

## 2011 Report of the President of The Urantia Book Fellowship

The annual President's report is a wonderful opportunity for reflection. As Secretary Cristina Seaborn reminds us, our work requires good people to contribute their "time, talent, and treasure," and The Fellowship has received all of these in generous portions in 2011. Some highlights of our activities this year:

The International Fellowship committee started out the year by sending Charlene Morrow and Chair Buck Weimer to India for the Kolkata Book Fair. In 2011 we also sent our intrepid team of international workers to South Korea, Ecuador, and Ghana. The International Fellowship committee sponsored our Spanish Reader Service duo, Dolores Nice and Nelida Oliver, who facilitate reader services and outreach in Latin America.

Andrea Barnes accepted a position as our Volunteer Coordinator. Since then, Andrea has been actively putting people to work and connecting readers with each other. She has been instrumental in expanding the Fellowship's presence online in various social media forums.

The Uversa Press committee, chaired by John Hay, initiated a contest to design new cover art for The Fellowship's next edition of The Urantia Book. The winning artist was Gary Tonge of Great Britain, whose cover design was chosen by Fellowship membership from among a field of twenty-seven entries. The new cover will be launched in the spring of 2012, on a revised printing featuring the new standard reference text.

The Fellowship's International Conference 2011, chaired by Susan Cook, was held on the campus of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. The Truthseekers and the Youth and Young Adult subcommittee (a subset of the Outreach committee) were visibly active in many conference presentations this summer, including workshops and two plenary sessions. The inspiring presence of these two groups of young men and women at IC'11 influenced the historic creation of the new Youth and Young Adult standing committee, voted into existence at the Summer meeting of the General Council and now ably chaired by Tony Finstad. This is the first new standing committee created in Fellowship history. Kudos to Tom Choquette, chair of Outreach, who first drew this dynamic group of young people into our midst.

The Executive Committee met with representatives of Urantia Association International in Chicago for the second year in a row. We witnessed the launch of the new study group portal, an online listing of Urantia Book study groups created in collaboration with the UAI, the Foundation, and The Fellowship. We began a long-overdue upgrade of our website and database systems. The Executive Committee also unanimously approved sending a proposed "Declaration of Cooperation," drafted by Buck Weimer, to the boards of the Urantia Foundation and the UAI for their consideration.

The General Council amended the Constitution this year to allow amendments to the Constitution by a supermajority of Councilors present, rather than a supermajority of Councilors in existence. This may not seem momentous to those uninitiated in the joys of Council deliberations, but since our governing document has remained largely untouched in nearly six decades of existence, I hope this modest alteration in the amendment process will encourage future Councils to actively consider how we might reshape it to serve us more effectively going forward.

I am pleased to be able to report on the considerable amount of work we do together; yet, this report would not be complete without mentioning our growth opportunities -- areas that call out for improvement.

The Constitution needs to be followed or amended. Our procedures need to be collected in written form, accessible to everyone who works for The Fellowship. A system needs to be developed whereby the procedures are maintained and adjusted as needed.

As Councilors, we need to find a way to work effectively while we are spread out geographically. We have yet to fully embrace currently available technology to facilitate our work together. We also need to take advantage of the variations of personality among us. Our differences have the potential to create either conflict or group wisdom in our midst-- the choice is ours.

The Fellowship is still a small group, but our founders designed our structure in anticipation of becoming a large organization. Thus we work with the major drawback of small organizations (lack of resources) as well as a major drawback of large organizations (lack of nimbleness). Since our resources are small and our mechanisms are slow, we must be patient in our work and patient with each other if we hope to succeed.

In closing, I include the 2011 Thanksgiving message, to permanently archive my impression of the amazing group of people we have gathered together as the General Council.

**I AM THANKFUL:**

- ~ to be a part of an organization that makes a positive impact on the world
- ~ for Vice President John Hales, who is always ready with a thoughtful and calming perspective
- ~ for the revelators service on our behalf
- ~ for Charles Olivea's prayerful reminders and deep consideration during deliberations
- ~ for my study group's constant habit of finding humor in the human condition
- ~ for Thomas Orjala's devotion to Urantia evangelism
- ~ for Charlene Morrow's willingness to serve not only on the Council, but also in her home society and internationally
- ~ for Andrea Barnes's cheerful energy and infectious enthusiasm

~ for committee members who inspire each other to better work and more service  
~ for Emilio Coppola, a joy to work with and Jack of all trades  
~ for Susan Cook's steadfast service creating our fantastic International Conferences, and for her inspiring example in championing young women  
~ for Cece Forrester's clear insight and thoroughness  
~ for the spiritual and emotional growth that the Fellowship stimulates in me  
~ for Steve Dreier's decades of faithful service to the group  
~ for Tim Hobbs's generosity and good humor  
~ for the magic of website technology that helps us make The Urantia Book available to people any time, any where  
~ for Robert Burn's endearing humility, passionate heart, and bright business mind  
~ for Jack Kane's easygoing nature  
~ for new readers who can't wait to show you the exciting new thing they've just read  
~ for Tom Choquette... a tenderhearted powerhouse and spiritual pied piper  
~ for Avi Dogim's sense of history and service  
~ for volunteers who work all week at a job in the real world and then make time to serve the revelation when they could be resting  
~ for Michael Challis's techno-brain and his willingness to share it  
~ for Linda Buselli's faithful production of the Herald and Mighty Messenger  
~ for the joy of hearing our amazing musicians every summer  
~ for Lila Dogim and her committee's continuing Summer Study Sessions  
~ for Buck Weimer, who is willing to leave hearth and home and travel to every deep dark corner of Urantia for the revelation  
~ for a staff that feels like family  
~ for Merritt Horn's brilliant mind  
~ for Larry Bowman's dry wit and compelling writing style  
~ for workshop leaders and conference speakers who overcome their nervousness to share insights with us  
~ for Janet Falbo's pleasant demeanor and professionalism  
~ for Janet Graham's continuing counsel and enduring example  
~ for the pleasure of watching group wisdom develop during meetings  
~ for Barry Clark's talent in making translations available online  
~ for Lara Amyx's willingness to lend her empathy and insight to multiple projects and committees  
~ for the angels and midwayers who stand ready to assist our efforts  
~ for Tony Finstad, who makes everyone he interacts with feel good about themselves just by being himself, and who inspires our young people to service  
~ for Lenny Cowles's lightheartedness, and for his knack for making presentations presentable and documents attractive (and for his emoticon collection)  
~ for families who spend their precious vacation time coming to conferences and study sessions  
~ for Cristina Seaborn's gifts of joyful music and youthful exuberance  
~ for Al Lockett's willingness to help when he sees someone in need  
~ for John Hay who does double duty developing our tangible assets—our books as Uversa Press chair and our cash as Finance chair

~ for knowing that the friendships we create here will survive into eternity  
~ for Phil Taylor's help in getting us to brainstorm and vision our way into the future  
~ for Jo Ann Wiedman's sweet nature, intuition, and office skills  
~ for my very first Urantia Book, with all its margin notes and scribbles and pictures and frayed edges and cross references and smudges  
~ for Dolores Nice's faithfulness, organizational skills, love of the Master, and book recommendations  
~ for Bob Bruyn's steady dependability  
~ for the knowledge that we each have a small part to play in a very big universe  
~ for Paula Thompson, whose heart must be filled to the brim because people love her so much... oh, my dear one, what would I do without you?  
~ for the priceless look on a person's face when she finds the book for the first time  
~ for living in a time when I can type this message to you and send it to people who receive it nigh-instantaneously... What a world we live in!

I especially thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President.

To Progress!

Michelle Klimesh