

**Report of the President 2012**  
**Skating Toward the Future**  
*Michelle Klimesh*

**Focus**

The focus of my presidency has been to prepare The Fellowship for the future. Wayne Gretsky once advised, “Don’t skate to where the puck is, skate to where the puck is going to be.” This concept influenced me from the moment I first read it, nowhere more deeply than in the work of The Fellowship.

How do we position our resources so we are ready for the future? How do we prepare for a world we cannot see?

We cannot perfectly understand what the world will need from us in twenty or thirty years, but there are things we do know. We know that people who will be our workers and leaders in the future are people we consider young today. We can guess from the current rate of innovation in technology that systems will be available that have not yet been developed or even imagined. It is likely that young people will continue to adapt to new technologies more quickly than the generations that precede them, and our work and services will be shaped by this trend. These intertwined assumptions have been the basis of The Fellowship’s work during my term.

We must not fear the future, for God is already there. It is exciting time to be alive, riding the momentum created by past revelation workers, adjusting our trajectory to accept whatever it is that God has planned for us.

**Progress**

When it comes to the work of The Fellowship, Cristina Seaborn said it best... “Expect the awesome!”

During the past three years, we have accomplished several goals. Perhaps the two most immediately visible are the General Council’s vote to create the first new standing committee in our history, the Youth and Young Adult Committee; and the Executive Committee’s decision to invest in updated information technology, which will provide The Fellowship with an interactive system that integrates our website, database, and communication services.

Less noticeable but perhaps more far reaching are two subtle amendments to the Constitution. The first amendment, eliminating proxy voting, ensured that our decisions are made only by Councilors who personally participate in the deliberative process. The second, allowing Constitutional amendment by super majority of Councilors present at the meeting, served to eliminate the previous nearly insurmountable hurdle which had rendered our guiding document impervious to change.

We created a Volunteer Coordinator position to help generate interest and workers for our programs and services. The International Fellowship Committee reinstated the Spanish Reader Services position to address the steady influx of new readers of *El Libro de Urantia* in Latin America. The RUN program, the first project funded by the Strategic Visioning Committee, served as a forerunner of our pledge to support grassroots projects that align with our purposes. The Uversa Press Committee launched the current printing of the revelation with a beautifully designed new cover and the Standard Reference Text. The Policies and Procedures Committee created an Empathetic Conflict Resolution process to help us maintain and model healthy working relationships.

All of this was accomplished while maintaining excellence in those services The Fellowship has provided so well for many decades: outreach at home and abroad, our publications, the International Conference 2011, the Summer Study Sessions. As I think about the hundreds of people and thousands of hours that go into the work of the Fellowship each year, I feel proud, humbled, and amazed by us.

### **Challenges**

As far as I can tell, we have two substantial challenges to face.

The first challenge is that our actions frequently drift from our Constitution. There are paragraphs in the Constitution that are outdated and need to be amended to reflect current behavior; paragraphs that are fine but we've gotten out of the habit of following them; whole sections that defy understanding; and activities evolved over time that need to be included in the guiding document. The authority to amend the Constitution belongs to the General Council. We need to be persistent in our resolve to bring our behavior into alignment with the Constitution, and our Constitution in line with our behavior.

The second challenge is human nature itself. We have lot of work to do, and only imperfect human beings available to do it. (I've dreamt of having an angel or even a lowly midwayer accept a nomination for a position on the executive committee, but sadly I always wake up at that point...)

What was God thinking when he made such a creature as the human being? At times we expect too much of each other. We unfairly think others should work according to our personal expectations instead of according to their actual job description. Sometimes we confuse our opinions with reality, misunderstand each other, refuse to support majority decisions, work from personal agendas, make promises we don't keep, think we're smarter than everyone else, forget why confidentiality must be maintained.

Having our work force spread out from Alaska to Florida tends to compound the problem, as does our habit of using intense, infrequent meetings to conduct business.

We must accept that our work will be done with ordinary people possessing typical strengths and weaknesses. Let us hold ourselves to the highest standards we can muster, being tough with ourselves and unfailingly kind toward each other. Let us each play our own positions to the best of our abilities, and have faith that others are doing the same.

### **Opportunities**

Thankfully, our challenges arrive laden with opportunities.

Our Constitution allows for its own transformation, which means the opportunity already exists to create integrity between our guiding document and our actions. Additionally, *The Urantia Book's* detailed perspective of the operations of the superuniverses gives us a unique opportunity to incorporate universe principles into our operating systems.

Human beings have the capacity for intelligent cooperation, loving tolerance, unfailing kindness, forgiveness, diligence, courage, altruism, faithfulness, and wisdom. Individually, we have a wonderful chance to grow in the fruits of the spirit and to develop positive character traits. Through group interactions, we also have a chance to develop faith and trust in each other.

Beyond *The Urantia Book* itself, resources at our disposal include divine inspiration, time-tested systems, adequate funding, hundreds of volunteers, over a thousand members, ten thousand contacts, and a collective passion to bring the revelation to Urantia. We have the wisdom of elders, the energy of young people, our devotion to God, and our love for each other to sustain us.

If I had the power to grant a single gift to The Fellowship, it would be this quality that the apostle Thomas demonstrated:

*139:8.8 In the councils of the twelve Thomas was always cautious, advocating a policy of safety first, but if his conservatism was voted down or overruled, he was always the first fearlessly to move out in execution of the program decided upon. Again and again would he stand out against some project as being foolhardy and presumptuous; he would debate to the bitter end, but when Andrew would put the proposition to a vote, and after the twelve would elect to do that which he had so strenuously opposed, Thomas was the first to say, "Let's go!" He was a good loser. He did not hold grudges nor nurse wounded feelings. Time and again did he oppose letting Jesus expose himself to danger, but when the Master would decide to take such risks, always was it Thomas who rallied the apostles with his courageous words, "Come on, comrades, let's go and die with him."*

In closing, I would like to express appreciation to the dedicated workers who served in decades past (on whose shoulders we stand today) as well as those who helped transform group potentials into actualities during my term. On a personal note, I am

grateful for every insight gained, every lesson learned, every prayer offered, every relationship deepened. It has been an honor and a joy to serve as your President.

To Progress!

*Michelle Klimesh*  
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