

Brothers of the Christian Schools
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Lasallian Schools and Teachers: A United States Perspective

Foreword

Being an American, a Pakistani, a Bolivian, a Senegalese, a Romanian, a Japanese or a Haitian should not be a prior condition for being pre-disposed towards or rejecting the present booklet. Neither does one have to be a teacher, administrator, painter, catechist or lawyer, although it is certainly true that part of the content is linked with the figure of the teacher. Being Lasallian, simply Lasallian, puts us in a privileged position to savour, by means of an exposition which is simple, in chronological order, detailed and enlightening, the reason why you and so many others can say today with joy and even with pride, "I am a Lasallian", or feel themselves attracted by the shared mission for Lasallian association and for the Lasallian school.

With great skill, Br. Frederick Mueller, the present Secretary for the Lasallian Education Mission of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, presents us with two parallel stories - almost twins - of the evolution of the Institute over the last fifty years and its mirror image as experienced in the United States. It is a story which, as it advances, becomes more audacious, daring, risky, explosive, filled with a future... and as it is the future which is at stake, it is a story which arrives there; which is not interrupted - as is usually the case and without explanations - ten or twenty years before the present time.

In the course of the story we meet with visionaries and prophets, always present in our family album, who, defying fatalistic predictions, launch the Institute into a future full of hope and meaning. We also come to understand better the circumstances, the key moments, the underlying stream of consciousness and the steps taken from recent decades up to today.

Any Lasallian, regardless of whether he or she has been one for a long or short period of time, will embark at the same time, surely very consciously, on two other stories parallel to those described: that of the Lasallian area to which he is linked (Continent, Region, District, Delegation, local education work) and his own individual story. Thus we have four stories, some of them going back to a more distant period, which will keep us in constant dialogue

and will give us an opportunity for integrating ourselves into the action, not as mere readers or spectators, but as actors with an important role to play.

In addition to the memorable dates which will be recorded in our minds and hearts, we will doubtless add others, which from now on will be points of reference. Just as for many Lasallians years such as 1651, 1694 and 1904 speak for themselves, it may well be that 1984, 1986 or 2000 hold the same importance in the future. Only time will tell.

Br. Alfonso Novillo

I. Lasallian Schools and Teachers in the United States: An Introduction

“La Salle and his first Brothers chose to exercise the mission of Christian education principally through the school. The importance of the *Conduct of Schools* is that it is the expression of the corporate educational vision and practical experiences of the first Brothers. In the history of education, it marks a new moment and it offers a serious and systematic approach to ensuring that the school, in La Salle’s frequently written phrase, ‘*runs well.*’ The attention of the Institute to subsequent updating of this basic approach to running good schools accounts largely for its own success in the 18th and 19th centuries and for the model which it provided for other groups interested in promoting popular schools. It is the ‘*school,*’ then, as understood broadly in its different levels and manifold forms, which has always been regarded as ‘*the preferred field*’ in the Lasallian Heritage for offering a good human and Christian education. It is through the school that Shared Mission has originated and developed; it is through the schools principally that Brothers and their partners in Shared Mission came to meet and work side by side. This dynamic principle of updating, which has characterized the whole Lasallian Heritage, needs to continue with some particular emphasis today.”

The Lasallian school, particularly the secondary school, with its roots in the pedagogical method and theological reflection of John Baptist de La Salle, has experienced in the United States an updating of its goals and an evolution of the role of lay teachers, much as have Lasallian schools throughout the Institute and as have Catholic schools in general in the United States. A pivotal moment for the Lasallian school, as for all Catholic schools, was Vatican Council II for, besides its decrees on the role of the Catholic Church in the world, Catholic education, and the role of

¹ *The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education*, Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1997, p. 50.

the Catholic lay person, it urged religious communities to embark on a course of appropriate adaptation and renewal. As with all religious communities, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, whose members are known as the De La Salle Christian Brothers, were instructed in the *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life* to renew the community by a continuous return to the sources of Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community (the charism of the founder) and by an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times. The decree further stated:

It serves the best interests of the Church for communities to have their own special character and purpose. Therefore loyal recognition and safekeeping should be accorded to the spirit of founders, as also to the particular goals and wholesome tradition which constitute the heritage of each community.²

Since Vatican II, religious communities have attempted to adapt and renew and that process has affected the way in which religious communities have organized their apostolic or ministerial endeavors. For those religious communities, like the Brothers of the Christian Schools, whose focus was education, renewal meant a renewal of the school as well as the religious community. Those efforts at renewal have complemented the overall efforts to renew the Catholic school. The Congregation for Catholic Education noted:

Certain elements will be characteristic of all Catholic schools. But these can be expressed in a variety of ways; often enough, the concrete expression will correspond to the specific charism of the religious institute that founded the school and continues to direct it.³

Religious communities have developed statements and processes to elucidate and to pass on their specific educational traditions.⁴

² "Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, W. M. Abbott, ed., New York: America Press, p. 468.

³ *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, Congregation for Catholic Education, Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul, 1982, p. 25.

⁴ *Preamble*, Washington, DC: Jesuit Secondary Education Association, 1970; *Instrument for Self-Evaluation of Jesuit High Schools: Principles and Standards*, Washington, DC: Jesuit Secondary Education Association, 1975; *Booklet on Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools*, M. Burke, ed., Kensington, MD: Xaverian Brothers, 1988; *Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States*, Newton, MA: Network of Sacred Heart Schools, 1990.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools have sought to do likewise. This process has not been without its critics who have claimed that the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the United States did not have an educational philosophy or educational methods peculiarly their own but rather shared in a philosophy handed down through the ages from the time of Christ⁵, or that the characteristics of Lasallian schools came more from our shared Christian heritage than from something exclusively Lasallian.⁶ Others have claimed that the question of uniqueness and distinctiveness is unanswerable.⁷ Still others⁸ have stated that the refoundation of Lasallian schools was dependent on clarifying and emphasizing the Lasallian characteristics of the school.

Regardless of the degree of Lasallian uniqueness, there appear to be some basic Lasallian guidelines which, taken as a whole, would define Lasallian: (a) concern for the young as unique persons with real needs, (b) preferential option for the poor, (c) communion with the Church, (d) social conscience and advocacy of social change with an emphasis on the rights of the child, (e) inspiration in the Gospel, (f) spirit of faith and zeal, (g) formation of a community of faith, (h) programs of excellence, and (h) an educational plan linking evangelization and sound

⁵ "The Report of the Committee for the Formulation of the Educational Philosophy and Objectives of the Christian Brothers of the United States," Brother C. Andrew, in *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Educational Conference of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, Vol. 5, 1943, pp. 31-32.

⁶ "Is Lasallian association a 'dangerous memory'?" M. McGinniss, in *A Sense of the Future*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeville, IL: Christian Brothers Conference, 1990, pp. 151-176.

⁷ "Summary of the Discussion," M. McVann, in *Our Responsibility for the Institute*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeville, IL: Christian Brothers Office, 1985, pp. 98-105.

⁸ *The Renewal of the Lasallian School*, J. Gaffney, a paper presented at the Regional Education Committee of the Christian Brothers Workshop, Chicago, IL., November 1985; *Pastoral Letter: Transformation*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1993; *Seven Hallmarks of a Lasallian School*, J. Johnston, an unpublished address at the Lasallian European Congress in Strasbourg, Germany, March 1994; *"To Touch Hearts": The Pedagogical Spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle*, G. Van Grieken, an unpublished doctoral dissertation, UMI Dissertation Services, Boston College, Boston, MA., 1995; *The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education: A Shared Mission*; *Pastoral Letter: The Challenge: Live Today Our Founding Story*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2000.

human development and emphasizing catechesis and pastoral work in multiple contexts open to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue.⁹

In terms of Lasallian schools in the United States, Gaffney has written:

Our attempt to identify the characteristics of the Lasallian School represents an effort to reclaim this tradition. The three categories of Lasallian characteristics presented to us are an embodiment of a living reality which continues to be a source of much grace and efficacy. In this tradition, teachers are looked upon as educational ministers. Through the strength of their association with one another in the spirit, their common goals are reached. The Lasallian schools are meant to be so conducted as to achieve their spiritual and temporal goals through carefully designed offerings and well-chosen pedagogical methods.¹⁰

These represent the special characteristics of Lasallian schools which the Congregation for Catholic Education has urged lay teachers to understand in order that they might “so identify themselves with these characteristics that their own work will help toward realizing the specific nature of the school.”¹¹ The Institute as well has challenged all educators who work in Lasallian schools “to share the common principles and particular emphases which are essential to the Lasallian heritage.”¹²

⁹ *Circular 408: Our Mission*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1978; *Circular 422: The 41st General Chapter, Propositions and Messages*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1986; *Letter to the Lasallian Family*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1989; *Circular 435: The 42nd General Chapter (1993)*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1993; *The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education: A Shared Mission*; *Circular 447: The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2000; *Pastoral Letter: Living Authentically in Christ Jesus*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1994; J. Johnston, *Pastoral Letter: The Challenge: Live Today Our Founding Story*; *Pastoral Letter: Associated with the God of Life: Our Life of Prayer*, A. Rodríguez Echeverría, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2002; *Pastoral Letter: Associated with the God of the Poor: Our Consecrated Life in the Light of the 4th Vow*, A. Rodríguez Echeverría, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2003.

¹⁰ J. Gaffney, *The Renewal of the School*, pp. 5-6.

¹¹ *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, p. 25.

¹² *The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education: A Shared Mission*, p. 95.

Thus, as with Catholic schools in general, the relationship of the faculty, especially the lay faculty, to the goals of the Lasallian schools is a critical factor in the continued effectiveness of those schools, in terms of both identity and mission.

II. Teachers in Lasallian Schools

Brother Luke Salm¹³ has identified one of the characteristics of the Lasallian school as its lay character, a character which could allow an easier identification of the school and its De La Salle Christian Brothers' staff with lay colleagues, students, and parents and which could promote a better understanding and support of movements to give lay persons a greater role in the life of the Church. This characteristic is a result of the nature of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, "an Institute of pontifical right, composed exclusively of lay religious men,"¹⁴ in contrast to clerical religious orders.

Early Lay Roots.

John Baptist De La Salle, a cleric himself, discerned in the earliest days of the Institute that this group of teachers should not have priest members, since the priesthood would be incompatible with the vocation and mission of a teaching Brother as he perceived it and the introduction of the priesthood might well weaken the foundation of the Institute by leaving it open to external ecclesiastical control.¹⁵ Even though De La Salle's primary concern was the training of Brothers to staff the gratuitous Christian schools which he established in the cities of France, he also established two training schools for young laymen in 1687 in Rue Neuve and in 1699 outside of Paris. These training schools were to prepare lay teachers professionally and spiritually for their teaching in small towns and rural parishes, places requiring a single teacher, according to Brothers Luke Salm and Leon Lauraire.¹⁶ Thus, even though Brothers could not be sent there because of a requirement established by De La Salle to have the Brothers minister in com-

¹³ "The Brothers' School," in *The Seven Christian Brothers' Colleges in the United States*, L. Salm, Riverside, NY: Manhattan College, 1983, p. 11.

¹⁴ *The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1987, p. 23.

¹⁵ *The Work Is Yours: The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle*, L. Salm, Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers Publications, 1989.

¹⁶ *Ibid*; *MEL Bulletin #12: Conduct of Schools: An Overall Plan of Human and Christian Education*, L. Lauraire, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2004.

munity (at least in groups of two), young people in those areas were able to receive instruction through De La Salle's normal school for laymen. That De La Salle had in mind all teachers, and not just the Brothers, can be seen in the title page of his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* which states, "For the use of all persons who are engaged in the education of youth..."¹⁷ Brother Jeffrey Gros¹⁸ has noted that those meditations spoke of the radical equality of the lay teaching ministry and the ordained ministry. Brothers Jean Pungier and Michel Sauvage¹⁹ have claimed that the Lasallian spirituality, a biblical and down-to-earth spirituality, is applicable to all those within the Church who dedicate themselves to the education of the young.

Evolution of the Role of the Lay Teacher (1958 to 1993).

Brother Nicet-Joseph, the Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, wrote in a letter:

We religious have to realize that lay teachers have come into our schools to stay, and that we owe them a debt of gratitude for their admirable spirit of co-operation and for the enlightened zeal they manifest in the cause of Christian Education.

While being fully aware that we, as religious, have an important and irreplaceable role in the Church, we appreciate the fact that most of the laymen who work at our side have come, particularly in recent years, to look upon their teaching career as a God-given vocation... We have often witnessed the deep impression made upon the minds of our pupils through their contacts with earnest Catholic laymen who so obviously put spiritual values to the forefront of their lives. It is true, of course, that these pupils have the inspiring example of the Brothers ever before them, but what they learn to take for

¹⁷ *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*, J.B. de La Salle, Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994, p. 410; *Retreat Manual for the Use of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, W.J. Battersby, Winona, MN: St. Mary's College Press, 1965, p. 3.

¹⁸ "The Brother and the Church: The Lasallian Legacy," J. Gros, in *Brothers in the Church*, M. Helldorfer, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1984, pp. 97-107.

¹⁹ *Ministers of Grace: The Work of Christian Educators according to St. John Baptist de La Salle*, J. Pungier, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1980; "Introduction" to *Ministers of Grace*, M. Sauvage, p. 1.

granted in a religious usually appears more striking in 'one of themselves'.²⁰

The draft of the *Rule of 1966* noted that the Brothers were to form a unit with other faculty members, working together closely, sharing responsibility for the common task, and holding periodic meetings to discuss methods of teaching and of promoting the Christian and apostolic formation of the students. The *Declaration* and the *Rule of 1967* referred to the lay teachers as collaborators, praised the richness that comes to a school through a diversified yet united faculty, recognized the unique contributions of lay teachers with their experience of family, civic, and professional life, and urged their full participation in the life of the school with catechesis, apostolic organizations, extra-curricular activities, and administrative positions. *Circular 391*, which reported the results of the General Chapter of 1966-67, praised the lay teacher as an excellent colleague and noted that by joining the knowledge and devotedness of Brother and lay teacher an effective team could be formed.

Circular 394 (Orientations for the Next 5 Years), the *Rule of 1976*, the Acts of the 40th General Chapter, and the *Letter of the Superior General* by Brother Pablo Basterrechea in 1977 encouraged the formation of the Lasallian family, an aspect of which was the opportunity for Brothers to share their Lasallian spirituality with all the members of the educational community.

Circular 408: Our Mission from the General Council and Brother Pablo Basterrechea's *Letter of the Superior General* in December 1979 noted some of the difficulties posed by this new conceptualization of the role of the lay teacher as a colleague or collaborator: (a) some Brothers were disoriented by the radical shift in mentality; (b) other Brothers realized that attitudes and previously uncontested concepts would have to change and the Brothers would have to conceive of their new role within the school; (c) the degree and level of participation of lay teachers presented delicate problems and affected negatively at times the spirit of unity and action in the school; and (d) the involvement of lay teachers in catechetical as well as secular teaching required a greater con-

²⁰ "Letter to the Christian Brothers Education Association," Nicet-Joseph, in *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Christian Brothers Education Association*, 1958, Vol. 19, p. 7.

sideration of their personal convictions and capacity for integration, witness, and commitment. However, despite the problems, both the General Council and Brother Pablo Basterrechea in his May 1979 *Letter of Brother Superior* re-emphasized the need for the formation of lay collaborators. In addition, lay collaborators were to be given administrative and leadership responsibilities or managerial control over entire institutions so that the Brothers could be freed to serve the educational mission of the Church in new ways.

Circular 415 reported on the 1981 Rome meeting of Brothers in leadership positions in their local areas from around the world. A major topic was the “Brothers’ school” and the role of the lay teacher in that school. This intercapitular gathering noted the need to transform the educational community into a faith community, a transformation which would require a group of baptized persons who would be able to share ideas and faith. It also recognized that some lay teachers worked in the schools for the sole purpose of gaining a living with no reference to Christianity. It further recognized that the Brothers would have to give lay teachers the leadership needed, share their spirituality with them, and develop programs and resources for communicating the Lasallian spirit to groups in the school. The new role of the Brothers was to assist lay teachers to assume their rightful and equal role in the teaching ministry (no longer as auxiliaries), to be present in the schools in key posts of pastoral, educational, and pedagogical influence where they could give clear recognition to their specific Lasallian identity, and to give witness to colleagues and students of consecrated life, gratuity, availability, brotherhood, and a care for the life of faith. Among the recommendations of the gathering was an especially urgent one:

Be more open to the lay teachers working among us with a desire for their greater integration. As the report points out, ‘we integrate them in our work, less in our mission and still less in our spirituality.’

As a logical consequence, be more associated with them and give them leadership within the framework of our common mission and responsibility.²¹

²¹ *Circular 415: Perspectives for 1986*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1981, p. 11.

and:

[It is] an urgent duty to get them [laymen working with the Brothers] to share in this mission and this spirituality. An urgent duty because it is a debt the Church owes the layman. And our negligence now becomes apparent in the difficulties we encounter when we see many lay teachers 'doing nothing.' Whoever has helped them do anything.²²

Subsequent letters of the Superior General, Brother Pablo Basterrechea, in 1982 and 1985 reiterated the rightful role of the lay teacher in the Lasallian school and noted how the Lasallian family was strongest in adversity. In his letter of 1985 Brother Pablo Basterrechea also challenged the Brothers to give a firm lead to those who seek to deepen their knowledge of Lasallian spirituality and not to dwell in confusion or to seek escape routes from their responsibility, since future decades of apostolic vitality in the schools would depend on the Brothers' resolve and willingness in the present.

In a 1985 report generated by the De La Salle Christian Brothers of various sectors of the Institute throughout the world, entitled *Final Report: The Ministry of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today*, it was noted that, although the Brothers seemed to believe in the equality and the difference of gifts in ministry between themselves and lay persons, the process of "Lasallianization" in a school sometimes became a patronizing process and distrust between Brothers and lay teachers decreased the possibility for integration in one common mission. The report also mentioned that, where there was true collaboration and a sharing of responsibilities, apostolate, and spirituality, a result was the reciprocal enrichment of the Brothers' own spirituality. The *Rule of 1986* declared that "the Institute sees the existence of the various Lasallian movements as a grace from God renewing its own vitality"²³ and that "the Brothers gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission... [and] provide, for those who so desire, the means to learn about the Founder and to live according to his spirit... [and] co-operate in forming Christian leaders."²⁴

²² Ibid. pp. 25-26.

²³ *The Rule*, p. 150.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

Circular 422, reporting on the General Chapter of 1986, provided an opportunity for the Brother Capitulants to address the Brothers and, for the first time in the history of the Institute, members of the Lasallian family. It called upon the Brothers to see themselves no longer as the “‘proprietors’ of our work and mission”²⁵ but rather as sharers in a common ministry with lay people and it urged lay teachers to draw from the “‘faithful memory’ of the Lasallian spirit”²⁶ within Brothers’ communities in order that they too would serve as animators of Lasallian spirituality. The Chapter proposed for both Brothers and Lasallian colleagues a “Credo” which declared: (a) a belief in a common mission to educate young people in a Christian way, (b) a belief in a common lay vocation through religious consecration and baptismal consecration, and (c) a belief in a common heritage of Lasallian spirituality uniting professional activity and the life of faith.

Subsequent letters of the Superior General, Brother John Johnston, in 1987, 1988, and 1991 called the development of lay involvement and the Lasallian family one of the most important and dramatic developments in the Institute since Vatican Council II. That development was not without problems, since Brother John Johnston in 1987 noted that many Brothers experienced frustration and demoralization. They felt that the “Brothers’ schools,” as they once had known them, were a thing of the past. In fact, Brother John Johnston wrote:

It is my impression that Brothers in most (but not all) areas of the Institute accept these new orientations, with attitudes, however, ranging from enthusiasm to begrudging resignation. There are Brothers who interpret the evolution from Brothers’ schools to Lasallian schools as a sign that the Institute has failed. Others wonder whether Brothers still have a worthwhile role to play in Lasallian education. Still others suspect that the Institute itself and its leaders have lost faith in the Brothers’ vocation and are actually contributing to its decline by encouraging and promoting the participation of the laity in Lasallian mission and spirituality.²⁷

²⁵ *Circular 422*, p. 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 29.

²⁷ *Pastoral Letter: “Irrevocably Committed” to Follow Christ Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1991, pp. 19-20.

Brother John Johnston reiterated that concern noting the need to avoid confusion of identity and roles between Brothers and lay and calling for “the wisdom, creativity, and courage to revitalize our own life as Brothers and simultaneously to develop and foster a variety of structural forms whereby the laity can participate actively in our Lasallian educational mission.”²⁸ However, some Brothers, according to Brother John Johnston in his report as Superior General to the 42nd General Chapter in 1993, believed that lay teachers are inferior to religious teachers, less dedicated and less suited to exercising responsibility.

In addition, in that same report as well as his earlier pastoral letter in 1987, Brother John Johnston noted that many lay teachers had similar frustrations and confusion because they did not experience themselves as full partners in the creation of Lasallian schools and they viewed the Brothers as employer and they, the lay teacher, as employees.

Brother John Johnston’s challenge in his 1987, 1988, and 1993 pastoral letters to the Brothers was to recognize the collapse of the traditional model of Brother-lay collaboration (lay in important but secondary roles) and to become involved in the emergence of a new model. In this model the Brother would live his consecration authentically and share his formation with his lay colleagues in a spirit void of paternalism, condescension, and control (however subtle) through open and frank dialogue, through helping to create structures to incorporate Lasallian values, through sharing Lasallian spirituality, history, and tradition, and through handing over certain works and activities to lay persons.

In a letter to Brothers and lay colleagues alike, the Superior General and his General Council wrote the following:

All these [lay teachers] share directly with the Brothers the apostolate of the Institute to educate and evangelize. We are very much aware of the extent to which their work with us is competent, energetic, creative, and of their willingness to help. We are pleased to see an increasing number of them willing to occupy positions of responsibility for the sake of continuity and the good of the school. Their presence in the

²⁸ *Pastoral Letter: Our Community Life*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1992, p. 21.

school and their work are a constant source of enrichment for us. The Institute, in its turn, is conscious of its responsibility towards them in the matter of training and guidance, tasks already undertaken by a number of Brothers... As partners in the work of educational communities, they [the Brothers] must contribute their availability, their creativity, their willingness to share positions of responsibility and to offer help in promoting growth on a human, professional and Lasallian plane... What is being called for here is a change of mentality and of attitude towards lay people: it is a response to the call of the Holy Spirit at the present time.²⁹

Circular 433, convoking the 42nd General Chapter, made provision for the first time in the history of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for the participation of fifteen Lasallian lay people in that Chapter. This change was initiated in order that the capitulants, in assessing the past and planning for the future, would hear directly what lay people thought and experienced. Brother Paul Grass noted that “the history-making invitation of the [lay] Consultants at this General Chapter is now a precedent for the future General Chapters that will address the worldwide mission of the Institute and the developing phenomenon of the Lasallian Family.”³⁰ That Chapter declared that Shared Mission was an “Institute priority”³¹ and that the Lasallian formation of teachers and educators was a “fundamental priority.”³² However, it was the two messages of the Capitulants, first to the Brothers and then to the Lasallian world, that captured the significance of that moment in the life of the Institute:

The discreet reminder in our Rule that the charism and spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle go beyond the confines of the Institute and are a gift and inspiration to others as well began to take on tangible and dramatic meaning. The new life we see in one shared mission means that a way of looking upon ourselves as the only authorized agents of the Institute’s mission is obsolete. In our unified commitment to

²⁹ *Letter to the Lasallian Family*, p. 26.

³⁰ “A chapter ends... a new chapter begins,” P. Grass, in *Bulletin No. 239: 42nd General Chapter*, (pp. 1-3), Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., p. 2.

³¹ *Circular 435*, p. 47.

³² *Ibid.* p. 48.

mission there is diversity of vocations. *Message to the Brothers.*³³

and:

We, ourselves, have experienced this Chapter as an historic event, as an 'irresistible and irrevocable stage in our history,' to quote the words of one of the Consultants... In our lives, there are special, powerful moments when the past takes on a new meaning, the events of the present have a stronger impact and the future is faced with renewed determination... In light of the experience of the last twenty years, the Chapter reaffirms the irreplaceable role of those men and women (lay persons, priests and religious) who carry out this [Lasallian] mission. *Message About the Shared Mission to the Worldwide Lasallian Family.*³⁴

Thus, within the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools a radical rethinking of the role of the lay teacher within the school had occurred. On the world-wide level clear official directions were given.

Lay Teachers in Lasallian Schools in the United States Until 1993.

Brother Gerard Rummery wrote that "...already in the 19th Century, the schools had expanded, particularly the schools in the East, in Asia to make use of other people who wished to teach alongside the Brothers"³⁵ and that, in the large schools of Asia, the tradition has been lay colleagues standing beside the Brothers in major roles in the life of the school. Likewise, during the 42nd General Chapter it had been noted that, in the 19th Century, lay teachers had begun to work in Brothers' schools on a continual basis in Belgium, France, and Madagascar, with training and support for lay teachers in the Paris area. However, the experience in the United States was somewhat different. In a 1985 report on the status of the ministry of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the United States, the compilers noted that, although there had been

³³ Bulletin No. 239: The 42nd General Chapter, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1993, p. 74.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 76.

³⁵ *Lasallian Teacher*, G. Rummery, a paper presented at the Lasallian Schools Workshop, October 1987, in Skaneateles, NY, p. 7.

an increased appreciation of the gifts of lay teachers and increased attempts at the animation of lay teachers in the Lasallian spirit, "in the midst of changing circumstances, Districts are trying to redefine the meaning of the Lasallian school and the role of the Brothers and our lay colleagues in this new setting."³⁶ In addition, the report made note of the distrust which existed between lay teachers (low pay, inability to rise in the system, and seeming special privileges for the Brothers) and the Brothers (tuitions must be raised because of more lay teachers and their salary demands) and stated:

The Brothers want to safeguard the distinctive style they have brought to their schools and fear that lay administered schools (either controlled by lay boards or under a lay principal) will become too elitist or private, or will not be in concert with the spirituality of a Catholic educational ministry. In spite of these difficulties, the Brothers have incorporated and continue to incorporate more of their lay colleagues into the management of the schools. The Brothers are searching for the appropriate role they should play and a realistic process for this incorporation.³⁷

This situation had historical roots.

According to Brother Francis Huether,³⁸ the first Regional Secretary of Education for the United States/Toronto Region of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, lay teachers were present in schools conducted by the De La Salle Christian Brothers throughout the 20th century. In New York City elementary schools, up until the late 1950s and early 1960s, lay teachers were primarily lay women who taught art and dance, though some taught regular subjects; in high schools, some lay women were librarians and most lay men taught secular academic subjects and coached. In the local school they were important; they were esteemed by the students and were consulted informally about decisions in the school. However, they often received a salary and benefits which were as meager as those given to the Brothers and they were

³⁶ *United States/Toronto Report in Study Group: The Ministry of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Church Today*, unpublished manuscript, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., p. 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 9.

³⁸ Personal correspondence, 28 October 1991.

rarely or never appointed to administrative positions, either school-wide or departmental.

Although they were present in the schools, lay teachers seemed to be somewhat invisible. There does not appear to be national records of the numbers of lay persons involved in De La Salle Christian Brothers' schools prior to the early 1970s, according to Brother Francis Huether,³⁹ and the annual proceedings of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Education Association make no substantial mention of the lay teacher through most of its history (starting in 1939) until 1958 when the meeting was devoted to the topic of the lay teacher, despite the fact that prior meetings had dealt with topics of Catholic Action (*Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Educational Conference of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, 1947) and the role of the teacher (*Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Educational Association*, 1952).

In the early 1950s, in remarks about the shortage of teachers (*Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Education Association*, 1953), Brother A. Benedict suggested that the solution for meeting the need for additional Catholic high school teachers was an increase in vocations to the priesthood and the religious life and Brother A. Raymond noted that "most secular teachers, although provided with all learning and the best of methods, could never form the spirit of Christianity in their students."⁴⁰

Brother J. Daniel, a De La Salle Christian Brother who had been a lay teacher, noted that "acceptance of lay teachers over the past ten years has increased greatly."⁴¹ He cited the criticisms directed at lay teachers, for example, lack of interest in the school, failure to lend a hand with more difficult tasks, inability to discipline students, and teaching in a second rate manner. He also proposed some guidelines for dealing with lay teachers: (a) lay teachers should have a philosophy of education consistent with Catholic

³⁹ Personal correspondence, 9 January 1992.

⁴⁰ "The Christian Man and His Life Work," A. Raymond, pp. 21-32, in *Proceedings of the 15th Annual Conference of the Christian Brothers Education Association*, 1953, Vol. 15, p. 30.

⁴¹ "The Problems of the Lay Teacher," J. Daniel, pp. 253-257, in *La Salle Catechist*, 1957, Vol. 23, p. 257.

principles, (b) lay teachers should be made aware of new policies in the school, (c) lay teachers should be treated in a friendly manner, (d) although lay teachers do not expect administrative positions, they could serve as a chairman of a committee or a temporary department chairman, (e) lay teachers should be expected to assist as monitors and to attend school functions, (f) lay teachers should be provided with some job security, and (g) lay teachers should have a room for study, lunch, and relaxation.

At the annual meeting of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Education Association in 1958 “the topic of lay teachers in a [De La Salle] Christian Brothers’ school assumed at times proportions of a controversial issue.”⁴² Brothers who spoke at that 1958 conference⁴³ described the positive contributions of the lay teacher: (a) lay teachers would allow new groups of Catholic students to receive a Catholic education (a parallel to John Baptist de La Salle’s training of lay teachers to serve students whom the Brothers could not serve); (b) lay teachers bring special skills as musicians, artists, shop and physical education teachers, bring a degree of reality to the schools through their experiences, and bring the potential for spreading news about the school into the public realm; (c) lay teachers, for the most part, are zealous, want to be Catholic teachers, and can influence students by their exemplary Christian life in the classroom and outside of school; (d) lay teachers bring diversity to the staff since there is a degree of inbreeding among the Brothers in reference to methodology; (e) lay teachers add permanence and stability to the staff because of the mobility, obedience, and frequent transfers of the Brothers; and (f) since the lay teacher will be a permanent part of the school, administrators must acknowledge their worth, provide for their incorporation, and recognize that their presence could help the Brothers to sanctify their own lives as well as help to sanctify the lives of their lay co-workers. On the other hand, disadvantages of lay teachers were noted by Brothers J. Camillus and B. Peter: (a) lay teachers were commonly perceived as the “necessary evil” who would be gotten rid of as soon as another Brother was avail-

⁴² “Summary of the Discussion,” J. Athanasius, pp. 40-43, in *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Christian Brothers Education Association, 1958*, Vol. 19, pp. 40-41.

⁴³ Brothers J. Athanasius, J. Camillus, B. Peter, I. Philip, and F. Thomas.

able, or who could not do too much harm because there were four other periods of the day when Brothers went into the class; (b) the cost of lay teachers would raise tuitions and exclude the poor; (c) with second jobs, lay teachers did not give their all to the students; (d) their restricted training (most in the humanities) led to the Brothers teaching the technical subjects and the lay teachers the attitude-forming subjects with the Brothers becoming pawns of scheduling and teaching what they did not necessarily do the best; and (e) the lay teacher often had discipline problems since he typically was a non-aggressive, bright person who sought the classroom as a refuge and something known. Also at that conference Brother F. Thomas reported on the findings of a survey of principals about lay teachers in De La Salle Christian Brothers' schools. The survey found that the rapport between lay and religious faculties seemed to be very good all over the country, that in many schools there were joint faculty meetings with vocal and active lay participation, that lay teachers did participate in social and religious activities of the school on and off campus where the functions were available, and that some schools had used lay teachers to serve on committees. On the other hand, it was reported that it was rare that laymen were appointed as department heads or to administrative positions and that there were deficient facilities in the schools for lay teachers due to inadequate space in the school buildings and to the great influx of lay teachers in the recent past. In addition Brother F. Thomas noted, "...the practically unanimous response to the question on the questionnaire 'Would you like to have more lay teachers?' was *NO*, or it was answered in such a way as to imply that lay teachers on our faculties are a *necessary evil*."⁴⁴ Among the recommendations offered by Brothers J. Athanasius, C. Francis, J. Camillus, and F. Thomas, during that conference, regarding lay teachers were: (a) recognition of the lay teacher as one of the family with equal treatment, with good communication, with some signs of recognition and status, and with opportunities for social and religious sharing between lay and Brothers; (b) attraction and retention of lay teachers through good working conditions, adequate salary, graduated contract, fringe benefits, extracurricular increments; (c)

⁴⁴ "Integration of Lay Teachers into Our Faculties," F. Thomas, pp. 52-57, in *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Christian Brothers Education Association*, 1958, Vol. 19, p. 53.

assistance in the professional growth of lay teachers through an orientation and on-going in-service to a sound Catholic philosophy of education and to an awareness of [De La Salle] Christian Brother teaching tradition and educational philosophy, through the provision of reading materials and instruction on the Lasallian concept of effective teaching, through the assigning of a Brother mentor, and through classroom supervision (as would be provided for a first year Brother teacher); (d) treatment of lay teachers as professionals by making them aware of their rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, by conducting joint faculty meetings, by informing them of changes in schedules and regulations, by consulting them on school policy, by appointing them to committees, by allowing them to represent the school, by encouraging them to participate in the evaluations of other schools, by giving them extra-curriculars beyond athletics, and by cooperating with them in establishing firm discipline; and (e) assistance to lay teachers in finding additional funds through summer work (tutoring or summer school) or other incentives with extra-curriculars. Brothers I. Philip and V. Ignatius summarized the meeting in the following manner:

It was generally remarked by the panelists and the delegates [none of whom were lay teachers] that the number of lay teachers in a school does not greatly increase the administrative burden provided that those lay teachers are well-trained and competent. It was the opinion voiced by several delegates that the influence of the Brothers as teachers and as guides for Christian conduct should be strongly maintained in all of our schools.⁴⁵

In addition an unanswered question was raised:

As to the matter of justice, the question was raised whether or not the quality and traditional standards of Christian education in the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers' schools were threatened by the ever increasing percentage of lay teachers in our schools. Is the influence of the lay teachers and, possibly, the psychological effect of their instruction upon the students such as to lessen the desirable results sought in the product of 'our'

⁴⁵ "Letter to Brother Nicet-Joseph," I. Philip and V. Ignatius, pp. 9-10, in *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Christian Brothers Education Association*, 1958, Vol. 19, p. 9.

education? ...Just what percentage of lay teachers can be permitted in the Catholic school?⁴⁶

In 1962, Brother I. Philip in his *Address of Welcome* to the 23rd Annual Conference of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Education Association noted that lay teachers were becoming more and more a part of Catholic schools but that the great bind for Catholic schools and [De La Salle] Christian Brothers' schools was the need for numbers of new religious and new Brothers. In that same year the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Educational Association revised the *Administrative Brochure* to include the following suggestions: (a) the importance of acquainting lay teachers with the objectives of the school, (b) the need to develop policies for the selection and elimination of lay teachers and for the provision of incentives for lay teachers, and (c) the inclusion of one or more members of the lay faculty, besides the Brothers of the Community Council, on the Administrative Council, an advisory committee to assist in administrative decision-making and planning. A further revision of the *Management* series in 1965 instructed the following:

That every teacher in the Catholic school should be especially proficient in his knowledge of theology and in his ability to impart vital knowledge of religion to his pupils, so that, in both himself and them, the purpose of Catholic education may be attained.

That the lay teacher is an integral part of the faculty; hence, his preparation, qualifications, and functions should meet the standards of the Catholic school.⁴⁷

and:

The Brothers should establish cordial relations with lay instructors on the faculty, recognizing that they constitute an integral part of the school staff.⁴⁸

In a sociological study of the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States in 1968, William Ammentorp posed questions

⁴⁶ "Summary of the Discussion," in *Proceedings*, 1959, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁷ *General Introduction to the Christian Brothers High School Management Series*, Committee of the Christian Brothers Education Association, Winona, MN: St. Mary's College Press, 1965, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 63.

regarding the Brother as a better teacher or as more effective than the lay teacher. He found in the responses of Brothers, lay teachers, students, and parents that the Brothers and their publics did not consider the lay teacher inferior to the Brothers (with the lay teachers strongly disagreeing about any inferiority and the parents somewhat favoring the Brothers) and that a staff comprised only of teaching Brothers was not a necessary requirement for a good school. The First Regional Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the United States in 1968 made acknowledgment of the decline in the number of Brothers (a decrease of 40 men in 1966 and 150 men in 1967) as a result of fewer men entering and an increased number of men leaving. It also acknowledged the need for the renewal of the school, but it made no special reference to the role of lay persons except in regard to lay governing boards. Likewise, the Second Regional Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the United States in 1975 made no mention of the role of lay teachers in the school even though it did suggest that the Brothers should see their place in the school in administration, teaching, campus ministry and other religious and value curricular and extra-curricular activities. Brother Francis Huether⁴⁹ commented that there was little concern in the Region and in the Regional Education Committee of [De La Salle] Christian Brothers (a group which monitored the educational ministry of the Brothers in the Region) about the lay teacher either in theory or practice, since the focus of concern was on the decline in the number of Brothers and the need to change and to increase vocation efforts for additional Brothers. However, during this same period, some lay persons were appointed principals of [De La Salle] Christian Brothers' schools in the mid-West.

Until 1979 no mention was made of the lay teacher, association of lay and religious, or the Lasallian family in the *Spirituality* series of books on the life and ministry of the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States despite the fact that the 1978 book was entitled *Life Together: A Study of Religious Association*. It was only in the late 1970s that the new role of the lay teacher came to the formal attention of the De La Salle Christian Brothers. The Religious Education Committee of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (a national grouping of religious educators) created the *Becoming*

⁴⁹ Personal correspondence, 9 January 1992.

Good News (1978) and *Being Good News* (1980) projects (faculty faith development programs using key Lasallian themes). A visiting group of members of the General Council of the Institute (Brothers John Johnston, Patrice Marey, and Vincent Rabemahafaly) suggested in 1978 that the Brothers in the United States develop a better distribution of personnel through the reduction of the number of Brothers in Brothers' schools, the giving up of the administration of some schools to well trained lay persons, and the maintaining of the presence of Brothers in other schools through a community of Brothers and perhaps a single Brother administrator.

In 1981 Brother Francis Huether wrote:

While in 1981 the Brothers comprise only about 19% of the instructional staff, they still comprise about 50% of Administration... Is there any indication in the Districts that we are preparing for this transition, or even considering the possibility? There is a sense in which these declining figures show a stagnation rather than merely a downward trend from which a reversal is devoutly to be hoped for. This stagnation means that nothing has yet actually been done to reawaken the force of apostolic commitment, or renewed ministry, among the Brothers in the U.S. institute... I suggest that this means that the crisis is still ahead of us.⁵⁰

That interpretation was disputed by the members of the Regional Education Committee of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers who noted:

Districts are learning to manage much better manpower and concepts of service, recruitment, and cooperation with lay people on staff and Boards. There is a justifiable optimism... because the Districts are confronting the issues and taking positive steps to deal with them. In short, the statistics when seen in the light of actual District realities would show that the crisis is past and that we are now in a time for planning, and for affirmative action in the apostolates of education in service to society and to the Church.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Overview of Statistics in Apostolate, United States Region*, F. Huether, available from Christian Brothers Conference, Landover, MD, March 1981, p. 1.

⁵¹ *A Study of Some Statistical Trends in the Apostolates of the United States Districts*, F. Huether, available from Christian Brothers Conference, Landover, MD, March 1981, p. 6.

Lay teachers and administrators of De La Salle Christian Brothers' schools had attended workshops sponsored by the Regional Education Committee of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers and summer workshops co-sponsored by the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers Conference and St. Mary's Press. Individual Districts and schools had provided opportunities for Brothers and their lay colleagues to discover the gifts of their ministry. However, the address to the Regional Convocation of Brothers in the Summer of 1984 by Brother John Johnston, then Vicar General, focused attention on the role of the lay teacher within the newly defined Lasallian school, rather than De La Salle Christian Brothers' school, by posing the question, "By whom is this Lasallian educational ministry to be exercised?" and by responding, "...the answer to the question By whom? is not: Brothers of the Christian Schools with lay collaborators. The answer is rather: the Lasallian Family, animated by the Brothers of the Christian Schools."⁵² Brother John Johnston declared that the triangular model with Brothers at the top had to be converted to a circular model with individual Brothers and the community of the Brothers as the animating force. The *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools* document, developed in 1986 by the Regional Education Committee of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers with its strong emphasis on association (lay and religious together), projects to implement that document,⁵³ a variety of Regional, District, and local conferences and workshops, (e.g., the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies which had started to enroll lay persons and the Huether Lasallian Conference on the Regional level; the Lasallian Characteristics Workshops offered by the New York District; school faculty retreats), and an increased interest in John Baptist de La Salle, according to Brother Francis Huether,⁵⁴ by some lay teachers who have developed an appreciation for his educational philosophy and spirituality gave a new perspective to the role of the lay teacher in the Lasallian school.

⁵² *Lasallian Educational Ministry*, J. Johnston, a paper presented to the United States/Toronto Regional Convocation, St. Mary's College, Moraga, CA, August 1984, p. 13.

⁵³ *Strategies for the Use of the Forthcoming Publication: Characteristics of the Lasallian School*, N. Kieffe, T. Leclair, and T. Molak, a paper presented at the St. Mary's Press Workshop, Winona, MN, June 1985; *The Lasallian School: Where Teachers Assist Parents in the Education and Formation of Children*, W. Mann, Narragansett, RI: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1991.

⁵⁴ Personal correspondence, 9 January 1992.

New Roles for De La Salle Christian Brother Teachers and Lay Teachers.

The Declaration had called the De La Salle Christian Brothers to a renewal that implied “that certain practices be given new vitality and that certain institutions be transformed”⁵⁵ in a way that was “sensitive to the problems which arise in each successive period of human history”⁵⁶ and faithful “to the specific intentions of the Founder and to the tradition of the Institute.”⁵⁷ Brother John Johnston’s 1984 challenge to the De La Salle Christian Brothers of the United States was to respond to the present moment, since “it is as living men that we must discover how fidelity to our Lasallian charism can be lived in the present.”⁵⁸ The shape of the challenge for De La Salle Christian Brother teachers and lay teachers in Lasallian schools in the world-wide Institute and in the United States, in particular, was to redefine and to accept new roles.

Shared Mission in the Institute (1993-the present).

Brother John Johnston in his pastoral letters of 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, and 1998 chronicled the movement of shared mission in the post 42nd Chapter Institute. He noted in his pastoral letter of 1993 the need for informed and enthusiastic participation of lay colleagues in programs of formation in Lasallian spirituality and pedagogy for Brothers and colleagues alike; he spoke of the reality of lay heads of schools and schools with no Brothers (a thought not possible even a few years before); and, he urged the Brothers to accept lay colleagues as full collaborators and cautioned: “I am not sure that most of us have moved beyond the stage of considering them [lay men and women] as ‘inferiors’ who require our direction. I think that we must avoid at all costs the creation of dependency relationships which are nothing less than a new version of ‘clerical-lay’ relationships.”⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *The Declaration: Brother in the World Today*, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1967, p. 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁵⁸ Johnston, 1984, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *Pastoral Letter: Transformation*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1993, p. 39.

In his pastoral letters of 1994, 1996, and 1997 Brother John Johnston spoke of new roles for the Brothers, not specific roles based on task or function, but roles that relied on the personal competency of the Brother, the quality of his personal witness, and his ability to “live authentically, passionately and effectively all the dimensions of our charism: religious consecration, mission, community.”⁶⁰

The General Council in its document on Shared Mission claimed that:

Shared mission, as the very words themselves suggest, demands a process of growth in unity, in communion (literally in its root sense *of united with*), between persons who share the same mission. This process of communion requires the development of links of unity, of communication, unified objectives, common actions, and good personal relationships in the same tradition which brought the Brothers to make a vow of association among themselves as to maintain the schools *‘together and by association’*.⁶¹

The challenge to Brothers and all Lasallian educators, according to the General Council, was to discover, through open dialogue, the associative dimensions of their commitment on behalf of the Lasallian mission, i.e., that in the ministerial Lasallian community there is a common Lasallian charism and also different charisms that are characteristic of each group. This dialogue might require stages: mutual acceptance and respect, working together with common objectives and developing real co-responsibility, deepening interpersonal relationships, coming to a deeper unity through a sharing of faith, and developing a deeper sense of the educational work as ministry. Lasallian formation, done together by Brother and colleagues, adapted to the diversity of the recipients, implemented as progressive and on-going, was to have as its aim that all Lasallian educators make a gospel ministry of their work.

Brother John Johnston in his pastoral letter of 2000 reiterated the notion that one can distinguish between the Lasallian charism, as

⁶⁰ *Pastoral Letter: Being Brothers Today*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1997, p. 12.

⁶¹ *The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education*, p. 99.

lived by John Baptist de La Salle, and the specific ways of living that charism that, in turn, can also be called charisms, one way being as a De La Salle Christian Brother. Thus, the charism extends “beyond the confines of the Institute.”⁶² He also noted, in both positive and cautionary tones, that:

The positive, even enthusiastic, reception of this movement (the Lasallian school) by so many of our teachers, personnel, parents, board members, former students, friends, and benefactors has astonished many of us. Of course, not everyone has received it enthusiastically. It is not surprising that some-particularly teachers-are indifferent. We need to insist, however, that all members of the educative community understand De La Salle’s vision of young people and his approach to education and, at the same time, not to be obstacles. We have to do all we can to encourage everyone to become active participants in the task of creating schools that are worthy of the name *Lasallian*.⁶³

He noted the importance of the hiring process as well as the process of formation for teachers, including those non-Christian teachers who believe in God, religion and moral values, and who appreciate the Lasallian tradition; these teachers also share in the Lasallian charism. He also recommended in this pastoral letter and in a prior pastoral letter in 1998 that what also was needed were boards or councils to permit participation of lay women and men, together with the Brothers, in the planning and animation of Lasallian schools and networks of schools, in decision-making and accountability, both in institutions with and without Brothers. Such governance structures would hold responsibility for the Lasallian mission of those institutions. On the Institute level he proposed the creation of similar councils or groupings of Brothers and lay Lasallians to share in decision-making and accountability for the worldwide Lasallian mission. Thus, for Brother John Johnston, the Superior General at that time, shared mission had both a personal and institutional face.

Like the 42nd General Chapter of 1993, the 43rd General Chapter of 2000 invited 15 lay Consultants to be present in order to rep-

⁶² Johnston, 2000, p. 24.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 49.

resent the diversity of Lasallian experiences. That Chapter echoed the dual face of the concept of “associated for mission” by recognizing that “the development of the Lasallian Mission requires the Institute to allow itself to be stimulated by the dynamism apparent among partners and associates, and to encourage and support collaboration among themselves and with the Brothers, so that all can deepen their own understanding of association,”⁶⁴ and thus it promoted processes of dialogue and formation to clarify the various ways of living the Lasallian charism. At the same time it recognized the “need to adapt existing structures and invent new ones where needed, in order to ensure the participation of Associates in the Lasallian mission, both at decision-making levels and in the accomplishment of this mission,”⁶⁵ and thus it approved the creation of a variety of councils and commissions with Brother and lay colleague membership at both the District and Institute levels. Of most consequence was the convocation of special assemblies on association and mission, composed of Brothers and lay colleagues that would meet prior to the 44th General Chapter. Two international groupings of Brothers and lay colleagues, “Associated for the Educational Service of the Poor Commission” and the “Standing Council for the Lasallian Educational Mission,” were created in order to plan for the International Assembly of 2006 that will look at matters of association for mission and educational mission itself.⁶⁶

The current Superior General, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, in his pastoral letter of 2003 reemphasized that “charism precedes its incarnation in a lay or a religious sphere. Consecrated and lay people are all called to ‘drink from the same well’ and to live the same charism based on their own specific vocations”⁶⁷ and noted that in many areas of the Institute lay are in positions rightfully theirs in Lasallian schools. However, there was still a need for new ways of communion and collaboration with lay persons.

⁶⁴ *Circular 447: The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2000, p. 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 13-14.

⁶⁶ *Circular 448: Toward the Year 2007*, General Council, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C.; *MEL Bulletin #1: In View of 2006: The International Lasallian Educational Mission Assembly*, Brothers of the Christian Schools, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 2002.

⁶⁷ A. Rodríguez Echeverría, 2003, p. 25.

Much has happened in the years following the 42nd General Chapter; it was an irrevocable moment that began to shape the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Yet, in the words of the Superior General, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, much remains to be done.

Shared Mission in the United States (1993-the present).

A Statistical View.

Despite an uneven reporting of the numbers of lay teachers and De La Salle Christian Brothers involved in the instruction and administration of Lasallian schools, some patterns emerge.⁶⁸ In 1957-58, in the 61 De La Salle Christian Brothers' high schools in the United States there was a total of 1,426 faculty members of which 1,021 were Brothers (71.6%) and 405 were lay (28.4%). By 1967, Ammentorp reported, the total number of Brothers involved in teaching in the United States numbered 2,789 or 62.1% of the total teaching force and lay teachers numbered 1,704 or 37.9% of the total teaching force.

The total number of De La Salle Christian Brothers involved in Lasallian high schools ten years later in 1977-1978 was 779, according to records of the Regional Secretary of Education. By 1986-87, the total number of De La Salle Christian Brothers involved in Lasallian high schools had dropped to 574 (17.9% of a total staff of 3190); lay teachers numbered 2391 (74.9% of the total staff); and, clergy and other religious numbered 225 (7.1% of the total staff).

During the year 2003-2004, statistics were aggregated to include all Lasallian educational institutions, except for higher education. Of the total of 4625 persons who served in those institutions, there were 275 De La Salle Christian Brothers in administrative, teaching, or professional staff roles (6.1% of the total staff), 4248 lay persons in those same roles (91.8% of the total staff), and 102 clergy or other religious in those same roles (2.2%).

The statistics indicate that over the past nearly 50 years the number and the relative percentage of De La Salle Christian Brothers teaching in Lasallian high schools (and other non-post secondary

⁶⁸ J. Camillus, pp. 27-33.

educational institutions) have dropped dramatically and the number and the relative percentage of lay teachers have increased dramatically; over the past 15 years the trend of fewer De La Salle Christian Brother teachers and more lay teachers has continued even more dramatically.

The number and the relative percentage of lay persons who hold administrative positions have increased over the past 15 or so years and the number and the relative percentage of De La Salle Christian Brother administrators have decreased. In 1986-1987, 43.8% of the administrators of Lasallian high schools were De La Salle Christian Brothers, 46.7% were lay men and women, and 6.5% were clergy or other religious men or women. In 1991-1992, 36.1% of the administrators of Lasallian high schools were De La Salle Christian Brothers, 55.2% were lay men and women, and 8.7% were clergy or other religious men or women. In 2003-2004 (again for all non-post secondary Lasallian educational institutions), 19% of the administrators were De La Salle Christian Brothers, 76% were lay men and women, and 5% were clergy or other religious men or women. Thus, over the past 15 years or so De La Salle Christian Brothers are more represented in administrative roles, by percentage, than in the total staff, by percentage.

Critical Issues for the De La Salle Christian Brothers.

For the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States the redefinition of their role in the Lasallian school movement was seen to represent a radical shift in attitude and in task.⁶⁹ Brother Michel Sauvage⁷⁰ called this redefinition of association “re-foundational” and Brother William Mann⁷¹ referred to it as “the re-capturing of an essential aspect of the founding vision” since it

⁶⁹ Circular 415; “1984 to the Year 2000,” J. Gros, in *Brotherhood: Orwell’s and Ours*, M. Helldorfer, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1983, pp. 17-21; “Owning the Future,” J. Gros, in *Our Responsibility for the Institute*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1985, pp. 89-97; “The Lasallian School-A Call to Action,” J. Gaffney, in *Our Responsibility for the Institute*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1985, pp. 79-84; *The Lasallian School: The Management of Schools-A Critique of the Document*, T. McLaughlin, a paper presented at the Regional Committee of the Christian Brothers Workshop, Chicago, IL, November 1985.

⁷⁰ *Together and By Association: Essential to the Institute*, M. Sauvage, unpublished manuscript, 1990, p. 20.

⁷¹ Mann, p. 36.

involves the extending of the Lasallian charism beyond a few members, the De La Salle Christian Brothers, to the entire educational community. The De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States were led to the point where the expectation was that they enable and empower lay people, especially lay teachers in Lasallian schools, to share completely in the ministry of the Lasallian school. Brother Mark McVann wrote:

Do we really want, it was asked, to empower and enable others, or are we committed to our own system of running schools? Should the Lasallian school be understood as a phenomenon in some way opposed to, or at least essentially different from, the traditional Christian Brothers' school? There are advantages, sometimes overlooked, as well as disadvantages, often overemphasized, in sharing responsibility with the laity in schools. If "Lasallian School" simply means the reemergence of the old Christian Brothers' model in new ideological dress, some felt there is not much hope for the future of the school. But, it was countered, "Lasallian" rightly understood generates hopefulness and enthusiasm in the apostolate. Also there are problems in collaboration between the brothers and laity... We are now in a situation where we find ourselves negotiating items in the conduct of the apostolate that had previously not been open to discussion. The large number of brothers in the school settled certain questions before they were even raised: the Brothers took care of things. Today a radically different situation demands that the brothers share their ministry in the school with their lay colleagues. The resulting new tensions and stresses can be alleviated to some extent if we can forge our way into a non-reductive pluralism, a difficult task.⁷²

Brother James Zullo⁷³ described some possible attitudinal responses of De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States which could result from declining numbers: (a) false optimism; (b) intensification of past efforts; (c) viewing the crisis as short-lived; (d) exploring new ways of doing things and new roles; (e) nostalgia and blame; and (f) grieving (with numbness and panic, pining and

⁷² McVann, p. 104.

⁷³ "1984-A Time of Scarcity," J. Zullo, in *Brotherhood: Orwell's and Ours*, M. Helldorfer, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1983, pp. 51-55.

protest, disorganization and despair, recovery and reorganization). The loss experienced by the De La Salle Christian Brothers was described as a loss of being “the guarantors of quality through the control exercised over the policies and practices of the institutions and by numerical majority.”⁷⁴ One result of this sense of loss was a tension between having non-members of the community as decision makers and the feeling of special privilege.⁷⁵ It also resulted in an uneven response to the challenge⁷⁶ and in a sense of ambiguity.⁷⁷ Finally, the sense of loss prompted a need for a conversion experience.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the question was posed whether a school can be Lasallian, even if there are no Brothers in it.⁷⁹

Brothers Michael O’Hern and Michael Meister⁸⁰ described the new role that must be taken by the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States as one of leadership, that is, preparing lay teachers, administrators, and boards in a systematic and on-going way to care for the schools and to continue the philosophy of De La Salle beyond the presence of the De La Salle Christian Brothers there. Brother Michael Meister questioned whether the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States, with signs of confu-

⁷⁴ *The Brother As Professional*, D. Delahanty, a paper presented at La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA, September 1985, p. 14.

⁷⁵ “By Faith Alone Are Works Made Fruitful,” J. Gros, in Work, T. McCarthy, ed., Lockport, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1980, pp. 43-50; Gaffney, *The Renewal of the Lasallian School*; “The Rising Tide of Criticism of American Education: Dare We Respond?” F. Mueller, *Our Responsibility for the Institute*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1984, pp. 65-78.

⁷⁶ Gaffney, *The Lasallian School-A Call to Action; The Perceived and Preferred Goals of Principals, De La Salle Christian Brothers, and Lay Teachers in Lasallian Secondary Schools*, F. Mueller, unpublished doctoral dissertation, UMI Dissertation Services, Boston College, Boston, MA.

⁷⁷ Mann, *The Lasallian School*.

⁷⁸ “Conversion, the Aging of the North American Districts, and the Extending Lasallian Family,” R. Isetti, in *Conversion: Voices and Views*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1988, pp. 118-129.

⁷⁹ *Association*, T. P. Fitzmaurice, a paper presented at the Lasallian Schools Workshop, Riverdale, NY, March 1987.

⁸⁰ “The Brothers as Servant-Leaders,” M. O’Hern, in *Brothers in the Church*, M. Helldorfer, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, 1984, pp. 69-74; “Empowerment and the Development of a Leadership Culture in the Institute,” M. Meister, in *A Sense of the Future*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers Conference, 1990, pp. 80-95.

sion and ennui, had the leadership ability needed at this point in their history, that is, a leadership of empowerment and the ability to develop a trust culture with communication and shared decision-making. Brother Michael McGinniss observed that Lasallian Association had to go beyond solely passing on Lasallian history, ideals, values, and educational techniques to the encouragement and support of the ongoing emergence of lay ministers and lay ministries within the American church. This would present an important and potentially dangerous notion in a religious and theological sense since it was future-oriented and experimental in nature, and it would force the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States "to look critically at themselves and their operative beliefs about baptism, church, ministry, and vocation."⁸¹

Thus, the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States, both as a group and as individuals, were forced by the circumstances of internal changes in the nature of the concept of association and of external changes in the evolving role of the lay person and in the growing numbers of lay teachers and decreasing numbers of De La Salle Christian Brother teachers to assume a new role within the Lasallian school. This new role demanded different attitudes, skills, and tasks within the educational community.

Critical Issues for Lay Teachers.

For the lay teacher in the Lasallian school in the United States the role also has been redefined. No longer should the term "lay" convey the idea of someone deficient in some skill or knowledge as it had in the past when the presence of lay was devalued and lay people thought of themselves as second-class members of the Church.⁸² In addition,⁸³ the survival of the Lasallian school in the United States at that moment of history was more dependent upon the lay teacher, who willingly and wholeheartedly took on the ministry of education in these schools, than upon the De La Salle Christian Brothers. It was observed that lay teachers have various lifestyles and responsibilities to personal and family needs which could militate against a total commitment to the goals of a

⁸¹ McGinniss, p. 154.

⁸² "Summary of the Discussion," M. Helldorfer, in *To Give a Christian Education*, T. McCarthy, ed., Lockport, IL: Christian Brothers National Office, pp. 66-70.

⁸³ Mann, *The Lasallian School*.

Lasallian school. Mr. Thomas Brady further observed that many lay teachers in Lasallian schools in the United States come from a wide variety of religious, philosophical, or ideological value systems; some lay teachers might know and respect the Lasallian spiritual tradition but might be unable to give full assent to the gospel values upon which it is based⁸⁴. One key question⁸⁵ for the lay teacher in the Lasallian school in the United States was described as how the lay teacher can be supportive of and affirmed by the Lasallian characteristics. Another key question for the lay teacher was posed by Mr. Thomas Brady in regard to full lay involvement in a collegial style of decision-making and administration, given the reality of negotiation on salary, benefits, and other conditions of employment. Still another key issue⁸⁶ for the lay teacher was the development of a sense of mutual trust and accountability between De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay persons in Lasallian schools. This sense could be developed by opportunities for shared leisure activities and for shared exploration of the Lasallian spiritual tradition, and by respect for the real differences in lifestyle of the two groups. Two factors militating against the new role of lay teachers, according to Mr. Thomas Brady, were teachers who would stay on as a teacher or administrator for income, security, or companionship with no commitment to the new role within the Lasallian school and the presence of labor unions which introduce conflict and an adversarial model into decision-making. Two lay teachers suggested the following steps to strengthen association: (a) that a person's ability to be receptive to Gospel values and the teachings of John Baptist De La Salle be one of the criteria in the selection of new teachers; (b) that Lasallian ideals be infused into the orientation of new faculty; (c) that faculty members be expected to participate in programs designed to explain the Lasallian character of the school; (d) that administrators be bold enough to realize the incapability of certain faculty members to fulfill a contract infused with Lasallian

⁸⁴ *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools: Examination of Part II-Association*, T. M. Brady, a paper presented at the Regional Committee of the Christian Brothers Workshop, Chicago, IL, November 1985; *Association*, R. T. Scott, a paper presented at the Lasallian Schools Workshop, Skaneateles, NY, October 1987.

⁸⁵ *The Teacher As Minister of Grace*, J. Boggio, a paper presented at the Regional Education Committee of the Christian Brothers Workshop, Chicago, IL, November 1985.

⁸⁶ Brady and Fitzmaurice.

values and act accordingly; (e) that a model for collegial style of administration be developed; (f) that the De La Salle Christian Brothers realize the growing need to be animators of Lasallian spirituality; and (g) that lay colleagues assume a more active role in the propagation of the spirit of De La Salle.⁸⁷

Lay teachers, like the De La Salle Christian Brothers, found themselves faced with a need for new attitudes (self-esteem as a lay person, equality with the De La Salle Christian Brothers in terms of ministry and ultimate responsibility for the Lasallian school), for new roles (ministers in the emerging sense of the word, leadership positions, sharers in decision-making), and for new skills (spiritual and Lasallian development, speaking about religious values).

Efforts to Promote Shared Mission.

As a result of the 42nd General Chapter each District was required to make "Shared Mission" a priority, as well as Lasallian formation for all Lasallian educators.

There already was some indication that lay teachers in Lasallian schools in the United States had positive perceptions about the De La Salle Christian Brothers and Lasallian schools. A partial profile of lay teachers in Lasallian schools had been provided by a study of vocations to the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the United States.⁸⁸ The study included a sample of lay colleagues. Among the findings regarding lay colleagues were: (a) 57% of the Catholic respondents attended Mass once a week or more frequently; (b) 93% of the respondents said that De La Salle Christian Brothers were needed in their schools; (c) 48% of the respondents agreed that De La Salle Christian Brothers taught no differently than lay faculty, while 35% thought that they did teach differently; (d) 61% of the respondents agreed that since beginning to teach in a Lasallian school they had grown more aware of the needs of poor people, while 34% felt that they had not grown in this area; (e) 69% of the respondents agreed that the De La Salle Christian Brothers exhibited a real concern for the poor and 70% felt that the De La Salle Christian Brothers in their schools mani-

⁸⁷ Association, P. Santanello and G. Linke, a paper presented at the Lasallian Schools Workshop, Haverstraw, NY, October 1986.

⁸⁸ Vocations to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, E. King, Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate/Georgetown University, 1991.

fested leadership in social justice issues; (f) 79% of the respondents said that there was no conflict in their schools between lay faculty and De La Salle Christian Brother faculty, while 13% said that there was conflict; and (g) perceptions of the characteristics of the De La Salle Christian Brothers were generally quite positive.

The Regional Education Board of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers of the USA/Toronto Region, the group that had developed the process for the development and promulgation of the *Characteristics*⁸⁹ document developed a similar process to promote Shared Mission. At the Huether Lasallian Conference in 1994 a draft of a process and document was reviewed and endorsed by a large gathering of De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay teachers from Lasallian schools and its document *Shared Mission*⁹⁰ was promulgated a year later. The document was described as one of on-going dialogue with six non-sequential movements to bring about a sense of shared mission: (a) inviting and welcoming all who espouse the Lasallian Mission, each with their appropriate role; (b) building the foundation through formation in Mission; (c) sharing the challenge that all bring their gifts and abilities to the service of Mission; (d) making Shared Mission work through support for one another; (e) growing together in faith; and, (f) expanding our horizons to new forms of and responses to ministry.

Districts created opportunities for De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay colleagues to join together in formation opportunities and programs; groups and committees of Brothers and lay colleagues were assembled to strategize on how shared mission would become a reality; in some Districts lay colleagues assumed positions of leadership at the District level. The Regional Education Board of the [De La Salle] Christian Brothers compiled sets of Lasallian resources and created in the mid 1990s the Lasallian Leadership Institute to complement the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies which served growing numbers of Lasallian lay teachers. In his study of Lasallian schools Brother Frederick Mueller⁹¹ found that some 88% of De La

⁸⁹ *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools*, Regional Education Committee of the Christian Brothers, Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers Conference, 1985.

⁹⁰ *Shared Mission*, Regional Education Committee of the Christian Brothers, Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Conference, 1995.

⁹¹ Mueller, *The perceived and preferred goals of principals*, (p. 48, n^o 98)

Salle Christian Brothers in his study had read the *Characteristics* document and some 73% had attended a Lasallian workshop; some 62% of lay Lasallian teachers in his study reported that they had read the *Characteristics* document and some 67% of them had attended a Lasallian workshop. He also found that De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay Lasallian teachers gave high priority to three of the five goals concerned with the role of the teacher as minister, i.e., the teacher in a Lasallian school is to manifest a spirit of faith by living in the presence of God and recognizing and responding to God's direction in all one's actions, is to manifest a spirit of zeal through a full commitment to the education of students, and is to manifest a spirit of zeal by a compassionate attitude and caring behavior toward all students. In a later study of the Lasallian Leadership Institute,⁹² it was found that the participants in the first groups to complete that Lasallian formation program reported that the program's two goals of helping participants to integrate Lasallian spirituality and pedagogy in their personal lives and to serve as catalysts to bring about a deepening of the Lasallian mission in their schools or agencies had been met.

In light of Propositions 1-4 of the 43rd General Chapter, Districts of the USA/Toronto have initiated committees of Brothers and lay colleagues to encourage discussion about what it means to be "associated for the educational service of the poor" and the implications for both the Brothers and their lay colleagues as regards identity and role, as well as to develop additional ways of gathering together for formative experiences. The response to Propositions 5-6 has been to create councils of Brothers and lay colleagues (Mission Councils or Mission and Ministry Councils). These councils, with the provisional approval of the Superior General and his General Council so to monitor their development and progress, have authority and decision-making responsibility regarding the Lasallian mission of the District and of its ministries, in conjunction with local boards of governance, many of which have lay persons as members. In addition, at the Regional (USA/Toronto Region) level, another Lasallian formation opportunity was developed (Lasallian Social Justice Institute); the Lasallian Youth and Collegian movement has continued to grow;

⁹² *Evaluation of the Lasallian Leadership Institute*, D. Ketelle and C. Swain, available from Christian Brothers Conference, Landover, MD, August 2002.

the Lasallian Volunteer Program has continued to provide placement for young Lasallians in ministries to serve the poor and a group of former volunteers have spearheaded new forms of being associated for the educational service of the poor; a group of Brothers and lay colleagues have come together to form Lasallian Partners for the Economically Poor and to engage in projects such as a cross-country bike-a-thon for literacy; the Lasallian Association of Miguel Schools has developed with impetus and support from Brothers and lay colleagues alike; groups, such as Signum Fidei (a group of lay teachers from a Lasallian school in Tulsa, Oklahoma) and a voluntary group of participants in the East Coast Lasallian Leadership Institute, have surfaced to explore ways of being associated for mission; and, planning, by Brothers and lay colleagues alike, was undertaken for a 2005 Regional Assembly for Association and Mission (with one third of the participants to be Brothers and two thirds to be lay colleagues) to precede the International Assembly of 2006.

Summary: Teachers in Lasallian Schools.

Over the past thirty-five years there has been a radical rethinking of the roles of the De La Salle Christian Brother and the lay person in the Lasallian school. Brother Donald Mouton⁹³ considered the evolution of the role of the lay person as a movement from rejection to tolerance to acceptance to welcome to invitation to join in association. Mr. Thomas Brady reflected back upon the years of strife, distrust, and absolute lack of association that existed in the days of “hushed deliberations of the old community [Brothers’ community] council”⁹⁴ prior to the introduction of some democratic decision-making structures in Lasallian schools.

During that time in the United States, the number of De La Salle Christian Brothers teaching and serving as administrators in Lasallian high schools has decreased and the number of lay teachers in Lasallian high schools has increased. The new roles both for De La Salle Christian Brother and lay person in the Lasallian school required a radical change in attitude and skills.

⁹³ “The Vow of Association,” D. Mouton, in *A Sense of the Future*, M. McGinniss, ed., Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers Conference, 1990, pp. 177-195.

⁹⁴ Brady, p. 2.

It has yet to be determined if Brothers and their lay colleagues in the United States have built and strengthened forms of being associated for mission in the three complementary and necessary ways envisioned by Brother Andre Jacq: (a) an educational route by which teams of teachers (Brothers and lay colleagues or lay colleagues alone), fraternal in their relationships, jointly plan and strategize for the institution and exercise joint responsibility for the institution; (b) an institutional route by which Districts, through groups of Brothers and lay colleagues, adapt and structure lay participation, working together, discernment, and decision-making; and (c) a spiritual route by which groups of Lasallians gather to build meaning together and envision a common view of ministry.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ *Brothers and Lay People Associating for a Single Mission*, A. Jacq, unpublished paper, 1991.

III. Goals and Identity of Lasallian Schools

Lasallian schools in the United States have goals which find their origin in the pedagogical and theological reflections and practices of John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Brother John Johnston⁹⁶ has noted that the Lasallian school discovers itself, and thus its goals, in understanding the Lasallian myth, in living the story of John Baptist de La Salle. The goals have resemblance to the goals of Catholic schools in general, and yet they also have distinct differences in terminology and in emphasis. Such differences make the spirit and mission of Lasallian schools somewhat unique while at the same time Catholic. The particular characteristics and goals of Lasallian schools in the United States were introduced into the life of the school as a result of Vatican II, recent General Chapters of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the document *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools*. Thus, even though the goals of Lasallian schools have a long and rich tradition, their clear expression in the United States has been relatively recent.

Implementation of the Goals of Lasallian Schools.

Since the publishing of the *Characteristics* document in 1986, Lasallian schools in the United States have committed much time and effort to ensure that the goals and characteristics of the Lasallian school are operative. Individual schools have rewritten Mission Statements, Statements of Philosophy, Statements of Vision, and Goal Statements to be reflective of Lasallian goals; they have, in turn, developed curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs that support those broader statements of mission and goals. Districts, e.g., the New York District, have developed Statements of Goals for Lasallian Mission and have made them the basis of sponsorship agreements between and among schools, boards, and the District; other Districts, e.g., the

⁹⁶ Johnston, *Seven Hallmarks of a Lasallian School and Pastoral Letter: The Challenge-Live Today our Founding Story*, 1986.

San Francisco District, have used them to serve as the basis for a school's self-study and for the development of a plan for growth as a Lasallian school. The Lasallian Association of Miguel Schools (LAMS) has developed its prescription for the Miguel Elementary and Middle Schools⁹⁷ utilizing as its first characteristic the elements of being Lasallian. In addition, a great number of programs have as one of their focuses the exploration of the meaning of the goals and characteristics of Lasallian schools. This includes, on the national level, the Buttimer Institute for Lasallian Studies, the Lasallian Leadership Institute, the Lasallian Social Justice Institute, and, in a particular way, the Huether Lasallian Conference that has addressed goals such as religious education, service of the poor, promotion of justice, rights of the child, education of the whole person through the arts, and pastoral ministry. Individual Districts, groups of Districts, individual Lasallian schools, and groups of Lasallian schools have also developed and offered programs to understand and to further refine the goals and characteristics of the Lasallian school. Furthermore, materials have been produced at the national and District level to promote the goals of the Lasallian school, including magazines, newsletters, reflection papers, and prayer services. Lasallian Youth Groups, Collegians, and Volunteers have helped to spread the Lasallian message of faith, service, and community both among their own constituencies and to the wider community, thus expanding the Lasallian family. Thus, in many ways, the Lasallian mission, as expressed through the goals and characteristics of the Lasallian School, has become common vocabulary in the Lasallian secondary schools of the United States.

Some research⁹⁸ has tried to measure the degree to which these characteristics and goals have become a part of the life of the Lasallian school in the United States. In one study⁹⁹ it was found

⁹⁷ "Six Essential Characteristics of the Miguel School Model," T. Shields, in *MEL Bulletin #7: Priority to the Poor: The Schools of San Miguel in the United States*, Rome: Motherhouse FSC, 2003, pp. 9-13.

⁹⁸ Mueller, 1994; *The Extent of Lasallian Lay Teachers' Perceived and Preferred Involvement in School Governance Decisions*, R. Meagher, unpublished doctoral dissertation, UMI Dissertation Services, St. John's University, NY, 1996; *Catholic Identity and Lasallian Culture in Higher Education*, M. Sanderl, unpublished doctoral dissertation, UMI Dissertation Services, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, 2004.

⁹⁹ Mueller, 1994.

that, for the most part, chief administrators, De La Salle Christian Brother teachers, and lay teachers in Lasallian secondary schools were in agreement about the importance of the characteristics and goals of the Lasallian school, holding that each goal had less importance in their present reality than they believed the goal should have had attached to it, i.e., the goals had not been fully operationalized; this was most pronounced for the goals that were internal, e.g., those to do with teaching as ministry and association. In addition, this study reported that the goals given the least priority were those that had to do with service of the poor, collegial decision-making, the wider Lasallian family of parents and alumni/ae, and the Church, including religious instruction. A second study¹⁰⁰ found that lay teachers in Lasallian secondary schools did not perceive that they participated in the decision-making in their school settings, except for the areas of curriculum/instruction and pupil personnel to some extent. A final study¹⁰¹ noted that, in Lasallian higher education in the United States, there were significant differences in the ways in which the campus ministry programs were seen to contribute to the institution's Catholic and Lasallian identity. An area of concern was the relationship with the Church. Chief administrators expected campus ministry to implement distinctively Catholic religious ceremonies; students more readily acknowledged themselves as being Lasallian than as adhering to a denominational religion; and, the campus ministers struggled with ministering to a campus community with multiplicity of meanings regarding Catholic identity and also readily identified service with being Lasallian.

¹⁰⁰ Meagher.

¹⁰¹ Sanderl.

IV. The Future of Lasallian Schools and Teachers

Some Areas for Future Implementation re: Goals and Identity of Lasallian Schools.

Given the continued importance of clear and accepted goals for Lasallian schools in the United States, some areas for future implementation can be suggested:

1. Some of the goals need further clarification. These include those that have to do with educational service of the poor, the relationship of the Lasallian school with the Church (both local, i.e. parish and diocese, and universal), and the implications of religious diversity in the Lasallian school, especially as regards religious instruction, religious formation, ecumenical dialogue, and inter-religious dialogue.
2. The goals need to be fully operationalized in the local school context, perhaps through processes such as the Self-Evaluation Process implemented by the New York and San Francisco Districts.
3. Models of good practice as regards implementation of the goals need to be shared among Lasallian schools, continuing to utilize the efforts of the Regional Education Board and the various regional formation programs in this regard. Such good practices would include models of professional development and formation for staff, hiring protocols, programs for new teachers, and programs for non-teaching staff, all of which would address Lasallian goals. In addition, compilations of resources about Lasallian goals should continue to be made available.
4. Greater attention needs to be paid to the formation of parents/families, Boards, and alumni/ae in the goals of Lasallian schools as an expression of Lasallian mission.
5. Continued attention needs to be paid to leadership for Lasallian schools, particularly as regards how Lasallian goals are to be implemented in a specific context with an appropriate style of decision-making leading to that implementation.

6. Greater attention needs to be given to new ways of promoting the goals of Lasallian schools, especially through newer technology.
7. Continued research should be pursued to determine the extent to which students, families, alumni/ae, non-teaching staff, teachers of different ages and with different religious backgrounds, and non-secondary school personnel support the goals of Lasallian schools; continued research should also be directed to determine the extent to which the goals of Lasallian schools are implemented in those schools.

Although the goals of Lasallian schools have been updated so that a human and Christian education can be provided, especially for the poor, in Lasallian secondary schools in the United States, the Lasallian heritage demands as well that De La Salle Christian Brothers and their partners come to meet and work side by side in this mission that is shared.

Some Areas for Future Implementation re: Teachers in Lasallian Schools.

Given the reality of an aging and dwindling population of De La Salle Christian Brothers in the near future in the United States and the initiatives already underway to strengthen the ways in which the Brothers and their lay colleagues are associated together for mission, some areas for future implementation can be offered:

1. There is need for a continued search for clarity of roles based less on functionality and more on complementarities of gifts and callings within the Lasallian charism;
2. Efforts should continue to educate the De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay colleagues to emerging realities and needs, both in already existing schools, e.g., board governance models, ways to provide financial assistance to the economically poor, and in new forms of ministries;
3. Forms and structures of being associated for mission need to be developed in an appropriate and timely fashion that both encourages creativity and allows for authenticity within the Lasallian family;
4. Plans need to be put into place for the training of the next generation of lay Lasallians, younger Lasallians who perhaps do

not have the same theological and spiritual roots as mid-life Lasallians;

5. Model programs of Lasallian formation at the local level should be promoted and shared;
6. Research should be initiated: (a) to gather data on the kind of personal traits, experiences, etc. of individuals and the kind of institutional environments that foster the growth of being “associated together for mission,” and (b) to determine the degree to which students, parents/families, Board members, and alumni/ae are and can be a part of being “associated together for mission.”

Shared Goals for Lasallian Schools in the United States.

In 1989 Brother John Johnston wrote to the De La Salle Christian Brothers that:

...no group can live in vitality without common meaning, common values, common identity. No group can survive if its members do not have common goals, or do not know what they are, or do not work together to accomplish them. If there is confusion about identity, vision, goals, values, there will be disorientation and discouragement, withdrawals from membership, and few new members.¹⁰²

Others¹⁰³ noted that the Lasallian school, with its extended Lasallian family of De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay persons, was in need of common goals in order to form a common vision and identity. In addition, the common goals would have to be translated into specific behaviors and effective programs, related to everyday performance, and be prioritized.¹⁰⁴ Despite the pluralism brought to the educational community by lay staff, a pluralism which could be positive, the Lasallian school would have to be supportive of human and Christian values; and “regardless of their [lay staff] ideological differences, the explicit evangelical orientation professed by the institution must be accepted by all

¹⁰² *Pastoral Letter: Solidarity*, J. Johnston, Rome: Motherhouse F.S.C., 1989, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰³ Boggio; Gaffney, *The Renewal of the Lasallian School*; Fitzmaurice; Isetti; *Letter to the Lasallian Family*; Johnston, 1991.

¹⁰⁴ McLaughlin.

the institutional sectors, as a basic minimum principle.”¹⁰⁵ According to Brother Pablo Basterrechea,¹⁰⁶ the role of the Lasallian school administrator was to make certain that the institution was faithful to its distinctive character and was to increase the possibilities of activities which would guarantee that fidelity. Brother John Johnston and the 43rd General Chapter¹⁰⁷ extended the guarantee of fidelity to new forms of accountability marked by collaborative decision-making by the Brothers and their lay colleagues.

In 2000 Brother John Johnston outlined the challenge for Lasallian schools in the future:

Obviously the success of all aspects of this movement depends on the willingness of the laity to assume responsibility for the Lasallian character of our schools, the openness of the Brothers to partnership with the laity, and the organization of effective formation programs at the Institute, district, and school levels... The long-range success of Lasallian schools as instruments of human and Christian education is directly dependent on what we do today to invite and assist our lay men and women ‘to share more intensely in the spirituality and mission’ of our tradition.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Circular 408: Our Mission.*

¹⁰⁶ Basterrechea, 1982.

¹⁰⁷ Johnston, *Pastoral Letter: Transformation and Pastoral Letter: The Challenge-Live Today Our Founding Story; “Propositions 5-7.”*

¹⁰⁸ Johnston, 2000, p. 54.

V. Lasallian Schools and Teachers in the United States: A Conclusion

Vatican Council II called religious orders to adapt and renew their internal life and their ministry by being attentive to the signs of the times and by returning to the original charism of their founders. For the Brothers of the Christian Schools this entailed rediscovering the goals of the Christian schools for which their founder, John Baptist de La Salle, had brought them together.

De La Salle's goal was to conduct effective schools which would be responsive to the special needs of young persons, needs which were educational, social, and spiritual. In order to conduct this type of school he drew together a community of lay persons whose rationale for association was the continued management of these Christian schools. Based on his theological reflection, De La Salle viewed the role of the teacher in a Christian school as an exalted vocation since the work being done was a ministry of grace founded upon a spirit of faith and zeal.

Over the 300 year history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools the original goals, though never lost, were underemphasized in light of other expectations for the schools and their wording was not updated to reflect new realities. The General Chapter of Renewal in 1966 and subsequent Chapters, as well as letters of the Superiors General and documents of the General Councils, have reformulated the goals for Lasallian schools over a forty year period. In the United States, the 1984 address of Brother John Johnston to a convocation of De La Salle Christian Brothers of the United States/Toronto Region and the process for the development of and the publication of the document *Characteristics of the Lasallian School* in 1986 resulted in a restatement of the goals for Lasallian schools as: teaching as ministry of grace, association for the sake of the ministry, and management of the Christian school. Management would include concepts like relationship to the Catholic Church, special regard for the poor, education for justice, peace, and service, total spiritual formation of the student, care for the individual needs of the student, and attention to a climate of excellence which would encourage the actualization of

academic and personal potential. These goals have been nuanced over the past nineteen years and their implementation and operationalization continue to be sought after and realized.

At the same time that the goals were being reformulated, new roles for De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay persons in the Lasallian school emerged. The roles flowed from the restated goals, new concepts from Vatican II on the place of the lay person in the Church and its institutions, and the historical circumstances of decreased numbers of De La Salle Christian Brothers. Although the Brothers of the Christian Schools was founded as a lay group and had strong lay roots, lay teachers in the schools historically had not been viewed as equals and were often seen as a "necessary evil." The General Chapter of 1966 and the official statements over the subsequent 39 years, particularly the last twelve years, have redefined the roles of the lay teacher and the Brother as collaborators "associated together for mission." In the United States the new role recognition has also been encouraged by the change in the numbers and percentage of De La Salle Christian Brothers and lay persons in teaching and administrative positions in Lasallian high schools. That change has left the De La Salle Christian Brothers as a minority in the high schools. Again, Brother John Johnston's address to the 1984 convocation of the United States/Toronto Region and the subsequent General Chapter of 1993 seemed to be pivotal moments in calling attention to the new reality of a Lasallian school served by lay and De La Salle Christian Brother as equal partners and to the possibility, in fact a reality, of a Lasallian school without De La Salle Christian Brothers on staff. Because of the radical nature of the redefinition of roles, both for lay persons and De La Salle Christian Brothers in Lasallian schools, and the relatively recent nature of that redefinition, there continues to be need to clarify and to accept those new roles.

Thus, the interplay of both realities, new goals and new roles, would seem to affect the degree to which the Lasallian school has a common identity, vision, and set of goals which define it as Lasallian in character. To the extent that this can occur, the Lasallian school will be authentic in its mission of being associated for the human and Christian education of the young, especially the poor.

Final Questionnaire

For reflecting and sharing:

1. Which ideas or facts cited have impressed you most in this journey towards the full incorporation of lay persons into the shared mission?
2. Are there any points from what you have read (actions, lines of action, suggestions...) which you consider of vital importance for your immediate reality: centre, District or Region?
3. At the end of the introduction some defining elements of 'the Lasallian' are listed (from letter 'a' to letter 'h'). Which of them would you consider as negotiable, indispensable, unnecessary?

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