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Published by Anonymous on Dec. 01, 1987

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Subramuniaswami, Sivaya A talk by Sivaya Subramuniaswami given at the Saiva Siddhanta Church Concord Mission at the installation of the svayambhu Sivalingam, October, 1987.

Every church mission performs three functions: nurture, outreach and maintenance. That's how a church runs; all the churches throughout the United States and the world understand nurture, outreach and maintenance.

Nurture is taking care of one another and the immediate concerns of the congregation. Nurture means seeing that the children are doing well, the wives are doing well, the husbands are doing well, and the brahmachari are doing well. All of the concerns of the congregation have to be nurtured along. Care must be given to new devotees coming to the temple and new members coming into the congregation of the church itself. This includes nurturing new friends along who are interested in Siva, seeing that they find out more and are provided classes.

This is our nurture program (right-hand chart). We teach Saiva Siddhanta through our temple. For Saiva Siddhantins everything comes from Siva, therefore everything comes from the temple. Teaching Saiva Siddhanta to children first started in San Francisco as a children's Sunday school. Now, here in Concord, teaching the religion has finally matured, through the grace of Lord Siva, into a school up to the eighth grade and into our Gurukulam for priest training during the ninth through twelfth grade.

Slowly we're beginning to generate our adult training program which is in two sections. First will be lots of classes here in the temple, possibly even a class after every puja as the vibration begins to build. Second is going from home to home teaching.

Maintenance is behind the scenes; seeing that we have enough flowers, seeing that we have enough ghee for the lights, cleaning the carpets, building a wall, fixing a door, putting in a light bulb, paying bills, making the budgets, going to the bank. All of that is maintenance and behind the scenes.

When nurture is complete, and maintenance is adequate, outreach can be done. Then we think outside of our congregation. We outreach to the Hindus of the world, provide them with whatever we can provide them.

We have two very good outreach programs within Saiva Siddhanta Church (right-hand chart). The first is Hinduism Today direct sales and other karma yoga activities, including telephone ministry for this mission. It is guided by the United Saivite Men and is the responsibility of our men throughout the world: In Canada the men do door-to-door ministry. The other outreach program is the Jnana Dhana Program: distributing free religious literature. It is guided by the United Saivite Women.

Everything we do in our church missions worldwide fits within one of five programs: temple, children and adult religious teaching, Hinduism Today sales and Jnana Dhana free literature distribution. Pilgrimages fit within the temple, for example, because it is the temple taking its congregation to India. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts fit in our children's programs.

Everything fits into one of these five areas, because this is all that a dharmasala does according to our Saiva Dharma Shastras. This is the beginning and end and will give a full life for each and every one.