

## **AMI Working Group 3 Summary**

### **Moderator Cdr Brian Parker RN (rtd)**

#### **AMI as an NGO**

1. The Group began with a Power Point presentation on the evolution of free speech, lawful assembly and the right to persuade others. These aspects of human rights and relationships are safeguarded in Articles 18, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are reflected in the published purposes of the Apostolate Militaire International as it seeks to promote a Christian vision and ethical action in the military profession worldwide. A generic look was taken at what NGOs do and where they operate to establish where AMI stood with respect to its Orientation of Operation (what it does) and its Level of Operation (where it is active).

2. One analysis examined suggests **NGO activities** may be categorised by four main purposes:

a. **Charity** – provision of relief to poor or oppressed people, often with limited participation on the part of beneficiaries other than the receipt of the aid given.

b. **Service** - providing health, education, (dare I say family planning) where the NGO and recipients cooperate in the provision, acceptance and administration of the service provided.

c. **Projects** - defining needs, participation in planning, financing and implementing projects with a significant involvement of committed people.

d. **Empowerment** - aims to influence and assist people in the development of religious, social, ethical, political and economic factors affecting their lives. This area calls for maximum involvement of members and/or beneficiaries often with the NGOs acting as a facilitator.

3. NGOs may be further categorised by where they operate:

a. **Community** – local initiatives

b. **Regional** – larger area (county or district)

c. **National** – would include significant philanthropic and professional associations.

d. **International** – common commitment across national borders but often with responsibilities for cascading benefits to national, regional and local areas.

4. This analysis, though not comprehensive, is helpful in positioning AMI in the vast array of NGOs worldwide. Thus we concluded that AMI is, essentially, an **International Empowerment** organisation that has recently stepped up from a private international association of the faithful onto the public stage as an NGO.

5. AMI's purposes (here defined in the **Empowerment** area) are well established and defined. It seems unlikely that AMI would want to move into additional activities (2a, 2b, 2c above). AMI is well positioned internationally (and arguably unique in its function as an international forum, association and now NGO promoting the Roman Catholic Christian dimension in the military). However, it was felt that significant scope exists for some top down encouragement for national, regional and even local organisations (3a, 3b, 3c above). The following suggestions are offered in the area of communication:

- a. Review the AMI purposes with a view to relevance and feasibility in a manner that would appeal to the Ordinariates/Unions – being aware of differences and sensitivities. When reviewing the purposes, due regard needs to be given to Vatican II and AMI's founding documents.
- b. Explore the feasibility of establishing an AMI network via visits and briefing with Military Ordinariates and/or Unions.
- c. Create a wide-ranging directory of people and expertise whereby AMI can share information, engage expert advice, research key issues and carry forward resolutions. Such a process would, of course, be open up and down the communication channels.
- d. Increase the general visibility of AMI at all levels.
- e. Making a wide range of information available for national organisations to choose and act on - the 'supermarket' concept, including dissemination of conference and other information.

6. The following suggestions are offered in the area of activities:

- a. Appoint each senior AMI national delegate as the formal head and representative of AMI within his/her own country.
- b. Consider regional groupings of countries, led by a successful AMI country to foster and encourage associated countries to form AMI national groups.
- c. Empower each head of national delegation to speak and act, with qualified authority, on behalf of the President.
- d. Provide multi-lingual strategic guidance/papers (to be translated by each national org) in the form of pocket guides for every service person (e.g. bullet points from the Declaration of Berlin).
- e. Adopt the AMCF model of conferences where local, regional and national gatherings build up to an international conference. The AMCF timing would not be suitable, however the progressive principle should be considered.
- f. Increase staffing levels commensurate with expanding activities. Although the present voluntary staff and board do a magnificent job, permanent paid staff and an office should be considered. This, of course, brings a serious financial challenge.
- g. Upgrade the imperative on ecumenism to reflect a pro-active rather than a reactive emphasis.
- h. Prioritise long-term plans tackling them in a logical order (giving due regard to principle of concurrent activity). Should changes be implemented, AMI must still be capable of meeting its purposes/obligations during change period.

7. The focus of AMI's concern should be the ordinary soldier, sailor or airman. Perhaps it would be right to conclude these brief notes with a question from one such: "What do I do to join AMI"?