BASIC TRAINING ON
THE RISK OF
EDUCATION

For Educators, Teachers,
Parents, Social Workers, Correctional Officers
Acknowledgements

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A theory or a technique can be learnt from a text and then repeated and applied. An experience cannot. An experience can only be lived and made part of oneself. In this way only can it also be communicated and shared.

This text is part of an experience and therefore cannot be read as a manual, a sum of instructions to be followed: doing that would affect the nature of the proposal, which is, as such, the communication of oneself attracted and involved in the adventure of an encounter that changes life.

This experience has its origin and continuous provocation in the figure of a great master, Luigi Giussani, and is shared by many people from different countries and traditions, who have been and are surprised, fascinated and changed by the encounter with him, by his tireless sharing of himself, his own way of facing the all reality and commitment to the great and universal questions in life.

The aim of this text is the description of The Risk of Education Training, one of the courses held in Uganda starting from 2002 within AVSI projects.

The training develops the themes of Giussani’s book The Risk of Education, with special reference to chapter 1, “Dynamics and Factors of the Educational Event” to which we refer the readers.

We don’t aim, in fact, at “re-writing” the book of Luigi Giussani, or at using his teaching only as an inspiration for the proposal of something different, created by us; we simply want to offer others the possibility to encounter him, communicating what his experience has produced in us and therefore using our persons as means for re-launching his proposal.

In these years The Risk of Education Training has been held for 847 teachers, educators, social workers, parents, correctional officers and wards. The training has always obtained a very positive response and provoked in participants the request for further deepening of the content, being followed-up in their daily work and involving colleagues in order to realize in their environment a common educative proposal.

This confirms that education is an event that moves the freedom of other people only in force of the energy originating from the wonder, the esteem, the devotion of the educators for something that has happened to them and has touched them.

This is exactly our experience in the encounter with Luigi Giussani and therefore the fruits of our work belong to him and only to him.
THE ORIGIN OF THE INITIATIVE

The possibility to translate some themes of the book *The Risk of Education* in a training for teachers and people involved in education emerged in 2002 in Kampala, within an AVSI project, which included some training activities and was supported by the Pontificium Consilium “Cor Unum”. The first step was the systematic study of the text of Giussani, which was done by a small group of only three people.

The concept of education proposed in *The Risk of Education* is focussed on what is at our origins as human beings and develops as the experience of the relationship with a master who accompanies the learners in their original opening to reality, awakes the awareness of themselves as desiring total beauty, truth, justice and happiness and sustains their research for a unitary and exhaustive meaning in life. The reading of the book and the discussion of its content were a true educational event: the nature of the proposal of Luigi Giussani put at play our very selves, provoked us to use his understanding of the original dynamism of our nature as a standard for a new “reading” of our own different experiences and made it easy to share them freely, creating among us a deep link of great friendship and esteem.

Another factor was immediately evident and also challenging, even with reference to our situation in Uganda: Giussani’s concept of human nature and, consequently, of education disputes the common idea that schooling as such is a factor that creates development. The possibility to have access to the school system, as Uganda's policy of Universal Primary Education has allowed, is not enough if formal education is not conceived and lived as introduction to a total meaning of reality. Only that experience in fact constitutes a personality that is aware of his/her deep needs, free, unitary and, therefore, capable to live, create and go through change. The awareness of this and the intensity of the provocation received made us perceive the urgency and the responsibility to share the proposal of Luigi Giussani, pushing us to work on the possibility to communicate it through workshops and seminars, so that what had interested us might be a help even for others.

THE AIM AND CLAIM OF THE RISK OF EDUCATION TRAINING

The training intended and intends to introduce, in an educational and pedagogical environment, a proposal that is fully respectful of the traditional background of our people, but that is at the same time absolutely innovative.

In fact we think that the emphasis put by Luigi Giussani on the value of tradition as the starting point for the openness to reality and, at the same time, on the need of an education in criticism is truly corresponding to the urgencies of Ugandan society and culture.

Here many different factors (the high spread of HIV/AIDS and the consequent crumbling of family, the interference of western culture, the urbanization and the massive displacement of people in the northern part of the country) have
impoverished the traditional structure of the society and its capacity to educate the young generation.

The consequences on the awareness of individuals and communities are enormous: persons act within a system of values, rules and habits that are often heterogeneous and even conflicting, but live in a social and cultural context that is poor of references and that reduces education to homogeneity as mere repetition of behaviours and knowledge that are socially recognized.

Therefore Ugandans, especially the youth, live a serious crisis of identity: they reproduce different roles, customs and creeds according to the requests and expectations of different contexts; this testifies the absence of personalities that can, “holding” the meaning of reality, give reasons of their choices and beliefs.

We thought therefore that even in this context, like everywhere else, the first urgency is to have “masters”, capable of helping people personally verify what is taught them, compare different traditions and ideals, develop the capacity to take decisions and to find personal and creative solutions.

We tried to respond to this urgency with our work; we think in fact that it is possible to contribute to the true and effective development of the country through the education of people aware of themselves and of the value of reality, whose personalities are unitary, because they are critically linked to their tradition, and who are capable to live and go through change while expressing their awareness of reality and not repeating defined schemes.

THE VALUE OF THE METHOD
According to the etymology of the word, method means a way, a path.

During the trainings our interest is to promote an effective dialogue, because always, but especially in the field of education, the first and main resource is the person: it is only the person in fact that communicates the enthusiasm for the discovery and the understanding of reality, the fascination of acting on it, the openness to the adventure of personal verification and creativity.

Thus our trainings are structured and organized as an example of a way of teaching that aims at a common work of verification, comparison and evaluation of a proposal that is interesting and fascinating for us. The result is always the experience of “encountering” new people, making new discoveries, receiving important inputs and creating new links.

The value of the method lies in the fact that the content is not an idea or a theory, but the experience we live and communicate in the act itself of our activity as facilitators (the unity among us, the way we relate to the participants, handle the content, express ourselves etc). In other words, in the experience we propose there is an identity between content and method.

Therefore, for us the method is not a strategy for delivering pre-packaged knowledge or developing competences and skills that are rigidly defined, but the true and effective sharing of what we are, live and look at.

THE CHOICE OF THE INSTRUMENTS
The choice of the instruments for our training is the result of the education, received from Giussani, to be open to any great expression of the heart of man. In particular, we always propose works of great artists, writers, musicians, thinkers and educators, even those not belonging to the African culture, in order
to emphasize the universal value of our proposal and also the need to look at the most significant documents of our nature as expressed by a genius.

A genius in fact represents what is common to each man and culture and helps the discovery of our very selves and this is the main objective of education.

The suggestions and contributions of new trainees continually enrich the list of our instruments; some of them are indicated below as examples of the path we followed, but we are aware that different means may be found as more useful for our activity or more adequate in other contexts.
Outline of
The Risk of Education Training

DESCRIPTION
It is the basic training, structured in 5 sessions and 1 follow-up.

CONTENT
The training
- presents education as the process by which the person becomes aware of the value of his/her existence and of the deepest needs defining his/her humanity: the need of meaning, truth, justice, happiness;
- identifies the link with a tradition, the relationship to a master, the personal verification of the learner and freedom as original and unavoidable factors of the educational event;
- offers examples adequately tuned according to the kind of trainees.

TARGET
The training is addressed to teachers, head teachers, social workers, parents, correctional officers and all the people whose work entails personal relationships with clients (nurses, counsellors, etc).

N.B. Since to educate is to promote the awareness of oneself while living and acting and is a task entrusted to any human being, the training can also be proposed, adequately tuned, to any kind of people.

OBJECTIVES
The general objectives of the training are the following:
- to introduce trainees to the awareness of the desire of totality as the proper human dimension and nature;
- to produce an experience of education as introduction to total reality;
- to introduce trainees to the discovery of the original factors and dynamics of the educational event;
- to arouse the awareness that education is the communication of that truth which has become one’s life experience;
- to introduce trainees to a critical understanding of their experience;
- to criticize the common reduction of education to instruction or inculcation and to introduce trainees to a new view on objectives, methods and habits generally accepted and used in education.

METHOD
The content and the objectives require that the training itself is a new experience of learning/teaching and therefore the method aims at involving the trainees in a constructive participation focussed on a critical reflection on their professional and human experience.

The method includes:
- clear and detailed proposal of the content through a lecture, taught according to the sensitivity of the facilitators and using a participatory approach in order to offer a defined hypothesis of the work at hand;
- reference to personal experiences, daily life situations or significant...
testimonies, in order to introduce trainees to the personal verification of the content and to develop the capacity of personal judgement;

- open communication and free discussions among participants and facilitators in order to introduce the habit of comparing different ideals and cultural positions;
- absolute openness and respect for any different experience and cultural position or ideal;
- use of multimedia aids in order to facilitate the understanding of the universal value of the content and to offer occasions for their deepening.

INSTRUMENTS
The following instruments are used in order to offer occasion for a full understanding of the content and an easy comparison with each one’s experience and also to promote free discussions:
- documentation of significant experiences,
- slides of art,
- pieces of literature,
- pieces of music,
- movies,
- synthesis of the key points of each session.

At the end of the 5 sessions, guideline questions are distributed to participants and are discussed later during the follow-up session.

EVALUATION
Either a quantitative or a qualitative method of evaluation is used. At the beginning of the training and at its closure the participants are requested to fill a questionnaire (cf. Attachment 1) in order to allow the facilitators to identify and measure:

- their knowledge and understanding of the original dynamics of education;
- their capacity to choose objectives centered on the development of the learner’s personality (self-awareness, criticism, freedom);
- their capacity to choose a proper learner-centered methodology.

According to the tables attached to the questionnaire the facilitators can measure and compare the level of understanding of the content before and after the training.

However the evaluation of the true impact of the training requires the evaluation of the awareness of the trainees at play in daily life. This is therefore a qualitative kind of evaluation and entails a holistic approach and the personal involvement of facilitators and trainees in a free relationship. One of the objectives of the sixth session of the training (follow-up after at least one month) is just this kind of evaluation. In fact the trainees are requested to share true experiences after the training and to find out points of novelty or difficulties and challenges in the implementation of the proposal. It allows the facilitators to express their judgement on the success of the training, but especially to discuss the modalities for a further common work and to identify the people who are most interested in the proposal.

DURATION
Each session requires at least 3 hours of activity.
Session 1
Education to totality

TEXT OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND
In common mentality and practices and also in the pedagogical context, education is generally conceived and lived as acquisition of cultural, ethical or behavioural models.

The emphasis put on the side of acquiring knowledge or values is associated with the absence of reference to the self-awareness of the learner as the main objective of any true educational intervention and therefore even of an effective learning process.

Moreover, sometimes the word education is also associated with the word “inculcation” in order to emphasise that the task of an educator is the production of certain given results in the learners even without the involvement of their awareness and freedom. On the same direction is the fact that very rarely do we find mention of a master able to guide the learners to the discovery of the meaning and value of their existence and of all reality.

This cultural setting is documented also by the analysis of the questionnaires that our trainees generally fill before the beginning of the course; when requested for a definition of education, they answer as follows:

- 90% Acquisition of knowledge and skills;
- 2% Inculcation of moral, ethical and spiritual values;
- 0% Introduction to reality;
6% Promotion of scientific, technical and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to enhance national development;

2% Acquisition of discipline and good behaviour.

OBJECTIVES
The specific objectives of the session are to introduce trainees to:

- the awareness of the desire of totality as the proper human dimension and nature;
- the awareness of the necessary link between education and human nature and its original dynamics;
- to the awareness that reality is the factor that activates the educational process and is also, at the same time, its achievement;
- to a critical understanding of the common concept of education and of the objectives, methods and habits generally accepted and used in education.

CONTENT
The following content is delivered during the session:

- to educate is to address the proper and peculiar factor of any human being: the heart;
- the heart is a complex of original needs and evidences;
- man’s heart is infinite: its desire is quenched only by the totality;
- reality is the factor that activates man’s heart;
- education is the introduction to reality, to total reality;
- education is the introduction to the exhaustive meaning of reality (in fact reality is truly affirmed only when its meaning is also affirmed);
- to educate is a journey done together: it is necessary that the educator is always available to be educated, even by the one that he has educated.

INSTRUMENTS

The movie is suggested for deepening some contents of the lecture and continuing the discussion on that theme.

The story: Daniel, a teenager, is picked on by some bullies, who all are adept in karate. The caretaker at his apartment, Mr. Miyagi, saves him by outfighting this gang, thereby demonstrating the fact that he is a great master in karate. Mr. Miyagi accepts to train Daniel and, while teaching karate, builds an educative relationship that involves and embraces any aspect of the life of the learner.

The movie emphasizes the following points:

- the educator is not concerned only with a single element of the life of
the learner (Daniel’s need to learn karate), but offers a companionship that embraces all his/her interests (Daniel’s girl-friend), widening his/her horizon of life and introducing him/her to totality;

- the educator uses reality and life situations as means for his/her educative aim (training in open air, painting the fence etc);

- the educator does not share only his/her knowledge or skills, but involves his/her whole life in the educative relationship;

- the educator accompanies the learner without forcing his/her freedom and capacity to act according to the teaching received;

- the capacity to educate does not necessarily imply to be without weaknesses (Mr. Miyagi gets drunk).

**ACTIVITIES AND DURATION**

The activities (and the approximate duration) of the session are the following:

1. Questionnaires 30 minutes
2. Lecture 45 minutes
3. Discussion 30 minutes
4. Watching the movie 110 minutes
5. Discussion 30 minutes

**COMPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENTS/TEXTS**

- Albert Camus, “Mr Bernard”, from *The First Man*, 1996
- Luigi Giussani, from *Children in Armed Conflicts* (Foreword to UN Workshop), New York, 5th June 2001
- Luigi Giussani, “With the Infinite in the Heart”, *Traces*, 2001, 8
Session 2
Tradition and Present

TEXT OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND
In present African culture the debate about the value of tradition is still a burning and unsolved issue and this has implications in the field of education.

On one side in fact there is the emphasis put on the need to return to the values of the pure tradition in opposition to the cultural and economic colonization suffered from the white people. This position aims at developing a peculiar African identity, but does not offer any indication on the way of relating to the unavoidable and massive influence of western culture (globalisation, mass-media, school system etc).

On the other side, instead, tradition is considered as a primitive system of life and, for this reason, is rejected and denied. This position does not consider the fact that tradition is still lived and active in society and affects the identity of the people; to reject tradition therefore means to reject part of the personality of an individual, to split and fragment it and to condemn African people and society to be subject to values and disvalues of western culture.

OBJECTIVES
The specific objectives of this session are the following:
- to develop the awareness of the importance of tradition as the starting point given by nature to a child for approaching reality;
to develop the awareness of the importance of tradition in the definition of personal identity;
- to develop respect to any tradition
- to develop the awareness that the educator must accompany the learner in the personal verification of what has been received from his/her tradition;
- to develop the awareness of the dangerous effects of rejecting tradition.

**CONTENT**
The following content is delivered during the session:
- any person grows in a tradition, a cultural environment that communicates knowledge, values, rules and habits;
- all the traditions are positive, because their value is the attempt to answer the deepest questions of the heart of man;
- tradition offers a meaning, an explanatory hypothesis of reality;
- tradition is different from traditionalism – the blind, uncritical, piecemeal acceptance of what was done or believed in the past;
- tradition is the starting point given by nature to a child for approaching and understanding reality;
- tradition as explanatory hypothesis of reality is the only condition of giving certainty to the learner;
- the effects of rejecting tradition are uncertainty, indifference, alienation, lack of commitment to reality, scepticism.

**INSTRUMENTS**
A choice of music from *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* op.61 by Ludwig Van Beethoven, 1806. Listening to this concert is suggested because the music of Beethoven, although not familiar to African audiences, expresses, with great communicative strength, the drama of the relationship between the tradition one belongs to and one's uniqueness. The orchestra plays the role of a strong, bold but also maternal tradition, in conflict with the personality of one member of its people, represented by the violin. The concert in fact is a dialogue between the orchestra and the violin, which many times tries to escape from its role in the common music and to create and propose its own different melody. The orchestra is surprised and gives it room to express itself, its cry and desire of novelty, but always recalls it to a unity, proposing again the common and usual musical theme, sometimes overwhelming it even with violence. The violin continues to escape, but its melody grows more and more desperate, loses beauty and harmony (in the 1st movement). Then (in the 2nd movement) the violin, totally overcome, accepts a new suggestion from the orchestra and starts again playing with the other fellow instruments, but at this point all the music changes: its acceptance to belong changes the attitude of the orchestra that opens a new melody where the violin and its theme can play the main role. At the end (in the 3rd movement) the renewed unity of the orchestra creates a festive shape of dance, the Rondo, where the principal theme is proposed by the violin, or by the orchestra or even by both together in a lively, new dialogue.

The concert deepens the content of the lesson and stresses the following points:
- the emphasis put on tradition is never the negation of the uniqueness of the individual, but, on the contrary, is the condition for its affirmation: only in link with his/her own tradition can a child develop as a full personality;
the link with a tradition does not mean its passive acceptance, but its understanding up to the point of affirming it in a different way and renewing it (novelty always blossoms from tradition);

- teen age is generally the time when the conflict with one’s origin and belonging blows up; only the patient and bold presence of educators assures the possibility of coherence to the research of the teenagers and fashions a generation of people with unitary and strong personalities.

**ACTIVITIES AND DURATION**

The activities (and the approximate duration) of the session are the following:

1. Synthesis of the previous session 15 minutes
2. Lecture 60 minutes
3. Discussion 30 minutes
4. Music 45 minutes
5. Discussion 30 minutes

**COMPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENTS/TEXTS**

- Angelo Scola, *Giussani’s Thought*, Washington, Georgetown Conference Centre, April 4-5, 2003
TEXT OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND
In the educational field the concept of authority is sometimes related to an exemplary role played by an adult, because of academic preparation, capacity of coherence or even only age, but especially, as in common mentality, to the legitimate exercise of power and to the ability to influence the actions of other people.

This mentality is documented also by the analysis of the questionnaires that our trainees generally fill before the beginning of the course; requested for a definition of authority, they answer as follows:

- 60% A person with a role in society that gives him power upon others;
- 33% A person who accompanies and helps others in their growth;
- 3% A person who can force others to do something;
- 1% A person who can decide for others;
- 3% Other.
OBJECTIVES
The specific objectives of the session are to introduce trainees to:

- the awareness of the importance of an authoritative figure in the educational process;
- the distinction between the common understanding of authority as power and the figure of an authority in education;
- the recognition of the authoritative figures in their experience;
- the awareness of the responsibility to offer the learner a lived exhaustive proposal for life.

CONTENT
The following content is delivered during the session:

- authority is the location of the most conscious expression of tradition;
- authority is the location of a hypothesis;
- authority is the location of the growth of the teenager;
- authority is my truest self;
- authority is the only condition for coherence in the educational process.

INSTRUMENTS

The movie is suggested for deepening some contents of the lecture and continuing the discussion on that theme.

The story: Mario, a simple half-illiterate postman builds a deep relationship with Pablo Neruda, the famous Chilean poet, who lives in exile in Mario’s place, a small Italian isle. Thanks to the authoritative presence of the great poet, the horizon of Mario widens and he learns to love poetry, to woo and marry Beatrice, to be committed in politics and also to see the beauty in his birthplace.

The movie emphasises the following points, related to the content of the session:

- a true authority, while living, reveals something that is already in the learner, but he/she does not know yet (while reading a poem by Pablo Neruda, Mario finds something that expresses his experience, but he had never thought of it before);
- a true authority does not answer “closed” solutions or rules, but introduces the learner to the experience of reality (when Mario asks how to write a poem, Pablo invites him to go to the shore and look);
- a true authority gives value to the experience of the learner and offers new elements in order to judge and understand it truly (Pablo reads a poem of his and helps Mario to use experience in order to understand it);
- a true authority is available to be taught by the learner (when Mario says “the world is a metaphor of something else”, Pablo is struck by this remark);
- a true authority widens the horizon of the learner beyond his/her particular interest (Mario discovers the beauty of his island he had never noticed before or takes interest in politics).

ACTIVITIES AND DURATION
The activities (and the approximate duration) of the session are the following:

1. Synthesis of the previous session 15 minutes
2. Lecture 30 minutes
3. Discussion 30 minutes
4. Watching the movie 100 minutes
5. Discussion 30 minutes
COMPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENTS/TEXTS

- Movie *The Sound of Music*, directed by Robert Wise, 1965, (first 100 minutes)
- Dante Alighieri, “Brunetto Latini”, from *Divine Comedy*, I, XV, vv. 79-85
- Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, 108.23.4
- Frank Mc Court, “Question Quigley”, from *Angela’s Ashes*, Harper Collins Publisher, London, 1996
Session 4
Personal Verification and Criticism

TEXT OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND
In African culture the person is never conceived in an individualistic way, but is always put in relation to the group to which he/she belongs.

This traditional African background has very positive consequences in the good development of the personality, because it corresponds to the true nature of a human being, ontologically dependant and belonging. It is also true, yet, that this position becomes also dangerous if associated to the common tendency to emphasise more the value of the group than the uniqueness of individuals, their responsibility to face reality on their own and to test and verify personally what is proposed to them. Thus, the concern of many “good” educators to fashion people who can fit in society risks to create a compact, but repetitive society, without personalities capable to innovate, criticize and give their personal and free contribution to the common good.

OBJECTIVES
The specific objectives of the session are to introduce trainees to:
- the awareness of the importance of personal verification in the educational process;
- the understanding that criticism is the habit to compare any experience with one’s origin, and not necessarily a rebel and negative attitude in front of reality;
- the understanding of the importance of criticism in the development of learner’s personality;
- the understanding that the task of the educator is to fashion personalities capable to innovate, to think freely, to be creative.

**CONTENT**
The following content is delivered during the session:
- it is necessary to stimulate the learner to personally compare any new experience with his/her own origin (heart and tradition);
- the educator cannot substitute the learner: the verification must be his/her own initiative;
- personal verification is an unavoidable condition for true education, which must be education in criticism;
- criticism does not necessarily mean negation or doubt; on the contrary it is the attitude to search for the true reason and value of any reality or experience;
- the urgency of this comparison implies a tireless reminder of the learner’s responsibility and of the need of a commitment with the reality;
- the conditions for verification (a commitment within one’s environment, in a community, including free time);
- the dimensions of verification (culture, charity, mission).

**INSTRUMENTS**
A series of slides on the works and the life of Vincent Van Gogh (Cf. CD in attachment).

Van Gogh, born in Holland in 1853 and died in France in 1891, was one of the best-known European painters of his century. He was a great artist and a great innovator.

The slides offer a show of his masterpieces and introduce easily his greatness and uniqueness even to people who are not familiar to art. Afterwards the slides help identify how his peculiarity is born of a tradition and of the relationship with another painter, Millet, whom he recognized and followed as an authority.

The slides emphasise the following points, related to the content of the session:
- the learner has the responsibility to follow, but also to personally verify the proposal received from the educator;
- true fidelity to the master/educator is not passive imitation, but a new, personal interpretation;
- the tradition the educator represents is loved and respected only if it is lived anew by the learner as his/her personal creation; otherwise it is mere repetition of forms and habits without any root and significance;
- novelty springs up from tradition.

**ACTIVITIES AND DURATION**
The activities (and the approximate duration) of the session are the following:
1. Synthesis of the previous session 15 minutes
2. Lecture 45 minutes
3. Discussion 30 minutes
4. Slides on art 30 minutes
5. Discussion 30 minutes
COMPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENTS/TEXTS
- Heinrich Schlier, “The value of Experience”, from Fundamental Lines of a Pauline Theology
TEXT OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND
In common mentality freedom is generally conceived as the possibility to act and choose without constrictions; very rarely is it associated with the experience of the satisfaction of a human desire and sometimes, especially in education, considered dangerous. In fact it is very common to think of the freedom of the learner not as the undeletable factor that has to be educated and addressed to what is fitting to human nature, but as something that disturbs the educative process and has to be feared and restricted in order to avoid damages.

This background is confirmed also by the analysis of the questionnaires that our trainees generally fill before the beginning of the course; when requested for a definition of freedom, they answer as follows:

- **2%** The satisfaction of your desire;
- **33%** The possibility to choose without any external interference;
- **60%** The capacity to choose in a right way, respecting others;
- **5%** The absence of links;
OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the session are to introduce trainees to:

- the awareness of the task to educate to freedom;
- the awareness that the experience of freedom is always caused by the satisfaction of a desire;
- the awareness that the desires of the human heart are accomplished only by totality and that, therefore, freedom is greater if it tends to totality;
- the awareness that the learner needs to act with increasing independence in order to develop his/her freedom as capacity to live, according to human nature, in openness to totality;
- the understanding of the task to fashion personalities capable to search for the fulfilment of their heart’s desires.

CONTENT

The following content is delivered during the session:

- the purpose of education is to fashion a new human being; for this reason, the active factors of the educational process must guide the learner to act with increasing independence and to face the world on his/her own;
- the increasing autonomy of the learner is a “risk” for the educator’s intelligence and heart and even for his/her pride;
- it is here that the learner develops his/her freedom as capacity to act according to human nature in openness to totality;
- freedom is the satisfaction of the desires of the human heart, which is made for infinity; therefore freedom is the relationship with the infinite;
- freedom is not absence of bonds; it is to be linked, to belong;
- what is necessary is the figure of a Master, someone reminding learners of the correspondence given by the openness to totality.

INSTRUMENTS


The movie is suggested for deepening some contents of the lecture and continuing the discussion on that theme.

The story: A group of Allied prisoners during the Second World War agree to take on the German military team in a football match held in Paris occupied by Nazi army. This is a cover for an attempt to escape at half time. But the expectation of French people watching the match pushes them not to escape, in order not merely to win a match, but to give hope of overcoming Nazism.

The movie emphasises the following points, related to the content of the session:

- freedom is not mere absence of constrictions, but is the capacity to act according to the dimensions of the human heart, choosing the objectives most corresponding to totality (the players feel free when they choose not to escape in order to pursue an objective greater than personal freedom);
- to follow the greatest desires is attractive and fascinating even if it entails sacrifice, because the human
heart is made for totality (the choice to refuse the possibility to escape is made spontaneously);
- the decision for true freedom gives more strength and boldness to the personality (they play the second half at their best’
- the capacity to follow the greatest desires is aroused and sustained by a significant link (the players decide to go back to the stadium because of the link with the people watching the match in Paris occupied by Nazi forces and of the need to give them hope of winning not only a football match, but their independence).

QUESTIONS FOR THE FOLLOW-UP MEETING

At the end of this session some questions are suggested as a guideline for the communication of the experiences of the trainees in the follow-up meeting.

Generally the participants are invited:
- to write their new positive experiences of teaching/working related to the proposal of The Risk of Education Training;
- to write their difficulties in the implementation of the proposal;
- to indicate themes to be deepened or issues to be discussed in a common work for the improvement of the quality of their teaching/working;
- to suggest whatever they consider useful for the achievement of the aims and the objectives of their school/place of work.

ACTIVITIES AND DURATION

The activities (and the approximate duration) of the session are the following:
1. Synthesis of the previous session 15 minutes
2. Lecture 45 minutes
3. Discussion 30 minutes
4. Movie 110 minutes
5. Discussion 30 minutes
6. Assignments for the follow-up meeting 10 minutes

COMPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENTS/TEXTS

- Movie Showshank Redemption, directed by Frank Darabont, 1994
- Luigi Giussani, “Freedom”, from Si puo’ vivere così”, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, Milan, 1994, pages 64-77
- Charles Peguy, “The Mystery of Man’s Freedom”, from The Mystery of the Holy Innocents
- Gilbert Cesbron, “Robert Alano”, from Lost Collarless Dogs
SESSION 6
Follow-up

REFERENCE
The assignments given to the participants at the end of session 5, which are generally related to:
- new positive experiences of teaching/working related to the proposal of The Risk of Education Training;
- difficulties in the implementation of the proposal;
- themes to be deepened or issues to be discussed in a common work for the improvement of the quality of their teaching/working;
- suggestions for the achievement of the aims and the objectives in their schools/places of work.

OBJECTIVES
The specific objectives of the session are the following:
- to suggest a general overview on the proposal of The Risk of Education Training through the contributions of the participants;
- to offer clarifications and suggestions as answers to the questions from the participants;
- to emphasise the key points of the proposal;
- to suggest a critical evaluation of objectives, methods and habits generally accepted and used in education;
- to evaluate the understanding of the content of the training and the quality of its impact on the trainees;
- to identify among the participants the people who are most interested in the proposal in order to involve them more in deepening and living it;
- to suggest and identify the ways for further work (themes for trainings, tutoring).

CONTENT
The following content is delivered during the session
- free contributions from the participants;
- synthesis of the proposal;
- comments and suggestions for further work.

INSTRUMENTS
Cf. Attachment 2: Contributions and experiences from the trainees during the follow-up meetings

ACTIVITIES
1. Contributions from the participant and discussion 120 minutes
2. Synthesis of the proposal 30 minutes
3. Proposals for further work 30 minutes
4. Questionnaires 30 minutes
5. Certificates of attendance to participants and closure 30 minutes
With Mr Bernard lessons were always interesting. He loved his work with passion. Outside the sun could be scorching the reddish walls, the heat could penetrate the classroom in spite of the curtains with their wide yellow and white bands. The rain could pour as it does in Algeria, transforming the street into a dark and wet well; but pupils were only distracted a wee bit. Only the flies, as a storm drew near, might deviate their attention at times. They were caught, and went to wait for long and horrible death in the dark blue-mudded inkpots stuck in their holes on the benches. Yet, Mr Bernard’s method, consisting in leaving no stone unturned as far as discipline was concerned, while making his teaching always appealing, took the upper end over the flies...

Only school offered Jacques and Pierre these joys. They probably loved passionately in it what they would not find at home, where poverty and ignorance made life harder, darker, sort of closed on itself; for misery is a fortress without drawbridge.

No. School did not merely offer evasion from life at home. At least in Mr Bernard’s class, it appeased a thirst that is even more essential for a boy than it is for an adult: the thirst for discovery. Sure, in the other classes too many things were taught, but in the way you stuff down geese. A pre-cooked food was presented and the boys were asked to swallow it. On the contrary, in Mr Germain’s class they felt they existed for the first time, and they received the highest consideration: they were deemed worthy to discover the world. The teacher was not only busy teaching that for which he got paid, but welcomed them with simplicity into his personal life, he lived it out with them, he told them his own story and that of other boys he had known. He expounded his points of view, rather than his ideas. For instance, although he was anticlerical as many of his colleagues, he never uttered in class anything against religion, nor against anything else that could be object of choice or conviction; while forcefully condemning what was beyond discussion, like theft, exposure, unfairness and dishonesty.
CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT (FOREWORD TO UN WORKSHOP)
by Luigi Giussani

The foremost emergency is education. ... I think those who thought of an initiative that has offered the witness of Christians who give their life to come to the aid of young people – the future mankind – these young people who are entrusted to the responsibility of adults as a treasure to be cultivated and not as masses to be used as tools. Having spent my life with young people, I say that our primary responsibility is to communicate to them a meaning of life. Not the security of an untroubled existence – because this ultimately depends on circumstances, whether favourable – but above all the certitude that life is positive and that each person is born for a good.

This passion for the education of young people lights up the testimony of Fr. Berton, who spoke in New York about the child soldiers of Sierra Leone: “These children’s perception of good and evil has been destroyed, they need an environment of peace in which they can be helped”. This is why he invented “family homes” for the former child soldiers, places where they could be taken in, and built a school to reconstruct the traits of a humanity that has been devastated by war. This is the great condition for development: the first need man has, especially if he is in a condition of poverty and injustice, is to be aware of his “I”. This elementary need is responded to with education, without which there is no chance of a future because nothing can last without an aware “I”, not even the most sincere generosity. This is true in the north and in the south of the world, because man’s heart is identical in everyone; and the heart is the need for beauty, truth, justice, happiness.

ELEMENTARY EXPERIENCE
by Luigi Giussani

All the experiences of my humanity and of my personality are filtered through the sieve of a primordial “original experience” that constitutes my identity in the way I face everything. Each man has a right and a duty to learn that it is possible to compare every proposal with this “elementary experience”. It must also become his habit. What constitutes this original, elementary experience? It can be described as a complex of needs and “evidences” which accompany us as we come face to face with all that exists. Nature thrusts man into a universal comparison with himself, with others, with things, and furnishes him with a complex of original needs and “evidences” which are the tools for that encounter. So original are these needs or these “evidences” that everything man does or says depends on them. These needs can be given many names. They can be summarized with different expressions (for example, the need for happiness, the need for truth, for justice, etc.). They are like a spark igniting the human motor. Prior to them, there is no movement or human dynamism. Any personal affirmation, from the most banal and ordinary to the most reflected upon and rich in consequences, can be based solely on this nucleus of original needs.
WITH THE INFINITE IN THE HEART
by Luigi Giussani

“All of life asks for eternity.” This phrase from a song written forty years ago by two high school students in Milan—which my friends chose as the theme for their gathering in Rimini—documents the first impulse which I feel describes my experience: a passion for humanity. Not humanity as the term of a definition for sociologists or philosophers, but the humanity that my father and mother have passed on to me. There is no humanity except in the “I,” otherwise it would be an abstraction in the name of which the most terrible injustices can be committed. Therefore, extreme seriousness is required for noting and grasping the needs and aspirations that define what is human.

The first line of the song I was just talking about says, “Poor voice of a man who is not there, our voice if it no longer has a why.” The threshold of why is the aspiration to a meaning that can explain and fulfill everything. A man who neglects this aspiration does not truly love himself: it is as though he were running away, as though he were always outside. He fills the silence with the clamor of his thoughts, being incapable or afraid of finding himself face to face with the nakedness, the poverty inherent in the deep needs and questions of which he is made up, for which his mother made him. He flees into distraction and normally seeks refuge in forgetting or, what is worse, in justifying what he does. In this way, ideology dominates not only society but also the little world of private relationships, in the family and between friends.

The dissatisfaction that lies at the end even of every success—because every success, after the first moment of giddiness, always presents a new problem—confirms that man is in search of his path. The Christian event is the answer to the demand for the infinite which is the heart of man. So that man may walk along: “homo viator,” a man who draws near by the movement that has been put into him, that has been brought forth in him by the Mystery which makes all things and of which he is made aware by the encounter, the encounters of life.

Christ impacts our “I” in its totality, and thus all our actions are influenced and determined by this relationship. This, among others, is the reason why the Church, as Galli della Loggia wrote in the Corriere della Sera, “cannot be subjugated” to any power on earth. In the Catholic experience, the relationship with Christ is a relationship among men: it introduces criteria, purifies points of view, sustains in disappointment, suggests solutions, and above all it does not permit partiality or taking sides but tends to the recognition and facing of all the factors that make up reality. Yes, all the factors in relationships, in society, in politics, which should be the area where this totality of factors is taken into consideration. In this way, the responsibility for granting salvation would not be unloaded onto politics. The century just past has shown that this claim of politics to grant salvation turns into partiality, factiousness, ideology, and the modern idol—“usury, lust, and power,” to use Eliot’s words.

For the Christian who is faithful to the Pope and the Tradition, there is no expression of life which cannot feel the impact of awareness of the relationship with Christ. In our experience, this relationship pushes one to recognize a truth that unceasingly renders us, in the face of all the problems that arise, without pretense, without preconceptions, indomitably open to everything and everyone, humble and continuously capable of changing and of picking up again where we left off.

To try to live within this point of view is the approach to reality that has been given to me as my heart’s obligation by the One who has loved my life.
TRADITION AND INVOLVEMENT WITH LIFE
by Luigi Giussani

Each one of us is born into a certain tradition. Nature casts us into the dynamic of existence, arming us with a complex instrument with which we can confront our surroundings. Every man and woman faces his or her surrounding reality endowed by nature with elements that one finds in oneself as given, already offered. Tradition is that complex endowment with which nature arms us.

We do not possess tradition in order to become fossilized within it, but to develop it, even to the point of profoundly changing it. But in order to transform it, we must first of all act “with” what has been given to us; we must use it. And it is through the values and richness which I have received that I can become, in my own turn, creative, capable not only of developing what I find in my hands, but also changing radically both its meaning, its structure and perspective.

We can visualize tradition as a work plan with which nature equips us as it sets us down into this great construction site of life and history. Only by putting this working hypothesis into action can we begin, not simply to gasp for air, but, with our reasoned judgements, our projects, and our critical outlook to have an impact on our surroundings and therefore on that extremely interesting factor which is part of those surroundings, ourselves. Hence it is urgent to be loyal to tradition: it is a requirement for a complete involvement with existence.

Let us say that a man is launched on life’s path with a tradition in his hands. Suppose he throws it away before putting it to use with a loyalty coming right from the very core of his being, before having really verified it. His refusal of something so inherent to his nature would betray a fundamental disloyalty in other aspects of his life as well, particularly with respect to himself and his own destiny.

In order that this loyalty to tradition become a truly active working hypothesis, one must apply this traditional richness to the problem of life through the critical principle referred to in our first premise as elementary experience. When this critical principle is omitted, the subject is either alienated by or fossilized within his tradition or, sold into the violence of his environment, he will end up abandoning it. As is the case for most people concerning their religious consciousness, this is all the more true: the violence of their surroundings decides for them.

I insist then upon this point: using tradition critically does not mean doubting its value - even if this is what is suggested by the current mentality. Rather it means using this incredibly rich working hypothesis by filtering it through this critical principle which is inherent within us: elementary experience. If tradition is critically used in such a manner, then it becomes a facet of our personality, the material for a specific face, an identity, an identity in the world. Goethe used to say: “Was du ererbt von deinen Vatern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen” (what you have inherited from your fathers win back in order to possess it!)

A second aspect of the commitment of the self, fundamental to discovering the facets which constitute it, is the value of the present.

Starting from the present is inevitable. In order to deepen our outlook of the past - whether it be the near or distant past - from which point do we start? From the present. In order to venture into risky visions of the future, what is the starting point? The present.

At first, this barely perceptible present appears to our eyes to be nothing, only an instant, but when you look at it, it appears so full and brimming with all that has preceded us! In the
measure in which I am myself, I am replete with all that has preceded me. Thomas Aquinas said, “Anima est quodammodo omnia” (the spirit of a man is in a certain way all things). The more that one is a person - human -, the more he embraces and lives in the present instant all that has preceded and surrounds that instant.

The present is always an action, despite an individual’s possible indolence, fatigue and distraction. One of the truly revolutionary phrases, which announced the first stirrings of the 1968 riots, could be read on the walls of the Sorbonne in Paris: De la presence, seulement de la presence!” This French slogan is a phrase which, when read truly, does not just point to the mere actuality of the instant. Rather, this word “presence” suggests all the dynamism which pulses in the instant and which derives its material from the past and its mysterious initiative of freedom. The present is, in fact, the place, both splendid and enigmatic, of freedom, the energy which manipulates the content of the past, thereby unleashing a responsible creativity.

As we have said, in order to understand the factors which constitute him, man must start from the present, not the past. To begin from the past in order to come to know man’s present would be a grave error in perspective. For example, if, before an inquire into my religious experience, I stated “Let us study the history of religions; let us analyse the primitive forms of religiosity: then we will identify the true factors of the religious experience”. If I claimed to be able to use the past as a starting point like this, I could not avoid constructing a “present” image of the past itself, and running the risk of identifying the past with a conception fabricated in the present. It is only when faced with the knowledge of my present that it is possible for me to take into account my objective structure as a human being with its natural elements and dynamic, which are thus also identifiable in the past.

If I grasp now the factors of my experience as a human being, then I can project myself into the past and recognize the same perceptible factors in the pages of Homer, or among the Eleatic philosophers, or Plato, Virgil or Dante. This will confirm the great unity of the human family and will really become for me an experience of civilization which grows and is enriched as time passes. Once I have used the present as a starting point to discover the value that constitute the human experience in its essential elements, then the study of the past will only illuminate ever more the way I look upon myself. But before I approach the enigma of the past, I must grasp the factors of my present personality which although unreflected upon must be clearly identifiable in experience.

THE NATURE OF THIS CHANGE
by John S. Mbiti

It is a total change and one which affects all spheres of life. On the level of the whole society, this change has been described as “detribalisation”. This means that traditional life is deeply undermined, so that tribal identity is fading away since other identities are making claims on the individual and the community.

In traditional life the family is the nucleus of individual and corporate existence, the area where a person really experiences personal consciousness of himself and of other members of society. Now the family is the most severely affected part of African life. Within one family or household may be found two totally different worlds coexisting: the children may be attending university studies, while the parents are illiterate and concerned mainly with cultivating their fields with wooden sticks. In such a family, there are two sets of expectations, economic standards, cultural concerns and worldview. Some families are obviously more affected than others. The new change shows itself outwardly in many ways
such as education, clothing, houses, food and moral behaviour.

But in the final analysis it is the individual who really feels the change, experiences it, accepts or rejects it, and to a great extent hastens or slows it down. Modern change has brought many individuals in Africa into situations entirely unknown in traditional life or for which that life offers no relevant preparation. Some are forced directly or indirectly to go and work in gold mines, industry, European farms and houses, leaving their land and homes and relatives. This sudden detachment from the land to which Africans are mystically bound, and the thrust into situations where corporate existence has no meaning, have produced dehumanised individuals in the mines, industries and cities. The change means that individuals are severed, cut off, pulled out and separated from corporate morality, customs and traditional solidarity. They have no firm roots any more. They are simply uprooted but not necessarily transplanted. They float in life like a cloud. They live as individuals, but they are dead to the corporate humanity of their forefathers.

For the individual the change has come too suddenly, plunging him into a darkness for which he has not been traditionally prepared. It alienates him both from the traditions of his society and from its roots. Paradoxically, the individual is involved in the change and yet alienated from it. So he becomes an alien body both to traditional life and to the new life brought about by modern change. He is posed between two positions: the traditional solidarity which supplied for him land, customs, ethics, rites of passage, customary law, religious participation and historical depth; and a modern way of life which for him has not yet acquired any solidarity. The change at best offers him a hope for the future, an aspiration and an expectation. The traditional life is fast being brushed into the past, and the further back it recedes the more golden it looks. So the individual is the object of a dual process: one recedes into the Zamani, the other hangs in the future; and the tension between these two is neither harmonious nor creative for the majority of Africans.

HANGING IN THE MIDDLE WAY
by Mabel Imoukhuede

Here we stand
Infants overblown
Poised between two civilizations
Finding the balance irksome
Itching for something to happen
To tip us one way or the other
Groping in the dark for a helping hand
And finding none.

I am tired, o my God, I am tired,
I am tired of hanging in the middle way
But where can I go?
BELONGING AND CULTURAL ROOTS
by Janet Museveni

In our work with orphans over the past 15 years as part of Uganda Women’s Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO), we realised that we could not isolate orphaned children nor uproot them from their communities and institutionalise them. We also realised that we could not reach the orphan child without first going through that home that has taken the child in and the community where that child lives. That is why we must work with families and communities to try to sensitise and empower them to actually be the ones to nurture the orphan child and shield him or her from danger. A child, whether an orphan or not, is part and parcel of a given family or household and a given community. That is where a child derives an identity. As much as possible, a child needs to have a sense of belonging, of cultural roots, of blood ties, of a clan, and of a particular mother tongue that connects that child to a particular community. This is important for a more holistic development of every human individual.

GIUSSANI’S THOUGHT
by Angelo Scola

The unavoidable point of departure for reaching experience in its integral form is tradition. Giussani defines tradition as “the whole structure of values and meanings into which a child is born” and he adds: “the adolescent uses tradition as a sort of explanatory hypothesis.” It is important to note that, when understood this way, tradition has nothing to do with a mere transmission of a system of concepts or doctrines that, like ballast, tie both educator and student to the past. It is rather, as Blondel said, a place of practice and of experience, lived and proposed in first person by the educator to the freedom of the student, which is always situated in history. Therefore, tradition understood in these terms is by its nature open to all the questions that overshadow the present. It guarantees the process of generation – the full and authentic experience of fatherhood-sonship –, which is an inalienable condition for bringing forth civilization.

MENTALITY AND PERSONALITY: Newman and Giussani on Catholic Education
by M. Katherine Tillman

THE OFFER OF TRADITION
For both Newman and Giussani, the whole tradition of the West, sacred and secular, constitutes a precious inheritance, an assemblage of rich voices offering themselves and their wisdom to the present by means of continual transmission by educators and ever-fresh appropriation by students. History is "something that endures," writes Giussani. It is “a permanence that moves through ever new versions of itself” (Risk 89). In Newman’s words: “old principles reappear under new forms” (Dev 40). … For Giussani, the “offer of tradition” to the young begins with the transmission by parents of a rudimentary hypothesis about the nature of things and how they lie in relation to one another. Parents bring their children “into a certain worldview, a stream of thought and civilization” (Risk 65), and the child develops “a steady dependence on a total sense of reality and something that precedes and goes beyond his consent” (Risk 66). Being born in a Christian environment or tradition implies, for Giussani, “that nothing can be treated independently of this fact” (Risk 90). In his
single use of Newman’s name in The Risk of Education, Giussani applies to the educational enterprise this sense of the continuity, permanence and stability of tradition.

Only an educational approach that introduces human and cosmic reality in the light of a hypothesis presented by a history or a tradition can systematically prevent young people from making false starts. … It is only through obedience to this starting point that one may reformulate it with attention and human dynamism. Cardinal Newman used to say that conversions are nothing more than a deeper discovery of what we already truly desire. (Risk 57)

… The original hypothesis that proposes meaning, according to Giussani, is given as a gift, “even if instinctive or confused,” in a rudimentary fashion. The tradition into which we have been inserted by birth “must be put before our eyes as a fact and a problem.” The unconsciously held original idea or view implanted within our hearts, imbibed from our mother’s milk, our father’s language, and our community’s and culture’s stock of ideas and values, must be tested again and again as a truly valid “hypothesis of meaning” and action, gradually earning (or not) explicit devotion as a conscious conviction (Risk 67-68). What must be measured and weighed is how far forth that hypothesis holds for what we discover, grow into and deepen through experience - or how it does not, in which case the original hypothesis must be tweaked, adjusted, or rejected. This “verification,” as Giussani terms it (or “realization,” as Newman terms it) is the project of the student alone, who is urged on surely and gently by the teacher who cares - about both the student and the truth of the hypothesis of meaning. Writes Giussani:

The student must verify the traditional contents being offered to him, which can be done only if he himself takes the initiative: no one else can do it for him… Conviction is formed when we discover a vital link between the idea we embraced or received and our own predicaments, and find it relevant to our needs or projects. In this sense, conviction is the result of a testing of the original idea or view that proves to be the keystone for all encounters. (Risk 67)

Newman expresses this same understanding dynamically, and at a length for which I cannot apologize because of its stirring beauty.

The enlargement consists not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind’s energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, [giving] order and meaning [to] the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive into the substance of our previous state of thought. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding then, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards, of that mental centre, to which both what we know, and what we are learning gravitates.

*The hypothesis of meaning as a “philosophical habit of mind”*

… Philosophically, Newman and Giussani are both realists. This means that they hold to an objective universe of beings and things, and of meaning, which exist outside of ourselves and independently of our own minds, as one total reality. In Father Giussani’s words: “We are not the creators of meaning. The connection that binds something to everything else is an objective one” (Risk 99). For both men, we are inserted into this external reality and are inextricably linked to it as ourselves part of it and reliant upon it, and thus, by implication, as radically dependent upon its Creator. Giussani writes, “God is precisely the unitary meaning which nature’s objective and organic
structure calls the human consciousness to recognize... God is the ultimate implication of human experience. “ (Risk 99-100).

For Newman, the large presupposition that supports his entire educational viewpoint is that the ultimate subject matter of knowledge is the great interconnected whole of God’s creation. Only a mentality as large as the universe is sufficient to know the universe. The university should be a centre in which all of the interconnected branches of the complete circle of knowledge are taught. Because each branch of knowledge is an integral part of this larger unity, it completes, corrects and balances every other part. If any province of knowledge is left out, others take over and distort and usurp the missing subject matter.

... Giussani writes of “the attraction of a total proposal” (Risk 120) and of a unifying “vision of the world” (Risk 53-54). This “working hypothesis,” which term Newman would like, lends certainty to the educational endeavours and to the student. In fact, Giussani says, “To educate means to introduce the child to reality by clarifying and developing this primary or original view” (Risk 54). Accordingly, the hypothesis of meaning continues to be “the light that illumines our experiences” (Risk 67-68). Newman calls this mentality a “philosophical habit of mind” and understands it too as giving light (that is, meaning) to all of our thinking and acting. It is a “real illumination,” he writes, which would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning.” To have even a portion of this “illuminative reason,” as Newman calls it, is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect. It is precisely the development of this “philosophical habit of mind” that is the goal or aim of liberal education, according to Newman.

For Giussani the “explanatory hypothesis” is “an image of how we feel and understand ourselves, of how we relate to everything,” an image that “is at work - in both teenager and adult--whether one is aware of it or not” (Risk 118). This explanatory hypothesis of reality, Giussani says, is

... the meaning of things, of the present, the past, the future, the contents of school curricula, our own family situation, happenings, current events... These are readily and instinctively identified by people according to an explanatory theory, an a priori general conception of the self and the world - that is, in the light of a certain frame of mind” (Risk 118).

In Newman’s words, “a permanent disposition of mind” is formed whereby the student apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little... [For] not to know the relative disposition of things is the state of slaves or children; [whereas] to have mapped out the Universe is the boast, or at least the ambition, of Philosophy.

Giussani succinctly describes it this way: “to comprehend the meaning of something is to discover its link to everything else” (Risk 99).

Newman compares education in the absence of this formative unity to the passive exposure of seafarers sailing from one end of the earth to another, mindless of the significance of the world’s great cities and landmarks that they are passing by.

The multiplicity of external objects, which they have encountered, forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life, as it were on the wrong side, and it tells no story... Nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward, to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Everything stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was.
Now listen to the apt metaphor Giussani employs to present the same understanding of the meaning derived from an enlarged mentality that comprehends the whole:

The student is like a child who finds a large clock in the room. Smart and curious, he picks up the clock and slowly takes it apart. In the end he has fifty or one hundred pieces before him. He was really clever, but now he feels lost and begins to cry, for the clock is all there, but it's no longer there: he lacks the unifying idea that would allow him to put it back together” (Risk 58-59).

What Newman would have the student grow into is a view of the whole terrain of knowledge in its broad outlines and interrelations:

analogous to the knowledge which we at length attain of the details of a landscape, after we have selected the right stand-point, and have learned to accommodate the pupil of our eye to the varying focus necessary for seeing them; have accustomed it to the glare of light, have mentally grouped or discriminated lines and shadows and given them their due meaning, and have mastered the perspective of the whole.

While the stated end of Newman’s liberal education is simply, in his own words, “the cultivation of the intellect” and nothing else, the end of Catholic liberal education, according to Newman, should be the placing into the world of a Catholic lay person with mind, heart and soul developed and enlarged to embrace the whole of reality on life’s journey in Christ to God. Giussani does not consider the cultivation of the intellect apart from the formation of the whole person. “The purpose of education,” he writes, “is to fashion a new human being (Risk 80). It means “to help the human soul enter into the totality of the real” (Risk 105), or, in still other words, “to help someone understand the elements of reality in their fruitful multiplying up to a totality which is always the true horizon of our actions” (Risk 106).

Both Newman and Giussani vigorously make the case that education within the secular mentality, with its excessively analytical and fragmented curricula, leaves students at the mercy of bombardment by a myriad of unrelated “facts” and contradictory solutions, leading them to feel disconcerted, uncertain, and finally empty (Risk 58-59). The supporters of secular or supposedly “neutral” education, Giussani emphasizes, think that “the student’s freedom requires that he develop by himself a unitary conception of life.” The condition for this “self-generation’ of a unified consciousness,” they say, is exposure to all kinds of theories studied in an unplanned, indiscriminate manner, according to all of the different ideological approaches of the student’s various teachers. But actually, the contrary is true, Giussani finds, for “a premature confrontation with conflicting fundamental ideas on how to interpret life will disorient rather than direct the student. … Scepticism is not a rite of passage” (Risk 60-61).

Newman calls the possession of this piecemeal and superficial knowledge “viewiness” and he contrasts it with the genuine development of an all-encompassing “view” or “habit of mind” or “mentality.” Giussani speaks of it as “a certain frame of mind” (Risk 118), and “a working hypothesis” (Risk 53). For him, the hypothesis of meaning “is offered as a total explanation of everything, as the ultimate meaning of life, the world, and history” (Risk 79). And to quote Newman: “That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole.
TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT
by Thomas Eliot

One of the facts that might come to light ... is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity. Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, 'tradition' should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.

This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

... To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe – the mind of his own country – a mind which he learns in time to
be much more important than his own private mind – is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Someone said: “the dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did”. Precisely, and they are that which we know.

… What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.
LEOPARDI AS A FRIEND  
by Luigi Giussani

What makes you follow the authority is the deeper correspondence he lives, represents, and proposes, with your original sentiment, with your natural feelings. This is why there is also an authoritativeness deriving from the fact that he makes you feel more beautiful the things you desire to feel; and this is the true authority; as the true sentiment is the positive one, not the negative one.

When you feel sad, it is as though you wished to be sadder. And you do it out of spite, or to make the others suffer, to let the others know more evidently the way you feel, to let the others understand.

In any case let’s not confuse things. Authority is someone who represents you better in what you feel lacking or in what you feel positive in you. There are those who guide a companionship exalting its joyful taste or the joyful moment: they become authority in that companionship.

If someone guides without representing better the pain you feel or the joy you feel, if one guides a companionship like this, he is no longer authority: he is a guard, a policeman, a tyrant, an ugly figure – I don’t know how to describe him (and you say, “Ssshhht, he is coming, he’s coming, quiet!”) and this proves he is not authority.

Authority is one who represents us in what we feel lacking or in what we desire most: someone who we feel represents us better. Representing us better: better than what? More than what? Than what we feel, more than we ourselves.

This is why the authority is out of us, it is an ecstasis. The true authority is an ecstacy, which in Greek means “being outside oneself”: I am out of myself. Authority is an ecstacy in that he is something more than what you are.

He represents better what I am. So much so that we try to substitute him for ourselves, for instance, we try to lean on him, to let him speak instead of speaking ourselves, thus we always leave him outside, and we don’t learn from him.

Authority is an ecstacy – have you understood in what sense? – because he is something greater. But authority – who is ecstasy – can be learnt on condition of making him re-enter us; only if I learn from him is he truly authority. In other words: authority is such because he represents me better than I am capable of; but if I stop at this, he will remain, in spite of everything, extraneous, therefore as a limit, and ends up becoming a burden. You read Leopardi or listen to certain music for ten or fifteen minutes, maybe twenty or twenty-five minutes, then you’re fed up, enough is enough!

If on the contrary I learn how he manages to be greater than myself in what I feel lacking – if I learn from him the reasons for my sadness – if he makes me understand better the reasons for my melancholy or he makes me understand better the reasons for my joy, then the authority re-enters inside me, but he returns more coinciding with me, and I am more level with him, for I learn from him. Is it clear?

Thus authority becomes a friend. So long as he represents me better than I am capable of at expressing myself, I can be grateful or full of admiration, or even devoted, but he is not my friend.

When I read Leopardi in my 8th grade – I read him throughout the month of May, without studying anything – Leopardi was not a friend to me. He represented far better than I would be capable of what I felt, but he was not a friend: he was an ecstatic authority,
outside of me. When in my 11th grade I began to understand certain things, then Leopardi taught me: he was giving me the reasons for his being sad, and through these reasons I discovered it wasn’t right, the reasons were not correct: he was that way because he forgot certain things. Then I should have been against him, but I was not: I felt pity for him and he was becoming my friend: he did become a friend. Someone becomes your friend when you interiorise him, that is, you understand the reasons why he represents you. When you begin to understand the reasons and to be critical about them – that is, to understand them better or to see their limitations – then that authority begins to become your friend.

But what you tell about Leopardi was it a following? For here you say, “But the encounter with one who feels and understands more my experience, my suffering, my need, my expectation, naturally leads me to follow him.” Sure: I follow him, certainly so! Authority is ecstatic, that is, he brings you out of yourself to follow him, in any case. Only if, in following, you manage to bring him back inside you, that is, to understand his reasons, then does he also become your friend. He remains ecstatic, but your admiration becomes greater, and it even becomes affection if you see the reasons, that is, if you watch him critically, with that critique of which we spoke at the Retreat, which is positivity. Positivity? Not even that, but really truth. For Leopardi’s lamentations in my 8th grade I felt as true, not positive; they even increased my melancholy and I eluded everything else because I thought of Leopardi.

The fact we are so slow…
… in believing!

…slow and somewhat rigid in recognizing and in being sincere with ourselves, and therefore in following, is it because, as you say in “The journeying”, there is nothing behind the word ‘I’?

The more there is nothing behind the ‘I’, the less can you identify with the reasons of the one who represents you, both in what you lack and what you desire. The less you are ‘I’, the less you recognize an authority.

Is this why this world is so flat?
It is the abolition of father – as the philosopher, Gluckmann I think, says – this world, this culture has abolished the idea of father, and the idea of father is the supreme idea of authority.

Then I too, when I don’t recognize authority, do so because I am not taking my needs seriously? When you don’t recognize authority it is simply because you may be distracted or inconsistent. For someone to be authority to you, you have to recognize he represents you, he expresses what you are better than you do. If you are not reflective or do not perceive yourself, you don’t care about yourself, you have no consciousness of yourself, you will never find any authority.

The youth today have no authority, except those who lead them in singing, dancing, or revelling. The characteristic of this authority, which does not correspond to something one is, in good and evil, is that it is short lived. The one who makes you dance and sing in a disco ends there, when you go home he stops being of value. On the contrary, if you find someone who represents your pain better than you can tell it, you have him always with you as a companion.

So true authority grows with self-awareness; at thirty you venerate and love your father much more than when you were two or three. As when I had mumps as a child and my father, who never went to church because he was a diehard socialist, pulled me into the big bed – I have a window for it in my memory – and started telling me the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (which is socialist, really). And I remember being there and listening to the story of the rich man, and the pain in the ear had gone; but no sooner had he finished than I started complaining again. In any case it is important to understand that title, how was it?

Setting up the human problem – Authority

Setting up the human problem – Authority. What does it mean? Authority is like a picture where in a vaster and more detailed way becomes explicit what you feel about yourself. Thus by looking at him you understand yourself better.
This is always an ecstasy, which demands, though, in order to be a human ecstasy, so that this ecstasy be human, to make him come back into you, to identify with him: understand his reasons, comprehend his motions, discovering his origin. Do you understand?

This then is something much greater than imitation. Earlier, as I was reading that the fact of encountering authority “makes me a natural follower,” I even thought that at times I imitate him.

Imitation applies to the authority who leads your dance or your revelling in the disco. Otherwise it is sequela: one who follows Schopenhauer or Leopardi in their sadness identifies with their reasons, and thus ecstasy is interiorised.

In any case even the natural man in order to follow Leopardi, must always compare him with his own heart, with the spot of infinity he has within him.

With himself. Authority is the one who represents me better than I can express or understand: he represents me. What is representation? To make sentiments and thoughts objective.

This threshold of friendship is rare, for it requires that a man be truly human. Reaching the threshold of friendship naturally seems rarer and rarer to me.

First there must be some positivity. Leopardi becomes my friend if I perceive some advantage with him, some usefulness, a positive correspondence: then he becomes my friend. So long as I don’t perceive any positivity, he is no friend: he remains ecstatic, but I am no friend.

As I read the text it came to my mind that for me at the beginning authority is precisely the reason for sequela. There are times when this is very clear and I say, this person is more me than I am. Then, in the dailiness of the relationship, this reason is less explicit and I am sorry to fall short like this.

In the dailiness of the relationship what fails is devotion. In the dailiness of the relationship what fails is devotion, because in the face of the void established and favoured by distraction the usual arguments of life find room. The usual correspondences have nothing to do with what one started from. In other words you are distracted. Why do we say – I said even to Da Rold when we discussed over coffee – that the true drama is that there has been no more education? I said, the problem is that man was no longer given a method: parents have desired happiness for their children, but did not give their children a method to walk towards it. Truly, Christians today do not know the Christian method. What is method? They have faith, poor things, but they have not the method of faith, so faith has nothing to do with life!

Then the reason why we say, Jesus, or the reason why we say the rosary or go to Lourdes or go to Holy Communion is much more banal than the greatness of the object we anticipate or initially perceive or confusedly think of in our heart. It is much more banal; it becomes “I need a grace”, or mechanical prayer, or the need for ritual, the need for something that unites us to something, the Gospel, morality… These are silly things compared to the fact that God has become man! They are silly things before an event of this import, whereas a publican stood there before God with a wonder the Pharisee had no idea about. The Pharisee treated God like an officer before whom to show off!
BRUNETTO LATINI
by Dante Alighieri

For in my mind is fixed, and touches now
My heart the dear and good paternal image
Of you, when in the world from hour to hour
Taught me how a man becomes eternal.

LETTERS OF LUCILIUS
by Seneca

I have spoken to you of these things to show
you that, if someone encouraged, enflamed
our novices, they would impulsively turn to the
highest things.

Instead, the teachers err, sometimes on
account of their students, who turn to them
with the intention of cultivating their mind or
their knowledge, but not their soul, so that
philosophy has now become philology, and
what was once wisdom has now become what
we call science.

QUESTION QUIGLEY
by Frank MC Court

Brendan Quigley raises his hand. We call him
Question Quigley because he’s always asking
questions. He can’t help himself. Sir, he says,
what’s Sanctifying Grace?

The master rolls his eyes to heaven. He's
going to kill Quigley. Instead he barks at him,
Never mind what’s Sanctifying Grace, Quigley.
That’s none of your business. You’re here to
learn the catechism and do what you’re told.
You’re not here to be asking questions. There
are too many people wandering the world
asking questions and that’s what has us in the
state we’re in and if I find any boy in this class
asking questions I won’t be responsible for
what happens. Do you hear me, Quigley?
I do.
I do what?
I do, sir.

He goes on with his speech, There are boys in
this class who will never know the Sanctifying
Grace. And why? Because of the greed. I have
heard them abroad in the school-yard talking
about First Communion day, the happiest day
of your life. Are they talking about receiving
the body and blood of Our Lord? Oh, no. Those
greedy little blackguards are talking about
the money they’ll get, the Collection. They’ll
go from house to house in their little suits like
beggars for the Collection. And will they take
any of that money and send it to the little black
babies in Africa? Will they think of those little
pagans doomed forever for lack of baptism
and knowledge of the True Faith? Little black
babies denied knowledge of the Mystical
Body of Christ? Limbo is packed with little
black babies flying around and crying for their
mothers because they’ll never be admitted to
ineffable presence of Our Lord and the glorious
company of saints, martyrs, virgins. Oh, no. It’s
off to the cinemas, our First Communion boys
run to wallow in the filth spewed across the
world by the devil’s henchmen in Hollywood.
Isn’t that right, Mc Court?
‘Tis, sir.

Question Quigley raises his hand again. There
are looks around the room and we wonder if
it’s suicide he’s after.

What’s henchmen, sir?

The master’s face goes white, then red. His
mouth tightens and opens and spit flies
everywhere. He walks to Question and drags
him from his seat. He snorts and stutters
and his spit flies around the room. He flogs Question across the shoulders, the bottom, the legs. He grabs him by the collar and drags him to the front of the room.

Look at this specimen, he roars.

Question is shaking and crying.

I’m sorry, sir.

The master mocks him.

I’m sorry, sir. What are you sorry for?

I’m sorry I asked the question. I’ll never ask a question again, sir.

The day you do, Quigley, will be the day you wish God would take you to His bosom. What will you wish, Quigley?

That God will take me to His bosom, sir.

Go back to your seat, you omadhaun, you poltroon, you thing from the far dark corner of a bog.

He sits down with the stick before him on the desk. He tells Question to stop the whimpering and be a man. If he hears a single boy in class asking foolish questions or talking about the Collection again he’ll flog that boy till the blood spurts.

What will I do, boys?

Flog the boy, sir.

Till?

Till the blood spurts, sir.

Now, Clohessy, what is the Sixth Commandment?

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not commit adultery what?

Thou shalt not commit adultery, sir.

And what is adultery, Clohessy?

Impure thoughts, impure words, impure deeds, sir.

Good, Clohessy. You’re a good boy. You may be slow and forgetful in the sir department and you may not have a shoe to your foot but you’re powerful with the Sixth Commandment and that will keep you pure.
REALISTIC AND SYSTEMATIC
by Charles Peguy

Pupils will be soon divided into two categories: those who stick to the teaching imparted to them and keep it pure and intact like a sacred treasure, and those who, proving to be endowed with initiative and originality, will develop their master’s teaching in the sense of such initiative and originality. Whether the best be the former or the latter pupils is an endless debate.

Is the perfect, total faithfulness of the pupils the best sign of school or is it not? Or isn’t there a better faithfulness in a certain degree of independence? Is repeating the thought of one’s master through centuries remaining faithful to his teaching? Or don’t you remain more faithful to it by developing it in keeping with its sense, as the master himself would, if he were to live on? How much would this render justice to masters, and to several human eras!

It would be right if masters were to live much longer than we ordinary people, but ungrateful nature is pitilessly deaf. Perhaps the most faithful of all faithfulnesses should consist in carrying the thought of the master, transferring it, translating it into a new language as times change and languages get more and more perfect.

OUR PURPOSE
by Luigi Giussani

What we want – and this is our purpose here – is to free the young generation from mental slavery and from the tendency to conform, which mentally enslaves them to the forces in society. From my first day as a teacher, I’ve always offered these words of warning to my class: “I’m not here so that you can take my ideas as your own; I’m here to teach you a true method that you can use to judge the things I will tell you.”

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE
by Heinrich Schlier

The ultimate, unique sense of an event, and thus the very truth of the event, will communicate itself only and always when the subject experiencing the event gives himself up to it, all the while trying to understand it.
A METHOD AT WORK
by Emilia Vergani

“The art of the educator is to make a proposal so that the young person may be in a condition to grab onto it.”

... A condition for enacting an experience of real education is that the kids constantly critique what they are doing. Experience is not trying out lots of things, but becoming aware of the progress one has made; being able to verify what has happened and saying, “This is good, this other is not right; I need this to go forward, I should drop this other thing. I think this about youth gangs, I think that about my friend who steals...” etc. This systematic labour is incredibly exhausting, and every week we hold a session to work on this, which we call “raggio.” Like most kids, ours too live according to the judgments of TV, fashion, and what others think, so that getting them to the point of asking, “Does this respond to you, to your heart, to your needs? What do you want for yourself?”—leading them to reflect on the fact that everything that happens has to be compared with their own needs—is a laborious task, but if we do not go through this process we do not root them in a critical position that gives them a criterion by which to judge everything, even if during the “raggio” we no longer talked about gangs or their father who drinks too much.
FREEDOM
by Luigi Giussani

We need to know clearly what freedom is. The essence of the human I is freedom: freedom which implies both brain and heart, intelligence and willpower, energy of will.

Only by understanding what freedom is can we know how to use it. Then where does the difficulty lie for us to have the clear idea of some words which are fundamental for life? The words that define man, precisely the words that define man in respect to beast, are hard to be understood by us, because we are alienated in the common mentality. The word freedom normally coincides with doing what we like and will. And it is right, as I am going to prove, but not the way they all use it, because they all equal freedom to doing what one likes.

But what does it mean to do what you like? There is only a disadvantage in following Jesus, in being Christian, in being in the Church: that we are forced to become aware of all that we do, the disadvantage of having to be intelligent, in other words, but not intelligent in the academic sense, but intelligent as use of the intelligence which after all is within the sentence Christ kept repeating, “Be awake and alert”...

THE EXPERIENCE OF SATISFACTION
On the contrary, what must we do to understand the words that concern our life? For instance, the word justice, the word love, the word life, the word freedom, the word happiness, to understand what freedom is, what must we do? We must start from the experience in which one feels free and one in which he feels not free.

When does one feel free? When he has satisfied a desire. … Starting from experience - this is the great burden, remember: man only starts from a present, for the previous minute is no more, the following minute is not yet; we always start from a present, and the present as an experience; otherwise it is a false present, it is an abstraction. We always start from the present; … our experience tells us that we have the experience of relief and freedom when a desire of ours is satisfied, and it tells us that when a desire of ours is not satisfied (someone tells us no) there is at least one instant of negative compression, like a slavery.

… Then, what results from this observation? That experience (for man starts from experience, what starts from experience is true, so much so that God wanted to communicate Himself to men through carnal experience, in time and space) experience tells us that freedom indicates a moment of ourselves, a self-awareness in which a relief dominates that derives from a desire satisfied.

Freedom = satisfaction, satisfacere (to satisfy), the satisfied desire. Rather than satisfaction we can use a more metaphysical word: perfection. Freedom is perfection. In Latin perficere (to accomplish) means precisely satisfacere: a satisfied desire is an accomplished, perfected desire.

Boys, I desire to go to the Caribbean Sea, Carlo says yes and I am very happy, happy and free; I’ll tell the others, I communicate it to the others: “The day after tomorrow I’m off”. I go to the Caribbean Islands, then I come back with a long face, worse than before. “How come? Haven’t you been to the Caribbean Islands?” “Eh, I don’t know…” If this satisfaction, this perfection is not total, if it is not totalising, if it has some holes from which water oozes out, if it has some hole, if something remains open, then there is no freedom, there is sadness: the hole is sadness. As Dante said: “Each one has the intuition of the existence of a good (happiness, satisfaction) in which his soul may rest and he desires (the search of man
is always a quest), so each one con-tends (he tends to it with all the factors of his life, and he tends to it with [con-] all the friends of the companionship) to reach it”.

**THE TRAJECTORY OF FREEDOM**

Let us help each other with a drawing: X is the point where man starts from, existence begins here.

Man’s dynamism is such that he never stops, never is there an instant equal to another:

The man who stops is a perished man. We describe man with an open angle: man’s dynamism tends forward more and more, to satisfy himself more and more and to fulfil his desires more and more. Then, the ultimate definition of freedom, if freedom is satisfaction and perfection, is “a good in which his soul may rest”, where all is solved. This good in which all is solved is infinite, because, whatever man has at hand, he will say: “And what after?”; whatever man reaches, he says: “And then? What I had seized most full of desire in the clasped hand was undone as a rose under the vault of eternity, and more so what more I had liked”.

… The I is relationship with infinity (the symbol 8 in the figure). The whole dynamism of the I develops and tends to a perfection, to a fulfilment of itself that, in all that you reach, is never there, as I have already said in The Religious Sense. In fact man’s heart is a need for truth, justice, happiness, and in all that man reaches there is never this. So, what man tends to is something further, always beyond: the transcendent. Thus your self-awareness perceives the existence of something other, that is, God, the Mystery, God as Mystery. For the time being, let us mark it this way: God is the 8 to which man tends. Freedom is the greater the more it tends to 8. Or rather, freedom is our relationship with 8, freedom will happen, it is not yet there. Freedom will happen when man is happy. If freedom is desire for happiness, the event of freedom will be accomplished when the desire for freedom is satisfied. Freedom, says the whole of St Thomas philosophy, and the thought of the Church and the Gospel of Jesus, is relationship with infinity, with God, the accomplished relationship with Mystery. Freedom is the capacity to reach destiny, the link with the ultimate destiny, the capacity of reaching God as the ultimate destiny. We live freedom as the capacity of something which must come at the end.

The space marked by this angle is man’s life: in a freedom is not yet complete; in b it is not complete; in c it is not complete; in d it is not complete; it will only be complete in 8. Incomplete, that is, imperfect: we live freedom in an imperfect way.

If freedom is experience of satisfaction, of accomplishment, this accomplishment, this satisfaction in its total meaning happens in relationship with the Mystery, with infinity; before achieving totally the relationship with infinity, freedom is something incomplete, unattended, not yet performed, something that is being carried out. Life therefore is the journey of freedom that is perfecting itself, realizing itself; but it is an imperfect freedom.

**HOW FREEDOM MOVES**

Now there are two fundamental ideas.

**A) Through creatures**

First of all, how does this dynamism of freedom which is in here (X) move? If freedom is relationship with infinity, how does it move? Infinity must reach it to solicit it. Like one who sleeps, you must go there and call him. How does infinity call me, call freedom? How does freedom move? Enzymes move when there is hunger, there is a stimulus that provokes them. How does God become a stimulus so that man moves? Through creatures. Creatures are the way through which infinity becomes present to man’s heart and arouses in him
the thirst for Himself. He arouses this thirst, He arouses the need for happiness, justice, truth, love. The need for justice, truth, love is set in motion through the stimulus that comes from the creature, which is the bit of time and space, the wee bit of things (a, b, c, d...) through which the infinite Mystery touches you, for all things are signs of God.

For instance, at this point there is a mountain, the Mont Blanc (mb), and man, the drawing should be on two planes, but it does not matter, seeing the Mont Blanc, says, “How beautiful! To be able to be in touch with the One who makes this! To embrace the Mont Blanc!” Then the small boy grows up, and after seeing the Mont Blanc he sees the “white mountain”: he sees the girl (r); the girl attracts him more than the Mont Blanc!

So, first thing, freedom enters into action, the dynamism of freedom enters into action because it is touched by creatures (he is touched more or less according to how the creature corresponds to him more or less), following the way God appears to him, and He appears to him in the sign of things.

But certainly a condition is needed: we must be alert, sincere. Do you understand why Jesus says, “Blessed be the poor”? Do you understand why Jesus loves children and shows them as a sign? One must be without preconceptions: one must be in front of things and perceive their recall in its originality, in its purity: “I thank you Father, because you caused these things to be understood not by those who think they are, but by the simple”. Simple is what calls a spade a spade. What is the contrary of this? Lie. Lie is against freedom: the opposite of freedom is lie. So much that sin is identified with lie in St. John’s Gospel: sin is a lie. What is the truth of this r? Her relationship with infinity: r is a bit that represents infinity. This r is a bit that represents infinity bigger than this mb.

B) Imperfect freedom

What happens then? Let’s suppose freedom is a steam locomotive, a horse, a plane... let it be any means of transport. It reaches here and says: “How beautiful”, it stops to praise God in view of Mont Blanc; then it reaches r and feels attracted this way.

This one I am talking about is a doctor in Tanganyika because the idea of mission in Tanganyika has attracted him (T). He has vowed his life to this self-giving; he became a friar in order to go to Tanganyika. Here your fantasy must work more. While he is a friar in Tanganyika he encounters a blonde (b), do you follow? This is why we would need the double plane, so as to represent that T and b happen at the same time. While he is in Tanganyika and he is a friar already in perpetual vows, he encounters a blonde and says: “This blonde attracts me more than being a friar. Then, if the blonde satisfies me more, it is my right to go with the blonde”. As the husband of that woman (poor woman!): if his secretary attracted him more, why shouldn’t he go with the secretary? Because in the plan of his life, the Mystery of God had given him this task, this vocation, even though it made him encounter the other woman. Which is the fundamental law? The fundamental law is that it should tend here (8): tend to his destiny. If the law is tending towards destiny, T is closer, it would make him closer than b, it would make him journey further on. Am I making myself clear? Yet this b attracts him more. T corresponds more to the needs of his heart, in spite of appearances, for the need of his heart is total happiness, it is destiny; but the greater emotion is here on b, then one gives in to the emotion and he turns here. He evidently loses the way. This is the concept of sin; in the dynamism of freedom the possibility of sin is implied: to choose before a creature what immediately satisfies more, rather than using the creature to tend more to the destiny for which we were made. Sin is to go overboard, to get out of the way to destiny in order to dwell on something that interests us more at the moment. Is it not clear? Anyway, you will think of it again.

But why can freedom make this mistake? Should it reflect, like Socrates or Seneca, like a great stoic or a great philosopher, it would not make this mistake. It is not so. They too made this mistake. Everybody makes mistakes; one way or another, everybody sins.
Why is freedom like this? Because it is not yet accomplished. Only upon arriving here (8) will freedom, finding itself before its complete object, be no longer able to choose; it will instead be fulfilled, it will be satisfied, it will no longer be tempted to choose something other. I have already said the second important thing: being on the journey towards destiny, imperfect freedom can make mistakes: to sin means to fail, amartanein, to fail taking one road and taking another; as in a desert, if the caravan loses its compass, it goes astray.

For freedom is imperfect, and precisely because it is imperfect, it can choose something which is not right. The capacity of choice is proper to a freedom on the journey, not to a perfected freedom. Error, the possibility of error, belongs to a freedom that is not yet free, that is not yet freedom, that has not yet reached total satisfaction. This is why it is called defect. Defect, failure, dicitere in Latin means to fail, as when one collapses, suffering from a sudden hypoglycaemia, tension goes down at a go, and he goes down: this is sin. The attraction or the emotion aroused by a creature that exercises an influence immediately stronger than something else which would carry freedom further on, making it walk, this is error; the attraction one feels is not the error, but preferring this attraction to the weaker one, which is more active and safe towards destiny, that pushes something into, proposes something to his heart.

Vocation, that is, the total plan God has on your lives, proposes to you, at the beginning, things that are by their nature less attractive than a disco, girls, the companionship as is lived by your age-mates (including those of the Movement); but they are the things through which you walk towards your destiny. The more you walk, the more the things that represent your destiny become attractive; the more you walk, the more magnificent this vocation will be.

It is the opposite of what happens with the worldly matters, where attraction knows its peak at the beginning and then ends. Are you following me? These things we shall need to repeat hundreds of times: either one discovers them in himself, or, if he is taught them, he has to repeat them hundreds of times to discover them in himself: it is necessary to repeat them in order to understand them.

Freedom as dynamism is provoked by the creatures, so omnis creatura bona, St Paul said: each thing is good, for each thing recalls you to the Creator, each thing, everything, but there can be something which attracts you more. In front of the choice of something that attracts you less but makes you go further on towards destiny, you are reasonably compelled to follow the second, not the first; if you do otherwise, this is error, this is sin. It happens like this because freedom is still unaccomplished, so much so that it needs to be prompted by creatures, so much so that it can err. It is not yet fulfilled; it is a freedom on the way. The freedom of choice is not freedom: it is imperfect freedom. For freedom will be full when it is before the object that satisfies it fully: then and then only will it be totally free, totally freedom.

THE CONDITIONS FOR FREEDOM

A) The awareness of destiny

The first point is a clear awareness of destiny, the love for destiny. If one loses sight of destiny, he will err. All people, 100%, live like that: let’s be careful, because we too live like that. This is the horror, this is against man, it is dis-humanity: man living with a criterion that is against man. It seems, and everybody says: “It is right, it is comfortable, it is to your advantage, you hold this dear, so do it!” Not so! For life’s destiny is not what we want, it is the Mystery of God, the consciousness of Mystery, the awareness of destiny.

B) Self-governance

Second: a tearing force is needed, an energy to tear you away from the attraction, so that you may apply your strength to going towards destiny. It is called mortification, capacity of mortification or penance. Penance, which in Greek is called metanoia, means “change of direction”: rather than going here where you feel attracted, you must make an effort to change direction, to change nous, to change the decision to be taken.
THE COMPANIONSHIP

So: awareness of destiny - man’s religious sense - and energy for dominating oneself, whose most critical aspect is called mortification or penance. Tell me if these two things are possible to someone on his own. This is the most external and evident value, the most banally evident aspect of the companionship: it recalls you to man’s religious sense, to destiny...

Boy, not even your mother tells you these things! The recall to destiny and the recall to self-governance, self-dominion: you will govern yourself according to the destiny of which you are aware. This always implies a tearing, a wound. In Christian terms it is called penance or mortification. Mortification means that it appears like death, it appears to be a renunciation, but it IS not! For if one chooses this T, then he sees this b in another light, he does not lose it: he will see b in a permanent, eternal, true and eternal light, and he loves of a love that is true and eternal. He does no longer lose himself; or rather, the other will lose it, but not he. Have you understood?

I have chosen to dwell on the problem of freedom because faith, as it concerns the event of the mystery that becomes man, becomes one among the things, among the others and things... Jesus was a man like the others, he was a man among the houses, the paths in the countryside, he was a man among the crowd in Jerusalem, he was a man among the others. Think of John and Andrew: from the moment they encountered that man, they went home to their wives and children, they went to fish - for even the last chapter of St John speaks of fishing at night - they went to fish, they went to the synagogue with others, they went to Jerusalem, they went around: they did all they had done before, but not as before; between themselves and what they were doing, they had a figure: that man. He was between their eyes and what they were seeing; he was between their heart and what they were doing, all in everything.

What has this to do with? With everything! With hair... “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered”. It is something he said, it is the most beautiful thing he said, because nothing describes the contingent, banal, concrete material ephemeral presence like a hair of the head that falls. Thus, the look he had when speaking of the flower in the field or the bird that falls, and all the more of the son of man, the child: “Woe to those who scandalize these little children. Better It’d be for them to have a great millstone fastened round their neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” To harm a child, whether physically or morally: in the material sense all run away from harming a child, but in the moral way all harm children, nobody cares, not even parents. No one loves as much as that Man: he lifted one child in his arms and said that phrase. Before this scene there is no chance to imagine a love for man greater than his. A mother, the mother of that child, if she had a vision sufficiently wide, must have felt that she was, rather than exonerated, watching a love for her child greater than hers.

Jesus’ call always implies giving yourself up to a community: belonging to Jesus always coincides with belonging to a community. These communities are like the arms of Christ on the child, Jesus’ eves which count the hair on the head, and notice the sparrow that falls or the small flower in the field, the powerful energy by which Jesus rises the dead teenager, son of the Nain widow. But before, and after, what was Jesus after? He wanted to rise the soul of that woman: “Woman, don’t weep.

The community is literally, physically, Jesus who does these things, Jesus present; then it is in the community that you learn what your destiny is. It gives you faith, too, it sustains your faith, it makes you understand what freedom is and it educates your freedom, in the awareness of a developed religious sense and in the awareness of the sacrifice to be made: therefore in the humble awareness, without useless despair, of your sin, of your sinning, of the easiness with which you sin. The easy way to sin, for in man there is a great wound, so that the arm which could have lifted 30 Kg cannot even lift 3, it is sort of weakened, it is like a paralysis in a child: it is called original sin. So, the community tells you
not to be scandalized of the temptation you feel, nor to be scandalized of the error you’ve made, but indomitably to pick up the journey again. Together we acknowledge what takes us to destiny, and what is great in life - what takes us to destiny is what is great - and we acknowledge the illusory attraction, the illusion in the attraction. All this is the education the community imparts on you.

Then, what must we do with our freedom? The same as with faith. How did the apostles learn to have faith in that man? They followed Him.

Had John and Andrew gone only that day, they would have brought a great impression home, and ten years later they would have said to their children, “We saw a man...”, but without faith in that man. They followed Him. How can we learn to be educated to freedom, so that freedom becomes truly the strength of our life and therefore the dignity of our life (man’s dignity lies in his freedom, for it is his relationship with infinity)? By following: to follow the companionship in which the Lord calls us and puts us. Nothing is more intelligent than following.

THE MYSTERY OF MAN’S FREEDOM
by Charles Peguy

Man must love these creatures as they are.
When you love a being you love it as it is.
There is only I being perfect
This is also why, perhaps,
I know what perfection is
And demand a lesser perfection from these poor people.
I know, I know how hard it is
And how often as they labour through their trials
I wish, I am tempted to put my hand under their belly
To sustain them in my large hand
As a father teaches his son to swim
In the river current
And is divided between two sentiments
For on the one hand if he sustains him always and he sustains him too much
The child will stick to him and will not learn to swim
But even if he does not sustain him at the right moment
This child will swallow a bad mouthful
This is how I am as I teach them to swim through their trials
I too am divided between these two sentiments
For, if I sustain them always and I sustain them too much
They will never know how to swim by themselves
But if I weren’t to sustain them at the right moment
These poor children might perhaps swallow a bad mouthful
Such is the difficulty, this great it is
And such is the very duplicity, the double face of the problem
On the one hand they’ll have to make their salvation by themselves
It is the rule
And it is formal. Otherwise it would not be interesting. They would not be men.
Now I want them to be manly. Let them be men and earn for themselves
Their knight spurs
On the other hand they must not swallow a bad mouthful
Having plunged in the ingratitude of sin
Such is the mystery of man’s freedom, says God.
ROBERT ALAIN
by Gilbert Cesbron

Robert Alain kept looking at the door, like a dog whose master has been absent too long. When at long last the door opened before the judge, he did not recoil, for he had not recognised him: he unconsciously expected to see the appearance of White Tusk, Buffalo, or Tomawak... Lamy, who meant to get for himself the glory of the boy, was deluded. But at once Robert Alain said, "Mr Lamy, I want to tell it all".

"All?" the judge asked, smiling and nodding. "Let's say all that you'll like to say."

"All that is necessary"

"You know you'll have to repeat it to me the day after tomorrow in my office. So then, what do you deem necessary to tell me?"

"Everything at once", said the boy, cutting it short with a dull voice.

When he was finished with his story, Robert Alain waited for the verdict. He hoped Lamy would decide to jail him, even only a few days, but at once.

"Evidently," said the judge slowly, "you have committed several silly things, haven't you? What do you think? You are right, of course, to be seeking out your parents. We shall help you... one day you might even find them... but tell me", he said suddenly, lowering his eyebrow. "Do me a favour. There is a newspaper kiosk on the far side of the bridge, go and buy me France Soir. Here is a one-thousand-francs note: you will bring me small change... Thank you."

"Mr Justice," the sentry whispered the moment the boy was out. "You have no right to let him out, nor do I have. And then, those thousand francs... some imprudence I'd say!"

The three vertical wrinkles showed up on the judge's brow.

"Garnier, it is now fifteen years that I have no right... As to my imprudences, they walk upright in the streets, they were married and had children! And they write me on New Year!"

"Yet..."

"An imprudence they'd do who should insist to lock up that boy, and let him believe that the only path to freedom is evasion. And by Jove, Garnier, even dogs are allowed a short walk once a day. Don't you think boys need it as well, God be praised?"

"I agree all the way!" said Garnier. But I'll be the one held responsible, if he does not come back"

"What if he cuts his veins tonight, as little Roger did last month, remember? Wouldn't you be held responsible?"

"I would not!" said Garnier.

"But I would..."

They were silent a long while; night was falling; the sentry rolled up a cigarette, and this time he failed.

"He is not yet back..." he muttered.

"Trust! It is the only handcuffs and the only bars that can hold boys: yes, trust..."

Robert Alain bolted into the room, with a serious face, looking elsewhere. He opened his clenched fist into Lamy's hand, who pocketed the money without counting it: a mess of coins and ill-folded banknotes.

"Here's the newspaper. See you soon, Mr Lamy..."
Questionnaire and Evaluation Tables

*Questionnaire proposed by AVSI Educational Department*

You are kindly requested:

a. to answer the questions calmly and sincerely, bearing in mind that each questionnaire is strictly anonymous and that it is not our aim to personalize the answers of the persons interviewed;

b. to read with attention the question and the answers before choosing the one corresponding to your opinion;

c. to mark your preference putting only a tick in the box corresponding to the answer you choose.

**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION**

Sex: □ Male  □ Female

Age: ........ years

Education Level: □ Certificate  □ Diploma  □ Degree

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. **According to you, education is:**
   - □ Acquisition of knowledge and skills
   - □ Inculcation of moral, ethical and spiritual values
   - ■ Introduction to reality
   - □ Promotion of scientific, technical and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to enhance national development
   - □ Acquisition of discipline and good behaviour
   - □ Others, that is .......................................................... ...........................................................

2. **According to you, tradition is:**
   - □ An inadequate way of life
   - □ A sum of values and rules that are not related to education
   - ■ An explanatory hypothesis that is the starting point for any relation to reality
   - □ The culture that was shared in the past by a particular group of people
   - □ Other, that is .......................................................... ...........................................................
3. According to you, an authority is:
- A person with a role in society that gives him power upon others
- A person who accompanies and helps others in their growth
- A person who can force others to do something
- A person who can decide for others
- Other, that is ……………………………………………………………………………………………

4. According to you, in the educational process, personal verification is:
- A waste of time
- A process that is useful for life, but that does not give good academic results
- The method to create certainty in the learner
- The way to become independent of everyone and everything
- Others, that is…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. According to you, freedom is:
- The satisfaction of your desire
- The possibility to choose without any external interference
- The capacity to choose in a right way, respecting others
- The absence of links
- Other, that is ……………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Your role of educator for your pupils requires first of all:
- A good academic preparation
- The capacity to guide your pupils to good academic results
- The capacity to offer a method of facing and understanding reality
- The ability to direct and organize the work in class
- The capacity to evaluate the performances of the pupils
- Other, that is ……………………………………………………………………………………………

7. Why do you consider yourself an authority for your pupils? Because of:
- Your academic preparation
- The power of your role
- Your capacity to recognise and arouse the original desires of their hearts
- Your exemplary conduct
- Your friendly attitude to them
- Others, that is ……………………………………………………………………………………………

8. According to you, the task of the school system is to form people:
- Having specialised knowledge in order to easily find a good job and to contribute to the national development
- Having a good general knowledge in order to easily find a good job and to contribute to the national development
- Living the values of honesty, tolerance and solidarity
- Capable to use in life the knowledge acquired at school
- Capable to act in life with responsibility, creativity and criticism
- Other, that is ……………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Do you generally give room to your pupils for expressing opinions?
- Yes, I do
- No, I don’t
10. According to you, the discipline in class is:
- A value in itself
- An important educative objective of your work
- An important condition for fruitful work
- Your main task as an educator
- Others, that is ........................................................................................................................................

11. You consider a class disciplined when:
- The children are punctual, smart and well behaved
- The children are involved in the work in class in an active and organised way
- The children follow faithfully every indication from the teacher
- You can follow your work plan without any change
- Others, that is ........................................................................................................................................

12. You consider yourself as the teacher of:
- a school
- a class
- each learner as an individual
- the best learners
- the weakest learners

13. Do you know each pupil of yours by name?
- Yes, I do
- No, I don’t

14. Do you act with all your pupils in the same way?
- Yes, I do, because they have the same duties and possibilities
- Yes, I do, because of my sense of justice
- No, I don’t, because each child is different and needs to be treated as an individual

15. The evaluation is an educative instrument because it is:
- The definition of the score in a school test
- The measure of the value of your pupils
- The measure of the value of your work
- The most important aspect of the learning process
- The expression of your power
- The main possibility to indicate the mistakes of your pupils
- One of the expressions of your personal relationship to each child
- Others, that is ........................................................................................................................................

16. According to you, a child when coming to school:
- Has not yet developed any aspect of its personal identity or acquired significant knowledge
- Has not yet developed any aspect of its personal identity, but has already acquired some knowledge
- Has already developed some aspects of its personal identity and even some knowledge
- Has already developed some aspects of its personal identity, but has not yet acquired significant knowledge
17. Do you know the social and cultural background of your pupils?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t
   If yes, how do you get the information?
     - Schedule of the school
     - Informal communication
     - Other, that is .................................................................
   And how is this information useful for your work?
     ..............................................................................................

18. Do you try to act in unison with the parents/guardians of your pupils?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t
   If yes, how? ..................................................................................

19. Do you know the behaviour and the performances of your pupils in the previous years?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t

20. Do you keep the record of the information on each pupil?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t

21. Do you give room to your pupils for asking questions?
   - Yes, I generally do, because..........................................................
   - No, I generally don’t, because..........................................................

22. How do you help your pupils to get involved in the work in class?
   - Rewarding the best ones
   - Punishing the ones who are not diligent
   - Challenging them by activities adequate to their original desire of inquiring and discovering reality
   - Giving room to songs, dramatizations, games and role plays
   - Others, that is .................................................................

23. Teaching your subject, your main concern is:
   - To communicate right knowledge
   - To follow the indications of the Syllabus
   - To offer a method of facing reality and room for verification
   - To obtain good academic results from your pupils
   - To evaluate in a right way the performances of the learners
   - Others, that is .................................................................

24. Do you share the information on each pupil with your colleagues?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t

25. Do you accept comments, suggestions or corrections from your colleagues?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t
GOAL OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is the instrument used for a quick and uniform quantitative evaluation of the following factors related to the content of the training:

1. teacher’s knowledge and understanding of the original dynamics of education;
2. teacher’s capacity of choosing objectives centered on the development of the learner’s personality (self-awareness, criticism, freedom);
3. teacher’s capacity of choosing a proper learner centered methodology.

The following table shows the correspondence between the above factors and the items of the questionnaire:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed. Dynamics</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal verification</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Development of student’s awareness and identity</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criticism</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Personal teacher/student relationship</td>
<td>12-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect for student’s tradition</td>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness to reality</td>
<td>21-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration with the colleagues</td>
<td>24-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

The evaluation of the results is obtained giving one score to each correct answer (that is indicated in the attached questionnaire with a black tick) and following the same classification (1. knowledge and understanding of the original dynamics of education; 2. choice of objectives; 3. choice of methodologies).

In this way three numerical indicators are obtained; a synthetic evaluation corresponds to each one of them according to the following tables:

**Indicator 1:**
Teacher’s knowledge and understanding of the original dynamics of education (questions 1-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 1/5</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicator 2:**
Teacher’s choice of objectives centered on the development of learner’s personality (questions 6-11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3/6</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/6</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indicator 3:
Teacher’s choice of a proper learner centered methodology (questions 12-25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 7/14</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - 9/14</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 11/14</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 –14/14</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B.
By giving the questionnaire before and after the training and comparing the scores, a first evaluation of the impact of the training on the participants is obtained.

Evidently this kind of measure is only a partial aspect of the process of evaluation, since the educative adventure can never be limited in quantitative terms, but implies always the reference to other elements that require a different kind of analysis.
Contributions and experiences from the trainees during the follow-up meetings

TEACHERS

I have not been mindful of the fact that the heart of the child I teach thirsts for truth!

I now keep on remembering that these are people with the same desires of the heart as my own.

In our education system, the administrator is there to direct and, if possible, to impose; and the destiny of the student is seen in terms of scores. This does not mean that I have neglected the need for high scores. But now I look at the people around me in totality and not just limiting my view to the school environment.

To have understood the importance of being in relationship not only with the class, but with every child as an individual helped me as a teacher to develop friendship towards the children I am handling and then to discover more about them. This has helped and encouraged me to understand better that each of them desires love, peace, friendship, freedom and therefore even education, just because it is a journey done with someone who loves and accepts them unconditionally.

P. is a pupil in P1 who had an undisciplined behaviour and used to kick his classmates. I decided to talk personally to him and he told me that he does not stay with his parents, but with an aunt and went to say that he had no friend. I therefore helped him to realise that he needs to have friends and to obtain the love of the people around him. Then I declared that we had already become friends very easily and this was beautiful for P. and for me. Finally I accompanied him into the class. Today P. has turned to be a good pupil and classmate.

Knowing the culture of each child is important in the introduction of the lesson because I can start from what they are and know.

I teach a child in relation to what already has been achieved from the family and the original community.

I have visited many homes in order to know the parents of my pupils.

I created friendship and understanding with some parents.

I used to look at African tradition with suspicion. Now I have discovered that tradition gives a base for comparison and so one is able to make a mature judgement.

Children should know what they are and of what importance they are to the parents, teachers and the school.

…I requested a pupil to ask her mother to come for an interaction. When she came, we discussed the child’s character and later called the pupil and talked to her. Realising our common position, she was fascinated and started paying attention to herself. Today she has greatly improved academically and socially.

I invited one of the parents (the mother). She came and we had a dialogue that helped me to understand this child. After learning the situation, I started giving him more attention and helped him to do his work. This has been a turning point for this child, today he is not the same, he is a happy child in front of the class, a reality before him.

Children are now free to contribute actively towards the school activities that go on; most of their contributions are true facts and even they look at themselves as true humans and important
people not only at school, but also in their homes.

The teacher should know that a learner has some experience in the subject matter being taught. Therefore a child should be allowed to participate during the learning process.

I now accept that a child comes to school not empty but has some knowledge got from tradition.

I realised unexpected learners’ experiences on the subject matter as important, even their questions are always challenging and useful.

One time I was teaching Religious Education in class when I gave an opportunity to the children to ask questions. As I was answering them, one child interrupted and I thought she was asking another question. She instead volunteered to answer that question. I was surprised, I had to lower myself and let the child answer, which she did. This is a clear manifestation of what reality is, we simply improve on what children already know.

I used to treat my learners the same way, but I realised that they are different due to their backgrounds. So I gained new love, devotion and methods of handling each child as an individual and I now know that each child is a value to a society he is in.

Each child is very different from the other in his/her own way of perceiving things, facing reality and attempting to solve problems. Now I try to help them accordingly.

There was a child in my class who was well known by the whole school for his “unwelcome” behaviour. I got time to talk to this child and appointed him to be a prefect. He at first doubted my appointment, but later responded to it responsibly. Each time he is free, I call him to share experiences about my life from childhood to-date (sharing the problems I faced, the punishments I received and how my life changed). Today I have observed a growth in him.

Every child now is free with me in or outside class and can ask for any help as they feel without any fear.

I usually give overviews and leave the learners to discover reality through practical work, research, class oral participation and criticism.

Where we meet a challenge, we all go and research and finally later we present our findings. I am no longer a “source of wisdom”.

The teacher should promote free interactions with the learners for easy assessment of the child’s participation in any task given.

Let the learner feel free with the teacher, criticize where he/she feels like and draw his/her own reality for the task assigned.

I have fully realized that academics only are not enough for the well being of a learner … because education should be looked at as the introduction of a child to life’s total reality.

The subject matter widens because of the different experiences that are given by the learners during the teaching.

As a result of the freedom given to the learners during the teaching, they tend to compete among themselves and with the teacher in analysing the subject matter. By these, learners develop the skill of researching and collecting data about a particular lesson content hence consolidate and re-enforce their understanding.

Due to the different experiences shared within the lesson, learners will always try to think about the challenges and other related situations to find out the reality in their daily life.

Learners become more interested in the lessons since time is always given to share in different experiences. Children enjoy learning through their experiences in daily life when related to the class activities, making the learning real life.

This system, where children are allowed to interact on their own, produces better results.

The learner should be given time to explore and make final judgement by him/herself to obtain positive learning results.
I find myself judged by this work not only when I am in a school situation, but in every day life too.

**SOCIAL WORKERS AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS**

Now I have realized that these children are greater than the gifts we give them.

I have discovered they should not only be provided with schooling etc, but also be close to me. Being close to them, I have seen a glimmer of hope in them and respect of dignity.

Without knowing the importance of tradition, it is hard to respect one's identity. As a social worker I have witnessed that, without using tradition as starting point, it becomes hard to understand other's previous experiences.

Before the seminar, I have been misusing the word authority; most of the time I thought I was there as a master, not as someone who can relate to people.

Now they open up and share their sorrows and happiness and I have discovered that everybody has his/her own qualities.

I am now giving room to my clients to ask questions.

My work gains value when I gain stability. I gain stability when I understand that the work I am doing is of value for me, is important for me. Then I can accept and welcome criticism from everyone I work with as a provocation to fulfill my freedom.

I, as an authority, can enter into relationship with the clients and accept them as they are while guiding and stimulating them to personal verification.

I have learnt that to be an authority to others is not only to advise and teach them, but also to enable them to discover on their own.

I have tried to be an authority not only by telling others what to do but trying to live together in what we feel is right.

I have learnt to respect and appreciate human nature as a fundamental aspect of correctional work. I can now deal very effectively with the offenders whom society regards as inhuman because of their being imprisoned.

I have learnt to cherish tradition as a foundation of human behaviour and a backbone to correctional work.

Through this training I have learnt the realities of life. As a correctional officer in the making, I feel that this approach will be very useful to me in rehabilitating the inmates if I can understand the situation of their lives.
Thank you for inviting me to take part in this important symposium. I am thankful for being given the opportunity to meet a culture different from my own in this particular moment, about such an important theme as education.

Many people believe that there can be no effective solutions to the military conflicts, and above all to the clashes of cultures or civilizations, that are marking the first years of this new century.

In this, all too often, dramatic situation, to speak of education means not to accept that conflict, destruction of the other and violence are the last words in human relationships, even though these words seem to be inevitable when we consider the interests at stake and when we look at the statistic picture of our predicament. These words, however, lose their importance and no longer seem so definitive when we look at things in their momentum, taking account of the possibility of a change. Indeed, education is concerned precisely with change. Instead of being inevitable, clash becomes an opportunity for encounter: an encounter between different cultures and identities. It is not thanks to a generic “goodwill” or human generosity that we move in this direction, but rather out of conviction that what we live and what we live for becomes truer, takes root in us more decisively, when we find ourselves in the other, through comparison with a culture that has different origins.

We cannot forget the main condition for this encounter between cultures—or “interculturality”, as Cardinal Ratzinger defined it, preferring this term to the other, more fashionable, but less precise term, “inculturation”— that is: the acknowledgment of a common being, a common human nature in every man. “The encounter between cultures,” Card. Ratzinger writes, “is possible because man, despite all the differences in his history and in his communitarian creation, is an identical, unique being.”

I remember an almost identical reply being given by Fr Giussani many years ago to a German university student. He had asked how it is possible for people of different cultures and traditions to communicate, and therefore how it is possible to share the same things and the same experience. Fr Giussani immediately replied that in whatever latitude they live, and in whatever culture they have grown up, men have the same needs and evidences, because the heart of man is always the same. The heart constitutes man’s ultimate nature and identity, and it is to this heart that education speaks: to the elementary experience, to the fundamental evidences, to the need for happiness, for beauty, for unity and for justice that vibrate in every man, even though in different contexts and different ways. Education means offering a proposal that can strengthen these evidences and lead to a positive answer to these needs. Many disappointments of modern man, and much violence, depend on having ignored or even denied the existence of these needs and evidences, thus reducing man to a bundle of needs and reactions, to be studied and straightened out, only to argue cynically that nothing human beings desire, apart form money, power and pleasure, is worth consideration any more. This kind of anthropology radically nullifies the value of education or reduces it to a kind of “training” in behaviour and ideas in function of the aims society has chosen for itself and for each person.

Education, instead, is a challenge to life, a challenge which engages life and opens to life.

In recent years, in addition to my regular courses in Medieval Philosophy, at Lumsa University, I have been teaching at the Pontifical Urbaniana University and at the Antonianum University in Rome, where I had the chances to meet many students from African countries. At times we had discussions, I listened to their questions and considered their opinions. In every such a dialogue, I noticed an attitude they had, which an African colleague later expounded to me in philosophical and historical terms, and which I can summarize as follows. Whereas western men tend to start off from ideas in order to reach reality, the africans start off from life and feel life as a continuous source of their thinking. I thought over this difference
as I was preparing this talk, because though it is true that the attitude described is broadly confirmed by the western mentality, all the same it is foreign to the author we are dealing with today. For in Giussani’s works the word life and the others related terms—like vital, alive—as well as being used with an unusual frequency, constitute the indisputable starting point, the source of a “generative” thought and of a declared openness to reality in its actual and vibrant existence. Everything starts off from life and experience, not because one remains victim of a naturalistic vitalism, but because the roots of all development, of every plan, of every construction are found in a lived experience, in a living presence, to use a term dear to Giussani. In Giussani, love for life is the acknowledgement of its ultimate positivity and, therefore, of its meaning, which can never be found lacking, whatever the circumstances in which one finds oneself.

Thus, I believe that, despite the differences that characterized the cultures from which we come, there are common elements which permit us to communicate and, I hope, to understand each other.

Today we would be focusing on a text that is fundamental in Giussani’s bibliography and which, for the effects it has produced, has shown to be fundamental for many people and for that array of human experience that is normally called the movement of Communion and Liberation. “The Risk of Education” is much more than just a title. The term expresses the dynamics of the educational experience, in its deepest sense and also in its concrete realization.

First of all the word “risk” is very significant. Today it seems to be reappearing within the ambit of pedagogy and of the philosophy of education, which formerly have been often reduced to the study of techniques and formative methodology, if not altogether identified with them. In place of the customary questions like, “How do we do this?”, “What methodology shall we use?”, or “What instruments should we use?”, we find other questions which touch on the very nature of education and its intrinsic conditions.

From among the many meanings linked with the word “risk”, and the countless reflections that this word arouses, Giussani stresses the two main meanings. The first regards the one being educated, and the second the one educating. Both meanings have to do with freedom, since the word “risk” points out how the problem of education has human freedom at its core. In this sense, to speak of “risk” means to go beyond the mechanical and automatic conception of education, of formation and also of the person’s growth. For outcome and success are never necessary consequences in education. Even the best techniques, the best actions and the best subjects can fail or not achieve the foreseen results, because the educative relationship implies freedom: the freedom of the one being educated and the freedom of the one who educates. This fundamental constraint or rule forces us to see education not as a psychological “cure” for shortcomings or sickness, nor primarily as a training for a job, but as an encounter between two freedoms, which in meeting each other, in dialogue and collaboration, interplay in a human risk that engages them.

Giussani speaks explicitly of “educating for the use of freedom and its risks.”

He stresses the close relationship between the three terms (education, risk and freedom), and observes that for the gravity of what is at stake, “We are not talking about a feeling to be evoked or a pietistic emotion to be called forth, but of a commitment that cannot be faked. In short, we are at the mercy of the quick-sands of freedom,” and therefore of the unforeseeable answer that may be given.

On one hand, then, education is a risk because it regards the freedom of the one being educated. Education begins from an encounter which provokes a person and wakes him up. Giussani says in The Risk of Education: “The cause of my growth does not coincide with me, but is other than me.” A similar concept is found in Traces of Christian Experience, one of the first of Giussani books, where he says: “in order to truly grow, man needs to be provoked and helped by something different from himself, something objective, by something that he ‘encounters.’”

In a conversation some years ago, Giussani took up this concept and related it to experience. He said: “Experience is to be understood as that fundamental phenomenon in the life of man as such, in which reality strikes the person, provoking and awakening the subject who would otherwise remain inert…This provocation and invitation awake the “l” to a way of being and therefore a way of existing”. This is the true beginning in our life as well in education: “The true beginning
is a provocation to our life...nothing has necessarily to be added to this formula: a provocation to life, that is to be followed". This provocation or invitation by reality, which is the beginning, is also defined by the word "event," which clarifies its nature. In a talk to University students Giussani affirmed: "It is an event that makes this confused and contradictory "I", floating in the air, clear and aware of itself...only an event can set in motion the process through which the "I" can become aware of itself, or get to know itself."

Now the setting in motion of this process requires the freedom of the one provoked or awakened. For a refusal of the proposal would make any development impossible, whereas its acceptance—which implies understanding and assent on the part of the subject—favours it, at the various levels made possible by the answers given. I believe that this is the meaning of an educative relationship lived out at the level of "pure freedom", an expression in which Giussani summarised his whole educative enterprise.

On the other hand, the risk regards the person who educates. In the act of educating, he is called not only to involve himself and to establish a relationship with others, but also to accept the changes that this implies. The risk for the educator consists in the fact that, in the last analysis, it regards him personally, that it calls him to go beyond himself. In The Risk of Education we read: "To educate means to develop the child's self-awareness, that is say the feeling of responsibility towards something greater than he is." When the educator asks a youngster to bring his freedom into play facing a proposal, he develops an awareness of himself as responsible towards something greater than he is and greater than the relationship with the youngster.

This experience of freedom, which education urges constantly, makes us understand why teaching can be considered the finest job in the world. Not only because of the effects it produces, but above all because every day it confronts human experience with its origin, with the reasons that can shape positively its very face. Profound respect for each one's freedom, far and beyond any mere "tolerance", lies in love for freedom itself. It is a sense of the mystery that the other person is and that is in him. Giussani again observes: "The first condition inherent in education, whetever that condition be conscious or merely implicit, is a sense of detachment and respect. It is a sense of fear and trembling in front of the mystery that dwells in that creature."

All this is possible if it is conceivable. But is an education in these terms really conceivable?

There are two assumptions that seem to make us doubt that this kind of education be conceivable and therefore possible: on one hand there is subjectivism, and on the other an individualistic conception of freedom.

By subjectivism I mean the disappearance of reality from the person's horizon, leaving everything to his interpretation and depriving it of any "objective" value. This might derive from the reduction of the real to pure illusion, dream, appearance, pretence; but also from its easy-going acceptance ("We easily accept reality perhaps because we sense that nothing is real," wrote L. Borges). But, if nothing is real, then education, too, would come to an end. For what and why should we educate, when the fundamental terms of the educative relationship have fallen down? Or, how can we distinguish education from what could be nothing but a form of manipulation of other people's consciousness and a rigid prescription for behaviour? These are inevitable consequences once we accept the subjectivist assumption.

In second place, individualism. Charles Taylor, a Canadian philosopher, observed that since the end of the second world war an "ethic of authenticity" has taken prevailing. It is now commonly summarized by expressions like "Do your own thing" or in advertising slogans like, "be yourselves in the world today"; but it takes its philosophical roots in the individualism of the 19th and 20th centuries. Individualism aimed originally at defending the individual from all external powers and interferences, but it resulted in closing the subject up in the sphere of an impenetrable individuality, which finds [—and indeed must find, not to contradict its very principle—] the resources and the conditions for its actuation in itself. Taylor sees the synthesis of this position in John Stuart Mill's "harm principle", "that no-one has the right to interfere with me for my own good, but only to prevent harm to others." This position not only erases all sense of human dependence, but identifies education with a set of preventive measures for avoiding conflicts and containing the hardship caused by human wickedness, leaving each one to his own destiny as regards the growth of his own personality.
In both these cases education would be impossible, because it would be inconceivable.

Here it can be seen how the problem of education is intrinsically bound up with the problem of culture, and how the mutual interdependence of these two dimensions of human existence is a core-point in the life of a people or a civilization.

Giussani is fully aware of this, as the Preliminary Comment and the Introduction to the 1995 edition of The Risk of Education demonstrate, both in his perceiving the challenge of culture and in his identifying education as the chief cultural concern ("Our main theme in all of our writings and lectures has always been education"). All the same, his proposal is not the result of an analysis of the cultural context, of currents in thought, nor it is shaped by a comparison of different educational currents, it rather springs almost impetuously from an exuberance of humanity and of awareness tending to communicate itself. This "communication," which is the most salient aspect of Giussani's concept of education ("education is a self-communication" which entails commitment with your own life and with the truth, not only of what you say and do, but of what you are), (this communication) expresses a precise anthropology, identifies a clear method and tends to a principal and well-defined aim.

It is well known, in fact, that educational plans, whether religious or secular, have always a strong anthropological base. Indeed, the new man that education aims at creating is always largely based on a definite image of man, towards which all efforts are directed. Even in Giussani there is a strong anthropological background; however, the image of man he presents has nothing of the abstract vision of human nature, nor does he have the slightest claim to define it exhaustively. Even though he shows, in his writings and in his life, a deep understanding of human existence in its various aspects and unespected expressions, man for him is a mystery, not only because of his ultimately unfathomable nature, but because of his radical openness to something greater than himself: "the definition of human being and of his and her destiny is a mystery". This sense of mystery, which generates genuine "respect" for every man—because in looking at him one also looks at what makes him great and fully himself—sustains a passion for the other person's journey, so that he can take his steps towards the knowledge of things and the development of his abilities and dispositions, in other words in that "introduction to reality as a whole" which is the true aim of education.

Giussani's reflection, though, is not simply the formulation of the ideal and final aspects of education, but includes the issue, often underestimated or badly interpreted, of an educational method. We have no time to develop this point in detail. The relationship between tradition, verification and critical awareness, the value of the present, the dialogical and communitarian dimension, the importance of the environment, are all themes that would take a lot of time to examine. On the other hand, they are so clearly dealt with in The Risk of Education that a reading of the text is certainly preferable to any explanation I could give it. So we just need to recall that the originality of Giussani's thought finds one of its happiest expressions precisely in the stress he places on the importance of method.

Without a sure path, Giussani observes many times, an aim cannot be reached and even the greatest ideals become dead things, not because they are not true, but because no way has been found to live them. The method is a process which makes it possible to carry out a content and that depends strictly on this content. In this sense Giussani speaks of identity between method and content, both because the former is not an exterior wrapping for the latter, and because the chief content of education, unity, is reached through a method which already actuates it. In this perspective, the communitarian dimension is key element of method in education, because it enables us to take steps that are usually very difficult, if not impossible to take, and also because it is the locus that the mature person creates and by which he is continually generated. The relationship between community and "I", and the communitarian dimension of personality - the community and the people exist for the "I", but the "I" lives in the people - are key elements in Giussani's reflection.

Finally, we have to stress the aim of education. There are two expressions in The Risk of Education, one at the beginning, the other at the end, that clearly point it out. "What we want – and this is our purpose here (states Giussani in the Introduction) - is to free the young generation from mental slavery and from the tendency to conform, which enslaves them to the forces in society". At the end of the book he takes up the same concept again ("We should remember that freedom is the
goal of education”). Giussani clarifies the meaning of this word, so important in human history: freedom is not the “absence of bonds,” but the satisfaction of man’s deepest need, a satisfaction that is given by a measure that goes beyond the normal measure. It is “that dimension wherein nature becomes capable of relating to the infinite”; Giussani likens it to “a window open on a reality that has never been exhausted and cannot be exhausted” and which thanks to this “relationship with the infinite”, is “a creative impetus”, “an inexhaustible will to create”. Therefore, the risk of education can give rise to a new capacity to generate, to create initiatives, to build a more human society, without ever giving up, but with continually renewed capacity to recover.

In the last Italian edition of The Risk of Education, Giussani decided to add a subtitle, so as to complete the meaning: “The risk of education as the creation of personality and of history.” This phrase, not present in the English edition, but which whoever reads the book will come to understand himself to be the outcome of a genuine education, expresses in a real and concrete way the content of a hope which we all need to entertain, but which is already true, because it is founded on a present experience.

Thank you.

INTERVENTION MR. KIZITO OMALA
Lecturer of Statistics, Institute of Statistic and Applied Economics, Makerere University, Kampala

My Bishops, all dignitaries, invited guests, my colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, my students and not the least; my friends.

Today we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of the ecclesial movement of CL, whose main objective is to recall men and women to their true nature and indicate the road to man’s destiny, in other words to educate men and women, young and old. For this reason we propose an educative experience, that has become mine too, part of which is contained in the book The Risk of Education by Msgr. Liugi Giussani.

What is most urgent today, in front of unimaginable contradiction, is education, true education.

But what is education? What is true education? What is the education that me and you, men and women of today need as a matter of urgency? Giussani in his book The Risk of Education alludes to Josef Jungmann’s definition of education, that: ‘To educate is to introduce a person to total reality’, the most fascinating and intelligent description of education, that I, a professional teacher of Physics, Mathematics and Statistics, never met anywhere.

- Education is introduction to total reality

The first reality is the person.

To educate is to awaken in the person the awareness that he has an infinite desire for Truth, Love, beauty, Good, Justice, Peace and ultimately Happiness. This infinite thirst seems to be there from conception. For instance, I have seen this dynamism of the heart vividly present in my daughter. After reading this book with some friends, most of them present here, I noticed that when my daughter was about 3 months or so, she would be comfortable with a baby-sitter who offered a variety of activities, not a person who song her only one lullaby.

The second reality is what surrounds the person, his environment up to his instincts. True education should guide a person to recognize that all the details of his environment is positive, since it is this that structures his path towards the true object of his infinite thirst. Man therefore depends. The inadequacy I experience after an achievement, like acquiring a Masters Degree or incapacity to save somebody like my wife (she passed to another life 19 months ago), is explicit evidence that what reasonably corresponds is not the sign, reality but what reality is pointing to.

Now, what can offer us the method and content of an educational process? It is Tradition.

- Tradition, is the explanatory hypotheses of reality

I have known the great detail of reality because some persons proposed to me the Tradition they lived. When I was eight, I went to a village, my ancestral village (Okwira-Padhola-Tororo)
for the first time (I was born here), my paternal grand father was dead. Moved by the great beauty—the smell of the kraal, the fresh air, my people, I told my father, I want to stay here. It was Third term, so daddy convinced me to finish the term. When the year began I went (against the wish of my mother) to Okwira to live with my grandmother, a great woman who knew the value of faith, work, school, tradition, even if she never saw a blackboard. That stay offered me a wealth of hypotheses that made Christianity reasonably concrete for me. In fact, with the possibility of doing my catechesis in Luganda (a language I knew little about) from a very comfortable environment, we decided with my younger brother to follow the instructions from Nagongera Parish in Dhopadhola.

Tradition must be proposed as a lived experience, and I thank my father for this. In him I could see that Christianity is the fulfilment of the hope of Jopadhola, that Christ represents the expectation of my people. In his text Fr. Giussani, affirms that all tradition is positive, and that tradition as hypotheses of explanation is the only condition for certainty to the teenager. I agree with him entirely, since the short time I have lived attests to this. In fact, in some of the students I meet and adults as well, I see in them indifference, lack of commitment to reality, scepticism as effects of rejecting or lack of tradition.

But, as I have mentioned before, tradition is fascinating if it is proposed as a lived experience. In other words, we need the figure of a master, an authority.

Who is an authority?

In his book The Risk of Education Giussani indicates that an Authority is one who causes growth, one who generates. In the educational process we need a person or persons who are the location of the most conscious expression of tradition. An authority is one who understands my true desires – he knows the reason of my sadness or sorrow, he is my truest self because he corresponds. An authority enjoys life, has the pleasure of things, he is young as ever. How could I make the risky step of marriage, if I did not have near me persons who propose what I see them enjoy?

But, even with an authority, the process of education is not done, the young star, the learner must personally verify the hypotheses proposed to him.

Personal Verification

To marry, I did not stop at watching the beauty in the marriage of my friends, but I had to verify with a woman whether this vocation is mine too. The teenager must verify the traditional contents suggested to him, which can be done only by him; no one else can do it for him. Giussani calls this criticism: the youngster must compare the proposals with the longing of his heart.

Recently I went to Pallisa because of research on UPE (Universal Primary Education), and in a school within the town area, pupils go without anything for break or lunch, because the politician says that schooling is free. How can parents, mother, father let their child go on without anything for at least lunch. This is an example of poor education to criticism; one cannot perceive that the proposal of the politician does not correspond to the nature of the child.

It is necessary that the master stimulate the adolescent to compare the traditional contents within his environment with the fundamental dimensions of his heart: culture, charity and mission.

Finally, what is the destiny of the educational process? It is satisfaction, fulfilment - Freedom.

Freedom

In Fr. Giussani’s book The Risk of Education and most of his published books, he affirms that we experience freedom when our desire, true desire is fulfilled. The task of education is to help one become truly human. In other words, to help men recognize the dimension of his heart and the importance of reality in structuring his journey towards destiny that is present. One is free if he belongs, if he is linked. The figure of a master is necessary. I am free, I find reality more familiar because I have meet, I meet the meaning of reality through concrete faces that make the Church, Christ tangible. Giussani says, and it is true, that we relate with reality truly, we recognize reality truly if we are aware of its meaning, more precisely, reality is truly affirmed if its meaning is also affirmed.

Thank you for listening to me, and I hope we can dialogue on this matter as we have done already with a number of social workers, tutors and teachers, best wishes.
INTERVENTION OF H.E. MSGR. CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
Apostolic Nuncio in Uganda

The Necessity for Mature Christian Personalities Capable of Making Reality More Human

About two years ago, a small team of people, led by Mr. Kizito Omala, Miss Clara Broggi and Miss Giovanna Orlando, started a very interesting experience. They went around a few schools or institutions of education, like the Naguru Remand Home, and offered a short ongoing formation course to teachers and educators, focusing on the dynamics of education and the presentation and study of the various factors that make up a true educational process. They introduced these teachers to a new method of education, taking into consideration all these factors, and helped them to understand the “consequences” - in their own way of teaching, in the “education” of their students, and in their own personal lives - of the adoption of such method.

When I heard about such a project, although I felt it was quite appealing, I wondered if it would actually work. Two years later, the same team of people has grown and is here to witness the tremendously positive response it has had among quite a significant number of professors from various categories, and coming from all over Uganda.

As we know, this course of formation, entitled “Education while teaching”, is inspired by the pedagogy contained in the study of Mgr. Giussani, The Risk of Education, which is being presented today.

* * *

We live in a country where “education” has become a magic word. Quite rightly, “education” is linked with development (of the individual and, as a consequence, of society), with promotion and with success. Parents want education for their children, priests and religious want to have “degrees” and the “graduation” seems at times more meaningful than one’s ordination or religious profession. If you read the curriculum vitae today, it looks as though the “essence” of the person depends upon his or her degrees and academic achievements.

I am not against “degrees”. They are necessary and more than useful.

However, the experience that is presented to us today and the book from which it draws its inspiration, The Risk of Education, tell us that “education” is wider and deeper, and that there would be a huge danger if we were to reduce education to instruction, to the acquisition of pieces of knowledge (bits and pieces!) and to the presentation of certain ways of living and behaving. How many of us, when we speak about education, present it as “forming good (whatever that means) citizens” or “giving effective leaders to society”. Is the nature and purpose of education only to prepare the people for the needs of society? We have been shifting from the person and his or her needs to the “role” this person has to play ...

May be because we are taken by some kind of urgency, we don’t take time to reflect, in our various curricula, upon the nature of education. In Latin, “e-ducere” means “to bring out”. The pupil is first and foremost a person with an original baggage of possibilities: he is originally in search of his destiny. The educator’s task is to acknowledge and develop what is already there, and to help the pupil grow in the awareness of his or her identity and to open him or her up to the world.

So it is much more than “impacting”, “inculcating”. It is “developing”, “fostering”, “stimulating” and “accompanying”.

This is why the project “educating while teaching” proposes a “critical analysis of the concept of education, teaching and social-educational methodologies. According to the purpose of this project, the activities in each school will include:

A training about the concept of education, based on the following points:

Since man is made in God’s likeness, his destiny and his desire are infinite. So his heart longs for great horizons and cannot be satisfied by anything lesser. Education is really an introduction into total reality.

To do this a hypothesis of life is necessary that will enable one to face and interpret reality; the first hypothesis, which man is offered by nature itself, is the tradition in which he was born. Education has to start from tradition, presented as a positive and lively experience.
Only someone who lives this experience for himself can communicate it to others. This is why in education a teacher, an authority is necessary that will prompt, guide, and accompany the disciple in his discoveries.

These discoveries must become the personal baggage of the person who receives education: during the educative progress the teacher must guide the disciple to verify personally what he has learnt.

This implies the need not only of respecting, but above all of arousing freedom in the disciple. This is a risk the educator has to run, because it is the condition for speaking of conviction, without which it is impossible to speak of adulthood.

In other words, it tells us that there is no proper education if we do not pay the proper attention to the person of the student (this applies first and foremost to the primary and secondary school, but also to the family, the seminary, the school of catechists, the relationships between priests and faithful).

But is it possible when a class has 100 pupils? Unfortunately, the fundamental relationship between educator and pupil is often reduced to a mere transmission of notions, leaving little room for a human relationship within which culture is passed on.

And the key concept is this “human relationship” making true “education” possible.

This is why the purpose of the future “education school” inspired by the method contained in the book The Risk of Education will aim at the formation of teachers and social workers, in order to help them become true “educators”.

And such task is an urgent one, because we live in a culture that is more and more secularised. Traditional and Christian values - those values that a father, a mother, a teacher, a priest, are proud to transmit to their children or students -, these values seem to lose their power of persuasion. Many parents and teachers seem to have given up … they are not “convinced”, they no longer appear as “authority” and are unable to offer a credible “meaning” to reality … to explain where the world is coming from, where it is going, what we are on this earth for.

Let’s take an example. Why should a man and a woman marry, be faithful to each other, have children …?

So we prefer to offer some “skills” … which will be “useful” … to succeed, to make money … but do we also equip the student with the capacity to make a “moral judgment”?

I have come across an interesting study of Archbishop Caffarra of Bologna, showing that in present-day culture, it has become difficult to present the truth of any kind of reality. Nietzsche said that “there are no facts, but only interpretations”. People say that “every interpretation and its opposite are equally valid”. (For example, it has become difficult in some quarters to agree about what is marriage.)

There is, therefore, dissolution of the real in an endless game of interpretations, which has a devastating effect on the spirit.

Some people say that there is no truth and that the truth cannot be reached!

The second aspect is the loss of the sense of freedom, which is reduced to “free will”. I choose between two possibilities … but they have the same value. It is up to me; there are no superior criteria!

The third aspect is that people have lost the sense of their own life as history, as part of a tradition, from where we are coming, upon which we build our existence, receiving from our “masters” values which have already been tested and checked, and which are offered to us in order to be checked and tested again, in the new context of today.

Education is indeed a challenge if such is the situation of our culture. And indeed it is.

This is why it is so urgent for the educator today not to accept passively a general trend but, on the contrary, to challenge it.

The method of Mgr. Giussani offers us the possibility to challenge today’s cultural trends through his radical reflection on the factors of education. I consider it as a blessing that it is being introduced to the Church and society in Uganda.

And the only way to challenge the situation is by helping teachers, professors, parents, priests to discover what is true education.

They have to become aware of their responsibility to enter into a relationship with their children or students – how many parents,
teachers, priests never communicate and remain on the edge!

They have to internalise and appropriate their own traditions, to receive the values and become living witnesses to such values, to understand the past and be able to make a proper and critical judgment upon it.

They have to be open to reality and be able to appreciate it, to give value to it and not to remain superficial about it. The modern culture cultivates an attitude of negative doubt and scepticism which is, as a matter of fact, a lack of courage and decisiveness in the face of human reality ... It is apparently easier not to take risks.

They have to accept to become, for the younger generation, an “authority” ... to present the meaning of life with authority (not in a dogmatic and “authoritarian” manner) ... mainly by the power of their convictions.

(In his last book, the Pope says, “My passion is not to impose, but to convince.”)

It supposes that we are always ready to be challenged and to give the “reasons” for our positions and convictions.

They have to be ready to “educate” by “entering” into a real relationship ... so that the student may be introduced into the meaning of reality through a “Master”.

We all need such Masters, good examples, people whom we admire and trust and who inspire us by their wisdom, their experimental knowledge, their honesty and their humility in the face of a reality which is bigger than themselves.

They become servants of a truth that they have found and which they help us to encounter.

They have to be capable of “dialogue”. At times, today people think that all opinions are of equal value ... and that we have to dialogue endlessly, but without any right to “conclude”. This is not true dialogue.

I need to find a master who will introduce me, through dialogue, into the truth of reality. He will not lead me to compromise with the truth ... But he will respect my freedom and help me, with patience, to recognise freely the truth of the reality.

Of course, there is a risk, the “risk of education”. But this is precisely what education is all about – to lead somebody else along the path towards the discovery of reality.


Good question ... but Pilate did not want to hear the answer ... nor the Jews who had led Jesus to his tribunal. They wanted to impose their own truth ... or, as happens in today’s culture, to say that there is no truth.

Yet Jesus is the “master” leading us to the truth (“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”).

Truth is found in our pursuit of knowing more clearly the meaning of life and the purpose of our existence.

Jesus invited his “friends” (his “disciples” – the “Master” has “disciples” and educates them!) to discover that the purpose of their journey is God, a loving God, who is the author of their life (the Creator) and calls them to himself, to live in everlasting communion and beatitude.

The “commandment” for the journey is love (love one another ... love yourself ... love God) because God is love and such love gives “meaning” to our life and destiny.

Jesus is the one introducing us to such a “path of truth” when we are led (by our educators ... the real ones) to discover, day after day, what it means to be fully human, developing in us, individuals, and in our communities, the beauty and all the potentialities of our humanity. On this path, we discover the truth. We become aware of God’s presence, of His loving care for us, as He helps us to love in the same way He loves us.

Such is the meaning and purpose of life at the centre of education.

For such a task, we need Christian personalities who are mature enough and capable to make “reality” more human.

They need to let their own humanity grow and mature, so that they may help their students ... to become, in return, truly human and Christian.