



~~~~~ FINAL REPORT ~~~~~

Christian Brothers Conference  
Landover, Maryland



## PREFACE

In the spring of 2000, the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was held in Rome. Even in ordinary times, a Chapter, which meets once every seven years, is a significant moment in the life of Brothers and of the Lasallian world. Its primary tasks are to serve as the Institute's supreme legislative authority and to elect the Superior General and his Council. But in extraordinary times, a Chapter strives to find a prophetic voice and to chart a bold course for the future in consonance with the "signs of the times" and the emerging needs of the Lasallian Educational Mission. Such were the circumstances in 2000.

The Brother capitulants took up the theme, *"Associated for the educational service of the poor as the Lasallian response to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."* Commitments to both the educational service of the poor and to evangelization of the young were affirmed as integral to the Lasallian Mission and given direction in certain propositions. But perhaps the most prophetic of the Chapter's documents pertained to the notion of "Lasallian Association for Mission." The delegates noted the increasingly critical role Lasallian partners play in effecting the Mission, as well as the emergence of new ways by which many partners are choosing to become associated for the Mission. The Chapter challenged Districts and Regions to develop programs to encourage new forms of association and to provide partners with Lasallian formation experiences and accompaniment. Most significantly, the Chapter called for the creation of new governance structures related to the Mission that would welcome both voice and vote of lay partners. In that spirit, it was determined that the next General Chapter would be preceded by Regional Assemblies conducted throughout the world and by an International Assembly to be held in Rome a year prior to the Chapter. Each of these important gatherings would focus on Mission and Association and each would be composed of delegates, at least two-thirds of whom would be lay partners.

In response to this directive, 112 delegates from throughout the United States (U.S.) and Toronto Region gathered in Salt Lake City, Utah, from November 15 to 19, 2005. They were joined by several visiting colleagues from Rome and from other Regions, as well as by a small number of observers from various Lasallian schools and agencies.

The purpose of this historic Regional Assembly was two-fold: First, to fulfill the Chapter mandate to convene groups of Brothers and Partners to reflect upon the wide array of issues related to the Lasallian Educational Mission, the current governance structures sustaining that Mission, and the manner by which individuals associate for the mission. And second, to chart a course for the Region itself, that is, to develop a series of vision statements and action steps in response to emerging challenges and opportunities confronting Lasallians in the U.S. and Toronto.

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The delegates came well-prepared for the task at hand. Nearly all had completed one or more of the major Regional formation programs, such as the Buttimer Institute, the Lasallian Leadership Institute, or the Lasallian Social Justice Institute. Many participated with their colleagues in focus group or listening sessions conducted throughout the Region in the months prior. Finally, all of the delegates were asked to read a significant number of important documents related to Lasallian mission and association.

And so, the delegates participated in an intense, four day-long process that explored rather fully the three main topics of Lasallian Educational Mission, Association, and Structures. Through a mix of keynote addresses, panel discussions, video presentations, and small and large group discussions, the participants developed a deeper appreciation for the complexity and urgency of certain of the issues and crafted a series of directional statements for application on the International, Regional, District, and local levels. The outcome statements were endorsed enthusiastically and unanimously by the delegates on the final day.

The document that follows, then, emerges as a response to the prophetic call of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter and in anticipation of the critically important deliberations of the 44<sup>th</sup>. The reader will discover in the paragraphs to come a sincere effort to present a statement that is at once accurately descriptive in its analysis of current realities and helpfully prescriptive in its recommendations for the future of our Region. In sum, this report reflects a strong consensus on matters of vital import forged by deeply committed Lasallians who came together for a week in Salt Lake City and experienced a moment of considerable value.

# ASSOCIATED FOR THE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MISSION IN THE UNITED STATES AND TORONTO REGION

## I. GENERAL CONTEXT OF THE GEOGRAPHIC REGION

This analysis includes the United States where the Region has six Districts and the Canadian province of Ontario where the Toronto Delegation is located.

The educational systems of the two countries are very different. In the U.S., education is locally governed within each state. Taxes on property support education resulting in upscale areas having better funded schools. There is no direct support for private education, although some states allow support to parents of private school students and limited support of certain programs. In Ontario, Catholic schools are publicly funded, but private Catholic schools that are not governed by the local board get no support as is the case of the school sponsored by the Toronto Delegation. Therefore, schools in the Region rely primarily on tuition and fundraising to continue to operate.

The Region sponsors seven universities that are eligible for federal and state student loans and some grants. For them as for all private universities, a massive effort in recruiting new students, finding financial support and raising funds is needed to make them viable and competitive in a tight market for students.

Three child-care systems for minors who have had some encounter with the law or are in difficult family situations are maintained by Districts of the Region. These institutions receive funding support from the state.

Although Catholic schools have been known to provide excellent education, there has been a continuing decline in the number of students. Without government support, inner-city Catholic schools struggle to provide a strong Catholic education for minority and lower-income students. A recent study on teen religious attitudes indicates that “Catholic schools have grown into college prep academies with competitive admissions standards and hefty tuition rates, serving the more privileged of their communities, whether Catholic or not, and more dedicated, by demand of parents, to getting their students admitted to prestigious colleges” than teaching religion (Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, Oxford University Press, 2005).

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## Children and Youth

In both countries the youth are highly influenced by the media technology resulting in a pseudo-homogeneous youth culture that is post-modern in many ways. The use of MP3 players, blogs and instant messaging has resulted in a youth culture that is different from the mainstream. These forms of media also individualize knowledge and interests, creating non-hierarchical or non-expertise sources of knowledge. What is read on a blog carries the same weight as what is read in a textbook.

Among the economically poor, in minority groups, and among many immigrants, there is a steady undercurrent of crime, often drug-related, in both urban and rural areas. In Toronto, there has been an increase in youth crime, especially gun crime, which was almost unheard of in the past. Yet, there is a searching for community, sometimes virtual, among young people and with that an interest in spirituality and a hope of making the world a better place.

## Family Life

Family life is almost identical in both countries. While there is great discussion about family values, family life is constantly being re-defined. In Ontario and in the U.S., the divorce rate is 37 percent. Single-parent families in both nations are about 16 percent of the population. However, Ontario allows same-sex marriage, while in the U.S., one state has same-sex marriage and six states have same-sex civil unions which are not recognized by the other states.

Families live very busy lives and rarely have meals or recreation together except during vacation time. Conversely, many parents follow their children's lives in school and activities very closely and look to playing an important part in their educational and recreational lives. The individualism of North American society takes a toll on families, and often people search for some kind of family values to come from the cultural or political society rather than from themselves.

## Promotion of Justice

In both Canadian and American society, there is a stronger sense of justice than in past eras. Awareness of native populations, immigrants, racial minorities, and the disabled has resulted in legal rights being extended to them in various ways. However, these populations still are economically marginalized due to the lack of employment opportunities.

There is a strong involvement in private volunteerism. Many organizations promote social justice activities and opportunities for service in the home country and abroad. In the U.S. there are government-sponsored programs such as the Peace Corp and AmeriCorp. The Canadian Bishops sponsor the Development and Peace Group. The growing Lasallian Volunteer Program in our Region recruits college graduates for one year of volunteer service in a Lasallian ministry that serves the economically poor and disadvantaged. Catholic schools offer courses on Catholic social teaching and service-learning.

Canadians and Americans who are financially gifted are generous and give to many causes. The challenge is to distinguish between justice and charity so that the causes of injustice are not merely assuaged by charitable acts but corrected through social justice.

The religious climate in the U.S. and Canada differs to some extent. Canada is a more secular society similar to Europe, while the U.S. has an overwhelming number of people who consider themselves believers and religious (90 percent) although actual church attendance is down. Fifty-two percent of the American population attends church services at least twice a month. This number is a decline from past decades. In both countries the Catholic Church is increasing in numbers and is the largest religious group. Religion in Canada is seen as something private, and religious intrusion into the public sphere is usually challenged. The same is true in the U.S., but in recent years some religious groups are pushing for a place in the public sphere.

Only 20 percent of school-age Catholic children in the United States attend Catholic schools. In Canada, where the government supports Catholic schools, questions have been raised concerning the quality of Catholic education in the schools.

In Christian Smith's study of youth and religion in the U.S., Catholic teenagers scored the lowest of all religious adherents on a measure of religiosity and knowledge of their faith. Smith calls the youth approach to religion *Moral Therapeutic Deism* which is described as believing generally in God, striving to be happy, and needing God only when there are problems. Students tend to follow their parents in expressing membership in the Catholic Church, but show little interest in or knowledge of Catholic teachings and traditions. The study also showed that the Catholic Church in the U.S. expends a smaller proportion of resources on youth ministry than does any other denomination.

## 2. THEMATIC CONTENT

**A**mong Brothers and partners there is strong commitment to and enthusiasm for the Lasallian Mission and working in Association. A rediscovery of the story of St. John Baptist de La Salle has brought energy and focus to the Mission. Many find the Mission engaging within and outside of the classroom, as they transform their job into a vocation.

A variety of facets of the Mission are emerging, including grade schools, San Miguel schools, child care and youth services, in addition to high schools and universities. A sign of the attractiveness of the Mission is the desire of schools that never had Brothers to become Lasallian schools.

## Religious Climate

## LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MISSION Situational Analysis

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Christian Smith, *National Study of Youth and Religion*, 2005.

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This diversity of ministries is a positive sign of the vitality of the Mission, but it also presents a challenge in keeping a clear and commonly shared sense of purpose. The expansion of ministries may affect the financial viability of existing ones, as both financial and human resources are spread too thin. While new ministries are emerging, others are on the brink of closing.

The strong progressive leadership of both Brothers and lay partners is seen as a strength of the Region, as is the increasing number of lay leaders assuming responsibility for the Mission. However, reliance on the Brothers to provide leadership continues to prevail. There is great District-Regional collaboration and a movement towards a Regional identity. Many Lasallians express a great deal of hopefulness, while at the same time they feel a degree of uncertainty about the future of the Lasallian mission because of the diminishing number of Brothers and economic concerns.

Rising tuition is pushing many schools away from affordability and consequently threatens the commitment to the poor. The need to offer fair and just wages and conditions to employees is another concern. The diversity of our schools is also at risk with minority students being excluded because parents cannot afford to send their children to Lasallian schools. Finally, in the quest for educational excellence, there is a tension between having a challenging academic curriculum and having support systems for poor learners. There is great concern that Lasallian schools will become elitist.

There are 100 Lasallian schools and educational ministries in the Region, all of which are conducted quite effectively and in consonance with the Lasallian Mission. While many of the schools are at risk of becoming inaccessible to the most disadvantaged youth, they have also undertaken significant efforts to maintain accessibility through generous financial aid grants from benefactors.

In addition, many schools are recommitting themselves to the service of the economically poor and to a focus on social justice. The expansion of the San Miguel schools and similar educational institutions is seen as a positive response to the call of the mission. There is much support for Miguel schools both within and outside of the Lasallian network.

For many, the Lasallian Mission offers a welcoming and inviting dimension of the Church. But the institutional Church is seen as an obstacle to a full expression of the Mission and its empowerment of the laity. For example, the diocesan officials may not recognize emerging structures that would continue advancing the Lasallian Mission once the Brothers leave. Others point to the struggle of St. Mary's Press to remain faithful to the Mission while producing quality religion textbooks. There is a consensus that the Lasallian Mission, with its focus on evangelization, is greatly needed by the Catholic Church in North America in the face of growing secularization in American society.

Most Lasallian educational institutions are governed by boards of trustees composed largely of lay people. These boards are non-canonical legal structures that are emerging rapidly as the primary guarantors of the Lasallian Mission in those institutions. The continuation of the Lasallian Mission necessitates the formation of Brothers and lay leadership, boards, faculty and staff, students and families. The lack of a board formation program is a threat to the Mission. The accessibility of Lasallian formation and its affordability is a challenge facing many lay partners. Partners find it difficult to commit to a length of time away from their family responsibilities. Upon completion of the formal Lasallian formation, how will the participants sustain the spirit of the programs once they have returned to their ministries?

Clearly, challenges exist as the Mission advances in the U.S.-Toronto Region. Many are in agreement with the need to clearly articulate the Lasallian Mission and promote it. Unclear language, particularly in distinguishing between Brothers and the laity, is an obstacle. The lack of a Regional plan and the strong individual identities of the Districts are also obstacles to addressing many challenges facing the Mission in the Region.

- The Lasallian Mission of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, animated by the Holy Spirit, is part of the “Church’s work in spreading the Gospel” (*The Rule*, Article 11). The Lasallian Mission is carried out by the Lasallian Family who “together and by association” evangelize by making the Gospel a living reality in the lives of young people and their families, especially the poor.
- Lasallian ministries are committed and empowered educational faith communities that form their members as educators who provide a quality human and Christian education and who seek out those who are abandoned by society and advocate for justice, leading them to the salvation God has meant for all.
- Lasallian ministries are first and foremost relational. They are also life giving and accessible to all—socioeconomically, culturally, geographically, and in schools, academically.
- Lasallian ministries include a diverse variety of non-traditional educational outreach programs to help young people receive an education and a place in society.
- Lasallian ministries respond to the signs of the times in creative fidelity to the movement of the Holy Spirit to advance the Mission.
- Lasallian ministries work collaboratively with those interested in and committed to the Lasallian Educational Mission, seeking and accessing resources at the appropriate level, inside and outside the Lasallian network, according to the needs that arise.

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## Vision

- Those who seek Lasallian educational opportunities should not be hindered because of economic need.

## Action Steps

*We recommend that the Institute—*

1. Create systematic, comprehensive, and flexible formation programs that would be accessible to a large a number of Lasallians, particularly for Districts and Regions unable to provide this.
2. Promote leadership at all levels by qualified and competent lay Lasallians, and encourage Districts and Regions do the same.
3. Emphasize the relationship of evangelization to education of the economically poor as key to the Lasallian charism.

*We recommend that the Region—*

4. Create a systematic, comprehensive, flexible, and ongoing formation program for Lasallian Mission that is accessible to all.
5. Promulgate the goals for Lasallian Mission throughout the Region.
6. Through the Regional Education Board, address issues of evangelization by offering guidelines on how best to proclaim Gospel values as they relate to programs and practices in the Lasallian ministries.
7. Through the Regional Lasallian Formation Board, develop a faculty Lasallian formation program that is engaging, flexible and respectful of the reality of the local community.
8. Form a study group to look into the educational needs of the immigrant poor and to bring those ministries already engaged in service to the poor into a collaborative, focused effort.
9. Work with Districts to create a formal process to educate boards of trustees and advisors on the Lasallian Educational Mission.
10. Create an office or network to oversee development on a Regional level and to assist ministries in their assessment of current funding sources and in their investigation of creative means to become more accessible to the economically poor.

*We recommend that the Districts—*

11. Hold ministries accountable for promoting involvement in existing formation programs.
12. Hold ministries accountable for the creation of leadership succession plans that emphasize the equal role of all Lasallians in the advancement of the Mission.

*We recommend that the Local Ministries—*

13. Make a high priority the mission formation of their leaders, including presidents, principals, directors, other administrators and board members.
14. Commit to the allocation of time and resources necessary for ongoing and sustained Lasallian formation.
15. Deepen their commitment to social action and advocacy on behalf of the young, especially the poor and underserved, as appropriate to their respective identity,

**M**ore and more lay partners are embracing the Mission and seeking ways to become more deeply involved in it and associated with other Lasallians. People are seeking a sense of belonging and see Lasallian Association as a way to fill this need. Others are desirous to remain faithful to the institutional Church and see Lasallian Association as providing a meaningful sense of community and an extension of the Church.

Lay partners and Brothers are breaking new ground in multiple settings and expressions as together they seek Association, often in very diverse geographical locations. Association among partners and between partners and Brothers is being lived experientially before actually defining it. A degree of experimentation is taking place as individuals come together and make decisions about Association, at once being faithful to the Lasallian ideal but also making the ideal responsive to their particular lived realities. In these emerging expressions of Association, lay partners are increasingly assuming leadership.

There is, however, considerable confusion surrounding the concept of Association for partners and the current movement's impact on the Brothers' understanding of their own vow of Association. In addition, the institutional Church and some of our own public are more apt to recognize the formal vow of Association of the Brothers than Association of the lay partners. Without a sense of empowerment through some kind of formalization or legitimization, lay expressions of Association may be hindered.

As an understanding of Lasallian Association emerges, the diversity of expressions across the Region becomes an obstacle as well as a gift. The term "association" itself is used frequently and sometimes indiscriminately without a deeper understanding and appreciation of its meaning.

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## ASSOCIATION

### Situational Analysis

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to be voluntary. Some lay partners see themselves as merely employed by Lasallian ministries while others seek a deeper commitment. In the face of this unevenness, it will be difficult to determine “membership” or develop criteria. How will families be included? Will the place of women be honored and promoted? How well are those of other faith traditions welcomed and included?

Lasallian Association, as it emerges, must be seen as a movement of the Holy Spirit within the Institute and not as a drawing of the curtain on the Brothers. Emerging Association is in development and there is much mutuality as Brothers and lay partners join together to respond creatively and faithfully to the Lasallian vocation and the movement of the Spirit. .

Association is about building for the next generation. Conceiving of a common form of Association and creating ways to formally recognize or legitimize are challenges. A structure or organization to support it will also be crucial. Formation is essential, and ways to sustain the transformation experienced during formation programs are needed. New models emerging from the various Districts should be advanced and promoted. Formal Association for partners will need to find resources and support outside of the Brothers’ structure if it is to be authentic and have a future.

#### Vision

- Association is a response to a God’s call. It is relational, guided by faith and celebrated by living the Gospel values. It is action-oriented, a continuation of the specific educational mission of St. John Baptist de La Salle to provide a Christian, human education to the young, especially the poor.
- The Lasallian family invites all constituents into association and celebrates rituals that welcome them into the Lasallian Mission. Association manifests itself at the local level but reveals the universal Lasallian Mission.
- A variety of expressions of Association, locally and regionally, supports the Mission and responds to the needs of the times. In any form, Association has clear guidelines to aid its members in living the charism of St. La Salle. Association carries mutual responsibility and ownership, and it requires commitment over time.
- Structures exist to support and create a network for the various forms of Association that are in place and evolving.

#### Action Steps

*We recommend that the Institute—*

16. Honor all expressions of Association and that there be no hierarchy of Association among partners, associates, affiliates, and Brothers.



17. Encourage Lasallians to accompany one another to facilitate their progressive growth in and expression of their Lasallian commitment, but in accord with their own situation, stage of life, discernment of their ongoing call, and needs of the Mission.
18. Continue exploration of Brother Antonio Botana’s “Solar System” model and other possibilities to examine Association for Mission with creativity and openness.
19. Welcome, celebrate, and nurture the diversity of emerging forms of Association and not ignore, thwart, or abandon grassroots experimentation during this formative period.
20. Serve as a clearinghouse to disseminate forms of Association emerging internationally and make this information available to the Regions, Districts, and local ministries.

*We recommend that the Region—*

21. Develop resources and structures that will facilitate the growth of local expressions of Association to include:
  - Formal recognition of the emerging expressions of Association at the District and Regional levels;
  - Establishment of a systematic curriculum that would introduce, develop, and foster Association for the ministries to implement;
  - Sponsorship of a Regional conference on Association to include opportunities to share best practices, encourage dialogue among associates, offer keynote speakers, and explore creation of a unifying symbol, and
  - Making available communication tools, such as newsletters and websites, to share and promote Association.

*We recommend that the Districts—*

22. Contribute funds necessary for the Region to support Association.
23. Ensure that local ministries and communities will continue to develop their own vital, emerging expressions of Association, while simultaneously collaborating with the Regional and International levels to define Association and to develop clear and measurable criteria in order for these new forms of Association to remain faithful to the Lasallian Mission.
24. Encourage chief administrators of Local Ministries to stress the critical place of Association for Mission as the heart of Lasallian spirituality and to provide the support and resources (including financial) essential for it to flourish in the community.
25. Establish an administrative office charged with the support and promotion of Association resulting in each Local Ministry having

  
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accompaniment, support, and formation opportunities for all Lasallians.

26. In collaboration with chief administrators, develop a means of accountability for carrying out the Mission and fostering a spirit of Association within the Local Ministry.

*We recommend that individual Lasallians—*

27. Accompany one another to facilitate their progressive growth in and expression of their Lasallian commitment, but in accord with their own situation, stage of life, discernment of their ongoing call, and needs of the Mission.
28. Especially graduates of formal formation programs, assume responsibility to invite colleagues into deeper association and to provide opportunities for growth in faith and in Lasallian formation.

## STRUCTURES

### Situational Analysis

**A**cross the Region, there is a great deal of enthusiasm and energy for new ways to relate to the Lasallian Mission and a seemingly unstoppable momentum for new structures to support it. Structures give definition to the organization and assist in holding people accountable. They organize individuals so that they can focus on their work and ministries. In other words, structures exist to further the mission. In creating new structures, it is necessary to first define and clarify the need and then design structures around it.

There is a general sentiment that current structures are not adequately supporting the Mission. However, adaptive changes have been made to the Institute from its inception and that spirit of change must continue today. The present structure is evolving from one that was geared towards the Mission based on Brothers to one in which the Mission includes both Brothers and lay partners. For example, Mission and Ministry Councils, lay animators, and mission effectiveness councils are adaptive structures emerging from existing realities. Ministries are creatively being adapted in non-traditional ways. An example is the use of government support in the new charter schools in Chicago, St. Gabriel's in Philadelphia and Ocean Tides in Narragansett.

Traditional District structures are dissolving as the three Districts of the East Coast and the Toronto Delegation look to create a new form of District. Lasallian structures that have served us well in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries seem to lack the capacity to serve well today because of diminishing human and financial resources. Consequently, current District structures sometimes hinder the effectiveness of the Region's leadership and planning to render effective service. Current structures need to adapt to the demographic realities facing the Brothers and their colleagues.

Leadership structures are also evolving. As ministries expand, the number of Brothers is declining. As a result, the number of lay partners in leadership roles has increased. Fortunately, formation programs have been effective, reaching a large number of people and providing consistent Lasallian formation for lay leaders. Going forward, formation programs must prepare lay partners to ensure the depth and quality of formation programs and assume the leadership of them.


However, board formation has not kept pace in the same way, as the role and function of boards has changed. It is also the reality that board members are not always chosen for their commitment to the Mission. Some districts are addressing this by developing criteria for board membership and developing board formation programs.

While there seems to be a general feeling that existing structures are not keeping pace with current and emerging expressions of the Mission, it is also true that a degree of fear and inertia may hinder the establishment of new structures. While some feel frustrated with a slow pace, others feel comfortable with a slower pace of change. There is security and identity in the current organizational structure. There is also some fear that changes may negatively impact the Brothers' identity and vocation. Some partners are comfortable with the Brothers having final control over the Mission and Association and fear a future with few or no Brothers. Again, while some Brothers and partners sense a need for change, fear of the unknown can also hold back any progress.


The language of structure itself is an obstacle. Current ways of talking about structures are uneven, inconsistent, and fuzzy. It is difficult for some to imagine new possibilities and to think outside of the existing organization. As we move forward, it will be necessary to understand and define the relationship between new and emerging structures.

At some point, civil and canonical law will require close scrutiny of new structures and may limit new possibilities for change. There are questions about whether the Church's hierarchy will allow new ways of organization and governance of the mission. On the local level, dioceses may be unable or unwilling to accept and recognize new leadership structures, roles, and responsibilities. Finally, the autonomous nature of the Districts may impede movement towards change.

On the level of practicality, shortages of time and resources may hamper the development of new structures. Among some, there is a sense of urgency, a view that existing structures hold back and restrict the mission as it is being lived out. New expressions of association and new ministries are arising rapidly, often before ways to support them are created. Sustained funding for newly created structures is uncertain and will need to be a priority as planning proceeds.



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**VISION** In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, serviceable structures, whether adapted from existing models or completely new, will be created within the local ministries, Districts, and Regions in response to the Lasallian Mission. They will seek to connect, to validate and to empower all Lasallians in the ministries they carry out

The new structures for mission and association need not exist within current District or Regional frameworks. New structures will adapt to present realities and will allow creativity and fluidity in the living out of the Mission.

The new structures will serve and sustain the Mission in light of limited and changing resources, and increasing needs, and continue to involve and engage all Lasallians in living the Lasallian Mission.

**Action Steps** *For the Region, we recommend that—*

29. The Visitors, together with the Regional Coordinator, with all deliberate speed, form a Regional level task force to explore possibilities of a new structure for Mission in the Region. Subsequently, they will formulate a clear vision of the structure to meet the needs of the Lasallian Mission and Association in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and create a strategic plan for the Region that fulfills the vision. This task force should:

- Include people from outside the Mission who have demonstrated expertise in mission, education, association, organizational development, and finances.
- Develop a plan for a new structure that includes:
  1. A structure for Association for the Lasallian Mission, and
  2. A Regional Lasallian educational network.

30. The task force address the following important elements in the formation of a new structure:

- The new Regional structure will be responsible for developing a clearly understood and identifiable “brand” which articulates the relational nature, excellence, and accessibility of the Lasallian Educational Mission.
- The new Regional structure will “take into account the diversity of situations and the significant number of women committed to the mission of the Institute.” (43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter)
- The leadership of the new Regional structure will include partners and Brothers.
- The structure will develop its own budget and funding sources.
- The reserved rights of the Institute will be protected.

**Following are necessary recommendations until new structures emerge:**

*We recommend that Institute—*

31. Investigate the nature of Districts and Regions and reexamine the way Regions are demarcated and defined.
32. Clarify the relationship of the Mission and Ministry Council to the District Council and of the Visitor to the Mission and Ministry Council concerning authority and responsibility.

*We recommend that the Region—*

33. Establish a Coordinator for Lasallian Formation who is responsible for gathering resources, coordinating training and programs at the Regional level, and supporting District Mission and Ministry Councils.
34. Move toward a new, creative, sustainable, broad, and more equitable funding model for various local, District, and Regional programs in support of Association for Mission.
35. Convene the Regional Finance Board to evaluate the financial needs and resources to support the Mission.

*We recommend that the Districts—*

36. Collectively examine current structures under the Visitor's authority with the goal of altering them to consolidate leadership and to avoid duplication of roles as well as to better utilize resources and personnel.
37. Strengthen the Mission and Ministry Councils to give voice and vote to Lasallians to foster dynamic relationships among the Mission and Ministry Councils, the District Council, and Brother Visitor. Further, we recommend the transfer of oversight responsibility, sponsorship, distribution of funds, and promotion of Lasallian identity to Mission and Ministry Councils.
38. Create a Director of Continuing Lasallian Formation position in each District for which the responsibilities include formation and accompaniment of all Lasallians. This position could be funded through a staff "head" tax assessed each ministry.

*We recommend that Local Ministries—*

39. Reserve some seats on their boards of trustees and advisory boards for individuals who have participated in significant formation programs in order to increase the mission effectiveness of Boards.

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