

# Summary Report

from the

## Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders

*This summary report is based on reflections and observations that were recorded by the facilitators at the **Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders** at the **Parliament of the World's Religions**. The facilitation team organized these reflections into categories that became apparent from an intensive overnight review and distributed a preliminary report -- as Issue 12 of **Your Voice** newsletter -- at the final session of the **Assembly**; this report is a revised version of the preliminary report. It should be made clear that the reflections are intended to be used as raw data that the Assembly may use in any way it chooses, and are offered in the hope that they will further the dialogue that has taken place at the **Parliament** and at the **Assembly**, and in no ways should be construed as involving any approval by the **Assembly**.*

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# The Declaration of the Global Ethic

## Provisional Endorsement

### "Towards"

- ! Recommend we call the global ethic a working document, best way to ensure signatures and send message to world of cooperation.
- ! We propose the prescript above our signatures we sign, as a first step towards a global ethic without necessarily being in full agreement with all in contains and with the understanding that this begins a process to which we are committed.
- ! Declaration is the beginning of a process that is a challenge to us to improve it. State this formally in the document itself.
- ! Would sign global ethic if title change to "toward a global ethic; mention made that this is a first step; will be refined at later gathering i.e. 1994 Brahma Kumaris
- ! Add "towards" to the beginning of the title of the document
- ! Add the word "toward" to the global ethic; this would put space in the declaration to allow additional work to happen to it. See this as the beginning of the dance (when it is seen as fixed it matters too much)
- ! Suggest signing of this document with language that indicates that the undersigned are recommending it rather than endorsing it and are bringing it home with them to encourage others to discuss and debate in the efforts to bring forth awareness and commitment.
- ! There are a number who will not sign the document unless this one change is made: It needs to be indicated that this is a global ethic put forth by the Trustees of the Council, not by the Parliament.
- ! State formally that the declaration is a working document that will be improved by a specific process that is defined i.e. put phrase at top in brackets (working document)

## Proposals for Next Steps

## Recommended Changes

- ! Changes: Non-violence: condemnation of one religion by another is the reason for violence. Violence will be used to defend people from attack by aggression after all other means of negotiating have been exhausted. But even in violence, compassion will be shared. This non-violence/violence applies to individual and public situation. Non-violence should be considered mental, spiritual and physical.
- ! The term non-violence needs qualification -- having to do with it is OK in self defence, etc.
- ! In document, why was "all religions" not stated rather than the great ancient religious and ethical traditions?
- ! Radical extinction of life system on the earth not an addendum but the central issue of our times (document is in fact anthropocentric)

## Proposals for Ongoing Process of Development

- ! We propose that there should be more involvement in the development of a global ethic. this would involve more participation by all the religions communities. This would be part of the formation of the ongoing council.
- ! Scholars work on it, provision to bring it back for new signing.
- ! All issues with the document should be attributed to faith community and learning among the assembly
- ! Continued revision of the Ethic might well be done using the Delphi Technique
- ! At future parliament, create on first day drafting /editing committee from representative religions/spiritual traditions to produce document which reflects current understanding and allows for modification.
- ! Working group; The on-going development of a Declaration of a Global Ethic. A more democratic process be created in way that religious leaders participate in its development.

- ! Need to prove to the rest of the world that spiritual and religious leaders can

come to an understanding; hence need to establish where we CAN AGREE and sign this document and agree to form committee with representation on traditions which disagree & dialogue on these differences to enhance document.

- ! Have the Chicago Council incorporate itself with due regard to representation for the express purpose of taking forward the extremely important work of clarifying the consensus of a global ethic. This committee will work as long as needed on this. This committee would be very substantial. It would have legal representation, professional representation and religious leaders and when they had completed this interreligious job, they would plan the next assembly in about two years.
- ! Set up task force comprised of 21-25 participants from council and assembly-global participation if possible- all working towards a global ethic based on the uniqueness of oneness in diversity. (global scope of civilization) community of the earth. Need new ethic/culture to contain that vision- bringing us closer to the source- the supreme source. We want a permanent body to meet every 4-5 months. Committee to study the most effective models of venue and to utilize these models. Draft discussion regarding the most important issues of our time: violence, homelessness, AIDS, disease, sexual preferences
- ! Take the Bangalore Revisions into consideration and incorporate them into the document.
- ! Second drafting committee be formally created by the Assembly. Small group start by taking revisions from Bangalore into considerations; main job is to gather
- ! In the future, the continuing development of the Ethic can be better if it includes both members of the assembly and members of faith communities not currently represented
- ! A group be created to describe the core values held in common by the religious traditions of the world.

- ! Look at verses in our own holy book for reference to Brotherhood, all on family.
- ! Urge wide discussion: Development of study materials & processes to support study and dialogue towards possible adoption.

### **Global Ethic process**

- ! If some sign who represent religious communities, communities will hold us responsible for language such as: non-violence (would prefer non-aggression) or equal partnership (would prefer equitable). We might be seen as diluting our faith.
- ! The declaration should be condensed into a brief statement, translated into many languages and printed in attractive form suitable for framed posters and small pamphlets for mass distribution.

### **Opinions about the Declaration**

#### **Concerns about Future Effectiveness of the Declaration**

- ! Emphasis in document is on common ground and basic principles -- but who will make it work, what will be a practical process.
- ! Document's connection to future organizing. We have confidence in the planners but there might be a negative world-wide reaction if people don't know what the end of desired process is.
- ! Concern for document signing. When a document gets this much attention -- with so many signatures -- then there is the possibility that it moves them to the establishment of organizing efforts connected closely with the document. Many people felt left out of this document creation and are unsure of how it was developed-and unclear where it is leading in relationship to "next steps" of organizing-they would not want this lack of clarity and participation to continue.

#### **Concerns about Ownership of Document**

- ! This document is an imposition, very like dictates from the pope which

come down without respect for process.

- ! Feel tension: wanting to support spirit of document and not wanting to condone the process.
- ! Too negatively written, should be re-written: the traditional global order gives birth to a new global ethic.
- ! We do not feel ownership of the document
- ! Should not be final but rather demonstration of the current of our thinking.
- ! We commit ourselves to continue dialogue where by all members of the assembly may participate in the further development of a document on Global Ethics which would be acceptable to all.
- ! Any document must come from the body and not be imposed. "Even a baby takes 9 months"

#### **Reservations about the Text**

- ! Reservations about Global Ethic: faith as practiced causes problems. This is missing on document; anthropocentric point of view -- biocentric point of view needed; not strong enough, won't be remembered; document is secular -- needs strong religious stand; manner adopted -- not full deliberation of assembly
- ! Issues with muslim community : Equality of women, non-violence, right to protect oneself from attack
- ! The global ethic is incomplete.
- ! Islamic concerns: Western definition of family; non-violence takes away rights of self defense. Declaration should have been presented before either/or choice.

#### **Acceptance of the Basic Spirit**

- ! We accept the basis spirit of the document.
- ! The global ethic is an excellent statement of principles of which we have consensus.
- ! Because we as humans are imperfect, we accept this document which is also imperfect.

## **Parliament of the World's Religions / World Association of Faith Communities**

### **The Idea**

#### **The Vision**

- ! Create a permanent global council. an organization distinguished by: 1. involving the most senior level of leadership in religious tradition in real relationship; 2. it being the only multi-lateral vehicle; 3. it being on-going rather than episodic; 4. it focuses on networking existing organizations rather than directing
- ! That there be established an international, interfaith organization to continue and enlarge the work begun by the Parliament of World's Religions: an organizing committee be formed to explore the options for the creation of such a body; that this committee send representatives to visit a number of countries and religious communities to seek trustees, participants and financial support; that political leaders be drawn in as honorary trustees.
- ! We want a continuing spiritual council of religions encouraged by all faiths with authority from religious leaders so that interfaith council will be able to influence events.
- ! Religious organizations can't now afford to isolate themselves we must join hands with others concerned with issues of great concern for this earth.

#### **The Need**

- ! Study other international interfaith organizations to see if need for on-going council work
- ! Existing international interfaith organizations should be supported. We don't need another one
- ! Any organizing effort now does not need to be seen as a duplication of efforts. There is so much work to be done in this area, but it would be important to get clear on the purpose and goals and to be communicating with others.
- ! Need for continuing Parliament mechanism.

- ! How is Parliament of World's Religions different from World Conference of Religion and Peace?
- ! Are there any specific thoughts on the ideas of continuing this parliament in some form of ongoing organization? What form is that?
- ! We need to use a model that will spark our imagination for interfaith dialogue and organizing

## Purposes

### Inspiring Spirituality

- ! Interfaith organizing needs to inspire spiritual development
- ! Remember - in interfaith organizing, the goal is to enliven people to go out with spirit and make a difference in the world.
- ! Being together, we are changed by the week by just being together: levels of fear and tension reduced; vital to see, touch, face one another; more frequent opportunities to do this

### Issue Driven

- ! Focus of acts should be on action, behavior and common tasks.
- ! To respond to world and local issues via page 1 and 2 of Global Ethic
- ! Networking-nurturing connections by: a list of people; nurturing the sharing of materials; names of assembly participants with information about what they were doing; how

### Catalyst, Connector, Facilitator

- ! An on-going organization, like the council already has been, should be a catalyst or facilitator -- not another interfaith body.
- ! There is a useful role for a service-oriented organization to provide a consultative and networking function among the existing international interfaith and world religious organizations.
- ! Serve as a moral force and a means to heighten awareness.

### Relationships-Not Politics

- ! Should it be issue driven? Or is it about relationship-building?

- ! Establish significant, on-going interaction and relationship at the highest level among religious leaders. Take on one specific project together.
- ! We propose that a World Assembly of Faith Communities be a place of dialogue and celebration of difference, working together to the good of humanity rather than a political body.
- ! Relationship building rather than decision-making. Do not use a political model.
- ! Continue to meet to continue to dialogue and learn together. Continue to exchange ideas that work. Continue to work to commune together with each other via mail, phone, fax etc....
- ! We are all here as individuals. If we want to form an organization, what would it represent, what would it do?

### Daring to Look Within

- ! New interfaith organization should invite faiths to reflect on whether parts of the teaching are causing problems we are trying to solve.

### Meetings

#### Meeting Process

- ! Have fewer presenters to encourage people to attend presentations of different faiths.
- ! Have written speeches available
- ! Update the source book
- ! Urgency of life requires the continuation of Dialogue through this assembly
- ! Future Parliaments should be less like a carnival with so many things happening; more sessions with real dialogue rather than people making a case, proselytizing and posturing; rather than having people of the same religious and workshops - mix the attendance
- ! Keep record for all ideas mentioned.
- ! Change the way we handle time -- don't just use Western sound bite time. Slower rhythms possible.
- ! We need organizing styles and structures that help leaders listen to each other. We need alternative ways.

- ! Reconvene Assembly in San Francisco concurrent with UN Anniversary.
- ! Have new Interfaith Center in Oxford host Assembly

### Next Meeting?

- ! Form standing committee, appointment; meet every 3 - 6 months; major Parliament again in 10 years.
- ! Form standing committee; meet every three to six months
- ! Hope that we continue to meet at least once every ten years.
- ! Should be reconvened periodically - there is no comparable body of religious leaders - existing ones focus on "educating others" and not on talking to one another.
- ! Branches of parliament in every city. At least once a year meetings. Same date all over. World Parliament once every five years.

### Membership

#### Types of Participant

- ! Convene the activists/field workers of the world's religions. Leave the academicians to other considerations of their own.
- ! Women must be included in continuing committee
- ! Youth must be a part of planning and actual participants
- ! Create new interfaith organization which includes scientists and scholars who are spiritually aware
- ! Assembly must empower itself to attract inter-faith leaders from all over the world. Provide funds to allow representatives from groups such as aboriginals and maori's.
- ! Who chooses council, planning committee? Sensitivity, people of color, smaller groups.
- ! Sensitivity to people of color and smaller groups
- ! We need more than leaders alone - but the people, the common people, must strengthen this kind of movement - therefore we need people to network.

- ! Participants -- should include very interfaith conscious Buddhists groups (new ones) from Japan
- ! Target people like interns and seminarians and those who run the seminaries.
- ! Most senior leaders of religious organizations; leaders of interreligious organizations; grassroots (women, young people, laity)

### Keeping Connected

- ! How will we keep a continuous link?
- ! Ongoing individual work: "twinning" -- find other person to connect with and commit to stay in touch, visiting, etc; as different religions -- visit each others homes on festivals, etc.
- ! Databank needed
- ! Give access to the list of 6,000 participants

### Membership Principles

- ! A permanent organization should only include religions that are at least 100 years old.
- ! Who is in and who is out? Who is welcomed in? Who do we work with in order to do it - what is the purpose? is it to get everybody in?
- ! Who should be welcomed in? Those with a willingness to listen and who can respect each other's work, not those who can only promote their own religion.
- ! A Parliament with real representation
- ! Inclusivity clause built into organization: the right to name the religion you want to part of; the right to belong (the only people who are not here are those who have chosen not to be here)
- ! Procedures should ensure inclusion of all faith communities and the possibility for their voice to be heard.
- ! Some felt a Parliament or "United Nations" structure was appropriate. Others felt it was exactly the wrong way to go -- it was too political structure.
- ! Kind of people should be "interested people" (not for namesake, not status)

! We propose the establishment of a world assembly of faith communities with the voluntary membership of all faith communities in cooperation with existing interreligious agencies that share our global perspective.

! The difficulty in creating a true umbrella organization is that it must be legitimate, which requires excluding "newer" (or fringe) religious groups. Not a problem if it's a network.

! Before convening another Parliament of the World's Religion -- need to define "religion" - I.e. not sure New Age, metaphysical are appropriate attendees. Who is really going to make something happen?

### Organisation

#### Organisational Values

- ! Any future organization "hold" competing paradigms of thought and concern itself with those paradigms.
- ! Questions we need to ask ourselves is what do religions or spiritual people bring to the issues. Our organization must look at the character of our activities, our style of organizational activity and whether it is simple or lavish. We must question the character of our organizing and the proposed activities.
- ! Realize truth of supreme experience given by divine consciousness - do not allow ourselves to be bogged down by our process i.e. national identity, religious identity, individual identity. No dogma period. Go deep within from core.
- ! Create new interfaith organization that makes a strong commitment to spiritual values.
- ! Participants should not do comparisons of religions when they intend to do "one-upmanship" over other religions.
- ! Participants should be able to stand up for what their religions can offer the world on different issues.
- ! We hope that we can take this reverent attitude we have toward each other - what we continue to come nearer and nearer to each other and

carry it forth from this place to those we serve.

- ! Religious organizations have no boundaries and are meant for working for all - for the progress of humanity
- ! Parliament Continuing. Kind of people to be chosen! "Interested people." Not for namesake, not status.

### Short & Long Term Planning

- ! Council should try to define what it can do in the future that is not currently being done.
- ! Formulate an agenda, come out with a clear focus - with others input from all over the world.
- ! Develop plan for action to create public opinion.
- ! Longer term thinking needed now. Take a look into the next 100 years. The 21st century is predicted to be a spiritual centering . . . Movement for that needs to be a broad movement.
- ! The "Global Council" must have two horizons within which it plans and acts: 1. Immediate crisis - killing and hurting of indigenous people; 2. Longer term - building a process and capability to tackle more difficult problems.
- ! Thoughtful analysis on issues of the day (e.g. environment)

### Funding Strategy

- ! After 1st Parliament in 1893- no mainstream religions would have anything to do with it - no funding, no participation in organizing. This is the struggle that follows.
- ! Combine multi-religious input around social and political issues -- so that all are pushing in the same direction
- ! Create a new interfaith organization that is large so it can receive funds.
- ! Funding by well wishers and philanthropists will come forward. Start small, not big superstructure. Grow by increments.
- ! Egalitarian financial support for world assembly of faith communities: to share the burden; to overcome undue vested influence; to ensure broadly shared commitments

## Structure

- ! Be a truly international organization in sponsorship.
- ! Regionally developed parliaments report to the larger body.
- ! Group of Presidents is not necessarily a permanent body.
- ! We want to exist after Monday. Assembly must empower itself. Balance between administrative wing, secretariat voters etc. ...
- ! Any future organization should not be bureaucratic, but a network
- ! Select an inclusive and sensitive name for the ongoing assembly (United Nations of Religion has a political overtone. Gathering? Council? Parliament?)
- ! If we choose to make this a loose organization, then we need to be clear that we are merely "floating" ideas for consideration or we confirm a Parliament with real representation.

## Preparatory Committee

- ! Trustees need to be empowered by assembly.
- ! Preparatory committee representing faith communities established immediately to work towards a world council of faith communities.
- ! To give this institution a constitutional and substantive shape, the parliament decides to set up a preparatory committee of interested individuals with the support role of the present council of the Parliament of the World's Religions. The preparatory committee should formulate its report within a year and propagate to the participants through the Presidents of the 1993 POWR, drawing upon the experience and cooperation of existing national and international bodies devoted to interfaith cooperation.
- ! Convene a smaller meetings of world interfaith organizations to decide the next step.
- ! Develop a consultation body drawn from representative groups to supervise the implementation or execution of a new round of meetings to move to more solid ground. If we

can't build that body than we have to accept this as a "loose" body.

- ! Widest possible consultative task force to explore the proper framework and common agenda to facilitate the work of interfaith dialogue.

## Space for Silence

- ! Meditation -- contemplation and prayer, silence -- should be and has been a major feature, as it is the core unifying force we all share.
- ! 10 minute silence evoked a feeling of deep mutual respect and caring for every participant
- ! To do dialogue we must first be in silence!! We want to have speech full of silence, words coming out of silence.
- ! We want 10 minute meditation (silent) as part of dialogue tomorrow.

## Promoting The Inter-faith Movement

### Inter-Religious issues

#### Proselytizing

- ! Challenge to interfaith religion: trying to convert people; the idea that "We have the only way through our prophet."
- ! Problems with conversion/missionary activities. Social tensions created in these environments. This problem very wide spread.

#### Critical Questions

- ! Are we really prepared to meet and accept all religions and faiths?
- ! If we want unity, why do we continue to exclude?
- ! Intolerance closes many avenues to political and social dissent. Minority religions are marginalized and persecuted.

### Inter-Religious Initiatives

#### Need for Networking & Exchanges

- ! Where is the place we can really talk to one another? If not here where?
- ! Regular opportunities to meet together, to pray together and look at

critical world issues. Seminars and lectures to educate.

- ! Form interfaith groups and listen.

## Dynamic Interfaith Education

- ! Share efforts toward unity, interfaith projects with entire Parliament. Examples: celebrate the birthdays of religious leaders; teaching all faiths/religions in school; teach that Jesus is one of many; teach that there are no "chosen people;" begin classes for young people with a non-religious moment of meditation.
- ! Let our children play together.
- ! Performing Arts - Storytelling. Experience in dynamic ways such as stories, drama, music, dance, the tenets of each other's faith, i.e., Thursday night's plenary.
- ! Look for where things are working well in interfaith activity. Look for principles of why they are working well.
- ! On a local level mobilize interreligious groups and the "family of religious adults" in individual religious as the agents of newly energized educational efforts.
- ! Persuade all religious centers (churches, temples, synagogues, mosques) to set aside time one month for an interfaith lecture, festival celebration, dialogue session, or shared worship experience to better educate their members on the beliefs and practices of other religions.
- ! Undertake scholarship, research and education on the resources for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation that exist within our individual spiritual traditions. These resources would include; myths, stories, symbols and ceremonies.
- ! We challenge members of the assembly to go back into their own traditions to educate in order to promote tolerance, respect, understanding, and appreciation toward all spiritual traditions. Education to promote tolerance was the single most important concern of our group.
- ! Offer interfaith courses on site of religious practice and get college

credit for it ( of course, people of different faiths would take this class).

- ! Inter-religious programs may be a part of comparative religions at an early age.
- ! Bring in people from outside our faith to educate us and increase tolerance and understanding.
- ! Develop comprehensive programs for educating both children and adults in understanding the various religious traditions and sharing worship (particularly silent prayer) with them; seek also for ways to develop cooperative projects for service to the poor, sick and needy involving participants from different religions.
- ! Educate children of the world. school in every state and country. Multiple languages taught, open to all. Network between schools. teachers training school. draw children of a greater global future which will support and strengthen the vision of Parliament. Support a global future for all of humanity.
- ! Use the Parliament as a means to pursue education about the various religions. this education would be provided through membership in the World Parliament. Education also in promoting interfaith exchange.
- ! We want to bring other religious leaders and representatives to come to be with our children and share their wisdom and help broaden their minds.

### **Spiritual Education**

- ! Early education should emphasize: 1) Development of heart as well as mind, 2) cultivation of justice - not prejudice, 3) skills to support the common good.
- ! Hope that we focus on creating the possibility for the children to experience respect and love. We hope that we will use our experience to transmit values to children.
- ! We hope that we can achieve the clean mind; we hope that we can recognize the spiritual nature of man; we hope that we can give children the space to remember who they are; we hope to teach correct relationships.

- ! Task for Parliament (children and adults): Compile bibliography of children's and adult books which have interfaith themes.
- ! Identify the basic, underlying truths that are common to all spiritual traditions. work together to determine how these might be implemented locally through education, knowledge, and information.
- ! Positive aspects of religion. Market films of spiritual heroes.
- ! Hope: That a virtual mass of people would realize that all religions express the same thing, come from the same essential consciousness.
- ! Hope to put the universal experience of silence or silent energy into our educational system. Differentiate silence or silent meditation from "prayer" and we believe we can give children a great gift for life.

### **Ethical Education**

- ! Start classes on Peace education in the school systems.
- ! We should promote universal education which teaches ethics and inner meditative practices.
- ! Youth should be part of school and college curriculum developments.

### **Inter-Religious Committees**

#### **Interfaith Councils**

- ! Interfaith Councils in each country. could be sponsored by POWR.
- ! Establish interfaith committees in all countries to carry out the work of this assembly.
- ! Have interfaith councils in every city!
- ! We need to remember what we experienced here. We want to commit to develop interfaith organizations at home with the spirit of inclusivity (including all not some faiths).
- ! While there are other worldwide interfaith organizations, this event has given important new energy to the interfaith movement
- ! That concerted and extensive efforts be made to form local grass roots

interfaith groups in many countries to promote local interfaith dialogue and community service and to serve as the solid foundations for national branches of the world wide interfaith organization.

### **Mass Media Monitoring Team**

- ! Inter-religious Committee sponsored by Council to monitor mass media against inflammatory remarks about other religions and sponsor broad religious education.

### **Inter-Religious Think Tank**

- ! We need an interreligious think tank (schools, scientists, etc.) to look deeply into critical issues.

### **To The World...**

#### **Interfaith Celebration Day**

- ! We want an Interfaith Celebration day in the spring around spring solstice time-a celebration of continuous renewal. All faiths have a special holiday at this time of year. Ie April 8th Buddha Birthday
- ! Future events- Parade - the most important things is for people to see "us" together
- ! Proclaim annual Interfaith Day of Peace to be observed worldwide with both interfaith marches and prayer vigils for peace and harmony.
- ! We would like to have a world Silence Day in the spring to celebrate our continuing work.
- ! Identify ways that we can celebrate our new emerging unity and interdependence as well as our common dependence on the earth. Build this celebration into all educational efforts.
- ! Celebrate differences- have a Festival of Faiths
- ! Actions- A peace prayer established for all people...

#### **Interface with Secular World**

- ! Hope that interfaith leaders lead way to influence decision makers by developing joint expressions of common values and principles.
- ! Through all interfaith organizations at all levels, reach out to the local,



national and international political leadership to try to influence their policies and behavior in favor of human rights and public welfare: try by all means to spiritualize politics.

- ! People at all levels should practice and learn to use spiritual and religious goodwill to influence their work and world ... this would impact political and social systems
- ! Spiritual leaders must interact with (but stay independent from) political leaders and members of community to influence decisions; policies toward the good of everyone
- ! The assembly should be working through/with U.N. leadership, safeguarding one another.
- ! Develop plan for reaching out to the non-believers to enlist them as cooperating partners of the religious believers in upholding values and principles of high moral and ethical standards. They too are members of the human family.

### **Managing the Media**

- ! I would love to see representation of the task force go around to schools and neighborhood centers, hospitals and places where people live to encourage local press coverage of a world wide effort to share the concerns of the parliament.
- ! Recommendations - that an international interfaith media/communication network be formed to give mass coverage to developments related to interfaith dialogue and corporation through the use of pamphlets and brochures, news release and radio broadcasts, live and on tape.
- ! Assembly to issue a communique: a report to faith communities of world reflecting on what happened
- ! Brief sentences on issues stay in sparkling, clear way. Say: "This is a remarkable historical development; we have a new fellowship of leaders that have identified areas of common concern." Refer to follow-up meetings.
- ! Hope that we will learn how to communicate the essence of religion

traditions in common to people. Find ways to involve media

- ! Issue agreement on "five" points as basis for ongoing discussion, i.e.: religious harmony, mutual respect for religious, spiritual traditions, commitment to offer wisdom on how to deal with problems facing society, global social and economic justice
- ! Tell the story of this gathering to those at home: What has this parliament and assembly been?
- ! Make a report or position paper to send message to politicians, business, communities around various issues--supporter endorsed by entire religious community.
- ! Will there be positive stories happening by media when parliament ends?
- ! Religious issues receive unfavorable press coverage, either focus on bad things (conflicts, division issues) or making fun.
- ! Need less on business of killing in media, and more on business of living

### **Interfaith Publication**

- ! There is a need for an interfaith publication of high quality
- ! Publish book that contains the essence of the common fundamental principles of all religions-translated into all languages
- ! Newsletter-monthly or Quarterly to all present

### **Issues for the Attention of the Parliament**

#### **Caring for the Earth**

#### **Peace**

- ! Endorse summit on world peace. Assembly should endorse convening of World Peace summit in 1995 of top spiritual and religious leaders of all faiths with the single agenda item of the prevention of all wars in the name of religions, and the settlement of all disputes through dialogue. Originally proposed at the second international Conference on Peace and non-violent action held by Anuvrat Global organization, 2/17 - 2/21, 1991.

- ! Issues identified: Poverty; Peace; Concern for conversion pressure; Moving beyond the words of a statement to gainful action; Practicing ideals; Language barriers- especially gender; Children and youth endangered; Concern that document is connected to elitism
- ! Must have a passion for peace. Don't want "the operation was successful but the patient died."

### **U.N. Representation**

- ! Assembly adopt UN seating resolution that either all major religions should be represented or seated at the UN or none of them should be.
- ! In December 1992, U.N. general assembly adopted an International document on the rights of minorities; there will be a proposal (a written document) presented to the Parliament Assembly on Saturday for its adoption by the assembly. This document will be an urging of the United Nations to adopt the document on Human Rights.

### **Immediate**

- ! Possible global reactions to violence: the Parliament vote to condemn violence in Bosnia and appeal to the Security Council of the United Nations. Take a stand on gun control issues in the U.S.
- ! Should immediately condemn the inter-religious warfare taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- ! We would bless and encourage the peace process currently taking place between Palestine & Israel.

### **Social Change Taskforce**

- ! People who are gifted in specialist areas in relationship to the ills of the world, e.g., drugs, youth be empowered to share their expertise and affect change in these areas.

### **Future of Religion**

- ! Religions themselves may be on the way out. There will be another form of searching for spirituality. Religious ideas may take on a broader, more universal expression.
- ! New type of fundamentalism is sweeping the world. This is true all

over globe. This has an economic part as well as a religious one, for example, a single economic system pushed on world community.

- ! Fundamentalism is a response to the disintegration of our communities.

### **Earth Care**

- ! All religions need to reaffirm the sacredness of the universe as the primary revelatory manifestation of the divine. Universe is our source of the ultimate mysteries of existence. Just as the first parliament celebrated the connection of spirit to human, the primary connection of our times is human earth issues. Economic inequalities and warfare among the nations contribute to the issues.
- ! Appreciate Gerald Barney's work: assembly formally accept his report; assembly acknowledge his efforts by saying they appreciate his work; copies given to all assembly members
- ! Assembly needs to address immediate issues such as environment and global conflict (Bosnia)
- ! Form commissions in key areas: 1. education and understanding; 2. conflict resolution/prevention; 3. sustainable development; 4. the crisis of spirituality, not only private but collective spirituality
- ! Issues to focus on: - violence; economics; environment; promote respect for all religions
- ! Priorities -- environment, respect of nature, children, violence, homelessness, AIDS, the poor, the sick and diseased
- ! Actions by Parliament: World charter by nature (written by UN) be adopted as the moral guide for ecological behavior
- ! Two tenets are important to "re-vision" human values: 1) respect for all forms of life; 2) respect for all life support systems as a natural, logical extension of the first principle
- ! Fight against pollution. Relationship with 21st century.
- ! We are here not just for people but for the whole household -- animals, plants, all inanimate life. Our job is to care for the whole earth.

### **Emergency Interventional Resources**

- ! Technical support for resources should be provided to communities torn by violence: water, power, health services... Formation of a network of such support should be at a grass roots level.

### **Radical Recognition of Women**

#### **Empowerment of Women**

- ! Include women in decision making processes of the world's religious institutions, also provide education for women.

#### **Challenge Religious Exploitation of Women**

- ! Can we as a Assembly address the exploitation of women in the name of religion?
- ! Attitude towards women must change.
- ! We support women networking at a local national and global level.
- ! Women must be treated with respect.

#### **Dispelling "Less Than" Myths**

- ! The international religions community can sign up in solidarity with the women of the world. Document available for signing, now. Women's liberation.
- ! Why were there no major women's events at the Parliament? Why did the women do all the work while the men were at the podium?
- ! Our job is dispelling the myth of women as "less than" bringing her to the level God made her.

### **Human Rights**

#### **Indigenous Rights**

- ! The indigenous people must be formally recognized and apologized to and the Council must do this in some explicit way.
- ! We recommend that the American Indian people be seen as a sovereign people.
- ! Move quickly and definitely to formally acknowledge the world has great problems and religious

institutions have been the source of many of these problems by failing as religious people, not practicing what we preach and this has been most difficult for indigenous people.

### **Social Justice**

- ! A declaration could be signed as a statement of support and solidarity of the human rights of another group were violated.
- ! We condemn genocide in all of its forms.
- ! A human rights watch should be set up in each country. Majority religion to set up a watch to protect minority religions in the country.
- ! Gandhi said, "We want to wipe every tear from every eye." - our spiritual, social action.
- ! World without war is still our goal.
- ! Find ways to address problems on our own doorstep. What can we do now?! Assembly should talk about human rights or address homelessness and what to do about it.
- ! There is a vacancy in interfaith work in the area of human rights.
- ! Need to address the violations of human rights in the name of religion, the suffering of people because of belief.
- ! Heighten awareness and loosen purse strings. We need to raise the level of consciousness that the human relations is the number one priority of mankind (and a loosening of purse strings) to support this effort.
- ! Religion must stop blessing guns and soldiers.
- ! Ongoing Parliament Work: commit to work for a speak out together; social justice (equality for all sexes, races, religions); for the poor, disabled, young, old, minorities.
- ! We must provide a centralized support system for justice.

### **Economic Justice**

- ! Poverty and lack of basic needs of many of world's peoples. Inequality of wealth and distribution of resources.

- ! Suggestion to address poverty: Need to fight against laws and policies which promote and divide people. Struggle against the system which disempowers.
- ! Eradication of poverty involves: organized communities gathering information about the needs of neighboring communities which they might help to serve.
- ! Economics: war against pain.
- ! Need to have economic equality, some kind of just distribution of wealth and resources. Globalized understanding of use of resources.
- ! Quality of life. Economics. Support economic growth, education, health care.
- ! Economics as source of religious conflict. Council should sponsor investigation/study.

## **Resolving Conflict**

### **Dialogue**

#### **Forums on Otherness**

- ! Leaders want to continue the dialogue beyond the Parliament, they deeply appreciate the experience of being together and experience a communion of commitment to on-going interaction.
- ! Need a forum to raise views on neutral ground to come to understanding between religious and spiritual traditions without this the danger of arriving at least common denominator is unavoidable.
- ! We need each other's "otherness" to confront each other and learn from one-another.
- ! Need inter-faith dialogue between mainstream religion and fundamentalist groups.

#### **Deepening Dialogue**

- ! Issues that need East/West Dialogue: Western traditions think meditation is demonic; Why is there such a global impression that Islamic women are oppressed and dominated
- ! Need a representative group willing to go DEEP into issues.

- ! The very act of dialogue here (the way we have been here together) is a religious act.
- ! Hope: One continuing dialogue can make the human heart more deep, more broad
- ! Go beyond victim and oppressor.
- ! Dialogue on religions, truth and differences.
- ! Can we develop through our dialogue a better understanding of the differences between cultural and religious factors, such as the cause of female suppression all over the world, with the Islamic world as a case in point.
- ! Dialogue needed for: scientists and religious leaders to talk about world issues; religious leaders among themselves to review difference in theology
- ! Before there can be serious dialogue, people need to be heard, a prerequisite for being heard is to have access like POWR, however necessary this is insufficient if the number of people willing to listen is few. There is need to hear from and listen to the citizens of the Third World.

#### **Centre for Dialogue & Mediations**

- ! International arbitration mediation council.
- ! Learning Center for dialogue and mediation.
- ! Hold inter-religious dialogue events in countries where there is a lot of religious friction and bring the local religious leaders into that dialogue. Televisé and broadcast widely so that the whole country/region is exposed to the dialogue as an example.

### **Conflict Resolution**

#### **Conflict Education**

- ! Focus our effort on 4 or 5 religions, most conflicts occur within a few religions: Hindu, Muslim, Judaism, Christianity. Start with these and other big one- don't spread our efforts and resources thin.
- ! Local/Regional POWR: focus these especially on local conflicts

### **International Interfaith Conciliation & Mediation Team**

- ! Bring in facilitators, educators, counselors and psychologists to work with children at the site of conflicts. Objective -- try to prevent ravages of war from transferring/proceeding from generation to generation.
- ! Ongoing network should support local education and training in conflict resolution, morality and collaboration.
- ! Many projects to not be launched when situation is out of control. Anticipate escalation of problems and address before situation gets out control. Establish on-going programs in those areas.

#### **Interfaith Conflict-Healing**

- ! A working group be established to condemn all war, especially religiously motivated war and to intervene appropriately
- ! Intervene in conflicts -- create a commission of religious leaders on call to: go to the site of conflict; mobilize resources for peace; caution, must do more than walk around and visit; must listen to people and do something
- ! The question of religious violence is better served by refusal to provide a basis for support at a grass roots level than by attempts to influence "top heavy" governments or international mediation. We need to talk less and meditate more, then we wouldn't have a need for conflict resolution.
- ! Permanent Council to go around to places of conflict in the world as a moral force perhaps connected to the UN.
- ! That there be formed an international and inter-faith conciliation & mediation service to provide for quick intervention in the case of ethnic and religious conflicts through: consultation with adversarial groups; quiet efforts at mediation and reconciliation; public appeals for the end of violence where it may occur
- ! Task force/inter-religious peace delegation sent to world flashpoints, truly inter-religious, sponsored by Council, case: Franciscans of Assisi visiting Hussein and releasing hostages.

## **Withdrawing Local Support for Religious Violence**

- ! Task force to create a container with international power in religious sector for social renewal and healing. A safe place for polarized groups to meet; to admit fault; to ask for forgiveness; to do something without rankle; to be accountable in change
- ! The on-going work could include creating reconciliation and mediation centers

## **Practicing What We Preach**

### **Being the Demonstration**

- ! The world needs a clear and strong demonstration of our belief in God, manifest in the way we treat one another.
- ! We are here to model the changes we seek to create. Create from place of humbleness, joy, humor, smiles, representative of every faith, culture, sexual persuasion, feminine represented. bold statements generated about common areas of concern.
- ! Promote positive aspect of religion, i.e., religious leaders are here. Emphasize more spirituality in leaders, essence of faith without excess ritual. Fact religion is also doing wonderful things.
- ! Religions are losing dignity and ability to guide people. Leaders need to focus on spirituality, devotion and away from consumerism.
- ! Lack of compassion: Some people feel they will help another only if he/she is in their faith. Charity: you are not a believer in God if you can sleep while your neighbor is hungry.
- ! we want to ask each of us to have a focused meditation of ten minutes a day on the ongoing work of the Parliament (when we awaken).
- ! Listen, think, Do: Post-Parliament Commitments
- ! Major challenge is ego.

### **Change of Heart**

- ! What is most essential is the change of heart and change of mind to be willing to live together. this can only be achieved when each of us brings the spirit of respect and openness to a

dialogue from this will to understand and will to live together we can leave the agony behind.

- ! Individual commitment to study all religions, to show respect to all faiths and paths, never to criticize religions or founders of religions.
- ! Our hospitality toward each other is a sacred hospitality.
- ! Use of the "Magna Carta of friendship and Decency to all People."

### **Living It**

- ! It is perceived that if one studies and practices one's own tradition at a deep level, that person will also understand the deep principles of another's tradition. this level of piety provides common ground.
- ! How are we actually living the principles of our religions on a day-to-day, person-to-person basis?
- ! Hope that "positive" influences of religion can prevail over "negative" aspects of religion.

### **Right Now!**

- ! Immediate individual work: capture this experience while hot and Parliament is news. Go out, speak to folks, use video, write open letter to editors.
- ! Re-insertion of spirituality into every walk of life: into United Nations; into political world; into family life; into business
- ! One next step will be for me to bring the ethic to some small groups in my community that will want to dialogue about it.
- ! Two commitments: each Assembly representative here to commit to continuing or beginning interfaith dialogue upon return to his or her home place; each Assembly representative here to commit to equal opportunity and education for men and women.

### **Commitment**

- ! At our grassroots in realistic practice Sunday service, once every three months, "Awareness of global consciousness." Service on Sunday will be conducted using universal terminology, avoiding own terminology. Buddhist teacher.

- ! I commit to once a month visiting another faith's temple.
- ! General atmosphere of my group was one of top cooperation and consultation. Individual commitments were given and many recommendations. Ended by offering invitations to visit each other and stay in touch.
- ! I commit to meeting with people, talking with people, sharing with people, learning with people, getting together with people, channeling our energy for survival and creating a climate of co-existence through awareness of oneness.
- ! I commit as editor of our monthly magazine to have an article from people of different faiths.

## **In Recognition of Chicago - Thanks**

### **Historic Milestone**

- ! Let there not be a memory gap of the importance of interfaith meetings.
- ! This event is very significant.
- ! This is a milestone along the way of interfaith. This Parliament: 1) is historic; 2) globalized so much energy for the benefit of so many people.
- ! Importance of this parliament: The impact of seeing and hearing, with a large number of religious groups that are here.

### **Powerful Model**

- ! Chicago, Thanks!
- ! Chicago has presented us with a powerful model of a community that is finding its global reality- and in its spiritual diversity: built a Parliament on the strength of that- which would also strengthen those connections and recognition of that every day reality in Chicago.
- ! Chicago effort - Might now work to fully understand the community-based structure - as a model of strengthening the understanding that the global is local & vice versa.
- ! Work to fully understand community structure as a model of strengthening the understanding that the global is local and vice versa.