

[HYO in Malaysia to Train 20,000 Youth](#)

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Led by Mr. Vithalingam, National Youth Council Will Spearhead Multi-Level "Hindu Revivalism"

Thiruvassagur, N. At its last annual general meeting, the Malaysia Hindu Youth Council's longest serving President, Mr. Vaithalingam, declined nomination stating that he wanted and new leaders to meet the challenges of the future. Many prominent Hindu leaders felt that the Malaysian Hindus would be losing a great leader. They were wrong.

In his farewell speech, Mr. Vaithalingam urged the new officers to form a religious subcommittee to attend urgent problems of the Hindus, and Mr. Vaithalingam was unanimously elected to spearhead that committee. The following members were elected to join him: Mr. A. Nagappan, Mr. Ramakrishnan, Mr. Chellakannu and Mr. Nandithevan. In their master plan, the committee offered the following findings and proposals.

1) To hold a series of religious seminars for youths in three levels, basic, intermediate and advanced - the aim being to train Hindu missionary workers to fill the gap of full-time preachers.

2) To conduct one-day, and longer, missionary-worker seminars on a nation-wide basis at Hindu Youth Organization (HYO) branches.

3) To then enjoin the trained youth to gather Hindu children in their areas for regular religious classes in local temples.

4) To qualify and encourage Hindu missionaries to offer religious and problem

counseling.

5) To monitor these missionary activities.

That was five months ago. From the feedback the committee has received since then, states Mr. Vaithalingam, the "greatest enemies" to Hinduism are the Christian missionary workers who take advantage of the poor Hindus in the rural areas and estates. These missionaries provide free food, clothing, medical aid and counseling while encouraging their beneficiaries to adopt the Christian faith. Thus the Hindus are converted not because they want to become Christians, but out of dire poverty and hunger. Cases were reported to the MHYC headquarters in which Hindus were paid monthly allowances if they adopted Christ. Moreover, the missionaries insult the Hindus and invent all sorts of nefarious stories regarding Hindus temples and ways of worship.

Taking the bull by the horns, the Religious Action Committee patterned its first course to confront economic and social problems faced by Hindus in Malaysia; coercive conversion by other religions and how to defend oneself; problems faced by Hindu school children; the lack of Hindu reading materials in Bahasa Malaya, the national language; and the challenge of raising funds for Hindu missionary efforts.

The second level, offered to graduates, offers training in more ministerial areas: organizing youth projects, conducting lectures, team work and community welfare efforts. The level-three course provides advanced training in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. Those who become missionaries are required to report to the HYO regularly on their religious service work.

Since the inception of the committee, 30 seminars have been held throughout Malaysia. At a seminar in Taman Karuppiah, Selangor, on March 11, attended by over 250 youths, Chairman Vaithalingam confidently stated that the committee foresees 20,000 Hindu Youth being trained in the basic concepts of their religion in the next two years. In the adjacent hall a separate program was being held for children under 12. "The enthusiasm and interest shown by all youths and children," remarked one leader in a subsequent bulletin, "makes us realize that Hindu revivalism is a real and dynamic phenomenon that has to be utilized immediately for mutual benefit by all those who have the faith's interest at heart."

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