

20 September 2001

AMI Position

AMI General Assembly 2001 in ERFURT, Germany

**"Cooperation between Christian Churches and between different Religions
in the Armed Forces -
Christian Soldiers at the beginning of the third Millennium"**

1. AMI, the international association of catholic soldiers from about 40 countries on four continents has, during its conference in Rome by the end of 2000, issued a basic declaration "The Catholic Soldier of the third Millennium: How does he see himself? What does he stand for? How can he make his self-perception be accepted by others?" Main points of this declaration are the human dignity, the educated conscience, and expectations with which we confront Church and Society.
2. Based on this declaration meanwhile the work went on and was discussed during the AMI General Assembly in September 2001 in Erfurt - with 15 nations participating -; continuation of this work was decided.
3. "Specific ethical criteria and their application by soldiers in military operations who have to deal with operational dilemmas" were discussed. There was unanimous agreement that the ethics of military service has to be an official part of training in the Armed Forces; AMI member countries will support this idea within their own area in the appropriate way. This being a long term process it was decided to install in AMI a system of communication using today's technical possibilities. Institutes of the respective countries that are in charge for themes like peace, security, justice, religion, and ethics will be included in this process; responsible coordinator is Prof. Fred van Iersel, Netherlands. There will be a yearly report on progress in the General Assemblies.
4. "Ethical questions and remarks in the context of international employment of Armed Forces - Humanitarian Intervention" were subject of considerations. AMI will continue to participate in the discussion on ethical and religious implications concerning the employment of Armed Forces for peace keeping and peace fostering missions taking into account that - at least in Europe - national defence is more and more being replaced by peace keeping missions abroad.
5. "Ecumenical cooperation and cooperation between different religions in the Armed Forces" are of great importance in the light of an ever more globalised world and of growing international cooperation of Armed Forces. Solid theological and pastoral knowledge as well as applicable rules are requested as a basis for this objective; AMI will continue to elaborate these basics in the future, too.

6. The realisation of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation becomes a predominant mission of AMI. Members of AMI from different countries and cultures will contribute to this with their experiences. The following main points are considered to be of great importance:
- Cooperation without loss of ones own identity
 - Respect for human basic values and for basic values of all religions
 - Cooperation in the personal, social, and spiritual area - based on a solid knowledge of each other
 - Respect for human dignity and for freedom of conscience in all questions of faith
 - Unlimited and open discussion of the problems caused by different opinions in the different religious systems concerning not only religious but also political law
 - Search of all religions participating in the dialogue for a common basis in order to further develop the idea of the Christian soldier laid down in the declaration from Rome 2000
 - Critical observation concerning the problem of religious fundamentalism
 - No poorly conceived assigning of responsibility for criminal or terrorist actions of certain groups to whole nations or religions.