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## **Fr Luigi Giussani's Concept of Education - an Outline**

### **Abstract**

This outline focuses on the multifarious academic, pedagogical and social activities of Fr Luigi Giussani, Professor of Theology, Italian thinker and scholar renowned for his numerous accomplishments. Due to his exceptional attentiveness, inquisitiveness and courage he has been certainly well-known and highly-regarded not only in university and ecclesiastical but also in the cultural and political spheres of life.

The author of this study describes Fr Giussani as an exceptional scholar and educator emphasising the pedagogical aspect of his activities. The study explains his understanding of pedagogy and education. Selected achievements from his biography confirm Fr Giussani to be an exceptional human being, educator and scholar. As an educator, Fr Giussani holds a sober and realistic view of man and his formation: the true value of man, he claims, lies in being rational and free. Complete trust in God and great love for a human person define the most fundamental elements of his approach.

The outline also includes a short biographical note and describes popular ways of education, formative events, the educators and educatee's personality constituents, and the relationship between freedom, conscience, tradition and education.

### **Keywords**

Rev. Luigi Giussani, pedagogy, education and formation, personality of the educators and educatee, educational events, the relationship between education, tradition, culture and conscience.

Various miseries and deficiencies faced the teaching and learning scholars and various miseries and deficiencies they suffered in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, Renaissance, in the period of Partitions, or in the previous century. Nowadays life also confronts us with various challenges. Especially after the catastrophe of the Polish plane at Smoleńsk on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010 when, for reasons unknown, the President of Poland Lech Kaczyński and his wife died, all top Commanders in Chief of the Military Forces of Poland died, the President of the National Bank of Poland died, the President of the Institute of National Remembrance died, such symbolic figures as Anna Walentynowicz, President Kaczorowski or even Janusz Zakrzewski an actor and Katyń Families members die. In the wake of the tragedy at Smoleńsk we realise that we are continually standing at death's door, living on the brink of eternity. Confronted with this event everyone discovers the same helplessness and the communion of sympathy and compassion in the very same helplessness. In this dramatic coincidence as in any other there appears "something" beyond the comprehension of the human mind, an issue that demands a thorough and complete explanation. We can see that in this drama, happening here and now, there is an "incomprehensibility" that we are not capable of understanding, yet we cannot remove it or forget it. We are forced to acknowledge it although, luckily, the human mind requires the final answer expecting that in time the Lord of World and History shall reveal to us the deeper meaning of these tragic events.

Looking back, with due honesty, upon the solutions of old times it must be admitted that a number of those solutions have all the hallmarks of an unusual wisdom and simplicity that the present day seems to lack. This is due to the fact that human attitudes are dominated by impulsiveness and reactivity in relation to reality. By way of illustration, let us quote some selected fragments of the teachings of a Chinese sage, Han Yu (768-824). "To show the power of intelligence the Ancient first ruled their country, but in order to rule their country they first organised their own family, yet in order to organise their own family they first took heed of their own conduct, yet to take heed of their own conduct they first made their own hearts better, yet in order to make their own hearts better they first straightened their own intentions. (...) The rules of the ancient laws were easy to understand and to put into effect. (...) However, today there is a will to praise the laws of barbarians, what is more, there is a will to value them over those ancient ones. (...) Today, they, who imagine that they reform, reject their mother country and family to the extent that the son does not respect his father, the subject refuses to obey the law. (...) What shall be done then? (...) People shall

act as real people. (...) And they shall be taught anew the ancient teachings. (...) Let us hope it shall be so”<sup>1</sup>.

Despite the fact that evil manifests itself in various and numerous ways, such hope can still survive as, more often than not, good prevails, and by an act of divine providence, from time to time, unusual people appear among us. Enriched with the passion of the heart, they radiate the particular blaze of goodness and bestow clarity of serene thought and unnatural simplicity on each human-being in need. Open to infinity, they go through the world sharing the wealth of the gifts they received from God with every person they meet. Meeting them brings about something that under normal circumstances seems impossible to happen. Since the Middle Ages they have been often called “giants”. Fortunately, the history of human thought has known a good number of them.

To consider only the previous century, one of such “giants”, apart from the Servant of the Lord Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński or John Paul II, is an outstanding Italian thinker and educator: the Reverend Professor Luigi Giussani who died five years ago (22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005). It is not possible to present his achievements in the field of work, culture and education in one short outline. At most, they can only be more or less ineptly outlined. Such is the purpose of this study.

In his letter “On the Occasion of the Death of Mons. Luigi Giussani” dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005, John Paul II writes that he was overwhelmed with emotion to learn the news of the death of dear Mons. Luigi Giussani. This was due to the personal acquaintance and the fact that the Holy Father admired his ardent faith proposing the “company” of Christ to a multitude of young people, today adults, who regard him as their spiritual “father” (para. 3). In this unusually warm and friendly letter the Holy Father notices that the synthesis of life and apostolate of “this fervent Milanese priest” lies in two words: “Christ and the Church”. The Pope recognises Giussani as a person who is both “an advocate of human reason” and “deeply versed in literature and music and firmly convinced that the appreciation of art can lead to the Mystery” (para. 4)<sup>2</sup>.

Undoubtedly Fr Luigi Giussani, at whose funeral mass the homily was inaccidentally delivered by Cardinal J. Ratzinger (who emphasises that Giussani, by guiding people not to himself but inviting them to personally encounter Christ, gave away all the wealth of his heart and by becoming father of many helped to make the world better), is one of the figures of the XX century who were able to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. Giussani, *Zmysł religijny* [The Religious Sense], Poznań 2000, p. 131-132.

<sup>2</sup> *Letter of John Paul II on the occasion of the death of Mons. Luigi Giussani* dated 22 February 2005. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/2005/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_20050222\\_don-giussani\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2005/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20050222_don-giussani_en.html).

witness that educating people into a rational religious belief and their full growth is the most important task and the best investment for the future. Expressing the need for detailed thematic monographs on the life and work of Fr L. Giussani, which becomes a fact<sup>3</sup> in the Italian-speaking area, this introductory outline aims to sketch an answer to a great number of questions concerning multifarious aspects of his socio-pedagogical activities. As far as pedagogical aspect is concerned, attention will be drawn to his understanding of pedagogy and education as well as to several facts that confirm his exceptionality as a person, educator and scholar.

## 1. The Issue of Pedagogy and Education

Fr L. Giussani holds a very sober and realistic view on man and his education. Emphasising the value of a person as a rational and free being his attitude represents a complete trust in God and a supreme love for man. In his 83-year-long life, educating thousands of people around the world into belief in God and creative presence in the world, he speaks of pedagogy as an “art of teaching difficult matters to the people still immature”. Education, in turn, he most often understands as “help given to human spirit in getting into contact with the whole reality and with the understanding of the factors constituting this reality”. He also defines it as “the appropriate communicating the past lived out in the present and criticised to some extent” or as “handing oneself over to become for pupils an inspiration and encouragement to their own engagement in reality”. He understands educating as the introduction into the entirety of reality and perceives

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. *inter alia* A. Rynio, Ks. Luigi Giussani. „Ja jestem zerem, Bóg jest wszystkim” [Fr Luigi Giussani. “I am zero, God is all”]. „Przegląd Uniwersytecki KUL” No. 3 (95) (2005), p. 24; *Charyzmat pedagogiczny Ks. Luigiiego Giussaniego* [Pedagogical Charisma of Fr Luigi Giussani], „Pedagogia Christiana” 2 (20) (2007), p. 91-100; *Aby objawiło się to co Bóg już uczynił. O ruchu Comunione e Liberazione* [To Reveal what God Has Already Done. About the Movement of Comunione e Liberazione], „Inspiracje” 49 (1998) No. 1, p. 16-17; *Wychowanie człowieka otwartego. Rola „Zmysłu religijnego” Luigi Giussaniego w kształtowaniu osoby* [Education of Open Man. The Significance of Luigi Giussani’s Religious Sense in the Formation of Man], Ed. A. Rynio, Kielce 2001; V. Messori, *Dwa sposoby na życie wiarą. Luigi Giussani* [Two Ways of Living Through Faith. Luigi Giussani], in: *Pytania o chrześcijaństwo* [Questions about Christianity (Inchiesta sul cristianesimo)], Kraków 1997, p. 207-218; *Comunione e Liberazione. Ruch w Kościele* [Communion and Liberation. A Movement in the Church], D. Rondoni (Ed.), Trans. W. Janusiewicz, Milano 1998; M. Camisasca, *Comunione e Liberazione. Il riconoscimento (1976-1984), Appendice 1985-2005*, San Paolo 2006; Z. Kowalska. *50 lat „Comunione e Liberazione”* [50 Years of “Communion and Liberation”], in: „Niedziela” No. 46 (2004), p. 19; R. Farina, *Don Giussani. Vita di un amico*, Piemme 2007.

the *raison d'être* of a human person in their heart with which nature endows its every child.

Such a perception of education begins with the “I” existing in a specific place and time. Its initial point is who man is and what his predispositions and afflictions are. Such perception of education involves openness to reality i.e. the real, beautiful, good and true. For Giussani it was not the most important “what the young can achieve, but who they are”, what their predispositions are and who they can become. His prolific literary output, exceptional pedagogical charisma and *Comunione e Liberazione* – an ecclesiastical movement founded in 1954 by Giussani himself were undoubtedly helpful in “teaching difficult matters to the people who are still immature”. His numerous works that sprang from this charisma were also helpful. Suffice it to mention “Tracce” (Traces) – *Comunione e Liberazione* international monthly that has a number of foreign editions, including Polish as well as English, and contains over six thousand works *Compagnia delle opere*, or an initiated by Fr Giussani in 1994 a book series presenting the most excellent works of poetry, prose or essays where various authors describe the way in which Christian spirit copes with the problems of existence and culture. The authors selected for the series are G. Leopardi, T.S. Eliot, E. Mounier, J. H. Newman, V. Messori or such classics as M. de Cervantes, F. M. Dostoyevsky, W. Shakespeare, and Dante Alighieri among others<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. A Short Biographical Note

Bearing in mind how exceptional Fr Giussani's service was, certain activities and facts from his life deserve particular attention. It goes without saying that this vigilant and courageous theologian born in Desio on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1922 was a recognised and appreciated person not only in the ecclesiastical but also in cultural and political sphere of life. On 15<sup>th</sup> October 2002 on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, he received over two thousand birthday cards including a special letter from the Holy Father expressing recognition of his accomplishments and exemplary witness of life. The day before his eightieth birthday in the interview by Dino Boffo, Fr Giussani spoke of himself: “Io sono zero, Dio è tutto“ – „I am zero, God is all”. One of his numerous achievements was initiating – as mentioned before – the Movement *Comunione e Liberazione*. Today this Movement operates on

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<sup>4</sup> For the complete list of all the titles visit [www.clonline.org](http://www.clonline.org) link: Libri&Musica/Il libri dello spirito cristiano-Elenco completo or [www.clonline.org/books\\_cd.asp](http://www.clonline.org/books_cd.asp) (for English).

all continents in more than 70 countries including Poland where it is known as *Komunia i Wyzwolenie* [Communion and Liberation].

Fr Giussani who, following the example of St. Paul, says “test them all; hold onto that which is good”, is a figure that entered the history of the Church and religion as witness. He was a charismatic and exceptional being. It is admitted and respected even by those who have not accepted his message.

The story of Fr Giussani’s life is fascinating. Given a closer look, it turns out that his father despite an enormous respect for priests was a declared socialist, and his mother – as he admits himself – “a beautiful woman of great and simple faith”. From his father Luigi inherited intelligence and sensitivity and also passion for life and beauty, a passion that later became one of the crucial elements of the formative method for the *Comunione e Liberazione* Movement. His family home had an atmosphere of great respect for a human being and of active formation to a constant animation of real dimensions of heart and reason. Owing to his father and mother Giussani learnt to perceive reality as a place where the Mystery of God is revealed to man. His mother, dedicating all her life to upbringing of her children, gave them an example of deep and at the same time very simple faith practised in everyday life. She constantly paid attention to those in need and all along she could show the beauty of the world thus admiring its Creator. Many times a day she would repeat: “Jesus can see you”, “do it for Jesus”, and, by doing so, encouraged hard work on oneself. His mother also spoke about and analyzed the past events thus helping to realise that Christianity is a past event lived out in the present. Therefore, it were the parents who woke their son to the sensitivity to the surrounding world and stimulated him to reflection<sup>5</sup>. In the process of discovering God as the principle of unification and explanation for all reality (“God is all in all and all in everyone”), the Seminary in Venegono Giussani joined at the early age of 10 is of considerable importance. As he admits years later, he met there such distinguished professors as: Gaetano Corti, Giovanni Colombo, Carlo Colombo, Carlo Figini. His professors and the authors they recommended to him: Newman, Rosmini, Stoppiani, Manzoni formed and developed his intelligence, freedom and fidelity to the Church. After taking the holy orders in 1945 Giussani takes up lectures in the Seminar at the Department of Theology of the Archdiocese of Milan on – which was then a rarity – Eastern and Protestant Theology. He is also interested in the rational character of the act of faith and the motivation for religious affiliation to the Church. In 1954, at his own request, he gives up the job of lecturer and his own study for the sake of the presence among youth. By his own choice, he becomes a catechist at Berchet Classical Secondary School

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<sup>5</sup> M. Camisasca, *Comunione e Liberazione. Le origini (1954-1968)*, San Paolo 2001, p. 38.

in Milan. The result of this activity is *Gioventu studentesca* (*Student Youth*), an organisation that later in 1970s develops into an ecclesiastical movement – *Comunione e Liberazione* (*Communion and Liberation*).

### 3. Fr Giussani – An Exceptional Scholar and Educator

Giussani's exceptionality manifested itself through the fact who he was and through the way he lectured, wrote, taught and acted. He was a truly humble person and although he never let anyone call him master, he gave birth to masters and was "all for all to save at least some". He loved the Lord, man and the Church. Presently tens of thousands people all over the world belong to *Communion and Liberation*. Fr Giussani was a catechist for ten years, and a priest, a thinker and an unquestionable authority on the matters of faith, morality and education throughout his life. Since 1964 he was Professor at the Catholic University of Milan where for many years he gave general university lectures coming out in the form of books whose editions reached thousands of copies. Fr Giussani's literary oeuvre comprises a great number of very interesting books and articles on fundamental theology, ontology, rudiments of anthropology, morality and education to mention just a few. Furthermore, not only did he pay special attention to the significance of literature and music in religious life but also discussed sociological matters<sup>6</sup>. For the author himself, the most essential series of three books includes: *Il senso religioso*<sup>7</sup>, *All'origine della pretesa cristiana*<sup>8</sup> and *Perchè la Chiesa*<sup>9</sup>. This trilogy is the basis of the educational-catechetical cycle used as the framework at the weekly gatherings of "The School of Community" members of the CL<sup>10</sup> Movement. Some of Fr Giussani's books have been translated into a number of foreign languages including Polish. One of them *The Religious Sense* was the

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. L. Giusani, *Zaangażowanie chrześcijanina w świecie*. Konferencje Luigi Giussaniego zredagowane przez zespół z Comunione e Liberazione [Christian's Engagement in the World. Conferences of Luigi Giussani edited by Comunione e Liberazione team], in: H. Urs von Balthazar, L. Giussani, *Miejsce chrześcijanina w świecie* [Christian's Place in the World], Kraków 2003, p. 115-184; by the same author. *Zmysł Boga a człowiek współczesny* [Sense of God and the Modern Man], „*Kwestia ludzka*” i nowość chrześcijaństwa [“Human Question” and the Novelty of Christianity], „*Ślady*” (1997) No. 5-6 (38-39), Trans. K. Borowczyk, p. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> *Il senso religioso*. Volume primo del PerCorso, Jaca Book, Milano 1986.

<sup>8</sup> *All'origine della pretesa cristiana*. Volume secondo del PerCorso, Jaca Book, Milano 1988.

<sup>9</sup> *Perchè la Chiesa – La pretesa permene*. Volume primo del PerCorso, Jaca Book, Milano 1990.

<sup>10</sup> *Comunione e Liberazione*. Ruch w Kościele [Communion and Liberation. A Movement in the Church], D. Rondoni (Ed.), Milano 1989, p. 114.

issue of the international session at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, organised by the author of this outline. The proceedings were published by “Jedność” in 2001 as *Wychowanie człowieka otwartego. Rola zmysłu religijnego ks. Luigi Giussaniego w kształtowaniu osoby* [Education of Open Man. The Significance of Luigi Giussani’s *Religious Sense* in the Formation of Man]. In 2002 with the same publisher, *Ryzyko wychowawcze jako tworzenie osobowości i historii*<sup>11</sup> [The Risk of Education] by Fr Giussani came out – a book of special value for pedagogues, catechists and parents. Among the numerous works by Fr Giussani the following are available in Polish: *Śladami chrześcijańskiego doświadczenia* [Traces of the Christian Experience]<sup>12</sup>, *Czas i Świątynia* [Time and the Temple]<sup>13</sup>, *Doświadczenie jest drogą do prawdy* [The Journey to Truth is an Experience]<sup>14</sup>, *Cała ziemia pragnie Twojego oblicza* [All the Earth Desires Your Face]<sup>15</sup>, *Chrześcijaństwo jako wezwanie* [The Challenge of Christianity]<sup>16</sup>, *Dlaczego Kościół?* [Why the Church?]<sup>17</sup>, *Czy można tak żyć* [Is It Possible to Live This Way?]<sup>18</sup> and others.

For many, Fr L. Giussani has always been and will remain a charismatic figure, that is to say a man who easily recognised living and omnipresent God and who taught how to consciously experience Christianity in its missionary dimension also in the sphere of cultural and socio-political life. For Giussani, Christ and what comes from Him was the most important. That is why he could say of his life “that he hopes that it goes on in accordance with God’s expectation, and that every moment of his own life was spent in search of the glory of Christ and “revealing” God. That “revealing” God consisted in making what God has already done manifest.

<sup>11</sup> *Ryzyko wychowawcze jako tworzenie osobowości i historii* [The Risk of Education], Trans. A. Surdej, Kielce 2002.

<sup>12</sup> *Śladami chrześcijańskiego doświadczenia* [Traces of the Christian Experience], Trans. K. Klauza, Ed. and preface to the Polish edition by Z. Bradel, Warszawa 1988.

<sup>13</sup> *Czas i Świątynia. Bóg i człowiek* [Time and the Temple. God and Man], Trans. K. Borowczyk. Preface to the Polish edition by F. Card. Macharski, Częstochowa 1997.

<sup>14</sup> *Doświadczenie jest drogą do prawdy* [The Journey to Truth is an Experience], Trans. D. Chodynicki, Kielce 2003.

<sup>15</sup> *Cała ziemia pragnie Twojego oblicza* [All the Earth Desires Your Face], Trans. D. Chodynicki, Kielce 2004.

<sup>16</sup> *Chrześcijaństwo jako wyzwanie. U źródeł chrześcijańskiego roszczenia* [The Challenge of Christianity. At the Origin of the Christian Claim], Trans. D. Chodynicki, Poznań 2002.

<sup>17</sup> *Dlaczego Kościół?* [Why the Church?], Trans. D. Chodynicki, Poznań 2004.

<sup>18</sup> *Czy można tak żyć?* [Is It Possible to Live This Way?], Trans. M. Idebska, Kraków 2010.



Fr Giussani proved to be not only a catechist or university professor at the University Sacro Cuore in Milan but also the founder and president of ecclesiastical societies developed from the Movement: *The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation* with almost 40 thousand members and growing, *Memoires Domini* and *The Fraternity of St. Joseph* (with virginity and unceasing memory of the Lord in the centre of their life) formally recognised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. We, pedagogues, often wonder what the source of Fr Giussani's spiritual wealth and his prolific educational inspiration was. For those who knew him every day the answer is simple: the source was the way he experienced meeting the Word "that become flesh and dwelt among us". About his encounter with Christ resulting in the emergence of the Movement *Comunione e Liberazione* Fr Giussani spoke in his detailed testimony in St. Peter's Square, Rome, on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1998. On this occasion he said: "It was a simplicity of heart that made me feel and recognise Christ as exceptional, with that certain promptness that marks the unassailable and indestructible evidence of factors and moments of reality, which, on entering the horizon of our person, pierce us to the heart. (...) 'It is not by means of scruples that man will become great; greatness comes through the grace of God, like a beautiful day' (Camus, *Notebooks*). For me, everything happened like the surprise of a 'beautiful day', when one of my secondary school teachers – I was then 15 years old – read and explained to us the prologue to the Gospel of St. John. At that time in the seminary, it was obligatory to read that prologue at the end of every Mass. I had therefore heard it thousands of times. But the 'beautiful day' came: everything is grace. (...) Forty years later, (...) I understood what had happened to me then, when my teacher explained the first page of the Gospel of St. John: The Word of God, or rather that of which everything was made, was made flesh – he said – and therefore Beauty was made flesh, Goodness was made flesh, Justice was made flesh, Love, Life, Truth were made flesh. Being does not exist in a Platonic hiperuranium [a world above heaven where ideas dwell]; it became flesh, it is one of us. (...) The Word was made flesh. Not only had Being (Beauty, Truth) not disdained to clothe its perfection in flesh, and to bear the toils of this human life but it had come to die for man. He came to his own and his own received him not; he knocked on the door of his own home and was not recognised. That is the whole story. My life as a very young man was literally invaded by this; both as a memory that continually influenced my thought and as a stimulus to make me re-evaluate the banality of everyday life. The present moment, from then on, was no longer banal for me. Everything that existed – and therefore everything that was beautiful, true, attractive, fascinating,

even as a possibility – found in that message its reason for being, as the certainty of a presence and a motivating hope which cause one to embrace everything<sup>19</sup>.

To describe the unstoppable elation that entered Giussani's heart from the moment he recognised Christ as the truth of everything the notion of desire has to be employed. It affects every true missionary and is expressed in a desire that everyone get to know what he has got to know so that "the *beautiful day* may dawn" for all. Fr Giussani proposes the experience of unity as a path leading to the acquaintance with Christ and living out the encounter with Him. It is revealed in the sign of concordance, friendship and community of those who follow Christ and that which comes from Him. He teaches that "when we recognise it, this unity begins to pulse and our life becomes more human. The community, propagated infinitely, is the mystery of this identity due to which and in which I can say to Christ with a shiver, fear and love: "*You!*"

No wonder then that "a community, an association, where an encounter with Christ happens, is the place to where our "I" belongs, the place where we are taught the final means to perceiving and understanding things, their intellectual assimilation and assessment, planning, designing, deciding, acting. Our "I" belongs to this *body* - our community and from it the criteria for coping with everything are drawn. That is why our *point of view* does not take its own ways but is obliged to compare and in comparing it shows obedience to the community, the association".

All Fr Giussani's ample formative activities are best described in his own words: "The only reason for which we have done what we have done (and will keep doing as long as God permits), the only reason for our efforts is *that they know Him*, that people encounter Christ. God became human and came to his own: the fact that his own know Him not is the gravest sin, undoubtedly the greatest injustice".

#### 4. Preferable Ways of Education

Looking upon education as introducing into that which is always and everywhere true and taking just the contents of his publications such as *Ryzyko wychowania* [The Risk of Education] or *Zmysł religijny* [The Religious Sense]

<sup>19</sup> L. Giussani, *W prostocie mego serca radośnie oddałem Ci wszystko* [In the simplicity of my heart I have gladly given You everything], Fr Luigi Giussani's testimony during the meeting of the Holy Father John Paul II with the ecclesial movements and the new communities. St Peter's Square, Rome, 30 May 1998, in: *Comunione e Liberazione. Ruch w Kościele* [Communion and Liberation: A Movement in the Church], D. Rondoni (Ed.), Milano 1998, p. 110-112.

it is clear that we deal with an education that confirms that which is, that which exists in reality. Giussani Teaches us that a man who lives in reality knows “that he has not been here before, and now he is”. He realises that “he can be either a small meaningless point carried by the flow of history, inevitably depending on authorities, or by relation to that mysterious X, limitless horizon of every thought and every action, he is who he should be and his actions can be called human i.e. free”. That mysterious X is the medium, the explanation of reality and the answer to the human need for being real, free and happy for ever. That X is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us – it is Jesus Christ. Real God and real man, born in time, of the Virgin Mary. Revealing the name of God and being the ideal and the model for each human existence, He brings freedom from the slavery of sin, loneliness and confusion. Being the Truth, the Way and the Life, He restores the meaning to everything, and for education He becomes “the infinite ideal”. His name is love and compassion. Remaining in Him makes a human being a new creation. It gives man a new perspective of seeing, thinking, affection and action. This new perspective of being expresses itself in justice which is love, in inter-human relationships, in the perception of freedom, friendship or work. It expresses itself in the capacity to judge and to live according to the plan of God. The follower of Jesus begins to conceive, in time, that every work expresses itself in the conscious relation to oneself, to one’s soul and to one’s body, to the father, mother, child, field, place of work, home and there is not a single thing, not a single relationship that would not be work. Such a perception of work, similar to the formation open to Revelation is born from the friendship with God and develops as an affection and passion that accompanies each person who forms a relationship with anything.

Describing education as an activity open to the hypothesis of Revelation, Giussani assumes that man guided by his sense of realism and rationalism is capable of making a judgement and being critical in his attitude. Such capability expresses itself in striving to be rational and to treat the world as a place of revelation of the One who created it. Teaching rational perception of one’s own person in action, Fr Giussani is convinced that “*raison d’être* of a person is the endless strive for truth, justice, freedom and happiness”. He believes that man draws his moral certainty from learning the truth about himself and the surrounding world. Assuming that faith is a gift, he is concerned about its maturity expressed in the fact that “Christ permeates all things and is present in history through the personality of the baptised and communion with his brothers”.

God was for him was a reality that could be encountered upon. He teaches that this Presence should become for man “a hypothesis of work” without which he

is not able to understand himself, others and the surrounding world. He defines Faith itself as “something that is born from undivided admiration”, something that is “a journey of the eye” and becomes the adequate answer to the ultimate sense of existence. According to him, a man thus formed is not only capable of criticism and judgement but overcomes the apparent dichotomy between faith and reason, life and action. Man, educated to faith by Fr Giussani knows that he is not a measure of reality and the criteria he discovers in his own heart are bestowed on him by someone else. He is formed into being careful, courageous and able to take “the risk of freedom that opens him ajar, as if he were a window, to every aspect of reality including the unknown and the mysterious”. He realises that for complete and real development he requires an authority, someone who impersonates that hypothesis explaining reality and lives out through the experience of faith and love. The Italian thinker emphasises the importance of the awareness of laws and obligations in education as well as developing the critical sense, problem category and a sense of belonging not excluding love of truth, willingness to transform, sacrifice and renounce, to accept the other person in their dissimilarity, sense of mission, responsibility, sharing the needs or the necessity for ascetic work<sup>20</sup>.

## 5. Formative Events

It was obvious for the Italian thinker that the purpose of his life is Christ present in the community of believers, Christ “perceived and recognised as the Lord of time and history” who, through incarnation, became for Giussani a companion on his human road. No wonder then that the subject of his formation, aware of baptism and confirmation feels called forth to reread anew, in conformity with tradition, the whole Christian experience. He views the Church as the place of salvation that comes from Christ. At the same time Fr Giussani preaches that by sharing his experience of faith a christened man is to build Christian community wherever he is. He also insisted that human life is the tissue of innumerable events and encounters man could be formed through. It demands from him, however, enormous humility. Such a formative event can be a discovery of the way to express cognitive need of reason, aesthetic impression, living out friendship, beauty, love, encounter with goodness or doing good, giving birth to a child,

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<sup>20</sup> These matters are the subject of a more detailed study, among others, in my article: *Wychowawcza metoda ks. L. Giussaniego* [Fr L. Giussani’s Method of Education], in: *Wychowanie człowieka otwartego (...)* [Education of Open Man (...)], p. 98-102.

one's own or someone else's misfortune or death of someone close. Appropriate communicating the past or an encounter with an authority is also such an event. Both an authority and Tradition critically perceived is important since "nature appointed it as norm for each instant of proper development". Therefore, formation, which Fr Giussani understands as "the appropriate communicating the past lived out in the present and criticised to some extent", needs a master teacher who leads us to that which is always true, everywhere and for everyone. We need someone who would have considerable authority to help unravel the criteria of judgement and develop the critical sense that is so very much necessary for young people. We need someone who would help children and young people understand themselves. According to Giussani, we need such teachers who not only teach but also educate in the spirit of the laws and obligations by which they themselves abide. We need these who educate in the spirit of concern for dignity and good of every man and who reveal decent conditions of life and work. Restoring formative presence in the process of education is a necessity since an important criterion of human development is the fact that a person learns only when he "follows". A child does it somehow instinctively, when a person grows more mature – will, intelligence and affectivity are engaged in the process. A person learns when he feels his inner value is respected, when he is permitted to be creative, independent and free.

## **6. Personality Constituents – Educator and Educatee**

Assuming that education, responding to the necessity for the hypothesis that explains reality, is communicating oneself, Giussani points out that there are significant elements constituting the personality of the educator and the person educated. It is not possible, however, to discuss them in detail here. Let us consider then several selected ones: love of truth, experience of living faith including belief in the existence of good difficult to attain (hope), necessity of belonging, concern for one's own and others' good, experience of free choice, responsibility for calls of reality, sharing the needs with others on the basis of human solidarity, necessity of possessing one's own identity and being grounded in tradition, appreciation of "here and now", openness to the future, necessity for work on oneself, acquiring attitude of being corrected and of correcting others, and finally, necessity of forgiving and accepting someone else being different.

It should be emphasised that these matters are not to be disregarded in the honourable, though difficult, art of educating man. Undoubtedly, to accept Christ

and everything that comes from Him makes the process of formation easier and more effective as it gives a strong foundation and shows the adequate method of formation. On the other hand, remembering Christ Fr Giussani paid so much attention to allows to appreciate everything that happens in life, in history and confirms the wealth that springs from Christian experience. This remembering, strengthened through prayer and participation in the liturgy of the Mass, breeds the unity of person, vocation awareness and the unity of all Christians manifesting and expressing itself in the commonality and unity with the true authority of the Church, not to mention mature personalities able to love even their enemies. According to Giussani, to go with the Church up the path of belief in God, who is “all in all”, and in Christ, who is “all in everyone”, makes it possible for man to become who he should become. It protects man from nihilism, pointlessness, mediocrity, fear, alienation, anarchy, scepticism, hopelessness and irresponsibility.

## **7. The Relationship between Freedom, Conscience, Tradition and Education**

At the end of this preliminary outline, let us consider the relationship between so defined an education and freedom, conscience, tradition. The analyses carried out so far prove that education proposed by Fr Giussani, with its necessity for integral and harmonious personal development, appreciates reason in its potential. So does it appreciate the ability to read meaningful senses inside reality, but does not leave out freedom, honesty of conscience, attentiveness, communal realisation of God’s plan, risk, necessity of forming emotions or responsibility for anything reality calls for at the moment. We deal here with an education that is deeply ingrained in tradition and in recovering what has been handed down from previous generations and, at the same time, with appreciation of the present and openness to the future. Such an education confirms what is as real as  $2+2=4$ . It has its ideal that exists in time and is the ideal infinite and, despite it, can be grasped. This ideal is God who was made flesh. This fact has, historically, been the reason for indignation and outrage for so many supporters of the cultural mentality of our civilisation. Giussani argues that not recognising this fact makes us liars who, instead of truth, see falsehood and live in it. Hence, to have Christ as an ideal makes us work on our thinking and our self-awareness, on our reason and our heart and tells us to take an ascetic way of life which only apparently is directed against oneself.

It should be emphasised that what makes Fr Giussani's vision of education, roughly presented in this outline, so precious is not only its biblical grounding but also its classical and philosophical background of reflection as well as its potential for practical application. Such an education, and similarly a Christian call, can be described as a clear initiative to every single man. It is simple and fundamental. It assumes ideal and desire that supports it, encounter, dialogue, reasonability, faith, love, freedom, action, concreteness, integrity, culture, tradition, cooperation, friendship, personal engagement, experience of impossible suitability, functionality and authority. Education as an openness to entire reality is acted out with the contribution of family, school, Church and personal activity on the part of the person educated. It is open to the social and professional aspect of life and calls for the presence of the baptised in society<sup>21</sup>.

Fr Giussani has been certainly recognised both as an exceptional pedagogue and friend to many and as a man of providence best described by his affection for the mystery of man and love of what man can accomplish and make the focus of his history. For him, Christianity was not only just an idea, it was a challenge and an advocate of the presence of Incarnation that has been happening through free and reasonable man and the Church. Therefore, each authentic Christian formation cannot neglect education to more and more profound cognition of and affection for the entire Church and consequently for its institutional aspect. Finally, religious freedom is a right and if it is not respected, it should be secured under the supervision of the appropriate authority.

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<sup>21</sup> For more details see, among others, one of my articles *Wychowanie człowieka w duchu „Zmysłu religijnego”* [Education of Man in a Spirit of “The Religious Sense”] and *Wychowanie otwarte na hipotezę Objawienia* [Education Open to the Revelation Hypothesis], in: *Wychowanie człowieka otwartego (...)* [Education of Open Man (...)], p.71-84; 89-92i

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