

A Portrait of GLENN CLARK
{As suggested by a writing of Thelma Lee}
by G. Jean Anderson

Who was Glenn Clark? When did he live? What did he do and how did he think? Miles Clark, Glenn's son, writes this about his father: "If I am asked who Glenn Clark was and what he did, I answer that he was a creative artist of life who believed in the brotherhood of man in Christ and believed in prayer as the perfect communion with God."

Today, we know Glenn Clark as the founder of Camps Farthest Out, a Christ-centered interdenominational, non-denominational spiritual growth movement which holds conferences and retreats all over the world.

Glenn believed in God as the central working force of the universe. He believed God is Spirit, to be worshipped in Spirit. He believed in the spiritual greatness of every man and woman. He believed in the coming of the kingdom of God and the possible present reality of the kingdom of heaven today in the hearts of humankind. He believed in prayer. Glenn Clark regarded himself as a message bearer and retained a sense of humility about his life and work. He wanted to awaken people to their divine heritage as children of God.

Glenn began life in Des Moines, Iowa, on March 13, 1882. He was one of eight children and apparently enjoyed a happy family life. He attended Grinnell College in Iowa, where he participated in track events and played football. He had a prevailing interest in writing. After graduation, he continued his education at Harvard University and earned a master's degree in English literature. In 1912, Glenn and his wife, Louise, moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he joined the faculty of Macalester College.

As a college professor, not only did Glenn fulfill his duties in the classroom, he also coached the track team of the school. In addition, he taught Sunday school and had regular prayer gatherings with his students. On one occasion, a young man asked that Glenn teach them to pray as he did; the young people had observed that their instructor's prayers always seemed to be answered.

As a result of this request, Glenn Clark began to analyze what he did when he prayed. His period of study and self-examination led to his writing his book, *THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE*. It was to be the first of many volumes on the life of the spirit, and sets out Glenn's thoughts about how to pray and the power of prayer.

Public response to *THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE* was overwhelming. People from every denomination and creed wrote, asking Glenn Clark to visit their church or group; he received innumerable invitations to speak to Christian organizations. He began to address young people at conferences and camps, where he observed that most of the emphasis was social and intellectual. He also noted that frequently the leaders of the meetings were not in harmony, and that this lack of agreement served to create hard feelings and misunderstandings. Glenn has written, "I yearned to see a camp where people ceased merely talking of and about God and the Kingdom — words that too often implied separation — and started immersing themselves in God and the Kingdom, in every area of their lives."

The first CFO —Camp Farthest Out —was held at Lake Koronis, Minnesota, in the summer of 1930. It was a true training ground of the spirit, a place where individuals from every walk of life, from many churches and faiths, gathered to become “athletes of the spirit.” The Camps Farthest Out have grown through the years to the point that now there are over 60 camps each year in North America and more than 120 camps and/or retreats throughout the rest of the world.

Glenn Clark was a mystic, a visionary, a man whose faith in God and in humankind was unshakable. One of his deep beliefs was that all things work together for good when we are in tune with the Divine Plan. He said this:

“I believe that my disappointments are God’s appointments.”

“I believe that to see harmony in that which is without brings harmony in that which is within.”

“I believe in praying for ever-increasing capacity to love and serve [others] and for greater worthiness to be loved and served by them in return.”

“I believe that the gifts of God are many thousands of times greater than I am now capable of receiving, and that I should therefore pray to increase my capacity both to receive and to give.”

“I believe that God’s Plan for life is a healthy, happy expression for the good of all.”

“I believe that the chief essential of life is to keep in touch with the Father, and let the divinity that is in me manifest through me.”

Glenn Clark lived his life in an attempt to follow the great example of Jesus. As he studied that unique life, he wrote, “Nothing was petty, nothing was trivial, nothing was without meaning in Jesus’ world, for all things combined to reveal the Kingdom....” Glenn added, “There is one prayer I pray regularly every morning of my life — that I may abide in the Kingdom of Heaven every moment of the day and inspire others to abide there, also.”

Glenn Clark’s legacy is the Camps Farthest Out, numerous books and pamphlets and his own inspiring example of how we might live in the Kingdom of God moment by moment. He traveled the world, sharing his God-given vision with people of many countries and races. His earthly life ended on August 16, 1956, yet the work he began lives on.

Glenn’s old friend, Starr Daily, wrote, “Out of all the spiritual truth and counsel given to the world by Glenn Clark, we have sought to find the one gem which more than any other has been the finest legacy left to us by him.” He found two. The first was: “*The answer resides in the question.*” The second was: “*What you are willing to relinquish, you are able to keep.*”

Miles Clark tells us, “All his life Glenn had asked the question, ‘How can I find my God?’ He found the answer in the question and in the relinquishing of the kingdom on earth for an eternal kingdom in heaven. He had, at last, given up all he had built and dreamed, and he will keep it forever.”