

["Divine Deception" Exposed in Mauritius](#)

Category : [April 1984](#)

Published by Anonymous on Apr. 02, 1984

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Young Tamil Hindu Missionaries Oppose Conversion Tactics Based on Promises of "Miraculous Healing"

"So look out for those tricks, everyone," S.K. Moorghen concluded, up on the stage of the Sri Sockalingum Meenatchee Ammen Koyil of Port-Louis," and never succumb to those low means by which they attempt to convert you!" He had just finished describing some of the deceptive means or "tricks" used by the Christian missionaries of Mauritius in their perennial campaign to confuse, convert and divide the Hindus.

His talk was given on the occasion of a Maha Sivaratri pilgrimage, the pilgrims consisting mostly of young teachers and missionaries of the Saivite Hindu religion, who have been working under the auspices of the Saiva Siddhanta Manram of Mauritius. Their Motto for over a year has been "Combattons la conversion par l'instruction" (Fight conversion through religious education).

As soon as 25-year-old Moorghen learned the teachings of Saivism and recognized their profundity a year ago, he was immediately inspired to share them with others. He formed a team of missionaries who have been going door-to-door to speak of the greatness of Saivite Hinduism and introduce his co-religionists to Saiva Dharma: a Catechism and a Creed, two small booklets which outline all the basic tenets of Saivite Hindusim.

On his rounds he became aware of certain patterns which the Christian missionaries follow, and their effects. The most obvious characteristic, he found, lies in their predilection to sniff out and follow a trail of misery. Wherever there is problem, conflict, disease, sorrow or despair, there they are! Moorghen discovered that wherever he found some misfortune, the Christian missionaries had already preceded him. This phenomenon had been observed elsewhere in Asia and South Africa by Hindu leaders who have labeled it "vulturism."

A famous political observer and writer in India, Ram Swarup, noted the change in Christian tactics in recent years, "In spreading light, as they see it, they have used all kinds of methods - force, fraud, persuasion, trade, and lately social service." Whereas in the past, the conversion efforts of the Christians bore mostly on financial, educational and political pressure now they are focusing their efforts on humanitarian service, helping people, as their way of gaining entrance, acceptance, trust, and finally of converting. That has certainly proved to be the case in Mauritius, where Hindu leaders are becoming genuinely concerned with such strategies.

Approaching the weak as easy prey to conversion is used with great effectiveness by the Christian missionaries in Mauritius, but especially so by the most aggressive converting movement of all - the "Salut et Guerison" (Healing and Salvation), a mission of the Assembly of God evangelistic movement founded in America, where it is the largest Pentacostal (Holy Rollers) Church in the country. Since reaching Mauritian soil Salut et Guerison's French missionaries have, as one local Hindu put it, "devastated large sectors of the Hindu population," especially the Tamils, converting entire towns, sowing confusion and breaking up families.

Claiming to Cure: Moorghen and his missionary teammates, Sivaramen and Ananda, became acutely aware of these tactics one day when they entered a Tamil home where the daughter was seriously ill, the parents destitute, and where the Salut et Guerison missionaries just happened to be at the same time. The Christians made their appeal: "Have faith in Jesus, he will deliver and cure her." Moorghen was deeply struck that the would-be convertors were simply taking advantage of the situation, preying upon this family at a very psychological and sensitive moment to attain their ends. These were his fellow Hindus, and he did not like what he saw.

Another tactic of this sect which is currently arousing some reaction in Mauritius is that of going into hospitals, unbidden, to the bedside of very ill and suffering people to preach their message, promising that Jesus will cure them if they will but place their trust in him this very moment. The problem manifests after Hindus leave the hospital cured (by nature and medical science), and begin feeling obliged, perhaps indebted to an alien faith. In the case where the person is not cured, then, of course, from the proselytizer's perspective, nothing is lost.

This particular tactic may disappear soon, for there is already a law in Mauritius

that forbids proselytization in hospitals, and the SSM is currently petitioning the government to enforce that law and preserve the privacy and dignity of suffering individuals.

Tales of miraculous cures at the hands of Salut et Guerison healers circulate all over Mauritius and serve to advertize the movement and draw in great numbers the unwary, the sick, the unfortunate, the problem-ridden and the superstitious. People go to the movement for all kinds of reasons - to cure mental anguish and physical disease, to stop drinking or smoking, to solve marital problems. One hears many testimonials in its favor, as well as accusations of faking and deception. One young man in Montagne Longue was drawn close to the movement, hoping for a rapid cure to his illness. After the healers had tried and failed to bring about the miracle, they admitted defeat but asked the man, even so, would he not please declare that he was cured anyway. The sick man, flabbergasted, dropped out.

Deceit Revealed: A case of pure deception surfaced in recent weeks. Moorghen explained he had recently gone to the home of a gentleman who was very ill and, consequently, was being visited daily by these same missionaries with promises of instant healing. "But I am not about to be taken in by it," the man explains, "I know their tricks too well!" He told Moorghen that he used to work as an electrician in a large hall which had been rented out by the Salut et Guerison on the occasion of a large revival meeting. He was working in a little room off to the side of the main hall but from which he could see everything that was going on in the main hall. At one point, a woman in the audience started shrieking and acting quite mad. The Pastor declared that she was being possessed by a devil, "but with the help of Jesus we'll soon drive it out." He had her carried off to the nearby room where this man, the electrician, happened to be working. Nobody noticed that he was there. He was quite shocked to see the woman sit up, perfectly normal, as soon as the door was shut behind her. The Pastor instructed her to wait a while. He would call her out shortly. At that point the Pastor saw the electrician and, obviously quite upset, asked him to leave at once. But the electrician's curiosity was aroused, and he blended in with the audience to see what would happen. Some minutes later, the Pastor told the audience that Jesus had effected another miraculous cure, and presented the now normal woman, who enthusiastically testified to the miracle and to her spiritual "rebirth."

Apparently, Salut et Guerison believes in the validity of the concept of "divine deception," a phrase coined by the Christian evangelical movement of the Rev. Moon (the Unification Church, nicknamed the "Moonies"), to describe their belief that all is fair in love, war and conversion. They are convinced that it is perfectly

righteous to deceive, trick or fraud, if the intent is to bring a person to "the Truth." There are quite a number of proselytizing movements around the world today who subscribe to tactics of divine deception.

A twenty-year-old young lady who is a teacher and missionary of Saivite Hinduism in Souillac, in the extreme south of Mauritius, writes to The New Saivite World: "We have some good news. We have recently organized regular meetings with people in the 45 to 75 year age group. The first time we met, Ramsamy Vencatasamy [a 30-year-old Saivite missionary] gave an ample overview of our religion as introductory class. There followed a question-and-answer session...A gentleman in the audience told us how members of the Mission Salut et Guerison had used base tricks and devices and fooled one of his neighbors. He also explained that some Catholics are writing books in the Tamil language in which they say that Jesus Christ was born a Tamil but that consequently he created his own religion because ours was not any good. He told us also of a television program he had seen over the RFO broadcast system of Reunion island where some [Catholic] priests said that sin and evil don't really exist. We can plainly see how their strategy is undergoing some radical changes, all aimed at absorbing Hinduism unawares. Well, we certainly are not going to let them do it!"

Mauritian Hindus have noticed a new trend among proselytizing Christian movements to print their flyers, pamphlets and books in the Tamil Language. It is an interesting maneuver, for actually very few Mauritians can read Tamil. But the language and the sight of the script evoke responses of reverence and trust which make for easy acceptance for the missionary and his message. Several young Tamils of the Port-Louis area were outraged to find such tracts being distributed in the Mauritius countryside some months ago. Among them, brothers L. and K. Sornum have appealed to the government to check this new stratagem which they qualified as "gross misrepresentation."

One of the most saddening effects of Salut et Guerison, Mauritian Hindus have told The New Saivite World, is the harm done to the family. Rarely will a whole family convert all at once. It generally starts with one member of a family, who, after he is converted, undergoes a potent program of indoctrination, revolving mostly around criticism and condemnation of his former religion. The new attitudes thus created in the convert are directed against other members of the family who are not yet converted. A Tamil lady recently shared her burden with a missionary of the Saiva Siddhanta Manram. She explained that since one of her daughters (one among nine children) had converted to Salut et Guerison, there was no peace at home anymore. The new convert never lost an opportunity to tell the other members of

the family they were worshipping the Devil, especially at sensitive moments, when they were going to the temple, for example. She refused to eat any food prepared at home because her mother had blessed it in the traditional Hindu manner, and she now considered it "food of the Devil."

Not long ago, a member of Salut et Guérison, a newly converted Tamil, claimed to have received messages from God that her recently-deceased husband could be brought back to life. Preachers rushed to the graveyard and started to dig up the man's grave. Naturally, the graveyard attendant called the police, who forced them to stop. The preachers tried again several times, petitioned the government and finally succeeded in creating a cause célèbre, a lot of free publicity and a new set of tales by which to capture the imagination of the unwary and the superstitious. Reports are that many are now mounting vigils in the graveyard, hoping to see a "dead man walk."

Boomerang: This last incident may turn to Salut et Guérison's disadvantage, if the SSM of Mauritius has its way, for they intend to explain and expose this event and the sly intentions of its instigators to Tamils and Hindus throughout the nation.

Moorghen's talk on that February 26th evening was not an isolated event. It represents a general new awareness among Mauritian Tamils of conversion and conversion tactics. The new generation of Hindu and Tamil leaders are courageous and proud - their boldness and resolve are in sharp contrast to the benign neglect of the past toward threats to their religion and culture. The SSM has just launched its journal, Sivaneri, which squarely faces up to the problem of conversions with a new boldness and resolve. An editorial in its first issue concludes: "We are asking all our Tamil brother and sisters to be on their guard and to stand strong before the lowly tactics of these conversion peddlers. Every time they come to your door, don't even let them in, and simply tell them, 'We too have sacred scriptures, which are far more ancient and profound than yours. Our sages were the first to have cognized a One-and-Supreme God that they named 'Siva.' Today, thousands of Christians in Europe and elsewhere believe in reincarnation, a pillar of our philosophy since time immemorial.' Don't hesitate to show or give them a copy of your Catechism and Creed to show the greatness of our eternal religion."