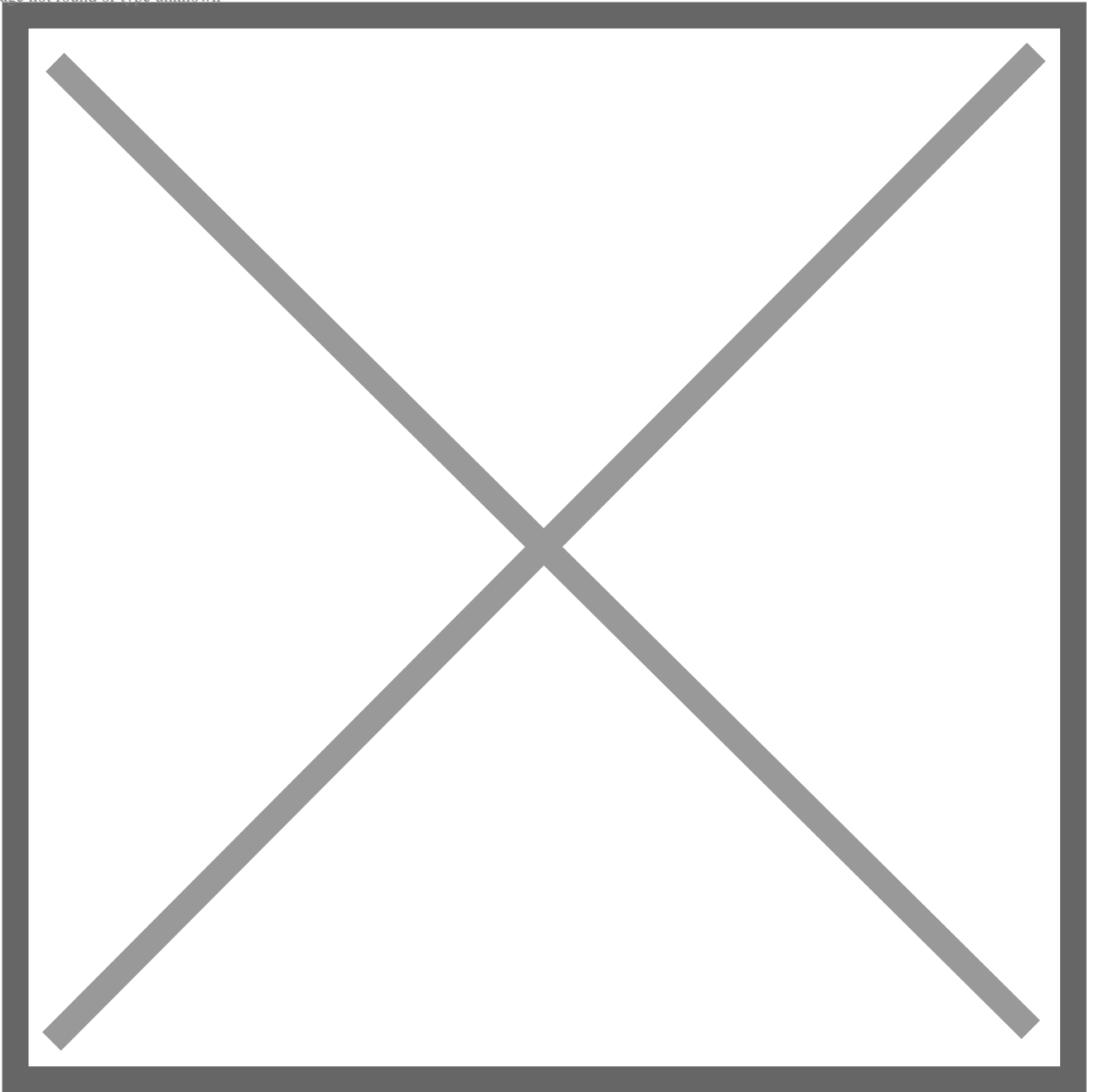


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**Muthiah, Veeran Puthukunathan (1916-1986)**

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## CHERYL CHRISTO HOWSON

Cheryl Christo Howson earned a graduate diploma in computer aided interior designing at the Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture for Women in Pune, India. She co-founded an interior design company in Sri Lanka and worked as a copywriter. She contributed to the morning devotional published by Women's Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the *Shepherdess International Journal* magazine, and the *Adventist Review*. She has written several plays. Currently (2020), she lives in Hosur, India while preparing for a piano exam.

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Veeran Puthukunathan Muthiah, assisted by his wife, Grace, served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an evangelist and pioneer worker in Maharashtra, India, as well as a church administrator in the Southern Asia Division.

### Early Life

Veeran Puthukunathan Muthiah was born February 14, 1916, in the scenic village of Seethapal nestled in the foothills of Thadaga Mountain about six miles from Nagarcoil. He was educated at Scott Mission High School in Nagarcoil!

Although his family were Hindus, his uncle encouraged him to enroll at the SDA boarding school in Prakasapuram. His parents agreed, and at the age of 16 he left home to study. This led to his baptism by Pastor Pakkianathan in Prakasapuram.<sup>2</sup>

### Education and Marriage

He continued with his Adventist education by attending Spicer College (now Spicer Adventist University) in Krishnarajapuram, (the site is now Lowry College). A very hard-working young man, Muthiah worked as a colporteur during summer vacations, selling books to earn money for his education until he graduated in 1938.<sup>3</sup>

On April 8, 1942, he married Grace Dass in Salisbury Park, Poona (Pune).<sup>4</sup> They had one son, Victor, and three daughters, Ranjitham, Roseline, and Perin.<sup>5</sup>

### Career and Ministry

From May 1939 until February 1940, he studied the Marathi language in Poona. From Poona he moved to Kolhapur. For the next few years he served as an evangelist and as secretary for several departments in the South Marathi Mission, including: Voice of Prophecy, Missionary Volunteer, Sabbath School, and Home Missionary.<sup>6</sup>

During the constituency meetings held in the South Marathi Mission in 1949, Pastor Muthiah was ordained and set apart to the work of the gospel ministry.<sup>7</sup>

In 1951 he was appointed principal of the Lasalgaon High School where he served for two years.<sup>8</sup> He was then transferred to the Northwest India Union in 1953, as secretary for the Sabbath School and Home Missionary departments until 1954.<sup>9</sup>

The Bombay State Section then called him to serve as secretary of the Sabbath School and Home Missionary departments from 1954 to 1955, after which he moved to the Western India Union and worked in the same departments from 1956 to 1962.<sup>10</sup>

Pastor Muthiah and his family were then transferred to the East India Section where he worked as president from 1962 to 1963.<sup>11</sup> At the end of 1962, he was called to go to the division as Sabbath School secretary, where he served faithfully until 1966.<sup>12</sup>

At the 1966 General Conference Session held in Detroit, he was voted president of the Western India Union. The 1970 division yearend committee held at Poona decided to realign the India unions, so that the Central India Union included most of the territory of the former Western India Union, and Pastor Muthiah continued to serve as president of the Central India Union until 1973.<sup>13</sup> Pastor and Mrs. Muthiah then moved back to Poona where he served as the Lay Activities leader for the Southern Asia Division until his retirement in 1980.<sup>14</sup>

### Later Life

Elder Muthiah retired in 1980, but he didn't stop serving the church. He worked at the SDA Hospital as an administrator and served as the church pastor of the Central English Church in Bangalore.<sup>15</sup>

On Christmas Day 1984, while taking food that his wife, Grace, had prepared for an elderly church member, Elder Muthiah fell from his moped. The accident was followed by surgery and months of suffering, until he finally fell asleep on April 7, 1986.<sup>16</sup>

#### Contribution and Legacy

Throughout his life he was noted for his personal ministry. He and his wife enjoyed visiting homes and praying with people. Whatever Pastor Muthiah did, his wife Grace was not far away. They worked, visited, built churches, and

together gave new meaning to ministry at a time when that was rare.<sup>17</sup>

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