget issues of the past. Don't remind your partner with his/her mistakes of the past. That will ruin your present happiness.
15. Don't have negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment.
16. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum that appear and fade away like algebra class but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
17. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar.
18. Smile and laugh more.
19. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone. Don't hate others.
20. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
21. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
22. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
23. Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about. Don't compare your partner with others.
24. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
25. Forgive everyone for everything.
26. What other people think of you is none of your business.
27. GOD heals everything.
28. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
29. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.
30. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
31. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
32. The best is yet to come.
33. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
34. Do the right thing!
35. Call your family often.
36. Your inner most is always happy. So be happy.
37. Each day give something good to others.
38. Don't over do. Keep your limits.
39. When you awake alive in the morning, thank GOD for it.



Secretary's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The role of the church is to spread the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every believer and member of the Church is here in their position, wherever they are, are given the light so that they can lighten others.

Mathew 5: 14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl, instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Mar Thoma Church was commissioned with the vision of mission.

Let us all collectively fulfill the vision of the mission of the Mar Thoma church

Yours in Christ

Biji (V V Abraham)





Useful contacts

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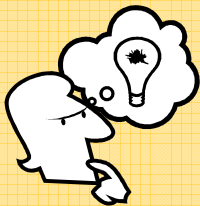
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Special Greetings this month

Birthday greetings to
Reuben Thomas, Jejo Joji, Suraj Isaac, Nathaniel M Isaac

Congratulations on the Wedding Anniversary of
Mathew V Patteril & Elizabeth M Varghese

Sunday school

At 3:30pm every 2nd and 4th Saturdays at the Church.

Kids

BRITTANY (age 4) had an earache and wanted a pain killer. She tried in vain to take the lid off the bottle. Seeing her frustration, her Mom explained it was a child-proof cap and she'd have to open it for her. Eyes wide with wonder, the little girl asked: "How does it know it's me?"

JAMES (age 4) was listening to a Bible story. His dad read: "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city but his wife looked back and was turned to salt." Concerned, James asked: "What happened to the flea?"

Other announcements

Forthcoming Events:

Elections of new office Bearers	:	27th Sept 08
Sevika sangam day	:	27 th Sept 08
Convention	:	To Be Advised
Harvest Festival	:	OCTOBER
Sunday school Dedication Day	:	NOVEMBER
Christmas Carol Service	:	DECEMBER

Changes to the above will be made based on availability of the Church Hall & holidays

THIS IS THE DAY.....



BE GLAD IN IT!!



"...AND LET ALL MY TEACHERS BE USER FRIENDLY."