

Sabbatical Report – Martin Chamberlain – Francis Douglas Memorial College

Sabbatical project - 4 - 29 May 2018

Pre-sabbatical

Because I am principal of a De La Salle (or Lasallian) school, namely one of many global schools that were founded by Catholic Frenchman Father John Baptist de La Salle, the tercentenary of whose death occurs next year, I will focus my sabbatical upon learning and assisting in other De La Salle schools that are very different to my own.

John Baptist de La Salle set up schools for poor boys concentrating on preparing them for employment in order to lead a dignified life. The French Revolution was in many ways a blessing because the exile of his Brothers has led to a network of one million students presently being educated by 80,000 Brothers and Associates in 82 countries.

Because of his persistence in bring social justice to the poorest of the poor, de La Salle was canonised (made a saint) by the Catholic Church in 1900 and declared Patron Saint of all Christian Educators in 1950. His statue can be found in St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

New Zealand is part of a sector grouping of Australia, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan. The latter associated because of the possible unwillingness of any of its neighbours to associate with it. Being one of the most different countries I could elect, rightly or wrongly, that has been my choice.

Along with Claire, my wife, we plan to spend 25 days working among the nine Lasallian schools based in Faisalabad, Multan and Khushpur. The Brothers' website describes each of the schools thus:

FAISALABAD:

LA SALLE GIRLS SCHOOL GOKKUWAL

Lasalle Girls High School Gokkuwal is located on the outskirts of Faisalabad city. In 1993, the De La Salle Brothers established a preparatory school for poor Christian children in Abdullapur shanty town. In the 2000's, due to the central location of the illegal shanty town, the residents forcibly relocated to Gokkuwal on the outskirts of Faisalabad, approximately 15 kms. Gokkuwal is an old agricultural area that has been reclaimed for housing. Due to its location, the village has limited access to basic facilities and the nearest school is a bus ride away. The cost of a bus to school is more than what most parents can afford as most are reliant on daily wages and they earn very little.

The residents asked the Brothers to relocate the old Abdullapur School to Gokkuwal. So the preparatory school was re-established, initially running its classes in the open air as there was no funding for building. The De La Salle Brothers provided all school books for the students over the first year, until the Government resettled the families on new land.



In 1996, the Brothers commenced reconstruction of the school at the new location and ran classes from Kindergarten through to Year 8. The school is now recognised as La Salle Girls High School by the Pakistan Education Department. There are two main campus sites separated by a small dirt road and general store. The school has 13 teaching staff.

With the acquisition of additional land in 2011, La Salle High School Gokkuwal expanded its buildings to cater for girls up to Year 9 and 10. These classes are in response to repeated community requests for education opportunities for girls in the senior high school years as some parents are reluctant to send their girls to a co-educational school. Due to the requirement for single sex campuses, there are not supposed to be any boys at the school from Year 6. However, due to their poverty there are a very small number of boys who remain at the school.

Since 2008, the Lasallian Foundation has worked with the school to improve the classrooms and infrastructure. In 2012, the school upgraded to a High School, supporting by a Lasallian Foundation grant in early 2009 that facilitated the purchase of more land and to build additional classrooms. If the school had not upgraded to become a High School, many students would have dropped out of their education after Year 8, as there are few high schools nearby. The school is subsidised by La Salle High School in Faisalabad. This subsidy puts a great strain on the resources of La Salle Faisalabad, making it more challenging to maintain and upgrade its own school facilities. Twinning is helping this school cover the costs of utilities, teachers' salaries, maintenance, support for school fees and other essential school expenses. Twinning is not only assisting Gokkuwal, but also La Salle Faisalabad.

LA SALLE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL MALKHAN WALA



La Salle Boys High School, Malkhan Wala was opened in April 2008 as a school for the poor. The Brothers opened a High School to service the local children at the request of the Bishop of Faisalabad and the local community. This school is situated in the suburb of Warispura and was established by the Marist Brothers but it was left unused from 2006.

The closest school is about 5km away and many families cannot afford the bus fares for their children to access that school. The site was formerly a very large school and vocations training facility but it had been abandoned for several years.

It is a massive complex/property consisting of classrooms, vocations complex, dormitories, chapel, multi-purpose hall which is hired out for local functions and events, sports ovals, full kitchen and bathroom facilities as well as staff quarters. However, the majority of the buildings, hostel, furnishings and equipment are in need of extensive repairs or replacement. The school could comfortably accommodate 500 children.

In 2010, the Bishop invited the Loreto Sisters to open a co-educational primary school on the site of Malkhan Wala School, however the primary school was given over to the Brothers in early 2012. There is a strong enrolment for the primary classes. That year, the school was also passed from Brother Principal to a lay Principal for the first time in the school's history. Since then, school numbers have increased rapidly.

Girls only attend the school up to Year 5. They move to another local school for the remainder of their secondary education.



Despite being in an urban area, people's access to clean drinking water and electricity is very irregular. Basic infrastructure such as roads and transport are poor, which creates issues in this highly populated area of the city.

The school is dependent on a monthly subsidy from La Salle High School in Faisalabad for its recurrent costs.

Twinning is helping to improve the school's science labs through the purchase of additional lab equipment and furniture.

LA SALLE GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL SANT SINGH WALA



Sant Singh Wala is located near the main Faisalabad/Lahore railway station on the outskirts of the city. It is a poor Christian slum area home to thousands of Christians but the student population is equally divided between Christians and Muslims. In 1997, the Bishop gave over management of the school to the De La Salle Brothers and it opened with only 33 students. Within one year, there were 80 children enrolled.

There are now over 300 students at this primary and high school. Although it is registered as a girls high school and the majority are girls, there are some boys in the high school classes as their families are too poor to send them to other local boys high schools. Many of the boys' parents have requested for the school to start a boys section, however the school is surrounded by residential buildings making additional infrastructure development difficult and expensive, as it would require the acquisition of land. The school has 13 teachers.

La Salle School Sant Singh Wala became a registered high school in 2010 and has consistently achieved top academic results over the last 12 years in the national examinations in Year 8 and 10 (matriculation). These results have ensured that the school has a steady enrolment of students. In early 2012, the school was passed from Brother to a lay Principal for the first time in the school's history.

The children live in very small, simple houses with poor access to running water so



most families have to purchase bottled water to drink. They live with daily power outages. Despite being in an urban area, many of the roads are not sealed, and many people still rely on donkey and cart for transport. The school has received 20 computers in the last three years as part of the Lasallian computer schools program. However, the school lacks space for all the desktop units. Twinning is helping to raise funds for the construction of a new purpose-built computer lab.

LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS 2 (FORMERLY URDU HIGH SCHOOL)

This is the biggest private Catholic Urdu high school for boys in Faisalabad city but it caters to students of all backgrounds. Campus 2 was established as Lasalle Urdu High School by the De La Salle Brothers in 1961 in response to Christian students not being accepted at Muslim schools and suffering discrimination at Government schools. Students are mainly Christian however there are some Muslim children studying at the school. The students come from extremely poor areas in the city around Warispura, Christian town and Madina Town. All of these children find it difficult to pay a very small sum of money as tuition fees, so the school has some scholarships available for qualifying students. The parents of these children are labourers on daily wages, sanitary workers or unemployed. Many of the students come from broken families. In many cases, they lack basic facilities at home. The school has approximately 575 students, supported by 47 teachers and six support staff.



The students come from areas where they are exposed to social problems such as drugs, child labour and domestic violence. These circumstances pose challenges to the school in their ability to deliver a quality education.

Although it started as a boys high school, it expanded to include primary students. The school has maintained a good record of quality education to the poor and marginalised, which is reflected in the school's consistently good results in the national exams.



In 2009, the school introduced English as the medium of instruction as having English-language skills would offer these poor children new opportunities for higher studies, and employment opportunities in the future. Both parents and students saw this as a very positive benefit of attending the school.

Campus 2 was only a co-educational primary school up to Year 5. In accordance with Education Department regulations regarding separate single sex campuses for secondary schools, the boys could continue at Campus 2 but from Year 6, the girls had to find an alternative school to continue their education or for many, they would just stop their education all together. This is sometimes a preference of her parents and/or the girl herself.

In response to this, the school introduced a separate section for girls (6th to 9th) in the 2012 academic year. The school has applied to the Government Education Department to register the new girls' section under the name of La Salle High School Campus 2. This has meant girls completing primary classes can continue at the school and the new school has attracted girls from other schools. However, real estate is very limited at the school making it difficult for further infrastructure development.

The government will not provide funding to private schools which makes it difficult for Campus 2 to provide the basic requirements for students. And the school cannot charge high fees due to the low incomes of their families. So the school is dependent on a subsidy from Lasalle English High School Faisalabad for payment of staff salaries.

In 2015, the school renovated the old unused novitiate building to create a separate area for the nursery and prep students.

The school requires additional funding to cover school fees, uniforms, books and stationery and any further upgrades in facilities or school infrastructure.

Twinning is helping to cover the costs of school maintenance work such as electrical and painting, along with the replacement of furniture.

LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL FAISALABAD

La Salle High School Faisalabad (LSHSF) was founded by the De La Salle Brothers in 1961 and commenced providing quality education to 86 local boys from Year 6 to Year 10. In January 1962, the classes moved to a newly constructed school and enrolment grew to 196.

On June 11 1962, the school was officially recognised by Mr. Sadiq, Director of Education (Lahore). Over the years, the school population has continued to grow and the buildings have been constructed to accommodate the increasing numbers.



Today the school has 1667 students from Year 2 to Year 10, with girls permitted to attend primary classes. After Year 5, the girls must move to a girls' only campus for their high school. The name "La Salle" has become well known for providing conducive and quality education throughout Pakistan.

In the 90's, La Salle High School started its Outreach Programme focusing on education in nearby poor communities. Seven schools were created: La Salle Urdu High School (now known as La Salle Campus 2), La Salle High School Khushpur, La Salle High School Malkhanwala, La Salle High School San Singh Walla, La Salle Primary School Railway Colony, St Catherine's Primary School and La Salle High School Gokkuwal.

The profit generated from school fees by La Salle High School are used to subsidise the costs of these seven small schools as their students struggle to pay even partial school fees. These schools receive text books for students and funds to cover the monthly salaries of teachers.

The objectives of all the Lasallian schools are common across all seven schools:

* To address the burden of poverty through provision of education that will provide options for employment and further education. In particular to provide girls an opportunity of creating a better, less marginalised future.

* To address the poor literacy rate within Faisalabad.

In 2009 Br Shahzad George Gill, Principal of LSHSF and President of the Delegation of Pakistan, took charge of the School. There was an urgent need to offer higher secondary education (known as college in Pakistan) to the local community and he presented the plan to expand La Salle High School in order to encompass these College levels (Year 11 and 12). The Province (District) approved the project especially because it offers a possibility to the girls to attend College. The construction commenced in 2011 and was inaugurated on October 23rd 2013.

LA SALLE COLLEGE

La Salle College accommodates 640 male students, Muslim and Christian, in a three-storey building that contains 18 classrooms and laboratories, offices, common room and auditorium.

The college offers courses in Intermediate Science/FSc pre-medical, Pre-Engineering,

Intermediate Computer Science (ICS), Intermediate of Commerce (Banking), Intermediate of Commerce (IT), and (Faculty in Arts) FA



LA SALLE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

La Salle College for Women was opened in April 2013 to support girls to complete their Year 11 and 12 studies, as due to the conservative culture, many parents prefer their daughters to continue their studies at an all-girls' campus.

Many girls upon leaving Year 10 find they are discriminated against and struggle to find a place in other local senior Colleges. Christian girls are particularly disenfranchised.



The College provides a solution to this problem and will support female students to complete their higher education qualifications.

There has been strong enrolment since the college opened (over 450 students) as the parents liked the new facilities and modern equipment.

Many of the girls have come from the other Lasallian schools in the area (Sant Singh Wala, Gokkuwal) which do not offer Year 11 and 12 so the College has been an excellent incentive for the girls to continue their higher secondary studies.

Many of these students would have previously dropped out after Year 10 or changed schools, due to the absence of a separate girls' higher secondary school campus. The new girls' campus is attractive to both parents and students not only because of the new facilities but due to the high quality of the teaching staff, and has resulted in a number of new female students enrolling from other schools.

KHUSHPUR

LA SALLE SECONDARY SCHOOL

La Salle Secondary School Khushpur, is situated in one of the largest Christian villages in Pakistan, home to approximately 600 families with 80% of them reliant on farming for their livelihood. The remainder are labourers. There is a very high level of poverty in the area and poor access to basic infrastructure, e.g. the roads are unsealed, access to power and running water is very intermittent. Many of the religious priests, nuns and Brothers serving the Church in Pakistan have come from Khushpur.



St Thomas Government High School in Khushpur was run by the De La Salle Brothers from 1962 until 1972 when, like all schools across Pakistan, it was nationalised by the Government. It targeted the poor predominantly Christian children of local farmers, cooks, drivers, labourers and sanitary workers. Although the government intended to maintain the school, it quickly became neglected and the standard of education declined considerably. St Thomas High School was the only high school in the area for the predominantly Catholic villages. The overall literacy rate in the area declined along with the standards at the school and the number of high school drop outs rose considerably.

In response to the falling standards of education and literacy, the De La Salle Brothers established "La Salle High School" in 2004 for local poor and disadvantaged boys in Year 6 to 12 originally operating from the old La Salle Hostel building. As the building was not originally built to be a school, the classrooms do not have lots of natural light and can get quite hot. The buildings are also very old and require significant maintenance or reconstruction.



Khushpur also offers an after-school tuition centre for children who cannot access regular school classes. The school is also offering a daily class for the younger poor local children (ages 4-9) that involves basic literacy and game playing. This class is being taught by one of the teacher's wives.

Over the years, with the support of the Lasallian Foundation, there have been significant improvements at the school. In 2011, a primary section was started and this has proven to be popular with local families, with primary now catering up to Grade 4.

In fact, the numbers in primary are four times higher than in secondary. This is partially due to primary being co-educational and the high school is boys-only.

In 2015, the Lasallian Foundation funded the construction of two new classrooms for Khushpur. However, the classrooms are still crowded and there is a need for two more classrooms.

In April 2016, the first Year 5 class commenced so the school can now provide continuous primary and secondary classes for the boys. Girls need to attend a local secondary school after Year 5, in keeping with the education regulations. There is space for new classrooms on top of the recently completed classrooms.

MULTAN

ALBAN'S ACADEMY

In 1975 Br Alban French, a Canadian Brother began teaching the children of the servants in Multan who were not attending school, basic maths and English. After Br Alban's death in 1985, this program was formally established into a school called Alban's Academy in 1987 targeting disadvantaged children. It opened with 50 students and this has steadily increased to over 450 students.

The school continues to target poor and neglected youth. The fee for the high school classes is US\$3, and US\$2 for primary. This English medium primary and high school has both a girls and boys section, respecting the majority Muslim student population and the government education board regulations which do not allow the mixing of the girls and boys. Due to the two separate campuses, there has been a need to duplicate many resources (e.g. books, equipment, library, labs etc).

As the girls' campus is newer, there is great need to continue to improve their resources and facilities, as the facilities for the boys were constructed first.

The girls campus is located with the primary campus, which is permitted. Despite the lack of resources in the girls section, the students are confident and are very enthusiastic about their education.



Albans Academy has achieved excellent academic results particularly in recent years, reflected in the high student numbers and increasing applications for admission. Albans has also achieved strong results in sporting activities, including basketball (2014/2015 their team reached and won the Nationals)

The school has 500 students (both Muslim and Christian) and most families struggle to pay school fees, so the school is subsidised by La Salle High School Multan.

The size and location of the school property in urban Multan restricts any expansion of infrastructure for Alban's Academy as this would impact the available playground.

Through Twinning, funds are being raised to repair the floor surfaces at the school to provide a safer place for the children to play, reducing injuries and to minimise damage on students' shoes, uniforms and bags.



LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL MULTAN

La Salle High School (LSHSM) in Multan was commenced by the De La Salle Brothers in February 1960 to provide quality education to the local community.

La Salle High School Multan is an English-medium pre-nursery, primary, secondary and college school (prep through to Year 12).



The school has an excellent reputation and is considered to be one of the best private schools in the Multan area with students consistently achieving top results in the national examinations.

Similar to La Salle English Medium High School Faisalabad, the school teaches the traditional high school curriculum for boys, as well as offering the Cambridge program for both girls and boys.

The majority of students are able to afford school fees as most of the parents have secure employment.



The school is not only financially self-sustainable but also helps to finance poorer De La Salle projects including Alban's Academy, La Salle College Hostel, and Ahamadabad Primary School.



AHMADABAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ahmedabad is a suburb of Multan and the De La Salle Brothers own eight acres of agricultural land, a school and also some other real estate in this area.

This is the smallest and one of the poorest schools managed by the Brothers in Pakistan. The students' parents are generally domestic workers and daily labourers who are extremely poor.

The school is staffed by eight female teachers and since 2010, enrolment has increased. Almost 50 percent of the students do not pay the PKR200 (A\$2.03)/month) school fee.

Br Zafar Daud has been transferring old computer equipment from La Salle High School Multan to Ahmedabad. He is also encouraging the La Salle Multan Primary and High School students to donate their old uniforms, books, stationary etc at the end of the school year to the students of Ahmedabad.

This has assisted the students and staff greatly. However, this school remains under-resourced and under-funded.

Due to a lack of space, the headmistress utilises a classroom as her office. This space is also the staff room and storage area.

Twinning is helping improve facilities for staff, including the construction of an office for the headmistress, a purpose-built staff room and bathroom facilities for the staff.

Twinning

Of all of these schools, the one of particular interest is Malkhan Wala (the second featured above). In a bid to include Pakistan with more purpose in the Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea grouping, the practice of twinning was introduced in 2015. Along with an Australian school, Malkhan Wala became our twin. Our school holds MAD (Mission Action Day) annually. It is a special occasion during which our boys complete a walk to earn the sponsorship kindly given by their families and the wider community. The outcomes for Malkhan Wala (and PNG) for 2016 are featured below:



Francis Douglas Memorial College 2016 MAD Projects - Completed



2016 – FDMC Solidarity with Lasallians in ANZPPNG	
PROJECT	A\$
La Salle School Malkhan Wala, Pakistan – school maintenance	15,000
La Salle School Malkhan Wala, Pakistan – classroom furniture	5,000
Rebiamul Preschool, Mt Hagen, PNG – school supplies, books, stationery, school utilities (water and electricity)	10,804
TOTAL	30,804



Pakistan

- 1 in 4 Pakistanis live below the poverty line, earning less than \$1 a day
- Typical family size is 6-8 children
- People have no social entitlements to health and education
- Child labour is endemic and critical for basic survival for about 40% of families whose children work
- Christians 1.6% pop. and suffer discrimination



Pakistan - education

- Literacy rate in Pakistan is the second worst in all of Asia/Africa. Literacy for 10 years old plus is 55%; ratio 67% males and 33% females. Literacy in urban areas is 72% and 45% in rural areas.
- Education is poorly resourced (teaching aids, text books, adequate classroom furniture, sufficient and safe buildings)
- 40% of schools in the public sector are without walls
- 32% are without drinking water
- 56% are without electricity
- 40% are without latrines
- 7% are without buildings
- 6% of buildings that housed education are in dangerous conditions (ceilings may collapse); another 42.7% need major or minor repairs



La Salle School Malkhan Wala

Christian Students (Girls)	60
Christian Students (Boys)	271
Muslim Students (Girls)	0
Muslim Students (Boys)	19
Total Number of Students	350
Christian Teachers (Male)	10
Christian Teachers (Female)	9
Muslim Teachers (Male)	0
Muslim Teachers (Female)	0
Total Number of Teachers	19
Support staff	7





Then for 2017, a request was put to Francis Douglas Memorial College to assist in funding a new road into the school. This was described as particularly problematic in the wet season:

Lasallian Foundation Board Meeting, 25 May 2017 Grant Request Summary		17PAK05
Location:	Faisalabad, Pakistan	
Organisation:	La Salle School Malkhan Wala	
Contact:	Br Kumar Iqbal	
Project Title	Improving School Safety and Access	
Brief Description:	Upgrading the school access road to improve student and staff safety	
Amount Requested:	Total Project: A\$32,406 = PKR2,583,500	
Commencement Date:	Upon receipt of grant funding	
Project Summary:	The school is subsidised by La Salle High School Faisalabad. This subsidy puts a great strain on the resources of La Salle Faisalabad and impacts their ability to maintain and upgrade their own facilities. So this project will not only assist Malkhan Wala, but also La Salle Faisalabad.	



This project is for improving the school's access road (pictured above) as due to poor maintenance, bad weather, and general wear and tear its condition has become a safety concern. During the monsoon, the access road becomes quite muddy and hazardous for students, staff, parents and vehicles.

This project will be reviewed during the Foundation monitoring and evaluation visit in 2017.

Detailed Budget:	Exchange rate as at 23/02/2017 PKR79.7240	
	PKR	A\$
Cement	1,362,500	17,090
Sand	120,000	1,505
Bricks	140,000	1,756
Bricks gravel	60,000	753
Pebbles	276,000	3,462
Liner (Patee)	210,000	2,634
Labour	350,000	4,390
Street lamp/pole	45,000	564
Other items	20,000	251
Total	2,583,500	32,406

Photos of the Malkhan Wala area:





Clockwise from top left: typical horse/donkey cart transport; the barbershop; kids on the street; woman drying cowpats as fuel for fire stoves/heating; girl standing near bricks drying; a brick kiln, one of the main local industries; cattle on the street; woman and child sitting outside their house.

Pre-sabbatical hypotheses:

From my brief meetings in New Zealand and Australia with five Pakistani De La Salle brothers over the period of four years, and my discussions with them, the following are my hypotheses of what I will observe and experience:

1. Christian education will be managed within parameters acceptable in an Islamic country
2. Education will be highly valued among the students in the schools as a means to achieving a better standard of living
3. There will be a lot of teacher-talk, board writing, student copying and rote learning
4. Examinations will be very high stakes and dependent on memorised material
5. There will be no corporal punishment of students
6. Teachers will be dedicated and highly regarded in their communities despite being poorly paid
7. Classroom resources will be meagre
8. The range of teaching strategies will be small
9. Student discussion and group work will be infrequent
10. School management systems will be in need of professional development in the areas of job descriptions, budgeting, procedures and appraisal
11. School and community security will be imposing
12. Despite their situation the children will be joyful and not just because of our visit

Conclusions

Now that my sabbatical is completed, I am in as good a position as I'll ever be to draw some conclusions. In doing so, I am acutely aware that opinions formed of another culture are made up of many snap-shots where nuances can go completely unnoticed and making generalisations is unwise.

There have been times when I believed our planned time in Pakistan was too long. On other occasions however, I realised I had gained an insight that made the picture ever more complete for me. We now feel that our (includes my wife Claire) impressions are accurate enough to bring back home to those who will follow us. Many will be familiar with Steven Covey's, "Seek first to understand – then to be understood" and I am glad we have had the time to do that. I had been expected to be put to work in classrooms immediately but that would have been a mistake. Even working with the whole staff of two schools for four days occurred only in the final week and I had to approach it with a lot of my recent learning on board.

After having visited all their schools, I believe that what the Brothers have achieved in Pakistan is truly remarkable. In the late 50's they readily embraced what Brothers from Sri Lanka brought to this country and have since amassed an impressive enterprise of people and buildings. The growth they have managed to achieve, especially with the poor at their centre, has been impressive. Current student numbers are more than 5,000 and growing. Their comparative excellence in educational provision has meant the Brothers have been able to take from the willing richer fee-payers in their two major schools to benefit the appreciative poor.

All schools, prosperous or not, mostly have all classroom surfaces made solely of concrete. Rooms are rather dark. There is no air conditioning in the 40 degree heat. Six or eight very noisy fans make hearing a challenge and students sit mostly on benches for three. Every school has an attractive uniform and the students are proud of it and their school. Except for the nursery or prep' classes which can have 40, numbers are similar to NZ. The students are all radiant – an attractive race of people. The teachers are proud of their work and many are former students of their employing school.

The dress of the female teachers is always spectacular. All tuition in the schools is now in English although the poorer schools have to proceed with a blend. Whether it was because of our novelty value, we had to be careful where we initiated student hand-shaking. A crowd five-deep could form in a very short time and make us feel like celebrities.

Cursed be the examination system! In both of our countries the joy of learning is secondary to the assessment systems and too much energy goes into measurement. I once heard it quoted, "You don't fatten your pig by weighing it." At home it's credit collecting and here it's rote. The students spend time learning work they have copied from the chalk board (it was great to use chalk again) and regurgitate it in exams. Teachers who would deviate from this would be punished by the exam system that recognises only material learned by heart without the necessity of comprehension. Even the nursery and prep' students here, aged four and five, have lengthy oral and practical examinations and reports sent home to anxious parents that comment, in percentages, on literacy, numeracy and other measures. This runs counter intuitively to much modern research that suggests children should be left only to play and experiment up to the age of six and a half.



On the other hand, senior students I chatted with could recite word for word, accurate definitions for any scientific term I would expect a NZ student to be familiar with, but not so word perfectly. Digging deeper, I found that the practical understanding behind those definitions was also present despite the paucity of any equipment for demonstrations.

Education is highly prized and for many students, school life is much richer than that at home. Staff did comment about indiscipline of students but the teachers' access to only textbooks and chalk made class time inevitably monotonous. My training with staff concentrated on assisting in planning that broke the lesson up into short episodes involving as much variation as could be collectively dreamed up.



The welcomes we received at all schools were humbling, leading to potential hubris. We were given enough large bunches of roses to stage a state funeral in NZ. Several schools wheeled out their brass bands, students presented cards and delivered impeccably rote learned speeches of welcome featuring words such as venerable, esteemed, gracious, privileged, humbled and of course, God bless you – the ubiquitous greeting from everyone. We are usually referred to as Mr Martin Joseph and Mrs Claire Martin.

Navigating life as Catholic institutions in an Islamic nation has been successful. The inclusion of Moslem staff members and students into the schools, the neutral references to "God", the obvious intent to make life better for the people of Pakistan, 60 years of work, and the absence of any apostasy, would make it challenging for even the most unfriendly political or administrative figure to challenge the existence or benefit of the schools.

The range of schools from the wealthy *Lasalle High School & College*, where the \$NZ 800 annual fee the 2,000 students pay, runs that school and the other local four, which are for the poor who pay little or nothing. Teachers there are paid up to a maximum \$NZ4,700 per year. In their other schools \$800 PA is not uncommon. All schools have some Moslem teachers. Moslem students are the majority in the prosperous school, whereas Catholics/Christians are in the others.

We never felt anything but secure, even when visiting the bazaars with Brothers' accompaniment. One was reminded of the threat that exists however when crossing the narrow road between two of the schools. Three large men in blue overalls carried heavy weapons which they showed me had a magazine of cartridges containing shot pellets about 3mm in diameter. Such was the Brothers' concern for the responsibility they had taken on that we were not allowed out of their compounds unless accompanied by one of them.

Malkhan Wala – our twinned school – has a very caring and united staff. Its urgent need for drinking water was crying out to be the next funding project Francis Douglas Memorial College should embark on. The local water is salty and polluted and many students spend the 7:30am till 1:30pm time at school with nothing safe to drink. Water is one of life's basics and I am sure FDMC will be keen to fund a water purifier and chiller for their 450 students.



We lived in community with eight, seven and three Brothers in the three different centres. As with anywhere else I have visited them, the Brothers' hospitality and cheerfulness knew no bounds. While attending Mass it seemed incongruous that there was a blend of religious responses as the five-times-daily prayer from the mosque just over our fence would blare out over their enormous speakers and yet I thought, how wonderful that these Christian institutions are here to act as bridges to greater understanding.

Pick the Westerners... – we are pictured here with Brother Sajid Bashir who is the Principal of Lasalle Urdu High School Faisalabad - Campus 2 and the overseer of the acting principal at Malkhan Wala High School.



As for my hypotheses:

1. Christian education will be managed within parameters acceptable in an Islamic country
As described above
2. Education will be highly valued among the students in the schools as a means to achieving a better standard of living
Most definitely. Waiting lists or places in the schools are long.
3. There will be a lot of teacher-talk, board writing, student copying and rote learning
Sadly true. Chalk and New Zealand's cloud assisted learning are galaxies apart.
4. Examinations will be very high stakes and dependent on memorised material
Sadly true as described above, although understanding also seems to be present.
5. There will be no corporal punishment of students
None at all but a lot of scalding due to monotonous lessons.
6. Teachers will be dedicated and highly regarded in their communities despite being poorly paid
True – same as in New Zealand!
7. Classroom resources will be meagre
Some posters on concrete walls and a chalkboard at the front but no readers, toys or puzzles in the junior school and only a smattering of archaic equipment in laboratories.
8. The range of teaching strategies will be small
Yes – as discussed.
9. Student discussion and group work will be infrequent
I never witnessed any. In one class however, students were handed the chalk to calculate arithmetic problems on the blackboard.
10. School management systems will be in need of professional development in the areas of job descriptions, budgeting, procedures and appraisal

A Brother from Australia is assisting with this process, which involves education in the need for them, as well as patient work as those processes become owned by the locals.

11. School and community security will be imposing

Armed guards were a daunting sight and a reminder that fanaticism can spring up. Security mandated by the government has led to a lot of expense from school budgets. This includes CCTV. There were also guard posts on the roofs of schools but the heightened state of alert for them must have passed because none was occupied.

12. Despite their situation the children will be joyful and not just because of our visit

Their joy and sense of fun were palpable. Although on the flip side, I asked a student what his favourite country was and he said America. Our presence possibly vicariously excited them in regard to their dreams about a more prosperous future.

I have been greatly enriched by my sabbatical visit and I grateful to Sir Brother Patrick Lynch of the NZ Brothers, the Brothers here in special Pakistan, our FDMC staff and Board of Trustees and grateful also for the Ministry of Education's sabbatical programme.

Martin Chamberlain