



Bulletin of the Brothers of the Christian Schools N° 231

The Regions of the Institute

BULLETIN OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

December 1988 – N° 231

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Front cover:

**Lasallian Regions open vast new horizons for the creativity
and dynamism of the Lasallian Family.**

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ROME, the Generalate. In March 1988, the Regional Co-ordinators and Permanent Representatives had a meeting in Rome with the General Council. This issue of the Bulletin offers its readers the mass of information on which the meeting was based.



INTRODUCTION

In the letter sent by Brother Superior and his General Council on December 28th 1988 to the Regional Co-ordinators and Permanent Regional Representatives, the aims of the March 1988 meeting are clearly defined, as are implicitly the characteristics and aims of the Regions. To achieve the aims of the meeting, a variety of topics was suggested for further study by those attending it. Bulletin N° 231 of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is based on the information prepared and gathered on that occasion.

By way of introduction we list for you the aims and subjects for study contained in that letter. Following immediately after that we include the questionnaire that was sent to the Regional Co-ordinators on July 24th 1988 to help them prepare a brief report on their Region.

AIMS OF THE MEETING

1. To enable those taking part to become acquainted and to exchange notes on what is being done in the various parts of the Institute.
2. To consider together the problems facing the Regional Representatives in their work of coordination in their respective Regions, and to find solutions.
3. To improve channels of communication between the various Regions, and strengthen ties of mutual dependence; and to do the same between the Regions and the central administration in Rome.
4. To analyse and discuss how the guidelines and decisions of the 41st General Chapter are being implemented.
5. To decide where our main thrust will be in the years to come, and which projects we think are likely to promote growth in the various parts of the Institute.

AREAS FOR STUDY

1. Coordination in the Region

1.1. *"The Region is conceived, not as a structure of government, but as a means of coordination and collaboration between certain sectors of the Institute which choose to join together..."*

A Region is established as an expression of the willingness of the units that compose it to cooperate with one another and so benefit by the added vitality that comes from acting together." (Rule 127)

★ Channels of communication and exchange of information in the Region.

1.2. *"Unity of mind and heart among the Brothers of the Region is established and maintained by communicating and actively sharing with one another." (Rule 127)*

★ How a Region works and how it is organised.

★ Collaboration, cooperation and mutual dependence in the Region.

1.3. *"The Regional Coordinator fosters communication among the Brother Visitors of the Region, and supports them in their mission. He ensures that the Region remains in contact with the Brother Superior General. He follows up the application of decisions and programmes adopted for the Region as a whole. He also encourages cooperation and interdependence within the Region and between it and the other Regions of the Institute." (Rule 127e)*

★ Successes and failures experienced by the Regional Representatives in their work for the Region.

1.4. *"In addition to participating in the activities of a given Region, the Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations are encouraged to cooperate with other parts of the Institute." (Rule 127g)*

"Sending Brothers to the Young Churches or to sectors that are lacking in vocations, together with the sharing of material or spiritual resources, constitutes a most significant form that Regional cooperation can take. Formal agreements between Districts that send Brothers and those that receive them specify the details of this type of collaboration." (Rule 127h)

★ Existing relationships and collaboration between Regions or between other parts of the Institute.

★ Suggestions as to how to promote greater interdependence and collaboration in the future.

1.5. *"The Brother Superior and his Councilors... keep in touch with all parts of the Institute." (Rule 117)*

"The Brother Superior and his Council set up a schedule of meetings that will bring together all the Brother Regional Coordinators." (Rule 127f)

★ The central administration of the Institute and the various parts of the Institute (connections, communication, support).

★ Relationships and communication between the various parts of the Institute and the central administration.

2. Life and Mission of the Brothers

2.1. The impact of the call to CONVERSION and its repercussions.

The dissemination of the Rule, and the part it plays in the renewal and vitality of communities and their apostolates.

2.2. Examples of renewal in the apostolate:

- pedagogical innovations
- service of the poor
- evangelisation and the pastoral care of youth.

2.3. The Lasallian Family:

- the present situation and the challenge it offers
- the circular on the Lasallian Family.

2.4. The fostering of vocations and initial formation:

- the present situation and guidelines for the future.

2.5. Retirement and continuing formation:

- present situation and suggestions for the future; the session called for by the General Chapter (Proposition 5).

QUESTIONNAIRE

July 24th 1988

1. THE REGION

- *When was it set up?*
- *How has it evolved?*
- *Which Districts, sub-Districts, Delegations and sectors does it include?*
- *Which countries does it cover?*

2. THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

- *Is he full-time? What other duties does he have?*
- *What powers has he as Regional Co-ordinator?*
- *How is he elected?*
- *How long is his term of office?*

3. REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- *Visitors' Conference:*
 - *How often does it meet?*
 - *What subjects have been discussed since the 41st General Chapter?*
- *Regional Council:*
 - *Does one exist? What are its duties? How often does it meet?*
- *Regional Assembly:*
 - *Who is part of it?*
 - *How often does it meet?*
 - *What did it discuss at its last meeting?*
 - *What are its powers?*

4. REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS

- *What has been possible to achieve so far?*
- *What have been the greatest difficulties?*
- *What plans exist for the future? What is the outlook?*
- *What are the specific and outstanding characteristics of the Region?*



SANTO DOMINGO (Dominican Republic):
Statue of St. John Baptist de La Salle outside the front entrance of De La Salle College.

FRANCE

1. ORGANISATION

The demographic position of the French Districts; the changes foreseen in this position in the years to come, insofar as statistical analysis can predict such changes (See P. 10); the large number of establishments still existing, all this, from as early as 1978, made the setting up of the Region more and more urgent.

This rapid drop in numbers made it quite impossible for some Districts to meet their basic commitments: the maintenance of teams of Brothers to train young people; providing organisers for various undertakings...

While bearing in mind the need to respect the autonomy of the different Districts involved, a major concern, nonetheless, was to set up joint undertakings especially in areas which faced collapse: formation, support for foreign missions, organising new ventures to help the poor.

The organisation of the Region is defined by statutes laid down in 1978 and subsequently modified in 1982 and 1986 in the light of experience and of the new Rule.

At the same time the Statutes of a Regional Co-ordinator were put together to help him not to tread on people's toes...



2. OPERATION

The way in which the Region operates is modelled on that of a District, as is set out in the Rule:

2.1. A *Regional Assembly* composed of ex officio members (Brothers Visitors and full-time Regional staff) and elected members (representing the Districts) meets every 4 years.

It decides by vote the aims of the 4 years ahead, and specifies the means.

2.2. A *Regional Council* (3 Brothers Visitors, 3 Councillors appointed by the Regional Co-ordinator with the agreement of the Visitors' Conference, the Regional Co-ordinator) meets every 3 months.

It prepares the meetings of the Visitors' Conference, and is responsible for seeing that its decisions are implemented.

2.3. *Full-time Regional Staff*, appointed by the Regional Co-ordinator in agreement with the Visitors' Conference, ensure continuous service. The following are involved:

- the Education Secretary;
- the Brother Director of the French Lasallian Centre and his helpers;
- the Secretary of the SEMIL (Lasallian Missionary Secretariat);

FRANCE

1537 Brothers

Regional Organisations

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FRANCE

Tel. (1) 45-67-04-98

– Regional Co-ordinator

Tel. (1) 45-66-47-41

– Brothers' Residence

– Archives

– Library

– French Lasallian Centre

Tel. (1) 45-66-41-80

– National Bursar

Tel. (1) 42-73-13-98

– Visitors' Conference

Secretariat

Tel. (1) 45-67-67-88

– Education Secretariat

Tel. (1) 47-34-94-66

– Lasallian Third Order

– St. Martin's Social Security
for Religious

Tel. (1) 45-67-55-17

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Atlantique

Besançon

Bretagne

France Centre-Est

La Réunion

Djibouti

Lille

Midi-Méditerranée

Paris-Rouen

Reims

Turkey

- the team in charge of the formation of young Brothers (novitiate team);
- the National Bursar.

2.4. *The Visitors' Conference, presided over by the Regional Coordinator, meets every 3 months. An occasion for continuing formation for the Brothers Visitors, it is also an opportunity for discussing problems proper to each District, seeking solutions in common, and making decisions.*

A statute (art. 7) lays down that a 2/3 majority is needed for "major" decisions to be binding. In practice, however, decisions are arrived at by consensus; and where this is unlikely, it is considered prudent to either withdraw the motion or postpone it till later. It is inconceivable that a Brother Visitor should leave the Conference feeling hard done by or that his hands are tied by a Conference decision.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGION

have somewhat increased in the last 8 years. They are listed in detail in article 12 of the statutes defining the role of the Regional Co-ordinator.

They coincide exactly with what the District and Delegations expect of the Region in the way of collaboration and coordination.

3.1. *Fostering vocations and initial formation*

Districts are free to organise whatever they wish on a local level.

The Region coordinates:

- the Lasallian Research Group which brings together on a regular basis aspirants and postulants, so that they can get to know one another and share certain aspects of formation. This year there are 7 young persons who meet regularly at the LRG;

- the Postulancy, even if the postulants are in communities in the District they come from. However, one community specifically for postulants has just been opened in the Third World at N'Djamena, with the agreement of the Br. Visitor of Douala;

- the Novitiate with a full-time course (2 novices this year in their 2nd year of novitiate);

- the prolongation of formation for young people by means of annual sessions (we have no scholasticate), and organising a "fidei donum" service for the foreign missions.

3.2. *Continuing Formation - What has been done.*

In addition to what Districts have done by themselves, the Region has also organised:

- formation sessions for Directors of Communities (in the course of 3 years, 139 Directors have taken part).

- sessions for Brothers forced by law to retire from teaching on reaching retirement age, and who have to restructure totally their apostolic life. In the last 5 years, 251 Brothers have taken part, including some from Belgium and Holland. The sessions for the most part have been held at Parménie.

- sessions on education and pedagogy organised by the Education Secretariat;

- sessions on Lasallian spirituality organised by the French Lasallian Centre have been attended over the last 2 years by 230 Brothers and lay people.

3.3. *Relations with missionary Districts or Sectors*

There is a Missionary Secretariat in each District. The one in charge goes to the Regional meetings of SEMIL 5 times a year.

The Secretary of SEMIL, in conjunction with the Regional Coordinator,

- goes to see missionaries on their home ground, once a year as far as possible;

- meets local representatives to discover what needs to be done, and to get an update on the local situation.

At regular intervals, the Visitors' Conference forms itself into a Missions Commission to examine how the needs that have been reported to them (personnel, material, in particular, financial needs) are being met.

Over the last 10 years, French Districts have sent 32 new missionaries to the Third World, thus keeping up our numbers of Brothers working there to 120.

The annual budget allocation for the missions is of the order of 1,200,000 francs. It is raised from personal contributions made by each of the Brothers living in France.

3.4. *Setting up communities connected with Regional Projects*

When an apostolic project has been designated as being a "Regional priority" by the Visitors' Conference, it is up to the Regional Co-ordinator to set up the communities in question by asking the Brothers Visitors to provide Brothers for them.

This may involve setting up a new community from scratch (where a community is there to serve a special section of society), or bolstering up existing communities attached to establishments which the District is no longer able to support by itself (agricultural schools, specialised establishments like the one at Guénange...).

3.5. *New Regional undertakings*

What has already been said applies also to the setting up of communities with a special purpose:

- communities helping vagrants (SIGEVO), teaching gypsies how to read and write.

- the community running the Parménie Centre.

3.6. *Policy with regard to undertakings and the sponsorship of educational establishments*

This is a completely new area for us, and we are still at the stage of research and experimentation.

The 1986 Regional Assembly decided that no Lasallian establishment would be left to its own devices, even when the headmaster was no longer a Brother, or when there was no longer a community of Brothers attached.

There is a great drive on at present, organised by the French Lasallian Centre, to give lay people a Lasallian formation.

At the same time, we are thinking about the organisation and running of Lasallian schools in the future, involving more and more sharing responsibilities with lay people. The La Salle Association is studying this question.

3.7. Point 7 of Article 12 of the statutes referring to the Regional Co-ordinator gives him authority only to carry out the decisions of the Visitors' Conference.

4. INTERDEPENDENCE

Simply in terms of figures:

— out of the 1545 Brothers belonging to the France Region,

* 55 Brothers have changed District to work in Rome, in the Region, but also to work in other Districts and Delegations belonging to the Region.

* 118 work outside of France in various parts of the Third World.

This mutual dependence makes it possible to offer help in cases of pressing need, but also to make better use of Brothers' abilities. This possibility, now a part of

the Rule, gives Brothers a chance to follow their own personal vocation when the opportunity to do so does not exist in their own District.

5. SOME CONCLUSIONS

Experience has shown that having a Region is worthwhile. This is an encouragement for us to go on and be creative.

We have to mention at this point, however, that there are problems, which will not go away, arising from trying to work within both the guidelines laid down by the Rule and the statutes of the France Region.

This kind of problem is not unusual when one bears in mind that the Rule deals in terms of a great number of different situations in the Institute as a whole.

The framework provided by the Rule enables Regions to strengthen their position without weakening the autonomy of Districts or lessening their importance. But for all that, there are times when discussions come to a grinding halt.

However, life goes on in spite of pronouncements from wherever.

A panoramic view of a large area of Paris, including (centre bottom) the buildings which house the French Lasallian Centre.



STATUTES OF THE REGION

Article 1

The Districts of France and the Delegations of Turkey and Djibouti-La Reunion form together the Region of France, which is a means to ensure coordination and collaboration between these sectors of the Institute which have chosen to come together. (cf. Rule 127)

Article 2

The unity of heart and mind among the Brothers of the Region of France is established and maintained by communicating and actively sharing with one another.

The Region of France is established as an expression of the willingness of the units that compose it to cooperate with one another and so benefit by the added vitality that comes from acting together. (Rule 127)

Article 3

The Regional administrative bodies are as follows:

- *The Regional Assembly*
- *The Regional Co-ordinator*
- *The Visitors' Conference*
- *The Regional Council*
- *The Regional Bureaux*

Article 4

The statute concerning the Regional Co-ordinator is formulated by the Regional Assembly. (cf. Rule 127d)

Article 5

The Regional Assembly is the body that represents the Brothers of the Region and which expresses their union.

There they become aware of the questions which face the Districts and Delegations of the Region as a whole, and decide on the way in which they should be dealt with.

Article 6

1° The Regional Assembly is composed of ex officio members (the Regional Co-ordinator, Visitors, members of the Regional Council, Brothers in charge of Regional Bureaux) and of members elected directly by the Brothers according to procedures laid down by the Visitors' Conference.

The Visitors' Conference draws up electoral procedures which ensure adequate representation of the younger Brothers and of those sent by the Region to work in the Third World and in the Young Churches.

2° The Regional Assembly elects the Regional Co-ordinator. This election must be approved by Brother Superior and his Council.

The Regional Assembly cannot be legally brought to a close before this approval is given.

3° The Assembly needs a majority of two thirds to define areas in which a Regional Co-ordinator has authority over persons and goods.

4° The Regional Assembly usually meets every four years. It can be called by an extraordinary meeting of the Visitors' Conference by a two thirds majority vote.

5° The number of elected members must be at least three times greater than that of ex officio members.

6° The Regional Assembly may suggest amendments to its statutes to Brother Superior.

Article 7

The Visitors' Conference is presided over by the Regional Co-ordinator. It can define Regional priorities and decide appropriate measures by a two thirds majority note.

It draws up its own statutes which match those of the Region.

Article 8

The Regional Council is composed of the Visitors and of Brothers chosen by the Regional Co-ordinator after consultation with the Visitors' Conference.

It helps the Regional Co-ordinator in his work.

Article 9

The National Bursar's Office is one of the Regional Bureaux; the statutes governing it are found in an annexe to these statutes.

ANNEXE

1° The National Bursar

— He is appointed by the Regional Co-ordinator after consultation with the Visitors' Council and for a period of time that is specified;

— As a delegate of the Regional Co-ordinator, he administers the funds of the Institute in France and ensures a fair distribution of its resources. (cf. Rule 139)

— He presides over and runs the Regional Economic Council.

2° The Regional Economic Council

— It helps the National Bursar in his work.

— It is composed of the National Bursar, District Bursars, two delegates of the Visitors' Conference, and one Brother appointed by the Visitors' Conference because of his expertise in particular in school financial administration.

— It can call in experts.

3° The Regional Economic Council Bureau

— The Regional Economic Council elects four of its members to form the Bureau.

— The Regional Economic Council Bureau studies from a technical point of view all the documents which are due to be considered by the Council.

THE STATUTES CONCERNING THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Article 10

The Regional Co-ordinator bears witness to the union among the Brothers of the Region and helps it to grow. He fosters cooperation between the Visitors of the Region and supports them in their work.

He is the link between the Region and Brother Superior General.

He ensures the implementation of the decisions made and schemes adopted for the Region as a whole. He fosters cooperation and interdependence within the Region as well as between it and other Regions. (cf. Rule 127h)

He seeks to associate lay people with the educational apostolate of the Brothers, and is ready to offer those who want, means to get to know the Founder and to live according to his spirituality. (cf. Rule 17)

Article 11

1° The Regional Co-ordinator is the ex officio Chairman of the Visitors' Conference.

2° It is his responsibility, to call the Visitors' Conference, organise its agenda, and see that its decisions are implemented.

3° After consultation with the Visitors' Conference, he appoints Brothers to run Regional Bureaux, and he coordinates their work.

Article 12

The Regional Co-ordinator has authority over persons and goods in the following areas:

1° Fostering vocations and initial formation.

2° Continuing formation schemes on a Regional level.

3° Missionary commitments in the Third World and the Young Churches.

4° The setting up of communities needed for the implementation of Regional schemes, in conjunc-

tion with the local Visitor who takes on responsibility for their pastoral care.

5° Taking measures to respond to urgent educational needs and providing follow-up.

6° Policy concerning establishments and sponsorship within the framework of decisions taken by the Regional Assembly.

7° The implementation of Regional priorities as defined by the Visitors' Conference. (cf. Article 7)

Article 13

The Regional Council is a forum for consideration, deliberation and leadership:

1° It helps the Regional Co-ordinator to implement the guidelines based on Regional policies.

2° It studies the agenda of the Visitors' Conference and ensures its decisions are implemented.

3° It inspires and assesses the new schemes and achievements of the Regional Bureaux.

Another view of Paris. In the centre can be seen the church of St. Sulpice, redolent with so many Lasallian memories. Bottom left can be seen the chapel of the Carmelites, visited often by the Founder, and where Blessed Brother Solomon was condemned and suffered martyrdom on September 2nd 1792.



MEDITERRANEAN

1. THE REGION

• Up till the Chapter of 1976, the Districts and Delegations of the Mediterranean Region, as well as other French-speaking countries, belonged to the Assistancy of Brother Merian: it was felt in Rome that it was advisable to consider all the countries along the shores of the eastern Mediterranean as belonging to one group. The Chapter put an end to assistancies and replaced them by Regions. At this point Brother Michael Roussos, President of the Delegation of Greece, was asked to be the link between the Centre of the Institute and the Districts and Delegations of the eastern Mediterranean basin.

On December 28th 1976, following a meeting attended by Brothers with responsibilities within the Region, the Mediterranean Region came into existence officially. The Superior General, Brother Pablo, was also present. Brother Roussos was asked to continue as the Regional representative.

On April 8th and 9th 1977, the statutes of the Region were drawn up and passed. Brother Merian was elected Regional Coordinator.

- This Region includes the Orient District and the Delegations of Greece, Turkey and Egypt.
- It includes also the following countries: Lebanon, Israel, the Occupied Territories, Jordan, Greece, Turkey and Egypt.

2. THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

- The work is not full time. At times, he has also been at the same time Visitor or President of a Delegation, and had a position of responsibility in a school.
- As his task is that of a co-ordinator of shared activities, he organises a variety of meetings.
- He is elected for three years by the Regional Conference.

3. REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- The Regional Conference. Members include Visitors, Presidents and delegates from the various Sectors of the Region. Officially it meets once a year. In practice, political events have made this impossible occasionally. Topics for discussion have included initial and continuing formation several times.



MEDITERRANEAN

127 Brothers

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90-97-65
90-43-22 (Staff)

Egypt
Greece
Orient
Turkey

- There is no Regional Council.
- There are no Regional Assemblies, Commissions or Secretariats. In recent years, however, there have been various meetings of Brothers at a Regional level: council meetings, workshops on the Founder, Directors' meetings...

4. PLANNED AND COMPLETED SCHEMES

- Our main achievement is the Regional novitiate.
- Our difficulties stem from:
 - the political situation in various areas,
 - the drop in the numbers of Brothers, their advanced age and the lack of local vocations.
- What is typical of these various sectors of the Institute is the cooperation with the divided Oriental Churches, often very much a minority in the midst of a militant Muslim population (except in Greece and Israel).

INITIAL FORMATION

– This formation is conditioned by the type of life led by the young man while seeking his vocation.

– It is important that, when a young man seeking a vocation takes his first step towards the Institute, there should be something organised he can be referred to.

A) THE POSTULANCY

Egypt

– All the postulants we had continued to lead their own lives while being kept in contact with the Brothers.

– They did not take part in community life.

– They continued with their studies or their work. It would have been difficult to do otherwise.

– Weekends were organised regularly for them so that they could think over things and pray with the Brothers.

– A Brother whose responsibility it was to look after these postulants organised meetings for prayer and discussion several times a month.

– During the Summer, these young men helped the Brothers in their pastoral work: «apostolic camps» in Upper Egypt and Sudan; retreats, and so on...

Lebanon

– The postulants live with the community of Beit-Mery.

– While they continue their secular studies, they are helped to deepen their faith and their spiritual life.

– The length of the postulancy has varied a great deal according to the requirements of those applying: from 3 to 18 months.

Regional document on the Postulancy

Taking into account the directions given by the last General Chapter, and basing ourselves on the experience of these last few years, we felt at Regional level that the postulancy stage of formation should be more clearly defined. Consequently a meeting took place in Cairo last January, in which Brothers from various Districts and Delegations took part. As a result a REGIONAL DOCUMENT ON THE POSTULANCY was published.

Remark: Experience shows that it would be better if the Director of Novices established some kind of contact with the postulants at BEIT-MERY a few weeks before they came up to the Novitiate.

B) THE NOVITIATE

– Before October 1984, there were 2 very run-down novitiates, one in Egypt and one in Lebanon, which at times stood empty. Pressure from Brother Pablo led us to set up a single novitiate for the Region in Cairo.

– The novitiate lasts 2 years:

Year one is given over to listening to Jesus Christ: concentrating on the interior life and on the life of prayer.

Year two consists of an examination of the apostolic dimension of a religious vocation, by means of courses, visits to communities involved in the apostolate, with a view to reaching an understanding of the specific Lasallian form of apostolate.

– Some courses are organised at the Novitiate, others at a Theological and Catechetical Centre.

– For the young Lebanese Maronites, being in Egypt offers a very good opportunity for meeting others.

– Three times a year, our novices take part in an organised gathering called an INTER-NOVICIAT, in which about 50 novices from a variety of religious congregations take part.

– The formation given at the Novitiate must, of course, take into account actual conditions existing in the various communities and schools of the Districts and Delegations of the Region.

C) CONTINUATION OF INITIAL FORMATION AFTER THE NOVITIATE

This varies according to sectors and individuals involved.

Egypt

– At the Delegation Chapter it was decided that a young Brother, before making his Perpetual Profession, would spend:

- *two years* in a community, working with the poor.

- *two years or more* studying theology and catechetics.

This plan will have to make allowances for differences in opportunities for study and in the personal development of Brothers, but even so, the experience of living in community seems absolutely essential.

Lebanon

The young Brothers live at BEIT-MERY, continue their university studies, undertake some commitments and share in everyday community life.

U.S.A. - TORONTO

1. THE REGION

When was the Region established?

The origin of the present Region dates back to October 26, 1960, when the Brothers Visitors of the Districts in the United States of America filed their incorporation in the State of New Mexico as *Christian Brothers Major Superiors*, also known as *Christian Brothers Conference*. This legal incorporation coincided with their decisions to purchase land near Santa Fe, New Mexico, and to construct the Sangre de Cristo national retreat and renewal center.

Christian Brothers Conference was licensed in the State of Illinois on June 7, 1965, in order to develop on a national scale the series of retirement and insurance plans that had been initiated by the Midwest Districts (Chicago, St. Louis, and St. Paul/Minneapolis) for their schools and communities. After twenty years of development and expansion under the leadership of Brother Joel Damian, FSC, these plans and services were separately incorporated in 1985 under *Christian Brothers Services*, a forprofit corporation wholly owned by the Conference.

The plans administered by *Christian Brothers Services* on behalf of Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, hospitals, and communities in the United States include the following:

1. Employee Benefit Trust.
2. Religious and Charitable Risk Pooling Trust.
3. Student Accident Insurance Plan.
4. Religious Comprehensive Medical and Dental Plan.
5. Religious Deductible Comprehensive Medical and Dental Plan.
6. Employee Retirement Plan.
7. Christian Brothers Retirement Plan (for Brothers only).
8. Unemployment Insurance Plan.
9. Come-Abord Travel Agency.

Another profit-making corporation, *Christian Brothers Investment Services, Inc.*, was established with the encouragement of the Conference in the early 1980's, and developed into a separate corporation whose stockholders are a number of Districts and Brothers' institutions in the U.S.A.

How has the Region progressively evolved?

The General Chapter of 1966-67, as well as the Re-



U.S.A. - TORONTO

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gional Assemblies which preceded it and the Regional Chapters which followed, stimulated many activities in vocation and information work, as well as in educational, missionary, and peace and justice programs. For two decades, the administrative staff of *Christian Brothers Conference* oversaw an expanding array of financial services, as described above, which were offered to an ever-larger number of Catholic institutions and agencies in the United States.

The Conference constructed a regional office building and community residence in 1966 to house the staff of Brothers and the administrative offices of the various plans and activities. During the decades of the 1960's and 1970's, the Region's first Formation Secretary (1966), Brother Erminius Joseph, FSC, and its first Education Secretary (1972), Brother Francis Huether, FSC, established an enduring and eminently Lasallian panorama of programs, workshops, retreats, and committee work.

The Sangre de Cristo program, under its successive directors, Brothers Cornelius Luke, FSC; Anthony John Halpin, FSC; Charles Reuteman, FSC; James Leahy, FSC; Maurice Anglim, FSC, and Bernard LoCoco, FSC, established a solid reputation throughout the region and the English-speaking world. Today, the Sangre program assembles priests and religious from men's and women's communities for two 100-day sessions annually. The waiting list attests to the importance of Sangre de Cristo in the lives of contemporary religious.

The Toronto District joined with the U.S.A. Districts in the Conference in 1978, in order to participate in the programs and services of this English-speaking region. With the retirement of Brother Joel Damian, FSC, as executive secretary of *Christian Brothers Conference* and the establishment of *Christian Brothers Services* in 1985 under its first and current president, Brother William Walz, FSC, the administration of the Conference itself was placed under the care of Brother Brendan Hayden, FSC, who held the position of Administrative Secretary until 1988. The current Secretary of Vocation/Formation, Brother Joseph Schmidt, FSC, and the Secretary of Education, Brother Robert McCann, FSC, succeeded to their posts during this same decade. Brother Francis Huether, FSC, former Secretary of Education, continues to serve the Conference as Managing Editor of Lasallian Publications. Brother Richard Rush, FSC, is the librarian and archivist. The Conference also employs two office secretaries, Carol Hamm and Marilyn Griffith, to assist in correspondence, publications, and general administration.

Which Districts, Sub-Districts, Delegations, and Sectors does the Region encompass?

The U.S.A./Toronto Region includes the eight Districts of the United States of America (Baltimore, Chicago, Long Island-New England, New Orleans-Santa Fe, New York, St. Louis, St. Paul/Minneapolis, and San Francisco) and the Toronto District of Canada. Nigeria is a Sub-District of Toronto. The East Africa Sec-

tor (Kenya and Tanzania) has recently been added to the Region's responsibilities.

Which countries constitute the Region's area of operation?

The majority of the Region's 1,395 members live and work in the United States of America and in Canada. Sixty-four brothers from the Region work in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria), Asia (Israel and the West Bank, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), the Caribbean (Jamaica and St. Vincent Island), Latin America (Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru), and Rome, Italy (the Generalate).

2. THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Is he full time? What other duties does he have?

Although there had been an executive or administrative secretary since the creation of the Region in the 1960's, the first Regional Coordinator in terms of the office described in the 1987 Rule, Brother Paul Grass, FSC, was appointed on July 1, 1988. The position is full time, with 50% devoted to the administration of the regional mission commitments and policies. The Regional Coordinator is also responsible for the overall financial administration of *Christian Brothers Conference* and for the coordination of the regional programs and office staff. He facilitates and encourages collaboration and coordination among the Districts of the Region. Additional duties include representing the Region at the central administration of the Institute in Rome and acting as liaison with other regions of the Institute. The Regional Coordinator oversees Lasallian Family and Lasallian Volunteer programs organized on a regional basis.

What authority has he as Regional Coordinator?

The Regional Coordinator is not a major superior; he has no authority other than that specified in the Constitution and By-laws of *Christian Brothers Conference*. He reports to the Board of Directors of the Conference (the nine Visitors of the Region) through the President of the Conference (the Brother Visitor elected by the Board for a one-year renewable term). He is a non-voting member of the Board of Directors and one of three members on the Executive Committee (the other two being the President and the Vice-president of the Board of Directors of the Conference).

How was the Regional Coordinator elected?

The Regional Coordinator was appointed by the Board of Directors of *Christian Brothers Conference*, upon the recommendation of a Search Committee which conducted interviews with candidates and reported its findings to the full Board.

What is the duration of his term?

The term is four years and is renewable.

3. REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Visitors' Conference: How regularly are meetings held?

Meetings of *Christian Brothers Conference* are held three times a year, usually in October, January, and June. The June meeting is the Annual Meeting called for in the Constitution and By-Laws, with attendance as nonvoting members by the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Vocation/Formation, and the chairs of the Regional Education Board, the Regional Vocation/Formation Board, and the Regional Finance Board.

What questions has the Conference taken up since the 41st General Chapter?

The Conference has three standing committees: Education (which includes elementary, secondary, and tertiary education, child care and family services, religious education, and peace and justice programs), Vocation and Formation (which includes vocation programs, as well as initial and continuing formation), and Finance (the budgets and audits of Sangre de Cristo Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and *Christian Brothers Conference*, Romeoville, Illinois). In addition, the Mission Advisory Group (the Mission Coordinators of the Districts) works directly with the Regional Coordinator on policies and programs related to the Region's missionary projects among the Young Churches.

The Education Secretary and the Vocation/Formation Secretary conduct programs for the region and report through the Regional Coordinator to the Board of Directors of the *Christian Brothers Conference*. The Region sponsors two series of publications: Lasallian Publications (English translations of the basic texts of De La Salle, the early biographers, and the Cahiers Lasalliens), and Christian Brothers Publications (biographies of the beatified and canonized Brothers, the annual Spirituality Seminar, and works of interest to the Brothers and their colleagues).

The Visitors use the occasion of their meetings as the Board of *Christian Brothers Conference* to discuss topics of pastoral interest and to strengthen their own unity and enthusiasm for their ministry as leaders of the Districts. Virtually every issue that concerns the Brothers today — whether in renewal programs, formation, education, new forms of ministry, catechetics, missionary activities, vocation programs, retirement, finances, or regional development — comes at one time or another before the Conference board members, the Visitors.

Regional Council: Does such exist? What are its duties? How often does it meet?

Under the 1988 reorganization of the Region, there

is no separate Regional Council; however, the chairmen of the Standing Boards (Education, Finance, and Vocation/Formation), together with the Education Secretary and the Vocation/Formation Secretary, meet with the Board of Directors of *Christian Brothers Conference* at the Annual Meeting specified in the By-Laws.

Regional Assembly: How was it constituted? How often does it convene?

There is no Regional Assembly provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws; however, the Region has conducted one Regional Convocation (in 1984) and is planning another one to take place on August 9-15, 1990, at Saint Mary's College, Moraga, California. All of the Brothers are invited to attend the Regional Convocation.

What themes did it take up in the last meeting? What powers does it possess?

The theme of the 1990 Regional Convocation is "The Brother and the Institute in the Twenty-first Century."

Secretariats and Commissions: Please name them, say how they are constituted and what are their powers.

In addition to what has been said above, it is important to note that the membership of the three Standing Boards is formed by the nine Brothers in the respective Districts who are directors of education, finance, and vocation/formation. These boards and the executive secretaries who work with them propose programs to the *Christian Brothers Conference* for approval in the annual budget and then carry out the projects.

There is a separate Advisory Committee for the Sangre de Cristo Center, to recommend to the Conference policies and procedures for the functioning and financing of that significant regional asset.

4. REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROJECTS

What has the Region been able to do thus far?

For nearly thirty years, the U.S.A./Toronto Region has conducted retreat and renewal programs at Sangre de Cristo and at other summer sites throughout the region. In addition, the legacy of financial and personnel services formation, and education programs at the regional level, plus the major effort to publish English-language Lasallian materials, have had a marked effect on the Brothers' communities and apostolates. More recently, the Region has focused attention on the Lasallian Schools movement, the Volunteer Missionary program, and the Lasallian Youth organizations. The evolving regional support of missionary activities among the Young Churches is one of the most important current concerns.

What are the major difficulties encountered?

Christian Brothers Conference is a voluntary organization (as is the entire Institute, of course). The individual Districts understandably give first priority to the communities, apostolates, and obligations within their boundaries. This is a strength, not a difficulty, because the Region must be based on vibrant, healthy Districts. The limited number of Brothers available to meet the many calls is a constant worry in this period of evolution in religious life and service.

What projects and perspectives are envisioned?

With the 1988 reorganization of the Region and the appointment of the first Regional Coordinator, the U.S.A./Toronto Region is beginning a new era of planning and program development. Although many of the details remain to be clarified, the major themes seem clear:

1. The missionary involvement of the Region.
2. The volunteer movement among recent university graduates who are interested in both missionary and local service.
3. The Lasallian School movement and the desire of Christian teachers to be associated with the Institute in a personally and professionally meaningful way.
4. The Lasallian Youth movement in the schools.

What do you perceive as being significant and specific to the Region?

The U.S.A./Toronto Region is both an aging region in a post-industrialized society and a youthful Region with respect to the variety of its educational renewal programs, new apostolates, and relationships with other Christian professionals and agencies.

September 9, 1988

Brother Paul Grass, FSC
Regional Coordinator

ST. PAUL (Minnesota, USA): This photo was taken last September on the occasion of the meeting of the Visitors' Conference of the USA Toronto Region. (From left to right) *Back row:* Brothers Paul McDonough, Visitor of St. Louis; Colman Coogan, Visitor of Baltimore; Francis McCrea, Visitor of Toronto; Robert McCann, Regional Secretary. *Middle row:* Brothers Joseph Schmidt, Regional Director of Formation; Paul Grass, Regional Co-ordinator; Wayne Viguerie, Visitor of New Orleans Santa Fe; Michael McKenery, Visitor of Long Island New England; Neil Kieffe, Visitor of Chicago. *Front row:* Brothers Mark Murphy, Visitor of San Francisco; Timothy Wentworth, Visitor of New York; Dominic Ehrmantraut, Visitor of St. Paul Minneapolis.



EDUCATION REPORT

This educational report of the United States/Toronto Region is divided into five sections in order to emphasize some important trends in the Lasallian schools of today. The first section deals with an overview of the system with emphasis on new projects to meet the needs of the economically and academically poor. The second section specifies the growing interest in the charism of De La Salle and how it is alive in the schools today. The third and fourth sections discuss briefly two of the present needs, the training of the faculties, and the financing of the schools. Finally, the last section looks to the future and the challenges to be met.

Part I: OVERVIEW

The Lasallian Educational system in the United States/Toronto Region is varied both as to type of school and the student population served.

1. *There are 7 Universities/Colleges (schools of higher education). All are co-ed and under the sponsorship of the Brothers.*

2. *There are 69 secondary schools (grades 9-12) serving approximately 50,000 students. Some are privately owned by the Brothers, others are owned by Dioceses or parishes, and, in the case of Toronto, by the Catholic School Board. Some schools are for boys while many are co-ed. Most of the schools are administered by Brothers but there is a growing number with lay persons as administrators. There are some 3,000 people who compose the faculties.*

3. *There are approximately 15 elementary schools with some of them the full eight years (grades 1-8) and totally independent, while others are grades 6-8 and associated with a secondary school. Administration is by both Brothers and lay persons. Some of these schools are located in inner city areas and are educating the economically poor.*

4. *There are 13 special education schools that serve the needs of young people who are declared delinquent by the courts, abandoned by their parents, emotionally disturbed or who suffer from drug or alcohol addiction. These schools are generally under the auspices of other agencies such as the Diocese, Catholic Charities or the government.*



WINONA (Minnesota): St. Mary's College, front view.



ROMEOVILLE (Illinois): Lewis University, main building.



SANTA FE (New Mexico): Santa Fe College, library.

During the past few years there have been several new projects developed, specifically geared to the needs of the poor. Some examples of these are:

1. St Frances-Charles Hall High School, Baltimore, Maryland (Baltimore District). Secondary school for black students in inner city. Three Brothers on the faculty and supported by the District.

2. De La Salle Academy, New York City. (New York District). Academically talented black and hispanic students from the inner city of New York. The program is for 7th and 8th graders and the purpose is to give as advanced education as possible so that these students will be able to complete University education and become leaders in their local community.

3. Centro La Salle, Tijuana, Mexico. This is a joint project of the San Francisco District and the North Mexico District. The purpose is to develop lay leaders for the parishes and to train adults to work with the poor in rural areas.

4. St Martin de Porres Center in Queens, New York (LI-NE District). This is a program for students who drop-out of a traditional school.

5. Refugee Center in Toronto, (Toronto District). The Brothers are educating refugees to a new living environment in Toronto. Basic language courses and high school equivalency courses are offered.

6. Hope House in New Orleans, (New Orleans-Santa Fe District). High school equivalency courses and basic reading courses offered to people who live in projects sponsored by the government.

7. The faculties of both Santa Fe College (New Orleans-Santa Fe District) and Lewis University (Chicago District) are sponsoring educational programs in prisons located near the Universities. College courses are offered to the prisoners.

8. New project beginning in the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi (St. Louis District), to serve the economically poor. The focus will be on illiteracy, high school equivalency and basic reading.

9. Guadalupe Area Project (St. Paul-Minneapolis District) is for students who have not graduated from high school because of language difficulties and other social problems. The program is to assist these students to achieve their high school diploma.

Part II.:

LASALLIAN DIMENSION

There has been remarkable renewal of interest in the life, pedagogy, and spirituality of De La Salle throughout the Region during the past 10 years.

This phenomenon is the result of the call to renewal of religious life through a return to the "original charism" by the Vatican Council II and, more immediately, by the direction given to the Institute by the 39th and 40th General Chapters.

On the regional level, a number of very important and successful programs have been established which promote the study, the personal interiorization, and the practical application of the ideas of De La Salle.

1. Buttimer Institute

The Region is into the third year of the Buttimer Institute. This is a three year program in Lasallian Studies covering the areas of The Life and Times of De La Salle, The Educational Philosophy of De La Salle, and the Spirituality of De La Salle. Over 100 Brothers and lay colleagues are participating in the program.

2. Huether Workshops. Chicago

The Education Committee of the Region sponsors the annual Huether Workshop which is focused on Lasallian principles. In 1985 they developed the Characteristics of Lasallian Schools. This topic was followed by Financing the Lasallian Schools, and The Teacher in the Lasallian School. The topic for 1988 will be Together and by Association... Schools. This Committee also began awarding the Distinguished Lasallian Educator Award to a teacher from each of the 9 districts who fulfills the quality of a Lasallian Teacher as outlined in the Characteristics document.

3. Lasallian Publications

The Lasallian Publications project of the Formation Committee is being used to further the interest and knowledge of the Founder. These books will form the basis of the Lasallian resource centers in each school.

4. Lasallian Workshops

There have been several Lasallian Workshops sponsored by the individual Districts for the faculties of the schools. The focus of these workshops is to deepen the knowledge of the Founder and to foster the traditions of the Brothers in the Schools.

This recommitment of interest in De La Salle has helped to promote a widespread re-examination of the principles and structures by which we operate our 100 plus educational institutions:

1. Institutional goals and objectives are being revised and reformulated. Some of them are:

— The teacher's providential role in the life of students is recognized;

— Teachers must see themselves as ministers of God;

— Association, shared responsibility and commitment to the work of education and evangelization are recognized by the entire faculty;

— Inclusion of the economically poor, and those from diverse ethnic backgrounds and academic ability levels is fostered;

— There is a re-emphasis on formal religious instruction and formation.

2. There is a Development of a Religious Atmosphere in the Schools according to Lasallian Principles. This is accomplished through the:

— Campus Ministry Program;

— Service Programs;

— Prayer – Liturgy – Retreats.

Part III.: TEACHER TRAINING

Teacher Training has been an Institute priority since the Founder established his first normal schools. The direction, however, that this endeavor has taken in the Region through the years has indicated a gradual change in emphasis because of teacher needs and the clientele itself has changed.

In the past, a college was established in each District of the American Region. It was in these educational communities that the Brothers who were to enter the teaching field at the elementary and secondary levels received their teacher education together with special instruction in their teaching field. The Brothers were the object of the Institute's concern because they generally formed the greater part of the faculties of our schools as lay men and lay women were few in number and generally, it was felt, absorbed the Lasallian spirit from close association with the Brothers.

Now that the percentage of Brothers that form our school faculties in the Region is low in comparison with the percentage of lay people who are teaching in the Brothers' schools, the training of Lasallian teachers has taken on a different perspective. Since but a few of these lay people may have come from a Brothers' college, and many have not received their education in a Catholic college, there is need to develop a Lasallian understanding and tradition for these people after they have been employed at the schools.

This training is done at the local District and school levels by a variety of procedures and programs. These techniques involve special introductory



The Brothers' retreat house at St. Helena, California which offers the students of the schools and various adult groups a place for retreats, days of recollection, convocations, and various services concomitant with educational works.

ry presentations as the teachers are being hired and by various in-service and orientation workshops to follow, all planned by the school administrators. Various methods of classroom supervision and evaluation will also generally be part of the local school program.

Participation in the Regional Lasallian programs is an integral part of this Teacher Training. The teachers who attend return to their schools and conduct sessions on the theme of the workshop to their school faculties. It is through this means that the spirit and information from the workshop become part of the wider association of Lasallian schools.

Part IV.: SERVICE TO THE WORKING CLASS/POOR FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS (UNITED STATES)

The beginning and the spread of the educational work of the Christian Brothers in the United States in the second half of the 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century coincides with the period where large numbers of immigrants from Europe came to the country. Many were Roman Catholics who settled in the large cities of the east and mid-west.

The bishops of the American Catholic Church decided at this time to establish and support a school system separate from the state-funded public school system. This was done for philosophical and religious reasons.

The work of the Brothers in elementary and secondary education was carried out in two ways:

1. In schools owned and operated by the Brothers in which sufficient tuition was charged to

support the school. These schools served the small numbers of Catholics of the middle and upper class.

2. Elementary and secondary schools established by parishes and dioceses, which charged no tuition or a minimal tuition and which served the large majority of Catholics of the poor and working classes of society. The parish or diocese provides the major financial support for these schools from collections and free-will offering.

Due primarily to the success of these schools, more and more Catholics moved to the middle classes. The schools grew in number and size and by mid-twentieth century in most large cities, a Catholic school education was available and affordable to the vast majority of the Catholic population. Fewer of these schools, especially secondary schools, were completely free, but the tuition charged was affordable to the middle and working classes.

During the second half of the twentieth century this situation has changed drastically. The decline in the number of Brothers, the increase in the number of lay colleagues and other financial requirements to maintain a high standard of educational excellence have caused a sharp increase in the cost

of operating Catholic schools. Dioceses and parishes have been unable and/or unwilling to carry the burden of these increased costs, and thus tuition charged to students has increased rapidly and significantly. More and more Catholics of the middle and working classes find themselves unable to pay these higher tuitions. The schools are not able to serve these traditional middle and working classes and certainly have been unable to serve the needs of the poor among the new immigrants to the country from Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa.

The tradition of the Brothers in the United States has been to see the school as the preferred means of exercising their apostolic ministry of education. The tradition of the Brothers in the United States has been to serve the working classes and the poor through these schools.

Today the Brothers of the United States continue the tradition of the school as this privileged instrument and preferred field. The special challenge of the Brothers of the United States is once again to make these schools accessible to the working class and the poor.

Virtually every school in the United States is

SANGRE DE CRISTO (Santa Fe, New Mexico): Center for Christian Studies, where the USA-Toronto Region runs sessions on spirituality and Lasallian studies.



sensitive to this challenge and is developing means to raise the money through voluntary contributions to provide financial aid or full scholarships to poor students. These fund-raising efforts are directed to several groups who can afford and can be motivated to assist needy students:

— graduates of the Brothers schools, many of whom were educated by the Brothers at little or no charge;

— families in the schools who can afford to pay more;

— the large Catholic community interested in supporting an effective Catholic School System open to all;

— businesses which benefit from the contribution Catholic schools make to the larger civic community;

— foundations which are concerned with special segments of the civic community, e.g. minority groups, immigrants, children from broken homes, the handicapped, etc.

During the 1986-87 school year, the secondary schools of the United States/Toronto Region awarded over \$ 5,100,000.00 in financial aid to enable needy students to attend our schools. This amount does not include the support given to all the students through the contributed services of the Brothers and other religious on the faculties.

Part V.:

FUTURE CHALLENGES

As we move closer to the 21st century, the future of the Catholic School System, which includes the Lasallian Schools, faces many challenges.

1. The Catholic School System uses the expression "Social Capital", developed by Professor James Coleman of the University of Chicago, while the Lasallian Schools call it Association. Both expressions emphasize that no longer can the Brothers alone operate the schools, but rather there is a need for the uniting together of the efforts of the entire school community; the Brothers, their colleagues, the parents, the alumni and all who are interested. It is by this unification of efforts and concern that the needs of the students can be met. This has started but it is only in its infancy and must be developed.

2. Catholic schools, which include Lasallian schools, are in existence for only one reason and that is to give not only an excellent academic education but that it be a Christian education. Good academic education can be received in public (govern-

ment) schools, but they lack the Christian atmosphere that is present in the Catholic/Lasallian schools. Parents are willing to make sacrifices so as to have their children attend these schools. The challenge to provide both the Christian atmosphere in the academically excellent school is of the utmost concern to school administrators.

3. The financing of the Catholic/Lasallian school system without any government aid is the number one challenge for the Church in the United States. The laws of the country do not allow for financial support of religious schools. This has always been the case, but it is becoming more and more obvious as the costs to operate schools become higher and higher. There is a close association between the diminishing number of religious as teachers and the increase of the number of lay teachers with the rising costs. Even the hiring of "excellent" lay teachers becomes difficult because of the differential in salaries offered by the public (government supported) schools over the private (religious) schools.

For Lasallian schools this financial problem becomes more serious as our charism calls us to the service of the poor. As tuitions (fees) rise the number of the poor diminishes. The challenge for the Brothers is to continue the Institute's tradition of service to the poor by creative means of support for the schools.

The Canadian school system must face the opposite challenge. The government has now begun full support of the Catholic School System, however, the government controls curriculum, teacher hiring, and student deployment. The Brothers in Canada must face the challenge of keeping their schools Lasallian under the new set of rules.

4. Another challenge of the Brothers is in the area of the teaching of Religion. The special charism of the Christian Brothers is the catechist and this must be balanced by the professional training of the individual Brothers. At one time an academic degree was not necessary to teach Religion, but today it is. As there are fewer Brothers in a school, the absence of Brothers teaching Religion becomes more apparent. How to resolve this dilemma is the challenge.

The future of the Catholic/Lasallian School is at risk. The creative genius of all who are concerned has to be employed to lead the Brothers to the 21st century. There are challenges to be met. The one constant, however, remains and that is that there are students to be given a Christian Lasallian education. One can only fall back on the Spirit of Faith, the Foundation of the Institute, to guide us to the 21st century.

GREAT BRITAIN - IRELAND

1. THE REGION

— Set up in 1976.

— From sharing at level of Visitors only, the Region has evolved into a wider co-operation with shared Retreats, Seminars etc..

Since 1986 the Novitiate in Ireland has become a Regional Novitiate and the setting up of a Regional Initial Formation Commission (R.I.F.C.) has resulted in a planned programme for the Region in Initial Formation i.e. Postulancy, Novitiate and Pre-Profession.

Since the setting up of the Region, observers from other sector have attended the District Chapters of individual Districts.

Summer missionary projects have also been shared by Districts in the Region.

— Ireland, Great Britain and Malta.

— Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Malta.

2. THE REGIONAL COORDINATOR

— He is not full time. He is Visitor in his own District as well.

He has no authority. He is co-ordinator of shared projects, Chairman of the Conference of Visitors and convenor of meetings of the Conference.

Elected by the Visitors and Auxiliary Visitors of the Region.

Term of three years.

3. REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

— Visitors' Conference meets twice each year or more frequently when need arises.

— Since the last General Chapter the Conference has discussed Interdependence, Formation, Mission endeavour, Lasallian Family, shared project for immigrants.

— There is no Regional Council.

— No Regional Assembly has taken place.

— There is no Secretariat. The only Commission is the one referred to above on Formation.

The Regional Formation Commission is composed of representatives from each District and Sub-District.

This Commission has drawn up a detailed plan for Initial Formation for the Region and this will be submitted to the Conference of Visitors for final approval.



ENGLAND AND IRELAND

426 Brothers

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4. REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PROJECTS

— So far the Region's main achievement is the setting up of R.I.F.C.; sharing views on Chapter implementation. Retreats, Seminars and Mission projects.

— The major difficulties are the totally different educational systems in all parts of the Region resulting in the inability of exchange of personnel.

— Efforts are being made to seek possible co-operation in missionary undertakings and a developed project for Irish immigrants in London.

— The Region has the advantage of a common language; proximity of all sectors; the fact that most Brothers are known to each other within the Region.

EVANGELISATION, PASTORAL CARE OF YOUTH

At present the Districts of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Sub-District of Malta form this region.

Background

The Republic of Ireland and Malta are 95% Catholic in name. In Northern Ireland and in the Districts of Great Britain, Catholics are in a minority. The educational centres administered by the Brothers in Ireland and in Malta are exclusively Catholic. Our centres in Great Britain are mostly all Catholic but amalgamation of schools is resulting in interdenominational centres. Most schools in the Region are non fee-paying, open to rich and poor alike and without discrimination as to financial situation or educational ability. Hence most schools are open to rich and poor; academically strong or weak; culturally and socially advantaged and disadvantaged.

Hence, comments on the above topics must be of a general nature due to the diversity of religious background. The educational system in the Republic of Ireland is different from that in the rest of the Region. Hence, co-operation and interdependence within the Region is limited with regard to interchanging Brothers (teachers).

Evangelisation

The school continues to be the preferred means of evangelisation within the Region. There is a commitment to making the schools a strong Christian centre. There is a growing awareness of the need and a deliberate move to involve all who influence the life of young people — parents, former students, co-workers, parish. In other words, the need for a strong Lasallian family is not being enforced by Rule but seen as an essential element in the process of evangelisation «The «Colloquium» — the training of Lasallian Christian teachers — is gaining in momentum. In Ireland this movement is quite active and a Brother will be released to work full-time in staff animation for the next four years.

Being realistic, each sector of the Region has realised that the school can do only a limited amount of evangelisation and steps have been taken to augment the work of the schools in this area.

Here, I wish to couple evangelisation with pastoral care of youth.

1. There are three Pastoral Centres in the Region: a) Kintbury - serving the District of Great Britain; b) Mellieha - serving the District of Malta; c) Castle-town - serving the District of Ireland. These Centres are available to all groups -Teachers, Adult Catechists, Caring Professions -while concentrating mainly on youth groups. The emphasis in these Centres is on developing self-worth, good liturgical experiences, reconciliation, faith and prayer sharing.

2. The District of Ireland has a full-time Catechist available to schools to assist teachers. He, together with some lay help, administers an outstanding Catechetical Resource Centre. The District intends supporting and developing this resource both financially and with increased personnel.

3. The Region administers five Child-Care Centres for young people who become involved in both petty and serious crime. The aim of these Centres is to rehabilitate these young people and to care for those at risk.

4. There is a policy in the Region to withdraw from some of our present commitments in favour of concentrating on the more needy and to deploy Brothers in pastoral care of students, parents, unemployed, unemployable, unschoolable. In the District of Great Britain some Brothers are engaged as Diocesan Catechetical Co-ordinators.

All of this may give the impression that the Region has no problems in the areas of evangelisation or pastoral care. But this is not the reality:

1. There remains a great need for conversion among the Brothers to the realisation that we are not teachers merely but that teaching is a means to an end - evangelisation.

2. Academic achievement continues as an absolute priority for students, parents and many teachers.

3. The «Local Church» often negates the efforts of the school in evangelisation.

4. Brothers and lay teachers need more retraining in these areas.

5. The home experience frequently contradicts the values being imparted by the schools.

RELEC

The Lasallian Region of Central Europe

1. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE REGION

RELEC (Central European Lasallian Region) has not the same claim to be considered a living reality as are the Districts which it comprises. Some knowledge of the situation is necessary before one can understand and make a judgment. Hence this brief introduction.

The Region has six Districts representing five nations, namely, HOLLAND, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, POLAND, BELGIUM NORTH (Flemish-speaking) and BELGIUM SOUTH (French-speaking).

Five different countries, then, speaking four different languages: German, Dutch, French and Polish (the language of our Polish confrères sets them apart, linguistically, from the rest of the Region and of the Institute).

In five of the Districts the majority of the Brothers are very old. Poland, on the other hand, is a District of young men.

The five "ageing Districts" live in Western Europe; Poland belongs to East Europe.

Poland is our most "conservative" district; Holland is very "progressive."

In four of our Districts the Brothers run schools. The Dutch Brothers no longer do so, and the apostolate of our Polish Brothers is to teach catechism and care for handicapped young people.

2. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE DISTRICTS:

2.1. *North Belgium:* Some 250 Brothers, of whom 200 are retired and the other 50 are directors or teachers in 59 schools.

2.2. *South Belgium:* Nearly all the Brothers are retired. A very small number are working in schools. Some devote themselves to the care of poor or handicapped young people (and of these Brothers some live outside a community). Our schools are no longer "broederscholen" - "Brothers' schools": in most of them we have only two, one or no Brother among 30, 50 or 100 lay teachers.

Our most important projects in this District are:

- the Lasallian Family;



CENTRAL EUROPE

749 Brothers

Central European
Lasallian Region (RELEC)
Secretariat
Hendrik Placestraat 45
B 1720 DILBEEK
(Groot-Bijgaarden)
Belgium
Tel. (02) 266-00-50

W. Germany
Austria
North Belgium
South Belgium
Holland
Poland

- a Lasallian Educational Project;
- meetings for lay teachers;
- the selecting of lay persons to run schools.

Our schools belong to, and depend on a "Bureau de l'enseignement catholique". Up to the present this centre has administered two types of schools "traditional" and "new", but the objective is to merge both types. It is also intended that the "Bureau" will be divided into a French-speaking section and a Flemish-speaking one. In the context of our Belgian political situation there will be a Flemish and a French Ministry of Education. The situation is not a very simple one!

2.3. *Holland*: After the efforts they have expended and following a serious study of their situation the Brothers of this District have reached the following conclusions:

- There is no future for the Institute in Holland;
- Young people show no interest in our life or our Institute;
- The school has no place in the mission of the Institute;
- The Dutch District has no schools and at the present moment (I think) there is only one Brother engaged in teaching young people.

2.4. *Austria*: About 55 Brothers with 6 schools (3 of them in Vienna). The Visitor and the former Visitor are Directors of schools. The Brothers are striving to maintain their undertakings and to provide inspiration and animation, despite the diminishing number of Brothers, and the corresponding increase of lay teachers, in the schools.

2.5. *Germany*: 45 Brothers, of whom 40 are at Illertissen. The great question is the same as in Austria: how to provide inspiration with so few Brothers and so many lay staff in the schools, and how to communicate the Lasallian spirit to the lay colleagues?

3. OTHER DIFFICULTIES

3.1. *The Role of Visitor*: The present Visitors of *Belgium* and *Holland* are men of retirement age. Those of *Austria* and *Germany* combine the roles of Director or teacher in very large schools (and cultural centres where the activities continue even throughout the vacations). These two Brothers Visitors are practically never free. The Visitor of *Poland* has difficulties with the other languages of the Region, French and German.

3.2. During a meeting of the Region at Haarlem (Holland) a Eucharistic celebration was the occasion of a breakdown in the relationship between the Dutch Brothers and the Visitor of Germany, Brother Norbert: the celebration was presided over by a woman.

3.3. Our Region has no Councillor responsible for the Region as a whole. Three Councillors have a special concern, respectively for: Belgium and Holland; for Austria and Germany; and for Poland.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1. The Statutes of RELEC.

4.2. *Collaboration between Belgium (North) and Holland*:

- translations of communications from the Chapter, Circulars etc.;
- an excellent translation of the RULE in Dutch;
- efforts for the interiorisation of the Rule by the Brothers (two assemblies presided over, and animated, by Brother Patrice);
- A visit (lasting a week) of our Provincial secretariat to the District of Holland;
- there is thinking already about a merger of the two Districts?

4.3. *Collaboration with South Belgium*.

- many contacts with the Visitors for the different sectors;
- interchange of ideas concerning, e.g. S. Belgium's Lasallian Days and N. Belgium's Lasallian Educational Project.

There are also the same problems to be dealt with:

- the ageing of the Districts;
- the necessity of appointing lay staff to the schools;
- the need to prepare these for the task of running our schools;
- the burden of our undertaking - the institutions, the buildings etc.;
- concrete difficulties with our missions secretariat;
- problems caused by various groups bearing the name of Young Lasallians;
- the relationship with Rwanda and Zaire.

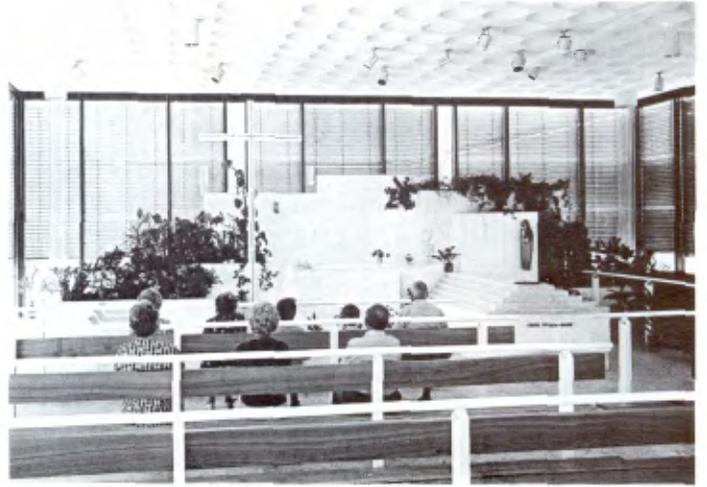
4.4. *Collaboration with Germany and Austria*.

- regular contacts (e.g. by telephone);
- exchange of District bulletins;
- we send them both all our documents;
- we visit their Brothers Visitors at least once a year, and we have informal contacts with many Brothers of those Districts.

4.5. With *Poland*, however, contact remains difficult.



MALONNE (Belgium): Br. Mutien Marie Pilgrimage Centre; calvary and statue of Br. Mutien Mary.



MALONNE (Belgium): Interior of the chapel and tomb of Blessed Brother Mutien Mary.

HAARLEM (Holland): Photo taken at a meeting in June 1988 between the Brothers responsible for the Region of Central Europe and General Councillors, Brothers Joseph Hendron and Gerard Rummery.



	(1)	(2)
WEST AFRICA	8	44
GERMANY	4	45
ANDALUSIA	22	152
WEST INDIES	7	34
ARGENTINA	18	93
PARAGUAY	SD 18	93
ATLANTIC	33	211
AUSTRALIA	31	182
AUSTRIA	7	61
BALTIMORE	21	250
NORTH BELGIUM	35	250
SOUTH BELGIUM	31	212
BESANCON	15	93
BILBAO	36	308
BOGOTA	21	138
BOLIVIA	11	55
BRITTANY	29	208
CARACAS	10	56
CATALONIA	31	266
CENTRAL SPAIN	6	41
BENIN GULF	SD 7	32
CENTRAL AMERICA	21	93
CHICAGO	13	108
CHILE	9	43
COLOMBO	12	65
INDIA	SD 7	49
PAKISTAN	SD 5	17
DOUALA	10	44
EGYPT	D 6	28
ECUADOR	17	79
ETHIOPIA	D 8	35
CENTRE EAST FRANCE	32	279
GREECE	D 4	19
HOLLAND	9	61
IRELAND	32	224
SOUTH AFRICA	SD 4	18
REUNION DJIBOUTI	D 8	41
LILLE	25	130
GREAT BRITAIN	23	173
MALTA	SD 4	29
LINE	15	141



1988 STATISTICS

NUMBER OF BRO

ASIA	592
CANADA	466
GREAT BRITAIN IRELAND	426
SPAIN-PORTUGAL	1418
CENTRAL EUROPE	749

(1) Number of communities
(2) Number of Brothers



★ Countries where there are Brothers.

ERS BY REGIONS

ITALY	_____	406
FRANCE	_____	1537
AFRICA	_____	315
LATIN AMERICA	_____	1222
MEDITERRANEAN	_____	127
UNITED STATES - Toronto		1395

MADRID	22	170
MEDELLIN	19	97
NORTH MEXICO	18	129
SOUTH MEXICO	18	128
MIDI MEDITERRANEAN	30	215
MONTREAL	17	181
JAPAN	SD 4	21
NEW ORLEANS SANTA FE	16	161
NEW YORK	29	275
ORIENT	13	71
OTTAWA	6	40
PARIS ROUEN	25	214
PENANG	17	59
HONG KONG	SD 4	19
SINGAPORE	SD 3	21
PERU	11	57
PHILIPPINES	9	38
POLAND	15	104
PORTO ALEGRE	30	151
QUEBEC	20	171
BURMA	D 6	23
RHEIMS	20	146
ROME	19	197
RWANDA	D 5	35
SAIGON - Vietnam	11	84
SAIGON - France	4	22
SAINT LOUIS	14	117
SAN FRANCISCO	17	169
SAO PAULO	13	49
TANANARIVO	11	87
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	—	16
THAILAND	D 3	13
TURIN	20	209
TORONTO	9	78
NIGERIA	SD 4	4
TROIS RIVIERES	6	53
TURKEY	D 2	9
VALENCIA	20	149
VALLADOLID	28	300
ST. PAUL MINN.	13	96
ZAIRE	7	48

TOTAL: 1202 8653

SPAIN-PORTUGAL

1. THE REGION

Foundation

It came into existence on September 8th 1963 during the first meeting of the Visitors' Conference.

There followed five Regional Assemblies. During each of these Regional statutes were revised and guidelines were drawn up for the following four years.

Development

The Central District was set up to administer the Region. The statutes of the District were approved on March 23rd 1973 and were revised by the Visitors' Conference at the request of the 5th Regional Assembly held in 1987. This revision was approved by the Vicar General in the name of the Superior General in a letter dated May 28th 1988.

Administrative areas

The Region includes the following Districts: Andalusia, Bilbao, Catalonia, Central Spain, Madrid, Valencia-Palma, Valladolid and the sub-District of the Gulf of Benin.

Countries involved

Spain and Portugal and the following missionary countries: Equitorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Gulf of Benin and Togo.

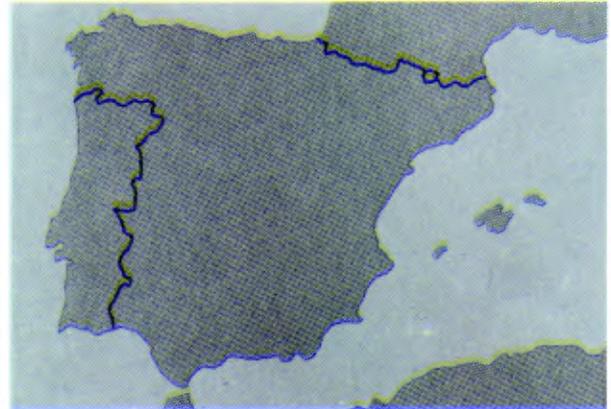
2. THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Responsibilities

He works full time. It is the responsibility of the Region to see to the running of the common services entrusted to it by the Regional Assembly.

The Central District was set up to organise these services.

The Regional Co-ordinator is at the same time Visitor of the Central District and President of the Region.



**SPAIN - PORTUGAL
(ARLEP)**

1418 Brothers

Casa Provincial La Salle
Dolores Romero, 6
28028 MADRID
Spain
Tel. (91) 2-55-07-58

Andalusia
Bilbao
Catalonia
Central Spain
Madrid
Valencia
Valladolid

Duties

The duties of the Regional Co-ordinator or President are listed in detail in article 15 of the Regional statutes.

Election

He is elected according to the procedures laid down in article 13 of the Regional statutes and article 5.2 of the Central District statutes.

Term of office

According to article 14 of the statutes he is elected for 4 years, renewable.

3. REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES

Visitors' Conference

Its powers are set out in articles 16 to 20 in the Regional statutes. It normally meets three times a year, in October, February and May. The October and May meetings last three days, while the February one lasts eight days and includes a five days' retreat.

Topics for consideration since the 41st General Chapter have been very varied. The main ones include the following:

★ the implementation of the 36 motions passed by the 5th Regional Assembly;

★ the assessment of the work being done by the various common services: the St. Pius Xth Pontifical Institute, pastoral education days, the St. Pius Xth Publishing House, courses in missiology, theology, catechetics as part of the continuing formation of the Brothers, CEL (Spanish Lasallian Centre), preparatory retreats for final profession, missions, Regional commissions, Bruno Publications, the IPSA Society, and so on;

★ planning a list of areas to be studied later:

— the call to conversion; methods and approach with regard to the implementation of Chapter documents; religious life;

— policy with regard to the missions;

— the implications of interdependence at a Regional level;

— plans for training lay teachers;

— continuing formation;

— the Lasallian Family;

— the Christian school; the present situation of education, the reform of education;

— the publication of Institute books; translation, coordination of work;

— fostering vocations;

— discussion on the work of the Visitors;

— the follow-up of young Brothers; the accompaniment of vocations and initial formation;

— pastoral care of adults;

— preparation for the 5th Regional Assembly which took place in July 1987;

— the appointment of Brothers to the common services and the missions;

— the ALFA-FERE information technology plan;

— plans for the care of retired Brothers;

— plans to draw up statutes for the sub-District and their approval;

— summer projects for the missions;

— the setting up of a non state controlled organisation called PROYDE (Promotion and Development) to help the missions;

— drawing up an annual plan of action for each of the Regional commissions;

— the approval of annual accounts and budgets;

— preparations for the final profession retreat;

— the powers of the Council of the sub-District of the Gulf of Benin;

— the meeting with the French Visitors' Conference;

— the meeting with Brother Vicar General and Brother Martin Corral, General Councillor;

— the revision of the statutes of the Central District;

— the «Enrichissement Instrumental» programme;

— relations between the IPSA Society and the Brothers of the Christian Schools;

— training courses for administrative staff;

— the new series of books entitled «Nueva Escuela» published by Bruno Publications.

There is no *Regional Council*.

The Regional Assembly

Its constitution is set out in article 8 of the Regional statutes.

It meets every four years, as is indicated in article 10 of the same statutes.

The topics treated in the most recent meeting were listed in the Regional Bulletin (ARLEP No 134).

The powers of the Regional Assembly are set out in detail in article 9 of the statutes.

The Regional Secretariat and Commissions

In accordance with article 33 of the statutes there are seven Regional Commissions.

They meet at least three times a year. Each draws up a plan of action which is submitted for the approval of the Visitors' Conference.

Each commission has a secretary and at least one representative from each of the Districts.

The Regional Co-ordinator is the chairman of all the commissions.

Each commission has a specific task: Education, Pastoral Care and Catechesis, Initial Formation, Continuing Formation, Missions, Retirement, Finance.

4. COMPLETED REGIONAL PROJECTS AND FUTURE PLANS

Common Services

We have been able to organise a large number of common services to match a variety of needs in accordance with articles 24 to 32 of the Regional statutes.

The Central District numbers 80 Brothers from other Districts. These Brothers run the Regional common services.

Main difficulties encountered

These lie mainly in the area of the allocation of personnel. However, thanks to the good understanding among the Visitors, these are not insoluble problems.

Future projects

There are many of these. They consist in the implementation of the 36 proposals approved during the 5th Regional Assembly in 1987.

Specific and significant Regional characteristics

The most significant characteristics of the Region are the coordination between the various common services and communication between the Districts.

Its most specific achievements are: support for the missions, training of catechists thanks to the St. Pius Xth Pontifical Institute, the production of school textbooks and publications on catechesis and spirituality by the Bruno and St. Pius Xth Publishing House, also the great vitality of the various Regional Commissions (the organisation of continuing formation courses, counselling, etc.).

Madrid, August 5th 1988.

Brother Jesus Eguskiza Igartua

SAN ASENSIO (La Rioja, Spain): September 12th 1988: a social get-together of the two novitiate communities of the Spain Portugal Region. In the front row of the group photo can be seen the former Superior General, Brother Pablo Basterrechea.



EVANGELIZATION, YOUTH MINISTRY, VOCATION PROGRAM

In this study we are going to consider what is being done regarding Evangelization, Youth Ministry, and the program for attracting Vocations at the Regional level, as well as at that of each of the Districts. (ARLEP).

A. AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

In keeping with the directives of the Regional Assembly, there exist:

1. A Regional Ministry and Catechesis Commission

This Commission is presided over by the Regional Coordinator, has a Secretary General who is a teacher of the Saint Pius X Pontifical Institute, and both of these are members of the said commission; another teacher of the Pius X Pontifical Institute and two ministry delegates from each of the six Districts.

Normally it meets three times a year.

Its purpose is to elaborate the ministerial criteria in the various apostolates dealing with the young, adults, Vocations: to put the proposals approved by the Regional Assembly into practice: to coordinate the National Youth Assembly each year and to give impetus to the various ministerial Courses or activities carried on in common throughout the Region.

To this statement, we should like to add:

- a) *the basic criteria for the Educational Plan in Lasallian Schools,*
- b) *the basic criteria for the recruitment of vocations,*
- c) *the basic criteria for an adult ministry.*

We continue by presenting the propositions approved in the Fifth Regional Assembly with regard to the Ministry:

25. *The Regional Commission for Ministry and Vocations and the Saint Pius X Pontifical Institute would like to maintain close ties for the purpose of*

analyzing together the ministerial and catechetical needs of Lasallian schools and to decide upon the manner in which to respond to these needs in a creative and cooperative way. Two Saint Pius X teachers are permanent members of this Commission.

26. *The Fifth ARLEP Regional Assembly makes the CRPC responsible, during the period until the sixth Regional Assembly, for studying the following themes and initiating appropriate activities regarding them:*

- a) *The Sacramental ministry, with special attention given to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in view of pastoral and catechetical difficulties which present themselves today.*
- b) *To draw up and circulate a document which is intended for our educational communities and Church organizations and which will clarify the rightful and special place of the Christian School as a centre of catechesis and of the celebration of the faith; what its conditions should be, especially in the realm of the sacramental ministry (the Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, etc.); and to spell out its connection with the parish ministry.*
- c) *The way of implementing within the Districts a policy of making Brothers aware, of inspiring and training them in all that pertains to the Vocational program and in the key elements which strengthen it (the nearness of the Brother and of the Brothers' community, Christian groups, personal interviews, the experience of commitment, prayer experiences, presenting an explanation of the Lasallian vocation), so that this vocational program will bear tangible fruit.*

2. The Saint Pius X Pontifical Institute

This is an institute dedicated to the education of Brothers, men and women religious, and lay people as educators in the faith.

It has been in existence for 25 years and has carried out numerous activities. The principal ones are:

- *The Licenciante in Catechetical Science and*

conferring the title of Master of Catechetical Sciences at the end of the course;

— A year long course to update educators in the faith;

— Catechetical Schools courses: 4 years;

— Correspondence courses for catechists;

— A year long course in Missiology;

— A course on the Pastoral Care of Youth and vocations.

— Course to qualify Religion teachers at primary level, 6th form level and continuing formation level.

— Days dedicated to the Educational Ministry;

— ETYC courses: School of Catechesis and Theology for updating the Brothers of the various Districts.

The First Regional Assembly has approved the following proposals for the Saint Pius X Pontifical Institute:

6. Given that our special vocation is to teach religion and that many Brothers have already studied the three main branches of Theology during their initial formation, each Brother should be given the opportunity of completing his licenciante in the Catechetical Sciences, either after 3 years of Theological studies, or during CEL, or at some time during his continuing formation.

7. In support of the proposal of the 1981 Assembly, which stated that the Saint Pius X Institute needs to be assured of future support by a policy of training future teachers, and without ignoring its present needs (studying and implementing schemes to do with Christian education; increasing research; help staff to get up to date; make cooperation and staff exchanges easier with other Regions of the Institute) four Brothers are asked to join the Pius X teaching staff. Two will join in 1988-89 and two others will begin in 1990-91.

8. We are aware of the priority need of our continuing formation. St. Pius X (through the ETYC) should offer courses which meet the needs of the Brothers' continuing formation and which, in consultation with the Continuing Formation Commission of each District, or, if such exists, in consultation with the Regional Commission on Continuing

Formation, determine the manner in which this will be carried out.

9. That the Regional Coordinator, together with the administrators of the Bruño publishers and the Saint Pius X publishers coordinate the work of the two publishers and determine how they can cooperate.

B. AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

Every year each District draws up its District Plan. This overall plan includes the study and implementation of the Pastoral Care programme.

The Pastoral Care programme of each District includes:

a) A District Pastoral Commission.

This Commission draws up the annual pastoral aims and points out the means of putting them into practice. In some Districts some lay people are included among the Commission members.

They meet at least three times a year.

b) A District Pastoral Team

This Team is made up of three or four full-time members doing this work full-time. In a fair number of Districts, this team is coordinated by a Brother Auxiliary Visitor.

c) In each school there is a Brother Coordinator of Pastoral Care

In some Districts, Brothers are released from other work on a half-time basis so as to be able to do this.

d) Pastoral care

Covers such areas as:

— School activities

— Extra curricular activities

— Youth

— Adults

— Vocations

AFRICA (RELAF)

1. THE REGION

The preamble of the RELAF statutes reads as follows: In line with the directives laid down by the Rule (art. 127), and wishing to promote unity, consultation and collaboration, the Brothers of the Christian Schools (the De La Salle Brothers) living in Africa have grouped themselves together in a Region called the Lasallian Region of Africa (RELAF).

As a visible sign of the "unity of mind and heart of the Brothers" in the Region, RELAF provides a link which binds them to one another, to the Centre of the Institute and to the Institute as a whole.

The Regional Constitutive Assembly was held in Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) in 1977. However, even a few years before that date, the wish to create closer ties and avoid the fragmentation of the Institute in Africa had led to some practical measures being taken. In 1972, there took place in Yaounde a first meeting of Brothers from the various Districts and sectors of Africa whose jurisdiction at the time was shared by 7 Assistants. A second general meeting took place in 1974 in Kinshasa, during which the subject for consideration was: "What does the De La Salle Brother in Africa want his religious life to be like?"

Ever since then, the inculturation of the Institute in the African Church has always been one of the aims of RELAF.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF RELAF

The statutes read as follows:

- those who belong to the *Districts* of West Africa, Douala, Antananarivo and Zaire;
- those who belong to the *sub-Districts* of Nigeria, South Africa, Benin Gulf;
- those who belong to the *Delegations* of Rwanda, Ethiopia;
- those who belong to the *sector* of East Africa.

All the other Brothers in Africa may join RELAF so long as they subscribe to the aims described in detail below and accept the statutes currently in force. For admission they should contact the Visitors' Conference.

All in all there are 400 Brothers belonging to RELAF. Of these 200 are African and 200 European or



AFRICA (RELAF)

315 Brothers

Provincial House
P.O. Box 544
ASMARA
Ethiopia
Tel. 11-98-20

West Africa
Benin
Burkina Faso
Ivory Coast
Douala
Ethiopia
Equatorial Guinea

Nigeria
Rwanda
South Africa
Tananarivo
Togo
Zaire

American. As far as numbers are concerned, it is one of the smaller Regions, but judging by the number of novices at present it shows every sign of growing. And what is more, every year there are more young Brothers in community.

3. THE AIMS OF RELAF

The main aims of RELAF are as follows:

- the establishment and development of Lasallian values in Africa within the framework of the local Church;
- the creation and development of initial and continuing formation programmes;
- research into and implementation of educational programmes and evangelisation;
- the study and resolution of the specific problems of members with regard to formation, new foundations, exchange of personnel, etc...

4. THE STRUCTURE OF RELAF

With a view to fulfilling its aims, the Region has set up the following structures:

the Regional Assembly, the Visitors' Conference, the Regional Co-ordinator.

4.1. Regional Assembly

RELAF holds at least one Regional Assembly in the period between two successive General Chapters.

Those eligible to attend the assembly include:

- delegates elected by Districts, sub-Districts, Delegations, Sectors;
- members of the Visitors' Conference;
- the Regional Co-ordinator.

The number of elected members is fixed by the Visitors' Conference.

The Assembly lays down guidelines for the Region and assesses the way it works.

4.2. Visitors' Conference

The following are members of the Visitors' Conference:

- the Regional Co-ordinator;
- Visitors and auxiliary Visitors;
- Presidents of Delegations;
- Brothers in charge of Sectors.

The Visitors' Conference is the body which executes the decisions made by the Regional Assembly.

It also provides support for those running the common services.

It organises the Regional Assembly.

The Visitors' Conference meets at least once a year. It can call upon the heads of the common services to attend. The Visitors' Conference makes its own internal arrangements in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the statutes of RELAF. One of these guidelines pinpoints the responsibilities of

the Regional Coordinator, which up till now have been left rather vague. The statute enacted in Lagos in July 1988 describes his responsibilities as follows:

4.3. The Regional Co-ordinator

RELAF has a permanent representative called the Regional Co-ordinator.

The Regional Co-ordinator coordinates the work of the Region. He must not have the responsibilities of a Visitor.

The Regional Co-ordinator is the visible sign of the unity of the Region and its link with the Centre of the Institute. As such:

- he is responsible for the common services of the Region;
- he ensures good communication and distribution of information within the Region;
- he encourages the exchange of personnel within the Region as the need arises;
- he is the one with the resources and the time available to work on and organise District plans for sessions, retreats, catechesis...
- he is the Chairman of the Visitors' Conference: he calls it, organises it, runs it and ensures its decisions are carried out.

With the collaboration of the Visitors' Conference, the Regional Co-ordinator convenes the Regional Assembly.

The Regional Co-ordinator is appointed by the Visitors' Conference. Brother Superior General and his Council are informed of the decision.

His term of office is three years, renewable.

5. COMMON SERVICES

RELAF has set up with the help of the Visitors' Conference a certain number of common services especially with regard to formation. Of these services, which are still in existence and which have helped a great number of Brothers, we can pick out for special mention CLAF (Lasallian African Centre) and the Regional novitiate at Kinshasa.

★ CLAF is concerned with the continuing formation of the Brothers. It was set up in 1974; it runs every two years but not in the same place: the new venue each time is decided upon by the Visitors' Conference. It is the Visitors' Conference also which chooses the special topic for each session.

★ The Regional novitiate in Kinshasa makes it possible to give the novices a solid formation thanks to the balanced contributions of formation personnel sufficient in number and working as a team. At present the formation team consists of 5 Brothers work-

ing full time. There are 24 novices spread over two years. The novitiate is French-speaking.

★ Other common services have been planned and are about to start their work. This is the case, for example, of the English-speaking novitiate in Nairobi. It is due to open in September 1989. Premises have already been bought and the formation team is gradually being formed. This means that a second Regional novitiate will be functioning in a few months from now.

★ The Pan-African scholasticate is another common services project waiting to be set up. When it is, it will provide in particular a theological, catechetical and pedagogical formation suited to the needs of the young Brothers. At the present time, there are discussions going on with the ICAO (Catholic Institute of West Africa) with a view to securing its collaboration in the setting up of this Regional scholasticate.

★ And finally let us mention one last project (last but not least!), the CELA (African Centre for Lassaillian Studies). It is intended especially for Brothers coming to the end of their basic formation and who are preparing for final profession. Up till now this project has remained simply a pious wish. Because there are so few Brothers making final vows each year, individual Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations have made their own local arrangements for a

month-long spiritual session or an extended retreat for their own Brothers who are due to make their final vows.

CONCLUSION

The setting up of the African Region is an adventure which has hardly begun. There are quite a few problems, and that is why those attending the most recent session of RELAF last July in Lagos called into question the whole idea of an African Region:

— because of the great distances involved and differences in culture,

— because the great differences that characterise African countries would seem to pose the question: should there be one or several Regions in Africa?

RELAF is facing these very real difficulties that stem from geographical and cultural considerations. But there is another side to the coin: there are those things that unite and bring closer. Thanks to these shared things, RELAF has not merely survived, but has forged ahead and created common services. It has also created for itself a flexible structure that can evolve. All these things have helped to strengthen the unity of RELAF, to the great benefit of the Districts, sub-Districts, Delegations and Sectors that compose it.

KINSHASA (Zaire): the 1987 novices with formation personnel.

