
ANNOTATION

Ruiz Morales, Gerardo. “La Guía de las Escuelas Cristianas.” [The Conduct of the Christian Schools]. PhD dissertation, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (España), 2002. 757 pp.

“The Conduct of the Christian Schools” is the school manual where the pedagogical ideas of John Baptist de La Salle appear. The French educator was born in Rheims in 1651 and died in Rouen in 1719.

The first manuscript of “The Conduct of the Christian Schools” dates from 1706, and the first edition was published in 1720.

Its basic objective was to establish a uniform method of teaching, and it was formulated after many years of experience in schools and with the collaboration of the Brother teachers who were closest to John Baptist de La Salle.

The dissertation, the work of a professor (at the time it was written) at Colegio de Nuestra Señora de las Maravillas in Madrid, is divided into five chapters: 1) historical context; 2) biographical and psychological study of John Baptist de La Salle based on his educational work; 3) the importance and meaning of “The Conduct of the Christian Schools”; 4) school applications coming from the Conduct’s Lasallian pedagogy and the spirit derived therefrom, in which De La Salle is the key figure; and 5) similarities and differences of editions.

A few noteworthy observations that are highlighted in the dissertation about “The Conduct of the Christian Schools” are: Latin is replaced by French as the language of instruction; the simultaneous method of instruction is established, and the individual system of instruction is abandoned; all kinds of students are accommodated, especially those children of the families of the poor and the artisans; systematic programs are designed from materials based on reading, writing, and arithmetic; teachers are ordered to follow student progress using cards; a type of teaching is set up using accompaniment and ongoing vigilance by means of prizes, punishments, and encouragement; innovation in the establishment of exercises, jobs in the classroom and extra-curricular activities, with real accountability, is established; in each discipline students are grouped by classes, lessons, and orders; results are periodically evaluated; and attention is paid to new teachers, making a specialist available to them for help and direction.

In addition, there was established at the school of Saint Yon a higher level of education for the children from more well-to-do families, Sunday schools were opened to instruct workers and young adults who could not attend classes at any other time; school furniture was designed and planned to adapt to the needs of the students; and an organization was provided for schools which assured order and achieved desired results.

The most significant contribution of this doctoral dissertation is the identification and placement of different editions of “The Conduct of the Christian Schools,” not catalogued up until now in the list of the 24 editions given by Brother Maurice-Auguste Hermans in *Cahiers lasalliens* #24 and dated 24 May 1965.

“The Conduct of the Christian Schools” was, the author of the dissertation concludes, the irreplaceable methodological instrument in the pedagogical movement in France of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.