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From a Historical Event to a Modern Institution

Interreligious Dialogue and Global ‘Critical Issues’ (Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions / 1989 – 1993)

1 The Centennial of the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions

1.1 Celebrating a Hundred Years of Global Interreligious Dialogue

Can history be repeated? What do we need to bring the world together? And how does an event become an institution? Let’s explore the formation phase of the 1993 Parliament of the World’s Religions to understand the background of its emerging institution: The Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions.

The 1993 Parliament is the centennial of the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, which is commonly referred to as the birth of the modern interreligious dialogue movement. This historic gathering has been described as the first official meeting of Eastern and Western religions and spiritual traditions. It took place in Chicago within the framework of the World Columbian Exposition. The 1893 Parliament was dominated by English-speaking Christian representatives, referring to both its planning committee and its participants. The most re-

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markable moment was doubtless the address of the Indian representative, Swami Vivekananda, at the opening session. In his speech, the Hindu monk Vivekananda, only 30 years old and unknown in the USA at that time, introduced Hinduism. Considering the memorable impression that Vivekananda left, it is no wonder that the impetus for a celebration of the centenary of the World's Parliament of Religions came from the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago.

1.2 Moving beyond the Centenary: Creating a Unique Event in 1993

Between 1893 and 1993, several attempts were made to conduct a second Parliament continuing the success of the first event. For example, plans were made to hold a Parliament in 1900 in Bombay (now Mumbai), and later to celebrate its 50th anniversary by integrating it into the 1933 World's Fair meeting in Chicago, and to hold a successor event in 1957. In the early 1980s James R. Thompson, the then-Governor of Illinois made plans for a centennial of the World Columbian Exposition. After an invitation by Mr. Duboq¹, different religious individuals met in his home on Chicago's 56th street in Hyde Park in 1982 and wrote a letter to Thompson, asking him to include a centenary of the World's Parliament of Religions into his plans.² A few years passed until the Governor abandoned the centennial plans for the Exposition. The centennial of the 1983 Parliament also almost fell through. But how did the event eventually come about?

The reason for this must be searched for in the planning phase. Was it the tenacity of the group that planned it? Or was it time for another Parliament? The cause may be a mixture of two factors. First, the group decided to not only hold a centenary, but to create a unique event that was in step with the *zeitgeist*. And second, a continuation was implied by the formation of an organization³ to conduct the event.

1 More information on the person that hosted this first Hyde Park gathering could not be determined.

2 Carlos Hugo Parra, *Standing with Unfamiliar Company on Uncommon Ground: The Catholic Church and the Chicago Parliaments*. (Toronto: PhD Thesis University of Toronto, 2012), 180–184.

3 While the 1893 event was called the World's Parliament of Religions, the 1993 event was named the Parliament of the World's Religions. The organization operates under the name The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, currently a name change to Parliament of the World's Religions is being discussed. To avoid confusion for the reader, in this essay the events will be referred to as "the 1893 Parliament" and "the 1993 Parliament", while the organization is abbreviated to "the Council".

The hypothesis of this paper is, that this creation of an organization is precisely what fostered the structuralized planning that eventually led to the 1993 Parliament event and beyond. Between 1893 and 1993, the organizations and individuals working in the field of interreligious dialogue changed dramatically. After some hesitations, the organizers of the 1993 event cooperated with the new actors in the field. Due to this, they were able to add a dimension that was more long-term and eventually translated this cooperation into an organizational framework.

Both, the character of the event and the continuation are central themes when dealing with the 1993 Parliament. They were driving issues in the formation phase. Moreover, these issues still build the basis for discussion today amongst the members of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

1.3 Visiting Chicago

Research has been conducted on two levels to fulfil the *Talking Dialogue Project's* aim to identify a core episode of the formation phase of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions and to analyze it within a wider framework. From the beginning of July until the middle of August 2014, archival research was conducted at DePaul University in Chicago⁴ and interviews were carried out with the members of the Council who planned the 1993 Parliament. Furthermore, secondary literature was consulted to frame and contextualize the research findings.

To enable a nuanced view of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, this essay focuses at first on the background of the event (2) describing the establishment of the Council during both the planning phase and the realization of the 1993 Parliament (2.1) as well as the socio-cultural background at that time (2.2). It then outlines the empirical approach of the research (3) by presenting the method of analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis (3.1), and considering the potentials and limitations of the available material (3.2). The analysis of the material (4) portrays the challenges that the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions had to face planning the 1993 Parliament (4.1) and defines a core episode of the formation phase (4.2). To take a close look at this core episode, the challenging period of the episode (4.2.1) and the resolution of this challenging period (4.2.2) are examined separately. Finally, the conclusion (5) sums

⁴ The DePaul University Special Collections and Archives hold all remaining documents of the 1893 Parliament, as well as those of the 1993 Parliament and those of the Council's work up to 1998.

up the findings (5.1) and presents an outlook on the progress of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions today (5.2).

2 The Outstrip of 1893

To answer the questions posed in the introduction it is first necessary to provide background information on the pre-history of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions to frame and contextualize the information presented on the core episode in the following chapters. For this purpose, at first, general information on both, the 1993 Parliament and the Council is given. The formation phases of the organization and the event are interdependent since the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions was established to plan and realize the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. This section takes account of this interdependence by describing how the Council's formation was shaped by the planning phase and the actual 1993 Parliament event and how the organization came to proceed after this time. This is followed by the description of the socio-cultural background of their formation time.

2.1 The Formation of an Organization

In the late 1980's, two years after the official plans for a centennial of the World Columbian Exposition were cancelled, the Vivekananda Vedanta Society⁵ invited the group that met in Hyde Park. The religious leaders, academics and organizers that formed the group discussed whether they should continue the planning for the second Parliament notwithstanding. "Then, we started to plan it on our own"⁶, said Rohinton Rivetna, who had been with the Council since its foundation and served as its secretary and vice-chair, during the time of the interview.

The group decided to arrange a small celebration on the hundred-year anniversary of the World's Parliament of Religions and started to regularly gather in the basement of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society to plan the event. As the project took form, they founded a non-profit organization, named the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions, to implement their plans. The foundation document was signed in 1988 by the group members Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez,

⁵ Vedanta Society is the general term for a branch of the Ramakrishna Order that is located outside of India.

⁶ Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

Paul Sherry and Leilani Smith. Charles Nolley was elected to be the first chair. Shortly after the establishment of the Council, the name was changed to the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. "The subtle change in the name of the new council [...] shifted the emphasis from an accent on the global nature of the event itself to the more egalitarian inclusion of all the world's religions and spiritual traditions."⁷

The Council took into account that while in 1893 the religions had to be brought to Chicago and had to get to know each other, almost a century later, most of the world's religions were present in the city, they just needed a place to exchange. Information on other religions was available, and contacts were established. The Board of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions itself was indicative of this change, mainly representing the minority religions such as the Baha'i Faith, Hinduism and Islam. "Not only was the new council representative of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, but the reasons for calling a centennial parliament were now shaped by the spirit of the emerging interreligious movement."⁸

Hence, the aim for 1993 was not only to celebrate the centennial of the 1893 Parliament, but to create a unique event, standing on its own. It was planned that the 1993 Parliament should follow the spirit of 1893, but at the same time fit into its own context, taking current issues and circumstances into account. Moreover, the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions agreed that a special focus should be put on integrating the event into its location on a long-term basis. Since the Council felt that "to all appearances, the 1893 Parliament of Religions left no impact whatsoever on the city of Chicago", they decided, their "first focus should be on the religions of Chicago, to assure that the centennial would yield a more vital legacy than its predecessor."⁹ Therefore, 14 local religious communities formed host committees "to represent their particular religious and spiritual traditions to the Parliament and, through the Parliament, to the world."¹⁰ The host committees also supported the Council during the planning process in raising funds, advertising the event and acquiring registrations.

Not only should the religious and spiritual traditions meet and exchange, they should also find common ground and collaborate with each other. The

7 William E. Leshner, "Parliament of the World's Religions", in: *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Edwin Fahlbush (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1999): 778.

8 Leshner, "Parliament of the World's Religions," 778.

9 Ronald R. Kidd, "Early Dreams and Plans for the Centennial," in *A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions*, ed. Joel Beversluis (Chicago: Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993): 10.

10 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

goal was to bring the world's religions together to highlight the existing consensus between them and to encourage them to work together on the challenges of the 21st century.¹¹

As planned, the centennial of the World's Parliament of Religions took place from 28 August to 4 September 1993. The event exceeded all expectations. A total of 195 institutions and organizations co-sponsored the gathering in the Palmer House Hotel in downtown Chicago. It gained worldwide recognition, recording more than 850 press registrations, listing journalists from four different continents. All in all, more than 6500 people from 55 countries attended the Parliament.¹²

At the early planning stages, the Council had never expected the event to attract that many people. Howard Sulkin, who has been a member of the Council since 1988 and was its executive director between 1993 and 2001, remembered during our conversation: "we had the assumption that very few people would come from abroad."¹³ The first budget plan counted on 400 participants, the amount of men and women, the 1893 Parliament had brought together. And there were major doubts among the Council's members, if that number could be reached. The former chair and executive director of the Parliament, Gómez-Ibañez, admitted during the phone interview: "if we knew how the Parliament would look like, we would have been too scared to conduct it."¹⁴ The amount of registrations exceeded the Council's estimates various times during the planning phase. "The number was more than double what the planners had anticipated, and consequently they were forced to suspend registration several days before the parliament began."¹⁵ In fact, more than a thousand checks had to be returned.¹⁶

Because the 1893 Parliament omitted so many religious communities, "effort was made to make the 1993 Parliament much more diverse on all levels, while also keeping the Parliament open to grass roots members – as opposed to

11 Kidd, "Early Dreams and Plans for the Centennial," 1–10.

12 Specifications concerning the number of participants range from 6500 (Beverluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Ch. 22) to 7000 (Alan Neely, "The Parliaments of the World's Religions," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 18 (1994): 61) to 8000 (Leshner, "Parliament of the World's Religions," 778).

13 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

14 Daniel Gómez-Ibañez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

15 Neely, "The Parliaments of the World's Religions," 61.

16 This information was provided by Constance and Howard Sulkin during our meeting on August 9, 2014.

only leaders.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, most attendants in 1993 were Christians, followed by Hindus, Buddhists, Baha’is and Muslims.¹⁸

However, this did not mean that the assembly was dominated by Christian thought in the same way as its predecessor is commonly described. “It was predominantly ‘an other-than-Christian’ assembly, with the Christians who were present maintaining a modest profile and assiduously avoiding Christian claims of uniqueness or superiority.”¹⁹ Sulkin emphasized during the phone interview: “Our ancestors [of 1893] kept people out. We wanted to preserve the position of inclusion, not exclusion.”²⁰ This striving for inclusion had its seeds also in the diversity of the Council itself, which since its foundation was formed by members of the Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Zoroastrian communities.²¹ According to Gómez-Ibañez, the Council believed that interreligious dialogue does not succeed if simply one religion invites other religions. Thus, they acted upon the maxim that “the decision to do interreligious dialogue has to be an interfaith decision from the beginning.”²²

If not the Christians, did any other religious group leave its imprint on the event? “Given the diversity of traditions represented in 1993, it is difficult to point to a single group that acted as a catalytic agent. However, earth-based spiritualities, foremost among them neo-pagans, formed a significant part of the total assembly.”²³ The Council wanted the Parliament to make room for the participants to express their religion and also share religious experiences with people of other faiths. Thus, music, arts, ceremonies, religious services, liturgies and meditation were included in the program. The Council “wanted the centennial itself to be a *religious* event and not just a week of talk *about* religions.”²⁴

Each day, the 1993 Parliament opened with prayer and meditation, followed by an opening plenary. During the day, three sessions of seminars, workshops and major presentations were held. In the evening the program closed with worship and a thematic plenary. For the last three days, the religious and spiritual leaders gathered separately in the afternoon at the Art Institute of Chicago for

17 Jon P. Bloch, “A Whisper Toward Peace: A Theoretical Analysis of the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47 (2008): 61

18 Joel D. Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth’s Community of Religions* (Chicago: Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, 1993) Chapter 22.

19 Neely, “The Parliaments of the World’s Religions,” 62.

20 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

21 Neely, “The Parliaments of the World’s Religions,” 61.

22 Daniel Gómez-Ibañez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

23 Wayne Teasdale and George F. Cairns, eds., *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World’s Religions* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 29.

24 Kidd, “Early Dreams and Plans for the Centennial,” 11.

the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. The programme was shaped by the collective work on the critical issues that challenged the world's religions on the cusp of the 21st century: "the earth, the human community, economics and justice, science and religion and 'Power, Politics and Liberation'."²⁵ The Council had started to cooperate with the Institute for 21st Century Studies (now the Millennium Institute) in 1991 to prepare this dimension of the Parliament.

The Opening Ceremony of the Parliament of the World's Religions included "music from East and West, an interfaith processional, welcomes, blessings, and invocations."²⁶ The first major speech was given by Dr. Gerald O. Barney from the Institute for 21st Century Studies. He gave "an impressive speech on the social, economic and ecological state of our globe."²⁷ The information Barney delivered was not particularly new, what was new was his plea for the world's religions to realize their important influence on the critical issues of the time and to act upon their subsequent responsibility.²⁸ Dr. Robert Muller, then chancellor of the Peace University established by the UN in Costa Rica, expanded Barney's thoughts and emphasized in his speech that the world is in need of a spiritual rebirth opposed to a "social, economic and ecological fatalism."²⁹ For Muller, the religious and spiritual traditions have to reclaim their influence in the world by once again being a guide to human behaviour.

The third major speech was held by the Swiss Catholic priest, theologian and author Hans Küng. During his talk, Küng expressed his concern about the same issues as Barney and Muller.³⁰ His approach to solving the global problems of humankind was interreligious dialogue. Küng believes that there would not be peace on earth without peace among the religions and that peace among the religions would only be possible through dialogue between the religions.³¹ Küng also prepared the document 'Declaration of a Global Ethic' at the request of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. Drawing on many of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, the text works on a common global ethic as a basis for interreligious dialogue among the world's religions with the Golden Rule of reciprocity at its center. It was presented as an initial declaration that should function as a "permanent contribution of the Parliament to the global conversation on how human beings should live together with each

25 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions*, 12–13.

26 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

27 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 98.

28 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 99.

29 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 100.

30 Kuschel, "The Parliament of the World's Religions," 102.

31 Hans Küng, *Projekt Weltethos* (München: Piper), 13.

other and the planet continuation.”³² With a slight name change, to ‘Declaration Toward a Global Ethic’³³, the document was approved by the Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders during their last meeting at the Parliament. The endorsement meeting was well-covered by the media, which praised the Declaration as the key outcome of the Parliament. The last day of the Parliament of the World’s Religions ended with a keynote address by the Dalai Lama at the Closing Plenary, followed by a concert in Grant Park.³⁴

Some conflicting incidents took place during the planning of the second Parliament and the actual event.³⁵ There were religious groups that did not want to participate in the event in the first place or that withdrew their support during the event. Evangelical and fundamentalist church groups refused to collaborate even in the early planning stages. As one of the reasons they named ‘neo-pagan’ groups being allowed to hold ceremonies. Four Jewish groups withdrew their support during the Parliament protesting the presence of Louis H. Farrakhan of the ‘Islamic Nation’, whom they associated with anti-Semitic statements. Furthermore, there was tumult among several Indians in the audience after a speech by a citizen of Kashmir, who described the fate of his land “as ‘psychological rape’.”³⁶ Finally, the ‘Declaration Toward a Global Ethic’ provoked intense discussions including the questioning of its development procedure, doubts about the content and the suggestion to treat it as a working paper only. Nevertheless, it seems that these conflictual incidents did not harm the Parliament’s cause. “On the contrary, it became clear that this Parliament was not being held outside our earth in a spaceship – in an atmosphere of artificially contrived harmony – but in the middle of this world.”³⁷

In fact, “observers and participants hailed it as a pivotal event that gave the interreligious movement global prominence”³⁸ and voices calling for ongoing work by the Council began to emerge strongly during the course of the Parliament.³⁹ As early as 1988, at the time of its formation, the objectives of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions did not limit itself to implementing the 1993 Parliament. At this stage already, the Council wanted to “develop and en-

32 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth’s Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

33 Blouke Carus, interview meeting, August 6, 2014.

34 Donald W. Mitchell, “Report on the Parliament of the World’s Religions,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 14 (1994): 207. Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth’s Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

35 Kuschel, “The Parliament of the World’s Religions,” 95–96.

36 Kuschel, “The Parliament of the World’s Religions,” 95.

37 Kuschel, “The Parliament of the World’s Religions,” 96.

38 Leshner, “Parliament of the World’s Religions” 778.

39 Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth’s Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

courage interfaith groups and programs which will carry the spirit of the Parliament into the twenty-first century.”⁴⁰ Driven by the call for continuation and its own initial intention, the Council decided in 1994 to continue with a threefold international initiative consisting of a continuation of the Parliament of the World’s Religions every four years, further work on the ‘Declaration Toward a Global Ethic’ and a cooperation with the Millennium Institute in Washington, D.C. for the ‘Projects 2000’, a plan that focused on the potential of the “millennial moment” to inspire individuals to initiate and foster positive changes for the world.⁴¹ Chapter 5 draws closer attention to the continuation of the Council’s work.

2.2 The 1990s as a Time of Reunification in the World

“One hundred years ago, Chicago brought the people of the world together. There is no better time than now for this to happen again.” – Slogan of the 1993 Parliament

The Parliament of the World’s Religions was conducted in a decade that was characterized by fundamental social changes. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991. These events led to a rethinking of East and West and marked the beginning of a time of realignment and reconsolidation in the world. The end of Apartheid in South Africa in 1994 and the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act passed in the US continued this development. The 1990’s were also a time of growing economic privatization and rapid electronic revolution with new technology such as cable television and the Internet. This all made way for the rise of multiculturalism and alternative media. At the same time discussions about globalization increased.⁴²

The US was shaped by “the dramatic influx of people into America from Asia and other parts of the world following the passage of the historic U.S. Immigra-

⁴⁰ Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth’s Community of Religions*, Chapter 22.

⁴¹ Jim Kenney, “The Parliament Experience: 1993 and Beyond,” in *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World’s Religions*, ed. Wayne Teasdale and George F. Cairns, (New York: Continuum, 1996): 138–40.

⁴² Richard H. Seager, “The two Parliaments, the 1893 Original and the Centennial of 1993: A Historian’s View” in *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World’s Religions*, edited by Wayne Teasdale and George F. Cairns (New York: Continuum, 1996): 24.

tion Act of 1965.”⁴³ In 1993, 44 % of the population in the United States were Protestants, 26 % Catholics, 3 % Mormons, 2–3 % Jews, 1 % Orthodox Christians and 2 % belonged to religious traditions outside the Judeo-Christian heritage.⁴⁴ Native American cultures were undergoing a manifold revival, the Civil Rights Movement had changed the nation and second-wave feminism had succeeded in putting a wide range of gender issues into the midst of the US society.⁴⁵ “The awareness of living in a changed historical era was reflected in the second Parliament in the spectrum of groups which this time were present or fully represented: not only Muslims and Zoroastrians, Jains and Tibetan Buddhists, but above all ‘native Americans’ and a broad spectrum of the most varied cults, spiritual groups and religious movements.”⁴⁶ The Parliament of the World’s Religions took into account the elements of its time, knowing that by 1993 numerous religions were represented in Chicago and were already in lively exchange with each other. It therefore mainly dealt with “concrete questions of the coexistence of the religions and thus with questions of common convictions, values, and basic attitudes: in short, with questions of an ethic common to all religions.”⁴⁷

The organizers of the 1993 Parliament created a unique event that was in step with the *zeitgeist* by considering the changes in the field of interreligious dialogue. They built on the history of the event but cooperated with the new actors in the field and established a continuing organizational framework.

3 Archival Research and Interviews

3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was chosen for this research because both the archive documents and the interviews can be effectively analyzed using this method. Furthermore, the inductive category development fits the exploratory approach of the *Talking Dialogue Project*. The iterative process allows for continuous revision and flexible adjustment to the material which caters to the varying types of material, the diverse perspectives and the broad distribution

⁴³ Leshner, “World’s Religions, Parliament of the,” 778.

⁴⁴ Karl-Joseph Kuschel, “The Parliament of the World’s Religions, 1893–1993,” in *A Global Ethic. The Declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions*, edited by Hans Küng and Karl-Joseph Kuschel (New York: Continuum, 1993): 92.

⁴⁵ Seager, “The two Parliaments,” 23–24.

⁴⁶ Kuschel, “The Parliament of the World’s Religions,” 94.

⁴⁷ Kuschel, “The Parliament of the World’s Religions,” 93.

of issues encountered during research. Qualitative content analysis also has the advantage of a transparent procedure, making the results comprehensible. It moreover enables both a broad overview and the study of single cases. Because some of the archive material is already ordered by themes, it would stand to reason that qualitative content analysis is used to examine it.

Furthermore, qualitative content analysis was chosen to widen the research perspective. It was used to analyze not only the material of the core episode, but also other documents referring to important information outside of the episode. Therewith, the core episode-approach is thought to be opened, allowing links to the wider context of the 1993 Parliament. The aim is to counteract the narrowness⁴⁸ that is inherent in the core episode-approach without exceeding the research framework.

During the phone interview with Howard Sulkin, he challenged the core episode-approach of this work. Sulkin said it included a revision of history, a process he does not support. For him, the 1993 Parliament inherited a greater goal than what is focused on in the aim of the *Talking Dialogue* research project as the Parliament planning follows neither a causal order nor can it be pressed into a scheme of high and low points. For Sulkin, the Council comprises an ongoing spirit that should not be reduced by scandal creation and exaggeration of critical issues. His critique went as far as refusing to answer certain questions, because for him they artificially created or exaggerated themes.⁴⁹

The self-concept of this paper refers to academic and not to journalist work. It is open to discuss its own approach and welcomes challenging remarks as those of Sulkin. During the archival research and the interviews, the core episode-approach helped to determine the scope of study. Nevertheless, the narrowness Sulkin noted, appeared when themes surpassed the boundaries of the chosen core episode, which already encompassed a long period.

Qualitative content analysis was chosen to examine the material to counteract causality and expand the boundaries of the chosen core episode. It was used to open the core episode-approach, allowing links to the wider context of the 1993 Parliament as it also analyzed documents referring to important information outside of the chosen 'core episode'. This allowed for greater differentiation and complexity, as well as a broadening of the research perspective.

⁴⁸ Here, narrowness refers to the time restriction that the 'core episode'-approach implicates and the causality that it implies.

⁴⁹ Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

Qualitative content analysis, as developed in the 1980s by Philipp Mayring, “consists in a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis.”⁵⁰ It works as an analysis tool for all kinds of recorded communication, so that for this research it can be used to analyze both the archive material and the notes of the interviews. Moreover, it not only counts the ideas of the text itself as content, but also includes latent content into the analysis, namely the communication context of the text. Qualitative content analysis is “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification.”⁵¹ It was developed as a counterpart to quantitative content analysis with the aim “to preserve the advantages of quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science and to transfer and further develop them to qualitative-interpretative steps of analysis.”⁵²

There are two types of procedures in qualitative content analysis: inductive category development and deductive category application. The former is used to analyze the material for this research and is thus described in detail. Inductive category development gradually generates categories out of the material in a step-by-step process.⁵³ The research question and research aim usually provide the starting point for category development. Further (sub) categories emerge directly out of the material as words or text passages are multi-linked to thematic keywords. “Within a feedback loop those categories are revised, eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability.”⁵⁴ As a last step of the inductive category development, all of the material is coded according to the main categories that contain the subcategories.

Through the ongoing comparison and contrasting of the subcategories during the iterative analysis process, the category-based analysis and presentation gains differentiation, complexity and comprehensibility.⁵⁵ The material can now be analyzed, interpreted and results represented along with the main categories while taking the subcategories into account. This also includes the elab-

50 Philipp Mayring, “Qualitative Content Analysis,” in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1, no. 2 (2000): Art. 20. <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0002204> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

51 Mayring, “Qualitative Content Analysis”.

52 Mayring, “Qualitative Content Analysis”.

53 Philipp Mayring, “Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse,” In *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch*, 4th edition 2005, edited by Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff and Ines Steinke (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 2000): 472.

54 Mayring, “Qualitative Content Analysis”.

55 Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerstützung* (Basel/Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2012), 77.

oration of correlations between and within main categories, putting the findings in a wider perspective.⁵⁶ Furthermore, interesting individual cases can be presented in-depth.

3.2 Potentials and Limitations of the Material

The material used for the research is described and examined below paying attention to its potentials and limitations. First, the archive material is specified, followed by the unstructured interviews that were conducted.

As agreed in November 1993, the Special Collections and Archives of DePaul University in Chicago were designated to hold the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection with the 1993 Parliament documents.⁵⁷ The Collection includes material from 1983–1999 in 60 boxes (16 feet), which is arranged into six branches: Publications, Administration, Biographies, Parliament Planning, Parliament Presentations and Memorabilia. The boxes include official publications by the Council, as well as internal material from the different committees that planned the Parliament such as correspondences, Minutes or handwritten notes. Enclosed are also photographs, audio recordings, videotapes and miscellaneous advertisements.

The contents of 25 boxes were carefully searched, to gather information for this paper focusing mainly on those associated with the planning process of the Parliament. Due to the large quantity of material and the fact that the current archive staff had not worked with the collection before, a significant amount of time had to be spent on orientation. The 71-page-long finding aid for the collection was a great help in navigating through the boxes.⁵⁸ The material provided both a good overview and a detailed focus on single aspects of the planning phase. Many of the files are ordered chronologically, whereas others are stored in the order of arrival at the archive. Other files are grouped thematically by issues that occurred during the planning phase or the event itself. The records of the host committees are grouped by denomination, allowing research by religious groups. While some documents are held multiple times, others are missing, leaving fragmentary correspondences and knowledge gaps.

The interview material consists of three interview meetings and three phone interviews with six individuals involved in the planning process of the 1993 Par-

⁵⁶ Kuckartz, *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*, 95.

⁵⁷ Beversluis, *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*, Ch. 22.

⁵⁸ DePaul University Archives, "Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Collection".

liament. The interviews vitalized the archival findings, adding the different perspectives of the contributors. They were helpful in setting information into context and establishing relations between single findings. Moreover, they bridged gaps by contributing information that was not recorded.

4 The 1993 Parliament – A Manifold Event

In this chapter, the results of the actual analysis of the material are presented. A general description of the planning phase based on the archive material and the interviews is given. The chapter provides an overview of the identified core episode of the formation phase and portrays the challenges that the Council faced while planning the 1993 Parliament. After this, the chosen core episode of the formation phase is examined in detail. Then, the challenging period of this episode and the resolution of this challenging period are examined separately. However, before proceeding with this information, the analysis process, including the finding of the ‘core episode’ and the coding, is described immediately below.

During the archival research a box list, a research diary and a list of people were kept. The box list kept a record of the documents viewed and digitalized. The research diary linked interesting topics to the respective documents and to further research options that came up. The list of people names the members of the Board of Directors and the advisors of the council, their functions, religious backgrounds and tenures of office.

The research diary enabled a mapping of the topics and issues of the planning process. This mapping shows an interesting episode, the core episode of the formation phase, covering the planning during the years 1989–1991, where significant topics accumulate. Moreover, the mapping also facilitated the preparation of the first coding of the qualitative content analysis, providing a range of interesting topics to search for. The keywords that were provided by the research diary and that emerged out of the material during the first coding were:

‘Küng’, ‘Finances’, ‘Kidd’, ‘Co-Sponsors’, ‘Organization’, ‘Aim’, ‘Cooperation’, ‘Structure’ and ‘Declaration’.

During the second and third coding, the codes were grouped, and more keywords were added. Through this, the relationships between the different dimensions were highlighted and the analysis became more specific. Here, the decision was made to differ between a period of challenges and a period of resolving

within the chosen ‘core episode’. At this stage, the groups and their sub-key-words were classified as:

Challenges: Aim – ‘Chicago vs. World’, ‘Centennial vs. Redirection’; Finances – ‘Kidd’, ‘Co-Sponsors’, ‘Office closure’; Content – ‘Küng’, ‘Declaration’; Structure.

Resolving: ‘Cooperation’, ‘Organization’, ‘New Board Members’.

The fourth and final coding resulted in the following arrangement of keywords. They are presented in a table according to the distinction between a period of challenges and a period of resolving, as well as under the subheadings aim, content, finances, structure, organization, cooperation and reorientation. The table is to be read in rows from left to right:

Tab. 1: Codings, structured by the Author

Challenges	Aim	Chicago vs. World	Centennial vs. Reorien- tation	Diversity
	Content	Küng	Declaration	Dalai Lama
	Finances	Kidd	Co-Sponsors	
	Structure	Size of Board	Policies	
Resolving	Organization	Financial Recovery	Stop-Gap	
	Cooperation	Institute for 21 st Century Studies	New Tasks	
	Reorientation	New Board members	Revision	

4.1 The Challenges of a Centennial Event that was meant to Reach Beyond

This chapter provides general information on the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions and the planning process of the centennial based on the archive material and the interviews. It deals with the challenges the Council had to tackle during the planning of the 1993 Parliament and provides an overview of the chosen core episode.

The Council started off with the Parliament planning solely with a vision. Looking back, Gómez-Ibáñez explained during the phone interview: “We were amateurs at that time. In the beginning, we didn’t know where we were

going.”⁵⁹ After having formed the Board of Directors and some committees during the summer of 1988, the Council organized a weekend-planning retreat at Crystal Lake, Illinois, to widen the initial vision.⁶⁰ The conversations at Crystal Lake began “to give shape to the program of the 1993 Parliament.”⁶¹ Nevertheless, further development was still quite undetermined. Rivetna recalled: “The Parliament planning happened little by little”⁶² and Gómez-Ibáñez explained: “We created the parliament as we went along, it was a learning experience.”⁶³

The first annual meeting of the Board of Directors, the General Assembly of the Council, consisted of 10–15 members. Rivetna remembered: “We did not really have a good direction and said different prayers at that meeting.”⁶⁴ By then, the Council was structured as follows: The Board of Directors functioned as the governing body of the Council. Main positions were the Chair of the Board, the Vice-Chair of the Board, the Treasurer and the Secretary. Additionally, an administrative office was established. Ron Kidd was named Administrator and started working “on a deferred pay basis.”⁶⁵ The Board was supported by local, regional or national institutions that functioned as Co-Sponsors. Furthermore, national and international individuals facilitated the Council’s work by becoming advisors. The heart of the Council were the committees, “the place where people transform ideas into decisions and plans.”⁶⁶ In 1989 two sets of committees had already started working: the internal business committees (Finance, Publicity, Physical Planning, Membership and Nominating), and the Chicago-focused Program committees (Program, Research, Worship, Dialogue, Science and Religion and Social Action).

In the annual report of July 9th, 1989, the then-Chairman of the Board, Nolley, predicted the Council would grow in terms of its members, but also its work in the following year: “Our Board will develop a rather different character as we establish an Executive Committee and the work of the committees develops.”⁶⁷ Nolley was right, the Council grew, and the work became more serious. Gómez-Ibáñez was elected as the new Chair of the Board. From 1989 onwards the Board

59 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

60 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989. (The boxes are quoted according to the guidelines of the respective archives.)

61 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

62 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

63 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

64 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

65 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

66 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

67 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report July 1989: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

Member, Blouke Carus, generously distributed an office to the Council for the Parliament of the World's Religions, enabling operation from a central workspace in downtown Chicago. The number of volunteers involved in the planning of the 1993 Parliament grew to nearly 200. The annual report of 1990 calls the past year "a year when we began to spell out our dreams for the centennial and make them real plans", but also "a year when ideas were tested against the hard surfaces of a real world."⁶⁸ Finances were a particular concern for the Council. There was no regular income to pay salaries and other expenses.

Between 1990 and 1991 the situation intensified. In a letter to the Executive Committee dated 3 December 1990, Gómez-Ibáñez wrote "the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religion is at a critical point" and he also clearly called for reorganization: "Unless we make some significant changes, the Parliament probably will fail."⁶⁹ The office of the Council had to be temporarily closed in December 1990 due to financial shortages and the expenses were reduced to a minimum, merely ensuring the continuation of the 1993 Parliament planning process. The services of the administrator, Kidd, had to be terminated. The annual report of 1991 talks about this being "a very difficult decision, because Kidd's vision and enthusiasm for the Parliament had been vital to the work and its success."⁷⁰ Sulkin recalls: "The biggest problem that had to be faced was money. It was there every second."⁷¹

Nonetheless, the situation improved between 1991 and 1992 and the challenging episode was resolved. The Council "saw progress on many fronts."⁷² Donations were received allowing the Council to regain pace. Gómez-Ibáñez resumed the administrative office, as the Executive Director. The Council could reopen in a new suite of offices donated for two years by the Continental Bank. The number of contributing people shrunk, but there were still more than a hundred volunteers involved in the planning process.

At least 12 people were continuously working for the Parliament, of which four were paid staff and two were funded by grants. People from the influential circles of Chicago were won over for the Parliament idea and joined the Board. The Board of Directors was renamed into Board of Trustees. Gómez-Ibáñez describes this change in the nature of the Board as a turning point in the formation

⁶⁸ Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

⁶⁹ Box 7 A: Correspondence January–December 1990: December 3 '90 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

⁷⁰ Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990–1991: Annual Report 1990–1991.

⁷¹ Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

⁷² Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991–1992: Annual Report 1991–1992.

phase.⁷³ From then on, “attention concentrated on the centennial rather than on the various plans for wider local participation.”⁷⁴

Another major development during this time was the cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century Studies. In a concept paper dated 5 December 1990, the Council reassures its focus on the critical issues, the celebration of the 1993 Parliament and the aim to bring together the religious communities in Chicago.⁷⁵ The question “*What shall we do? How are human needs to be met in the 21st century without destroying the ability of the planet to support life?*”⁷⁶, also referred to simply as “What shall we do?”, was put forward and the partnership with the Institute for 21st Century Studies was initiated. The Institute had been a co-sponsor of the Council for some time and Barney, the Director, was in contact with the Parliament planning group since 1989. Therefore, the cooperation, settled on 11 May 1991, did not involve a reorientation of the Council, but an upswing of existing ideas. During the phone interview, Gómez- Ibáñez made clear that there was no restructuring during the planning process, but a continuous professionalization over time: “we just got more and more serious.”⁷⁷

In 1992, arrangements with the Palmer House Hotel were made. The Council negotiated a room rate for the guests and was not charged for the use of conference rooms and function spaces.⁷⁸ The centennial finally had a fixed location. In 1992 and 1993, the plans took form. Speakers were invited, registrations accepted, and the final program was launched. Many decisions were short notice, but major changes were not needed anymore. In the end, the Council managed to keep the budget.⁷⁹

However, the 1993 Parliament event brought about a few new challenges. There were protests outside of the Palmer House Hotel, Jewish and Orthodox groups withdrew their support for differing reasons, the projected key outcome: the ‘Declaration Toward a Global Ethic’ was criticized and its creation process questioned. On top of that Gómez-Ibáñez resigned.

As mentioned above, the time between 1989 and 1991 was chosen as the core episode of the formation phase of the 1993 Parliament of the World’s Regions. Several reasons for this were excerpted from the material and already elaborated

73 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

74 Beversluis, A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions, 13.

75 Box 7 A: Correspondence January-December 1990: December 5 '90 Draft Concept Paper.

76 Box 7 A: Correspondence January-December 1990: December 5 '90 Draft Concept Paper.

77 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

78 Box 7 A: Correspondence February-August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

79 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

in this chapter. During the interviews, the importance of this episode was reconfirmed. Gómez- Ibáñez called the time between 1989 and 1991 the “period of most intense planning.”⁸⁰ And also Rivetna sees it as an important stage of the planning process: “Between ‘89 and ‘91 we really started to organize, make a program and plan the Parliament, it became an event organization.”⁸¹

4.2 A Core Episode of the Formation Phase

Below, the chosen core episode is described according to the structure of Table 1 on page 14. First, the period of challenges is described and afterwards, the period of resolving is presented.

4.2.1 The Challenging Period

a. Creating an International Event in a Local Context

As the planning for the 1993 Parliament evolved, the members of the Council had two major plans for the Parliament. First, they wanted to plan a big event with worldwide significance and second, they wanted to create an ongoing mechanism for Chicago to deal with interfaith issues. While the former became the principal aspect, the latter became the secondary.⁸² This was mainly due to decisions made after the presentation of the concept paper in 1990.

As Gómez-Ibáñez explains in a letter to the Executive Committee, “its adoption implies that our work on the critical issues will be manifestly global, not just local, in that we will seek to involve the world’s religions in a dialogue on global problems. So, with respect at least to the critical issues component of our vision, I think we would be deciding that the Parliament was to be an ‘international event held in Chicago’ rather than a ‘Chicago event which might attract international attention and participation’.”⁸³

⁸⁰ Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

⁸¹ Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

⁸² Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

⁸³ Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: Dec 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

b The Balancing Act between a Centennial and a Reoriented Major World Event

Another major topic concerning the aim of the 1993 Parliament was the management of the balancing act between a centennial and a reoriented major world event. The Council stated in 1990: “We do not see the 1993 Centennial as simply a repetition of the 1893 Parliament.”⁸⁴

But the matter was not so easily resolved, as demonstrated in the 1990 Annual Report: “from the beginning our work was seen to have two foci: the centennial in 1993 and the world’s religions already assembled day in and day out in the Chicago area”.⁸⁵ The Vedanta Society especially wanted to emphasize the centennial character of the 1993 Parliament to celebrate Vivekananda’s speech at the 1893 Parliament.⁸⁶ In the end, also due to the concept paper decisions, the reorientation was emphasized, while at the same time, the spirit of the 1893 Parliament was not forgotten.

c. Striving for Diversity

The third challenge linked to the aim of the Council was the striving for diversity. Because the 1893 Parliament was mainly organized by people of Christian faith and excluded certain religious groups, the members of the Council wanted the 1993 Parliament to be as manifold as possible and organized by people of many different faiths. This thought substantially guided the Council, as Nolley reports: “early on, we made a commitment to ourselves that this Parliament would not be organized by an elite few for the many. Rather, we have set for ourselves the far more difficult task of incorporating as much diversity as possible, not only in our programs but within the very fibres of our organization”.⁸⁷

During the interview, Sulkin described that the Council’s main concern was to get more and more people involved for the sake of diversity and inclusion. He also mentioned that the result of this endeavor was a tremendous variety of opinions, worldviews and intentions. This was challenging for the Council but did not lead to split-offs or disjunction, because “the spirit of the Parliament left room for everyone to have their own agendas”.⁸⁸

84 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: March 9, 1990 letter from Kenney and Kidd.

85 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

86 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

87 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989 July: Annual Report July 9, 1989.

88 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

d. The Involvement of Hans Küng

The participation of Hans Küng, the well-known Swiss Catholic theologian, was of vital importance to the 1993 Parliament. Küng contributed not only through an important speech and the key document 'Declaration Toward a Global Ethic', but his participation also showed the openness and courage of the Council to live up to its values. As Sulkin expressed: "Küng was so controversial as a person and as an individual, but still, he contributed so much."⁸⁹

From the outset, Küng's involvement with the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions raised some issues. Kidd invited Küng in a letter dated April 28th, 1989 to get him involved in the 1993 Parliament as an advisor, asking him to write a declaration, to come to Chicago in 1991 or 1992 to lead a group on this issue and to present the final document at the Parliament event⁹⁰. Küng agreed on May 10th, 1989, as a response letter from Kidd on June 1st, 1989 intends.⁹¹ However a memo from May 24th, 1989 speaks about discrepancies in the invitation process: "Ron Kidd simply wrote to Dr. Küng and invited him to come to Chicago and lead a program, write a declaration, etc. However, none of this was discussed among the officers or in committee—i.e. no resolution was made or approved saying the Chicago WPR should do this and Ron should write such a letter."⁹²

The memo was signed 'J.' and was most likely written by the then-secretary Judith Lawrence, who had welcomed Küng as an advisor in a letter dated just two days before the memo.⁹³ The letter raises two issues: First, the decision-making process at the Council at that time: "It's not that Küng should not be invited, etc., but more a question of making an executive decision on when to send and what to say when sending out a letter."⁹⁴ And second, the fact that it was difficult for the Council to get the main line churches to participate⁹⁵ and Küng was more of a barrier than assistance in this: "I was very concerned, since our group has still not gotten enough broad-based support from all the denominations here (especially, for example, the Archdiocese!)."⁹⁶ The Catholic members of the Council

⁸⁹ Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

⁹⁰ Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: April 28, 1989 letter from Kidd to Küng.

⁹¹ Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: June 1, 1989 letter from Kidd to Küng.

⁹² Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: May 24, 1989 Confidential Memo.

⁹³ Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: May 22, 1989 letter from Lawrence to Küng.

⁹⁴ Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: May 22, 1989 letter from Lawrence to Küng.

⁹⁵ Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

⁹⁶ Box 7 A: Correspondence April-December 1989: May 24, 1989 Confidential Memo.

were very critical and cautious about Küng, because he was stripped of his *missio canonica*, his license to teach as a Roman Catholic theologian.⁹⁷ In the end, the Council agreed on Küng and the declaration document and nevertheless managed to have the Catholic Church involved. After the Archbishop Joseph Bernardin declared his participation, the main line churches followed.⁹⁸

e. Establishing the Declaration

While the concerns with Küng's involvement were soon overcome, the criticism of the declaration began during the same time but outlasted the Parliament event. The creation of a document with the intended significance and broad acceptance was a difficult task.

While Küng had agreed on participating in the 1993 Parliament at an early stage, he felt uncertain about the Council's idea of a universal declaration as time passed. Gómez-Ibáñez remembered: "Küng did not want to write the declaration anymore. I went to Tübingen and persuaded him a whole afternoon long"⁹⁹ In July 1992, the first draft of the declaration was ready, a revised second edition followed in October the same year. While the Council wanted the document to be called "*Universal Declaration of Human Values*"¹⁰⁰ or 'Declaration of Global Values', Küng strongly recommended choosing 'Ethic' instead of 'Values'. He wrote the 'Declaration of a Global Ethic' as there had already been a conference on 'Global Values' and he felt 'Global Ethic' "is also more precise and not so vague as Global Values."¹⁰¹

Several meetings were conducted to discuss the declaration during this stage of its development process. On May 26th, 1993 individuals from several religious groups and academics met to discuss the declaration that they at that time called 'Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic'.

They had the concern that "the document was perhaps too western and relied implicitly too heavily on Judaic, Christian, Islamic structures."¹⁰² They suggested a revision of: "1) the implications of a pledge versus stating the ethic

⁹⁷ Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

⁹⁸ Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

⁹⁹ Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

¹⁰¹ Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989 – 1993: October 23, 1992 letter from Küng to Gómez-Ibáñez.

¹⁰² Box 20: Global Ethic Discussion 1993 May 26: May 26, 1993 A Discussion of "Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic".

as a statement of duty; 2) the need for a more careful delineation of the context for developing the ethic; and 3) general and specific concerns of the language of the ethic.”¹⁰³

During the meeting entitled Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, held on 5 December 1992, similar issues were raised; “we need a statement that comes from simplicity and depth, not something coming from the academy.”¹⁰⁴ During the meeting, the declaration was called “an ethic from above”¹⁰⁵, referring especially to problems concerning “its tone, its expression, its style and its omissions.”¹⁰⁶ Küng himself had advised in favour of “strategic reflections in a very early stage concerning the acceptance of such a declaration.”¹⁰⁷ The Council wanted important religious figures to review the document, but time was running out.

Moreover, the Council tried to shorten the document: “What is needed is a declaration that *inspires* while it conveys guiding principles. It shouldn’t exceed more than two pages.”¹⁰⁸ Küng refused to support the reduction and they agreed to a combined declaration with a short introduction by the Council followed by the longer text from Küng. He expressed his frustration in a letter dated May 7th, 1993. He had not received the promised feedback and corrections; “this is an absolutely impossible situation, which lacks all transparency.”¹⁰⁹ His second draft from October 1992 was finally commented on in June 1993, eight months later.

The Parliament moved closer and there was still a lot to do. On July 25th, 1993 Gómez-Ibáñez wrote to the Board: “we are under an extremely tight time constraint because we intend to send the declaration to a number of religious and spiritual [leaders/people] for endorsement *before* the Parliament begins.”¹¹⁰ Already during a meeting of the Executive Committee on December 10th, 1990 sev-

103 Box 20: Global Ethic Discussion 1993 May 26: May 26, 1993 A Discussion of “Declaration of the Religions for a Global Ethic”.

104 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

105 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

106 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

107 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: May 10, 1989 letter from Küng to Kidd.

108 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: December 5, 1992 Reactions of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

109 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: May 7, 1993 letter from Küng to Ramage.

110 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: July 25, 1993 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

eral people had noted that “it would be impossible to get people to sign such a statement for their faiths without there being time for the judicatures to review the document in detail.”¹¹¹ But now, this detailed revision had to be cut short: “the document will not be offered to prospective endorses or to the Assembly for modification, but ‘as is.’ This is appropriate not only for practical reasons, but also because the process up to now has been consultative and broad-based.”¹¹² This lack of revision time was harshly criticized at the 1993 Parliament event.

f. The Challenge of Inviting the Dalai Lama

Another major participant did not make the planning easy for the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. “A major discussion ensued concerning inviting the Dalai Lama to be the keynote speaker; the discussion included an explanation of the need for well-known names to draw attendance.”¹¹³ Gómez-Ibáñez tried for more than a year to arrange an appointment with the Dalai Lama. “In September 1990, H.H. the Dalai Lama met with Gómez-Ibáñez and agreed to deliver a keynote address at the opening of the Parliament in 1993.”¹¹⁴ The plan worked out: “when we had his name, others followed.”¹¹⁵

g. The Debt Owed to the Administrator Ron Kidd

While the plans for the centennial took form and the Council grew, the 1990 Annual Report admitted that “what was not there were a regular supply of operating funds, successful fund-raising efforts, or income to permit salaries to be paid every month.”¹¹⁶ And the financial situation of the Council got worse in 1990. Between January and August 1990, general and administrative expenditures amounted to \$29,305.96, the account balance showing a debt of \$31,285.50.¹¹⁷ As an emergency solution, Gómez-Ibáñez reported that “the Council’s Executive

111 Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5 1990: December 10, 1990 Minutes of December 5 meeting of Executive Committee.

112 Box 7 A: Correspondence Prof. Hans Küng 1989–1993: July 25, 1993 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

113 Box 7 A: Correspondence January–December 1990: April 18, 1990 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.

114 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1990–1991: Annual Report 1990–1991.

115 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

116 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

117 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1989–1990: Annual Report 1989–1990.

Committee decided to reduce expenditures to the minimum necessary to preserve the organization until we receive additional funding.”¹¹⁸ The outstanding debt was mostly a liability to Kidd, who had not been paid for his administrative work up to this point. At the end of 1990, the salary owed was beyond \$45,000.¹¹⁹ The Council had to terminate Kidd’s employment by 21 December 1990.¹²⁰

As a letter from Gómez-Ibáñez showed, the situation weighed on the Council: “Several of you have said we should take some decisions concerning our debt to Ron Kidd, and so we should. We need to decide what we can do about itself; also how we shall manage the affairs of the Council while the debt is still outstanding.”¹²¹ It was decided that “Donations received without restrictions will be used to repay Mr. Kidd.”¹²² Since it was a very difficult task to acquire donations at short notice and the Council wanted the debt out of the balance, “the Executive Committee decided that all thirty members of the Board will contribute \$1500 to the Parliament.”¹²³ At the end of December 1990 the account balance showed \$86.97¹²⁴ as the debt to Kidd was not listed anymore.¹²⁵

A letter to the Board shows, that the situation bothered Kidd, as well. He tried to avoid an interruption of the Parliament’s work: “no one spoke to me about the debt owed. Therefore, let me for the first time make the offer to reduce the amount owed to me by \$3,000 so the next Conference on Critical Issues can take place as soon as is practicable.”¹²⁶

During the phone interview, Gómez-Ibáñez explained that Kidd had been volunteering before and all of a sudden wanted to be paid for his activities in 1990.¹²⁷ The documents on the contrary state, that Kidd had agreed on postponing his salary, but that it was agreed to pay him from the start. “Mr. Ron Kidd was named Administrator in January and has generously worked for the Council on a

118 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: February 6, 1991 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

119 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: January 5, 1991 letter from Wurmfeld to board.

120 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: February 6, 1991 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

121 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

122 Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5 1990: December 5, 1990 Minutes of Executive Committee meeting.

123 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: January 5, 1991 letter from Wurmfeld.

124 Box 6 A: Annual Report 1990 – 1991: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.

125 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes, March 11, 1991.

126 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1991: January 27, 1991 letter from Kidd.

127 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

deferred pay basis.”¹²⁸ After donations came in, Gómez-Ibáñez continued in Kidd’s position and was paid.

h. Unused Financial Resources

The perspectives and opinions on the financial situation of the Council differ. While on the one hand, Sulkin expressed that “the biggest problem that had to be faced was money. It was there every second.”¹²⁹ On the other hand, Gómez-Ibáñez said, they just did not have enough money to pay Kidd. In addition to that, the Council had no financial difficulties. “We were very careful with money in general, it was not the driving issue at all.”¹³⁰

In any case, finances were a challenge to the Council, especially because the potential of the Co-Sponsors was not used for a long time during the early planning phase.

The cut-back of costs also left the Council homeless for some time. In the December 5th, 1990 meeting “the Executive Committee decided that the Council must stop spending money or incurring liabilities. This decision requires closing the office.”¹³¹

i. The Growing Size of the Board

A challenge concerning the structure of the Parliament was the fact that people kept joining the Council. Sulkin describes the great number of people involved in the planning of the Parliament as “joy and woe”.¹³² From 10–15 people that gathered for the first annual meeting, the number of people involved increased to more than two hundred.

The Parliament especially tried to win over people from Chicago’s influential circles to the Parliament idea. They helped interact with the city and get decisions made in favour of Parliament, for example, the permission to hold the closing ceremony in Grant Park.

128 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1989: Annual Report 1989.

129 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

130 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

131 Box 14 A: Minutes, Notes December 5, 1990: December 5, 1990 Minutes of Executive Committee meeting.

132 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

j. The Necessity to Establish Policies

As the planning got more serious, the Council had to make some administrative decisions and establish policies.

Kidd called attention to the procedure of recruiting advisors: “We have been adding advisors without any particular effort to enlist people in this category, but without restricting the list particularly, either. In 1898 advisors world-wide totalled some 5,000 people. Do we want to follow their example and sign up any clergy-man or academic or other interested parties?”¹³³

To establish a guideline, he suggested to “limit the ‘advisors’ to men and women of standing locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.”¹³⁴ Furthermore he recommended to “drop the designation ‘Board of Advisors’. There is no Board, never was one, and there is no intention of ever calling the advisors together in a Board.”¹³⁵

Lawrence also felt that guidelines needed to be set up. “Up till now, we have been very informal about all of this, even lax. During the past 12 months the Board officers have never met together to discuss policies.”¹³⁶ In a memo from May 18, 1989, she wrote: “it’s time that we get ourselves organized and tackle some of these administrative matters.”¹³⁷ She expressed: “I feel we need to clarify and establish policy regarding decision-making and governance matters. Not all correspondence is purely informational or routine.”¹³⁸

Lawrence clearly also referred to the issues concerning Küng: “If correspondence or meetings regarding issues which will affect the Council’s position as a public cooperation are to be undertaken, I feel statements of policies or plans should be cleared by an executive committee in advance of holding meetings or sending letters. If policies have not been officially established, we should not represent in our correspondence that they have been.”¹³⁹

At a later stage, a revision of policies and procedures was undertaken. The remarks of Kidd and Lawrence were considered in this process. The revision is described in-depth below.

133 Box 6B: Correspondence 1989–1990: February 9, 1989 letter from Ron Kidd.

134 Box 6B: Correspondence 1989–1990: February 9, 1989 letter from Ron Kidd.

135 Box 6B: Correspondence 1989–1990: February 9, 1989 letter from Ron Kidd.

136 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.

137 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.

138 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.

139 Box 7 A: Correspondence April – December 1989: May 18, 1989 memo from Judith Lawrence.

4.2.2 Resolving of the Challenging Period

a. Financial Recovery

In a letter dated July 31st, 1991 Gómez-Ibáñez finally broke the good news to the Board informing them that “since March, when the Board authorized a fundraising proposal to various foundations and donors, we have been able to raise \$176,000 from individual contributors.”¹⁴⁰ Up to September 1991, donations were made by Steven Rockefeller (\$25,000), Lauren Rockefeller (\$50,000 in 1991 and \$50,000 in 1992), John Templeton (\$10,000 per year for the next five years, starting in 1991) and co-sponsors and individuals (cash donations of \$13,000).¹⁴¹ On August 17th, 1991 the Council’s account balance showed \$53,919.41¹⁴² and by the end of December 1991, the balance amounted to \$60,450.¹⁴³ At last, the Council was in the black again.

Moreover, in August 1991, the Gómez-Ibáñez’s employer agreed to give him a leave of absence of more than two years, as well as donating the first six-month’ salary and benefits to the Council. Thus, Gómez-Ibáñez was able to start working full-time as Executive Director for the Council from September 1991 onwards.¹⁴⁴

And the financial upswing continued in 1992. “Generous donors gave more than \$200,000 in cash and in-kind services during the year.”¹⁴⁵ The account balance on August 31, 1992, showed \$49,170.14.¹⁴⁶ As Rivetna recounts during the phone interview, the Council reached its goal: “We managed to keep to the budget.”¹⁴⁷

b. Interim Management

During the time between the financial difficulties and the recovery, the Council had to decide on an interim management of its affairs.

Gómez-Ibáñez wrote to the Executive Committee on December 3rd, 1990 that “in the near future we also will need to consider steps to strengthen our

140 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – October 1991: July 31, 1991 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez to board.

141 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.

142 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.

143 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.

144 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.

145 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.

146 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1991 – 1992.

147 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

board.”¹⁴⁸ For this, he proposed “the creation of a small ad-hoc board development committee.”¹⁴⁹

During a Board of Directors Meeting in March 1991 this ‘Board development committee’, then called Coordination Committee, was approved. It consisted of Gómez-Ibáñez, Sulkin and Yael Wurmfeld.¹⁵⁰ The establishment of the Coordination Committee was preceded by a discussion on the need to have an infrastructure in place to be prepared for mobilization, as soon as funds are received and on the role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee until the administrative staff is in place again.¹⁵¹

It was only in April 1992, that the Executive Committee was able to advise the renting of a new office space, so the Parliament work could go back to normal.¹⁵²

c. The Cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century Studies

A conference on critical issues, which was organized by the Planning Committee, was held on 13 October 1990 at DePaul University. The conference featured a presentation by Barney, the Executive Director of the Institute for 21st Century Studies with the title *What shall we do?* “Partly as a result of this conference, and partly because the Institute for 21st Century Studies had been searching for a way to introduce its concerns to the communities of faith, the Council’s Board of Directors and the Board of the Institute decided to collaborate in organizing the Critical Issues part of the 1993 Parliament.”¹⁵³ Additionally, the Council admitted that it “is well positioned to reach out to the world’s communities of faith, but is less well prepared to undertake the analysis of critical issues.”¹⁵⁴ A formal agreement between both parties was signed on March 11th, 1991.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Institute declares that “the Council’s plans and the Institute’s plans are related and com-

148 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

149 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

150 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11, 1991: Minutes Board of Directors, March 11, 1991.

151 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11, 1991: Minutes Board of Directors, March 11, 1991.

152 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez on recent developments.

153 Box 6 A: Board of Directors: Annual Report 1990 – 1991.

154 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

patible. Each can assist the other in achieving its goals. The Institute has a unique set of contacts throughout the world and a demonstrated capacity to prepare analyses and syntheses of critical issues. The Council has excellent contacts with the world's communities of faith and a commitment to hosting the 1993 Parliament."¹⁵⁵ Surely, the cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century Studies has to also be seen in the light of hope for successful "joint grant proposals."¹⁵⁶

For the cooperation, the Coordination Committee was formed, consisting of both the Council's and the Institute's Executive Directors and two members of each board. The Memorandum of Understanding moreover manifested that "the Council and the Institute intend to collaborate further beyond the date of the Parliament."¹⁵⁷

d. New Tasks and Perspectives

Due to the cooperation with the Institute for 21st Century studies, the Council had to include the co-sponsors more actively in the planning process and assign new tasks to them: "the increased attention to critical issues will require more specific participation of our religious co-sponsors."¹⁵⁸ The co-sponsors were to especially help with the development process of the religious perspectives on the critical issues and the fund-raising. Prior to this, they were "not contributing much to the effort in part because the Council has not asked them to do specific tasks."¹⁵⁹

Another area that needed more attention and support was the publicity of the Council, as Gómez-Ibáñez pointed out in a letter dated May 4th, 1992: "this is a weak area for us. I want to get as much publicity as soon as possible, for obvious reasons, and so it will be a priority in May and the months following."¹⁶⁰ The Council finally realized that it was essential for the fund-raising to have a broad public appearance and advertise the goals of the 1993 Parliament. For this, both the co-sponsors and host committees were roped in.

155 Box 6B: Institute for 21st Century Studies Joint Meeting 1992 September 27: March 17, 1991 Memorandum of Understanding.

156 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

157 Box 6B: Institute for 21st Century Studies Joint Meeting 1992 September 27: March 17, 1991 Memorandum of Understanding.

158 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

159 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 3, 1990 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

160 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

Co-Sponsors and host committees were also consulted for recommendations of speakers and participants in the plenary, since the Council was short on time. “In some cases they offered to sponsor (pay for the expenses) of the speaker.”¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, it was not until May 11th, 1993 that the invitations for major presentations were sent out.¹⁶² And by May 18th, 1993, Barbara Bernstein wrote, “most decisions as to which speakers will fill these plenary positions have not yet been made.”¹⁶³

e. Recruiting New Board Members

As mentioned above, the Council recruited influential people to interact with the city of Chicago. An outcome of this was that more money was raised, but the new members also changed the nature of the Board. Gómez-Ibáñez described this as a turning point during the interview.¹⁶⁴ According to him, the former Board wanted interreligious dialogue, the global issue discussion and was rather liberal, while the new Board members wanted the Parliament to be successful, were not so interested in its continuation after 1993 and more conservative. Gómez-Ibáñez felt that: “this was a more difficult Board to work with.”¹⁶⁵ By his own account, he resigned during the Parliament because he felt that the Board was not interested in the continuation and he felt that it was too difficult to work with the new Board. Nevertheless, he continued his interfaith work and remained a member of the Council’s Board until 2000.

Sulkin mentioned that the former Board had feared this change. He said there had been the inherent behavior or attitude on part of the Board that it is wrong to get into partnerships with wealthy people as this might undermine the philosophy of the Parliament. Eventually, the majority of the Board, including Sulkin, voted for the cooperation with the influential circles.¹⁶⁶ It seems that the situation required the inclusion of influential circles, as stated by Sulkin himself: “we have a good number of dedicated volunteers. But we need more.”¹⁶⁷

161 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Gómez-Ibáñez.

162 Box 36: Correspondence accepted invitations A-G: May 11, 1993 invitation to major presentation.

163 Box 18B: Plenary Programming and Timeline 1993 May: May 18, 1993 Memo from Barbara Bernstein to the Executive Committee.

164 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

165 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

166 Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

167 Box 7 A: Correspondence February – August 1992: May 4, 1992 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez on recent developments.

To familiarize the new Board members with the Parliament planning, an orientation program was held on 1 December 1992. The programme included talks and discussions on the idea of the Parliament, outreach efforts (Host Committees and Co-Sponsors), future planning and administrative issues, as well as an introduction to the committees.¹⁶⁸

f. Revision of Previous Procedures and Policies

During the next years, a lot of discussion about and revision of previous procedures and policies needed to be done. In April 1990, the mission statement of the Council was revised.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, it was decided to create a 'group membership' with a fee of \$100 per annum. And finally, Kidd's proposal was carried out to change the 'Board of Advisors' to simply 'Advisors'.

During the April 18th Board of Directors Meeting, the Board also decided to eliminate Advisors and Co-Sponsors from Board of Directors, as the Board grew too large. Furthermore, a procedure for Co-Sponsors was adopted: "candidates for co-sponsorship must be proposed by at least three co-sponsors or by at least three members of the Board of Directors and must be approved by a majority of the Board of Directors."¹⁷⁰

The concept paper of December 5th, 1990 exceeded the focus on the critical issues as they were thought to appeal more likely to funders than interreligious dialogue or the centennial event itself.¹⁷¹ Gómez-Ibáñez highlighted in 1991 that this reorientation however did not imply a major shift of the Council's original goals. "While the approach to those issues has been expanded, we are convinced that our original vision is still very much in place."¹⁷²

In 1992, a discussion was held about the criteria for Co-Sponsors, on the frequency of Board meetings and on the location of those meetings.¹⁷³ Also, the

168 Box 6B: Orientation for New (and Old) Board Members 1992 December 1: December 1, 1992 Orientation Program Board of Trustees.

169 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: April 18, 1990 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.

170 I Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: April 18, 1990 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.

171 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 5, 1990 Draft Concept Paper.

172 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – October 1991: February 6, 1991 letter from Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez.

173 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11: March 11, 1991 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.

Board of Directors recommended that “the Program Committee review all plans and submit a revised program proposal to the Board.”¹⁷⁴

5 To Reach Beyond, not Beyond Reach

5.1 From a Centenary to a Continuation

In 1993, Chicago brought the people of the world together for a second time. After many attempts to hold a succeeding Parliament had failed, this one finally bore fruit. The vision of the small group in the 1980s might have seemed beyond reach at first: “organizing an event that although officially identified as local, was global in its proposed content and planned to bring together world religious leaders [...] was an enterprise for which the well-intentioned pioneers had neither previous experience nor proven expertise.”¹⁷⁵ However, the Council proved that not only the time was ripe, but their plans to reach beyond were, too.

According to Paul Carus, a participant in the 1893 Parliament, previous planning failed, because the 1893 Parliament was ahead of its time and the people were not yet ready for its thought or because “the successor groups were loosely structured and had vague objectives.”¹⁷⁶

The reasons for previous failures are surely as manifold as those for the success of the 1993 Parliament. The fact is that the planning phase of the 1993 Parliament was still very challenging and the challenges are closely linked to the success of the event.

The qualitative content analysis not only allows for a detailed view of the chosen core episode from 1989 to 1991 with the challenging period and its resolving, but also gives an overview of connections or links between the keywords. It shows that the structural challenges are closely linked to the reorientation process of the Council. Especially the categories ‘Policies’ and ‘Revision’ as well as ‘Size of Board’ and ‘New Board Members’ are connected. Furthermore, the financial challenges and the resolving organization and cooperation are interrelated. The aim affects all categories of both ‘Challenges’ and ‘Resolving’.

The analysis showed that the three-way approach of the concept paper from December 5th, 1990 leveraged the planning process. The triple focus on the crit-

174 Box 6 A: Board of Directors Minutes 1991 March 11: March 11, 1991 Minutes Board of Directors meeting.

175 Parra, “Standing with Unfamiliar Company on Uncommon Ground”, 174.

176 Harold Henderson, *Catalyst for Controversy: Paul Carus of Open Court* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1993), 65.

ical issues, the Parliament event and the gathering of the communities of Chicago, was hard to achieve, but the road to success.¹⁷⁷ Another aspiration was the wish for the 1993 Parliament to continue the spirit of its predecessor. “The outcome we want is a holy gathering. This is not a conference.”¹⁷⁸ This also involved to continue the dialogue started in 1893: “as part of the planning process for a centenary observance of the Parliament, it was strongly felt that dialogue, so central to the original gathering, should be a major element of the 1993 Parliament as well.”¹⁷⁹ All in all, the hypothesis of this paper that the creation of an organization fostered the structuralized planning that eventually led to the realization of the 1993 Parliament event was confirmed during the research.

While the 1893 Parliament struggled with the task to leave a lasting impression on Chicago, but “remained so vivid in the memories of many religious people in other parts of the world”¹⁸⁰, the second Parliament did not fall short of the first, but also managed to be treasured by Chicago, continuing its work beyond.

The Council did not only hold a centenary, but also created a unique event that was in step with the *zeitgeist*, because the organizers cooperated with new actors in the field of interreligious dialogue. Simultaneously, they managed to establish an organization that fostered structuralized planning. The special character of the 1993 Parliament and the accomplishment to continue the interfaith work locally and globally still form the basis and the stronghold of the Council for the Parliament of the World’s Religions today.

5.2 The Parliament of the World’s Religions Today

The success of the 1993 Parliament left the Council with the question of continuation. Gómez-Ibáñez said during the phone interview, “we did not want to wait another hundred years.”¹⁸¹ However, he also admitted that: “after the 1993 Parliament, we had no clue to what we should do.”¹⁸² Having fulfilled its task, the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions had to find itself again. And the

177 Box 7 A: Correspondence January – December 1990: December 5, 1990 Draft Concept Paper.

178 Box 17C: Assembly Concepts 1993 July 17: July 17, 1993 Assembly of Religious and Spiritual Leaders Concepts.

179 Box 13B: Minutes 1990 May 1: May 1, 1990 Minutes of Dialogue Committee meeting.

180 Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *The 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions and its Legacy*. Eleventh John Nuveen Lecture. University of Chicago Divinity School and Baptist Theological Union, 1983, 1.

181 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

182 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

members lacked not only the capacity to act, but the funds to operate at all. The group “had to get money to continue, so six to seven of the Council’s members contributed \$10,000 each.”¹⁸³

The Council then split into an international and a local branch. The international branch fulfilled its mission by suggesting a continuation with the ideal of the Olympics, holding a Parliament in a (four-) year cycle at different places. Gómez-Ibáñez remembered “that jelled and gave us the impetus to move forward.”¹⁸⁴ The local branch dissolved after two to three years, as it did not manage to work out how to continue. Several meetings at DePaul University were held, but “nothing really grew.”¹⁸⁵ So the Council continued with a more global focus.

Today, the Council’s work includes various programs and initiatives: *Sharing Sacred Spaces* encourages communities to develop positive relationships and the *Partner City Program* connects communities worldwide in a network to foster relationships among different religious traditions. The *Ambassador Program* invites religious leaders to become official spokespeople for the Parliament, while *Educating Future Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* is concerned with the education of the religious leaders of tomorrow. The campaign *Faith against Hate* is “working amid rising hatred and fear to create respect and trust among dissimilar religious communities”¹⁸⁶, whereas the *Women’s Task Force* is “dedicated to fostering multi-generational women’s groups to engage the intersection of life issues and the religions.”¹⁸⁷ The Council moreover offers webinars providing training for interfaith work by passing on experience.

The Council moved the Parliament beyond dialogue into engagement. Abdul Malik Mujahid, Chair of the Board of Trustees (at the time of research), explained the new role of the Council during the interview meeting, “People do not come to the Parliament and then leave spread up. They leave as a well-connected network.”¹⁸⁸ He describes the aim of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions today as a strengthening of this network. Between the Parliaments, the Council functions as a resource to other interfaith networks and organizations. Moreover, Mujahid reported that: “the Council is today financially healthier than ever.”¹⁸⁹ But the current chair of the Council nevertheless has to admit “fi-

183 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

184 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

185 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

186 Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. *The Other as Neighbor*, 5.

187 Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. *The Other as Neighbor*, 5.

188 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.

189 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.

nances remain a challenge, because interfaith organizations are not taken as a serious player by society.”¹⁹⁰

Rivetna explained the situation differently: “the model of the Host Committees has disappeared, thus the communities do not feel as part of the Parliament anymore, now it’s a Trustee event.”¹⁹¹ He further explained that: “due to this the expenses grew and that made the planning very difficult.”¹⁹² Gómez-Ibáñez similarly described the reason for the ongoing financial challenges of the Council: “the Trustees have to contribute as there is never money, because the communities are absent from the Parliament planning.”¹⁹³ Rivetna explained his concerns further: “things have moved along and they are moving, but we have to learn from the past. We work with universities and centres, but they are not grounded in the communities. We have to integrate a cultural aspect. I would like the different communities to organize the event.”¹⁹⁴ And Rivetna further wishes for inclusion of intra-faith dialogue: “we need to do intra-faith dialogue and in order to do it we need an intra-faith dialogue model. There has to be a transformation from within. Without intra-faith dialogue there is no peace among religions.”¹⁹⁵

If the situation, especially concerning the communities, is really that drastic, then this represents an area that requires further research. The former members of the Council remain vividly concerned and involved in its work and today the Council is operating more globally than ever. After 1993, Parliaments were held in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999, in Barcelona, Spain in 2004, in Monterrey, Mexico in 2007, in Melbourne, Australia in 2009, in Salt Lake City, USA in 2015 and in Toronto, Canada in 2018. And looking at the various programs and activities, the Council is also still active in local contexts. Its members continue to live out its mission: “to cultivate harmony among the world’s religious and spiritual communities, and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.”¹⁹⁶ They are planning to increase the frequency, holding a Parliament every two years.¹⁹⁷

190 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.

191 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

192 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

193 Daniel Gómez-Ibáñez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.

194 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

195 Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

196 Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. *Towards a Global Ethic: A Call to Live Out the Vision*, 3.

197 Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.

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6.3 Interviews

- Blouke Carus, interview meeting, August 6, 2014.
- Daniel Gómez-Ibañez, phone interview, July 21, 2014.
- Abdul Malik Mujahid, interview meeting, July 25, 2014.
- Rohinton Rivetna, phone interview, July 29, 2014.

Howard Sulkin, phone interview, July 24, 2014.

Howard and Constance Sulkin, interview meeting, August 9, 2014.