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THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

AND EDUCATION TODAY

Five colloquia towards a more informed understanding

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

In planning the topics for the Bulletin following the General Chapter of 1993, the General Council decided that, in the run up to the General Chapter of 2000, the number for 1999 should deal with the educational issues which had been explored during the Colloquia.

Five Colloquia had been held between the years 1994 and 1998. Each of these meetings afforded a chance to explore the ways in which a partricular phenomenon of the contemprary world impacts upon education and upon the people we serve.

This 1999 number of the Bulletin is in five sections, each being a report of one of the colloquia.

The reports were submitted by different authors. This explains why the structures are not uniform. While some were prepared expressly for this Bulletin, others were written some time ago as reports to be circulated after each colloquium. The translations into the three languages were also done at different times and by different people. The identity of some is not even known to us where the work was done outside the generalate. This is offered in explanation of the different styles that can be recognised in the texts. The decision was taken to respect the individuality of the original texts rather than to rewrite, unifying the styles and even sometimes the terminology.

It seems appropriate, however, to recal the names of the translators who have played a major role in the preparation of this Bulletin. For the Spanish texts, Brothers Manuel Gil and José Maria Perez. For the French texts, Brother Joseph Le Bars. For the English texts, Brothers John Blease, Gerard Critchley and Allen Geppert.

We would like, similarly, to record our gratitude to the team who, under the coordination of Brother Pierre Josse, General Councillor, took on the task of preparing the colloquia and who, ultimately, helped in collating the material for this Institute Bulletin; Brothers Nicolas Capelle, Anton de Roeper, Herman Lombaerts and José Maria Martinez.

Finally, we would like to mention the special collaboration of two artists, Brother José David Berbesí, creator of the front and back covers, and Mr. Alain Damiani, who has provided drawings and photos from the magazine 'La Salliens', published by the District of France. Our sincere gratitude goes out to both of them.

Brother José María Valladolid
Director of the Bulletin

THE BROTHERS' INSTITUTE

AND

EDUCATION TODAY

This Institute Bulletin outlines for the Brothers and Lasallians the results of six years of study commissioned by the 1993 General Chapter.

During the course of these years, some 250 Brothers and lay persons gathered together with the Superior General and the General Council to participate in discussions concerning the general theme of **EDUCATION TODAY**. This intercapitular period was used to increase awareness of what today affects the life of young people and therefore, what shapes their way of thinking, acting, choosing; this awakening is for us the very first requirement of the mission of human and Christian education which is our reason for existence.

This is, therefore, a real Institute endeavor which is hereby presented to the communities of the Brothers and the Lasallian communities so that each of these might take the time to consider the evolution of the contemporary world and its impact on the realities of education today, deal with these realities in a practical way and contribute to the discussion and offer suggestions for the 43rd General Chapter in the year 2000.

A process of reflection

1. Origins

Proposition 2 of the 42nd General Chapter states:

"The General Chapter asks the Brother Superior and his Council to name a group of experts in the field of education who will serve as observers of the broad educational concerns throughout the world to enable the Centre of the Institute to develop a public policy".

In September, 1993 Brother Superior put forward the names of three experts to draw up a program in accord with this proposition: Brother José María MARTÍNEZ, Herman LOMBAERTS and Nicholas CAPELLE. Brother Pierre JOSSE, representing the General Council, assumed the role as president of this team. Brother Anton de Roeper was put forward as secretary. This group of five Brothers became the standing committee for the realization of the program.

2. Strategy

At issue was how to focus attention on pressing problems in the contemporary world which affect educational situations in an urgent way. With this goal in mind the committee, with the Council's consent, suggested organizing four colloquia which would focus on highly significant issues in order that the Institute might come to grips with contemporary society.

Each colloquium of 4 or 5 days' duration gathered together between 50 and 60 experts (among them 2 or 3 experts with university competence and international experience). Brothers and lay, men and women from the field of education, capable of dialoging from sociological, psychological, political and theological points of view and with practical educational experience as a result of daily contact with young people on five continents.

To help this effort along, the standing committee developed a strategic work plan for the set of colloquia. For the purpose of involving the participants in a systematic evaluation of the Lasallian educational mission, institutions and patterns of performance were examined with reference to the five contemporary phenomena that are having a profound effect on the environment where the Institute has taken root. The process that was begun for this objective was the same for all the colloquia. Along with an invitation, participants received a text which spelled out the set of issues for the colloquium. So by the time they reached the site of the colloquium, they already had, for starters, given some thought to a particular theme, since they had been in direct contact with concrete realities. Mindful of this experience, participants were thankful to the experts who had suggested an evaluation (anthropological, sociological...) of the reality, followed by theological, ethical and pastoral discussions. In this way there was a very broad interchange of experiences and an open debate was able to shed light on the amplitude of the topic, while each one was invited to anticipate the future and imagine options that should be adopted in our schools or in the Institute or Church as a whole.

3. The choice of topics

After having examined an impressive list of urgent issues concerning education in the contemporary world, the committee eventually suggested a detailed study of four topics.

1. Since this program coincided with the end of the international year of the family, it seemed important to give priority to this fact for the first colloquium. Since the family is the first place for socialization and upbringing upon which one's schooling is later integrated, it is essential that the Institute be aware of the changes that are taking place within the family unit. This discussion may inspire a stance or the development of a strategy for updating how the Institute deals with family relationships. (1994 Colloquium)

2. The presence of Christians in non-Western cultures and within a non-Christian world, especially in Asia, is directly related to two inescapable realities: the poverty of the great masses and non-Christian religions. Furthermore, north-south relations are being reorganized due to a characteristic phenomenon of competition which is typical of neo-liberal capitalism: globalization. It is for this reason that the second colloquium was held in Sri Lanka and it dealt with north-south relations such as poverty, exploitation and non-Christian religions in direct confrontation with the phenomenon of globalization. (1995 Colloquium)

3. The third distressing concern nowadays concerns population concentration, especially in "third world" countries and in cities known as "megalopolises". During the third colloquium, which took place in Mexico City, the participants looked closely at the whopping explosion taking place in a large city, centering on the consequences for its inhabitants and noting how the Institute is or is not involved in this type of transformation. (1996 Colloquium)

4. Another change that represents a fundamental revolution in contemporary society and which undoubtedly affects education is that of information technology and communication. The fourth colloquium was held in a training center for computer engineers (Barcelona). Participants were invited to experience and explore some of the dimensions of this revolution and to assess the consequences of all this in terms of the immediate future of education. (1997 Colloquium)

5. All of this extensive knowledge about contemporary reality - observing it closely, analyzing it, discussing it, sharing many feelings...brought to the fore the need to look at our educational apostolate in another way. Therefore a fifth colloquium was conceived with regard to our preferential involvement in religious education. The choice of the topic "Communicating the Christian Faith, Teaching Religion within the School" had for its purpose the clarification of possibilities and the limits of Christian education on the part of educational institutions within contemporary society. (1998 Colloquium)

4. Colloquia Participants

Brother Superior General, the General Council and the Colloquium Committee participated in all the Colloquia to assure continuity of and coherence to the general process.

But for each Colloquium, 50 guests came to share their reflections and practical experience.

1994 – Those in charge of services in the Generalate participated;
    – There were participants from Africa, the Americas, Europe, the Phillippines and Madagascar.

1995 – The Brother Visitors of PARC were participants;
    – There were many participants from Asia, but also from Latin America.

1996 – The Brother Visitors from Central and South America were participants;
    – There were participants from Latin America, the United States, Europe and Quebec.

1997 – The European Brothers in charge of educational services were participants;
    – There were participants from the United States, Africa, Quebec and from Argentina.

1998 – Those in charge of ministry services in Europe, Asia, the United States, Latin America, Quebec, Africa and Lebanon were participants.

It should be noted that it was not possible to hold a Colloquium in Africa as was foreseen in the initial program. In addition, it is possible that we that we did not sufficiently reflect what is happening in Asian countries, with the exception of the Colloquia on globalization and faith. On the other hand we did not know how to give female participation the place it deserved; there was too little of it.

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5. This Bulletin is a working instrument

1. Available materials

You have in your hands the materials that you can to use in any order you wish. According to your own preference you can work with the section which most interests you.

• After reading the introduction you might wish to go to the Conclusion section which would perhaps lead you to flesh out some specific point from the Colloquia.

• You might wish to read through all the information which pertains to one entire Colloquium. Each Colloquium is presented in three parts:

    – the official report itself;
    – a study questionnaire;
    – some additional texts which come from the same Colloquium.

2. A suggestion for the use of these materials

This is a text for group work:

* Brothers: District Councils, Brothers' communities, educational teams, young Brothers.
* Lay partners: parents, leaders in ministry, teachers, catechists, other groups, Signum Fidei...

Recommended Uses:

Two types are possible:

* *Based on one Colloquium* which is particularly interesting to the group
    • Read the introductory chapter for the Colloquia
    • Then choose a Colloquium
    • Read through the Colloquium documents and fill out the questionnaire as much as pertains to you
    • *The questionnaires: These are intended to facilitate discussion but obviously each group is free to modify them to suit their purpose and then use them. Each group chooses the questions (or creates other questions) which best correspond to the realities of its environment.*

* *Based on a recurring theme:*
    • Read the introductory chapter for the Colloquia
    • Choose a recurring theme (see number 3 above)
    • Read through the material and work with the questionnaire the best way possible.

In all cases, the Colloquium on **"Communicating the Faith Today"** should be read and worked on if possible.

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6. Recurring themes

THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL COLLABORATOR

1.	families	"The family"	pp. 13-16
2.	poor	"Megalopolis"	p. 50
		"New Technology"	p. 69
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		"Communicating the Faith"	p. 93
4.	societies	"Communicating the Faith"	pp. 90-91

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE YOUNG

"Families"	pp. 13-16
"Megalopolis"	p. 50
"New Technology"	pp. 64-65
"Communicating the Faith"	pp. 85-86

THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL: GOALS

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"Globalization"	pp. 37-38
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"New Technology"	pp. 71-72
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AREAS OF COMMITMENT FOR THE INSTITUTE AND ITS ASSOCIATES

"Families"	pp. 19-20
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"Communicating the Faith"	pp. 93-95

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

| "Globalization" | p. 36 |
| "Communicating the Faith" | pp. 89, 104-105 |

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

| "Communicating the Faith" | pp. 101-103 |

SOCIAL DEMANDS AND THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

| "Communicating the Faith" | pp. 106-108 |

INCULTURATION

| "Communicating the Faith" | p. 100 |

7. Dialogue with the 43rd General Chapter

Interested communities of Brothers and Lasallian groups are requested to make known their discussions, either wholly or in part, to the Chapter Preparatory Commission, so that the Commission can include these ideas as they draw up the notes which will be given to the Capitulants in May, 2000.

For this purpose, please direct your ideas to the Brother Secretary General of the Institute. Deadline: 1 March 2000.

The Colloquium Standing Committee

COLLOQUIUM

1

ROME
1994

THE FAMILY TODAY AND THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE

1. REPORT

The Family Today and the Mission of the Institute

The aim of this colloquium was not to arrive at common conclusions or positions. It was rather an attempt, by listening to others and reflecting, to understand the various ways in which the family is understood and functions. By becoming more aware of the factors involved, our various Lasallian partners, representing different continents, were enabled to see the possibility of other forms of action, but above all, to gain a new perception of their role regarding families, in line with their respective charisma.

The General Council would like to share some of the riches of this colloquium with the rest of the Institute, realising, however, that texts, however complete, can never be wholly adequate. **What follows is a summary** of the material contributed and discussed together, regarding questions which appear to concern the mission of the Institute. It is left to each community or sector to make use of these documents to help it analyse the situation of families in its own area. The material of this report is organised under a number of headings:

– **The family:** What do researchers have to say about it? What does Christian anthropology have to say?

– **The Institute is its partner**: Why? How?

– **The family challenges** the Institute: What new steps must we take in order to:

  • change our ways of thinking as individuals, as a body, as a network?

  • help adults and young people?

  • live in a renewed way in our religious family, in the Lasallian family?

1. The family

The International Year of the Family, launched by the United Nations, is a stimulus for our own Lasallian Educational institutions, composed of Brothers and lay persons involved in the same mission, to take a closer look at the resources and responsibilities of the family in a changing \world. The family is a universal institution, taking a multiplicity of forms, which remains essential for the future of individuals and societies. The family affects all stages of human life, and consequently, it concerns us very deeply.

It is a question that cannot leave our association of Christian Educators indifferent. Because of their professional and apostolic obligations, they have received a mandate from the parents who entrust their children to them daily. These parents have associated them deliberately with the work of education for which they themselves are primarily responsible. For the most part, it is parents who make any educational system credible. In fact, the extent of their commitment, their understanding of the system, their support and their acceptance of methods, are so many indicators which demonstrate, in the eyes of a child, that the family and the school are partners in education.

A wide-reaching expert enquiry held in 1991-1992, in which non-governmental organizations (NGO) were involved, came to the conclusion that the family has a decisive influence on individual and social change and development. This enquiry makes it possible and even necessary to adopt a worldwide approach to the question of the family, and to treat it from three different directions:

  ※ the lasting and fragile nature of the family as an institution.

  ※ the paradoxes it has to reconcile: *protecting/opening;*
  passing on traditions/organising change;
  being active/being supported.

  ※ a definition which is generally accepted nowadays: *«Although derided and destabilized, when it had always seemed so stable, the family still remains the natural supportive unit for men and women. It guarantees and ensures their growth and their personal, physical, psychological and spiritual development. It is the family that initially and primarily prepares for life in society».*

> The enquiry revealed a worldwide consensus on 9 points:
>
> 1. The lasting nature and positive value of the family as an institution.
>
> 2. A realistic view of the present situation: uprooting, migration, urbanisation, child labor, women working outside the home, singleparent families, social evils such as unemployment, drugs, etc.
>
> 3. The family needs to be supported, comforted, protected.
>
> 4. Relations between different generations in families, the role of the enlarged family.
>
> 5. The future of the family in the face of changes produced by science and technology. The consequent need to search for a new ethic and a new definition of rights and codes.
>
> 6. The family and its enviromnent. The family is subject to innumerable influences (social, media, spiritual, ethical, commercial, technical. . .).
>
> 7. The family and the plurality of cultures. Passing on cultural heritage and openness to new ideas. To what extent?
>
> 8. The family and the decisive role of women.
>
> 9. Families and situations of great material, cultural and spiritual poverty.
>
> *(Cf. Annexe 1, p. 19)*

2. The family - the different forms it takes

The consensus we have noted should not prevent us from realising that families take very diverse forms in different parts of the world, and that the same terms may describe very different images and realities. We should realise that the western model does not take into account all aspects of present-day reality and accept that it is not necessarily the future model for all other models. A few examples will help us to see this more clearly.

2.1. Louis Roussel: «*The uncertain family*»

In the 18th century, it was realised that people could do better than simply survive and that their ideal lay no longer in a repetition of the past but in the creation of the future. And so, the family became a maker for planning, and the couple a source of private happiness. Marriage for love became common and was advocated. Children were awaited and equipped to fulfil their parents' plans. The ultimate purpose of the family was happiness, in particular, by and through children.

Gradually this tendency became stronger, but private happiness was not easy to achieve. With the onset of disillusiomnent, stable commitments between partners were called into question. Louis Roussel points out some causes **of this new outlook:**

The search for private happiness in the marriage union and the desire to experience instant happiness without reference to long-term plans;

Women claim their right to work: this gives them a high social status; new distribution of parental roles.

The child is no longer the result of fate but the gratifying outcome of a choice, something to celebrate; constraints and ways of behaviour will be taught later and will be the child's choice.

The State has to deal with the problems caused by a refusal of long-term commitments and by educational constraints.

(Cf. Annexe 3, p. 22)

Louis Roussel thinks that these causes can lead to frustration and violence in the future, because everything is put on the same plane, is endlessly negotiated, and there are no long-term plans. He says that «love requires a future. The future will consist in the search for the bounds of the negotiable, the search for evidence in daily uncertainties; in the understanding that love is fusion, but also acceptance of independence; it means having one's roots in the present but needing also the future.

«The potential future that every family has is not something that is ready made: it has to be fought for constantly, lucidly and bravely».

2.2. Djamchid Behnam, an Iranian researcher

«The family of tomorrow will be smaller, more fragile, varied in form, giving its members more of a chance to develop. The need for the sacred and for meaning augurs well, perhaps, for the search for family values.»

The consequences of demography, social and cultural changes, and scientific progress are and will continue to be clearly felt:

1. Contrast: ageing of industrialized countries and the inverted pyramid of developing countries, where women capable of bearing children will have doubled by 2025.
2. Urbanisation: cities in the Third World will contain twice as many inhabitants as those of developed countries, with all the consequences this will have on family life.
3. Population movements and the accompanying problems of assimilation, insertion and social integration.
4. Fertility.
5. Prolongation of life and new relations between generations.
6. Mixing of cultures in families under pressure from migration and urbanization.
7. Wave in which States intervene will show them what long-term options they have.

(Cf. Annexe 2, p. 21)

2.3. People continue to accept traditional models

Everyone surrounds the word family with so many traditions, memories, symbols, rites, that it would be dangerous to think that its meaning was the same everywhere, and that it expressed the same values. For example:

✳ An African view (Madagascar):

Life is an all-powerful current. The family is part of this life-giving current which nothing can stop; it is where I am recognised as a child, where I am related. Everyone's place is such that life can flow freely: ancestors as always present, man as head of the woman, woman as a receptacle of life and of necessary fertility, children that are given names denoting parentage (son of . . ., brother of . . .). Bonds are strong, extensive, necessary for survival.

✳ An Asian view: Philippinnes

When a Filipino is in need, there is always a relative prepared to give him a helping hand. Parents provide their children with what is necessary, and children look after their parents in old age.

The *extended family* enables parents sometimes to delegate the education of their children to other responsible adults, to find help for household tasks, to devote more time to the psychological and affective needs of their children, and to work away from home.

This offers young children a wider opportunity to experience satisfaction, encouragement and affection.

The *hierarchical authority structure* in the family (stress on obedience, concern for others, avoidance of conflict) reinforces solidarity and cohesion within the family.

What constitutes the strength of the family is also its greatest source of weakness. It is sometimes difficult to find one's proper place in a complex network of family bonds and to express negative sentiments regarding the adults in the family.

Areas of family life at risk in the Philippines

1. Children begin working very young and consequently have no childhood, with all the consequences that this implies.

2. The effect on marriage relations of women working, husbands working abroad, marital infidelity and the breakup of marriages.

3. Adolescents faced with the breakdown of traditional sexual mores: sexual relations before marriage and extra-marital pregnancies.

4. The position of elderly persons as families become smaller, tending increasingly to have only one child.

❋ Remarks about the state of the family in Australia

Statistics define the family as all the persons living in the same house. Often, however, the child of divorced parents considers the parent who does not live with him still to be part of his family; widows living alone often maintain close contact with their children, many children who have left home remain financially dependent on their parents; and Aborigines consider that dead parents remain part of the family.

55% of boys and 40% of girls in the 20-24 age range continue to live with their parents, often doing a part-time job while studying. Marriage is put off till later.

16.6% of families with children arc one-parent families— the same percentage as in 1891! On the other hand, there is an increase in the number of divorces and children born out of wedlock.

❋ The family in Latin America

The family is a basic economic unit, a means of survival, often tied to an economic model imposed on it from outside.

The decrease in the birth rate, varying according to socio-economic conditions, is linked to the spread of contraception and (illegal) abortion. 45% of families have only one child, and the percentage is increasing with urbanization. Many areas lack essential services: water, health care, education.

The authority of the man in the family is on the decline, in a world in which the sense of the transcendcutal is disappearing, where there is no law and violence is regularly used.

2.4. The media and public opinion offer a model for the family of the future

The media, and in particular the ubiquitous American TV series, provide a model for families facing inevitable changes that provoke fear, insecurity, surrender. They depict above all the search for individual happiness, free of all the inevitable frustrations of setting up a family unit, each person managing on his own, organising his own life, which must be independent, controlled and organised. Roles are fluid, and it is no longer clear who provides protection, the children or the parents.

Research shows a strong desire on the part of young people and adults to live in a permanent and stable family, offering the traditional values of love, fidelity, mutual help. There is a vague feeling that *the family, with all its changes, can continue to serve as a vehicle for cultural and ethical values and to be an indispensable means of protection for people against solitude, violence and all the other dangers of contemporary civilization.*

(Cf. Annexe 4, p. 23)

3. The family, the cradle of personal growth

Christian anthropology gives a central position, not to the family, but rather to the individual. This it does in imitation of Jesus in the Gospel, who dealt constantly with people at the level of personal relations. As the primary cradle of human growth, the family should promote a love of life, awaken feelings for people and things, concentrate **on the needs of persons in the making**. Here are five of those needs:

1. **To be born as a result of a free choice and a responsible decision by parents**. This human and responsible decision, which no couple can shirk, is an absolutely essential factor as the child gradually grows in self-awareness.

2. **To be accepted as one is and to be encouraged to fulfill oneself, in order to dare to exist as a person**. To use his unique and personal abilities, a child needs to know that he is accepted unconditionally. The fear and aggressivity of children lacking affective security is well-documented.

3. **To have one's sexual identity recognised**, so that relations with the father, mother, siblings and relatives are clearly defined. We lack an ethical standpoint which can help us to humanise attraction, relations, pleasure, the desire to dominate, respect, differences, creativity in a wider context than procreation; and to approach relations between the sexes in terms of differences and complementarity, rather than of competition, or of better or less.

4. **To be gradually given a social identity**; to discover the identity of others, their differences; to see the positive side of prohibitions; to overcome fear of what is different. In this instance, the role of the parents is to exemplify a moral law which humanises individuals and societies.

5. **To realise that the family is a place to learn about the finite nature of things**, and to be clear-sighted about reality, others, oneself. It is a place to learn to assess situations with maturity, with an acceptance of responsibility, rather than with guilt feelings and a feeling of total failure. Not everything is possible here and now. The present crisis of the family is less a moral crisis than the expression of a desire to look for a renewed form of partnership in couples and in family relations.

(Cf. Annexe 6, p. 25)

4. Our Institute of educators, a partner of the family

There are many sorts of partners that help to build up the identity of the married couple, of parents and of young people: the economic system, the world of work, life in society, kindergartens and other local facilities, social workers, the State and the law which are concerned with the new rights and duties created by new situations, and which are called upon to make up for the deficiencies of the family system, and religions which continue to leave their mark on the minds of people.

(Cf. Annexe 5, p. 24)

4.1. The school **is the closest partner of the family, even if not always the most influential**

The organization of the school and the family is concerned primarily with the child. Each has a different role, but both play an important part in his life. The school introduces him to a multiplicity of new influences, to different ways of seeing things, feeling and thinking. To what extent do the family and the school work together?

The school, like any other society, has to find a balance between confrontation and complementarity, accepting the questions and questioning of young people, for whom nothing is obvious nor taboo. It this were not so, a society would make it impossible to look to the future and to build it, and to accept the past. It is a process in which the mind constantly seeks ideas, in which it turns away from itself to listen to others with their differences, a process wich is both one of assimilation and adjustment.

The school is the homeostatic place mentioned by Brother Didier J. Piveteau: always questioning and always resisting the numerous influences that affect society and young people.

4.2. The Lasallian Educational Centre (the school) and the family

By its history, tradition, purpose and its international connections, the Lasallian educational centre can be a real partner for the family, with its openness to so many different situations, to doubts, failure and suffering. In this sense it has a specific nature which can be described in terms of three complementary aspects.

1. A place where people listen

Parents, children, colleagues have different family backgrounds and cope, as best they can and often with great courage, with the problems that assail them.

By listening respectfully to problems, especially if suffering is involved, we learn to take the real circumstances of life more seriously and, with others, to look for answers to the very basic questions of human growth that come to light.

As a place where young people and adults can meet and rally, the Lasallian school can also be a place where there is dialogue, discernment and accompaniment. It is a place where, together, young persons and adults have to foresee the kind of skills that must be learned in order to face new situations in which they will have to find meaning.

2. A human community

People struggle to give a meaning to their lives. The Lasallian school is not a place where moral judgments are made, even if they contribute to education: it is a place which seeks to decipher the human values which come to light as men and women of good will continue searching.

The Lasallian school means nothing if it is not there to sense the people of our day, who try to live in accordance with the natural law written in their hearts by the Creator of all life.

Everyone—young people, parents, educators, Brothers—has to face the basic realities of life, love, suffering, desire, fatherhood, motherhood, absence, death.... But we know that behind these basic realities God is present and calls each person by name.

3. A Christian community

All human life leads to God. The Lasallian school must be able to recognise life, give it expression, and celebrate it through the Christian community that conducts the school.

We know how to mark the happy moments of this human growth and to recognise God's hand in it. A Christian pastoral ministry should also be present to accompany the searching, the failures and the hesitations of human life: the break-up of marriages, custody of children, second marriages, reconstituted or single-parent families, isolated parents....

All these human situations can become a «theological locus» giving rise to words of mercy and of life. It is up to us to bring to bear the Church's teaching on these concrete situations as a means of awakening and educating consciences.

5. Implications for us as a body of educators, Brothers and lay persons

There are two requirements regarding methodology: **we must lay aside** the Cartesian way of thinking, according to which the identification of the link between cause and effect is enough to enable the school to give itself precise objectives aimed at providing solutions for family and social problems (the *widespread interaction* between different systems makes this kind of approach impossible). We must be open to a whole variety of experiences and systems, without trying to reduce them to fit in with known constructs.

These two methodological requirements raise the following questions: **what way of thinking** do we normally use when we wish to understand a situation and find solutions? **What discernment skills do we make use of?**

The first and only conclusion of this Colloquium could be to launch a generalized and ongoing programme of anthropological research in our Institute to put into perspective the situations in which people find themselves and the tenets of the Christian faith which spreads as a result of everyday life:

— which man, which woman, which roles, for which tasks, which societies. . .
— which children, what future, what relations. . .
— what dialogue, what openness, what differences. . .
— what minimum, common, universal-values, to be able to live together
— what contribution from Revelation, from positions adopted by the Magisterium. . .

(cf. Annexe 7, p. 26)

Some suggestions for.

5.1. Brothers' community: It is the Brother's everyday family where he must grow humanly and spiritually. It is his home where he ought to he able to pass through all the stages of human life, with all their joys and inevitable frustrations.

The aim of fraternal life is above all to introduce the Brother to a wider range of relationships, to open his heart to embrace the whole world, to enable him to meet people who are different from him, and who face the same life but in a different way.

Nothing would be more mistaken than a community which restricted the field of vision of its members and cosseted them with a life that paralysed their taste for life and self-giving.

An essential element of initial or continuing formation of the Brothers:

The introduction of an anthropological approach which induces the Brother to understand his roots and accept responsibility for his own life, become aware of differences, be open to values shared by all people of good will, and make allowances for failure, frustration, asceticism.

An urgent need: Reconsider the meaning of our celibacy in today's context. It is a celibacy that is less focused on the fertility of work than on a shared taste for life, willing openness, the acceptance of persons for what they are, the warmth of being together.

A questionnaire for our communities
☆ In what kind of social setting is the community located?
☆ With whom can we discuss the daily difficulties of people so that our consecration can become solidarity?
☆ In concrete terms, what kind of poverty do we experience and share?
☆ To what extent are we aware of what life is really like and of the changes that are taking place?
☆ How do we act towards young people and their aspirations?
☆ How do we act towards young Brothers and their striking utopian ideas?
☆ What kind of welcome is there for our families in community?
☆ What feasts and occasions do we celebrate to nourish our affectivity, our joy at being together and our zest for life?

Make the educational centre *a place for culture, information and the discussion of ideas.*

* To give added impetus to the study of social, marital and family relations.

* To listen to families and encourage their expectations.

* To listen also to colleagues who are experiencing problems.

* To listen to headmasters who are torn between their professional life and their personal and family life.

* To accompany and celebrate.

In practical terms

* Create structures to make listening possible.

* Create programmes for families, for young couples.

* Help single parents (an appropriate function for centres).

* Enable directors of centres to catch up, recover.

5.3. Young people

Teach them values, communication, to be open, tolerant, loyal in their social contacts.

* Enable them to meet different people, people in search of humanity.

* Offer them education in affectivity that is open and responsible.

In practical terms

* Ensure a balance between academic programmes and human education.

* Organise programmes of meetings.

* Create structures to make listening possible.

* Make the thinking of the Church known and explain it.

In association with others

* Make contact with street children and organise programmes.

* Put pressure on the media to promote respect for families through actors.

* Support (inter)national organizations that seek to change the position of women, promote the schooling of girls and the roles of parents, and change policies towards families.

5.4. Lasallian Family

We have a common ancestry, history and future. What do we want to do as a result?

In practical terms

What form are we going to give our Lasallian communities?

* Occasional, regular?

* With what kind of sharing?

* Including a more committed core group?

* In view of what apostolate? Among whom?

Who should be trained? For what?

* So that they can provide stimulus and accompaniment, and help discernment.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

At the end of the colloquium, Brother Superior listed a number of points that had inspired general agreement. These we can use as a conclusion to this document and as a guide for its use.

1. A deep respect for each young person: love, respect and acceptance of what he or she is today, and not by comparison with what young people were like 25, 15 or even 5 years ago.

2. The need to have contact with parents and families — there is a difference. We owe respect to all families, whatever they are: the families of our students and those of our colleagues.

3. Our schools must be centres where young people can ask questions about the meaning of their lives, including sexuality and marriage. This calls for certain attitudes, skills and structures. It is possible to do this everywhere in the Institute. As one group said, we have to LISTEN and allow young people to express themselves. As brothers and sisters, we share our beliefs.

4. Our Lasallian establishments work together with other communities of the Church. As a consequence, papal documents and those produced by the local bishops on this topic are there to help them in their reflection on the family.

All this shows that the colloquium is only a starting point. It is up to each District and each Lasallian establishment to see how in its own area it can become better acquainted with the way families live, with their strengths and their needs, and to discern how they can collaborate with these families according to the charism of the Institute.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE

suggested for Brothers,
Lasallian Partners,
educational teams,
young Lasallians,
parents . . .

1. REREAD THE 5° PART OF THIS COLLOQUIUM (pp. 15-16).

Choose the questions which are of concern to your reflection group
and which will move you to

2. CULTURE OF LIFE

What place do you give the Magisterium declarations this regard, in your Lasallian Centre or your community? Have you taken any clear initiatives in the past 3 years? What? What was the outcome? How are you going to move forward?

3. **The topic of this Colloquium** has been considered the most important for the educational work of Lasallians. What precise initiatives should the Brothers' Chapter embrace in this area?

You are encouraged to make your position known.

3. ANNEXES

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1. - REVISION OF NINE CENTRES OF INTEREST

The important developments to which the questions broached have given rise, allow specific commentaries relating to each question to be made and they are presented above. They also allow a synthesis to be made that clearly displays the present view of the family, its responsibilities, the supports it needs, the changes it is living through.

This synthesis is listed below in nine centres of interest, which can serve as a basis of targeted study and action.

1 - Durability of the family institution and positive view of its function

Through the answers and comments, a definition is outlined of the family considered as a "base cell", "the preferred place of development of the individual and of society", "the essential anchor point for the individual", "a place of replenishment" . . .

Time and time again its function is termed irreplaceable: "we are convinced of the vital role of the family, of its determining role in the cultural development of the child", "in the forming of its personality"; "a basis for the harmonious development of the individual", it is determining in "the transmission of values" and "humanising education". . .

2 - Great attention to actual family realities, difficulties and problems

The difficulties faced by families are pinpointed in real life situations. A theoretical and general talk on "family crisis" is found only once.

On the other hand, difficulties encountered in uprooting and moving are considered; family upheaval inherent in urbanization events. The work of children in the very midst of the family, or outside it, is exposed. The consequences of the break-up of the family unit on the equilibrium of children are underlined. The increase in numbers of single parent families and their social integration commands attention in developed countries just as much as in others. . . The inadequacies and weakness of families in the face of social scourges such as drugs are brought to mind. . .

3 - The family needs to be supported; a very strong appeal for attention to its difficulties is expressed

To fulfill their mission, families must be protected; "a favourable educational environment, support centres helping with formation in parental duties must be created; national budgets must be adequate; there is concern about their inadequacy, especially "in developing countries which bear an overheavy external debt and cut social budgets" . . . Aid to destabilized families, single parent families . . . legal protection, knowledge of rights and duties . . . are set out.

The determining role of the family in the welcoming and supporting of a handicapped child is underlined. The very strong appeal for the support of the family institution and parental education is addressed to the States, but also to associations. . .

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4   Relationships between generations is the family

family is in a developed or developing country, or whether the family is widespread or nuclear. Adults are often reminded of the importance of early infancy; questions about the position, role and function of elderly people and grandparents are asked repeatedly. Greater heed to youngsters is desired . . .

5 - The future of the family

The future of the family is tackled mainly with regard to the efforts of science and technology on the family unit. Social evolution, the break-up of the family unit, the development of single parent families cause anxiety and lead to a request for ethical research, of definition of rights, of codes, to protect the family and its members.

6 - Family and environment, a fairly new topic

The influence of the environment on the family is stressed frequently. This term certainly covers several meanings, from ecological concerns relating to our natural surroundings to the notion of social surroundings, of civil or spiritual space. The thin line between the urban phenomenon and the upheaval of the family unit is often stressed.

7 - Family and multiculture, an intricate and complex question

A massive yes begs for an education in intercultural realities, for the necessary development of transcultural dialogue. The major role of the family regarding the passing-on of cultural heritage justifies this necessity of interfamily exchanges; mixed couples and the handling of multiculture are touched on; displaced families, migrations . . . A collection of concrete cases are raised several times as presenting great risks of family break-up, damaging for the individuals.

8 - Family and determining role of women

The impact of the female on the family is stressed very many times, whether it concerns education, the advancement of the family, supports, cultural development, handing down of values and culture . . . Expressions are often used: "marginalisation of the woman, negative effects on the family of every discrimination"; "fundamental role of the mother". . .; "woman, the essential link in the cultural development of the child", "necessary eradication of illiteracy among girls". In these areas an inter-NGO collaboration is asked for several times. The status and the place of the woman in the midst of the family are concerns that are frequently reaffirmed . . .

9- Families and situations of great poverty

This term seems to be taken in its widest sense, material poverty, cultural, spiritual poverty, ... All these types of poverty; command attention, considered as degrading the responsibilities and resources of the family. Education is recommended to avoid marginalisation; how is participation to be engendered, or the involvement of poor families in development. There is a desire to intensify the quest of better conditions so that families in dire poverty can be heard; the quest for solidarity between families, the quest for greater legal protection of the family are considered necessary.

UNESCO survey

2. - KEEN ANALYSIS BY DJAMCHID BEHNAM

With Djamchid Behnam, analysis will be something different, it is meant to be world-wide and without any concession for westerners who looked smugly on their family models. With great scientific precision, D. Behnam arrives at a keen analysis of the complexity and uniqueness of the family institution across the continents, ethnic groups and religions; as for the family and its future, if he admits that it is in the middle of change, he acknowledges that the redefinitions in vogue are difficult to define in the short term. For him, the factual, the visible surface of the iceberg is secondary, it is the gradual tendencies that need to be watched.

First and foremost he considers "the family as one of the major problem areas of the contemporary world".

The world journey that Behnam invites us on causes vertigo, when the descriptions of different types of family by continents and cultural zones are telescoped. It is understandable that the web might be difficult to unravel and that the reduction of distances because of technical progress, causes a confused juxtaposition of family types in restricted spaces.

♦ A number of parameters that I have been able to draw, may help us to define and understand better the family situations in the world; I am offering them for your attention:

1 - geographical area
2 - the influence of history
3 - ancestral family traditions
4 - the dominant religion and its evolution
5 - the secularization and secularism of society
6 - the economic and political influences on the family
7 - the effects of modern communication methods
8 - the legislation in force.

These eight fundamental parameters have different combinations and define a predominant kind of family; Behnam himself refers to a concept of cultural area, the word culture having the widest possible meaning.

After the effect of surprise that a journey round the families of the world might leave, convergence can be found.

♦ Main characteristics

You will always find the concepts exposed by the survey that I have presented to you: continuity, fragility, destabilization .

Behnam stresses the following main characteristics:

– «overall it can be said, that over the last decades, the family unit has acquired a predominant position, spreading from the west with the process of modernization and development».

– «in industrial and post industrial societies, parental relationships disappear in the face of professional, administrative, political and community relationships». «The family unit excludes a large group related by blood and unions from its daily life. It limits the network of blood ties».

The cultural effects of the industrial era are of 5 kinds: decided fertility, simplifying of family structures, distinction between natural family and career-minded family, family relationships not based on authority, relaxation of family ties.

According to Behnam, in 50 years' time the predominant family will be Asian, unified, urban with county roots, three children with strong likelihood of being Muslim.

In a word development of family examples which are more unstable and more broken, beyond the unit model.

Marriage, "institution" is questioned; co-habiting is the substitute for marriage . . . and no longer the preparation for marriage.

Movement towards celibacy, as a temporary option, development of alternative modes of life; there would be periods of family life and a wandering life.

Parental bonds will however, not entirely disappear . . .

Family crisis, yes if one looks at the marriage rate, fertility, divorce, but with increase in life expectancy, parental ties are strengthened, support between generations change, births outside marriage are accepted, young people live with their parents . . .

Djamchid Behnam develops the concept of the extended family unit, with situations of cultural ambiguity, with blurred and redistributed roles for members of the family . . .

All in all, a quite optimistic view of the changes; it is marriage which has been devalued. The visions of the evolution of the family imply the questioning of global society . . .

«Tomorrow's family will be smaller, more fragile, of many kinds, allowing its members to blossom more . . . The demand of the sacred and of sense might permit one to foresee a search for family values; will it be possible to speak of forms of family life or simply models of life. . .»

We must not forget that 4/5 of the world population will have to face up to problems of poverty in the year 2000 (today it is 3/4).

In the year 2005 Europe will represent only 6.5% of the world population.

The numerical decline of western countries is a fact . . .

The distribution of religions is changing: the list will need to be amended.

♦ The final voluntarist note

«It would be suitable to think of the family as a unit which is still evolving, presenting a flexibility and a capability for considerable adaptation, as an institution continually beset by the impact of changes, capable of resisting and of acting in the face of events and changes».

Madame Le Bret

3. - EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES SUPPORTS AND REQUESTS

KEY IDEA: THE EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY IS VERY WIDELY CONSIDERED AS DECISIVE IN THE SHAPING OF AN INDIVIDUAL AND HIS/HER INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY.

THE EXTENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES, FAMILY MEANS AND THEIR CHANGES, JUSTIFY A STRONG REQUEST FOR SUPPORT.

– For 63% of NGO's, the educational task of the family, the informal education which the family takes upon itself are determining in the shaping of the person and his/her integration in society (41%) and the actual changes of this educational responsibility (22%) are often considered a source of worry.

– 69% want the family to exercise its responsibilities in the most favourable conditions. The development of education in a parental role (31%) and the support of the family in its educational task (38%) are considered as having priority.

– 55% consider as vital the close association of family responsibilities with the educational work exercised by the school systems (35%) or those which are generated by the media and modern means of communication (20%).

– The open question which closes this family/education rubric, shows a marked concern for education in values identified as such, or specified as religious, spiritual, moral values, education in human rights, peace . . .

COMMENTS

Great agreement of expression and a consensus on this question of the educational responsibility of the family is apparent.

The family is clearly considered as a privileged place of education, and its function in the matter is seen as irreplaceable.

It is also important to state that the family finds itself somewhat overburdened with responsibilities and that no request for a transfer of these responsibilities is expressed. On the other hand, there is a strong request for support and for parental education.

It should be noted that in addition to the tasks touched on explicitly in the questionnaire, the importance of everything that is to be considered education in values is very largely stressed in the comments accompanying the answers: education in peace, tolerance, human rights; opening to a spiritual dimension; several times allusion is made to the civic function of the family «bearer of the national conscience, of social values, such as justice and solidarity . . .»

NGO/UNESCO
Mme Le Bret

4. - THE EDUCATIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FAMILY, A FUNCTION TO BE ENCOURAGED.

There are three main pointers we must use in designing strategies and policies to help families to perform their educative responsibilities, and to foster the harmonious development of the individual and of societies:

– encouragement to public and private initiative in taking action of a specific and palliative kind in the field, to help families to fulfil their responsibilities as educators (there are many examples here),

– regular co-operation with schools, to make the education process a consistent and complementary one, with the development of participation arrangements,

– and, lastly, an appeal to governments to take innovative preventive and anticipatory action, which will offer more support to families and give greater attention to the existing web of associations that work closely with families.

These three approaches are not mutually exclusive; they are complementary.

To conclude, it may be worth recalling a few of the rights of the individual and of the family;

♦ The right of individuals to be surrounded by a family community, which provides for their education, their future, their growth and their self-fulfilment, and recognises their full and equal dignity. To this end, society must defend and promote the identity and stability of the family, which is the true soil of education, in which children can take root and from which they can draw their joy in living.

♦ The right of individuals to live physically within a family, where they can have the permanent experience of a relationship based on love and therefore full of the promise of peace, so that in this way the affective dimension of the human personality is nurtured. To this end, society must provide the social conditions and facilities for an authentic family educational environment: housing, health, education, etc.

♦ The right of individuals to learn to live in society by discovering through direct experience the values of mutual recognition, benevolent tolerance, selfless endeavour, reconciliation and pardon. To this end, society must develop methods and techniques for social education, or education in responsible citizenship, which begins in the family.

♦ The right of individuals to find within the family human liberty, the spiritual dimension of human life, the experience of religion and the means to make a free choice of their religion. To this end, society must ensure respect for Human Rights, and freedom of conscience, by supporting the family in discharging its educational mission in this area.

NGO / UNESCO
Mrs. Le Bret

While the family is the chosen educator, there are other agents, other institutions in society that perform an educative function or discharge educational responsibilities.

♦ Society itself also has an education function, which in the contemporary world assumes an institutionalized form in the education system and whose characteristics vary in time and space. The education system, provided by the community, is principally of the school type. In most cases it comes under the general responsibility of the State from the point of view of both strategy and finance. The system may have a paraschool education sector attached to it to take care of leisure, sports and cultural activities...Youth movements supported by the associations also have their various attractions and fulfil an important educational function.

♦ Apart from this, with the advance of technology and the consequent development of the communications media, we have seen the growth of a kind of education sometimes known as «parallel schooling» which are channeled in the main makes through the modern media.

All these agents must be identified as clearly as possible and they must find ways and means to work together on a broad front. They can be grouped together into five categories:

– the family, the principal educator and the primary help to the child as it grows up,
– the school, as the place where the seeds of knowledge are planted and fertilised, where the learning of skills and know-how occurs, and where the sense of citizenship is inculcated.
– the media, which offer an opening to the world, and which are now decisive in their influence, but illcontrolled.
– organised movements, which are the very fabric of society, as educative communities outside the family and outside the school, teaching people to «live together»
– religions, decisive in the transmission of values, peace, tolerance...

It is up to each of these educational agents or spheres to invent appropriate methods and teaching techniques. These methods and techniques are bound to be infinitely varied and geared to the situations and possibilities of the cultures and religions, the families and schools, the media and the movements concerned. What is urgent is to look carefully at the mesh between, on the one hand, the methods and techniques and, on the other, the ultimate aims and objectives. Today there is a great deal of groping... «Novelty», or vogue, or success are often the sole criteria for evaluating educational methods.

♦ The lack of adequate communication between families and certain educational sectors (schools, the media, etc.) can cause dysfunction. We can observe a tendency for families to off load their responsibilities on to the schools and for the mediate encroach on ground that, in the past, was the prerogative of the family in education. The absence of accurate measurement of the educational effects of the media systems further complicates the educative task of the family.

♦ The other providers of education can sometimes have harmful effects, by cutting young people off from their home environment. Parents, and mothers in particular, should be able to attend classes, starting with literacy in the local language and going on to the official language afterwards, so that they can understand what schooling is about, and keep up with what their children are doing. They should also be given classes in criticising the media, and in health and hygiene and in social matters...

Parent education systems and efforts to make parents aware of education issues are far from being as widespread as they deserve to be. While it is true that many attempts are being made, public funding where it exists is insufficient and private initiatives are still too few and far between.

Many examples could be given of initiatives backed by the NGOs:

– the efforts spent on giving families functional literacy so that they can play their educative role to the full, and be more involved in school life and in their children's development.

– the work done by youth movements to inculcate values and to support families in this specific task.

– the numerous initiatives in basic family education...

NGO / UNESCO
Mrs Le Bret

Some people think that family values have declined. If it is true that family reality has changed greatly since a few decades ago, it still remains central. The family is no longer "the basic element in society"; it is no longer responsible for many tasks which used to burden it. But its essential and irreplaceable tasks probably appear today more insistent and pertinent. It is an essential place of attention and welcome, where a love of life is gained, the first place where consideration for others, and socialisation are discovered, where responsibility and self-government are learned or should be learned, in a climate of affection and confidence. How vital these family roots are is measured sooner or later by many things. Providing these roots does not enclose a self-sufficient family, they can give that first security which allows one to pursue the adventure of life. That parents ensure for their children an affluent existence, important financial resources or even a network of relationships and influence, will become less and less important. The essential for building one's life, one's joy of living, is in being rather than having.

Do not the parting of so many couples constitute a major element of social breakdown and worsening of true values? We should not idealise past situations. Was there more unity, understanding, love in families in the past? People certainly kept up appearances, the outward facade of the family, but in many cases only at the expense of a debilitating climate of untruth, wearing tension sometimes of silent war.

People often speak of "children who are victims of divorce". This is not an exact expression that remains on the level of the external framework of the institution, without going to the heart of the living reality. Divorce is only the consequence - necessary and freeing in more than one case - of a situation of serious and irremediable dissension. If the children are victims, it is not because of the divorce, but from the parental couple's lack of understanding and love. It has to be said that a growing number of parents are fortunately now very aware of the consequences for their children of their disagreement. If its impossible for them to heal the marital split, if they believe it is unhealthy to continue a debilitating life together, then far from using their children as weapons of war, they try hard to remain as united as possible in fulfilling their parental duties. This is the role of "family mediations which is fortunately developing to help parents and children find the best ways of living for the good of each at the centre of a sorrowful crisis for both.

P. de Locht

That indispensable tension between everyday life and ethical standards is also threatened with extinction in as much as a moral aim becomes imperative, dominant, wishing to retake the whole ethical area, to the point of scorning the irreplaceable and final verdict of the "subjective" decision.

The so-called "objective" morality is too often thought of as having a sufficient and complete grasp of reality, allowing people's conscience only the ability to apply an already completely packaged verdict to such and such concrete situation. In this perspective, subjective, personal judgement cannot enrich and complete the objective standard; it can only reduce it without due cause, even if one were to recognise that attenuating circumstances can justify this impoverishment. The distance between the verdict of the objective morality, considered the expression of the ideal, and the subjective solution is then attributed to sin, or at least to the weakness of the personal condition, incapable of fully grasping the pertinence of the moral standard or of applying it in a proper way. It is a distance that will arouse leniency and forgiveness, but does not call into question the status of the "objective" morality. The claim of working out an "objective" moral law, retaking almost the whole moral high ground can only end in a stunting of conscience or, a healthier, but equally serious unilateral, reaction, to a rejection of every objective reference. Between this double reef lies the difficult way of synthesis, obliging, with as little harm as possible, a fusion of the objective reference and all the necessary attention to concrete cases.

The task of a moral authority, as with any moral educator, is not simply to make moral values known and appreciated, as well as the laws that clarify their application, but also to inculcate the indispensable and healthy responsibility of conscience and personal decision. The apprenticeship in the distance between the moral law and concrete judgement, which in the final analysis is set by the subject, is a vital element of moral maturity. Unfortunately, the teachers and authorities of morality seem almost exclusively preoccupied with defending the validity of the moral laws that they have drawn up. They are very rare instances in which they state at the same time how insufficient these moral standards are, no matter how wise, in fully deciding the judgement to bring, but require the assessment by the subject of all the concrete elements, which an objective law is not capable of defining. The exercise of this responsibility is certainly difficult; but it constitutes one of the jewels of the human state. Rather than reduce the area of application as much as possible, through fear of mistakes and blunders, it is important to awaken and educate to the use of it, with all its rumblings, but, in the end, its responsibility and greatness for each and every one.

P. De Locht

COLLOQUIUM

2

COLOMBO
1995

GLOBALISATION IN A DIFFERENTIATED WORLD AND LASALLIAN EDUCATION

1. REPORT

Globalisation in a Differentiated World and Lasallian Education

Introduction and rationale.

The theme 'globalisation' was selected for the second Colloquium to offer an opportunity for considering cultural and economic dominance as it applies to the Lasallian educational mission.

In considering globalisation, the colloquium was brought to consider two main areas:

1. How 'westernism' comes to dominate and manipulate traditional economies and cultures.

2. The part played by non-Christian religious systems in the maintenance of cultural identity and community integrity and our need to work with them.

1. The aim of the Standing Committee in organizing the colloquium.

The aim of the standing committee in arranging the colloquium was to confront participants at the outset with the processes of globalisation. This would help those taking part to inform the way in which they represent the world to themselves. Opportunities were to be furnished for seeing at close quarters the emerging mechanisms of financial concentration and control and of perceiving the discernable priorities, along with their ideological presuppositions, underpinning the framing of economic and political policies. There would be occasion to experience the consequences of these mechanisms and policies for large populations of the world. An informed model would influence the formulation of educational policies.

Participants in the colloquium would work over several matters of moment

• Poverty and riches and the polarisation of dominant and dependent economies.

• Development and modernization and the way they have become related to violence, arms production and trading, civil and military conflict and to exploitative cultural domination.

• Interreligious dialogue, Christianity and other religions.

In a Lasallian mission that spans more than 80 different countries we face a serious dilemma. We might become identified with, indeed identify ourselves with, groups having diametrically opposed interests.

2. The objectives of the colloquium.

• To develop a critical analysis of the presuppositions upon which we model the structural relationships that exist between populations and an awareness of the consequences of these presuppositions.

• To evaluate the position taken up, explicitly or implicitly, by the Institute with regard to these relationships between populations.

• To recognise our potential for modifying the processes and interactions involved in these relationships by identifying the resources or policies with which the Institute and its individual members can respond to them.

• To attain a greater sensitivity in understanding how these relationships affect or condition the way the Institute works.

• To stimulate creative thinking and foster mental competence, so facilitating the move beyond ideological contrivances with their presuppositions to arrive at alternative models for action.

3. The constituent elements in the colloquium process could be summarized as:-

Setting and Participants. Royal Oceanic Hotel. F.S.C. General Councillors, PARC.
Sophisticated tourist services such as were enjoyed by those taking part in the colloquium, have been set up at the cost of the dispersal of a local fishing community, the suppression of its culture with denial of its values and the virtual enslavement of its children. (The members were invited, by implication, to observe the impact on local communities and their culture of economic aid offered with strings attached.)

Thematic input. Theme and critical comments. Social analysis and theological discernment.
Relevant experiences from the Lasallian mission in Latin America, Africa, Israel.

Exposure. Visits to industrial centres, sport facilities, and rehabilitation centres for young victims of sex tourism.

Witness. Testimonies to the responses of other Asian religious groups.

Thematic discernment (J.Heisig S.J.) Assisting participants to set the experiences and presentations in the perspective of globalisation and its impact on our mission.

1. Keynote presentation:

Moving away from a concept of relationships based on opposing forces towards an understanding of the relationships consequent upon globalisation.

Br. Herman Lombaerts.
Prof. Of Pastoral Theology, University of Leuven.

Globalisation is a world-wide, ongoing process, a complex and evolving phenomenon which challenges us wherever our mission is. Br. Herman Lombaerts, in introducing this topic, willed the participants of the colloquium to accept his confrontational presentation as a ploy intended to sensitise our exploration of the finality of the Lasallian mission. He suggested that a critical look be taken at the frames of reference within which we represent the world to ourselves. The terms North/South, East/ West, furnish a geopolitical representation which conditions our understanding. By adjusting our images and preconceptions we might come to see more clearly the ways in which peoples have been, and are still being, affected by interactions among different power groups.

Our fixed frames of reference and enduring conceptual apparatus can hinder our seeing what is really happening to people. They may ultimately hinder our perceiving in whose actual interest even our most generous and spiritually inspired undertakings are being exploited. The theme of poverty, the service of the poor and the preferential option might serve as illustration. Our concern for the poor has to take into account the existence of the rich in such a way that we become aware of the mechanisms which tend to keep people in either the one or the other of these categories. Other relevant contrasting groupings were to be suggested by Br. Wilfrido Villacorta:

capitalist democratic,

capitalist authoritarian,

or -

(North - developed, East - capitalist, Far West - modern progressive) - superior.

(South - underdeveloped, East - communist, Far East - traditional) - inferior.

This playing with models and seeking to identify the presuppositions underlying their construction can be applied to a critical examination of the ways in which the Lasallian educational mission might be used. We need to know with whom and for whom we are working and whose interest is being served in the end. What kind of Christianity is being propagated throughout a world network characterized by inculturated and contradictory expectations? To what degree is our international Institute, unconsciously, unwillingly or even perhaps with our passive connivance, part of a selective capitalistic strategy of globalisation?

Relevance of the concept 'globalisation'.

Along with the phenomena grouped under its title, the concept 'globalisation' is evolving. The term, therefore, resists definition. The concept is frequently associated with modernity. It certainly describes a major factor in the contemporary world.

Wallerstein relates it to the global social system which results from the capitalist world economy which is, coincidentally, determining the cultural and social domain.

J. Meyer associates globalisation with the creation of a value system which the autonomous impose upon the dependent. This imposition is supported by two pillars ; the commodity economy and the collective authority wielded by the functionally independent. In this scenario, the world political economy is the main part player in globalisation.

R. Robertson associates globalisation with the evolution of the particularistic cultures and societies (Gemeinschaft) into a world society (Gesellschaft) . The relativisation of particularisms is the central constitutive impetus of globalisation. In the process four poles are in tension-

societies - individuals.

world systems - humankind

N. Luhmann sees globalisation as an incidental consequence of the structural modernization of western society, a society which has become independent of any kind of social communication (economic, political) and value creation. This structural modernization is becoming of such a scale that the only possible limit remaining for its encompassing influence is set by the globe itself.

The problem remains of dealing with the consequent disappointed expectations of the dependent. In this, globalisation becomes associated with an increasing focus on information as a means of modifying some expectations to reduce disappointment.

These approaches to a definition of globalisation are helpful when we address

(a) the presupposition that globalisation is to be understood as a consequence of modernity in the western world which has now expanded to the whole world and is affecting every particular culture, civilization and social system (item 1 of the Introduction).

(b) the question principally claiming our attention - 'What, then, is the role of religion in relation to globalisation, given the fact that in traditional (particular) separated societies and cultures, religion played a central role in protecting communities from chaos, guaranteeing unity, continuity, identity and meaning?' (item 2 of Introduction).

In the way that the colloquium received the statements of Brs. Wilfrid Villacorta and Anthony Rogers in the discussions that followed there was evidence of a need for us, as an international institute, to look closely at our concepts regarding the contemporary world and at the language in which we make it present to ourselves. An institute language with a particular usage for religious, ideological, doctrinal, spiritual and educational terms, a usage having its origins in the writings of our founder and its historical development within our own community, can present us with difficulties. It is not easy to shift into a secular description and analysis as a first step in an ongoing appraisal of what we deem to be the true state of things. The vigourous, prophetic response to acknowledged challenges with which the institute seeks to furnish its members and partners can be the product only of careful thought in which a correctly perceived reality is examined in the light of a renewed vision.

A prerequisite of the desired common discernment is an agreement about the contextual meaning of terms. Context imports nuances which can cause difficulties of a kind not usually associated with everyday usages. The following analyses illustrate this.

1. The economic consideration is not a neutral dimension of society. It is associated with competition between various forms of acquisitiveness. In the context of globalisation it stands for a new combination of all the elements already recognised in existing processes; internationalism, transnationalism, universalisation, mondialisation. It involves, further, a different understanding of space. (Territory, the space necessary for a particular population to guarantee its survival, is replaced by an invasive presence in which technology is employed in a manner that respects no boundaries, exploiting resources in the interest of a few at the cost of deprivation for the many.)

This globalisation can be presented as morally neutral. The actual mechanisms can be used for either good or evil ends. The moral response, obviously, is to ensure that they are used for good. The ethical response, however, suggests a different conclusion. If a thorough analysis of the phenomenon shows that globalisation is set up

intrinsically for the benefit of the few and the disadvantage of the many who have no access to the process, then we can conclude that it is dangerous and should be exposed and denounced.

2. If this kind of analysis can be used to demonstrate that every aspect of life can be harnessed to the plough of sectional interests..

Education can be managed as a business, selling services to promote economic gain, functional dominance, competitive edge and even violence.

Tourism can involve the exploitation of people, diminishment of their opportunities and devastation of their land in building private wealth.

Religion can be used to enhance financial and political control.

Culture can be a ready-to-hand interaction framework which can be used to foist imaginary and exploitable needs and desires on large numbers of people.

to set up powerful economic control through an unjust world order.

3. The term globalisation carries within it the suggestion of violence. Violence is fueled by greed for power and possession and makes possible the establishment of monopolies. It is expressed subtly in networks of instant communication and media exploitation with impressive technological sophistication.

The ethical question raised in this context relates to the boundaries we set in tolerating violence. The spectacular achievements made possible by technological development, raised output, increased automation and reduced labour, beg acceptance. What can be wrong with using modern means and equipment - computers, communication networks, e-mail and CDRom? The question skates around the issue, answering itself when shorn of its contextual components. But it becomes problematical when it is seen that the proclaimed aim of extending the use of these tools and services to everybody, world-wide, is to be achieved through a global process involving detriment to the dependent economies of vast populations. The ethical challenge, then, is that the acceptance of spectacular achievements implies a compromise, a shifting forwards or backwards of the tolerance boundaries we set to violence.

We need to think about the way in which commonly accepted models of personal interaction appear in the light of globalisation. One person knows more, has more skills, and so assumes the role of instructor of the others. Knowledge is transferred from one (superior) end of the dipole to the (inferior) other.

In the transference the actor produces change in the acted-upon. If this, the simplest, image of interpersonal influence is our point of reference, then we can, logically, evaluate our impact on others in linear terms -and come up with a flattering assessment. But, again, a question remains. It could take the form,"Does the linear approach to personal interaction condone violence to the acted-upon?" This question was addressed in an arresting manner by Bartolemé De Las Casas in ' *Del único modo de traer a todos los pueblos a la verdadera religión* ' (16th. Cent.) This tract is a reaction to the violent subjection of people to the (Spanish) Christian religion within the process of colonisation.

The reality of interactions between individuals and between populations is more complex than this linear, dipole model. Each interactive relationship has its own attendant circumstances and follows its own logic. A less restricted model might disclose a multitude of unplanned influences and a diversity of interests. The disclosure should influence planning by inviting a greater attention to the range of effects, good and bad, which a particular line of action might have on people.

The topic elicited several references to church documents and Institute priority options. Is our 'religious universalism' a suitable response to the globalisation phenomenon? Do not the texts *Gaudium et spes* and *Evangelium vitae* aim at a constructive type of globalisation? Do we not have already in place defensive structures against selective capitalistic targeting?

Where the human person is respected and where truly human persons interact freely, networks develop which resist the abuses to which linear relationships are exposed. Whatever might be 'on offer' is filtered through a net of collective perceptions and agreed ways of evaluating and receiving it.

2. Panel comments on the keynote presentation.

♦ Br. Wilfrido Villacorta

1. The geopolitical matrix.

With the resolution of the socialist/capitalist tension in favor of capitalism the former E - W balance has been replaced by a dominance/dependence polarity kept in place by a globalized control of resources.

We need to be critical of the contributions our education service has made to both of these economic orders.

2. Ideal response of Lasallian education - the global view.

We need to have policies which are a public statement of Christian values in response to the challenge of globalisation. Lasallian education belongs to the world and to the future. Allow it to develop and adapt in a close, responsive and interactive association with human communities and their changing needs.

♦ Br. Anthony Rogers.
Executive Director of the Office for Human Development for the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

Globalisation tends towards homogenization - the supremacy of knowledge and reason, relativization of morals, and the implied atheism of a 'me-first' individualism supporting economic manipulation.

In this there are winners and losers. Societies with dependent economies are undermined culturally.

Tension is established between a movement towards globalisation and a search for ethnic roots.

How might the educational mission of the Church respond to this?
- *Gaudium et spes* urges mutual caring and community of purpose.
- interfaith dialogue to share the 'Good News'
- upholding the value of prayer and of restraint in life style.
- where a transnational world tends towards globalisation, the Church must emphasize the universality of its mission.

♦ Summary of group reports and panel responses.

Although the social documents of the Church offer values to counter the ill effects of globalisation, one wonders to what extent these documents get into the lives of both the wealthy and the dependent.

What perceptions of the world are predominant in our Institute and in our particular institutions? Social justice must become a fixed intellectual frame of reference in assessing our works and programmes.

We have to make a morally significant response to the phenomena of globalisation. Focussing on the preferential option for the poor, what bearing does globalisation have on the status of the poor and how should our Institute respond ? We have to influence the course of globalisation in accordance with a Lasallian vision. We need to take note of the language used in the service of globalisation and of who it is that controls it. Can we counter the evil elements adequately from within our schools? Are there aspects of globalisation which have already infiltrated our mission? Does it make sense to take sides in political divisions?

Globalisation involves the use of Internet and other forms of communication technology to establish a wide network of influences to dominate the social and economic status of the many in the interest of the few, and without consideration of the potential implications. It can be independent of governments and politicians, bypassing governmental structures and operating beyond established controls. Students can assert independence of teachers and schools, getting information from technical aids - information mediated by whatever interests promote the presentation. We have to become aware of the potential of the word processor. It is more than an improved typewriter.

3. Globalisation from a theological point of view.

♦ The Church in history and globalisation.
Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, OMI, Director of the Centre for Society and Religion.

The models which the Church has traditionally used have tended to obscure the dangers inherent in a differentiated, globalised world.

Present day globalisation is to be seen against an historical background of white, male domination. It issues now in electronic capitalism with its concurrent ills. Working class people have become expendable. In all countries where globalisation pevails, specific socioeconomic classes are kept down while advantages accrue to an elite. North - South no longer defines the division of advantages. The wealthy in India are better off than the middle classes in the U.S.A.. And Bishops in India are seen to be among the elite.

Emergent phenomena.

People are coming together into groups to safeguard values - a sign of the breathing of the Spirit? There are loose, international coalitions of interest; feminist movements, labour movements. There is a closer involvement on the part of those who have become aware in the lives of those who are marginalised.

Religious orders could become a grace, a worldwide network influencing multinationals. We should take note of who they are who are now working to humanise globalisation. Our religious institutes developed largely to secure salvation in an after life, not to establish a just order in this one. We must recognise that not everything that is done with the best intentions is, in fact, for the best. (Arbuckle. 'Refounding Religious Life').

♦ Discussions. Confronting our practice with the ideals of the Lasallian mission.

Evils like those associated with western interventions in the past can be visited on their own people now by the formerly colonized, especially if they have had bequeathed to them the necessary skills and the underlying values. This is the paradox in which western aid, extended to previously colonized and exploited communities, can now be subverted to promote inequality within them.

We need to make a critical examination of the content of our education service in terms of what is taught and to whom, the relationships fostered, the values engendered, the skills imparted. We have also to examine the financing strategies.We have to be ready to move out of education services which do not promote gospel values. In third world countries, a sport and club ethos can be a way of consolidating the elite in a controlling dominance.

A theology suited to today would carry a critique of the world system, taking into account the real resources of the earth. It would focus on the potential for good in the processes of globalisation. Religious life must find its place both in this focussing and at the frontiers of human struggle. As religious, our lives, at different times and pursuant to different purposes, are lived out at various class levels. We live with ambiguity and have to decide how to deal with it. Our alignment must be with the oppressed. If we network with peace and justice workers we will become exposed to the poor. And the poor will tell us what the gospel values are.

4. Tourism and globalisation.
Economic imperatives and cultural imperialism.

Child abuse in Sri Lanka Tourism.
Maureen **Seneveratne**, *Chairwoman PEACE (Protecting Environment And Children Everywhere.)*

We see in the abuse of the tourist trade the result of large international cartels dictating to communities with vulnerable economies the conditions they must fulfil if they are to receive aid.

Small family businesses are better adapted to preserve cultural values.

The World Bank recommended that Sri Lanka should commit itself to developing its tourist industry so as to become an attractive prospect for loans and investments. After the 1988 civil war the need to reestablish the lucrative tourist trade caused the government to relax its former supervision. Visas were easily granted and blind eyes were turned to suspect cases. Enticing tourists to the island involved changes that dismantled the substructure of indigenous industries. The poorer became providers of leisure for the richer. The lives of the poor were in danger of further impoverishment by a kind of servility. They became exposed to exploitation as cheap labour and their children to abuse as available sexual commodities.

The problem is growing. The buying and selling of children , 'commoditisation', is on a vast scale in Asia. Estimations for Sri Lanka are..(1995)

Year.	Number of children subjected to abuse.
1980	2,000
1989	5,000
1995	30,000.

There is need for suitable advocacy, law and litigation. Especially legal reforms in 'sender' countries to permit the prosecution of their citizens for crimes committed against children while abroad in 'receiver' countries.Much is being achieved. There is effective assistance from NGOs through their powerfully organised and experienced international advocacy. (ECPAT: End Child Pornography in Asia Tourism, PEACE: Protecting Environment And Children Everywhere, and the NGO Group for the Rights of the Child.) Religious should become engaged in those NGOs which work in the cause of peace and justice.

There is still need for education.
• In 'sender' and 'receiver' countries, a well planned campaign (to include for example, that children can be AIDS carriers too).
• Training local lawyers to use existing legislation effectively to prosecute and make the prosecutions stick.

Group discusssions
on the abuses of tourism.

– Education. In content, our education service should help people to grow in self-awareness and a sense of self-worth. At community level, especially in dependent economies, we should enter into dialogue with local cultures and religions to strengthen the moral basis of resistance to exploitation.

We must identify the individuals who are agents of liberating change and be prepared to free them off as core groups even at cost to existing works.

– Advocacy. How can we Brothers become more connected with these problems and the efforts to solve them? 'Church people' who get involved in this kind of issue, tend to do so 'incognito'.We should not relinquish attempts to influence the 'network'. (As it is, those who are bringing about evil are the ones using it most effectively).

Returning to a theological approach to tourism. (An invitation)
Fr. Tissa Balasuriya to set the group discussions in this perspective.)

What theological reflections can we share on tourism? Tourism is an image of paradise. We are on earth as pilgrims and this is imaged in the pilgrim tour seen as an immediate fulfilment of a promise not yet accessible. Journey is a recurrent in scripture.What values do all these journeys commend?

Exploitative travel is damaging. Relationships can be fulfilling where characterised by equality and mutual acceptance. Education should lead tourists to a sympathetic understanding of the culture of the host country and to a knowledge of and concern for its political struggles. Sri Lanka was compelled to open and expose itself from a position of economic dependence. Other Asian countries have had the option of opening themselves from a position of commanding economic strength. Because of the dependency of their economies, exploitation and abuse are likely to mark India and Sri Lanka for the next ten years at least. The poor will be further impoverished and those who become richer financially will become poorer in the depths of their humanity.

5. The need for interreligious dialogue.

1. Panel presentations. Different religious traditions.

- **Dr. A. Pushparajan (Christian)**
  Head of Department for Interreligious Relations, Madurai Kamar University.
  Secretary Archdiocesan Commission for Dialogue.
  'Social justice from the point of view of Christian tradition' (Text, Annex 1.)

There arises a tension within the Church between those who advocate the more traditional approach -convert the heart of the oppressor, and those who are more aggressive in denouncing and removing the structures set up to promote the oppression. We work to reconcile these two approaches..

- **Ms. Poomani Gulasingham (Hinduism)**
  Educator. University Lecturer, faculty of Education. Colombo. Member of Religious Council, NIE.
  Advisor, Sarvadoya-Womens' Movement.

Social justice in the perspective of religious traditions in Asia. (Text, Annex 2.)
One can expect concern for social justice in people whose inner life as been transformed. Integrity of existence involves seeking harmony in life, in nature and social interactions, in the way we live towards each other.

- **Mrs. Jezima Ishmail (Islam).**
  Principal, Islamic College foe Women.

Islam and social justice.(Text, Annex 3)
"Does 'brotherhood' (Koran) refer to mankind or to the Islamic community? The answer should be that it refers to mankind".

- **Ms. Kusuma Devendre (Buddhism)** *Lecturer, Sri Jayewardenepura University.*
  Teacher, Biology. Panel member 'Buddhist Forum' Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation..

Buddhism and social justice. (Text, Annex 4)
Social justice arises when human beings, as individuals, act with responsibility. The entire *Dharma* that the Buddha preached was for the liberation of individuals and the liberation and stabilising of society.

2. Discussion . The Panel.

Asian religions tend to oppose the value of life, expressed as that of individual persons, to the dangers inherent in globalisation.

The traditional Buddhist response has been to emphasise the importance of reducing the ego, so making room for compassion. A just social order is to be achieved by sensitising individuals to make things better. Buddhist monks in Thailand and in China are now engaging in social service, setting up units to help addicts, street children and others in need.

Hinduism calls for a direct concern for the common good. It enjoins tolerance and respect for all other religions..Ghandiism offers a valuable antidote to globalisation - meeting the pressures of powerful corporate interests with strong self-awareness.

Islam also stresses the importance of the internal purification. The holy war, the *jihad* is intended to be an internal struggle with personal evil propensities, not an armed and violent proselytism.

Buddhism offers no personal deity and focusses on no personal on-going self. The eternal principle resides in life, not in the individual, and that life is reincarnated.

In the East religious tradition is found mainly in prayer where in the West the emphasis is on social engagement. The extent to which young people in non-Christian traditions are growing in their faith appears to be affected by a pervasive preoccupation with passing examinations. The young are in despair as the prospects of employment recede. We have to lead them to rediscover that their treasure is not in knowledge on its own but in the lived moment.

6. The lived Lasallian realities.

1. Globalisation and Lasallian schools. A view from South America.

Br. Ludolfo Ojeda. (Text, Annex 5)

Presentation of the polarity, dominant class —— oppressed classes, in an historical setting.

In planning its educational mission the Institute must be clear about:
– What globalisation is, and how it comes to be applied differently in different parts of the world.
– The role of the Church in the history of globalisation.
– The contribution of inter-faith dialogue to the search for solutions.
– The kind of education that should engage the Lasallian mission in view of the new conditions resulting from globalisation.

2. From the discussion group reports.

Education reflects and integrates the assumptions people have. What really are our aims in education: -to inform? -to please parents? -to socialise? -to meet government standards? What do families seek from schools: -social promotion? -discipline? -'getting on' financially? What would not be enough to satisfy us: -merely to serve the short term interests of parents? - to get our pupils wealthy? Have we, in traditional Lasallian education, perpetuated the values of the colonisers ?

Our critique of society must recognise our participation in it. We must not shun society, but help to integrate its elements, having a proper awareness of its economic aspects, of the place of the media in it, and of the role of the Church. Our young people must have a sense of belonging to it and a sense of the relevance of the school to it. The new De La Salle community is challenged to be a dynamic influence in society.When our students go out into the world they should be aware that a living community supports them. It is possible for our institutions to become so distanced from the local community as to lose their Lasallian character.

Brothers preparing for higher education will travel and acquire wide experience. Are we disposed to make best use of their travels and exposure to other cultures? Sangre and CIL can be valuable experiences. They both, to differing degrees, offer a cultural experience of powerful impact which can disturb. There needs to be follow-up for 'graduates 'of these courses. Need for this care extends also to men undertaking work in the unfamiliar '4th. World' of first world cities

Combining *living up to* our ideals with *rethinking* them.

We have to become connected to, and interactive with, a local, plural and globally directed world while watching it critically. We have to find a way of sharing our best insights and choices with the world. We do have a community model which can be of wide benefit - and sharing it widely will demand of us mastery of the very techniques associated with globalisation. The formation of our Brothers and secular partners must prepare them to be able to develop community values within a globalised world.

3. Brothers invited to contribute from experiences in the Lasallian mission.

◆ On Africa. *Br. Dominique Samne.*

There have been 30 wars of ethnic origin in the past   40 years. At the moment, 20 countries in Africa have ethnicity problems. What happened in Rwanda could happen anywhere in Africa. And the disasters would be exploited politically. Some wars appear to be religious in origin but the problems are always complexed with ethnic, social and political elements. Adequate and suitable systems of government are lacking.

Western democracy is not necessarily good for Africa. Traditional chiefs are still in place and tend to resist the elected authority. Democratic elections and electioneering require an infrastructure of communications which is not always to be found. There is a need to educate genuine, honest politicians who will devote themselves to a truly patriotic public service. Africans are not doing enough, themselves, to become positively involved in national and international affairs and to create just government. A suitable evangelisation must take account of this need - a culture of professional service.

The sources of the problems are manifold. Africa does not present itself either as a valuable resource or as an economic threat to the rest of the world at this time. So interest is limited. It has become a marginalised continent in many ways. Traditional African attitudes do not spill over into the domaine of moral social conscience. There is, then, a need to evangelize the baptised and to baptise the culture. We find our way to God, and He reveals Himself to us, through our specific cultures. What does it mean to be African? - to be Christian? -to be an African Christian? The African synod stated that evangelisation was about inculturation, proclamation, communication and justice.

Africans will not gain by complaining of the legacies of colonialism. They must, themselves, become part of the solution.

♦ Some aspects of Lasallian education in Japan. *Br. Ohtomo Shi Gehiko.*

The relationship of Japan to the rest of Asia is somewhat similar to that of Britain to the rest of Europe, uneasy. Commitments are ambivalent. There is a reluctance on the part of the Brothers to become immersed in the affairs of PARC. This is being addressed both through the experience of meetings and by the acquisition of greater fluency in English as the *lingua franca* of PARC. The former pupils of Japan are warmly welcomed by the Brothers in Singapore and the Philippines.

At the official level the Catholic Church in Japan seems to be luke warm about Catholic education.

For their part the Catholic schools sometimes disbar catholic children on acount of their academic achievement at the time of their application. The Church in Japan is experiencing change. At holy mass there might be more people from the Philippines and from Singapore than there are from Japan. What, then, should be the liturgical language?

Parents send their children to Lasallian schools so that they will have a better chance of gaining entry to university. This reflects a major problem for educators - the pressure on young people to succeed.

This same pressure results in reduced time and opportunity for the young to study their religion. It is also a stem cause of the bullying and suicide that mars schooling in the country. In the presence of material wealth in Japan, one finds emotional poverty. The Brothers try to help students in these difficulties. Suicides are avoided in our schools. The Mothers' Club, founded in the wake of W.W.II to help poor students with their fees, still functions. All students attend weekly ethics classes.

♦ Bethlehem University *Br. Anton de Roeper.*

A Christian university founded by the Holy See and confided to the Brothers in response to requests from the local Churches to offer an opportunity for higher education to young Palestinians, without discrimination on lines of gender, religion or, as far as possible, wealth. This project is the special concern of the U.S.A/T Region. Student tuition and fees cover around 25% of the cost of the courses. Scholarships are awarded in cases of need. One quarter of the student body pay no tuition.

Palestinian Arabs had been stateless since 1967 and were cut off from university and professional training by the occupation of their land in that year. The university recognises the injustice done to Palestinians and continues to offer them the benefits of higher education in spite of continuing difficulties and interference. During the three years of enforced closure that accompanied the *intifadah* undercover teaching continued in spite of prohibition. Not a single teacher failed to respond to the call to volunteer for this dangerous service. The true nature of the political realities is generally distorted by interested media magnates and presented to an international public all too ready to be misinformed.

Drawn together by common dangers, the different sections of the university body, comprising members of different religious groups, coming from several countries and cultural traditions, contrive to form a community of learning characterised by mutual reverence.

7. What would constitute an adequate Lasallian response to the ills of globalisation?

Lasallian education responds to the global reality.

From the joint presentation of the Standing Committee and the theme moderator.

There is a danger that educational establishments that were set up originally in response to need, can come to be beguiled by a kind of success which inclines them instead to respond to demand. Academic excellence can too easily invite a market-led demand, the meeting of which can entail the proposing of temporal values in place of those of the gospel. The influence of the De La Salle tradition of mission can be so dilute as no longer to offer an effective counterweight to the forces tending to subvert Christian institutions to the promotion of globalised interests. Where this state of things can be recognised it is unlikely that an attempt at readaptation will be more than cosmetic. If we are to oppose the gospel effectively to the structural sin which emerges in a social order dominated by these interests, we will have to recreate our service to education even if it means abandoning existing works.

And how can we remodel the spiritual life in terms at once contemplative and prophetic? Traditional formation falls short of this. The colloquium is an experience of light. In the Lasallian tradition, our relationships with our pupils are rooted in the relationship that God has with us.

We might consider developing our liturgies and our meditations to have an impact on social realities. Rituals sustain collectively - and can do so to perpetuate weaknesses or to strengthen in bold initiatives. On the other hand, privatisation of religion can lead to its irrelevance. We need to be aware of the way the global aspect of our Institute affects the way people look at us.

The globalisation of information, no less than that of economic resources, calls for a new kind of education space. It will not be sufficient to furnish existing plant or programmes with new technology. The school must be reinvented. Our students must feel capable of meeting the contemporary world on its own terms and must be prepared to hold out to it the same hope that inspires themselves. Creativity will involve suffering as we free ourselves from old mind-sets. Risking is part of this suffering. The risks called for might involve us in giving up attachment to otherwise laudable traditions - like prowess in sport - in order to establish new traditions - as of social involvement. Jesus and De La Salle risked. For De La Salle the risk was realized when he found Christ in the poor and exploited.

2. - Mrs. Poomani Gulasingham (Hinduism)

Immensely impressive technological advance has been accompanied by the growth of such a disparity in the wealth and controlling power of people that, on the personal level, life fails to have meaning and the prevalent injustice disturbs the peace of mind. Social justice pertains to life in an organised comunity where the welfare of each receives sympathetic understanding. Justice as uprightness, fairplay, integrity and unselfishness can be expected in small social groups. On a scale involving the masses of humanity, however, this expectation seems to be utopian. But if people aim at that spiritual evolution which is within the reach of everyone, social justice becomes practicable.

The foundations of social justice have to be laid at the individual level. To the Hindu man in his higher level realises that his lower appetites must be schooled if he is to live well with the others members of his society. Social rules and arrangements for their enforcement have been developed. These are proving inadequate for limiting the appetite of contemporary man. Hinduism aims at the manifestation of *atma*, man's spiritual dimension, an innate goodness derived from his divine essence. So we have an ongoing struggle to become morally better.

"It is a change of the soul itself for the better that above all will cure the evils and injustices in society" (Swami Vivekananda).

Social responsibility demands the fulfilment of the tasks proper to the four stages of life. The fulfilment of the Asrama Dharma is its own reward. While engaged in the pursuit of temporal needs proper to ones state in the four stages, one should learn to be contented. In the Hindu tradition, the search for peace and justice starts in the family. The breakdown of the modern family leaves society faced with the problems of orphans, the aged, the sick and the destitute.

Religion is to be lived, not talked about. Hinduism proposes the purifying of the mind in order to find God and lead a good life. We are not all equal, we are born differently. Our actions define our present state and affect the form of our future reincarnation. One can expect concern for social justice in people whose inner life has been transformed. Integrity of existence involves seeking harmony in life, in nature and social interactions, in the way we live towards each other.

3. - Islam and social justice. — Mrs. Jezima Ishmail (Islam). Principal, Islamic College foe Women.

This study was associated with the development of a keenly concerned interest in social justice. The essence of all social justice is equality of opportunity for all human beings in every sphere of life.

Globalisation relates to the macro- scale, Mrs. Ismail focusses on the micro- in examining Sri Lanka. Justice is the same in all religions. The majority of people of all groups in Sri Lanka have been saddened by the war and its attendant disorders. Islam accepts the reality of inequality in economic status of people, but insists on their underlying equality as persons, a brotherhood of man. The Islamic society is supposed to be classless. The poor have a rightful claim to a share in excess wealth. Loans should be made without the abuse of usury. Giving alms to the poor is an obligation. Some aspects of Islam which might seem to be at variance with this spirit (like polygamy) should be understood in the context of social need (Arabian desert) at the time of their injunction.

One should distinguish between Islam and the aberrations of islamic communities. If the question is put, "Does 'brotherhood' (Koran) refer to mankind or to the Islamic community?", the answer should be that it refers to mankind. The use of amplifiers in the call to prayer, for example, violates this principle in the injustice it does to other communities. One finds in the Islamic community a tendency to suppress the calls to social justice and to the rights of women. It may be said that Islam is not well understood without reference to the Christianity out of which it came.

A Muslim in Sri Lanka seeks to live in harmony with the members of other religious comunities.

Being Muslim in Sri Lanka is facilitated by the tolerance of the principal religious tradition, Buddhism. Mrs. Ismail prefers to live as a member of the Islamic minority in Sri Lamka than as an individual in an overwhelmingly Muslim state. The kind of cooperative coexistence that can be achieved is illustrated by the La Salle Community Education Services in Sri Lanka, where people from different communities work together for the good of all.

4. - Ms. Kusuma Devendre (Buddhism)
Lecturer, Sri Jayewardenepura University.

Depending on the quality of the contribution, each human being, like a stitch knitted into stuff, brings strength or weakness to the fabric of society. All persons, and all things, are interactive. At the same time there is nothing *nicca*, permanent. All things are in cyclic flux, *annica*. The breaking down, in sickness and death, of an ordered interdependence of body and spirit has to be reversed in a reassociation the nature of which will depend on individual karma.

By processing sensory experience, each individual interiorises and recreates a personal inner world of the mind. The quality of the mind will inform this inner world. Personal responsibility is exercised in the careful nurturing of purity of spirit. This is important since, in the pervading *annica,* both the sensory perception and the inner reconstruction are constantly changing. This changing produces tensions, within individuals and between persons. Interpersonal tensions are fed by greed, hate and ignorance. If we consider social justice in this context, we will see that as long as man responds to the world in terms of his own greed, hate and ignorance, there will arise tension, no matter how perfect the world is. Purification of the mind, reaching to release from greed, hate and ignorance through the eight exercises of 'the path', gives liberation to all living beings. Social justice arises when human beings, as individuals, act with responsibility.

The entire *Dharma* that the Buddha preached was for the liberation of individuals and the liberation and stabilising of society.

5. - *Globalisation and Lasallian schools. A view from South America.* *Br. Ludolfo Ojeda.*

The history of invasion and immigration into South America since the 17th century has been a story of control, dominance and exploitation. The sweeping aside of traditional culture and nationhood by the conquistadors gave place, in the 18th. century, to the influence of the French enlightenment. Between the 18th and 19th centuries British sea power underpinned an exploitative merchantile colonialism - including slavery. Through much of the 20th century Latin America has striven to cope with the economic might and cultural pervasiveness of the United States.

All stages of this conquest have the same element of 'perfect' dominance over the 'imperfect'. This relationship is exploited to impose debt on Latin America. (Cocaine production brings income to Latin America, U.S.A. imposes suppression.) Debt and credit are two aspects of a single phenomenon.

The influence of traditions also contributes to the problem. Both the Incas and the Spanish imposed strong government. Present day democracies, once voted into power, tend to become authoritarian. Government is not seen to be accessible. There is a predisposition among indigenous communities to accept the evil consequences of globalisation as all part of a determined social order.

Global control of the labour market tends to eliminate workers from consideration. The Church has moved away from liberation theology. Yet Latin American insurgency has a moral justification in the two elements, liberty and option for the poor.

We should look at the history of our schools in Latin America to see what we have, in fact, been teaching. The Brothers began there educating the poor. They then 'moved up' with them socio-economically to wealth. In this move the histories and cultures of Latin America became unimportant to us.

Truth is not self-presenting. It is delivered, through the mediation of culture. Whoever determines what is true delivers moral precepts. We have to enlist the help of our students, of our faculty colleagues, and other partners in the mission in order to arrive at truth.

The multi-cultural and ethnic considerations come to the fore increasingly when moral norms are debated in North America and Europe. And what of Africa? These are complex issues and hopes of resolution are not arrived at easily. As a prerequisite for effective forward planning we will have to be clear on the following.

What globalisation is, and how it comes to be applied differently in different parts of the world.
The role of the Church in the perspective of globalisation.
The contribution of inter-faith dialogue to the search for solutions.
The kind of education that should engage the Lasallian mission in view of the new conditions resulting from globalisation.
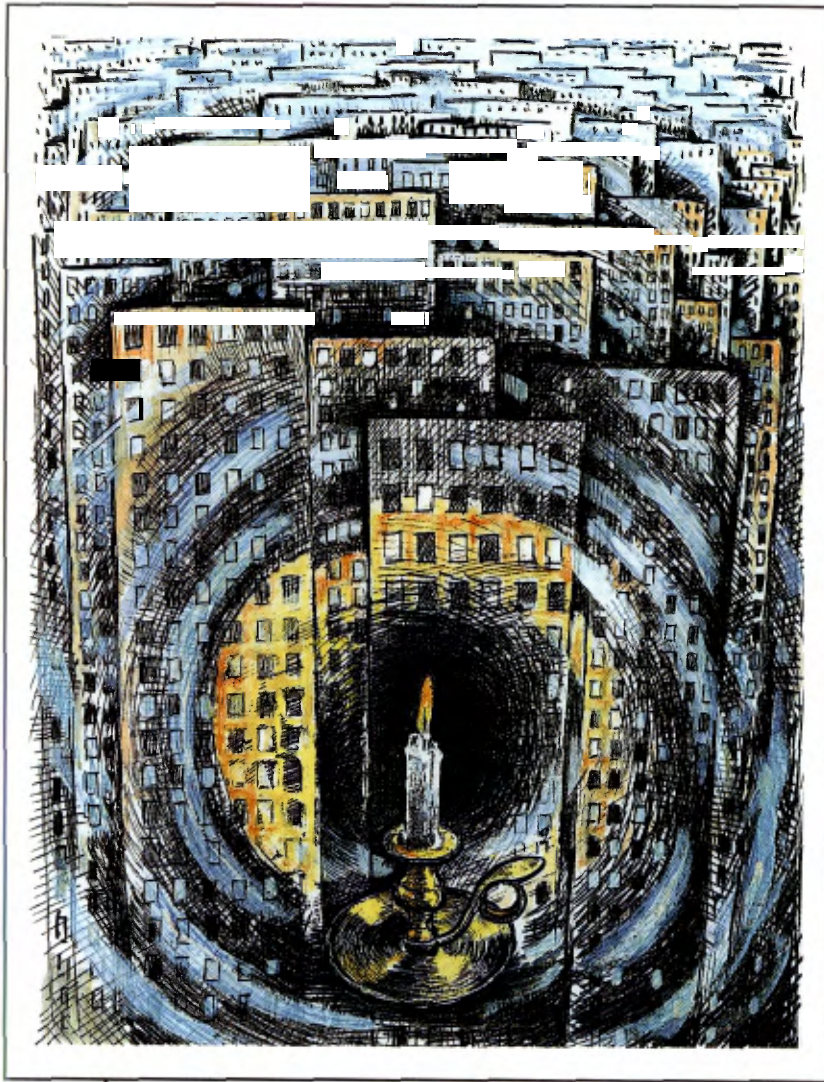
COLLOQUIUM

3

MEXICO
1996

THE MEGALOPOLIS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON AND LASALLIAN EDUCATION

1. REPORT

Megalopolis, the phenomenon and its relevance to the Lasallian educational mission.

Br. José María Martínez, Advanced Institute for Religious and Catechetical Science St. Pius X.

In his keynote presentation, Br. José María Martínez invited those present to consider the characteristic features of the new, accelerated urbanisation. He went on to set out the objectives of the meeting reported here. The colloquium was to afford experience of life in a great and expanding city. In the light of that experience those present would be invited to look critically at the allocation of our Lasallian resources and the short term goals of our present endeavours.

Objectives:

1. To promote a shared and reliable presentation of the megalopolis by examining together its various components, helping each other to arrive at a greater understanding of it and its implications.

2. To analyze the contributive causes and range of influences that are understood to bring about the phenomenon.

3. To arrive at an informed understanding of the variety of relationships that are engendered by the urban pathology associated with the megalopolis.

4. To invite ourselves, as an Institute, to critical reflection, in order

(a) to arrive at an informed perception of our own urban ministries in the light of the experience afforded by the colloquium of conditions in the megalopolis,

(b) to consider to what extent our traditional ideals are reflected in the spatial and temporal actuality of our present works,

(c) to exchange thoughts on what moves us with regard to our present urban ministries and to consider the options open to us.

1. Thematic development of the Colloquium.

♦ The term megalopolis

refers to a large urban region that lacks obvious unity and in which are found various forms of non-coherent social groupings.

The city in developing economies shows rapid growth and the complexity to be expected of large crowds of people. Residential areas come to be surrounded by the immense areas of shacks and shanty satellites that are associated with this type of growth. Excessive growth brings with it problems of insufficient income, inadequate nourishment, and to exclusions consequent upon differences in access to education, energy consumption, capital resources and infrastructure.

Some facts. Globally, we have gone from an urban population of 2.5% at the beginning of the nineteenth century to 30% in 1950. As we near the end of the twentieth century the figure is 45%.

The predictions of the U.N. state that the figure will reach 60% by the year 2025. Differences will be substantial. In Latin America the urban population will account for 83% of all. The fraction for Africa is expected to be 52% and for Asia, 49%.

Year 2000. 90% of the very poor of Latin America and the Caribbean are city dwellers.

Statistics of megalopolis:

Mexico City	25.5 million	Cacutta	15.5 million
Sao Paolo	22.0 million	Bombay	15.2 million
Tokyo	22.0 million	Beijing	15.2 million
Shanghai	17.0 million	Los Angeles	14.0 million
New York	16.7 million	Jakarta	13.5 million

In the year 2025 there will be 93 cities with populations of over 5 million, of whiich 80 will be in developimg countries.

The International Health Conference in 1978 declared: *"By the year 2000 all world nations will achieve a level of health that will allow a productive social and economic life"*

♦ The interaction of contributing factors.

The megalopolis is attended by all the problems that are associated with globalization.

The city appears to offer the attractions of work, abundance, diversion. The reality is that access to these is guarded by those who already enjoy it. The floating population adds to the poverty belt that surrounds the megalopolis. Added to this is the effect of migration from the rural areas of the poorer countries to the urban attractions of the richer.

Urban poverty can so degrade the environment and reduce its capacity to regenerate that life in it becomes all but impossible.

Urban growth through migration challenges government and calls for political will. The politics of urban development have reduced the revenue of small farmers, strained social relationships and intensified the attractiveness of the cities for the poor farmers.