

Columbia Union Visitor

MICHELE JOSEPH

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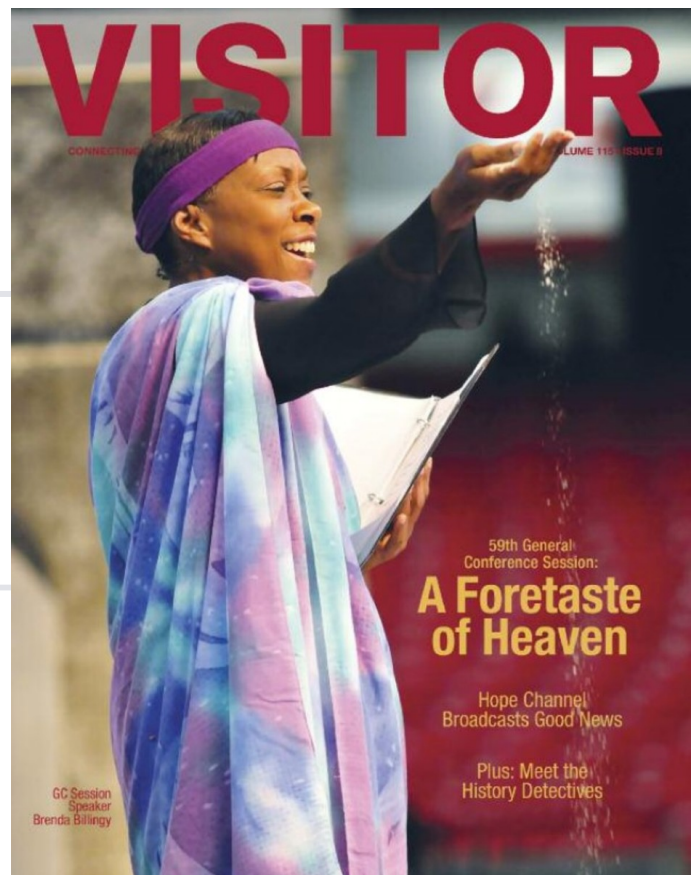
The *Columbia Union Visitor* is the official publication of the Columbia Union Conference, providing church members in its territory with news and information along with inspiration and insight to enhance their involvement in the mission of the church.¹

The Columbia Union was organized on November 17, 1907, covering territory ceded from the Atlantic Union (New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia) and the Lake Union (Ohio). At the organizational meeting the delegates recommended that the *Welcome Visitor*, published by the Ohio Conference since 1896, be made “the official organ of the Columbia Union Conference.”² Accordingly, “Columbia Union Conference” replaced “Ohio Conference” as publisher on the masthead of the *Welcome Visitor*, beginning with the January 15, 1908 issue.

The name of the periodical change to the *Columbia Union Visitor* beginning with the March 18, 1908, issue. The union conference president, W. J. Fitzgerald, wrote: “With its entering upon its mission in the entire field of the Columbia Union Conference, it is apparent that [the publication] should bear a name that will clearly indicate the extent of its field and importance under the new arrangement. Hence, the new name.”³

The *Visitor* continued to be issued from Mount Vernon and published by Mt. Vernon College Press through October 1941. Thereafter the locale of the editorial office coincided with that of the Columbia Union headquarters located in Takoma Park, Maryland, until moving to Columbia, Maryland, in 1981.

The periodical appeared weekly from its inception as a Columbia Union publication in 1908 through March 1966. Except for special issues, it had eight pages. Twelve-page issues began appearing occasionally in the mid-1950s and became the norm in 1961. A twice-monthly publication schedule began with the April 7, 1966 issue, with the



Columbia Union Visitor, August 2010 cover.

number of pages increased to 20, sometimes 24 or 28. Two-color covers began in 1967. For a decade (August 1972 to August 1982), the *Visitor* was inserted into the *Adventist Review* with church members in the Columbia Union thus receiving the *Review* as a free bonus every other week. Thereafter the *Visitor* again was sent as a separate publication every two weeks, although later for a time the *Review* was inserted inside the *Visitor*'s folds.

In the 21st century, the printed *Visitor* has been enhanced while at the same time the publication has taken advantage of the new opportunities created by digital media. In 2002, the *Visitor* became a full-color monthly magazine with 48 to 64 pages. Semi-monthly (6 issues per year) publication began in 2020. The *Visitor* brand encompasses a website, podcasts, weekly e-newsletters and several social media accounts. Members of the union also receive special promotions — music CDs, calendars, videos and more — made possible by partner institutions across the union.

As of May 2022, the magazine in printed form has a circulation of nearly 65,000, with 75,000 online readers.⁴ As it has throughout its history, the *Visitor* continues to serve the mission of the Columbia Union Conference by publishing “stories about worship and witness, mission and money, concerns and classrooms, services and statistics, openings and offerings, Christ-centered ministries and Christ-entered lives.”⁵

Editors

Bessie Russell, 1908; Mrs. S.M. Butler, 1909; D.D. Rees, 1909-1910; Maude Pengelly, 1910-1912; Walter C. Moffett, 1912-1913; Grace V. Purdham, 1913-1914; Emma Silber, 1914-1919; Sara K. Rudolph, 1919-1920; Emma S. Newcomer, 1920-1921; Ruth E. Melendy, 1921-1925; Genevieve Melendy, 1925; Robert B. Wheeler, 1925-1927; E.W. Tonjes, 1927-1928; Mrs. E.R. Corder, 1928; Mrs. A.J. Olson, 1928-1932; A.B. Cole, 1932-1938; Warren F. Adams, 1938-1968; Morten Juberg, 1969-1973; Charles R. Beeler, 1973-1976; Franklin W. Hudgins, 1977-1979; Ernest N. Wendth, 1979-1984; Ron Graybill, 1984-1986; Kermit Netteburg, 1986-1991; Richard Duerksen, 1991-1998; Monte Sahlin, 1998-2002; Celeste Ryan Blyden, 2002- .

SOURCES

Columbia Union Visitor. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Online Archives, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/Forms/AllFolders.aspx> Full text of *Welcome Visitor* (October 10, 1901 through January 8, 1908) and *Columbia Union Visitor*, all issues March 24, 1908 through June 2014, except for 2001-2005, and April through December 2006 issues.

Fitzgerald, W. J. “Another Union Conference Organized.” *ARH*, January 9, 1908.

Fitzgerald, W. J. “The Visitor: A Union Conference Paper.” *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 18, 1908.

Pedersen McClure, Charlotte. “How God Has Led in the Past: An Encouraging Visit through a Century of Columbia Union News and Views.” *Columbia Union Visitor*, November 15, 1996.

NOTES

1. Masthead, *Columbia Union Visitor*, January-February 2022, 2.
2. W. J. Fitzgerald, "Another Union Organized," *ARH*, January 9, 1908, 18.
3. W. J. Fitzgerald, "The Visitor: A Union Conference Paper," *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 18, 1908, 1.
4. Masthead, *Columbia Union Visitor*, May-June 2022, 2.
5. Charlotte Pedersen McClure, "How God Has Led in the Past: An Encouraging Visit through a Century of Columbia Union News and Views," *Columbia Union Visitor*, November 15, 1996, 6.

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