

CONCORDEX™
of
The URANTIA® Book

THIRD EDITION

Clyde Bevell

CLYDE BEDELL ESTATE • SANTA BARBARA • CALIFORNIA

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REMINISCENCES OF AN EARLY FORUM MEMBER

AN INTERVIEW WITH CLYDE BEDELL

The following article almost wholly consists of transcribed excerpts from a taped interview with Clyde Bedell conducted by Barbara Kulieke in 1983, a little over one year before Clyde's death.

Clyde Bedell joined the Forum in 1924 before the Urantia Papers had begun arriving. Clyde remained a member of this group for over 30 years until it was replaced by the Urantia Brotherhood and First Urantia Society in Chicago. Clyde was a member of the Brotherhood until his death in 1985. He thus had over 60 years of involvement with the Fifth Epochal Revelation of truth to our planet.

Clyde first related how he came to be involved in the Forum:

"I was living in Texas, in Dallas, in 1921-22. My mother who had been down there with me for the entire summer preceding had gone back north . . . and she wrote that her doctor wanted her to have an exploratory operation. Well, that frightened me. We were very close. I quit my job and went north. I wanted to be on hand if that were done. It was and she was found to have cancer and died quite soon after that.

"Meanwhile, as soon as I got up there, I went to look for a job in Chicago . . . I responded to an ad for an advertising agency wanting a copywriter . . . Well, I immediately made a good friend in this agency by the name of Lister Alwood, a man much my senior but a gifted writer. And we became very close friends . . . We would write things about emotional response and that sort of stuff. He was a religious man, as I was.

"Before I left [the agency] . . . a girl came there to work by the name of Florence Evans . . . I asked her for a date and was given a rain check which I never cashed in because I left pretty suddenly . . . Lou Hennig offered me a job in San Francisco . . . I joined him in San Francisco. I was there for two years . . . It was a great place. And a great job.

"Then I received from my friend Lister Alwood a long telegram . . . He had applied for a job, had not got it and decided from the interview that . . . perhaps I was better suited to it than he . . . I applied and I got the job . . . I arrived in Chicago and of course the first person I saw was Lister Alwood . . . I had Sunday din-

ner at his home, I would imagine a day or two after I got there . . . He asked me if I would like to go Sunday afternoon with him to a Forum meeting at the home of an eminent Chicago psychiatrist.

"I asked a few questions and he said, 'Well, Sadler is a fantastic speaker; he talks about all sorts of things. Discussion may go in any direction. But he's a fascinating, interesting, brilliant man.' . . . I said it sounded great, I'd like to go. So that first Sunday I had dinner at Lister's home and we then went to Dr. Sadler's Forum at 533 Diversey.

"It was extremely interesting — I have no idea what it was all about or what he talked about now. Can't remember. But I do know that the second person I saw in Chicago was Florence Evans whose address I had . . . I called her . . . Made a date and had a date at once . . . It must have gone fairly well because at the end of the [my] first Forum meeting, which was, I think the 24th of September, 1924, I went to Dr. Sadler and said, 'I wonder if I can bring a young woman into this Forum meeting next Sunday.' . . . So the next Sunday which was on . . . The first Sunday in October, . . . Florence went to the Forum with me and from late September, early October, 1924, we have been identified with either the forerunner of the movement, or the Urantia movement itself. They're interesting circumstances that I would meet Alwood and Florence in this one advertising agency, leave it for two years, Alwood be instrumental in my coming back, he being in the Sadler Forum and then the girl I married two years later. . .

"Incidentally, I should mention the fact that shortly after I joined the Forum, Lister Alwood was through with the Forum . . . There was quite a little turnover. There were no limits on what could be discussed. I think a good many people in the very early Forum felt years later they had been circumstanced into it. If that is the case, what occurred before papers started coming . . . was of no moment. It's a strange thing but . . . many things which you think today we should have remembered, we do not remember, probably because we were not supposed to remember them. What year did the papers begin to come through? I don't know. If we had known that such a thing as an epochal revelation was coming

through, we would have kept diaries . . . I have concluded . . . that we weren't supposed to."

Clyde talks about the Forum process:

"When a paper was read to us for the first time, we were then asked to ask questions in writing and bring them in the next week which we would do. Mr. Kellogg would sort them out, eliminate duplicates, and so on. And then maybe six months later, the paper would come back again modified and amplified by the answers to the questions we would ask.

"I believe, Florence did too, and I'm sure some other oldtimers did, that there were communications coming through which may have been a testing on the part of the revelators or unseen friends . . . testing whether or not this group would react rationally or fanatically or what not to some psychic phenomena, to something occult. We had reason to believe in those old days that there were several groups in the United States that were being checked and tested. We were quite certain that there was a group in Omaha that was being tested, checked, probably to see whether or not the leader of the group was the kind of person who could be trusted with such a revelation, and whether or not the members were also the type that would react rationally and reasonably. And of course in my opinion, no one better than Dr. Sadler could have been found. He was a fantastic man.

"The Contact Commission were all Forum members, that is the few who went with Sadler sometimes when the papers were coming through . . . They were all Forum members . . . Dr. William, Dr. Lena, Bill Sadler, his son, the three Kelloggs, one of whom, the daughter, I think, was there very rarely. And then a doctor whose name I can't recall who was in the Forum. I have it in my papers somewhere.

"The papers were revised until Paper 196 had been presented, questions asked, and then answers brought into the text which would amplify and so forth."

Regarding secrecy:

"Anything in the form of an important document or paper that supposedly has a mysterious source, but that is to be ultimately a completely integrated

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The URANTIA Book

SYNERGIST

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A Forum Dedicated to Planetary Outreach

Dedicated to Independent Outreach Two Pioneers: Clyde Bedell * M. Sek Seklemian

Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings. ...These spirit-born souls will quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world. [2082:last]

Clearly, both Clyde and Sek would not have wanted attention paid to the plain fact that they were such leaders solely depending on Jesus' teachings, nor would they have stood still when acknowledged for this kind of exemplary leadership. Nevertheless, their well-recognized work was necessary for the evolutionary progress and the forward movement towards disseminating The URANTIA Book and its most important teachings on this spiritually-needy world.

Who were these brothers, and how could they so fearlessly and consistently minister to their fellows and support them in their personal transformation? Without thoughtlessly copying how they ministered, how can we restate in our lives what worked for them so magnificently?

Clyde Bedell was born in 1898. When he was a young man of 26 he joined Drs. William and Lena Sadler's Forum in Chicago. Clyde remained a Forum member, and when The URANTIA Book became finally published in 1955, he became one of the first true disseminators of this epochal revelation for planetary uplift.

M. 'Sek' Seklemian also served some eighty years plus on this earth before he was graduated. He knew Clyde professionally for decades. At about the same age Clyde joined the Forum, Sek gave up "on standard churches

including 'off-beat' religions". It was not until "the departure of my loved [wife] into the unknown" that Sek's spiritual truth-seeking adventure began. Five years later, in 1977, Clyde enclosed a sheet of paper describing The URANTIA Book to his comrade. "Who knows--maybe I should look into this", Sek thought, "I've known Clyde for years. If he's involved it can't be all bad."¹

Equipped with The URANTIA Book, and naturally, with The Concordex of The URANTIA Book, Sek left Santa Barbara on a Saturday morning and flew to New York to prepare for a big promotional presentation the coming Monday. "Sunday evening I put down the Book. I had not slept a wink or paused to eat. I hadn't done a stitch of my planned work either. That evening I wrote a note. 'Dear Clyde: You successfully ruined my weekend.'²

How many weekends did Clyde "ruin" over his many years of independent ministry? And how many more of his spiritual brothers and sisters did Sek consequently empower with our great teachings? We don't know numbers, Clyde and Sek did not even care about numbers. They fearlessly dedicated their life's work to finding the many who are now ready and hungry for the URANTIA papers and their teachings.

Fearlessly? Yes, Sek told us one study group night that he totally believed that his heavenly Father would not put him in any situation he could not handle together with the Father. That pure faith was a result of living the teachings in his daily life. He listened to Jesus, he followed his inner guidance, and he dedicated himself to independent outreach.

Said Jesus, "...Let all mankind benefit from the overflow of your loving spiritual ministry, enlightening intellectual communion, and uplifting social service; but none of these humanitarian labors, nor all of them, should be permitted to take the place of proclaiming the gospel. These mighty ministrations are the social by-products of the still more mighty and sublime ministrations and transformations wrought in the heart of the kingdom believer by the Spirit of Truth and by the personal realization that the faith of a spirit-born man confers the assurance of living fellowship with the eternal God." [1931:2]

"The Gods have decreed, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' and said your Master Son, 'He who would be the greatest among you let him be server of all.' " [316:5]

Clyde was such a server. He served us all through the monumental labor of love involved in creating the handiest tool in the study of the Urantia papers, the Concordex of The URANTIA Book. While severely impaired by failing eyesight, he assiduously worked on improving and enlarging the third and forthcoming edition of the Concordex. For him the Gods had decreed; for him his Master had charged him; he listened and followed his own inner guidance.

You can express that same desire for outreach and service to your fellows, harmonizing with the leadings of your "divine lover" [2094:1], in your own pace, your own way and according to your own capacity for increasing faithfulness and diminishing fearfulness. Service is a very personal and powerful thing. It must be based on independent decisions, your own decisions, more and more decisions. Service is at one and the same time a very social thing. It can only be done in a social setting, it is most often effectively done in a group, due to the synergistic effect. But whether individual or group, your service in working for the Kingdom, must be in harmony with your own inner guidance. It can't be legislated. The harmonizing working group may offer wisdom, still, the individual must act.

For instance, it appears that it has become quite fashionable for some readers to accept the conjecture that the world is not

ready for The URANTIA Book. Therefore, it has been concluded, we should not do anything public, stay away from public ministry, refrain from public outreach to acquaint sisters and brothers with our superb teachings. Never mind what the Book teaches!

" '...You should no longer say it is such and such a time until the harvest. ...I tell you the fields are already white for the harvest. He who reaps receives wages and gathers this fruit to eternal life; consequently the sowers and the reapers rejoice together.' " [1615:2]

"The world is now ready for The URANTIA Book!" This quote from one of our highly theologically trained local readers is in complete conformity with our Master's assertion from some 1960 years ago.

Said Sek, "[People] are crying for help. How can we sit still? We have what the world is searching for and how can we reach them? How can we have these glad tidings of great joy and not explode? I heard one of our readers say, 'It is the message of the Book ... you don't need to mention the Book at all. As long as you give them hope and love, and the essence of God's message.' I say, 'Okay, let's do that. Let's forever be ready to give the glad tidings. But let's do more.' ... You talk to a man about the glad tidings, and you give him food for a

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