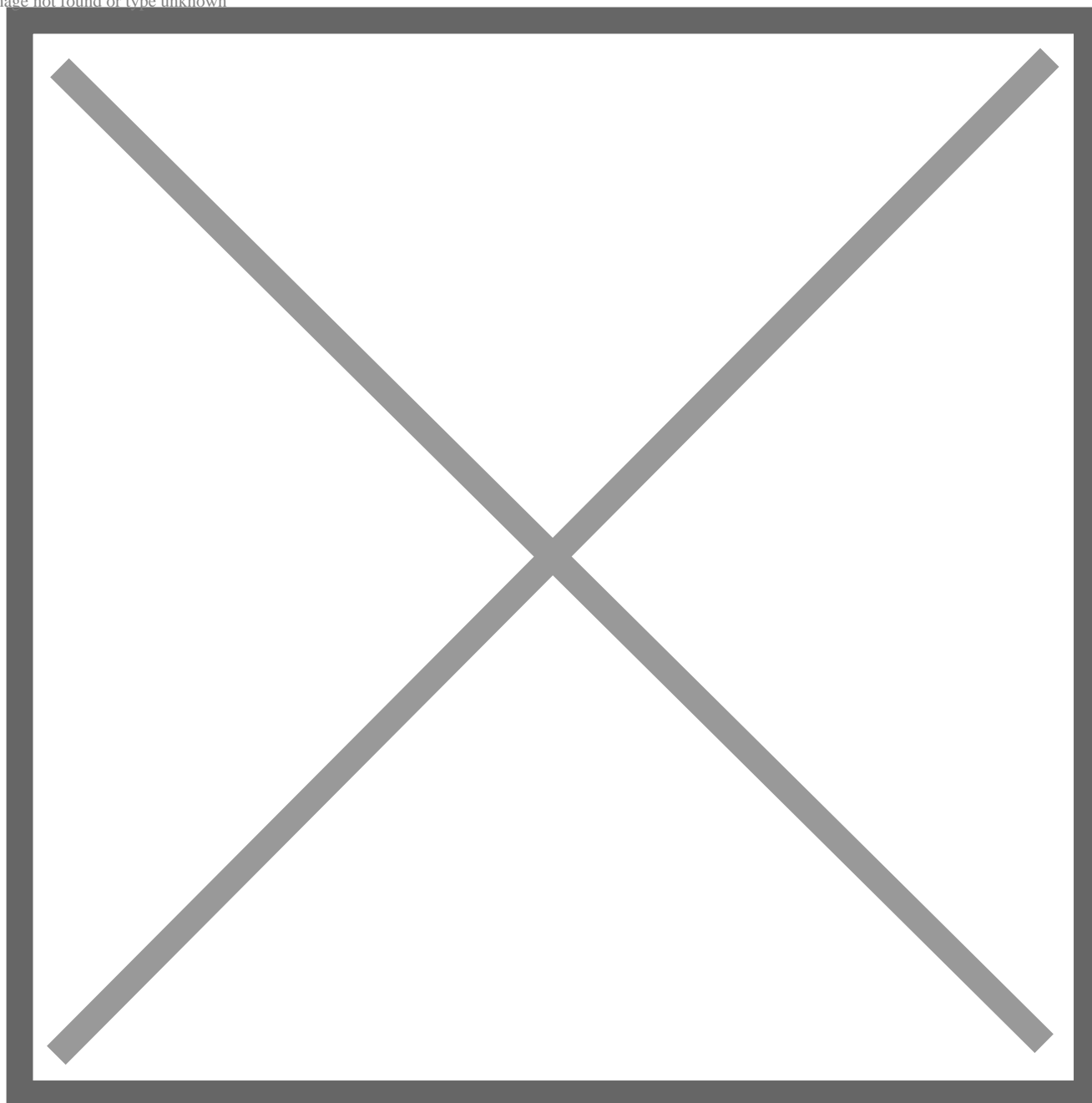


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East Central India Union Section

GORDON E. CHRISTO

Gordon E. Christo, Ph.D. in Old Testament and Adventist Studies (Andrews University). Christo is retired and working on contract as assistant editor of the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* and assistant editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist International Biblical-Theological Dictionary*. He is currently setting up a heritage center for Southern Asia Division. Some of his research on Adventist history can be seen at <https://sudheritage.blogspot.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/SUDHeritage/>.

When in 1963 the East Central India Union stated that it could not afford either in terms of funds or personnel so many sections and cited a breakdown in progress, leadership voted to combine those sections that spoke the same language, a move that applied to the two Andhra sections, the two Tamil sections, and the two Kannada sections.

The two Kerala Sections were joined under the leadership of V. D. Edward.¹

The southern part of Madhya Pradesh and the state of Orissa from the Northeast Union were attached to the territory of the Western India Union which also received the states of Andhra Pradesh from the South India Union in exchange for the state of Goa. The enlarged union would be known as the "Central India Union." New Delhi became headquarters for the Northern Union and Bombay for the Central India Union.²

The uneven membership of the earlier unions may have been a factor in the realignment. While the South India Union had a membership of 31, 968 at the end of 1970, the Western India Union's membership was 2, 878, the Northwestern India Union's 3, 157, and the Northeast Union's 4, 713.³ After the restructuring at the end of the first quarter of 1971 the South India Union had 22, 240, the Central India Union 14, 861, and the Northern Union 8, 289 members.⁴

In a major action starting in November 2000, church leadership split the four unions in India into seven. The reasons cited were authorization by the General Conference to experiment with alternative structures within guidelines and considerable growth in the Central India and South India Unions.⁵ However, the division administration had not sought the counsel and consent of the General Conference prior to altering the boundaries of unions or in the creation of new ones. Thus, administration amended the two actions of November 2000 to request the General Conference for permission to reorganize the two unions and subdivide them into "attached fields" as a temporary special relationship while awaiting its consent.⁶

The territories of Maharashtra and Gujarat were then detached from the Central India Union and formed into the "Western India Attached Field." The state of Kerala was removed from the South India Union and initially called the Kerala Attached Field (later "Southwest India Attached Field"). The state of Karnataka and the union territory of Goa were combined into Karnataka-Goa Attached Field (later "South Central India Attached Field"). Two days later on November 16, 2000, the presidents of the fields were elected and voted as members of the division executive committee.⁷ After the General Conference officially recognized the action, a formal action taken at the 2003 year-end division meetings changed the names to "unions."⁸

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Minutes of the South India Union Committee, Aug 23, 1963, # 63-449, 162.?
2. Cecil B. Guild, "India Unions are Re-aligned," *Eastern Tidings*, January 1971, 1.?
3. "Quarterly Statistical Report for the Quarter Ending Dec 31, 1970," *Eastern Tidings*, April 1971, 8, 9.?
4. "Quarterly Statistical Report for the Quarter Ending Mar 31 1971," *Eastern Tidings*, July 1971, 8, 9.?
5. Minutes of the Southern Asia Division Executive Committee, November 14, 2000, # 2000-137 and 2000-138, 78, 79.?
6. See the acknowledgement in the Minutes of the Southern Asia Division Executive Committee, November 23, 2001, preamble to #2001-243 and #2001-244, 126, 127.?
7. Minutes of the Division Executive Committee, November 16, 2000, #2000-139/25, 104.?
8. Minutes of the Division Executive Committee, November 11-13, 2003, # 2003-148, 93.?