

[900 Hindus Gather for Saivite Youth Convention In South Africa](#)

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To incorporate the 1985 International Year of the Youth, five Saivite youth decided to host the first-ever Saivite Youth Convention in the Republic of South Africa. The organizers were Morgan Yegambaram, S. Padayachie, Vijeand Desai, Sivanesan Chetty and Archie Hirasen. The effort aimed to "bring about a Saivite youth awareness" and "assist in stopping the conversion process" into Christianity.

Planning the program was nearly as instructive as the convention itself. The committee worked in close association with the Saiva Sithantha Sungum spiritual head, Sri Swami Sivananda Navalar, and with Swami Arunananda, also of the Sungum. They placed ads with Indian papers and radio and put up eye-catching displays at strategic points in Hindu areas. So by 10 AM on the day of the event. Dec. 29, the Sangam's Chatsworth Centre was filled to capacity with 900 youths and adults.

After an opening prayer by Swami Navalar, the entire hall echoed with enthusiastic chanting of "Aum Namasivaya" put to music. Kumari Kubashni Pillay, 17, gave a scintillating performance of Bharata Natyam. Messages were read from Saiva Siddhanta Church, Hawaii; Thiruvavaduthurai Aadheenam of Thanjavur, India; and the Saiva Siddhanta Mandram of Mauritius.

Morgan Yegambaram spoke briefly on "Problems and Solutions Facing South Africa." He emphasized the problem of conversion, giving practical hints for speaking with Christian missionaries and stressed the importance of religious education. He also spoke briefly on sectarianism (which is often ridiculed) as a matter of pride and strength.

Sash Padayachee spoke on the 3 pillars of Saivism: the temple, the scriptures and

the sat gurus, and urged the youth to be strong in their faith and practice.

An open discussion on "Our 1986 Goals" gave all a chance to speak, although few were bold enough to do so and not many suggestions were put forward. However, the coordinating committee resolved: 1) to foster Saivite religious education among the youth (based on the Master Course of Saiva Siddhanta Church); 2) to hold the Youth Convention annually; 3) to publish and distribute 10,000 copies of the Catechism and Creed of the Master Course; 3) to hold religious/cultural/social events; 4) to propagate the "authentic" Saivite scriptures and not a "mixed or confused brand of Saivism."

In the words of the organizers, "All told, the convention was a success, but more importantly it is a forerunner to greater adventures in promoting, protecting and preserving Saivism here in the Republic of South Africa. All signs indicate that we will not stop here!"

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