

## **WORKING GROUPS SUMMARY – FUTURE OF AMI**

### **Introduction.**

With AMI having achieved NGO status consideration needs to be given to its future roles, organisation and modus operandi. Discussions to examine this were initiated through three informal Working Groups (WGs) at the 2016 AMI General Assembly. A parallel synopsis of the three WGs' findings is at ANNEX A and the following strategic summary suggests to the President and Board areas that could be considered for expanding the role and influence of AMI.

### **General.**

Within the wide spectrum of NGO major activities, it was suggested that AMI is uniquely placed to be identified and act as an International Empowerment organisation, with the broad aim of influencing, advising and assisting agencies, organisations and individuals in the development and propagation of religious, social, ethical, political and economic viewpoints within Roman Catholic and military contexts.

With this framework, AMI would also be well positioned to directly promote the Roman Catholic (and wider Christian) dimension within the world-wide military.

If this is accepted, AMI's Aims and Purposes will need to be re-examined for its functionality, both within the military community, and its relationships with other external organisations and individuals.

In doing so, it was commonly held by WGs that in the international arena it should concentrate on working with, and through the Vatican, to propagate its message, as well as offering, in consultation and with the knowledge of the Vatican, advice and assistance, acting as the 'Subject Matter Expert' (SME) to any international organisations and individuals that require or request it.

### **Structure and Organisation.**

Having established the Aims and Purposes, the overall organisational structure needs to be identified to implement them for:

- working with the Vatican, and other external agencies, organisations and individuals.

It may be that the existing personnel and protocols is minimally sufficient to achieve this in the early days, but will need refining and developing as the organisation and its work progresses.

- a 'Chain of Command' for internal workings amongst member nations.

The existing framework of the Presidency and the AMI national membership is already well placed to adopt this. It is proposed that a senior AMI national delegate is appointed (having volunteered!) as the formal head of their respective national delegation, with qualified authority to act for the President within national contexts.

Regional groupings could be formed, led by a successful AMI country to foster and encourage participation in AMI, both through informal contact, and with formal, regular, regional gatherings.

National leaders should have the remit of actively engaging with their own national Services and their major formations, cascading down to unit level.

High priority and much effort needs to be given to bringing the military bishops, chaplaincies and unions 'onside' and active with this scheme, as well as commanders at all levels.

Due regard must be given to the differences and the sensitivities of working with Ordinariates and Unions, and adherence to the Magisterium.

A drive for ecumenism, and a reaching out to other military Christian Organisations should be prominent.

### **Communication.**

It was clear to all WGs that AMI's visibility needs to be considerably increased. The role of Communication was therefore clearly identified as playing a crucial role in positively and widely exposing the AMI ethos and actions, both internationally and nationally.

The intelligent use of modern media should be exploited and maximised in all its guises, with an overall strategy being developed, and converted into a detailed communications plan.

Whilst it was not formally discussed by WGs, it has subsequently been proposed that an International Prayer Support Chain should be established from within all member nations to provide routine and emergency prayer support for AMI's work – and then see the miracles happen!

### **AMI Conferences.**

A major part of the AMI process would be staging conferences at International level and cascading down through National, Regional and Local levels, essentially involving the memberships at all these levels.

These conferences would concentrate on developing and taking forward the AMI vision at the appropriate level – Internationally focussing on strategic, and on down the line in varying and relevant degrees to Local level – involving, ideally, that sailor, marine, soldier or airman whose concerns AMI will be addressing – to which they will be responding, with responses being transmitted back up the chain

It was proposed that National Conferences should be staged, where informal discussions and proposed policy could be formulated, leading up to a subsequent General Assembly for formal consideration and voting.

There could also be scope, further on in the development of AMI, in holding World Conferences, where member nations send large delegations of all ranks – maybe this could be linked, or mirrored in some way, to the Lourdes military pilgrimage.

### **Funding.**

As ever, this will be the crux by which AMI's ambitions stand or fall, or be severely constrained. At this stage there is no substantial recommendations on possible sourcing, or amounts required. It will need serious backing and support, we suggest, from the Catholic Church at all levels and from all national members.

### **Conclusion.**

It was acknowledged that these proposals are very ambitious, and could not be undertaken with current volunteer staffing levels. A permanent Headquarters would have to be established, with a permanent, paid staff. The location and detailed composition is beyond the scope of the WGs at this stage, but would clearly require a Chief Executive, with supporting Secretariat, a Communications and Media cell, a Financial and Fundraising cell, and a Prayer Support warrior. Volunteers will continue, however, to be an important and integral part of the AMI effort at all levels – whether it be supporting general activities, or called upon to render specialist advice or support.

The motivation in striving to achieve all this is that ultimately, world power, implicitly or explicitly, lies in the hands of the military. It is to these militaries that AMI, and other like-minded organisations such as the Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF), should be in constant dialogue with, persuading, demonstrating and ensuring that the Christian message of justice and peace is understood, and above all, prevails.

*“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” Pr 16:3*