



Apostolat Militaire International (AMI)

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The AMI General Assembly of 2010 gives a Christian perspective on military service in the 21st Century

“Those in military service can clear the avenue that leads to peace in order that others may walk it in safety. Our contribution is therefore one of paving and protecting the way for political, diplomatic and civil agencies in concert to establish order, justice and freedom. Whilst we owe loyalty to these great principles, we are conscious that we must also answer to the Prince of Peace for our faithfulness and integrity in answering this call to duty.”

Delegations from 13 nations attended the General Assembly of the Apostolat Militaire International in Berlin from 26 September to 1 October 2010. The assembly considered issues concerning modern military service and the role of the Christian soldier in the service of just peace. Guest speakers addressed the perception of the military by society, the church and government and the reciprocal perspective of the soldier in light of what these institutions demand or expect of

him.

Delegates had the opportunity to comment on and contribute to a position paper that had been drafted in preparation for the General Assembly. Two working groups, one in German the other in English evaluated the document and, after some lively exchanges, both the form and content were agreed unanimously. The AMI “Declaration of Berlin” may be downloaded at:

www.apostolatmilitaireinternational.com

The themes taken and views expressed by the specialist speakers were in harmony with the declaration paper and reflected a refreshing consensus between the international delegates present and some leading ethics, military and church thinkers.

The recommendations of the assembly are summarized in seven steps to advance the cause of just peace:

- Protection of the moral restraints of our defining principles for engaging in conflict and their rigorous application when hostilities seem to be a possibility, when engaged in conflict and in its aftermath.
- Engagement in a diligent dialogue to improve and make more relevant the just peace criteria in our contemporary situation.
- A recognition that the seeds of hostility are within us all and lie dormant even in the noblest soul. Any quest for peace and brotherhood must therefore begin in the heart of the individual, cultivating the seeds of peace and suppressing the roots of bitterness.
- A willingness to understand and accommodate other perspectives and an avoidance of negative typecasting in unfamiliar cultures.
- Intelligence led, UN authorized mediation or intervention to pacify unstable situations with the role of military forces extending beyond conventional national defence and alliances. Military intervention must be properly supported and quickly followed by a just settlement in which the indigenous people are the greatest shareholders.
- Appropriate training and familiarisation for deploying forces in the cultural conditions prevailing in a possible theatre of operations. Such familiarisation is equally important between deploying allies, about indigenous populations and concerning potential enemies.

- Focused operational preparation with loyalty to and support for those constrained to make operational choices, especially those that may have tragic outcomes.

The AMI President, Secretary General, board and delegates sincerely hope that the findings and report of this General Assembly may help shape the self-perception of modern Christian soldiers and offer some waypoints to illuminate their path as they make their contribution to a just peace wherever their duty takes them.

The **Apostolat Militaire International** (AMI) is a Catholic Association serving the interests and transmitting the views of Catholic armed forces members to their contemporaries, to the general public and to higher authorities in order that Christian ethics might influence policy making and subsequent action in local, national and international affairs.

The Association links organizations and representatives from Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia.

If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview please call Mrs. Nelleke Swinkels – van de Vorst, AMI Secretary General, phone: 0031 6 54796857 or e-mail: secretarygeneral@ami-international.org

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