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Edmonton Mission, Canada

Where: Edmonton, capital city of the province of Alberta, Canada. Located 600 miles East of Vancouver, 300 miles north of the border with the U.S. Population (1976) 554,228. Hindus in Edmonton: 5,000.

Name: Saiva Siddhanta Church Edmonton Mission.

When: Begun July 13, 1985, 8:40 a.m. Movers & Shakers: Adiyar & Mrs. Aran Veylan, Assiriyar Jai and Aassiriyai Ganga Murugan.

Major Activities: Children's classes and summer camp, Hindu Solidarity, 1987 India Odyssey, Hinduism Today sales, literature distribution.

Saiva Siddhanta Church Edmonton Mission is a small Mission with its two families and one sadhaka. But its size and present state of development are deceptive, for the Veylans and Murugans have been busy for years helping establish the Maha Ganapathi Society of Alberta - comprised largely of Sri Lanka Tamil Saivites. Jai Muruga served as the Society's pandaram priest for years, while Adiyar Aran Veylan, a successful Edmonton attorney, worked through all the legal obstacles to establishing the Society, acquiring land for the temple and visas for the priest and his family. Now the temple is built, and the permanent priest (and his family), Subramaniyam Kurrukal, have arrived from Sri Lanka.

As a final help, Gurudeva had two of his monks, Sadhaka Nitya Sivam and Sadhaka Jnanideva Cevvel, fill in at the temple for several months and to prepare the permanent priest for life in Canada, teaching him, for example, how to drive a car.

Now with the Society well established, the Church members are free to develop their own Mission. They are approaching it with great gusto. Both families tithe. They've already held their first annual summer camp. The Mission is helping to coordinate the 1987 India Odyssey, along with the Beau-Bassin (Mauritius) and Concord (California) Missions. Amachar Manon Mardemootoo of Beau-Bassin recently visited Edmonton for four days to finalize those arrangements.

Hindu solidarity, the keynote of the Mission from the beginning, continues to be strong. In fact, as Adiyar Aran Veylan put it, Saiva Siddhanta Church IS Hindu Solidarity in Edmonton - the only group to get to know and take an interest in the three main Hindu groups: The Maha Ganapathi Society; the Fijian "Sanatan Society" (with their Vishnu Mandir), and the Hindu Society of Alberta. The Mission has arranged for Gurudeva to speak at all three temples when he next visits Edmonton. Adiyar Veylan is helping the Fijians with their legal work.

Ganga Murugan and Tara Veylan are busy with the Jnana Dhana literature distribution program. They've handed out pamphlets in person, plus stocked the three Hindu temples. The Fijian Temple made good use of the pamphlets: they sent "Tour Facts," "Dharma & Realization" and "Karma & Reincarnation" to the Canadian tax office in response to the government's request to "know what they believe."

Jai Murugan and Sadhaka Jnanideva Cevvel sell Hinduism Today door-to-door. They report a sales rate of 90% among those contacted-certainly unmatched by any other method tried to date. The Mission maintains its own subscription list, acquiring the papers in bulk for redistribution.

On September 7th, the Mission is conducting a one-day retreat program for the Edmonton community as part of outreach efforts. Entitled "The Inner Side of Saiva Siddhanta," it will be held at the Maha Ganapathi Temple from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. and will include guided meditation, hatha yoga, scripture, and classes.

The adage, "well begun is half done," characterizes the Edmonton Mission. We look forward to steady growth through the years.