

2.0 PRELUDE

As the preceding outline of the Lasallian Heritage has indicated, the Lasallian Mission in education has become a global mission. Wherever this mission is being carried out, those involved in it attempt to provide what the *Declaration* and 1987 Rule refer to as “a *quality education*” which will help all those who receive it to be actively involved in their own formation as they grow in their human and spiritual development. La Salle and his first Brothers chose to exercise the mission of Christian education principally through the school. The importance of the *Conduct of Schools* is that it is the expression of the corporate educational vision and practical experience of the first Brothers. In the history of education, it marks a new moment: it offers a serious and systematic approach to ensuring that the school, in La Salle’s frequently written phrase, “*runs well.*” The attention of the Institute to subsequent updating of this basic approach to running good schools accounts largely for its own success in the 18th and 19th centuries and for the model which it provided for other groups interested in promoting popular schools. It is the “*school,*” then, understood broadly in its different levels and manifold forms, which has always been regarded as “*the preferred field*” in the Lasallian Heritage for offering a good human and Christian education. It is through the school that Shared Mission has originated and developed: it is through the school principally that Brothers and their partners in Shared Mission came to meet and work side by side. This dynamic principle of updating, which has characterized the whole Lasallian Heritage, needs to continue with some particular emphases today. These are the same emphases as found in the *Lasallian Heritage* but they are sharpened and focused to what appear to be important needs of today’s world, even if the degree of emphasis will be determined in relation to the local culture. In the following chapter, then, the priorities for a “*human and Christian education*” for today are set out by considering the following six topics:

- 2.1 Educational works of quality;
- 2.2 The explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ;
- 2.3 Relating the educational work and the Gospel to the local culture;
- 2.4 Careful attention to the education of the poor;
- 2.5 Fostering ecumenical dialogue between Christians;
- 2.6 Openness to inter-religious dialogue.