V. MORE PROMOTION, MORE EDITING, MORE WRITING

The General Conference of 1918 also endorsed a Christian Education Campaign and ordered that the last two years of the quadrennium be devoted thereto. The goal set by the Conference included 5,000 life service volunteers, $13,000,000 for the schools and colleges, and $10,000,000 for Emory and Southern Methodist Universities. The Educational Commission, however, increased the goal to $33,000,000 because of the large influx of students following the war, plus $1,000,000 for scholarships.

J. H. Reynolds, president of Hendrix College (Clark's alma mater), was Director of several of the Education Campaigns, and he invited Clark to become publicity director. This meant staying on in Nashville and in the type work that appealed to him.

Wedding Bells

In addition, he had met and dated occasionally Miss Mary Alva Yarbrough, a secretary in the Centenary Campaign office. She was the daughter of Charles H. Yarbrough of Nashville, an active and well-known Methodist layman. The friendship between Elmer and Mary Alva did not develop into romance until she returned from a visit of several months with relatives in California. Suddenly the tempo of the courtship increased, and the couple were married on August 15, 1923, before the groom's brother, Charles Newton Clark.

Too Much Literature?

Reynolds was of the opinion that the Missionary Centenary had issued too much literature and that much of it had been wasted. He felt that the same situation could be avoided only by producing materials "so attractive that they could not be ignored." While Clark did not necessarily agree with this viewpoint, he went along with the policy. He first prepared another "case book," a book of 127 pages called the Educational Survey, containing a detailed account of the needs of the various institutions.

Clark outlined a preliminary Big Givers' Campaign and for it prepared two books. One of these, entitled Immortal Monuments and Human Dividends, was elaborately illustrated and printed in five colors. Copies were never sent through the mails but were delivered personally to wealthy persons by the campaign directors and solicitors. It attracted wide attention, and while the Big Givers' Campaign did not reach its goal of $5,000,000, several pledges of $100,000 or more were secured and the total was $2,500,000.

Following up what he had done in a small way during the Missionary Centenary, Clark drew up a more elaborate scheme of newspaper advertising. He prepared forty full-page advertisements and went to New York and had them illustrated by competent artists.
These were published in a book called *Educational Advertising*. The book was sent to all the newspapers in the south and southwest with the request that local advertisers be asked to underwrite them. The ads were supplied in plate or mat form. The result was all that could be desired. Most of the newspapers published one or more of the advertisements and some used nearly all of them. Thus the territory was covered with advertisements which would have cost millions of dollars if paid for at regular rates.

**Big Name Promotion**

Clark also secured endorsements of the Christian Education Movement from President Woodrow Wilson, General John J. Pershing, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, and numerous other prominent personages, and these were used in the advertisements and printed in a booklet entitled, *The Admiration of the Great*. He also produced a motion picture on the campus of Randolph-Macon Woman's College called, "Out of the Christian College." It showed a country boy and girl arriving at a college in horse-drawn buggies and followed their development into outstanding leaders as they progressed through the institution. The picture was not an outstanding success, but it was not such a failure as "The Wayfarer" made at the Columbus Celebration.

The Board of Education published a little bulletin which Clark enlarged and changed to the *Christian Education Monthly*. It was printed in color and became the official organ of the Christian Education Movement.

In spite of Clark's creativity and hard work, the Christian Education Movement was not as successful as was the Missionary Centenary. This was not surprising he felt, since the people were still paying on pledges made two years earlier. The report in May 1922, showed that $17,847,652 had been pledged while $5,850,000 had been secured locally by the institutions themselves. This was around $10,000,000 short of the top amount sought by the Commission.

**A Book on the War**

During these years of campaigning, Clark was approached by George H. Doran about the possibility of gathering together Clark's articles on the war and issuing them in book form. One of Doran's agents conferred with Clark, and the result was publication of a volume in 1919 called *Social Studies of the War*. It was one of the first of the war books, and met with good reception by readers and critics. Perhaps largely due to this volume, Elmer Clark was listed as an author in *Who's Who in America*—before he was thirty-five years old. His sketch appeared continuously in *Who's Who* in succeeding years until his death—always under the single category of "author."
At the conclusion of the financial campaigns Clark continued for a time as a secretary with the Board of Education, although Beau-
champ asked him to return to the Centenary Commission and work on the collection of pledges. In 1922, when Beau-
champ was elected bishop, Elmer T. was made publicity director under Missionary Centenary Director W. G. Cram. Their offices were in the Doctors’ 
Building, Nashville, Tennessee, which had been purchased with Centenary funds, and they were in constant touch with the secre-
taries of the Board of Missions. District missionary institutes were set up in all of the annual conferences, and Clark traveled over the 
church, promoting district meetings and assisting with the collect-
on of pledges.

A Stream of Books

During this period, Clark continued to engage in considerable 
literary activity. The Home Mission Secretaries asked him to write a 
study book in 1924, which he did under the title of Healing Ourselves. In this connection he conceived the idea of sending study 
books on consignment to the pastors, allowing them to return all 
unsold copies. This plan was used for a book called The Task Ahead, 
which he wrote in 1925. Although this was a cloth-bound book and lavishly illustrated with charts and graphs, because of large volume 
the price was only twenty-five cents. Around one hundred thousand 
copies were sold, and this large a circulation resulted in a profit in spite of the low price.

In 1926 Clark wrote a book on stewardship and missions under 
the title of Thy Kingdom Come, and the process of distribution was 
repeated with equally good results. Clark had thought this plan might succeed for four or five years, but when he turned the enter-
tprise over to his successor a quarter of a century later there had 
never been a deficit and the large circulation continued year by year, 
reaching a quarter of a million in 1934. Clark wrote several of these 
later books, some of which were published under the names of other 
persons, with their consent, of course.

Offers from Secular Journalism

These books and the distribution plan came to the attention of 
George H. Doran, who had published Clark’s first book. He proposed to Clark the publishing of an annual mission study book for all de-
nominations, changing certain sections and inserting material about 
the work of the particular denomination using it. He said the weak-
ness of the books put out by the Missionary Education Movement 
(now Friendship Press) was that they contained no denominational 
material. Doran offered the editorship of such a series to Elmer, proposing to set up a special department of his business for their 
publication and distribution. Clark thought the idea was a good one
and agreed to cooperate, but told Doran that it would be difficult to enlist the support of the denominations. This proved to be the case and nothing came of the plan.

Clark's prominence in these financial campaigns—and probably the appearance of his several books—brought several offers of positions to him. The first was a proposal from Bishop McMurry to send him to Rayne Memorial Church in New Orleans. The salary was nearly twice as much as he was receiving, but he declined the offer largely because he was in the midst of one of the campaigns. But, in addition, since he had moved almost annually for some years, he feared a bad impression would be made if he left the work again because the salary was larger.

Another offer that came to him was the editorship of the Literary Digest, at a salary five times what he was receiving. He went to New York and found the magazine was in financial trouble, so he declined. The Digest did not survive much longer. He was also called to New York to interview the attorney of the owner or backer of the Christian Herald. He was not actually offered the editorship but was "sounded out" on the subject. He found it also was in trouble, and it was saved by becoming a monthly instead of a weekly publication. Then he was approached about joining a firm of financial counsellors or of going to New York and establishing his own publicity office. All these he declined in spite of the much larger remuneration offered.

The success of the Centenary Campaign and the relative success of the Christian Education Campaign were decisive factors in Clark's future career, for these experiences launched him in editorial/promotional work that both brought him a sense of achievement and satisfaction, and revealed his talent for such work. The offer of several other jobs following his work in these two campaigns gave him confidence in his ability in such fields, and as a result he continued in editorial and promotional work in the years that followed.