

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Faculty Publications

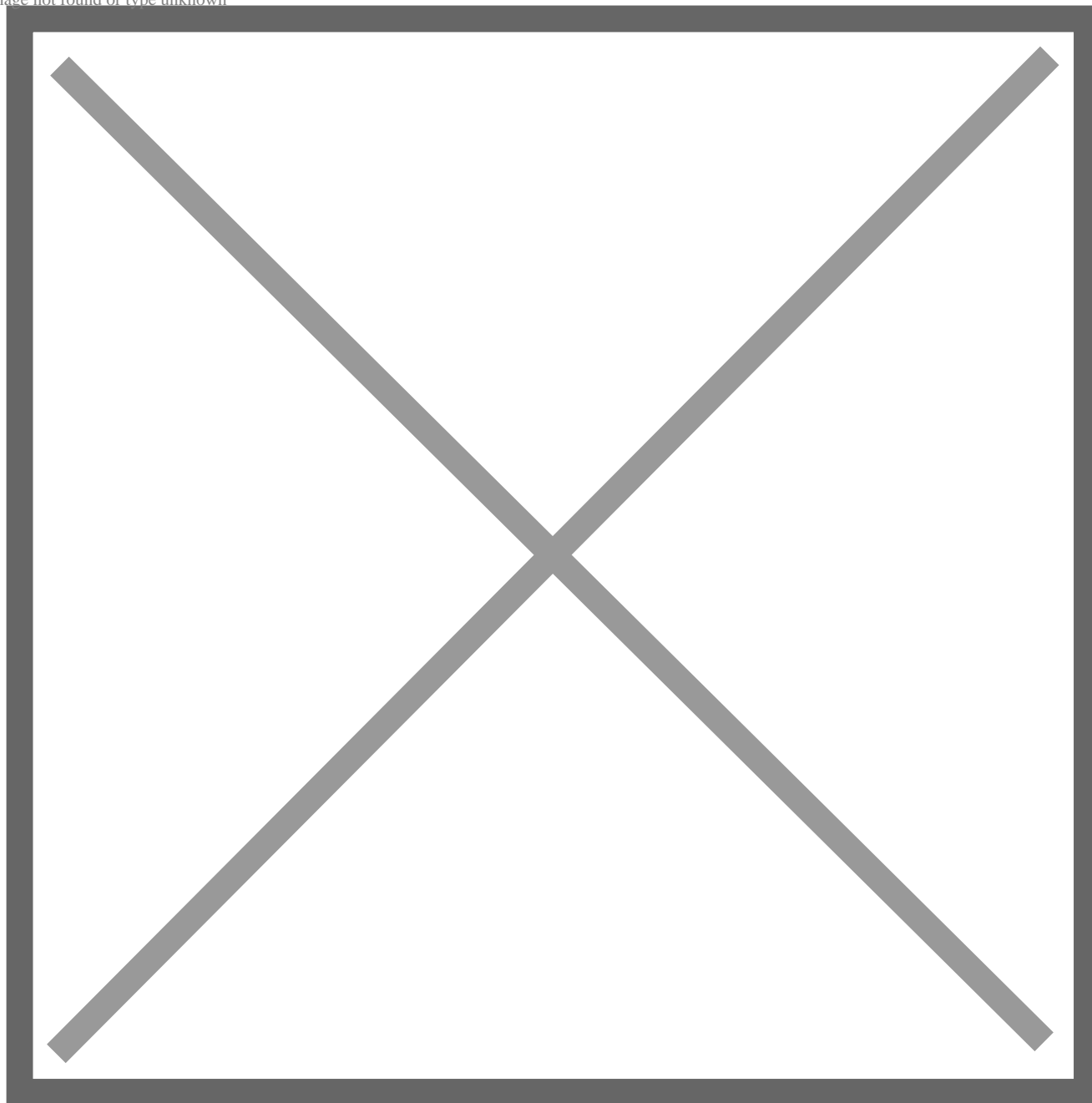
2020

Stewart, Charles Eugene (1869-1957)

Jerry A. Moon

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>

Image not found or type unknown



Stewart, Charles Eugene (1869–1957)

JERRY A. MOON

Jerry A. Moon, Ph.D., served as chair of the Church History Department in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University (2002-2016) and as editor of *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (2000-2009). He co-edited *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Review and Herald, 2013) and co-authored *The Trinity* (Review and Herald, 2002). His dissertation, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship between the Prophet and Her Son*, was published by Andrews University Press in 1993.

Charles Eugene Stewart was an Adventist physician who succeeded John Harvey Kellogg as director of the Battle

Creek Sanitarium, and authored a controversial “Blue Book” of questions about Ellen G. White.

Early Life (1869-1889)

Charles Eugene Stewart was born March 21, 1869, near London, Ontario, Canada. His father, John Paton Stewart (1846-1899), was born in Scotland, migrated to Canada with his parents when he was 8, and became a carriage maker and blacksmith in London, Ontario, where he met and married (January 1, 1868) Margaret Grieve Stewart (1849-1938).¹

Stewart was the oldest of ten children, seven boys and three girls, eight of whom were still living in 1913: William G., John E., Mrs. Arthur Brown, Robert P., Fred M., Chester A., and Ruth E. Stewart. Charles Stewart received his early education in the public schools of London, Ontario. In April 1883, when he was 14, the family moved to a farm near Moorhead, Minnesota, where he graduated from the Moorhead High School in 1889.² During those years, his father, John Paton Stewart, served as elder of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Fargo, North Dakota, a twin city to Moorhead, across the Red River.³

Medical Education, Early Career, and Marriage (1890-1898)

In 1890, Charles E. Stewart began employment as a night call boy at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, but his penmanship was so exemplary that he was soon assigned to assist the bookkeeper. Then he enrolled in and completed the men’s nursing course (1890-1891). In 1891 he entered the University of Michigan as a medical student. After receiving his MD in 1895, he returned to the Battle Creek Sanitarium as director of the pharmacy department.⁴

At the Battle Creek Sanitarium, Stewart met Elizabeth Reith (1875-1956), the daughter of John and Jean Moir Reith, farmers near London, Ontario. Like himself, she had begun her education in London, Ontario, Canada, and graduated from the nursing program at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. She eventually became the head of the nursing department. Charles Stewart and Elizabeth Reith were married in Chicago, Illinois, on June 28, 1898.⁵ They eventually had five children, Edwin R. (1903-1964), Elizabeth Margaret Stewart Mortensen (1905-1990), Jean Frances Stewart Boyd (1908-1933), Eleanor Ruth Stewart Johnson (1911-2000), Charles Eugene Jr. (1914-1991), and Isabel Agnes Stewart Newbold (1920-2014).

The “Blue Book” (1907)

In the early 1900s, as the historic conflict between the medical and ministerial leadership approached its climax, Dr. David Paulson, Dr. W. S. Sadler, and Dr. Charles E. Stewart were John Harvey Kellogg’s most visible colleagues. Paulson and Sadler led the Chicago Medical Mission, and Stewart was Kellogg’s associate in Battle Creek. Because the reliability of Ellen White’s writings became a major point of contention, she addressed an open letter to the medical leaders inviting them to “specify what their objections and criticisms are,” so she could answer them and “make plain that which seems to be intricate.”⁶ This letter elicited responses from many individuals, including the three physicians, Paulson, Sadler, and Stewart.

In reply, Ellen White personally wrote more than thirty letters and four *Review and Herald* articles.⁷ Some of the questions she referred to members of her staff, particularly W. C. White and C. C. Crisler, and a few questions she declined to answer yes or no, because, she said, “I must not make statements that can be misconstrued” by those who “try to vindicate their personal unbelief.”⁸ Paulson accepted her explanations, but Stewart felt that Ellen White’s decision not to attempt a definitive answer for some questions amounted to “dodging the issue.”⁹

Consequently, in October 1907, with help from A. R. Henry, Stewart published an 89-page booklet, known as the “Blue Book,” because it had a blue cover and the title was too cumbersome for easy use. The book placed quotations from Ellen White in parallel columns to highlight apparent contradictions and to demonstrate literary dependence. It reiterated some well-known issues and placed in writing some charges that had previously been circulated only as rumors.¹⁰

W. C. White, W. W. Prescott, and General Conference president A. G. Daniells discussed Stewart’s letter by mail and in a council meeting at Elmshaven, Ellen White’s home near St. Helena, California, in January 1908. Ellen White compared Stewart to earlier dissidents B. F. Snook and William H. Brinkerhoff, and advised against attempting any comprehensive reply. The committee subsequently noted that some of the questions were so trivial that a formal response was unnecessary, and that others had been answered in an earlier publication. A few topics—such as the use of milk, eggs, and butter; drug medications; the rebuilding of the Battle Creek Sanitarium; the charge of plagiarism; and the proper use of tithes—were considered important enough to be addressed individually in small pamphlets or other brief writings.¹¹

The subsequent separation of Kellogg and Stewart from the denomination made the sanitarium board the virtual owners of the institution, but without its denominational base of support, the sanitarium began to decline. As the Adventists developed a new medical school in Loma Linda, California, the American Medical Missionary College affiliated with the Battle Creek Sanitarium lost enrollment and closed in 1910.

By 1927, Kellogg was semi-retired and Stewart succeeded him as head of the sanitarium and chair of its board.

When Stewart promoted the building of an opulent 14-story addition to the sanitarium at a cost of over \$3 million, Kellogg opposed the risk, but was no longer in control. The lavishly furnished tower addition dominated the Battle Creek skyline, but a year later the stock market crashed, destroying the wealth of those whose patronage had sustained the sanitarium, and signaling the onset of the Great Depression. The patient census dropped by two-thirds, from 1,300 to 300, and in 1933 the sanitarium went into bankruptcy.¹²

It emerged from bankruptcy in 1938, with Stewart as director of the sanitarium and president of its board of trustees, but the institution was still deeply in debt. In 1940, he wished to retire, but the board rejected his resignation. By 1941, he had begun an extended vacation in Vista, California, that signaled his approaching retirement. In 1942, the huge Battle Creek Sanitarium building was sold to the United States Army, becoming the Percy Jones Army Hospital. The sale enabled the institution to retire its debts and move operations to a smaller building nearby.¹³

Later Life (1942-1957)

During his retirement years, the Stewarts lived near Los Angeles, California, where their youngest daughter, Isabel Stewart, completed nurses training at the Glendale Sanitarium and married a young doctor, Robson Newbold, MD, a graduate of the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University). Most of their other children also lived in southern California. Elizabeth Reith Stewart died December 3, 1956, and Charles E. Stewart, MD, died on May 24, 1957, in Glendale, California.¹⁴

Contribution

Dr. C. E. Stewart was one of the first Seventh-day Adventists to earn an MD from a recognized medical school (University of Michigan). He was closely associated with Dr. J. H. Kellogg and climaxed almost fifty years of service at the Battle Creek Sanitarium by succeeding Kellogg as its director. He and Kellogg both contributed to the success of the Battle Creek Sanitarium during its denominational years, but their roles in separating it from the church also contributed to the later decline of the sanitarium. The "Blue Book" may be seen as Stewart's rationale for giving his loyalty to Kellogg and the "San" above his loyalty to the denomination. Nevertheless, Stewart's children and descendants include many physicians, nurses, pastors, and missionaries who gave and continue to give notable service to the Seventh-day Adventist church.¹⁵

SOURCES

Breed, A. J. "John Paton Stewart obituary." *ARH*, December 19, 1899.

"California Death Index, 1940-1997." FamilySearch.org. October 13, 2019. Department of Public Health Services, Sacramento. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2015582>

"Dr. Charles E. Stewart." *Michigan Alumnus*, March 8 1941. Accessed September 16, 2019.

https://books.google.com/books?id=U_nhAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA321&lpq=PA321&dq=Dr.+Charles+Eugene+Stewart,+M.D.++biogra

Gardner, Washington. *History of Calhoun County, Michigan; a narrative account of its historical progress, its people, and its principal interests*. Chicago and New York: Lewis Pub. Co., 1913.

Hoehn, Jack. "The Blue Book." *Adventist Today*, June 5, 2014. Accessed September 16, 2019, <http://atoday.org/the-blue-book>.

"John Paton Stewart, 1846-1899." Accessed June 30, 2017, Ancestry.com.

Lake, Jud. *Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010.

"Margaret Grieve, 1849-1938." Accessed June 30, 2017, Ancestry.com.

Markel, Howard. *The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek* New York: Pantheon Books, 2017.

Moon, Jerry Allen. *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship between the Prophet and Her Son*. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 19. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993.

Stewart, Charles E. *A Response to an Urgent Testimony from Mrs. Ellen G. White Concerning Contradictions, Inconsistencies and Other Errors in Her Writings* ["Blue Book."]. Battle Creek, Mich.: Liberty Missionary Society, 1907.

Stewart, Charles E. Charles E. Stewart to W.C. White, October 22, 1906. GC Archives, RG 11, 1906, W. C. White, folder 2.

Stewart, Phil, ed. *The Government Years at the Battle Creek Federal Center*. Battle Creek, MI: Battle Creek Federal Center, 1999.

A Tour through the Past and Present of the Battle Creek Federal Center. Battle Creek, MI: Battle Creek Federal Center, 1987.

Moon, Jerry. "Blue Book," "Chicago Building Vision," "Chicago Medical Mission," and "Stewart, Charles E." *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*

. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, co-editors. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013.

Poirier, Tim. "To Those Who Are Perplexed...." Ellen White's response to questions raised by her critics, including "The Blue Book." Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference, n.d.

White, Arthur L. "Ellen White Comes to Her Own Defense." Chapter 7 in *Ellen G. White: The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982.

White, Ellen G. [Four articles in *Review and Herald* in reply to questions she received in response to her Letter of March 30, 1906, "To Those Who Are Perplexed Regarding the Testimonies...."]: "A Messenger (July 26, 1906). "Hold Fast the Beginning of Your Confidence" (August 9, 1906. "Correct Views Concerning the Testimonies: A Reply to an Inquirer [part 1]" (August 30, 1906). "Correct Views Concerning the Testimonies: A Reply to an Inquirer [part 2]" (September 6, 1906).

White, Ellen G. Letter "To Those Who Are Perplexed Regarding the Testimonies Relating to the Medical Missionary Work." March 30, 1906. Letter 120, 1906. Accessed September 16, 2019, Ellen G. White Writings, <https://egwwritings.org>.

White, Ellen G. Ellen G. White to David Paulson, June 14, 1906. Letter 206, 1906. Quoted in *Selected Messages* 1:24-31. Accessed September 16, 2019, Ellen G. White Writings, <https://egwwritings.org>.

[White, W. C.] "Memorandum of Plans Agreed Upon in Dealing with 'The Blue Book.'" February 1908. GCA, RG 261, F. M. Wilcox Reference Files, Folder: "E. G. White Testimonies of Special Interest."

NOTES

1. Washington Gardner, *History of Calhoun County, Michigan; a narrative account of its historical progress, its people, and its principal interests* (Chicago and New York: Lewis Pub. Co., 1913), 862.?
2. Ibid.?
3. A. J. Breed, "John Paton Stewart obituary," *AHR*, December 19, 1899, 14.?
4. Gardner, 862; "Dr. Charles E. Stewart." *Michigan Alumnus*, March 8, 1941, 320, 322, accessed September 16, 2019, https://books.google.com/books?id=U_nhAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA321&dq=Dr.%20Charles%20Eugene%20Stewart%2C%20M.D.%20%20biography&pg=PA321#v=onepage&q=Dr.%20Charles%20Eugene%20Stewart%2C%20M.D.%20%20biography.?
5. Gardner, 862.?
6. Ellen G. White, Letter "To Those Who Are Perplexed Regarding the Testimonies Relating to the Medical Missionary Work," March 30, 1906, Letter 120, 1906, accessed September 16, 2019, Ellen G. White Writings, <https://egwwritings.org>.?
7. The four *Review and Herald* articles: "A Messenger," July 26, 1906, 8-9; "Hold Fast the Beginning of Your Confidence," August 9, 1906, 8; "Correct Views Concerning the Testimonies: A Reply to an Inquirer [part 1]," August 30, 1906, 8-9, and part 2, September 6, 1906, 7-8.?
8. Ellen G. White to David Paulson, June 14, 1906, Letter 206, 1906, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:29-30, accessed September 16, 2019, Ellen G. White Writings, <https://egwwritings.org>.?
9. Charles E. Stewart to W. C. White, October 22, 1906, GCA, RG 11, 1906, W. C. White, folder 2.?
10. Charles E. Stewart, *A Response to an Urgent Testimony from Mrs. Ellen G. White Concerning Contradictions, Inconsistencies and Other Errors in Her Writings* ["Blue Book."] (Battle Creek, MI: Liberty Missionary Society, 1907).?
11. [White, W. C.], "Memorandum of Plans Agreed Upon in Dealing with 'The Blue Book,'" February 1908, GCA, RG 261, F. M. Wilcox Reference Files, Folder: "E. G. White Testimonies of Special Interest." See also Jerry Allen Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship between the Prophet and Her Son*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 19 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), 317-323.?
12. Howard Markel, *The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2017), 370-373.?
13. Phil Stewart, ed., *The Government Years at the Battle Creek Federal Center* (Battle Creek, MI: Battle Creek Federal Center, 1999), 6-7; *A Tour through the Past and Present of the Battle Creek Federal Center* (Battle Creek, MI: Battle Creek Federal Center, 1987), 13.?
14. California Death Index, 1940-1997, Charles Eugene Stewart, Department of Public Health Services, Sacramento, FamilySearch.org. Accessed October 13, 2019. <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VP8F-4HJ>.?
15. Jack Hoehn, "The Blue Book," *Adventist Today*, June 5, 2014, accessed September 16, 2019, <http://atoday.org/the-blue-book>.?

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000