

I am writing to you all, as attendees at the recent Officers' Conference at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, to advise you of the actions which Council has taken subsequent to that event.

The Conference indicated that there is an appetite for change in the Newman Association and four areas were identified as being worthy of further study by groups of members of the Association. I should add that some Circles provided their own written submissions to Council.

Conference indicated it was uncomfortable with the present situation of allowing only Associate Membership to our non-Catholic Christian members. As our Chaplain pointed out it will not be easy to change this situation and yet remain a 'Roman' Catholic association but we have, however, decided to try to do so. Therefore, Council has formed a small committee of three members of Council, one of whom attended the Conference as a non-Council delegate but has subsequently been co-opted onto Council as we felt the need for a lawyer on Council.

The three members of this committee are: Harcourt Concannon (Manchester/N. Cheshire), Marie Rose Low (Hertfordshire) and Arthur McLay (Glasgow). This group will bring their conclusions to Council and if their recommendations require a change in the Association's Memorandum of Association then this will be subject to a vote of all full members. They will also look at redesigning the membership form. For that element a member of Edinburgh Circle, Daniel Cronin, will be invited to join them as he has already offered his services in that regard.

The other three areas which emerged as being of greatest interest and in need of review were: Mission, Communication and Finance.

Council has decided that three groups should be formed to look at these issues with a view to bringing recommendations to the AGM in Manchester in June 2016. Each group will have 6 members and each will have a majority of non-Council members [2 members from Council] and will elect its own chairperson. The four non-Council members of the groups need not all have attended Conference.

With regard to the group addressing 'Mission', Council has decided to ask Peter Firth (North Merseyside), who gave a very interesting and challenging presentation on this subject at Conference, if he would be prepared to be a member of that group.

This therefore is by way of asking you to put forward names (your own, or someone else's - with their expressed agreement) for membership of the three groups: Mission, Communication and Finance.

I am happy to be the collecting point for these submissions.

With very best wishes for a happy Christmas.

Gerald Williams
(Newman Association, President)