

Christianity as an Event: The Educational Proposal of Fr. Luigi Giussani

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1. Education and the Method

Luigi Giussani is rightly considered one of the greatest educators of the twentieth century. The outcomes of his educational efforts have gained him universal recognition and have garnered attention around his personality. Although he was well on his way toward an academic career in theology, particular events in his life led him to an abrupt change of direction. In the early 1950s (nineteen-fifties), while he was still fully engaged in academic research, thanks to many and meaningful conversations, he clearly realized that, in so-called ‘Catholic’ Italy a profound gap between the youth and faith had opened up. Those who still attended Church groups and parishes were displaying a great fragility in their conviction and an almost complete lack of enthusiasm. Giussani became persuaded that at the root of that gap lay a “lack at the level of education” and that such lack coincided with “a lack of method”. Therefore, he strongly felt the urgency to go and encounter the youth in the environment in which they primarily lived, that is the school, and made up his mind to leave the academia. Within a few years, a great movement of people took shape around him, which later spread in other Italian cities (and a few decades later in other countries as well). The fact that we are here today is a living witness to the lasting fecundity of that beginning.

Throughout his life, father Giussani continually comes back to the problem of education and its method. It is for him a crucial problem for various reasons that I will try to explain. His interest and reflection on education, however, are not the outcome of an academic research in pedagogy, a research field to which he was fundamentally extraneous, but they are born out of the desire to propose the Christian experience in an integral way, so that it could appear to his contemporaries – and especially the youth – without reductions and could be sifted through by their reason and welcomed by their freedom. He does develop his original insights in the field of education both pedagogically and psychologically, but they are primarily the development of a burning missionary passion.

In 1958, Father Giussani is speaking to the leadership of the Italian Youth of Catholic Action, who was experiencing the rising challenges of engaging with the youth. He presents to them a simple either-or: “Either the reason why we act (the ‘ideal’) is not valid, or the way in which we carry it out (‘the method’) is wrong. Let’s exclude the first hypothesis, that of considering the Christian ideal as insufficient; let’s instead focus on the second. That is, let’s

try to identify the conditions in which the method we deploy becomes effective”. Many years later, in 1992, he will go back to this same idea, but in a more drastic and radical manner: “According to me, for the past one hundred years, we as Christians, as Christian people, have failed on this very point, that of the method, the method of communication”. “It is the method we use that is wrong, the method we use to hand down our faith”. That is, “we can communicate our faith, the evidence that the Christian experience has for us, we can communicate our good news: ‘The mystery of God is among us’, without following the method that this truth implies”.

What is this method, then? In order to answer to this question, we must not take for granted the nature of Christianity. What is Christianity? It is the event of God made flesh, man, a fully human presence. The definition of Christianity as an event is – we could say – the hallmark of Giussani’s thought, his ‘fundamental intuition’. “Christianity is a fact, an event, an objective fact, and even if the whole world did not believe in it, it would no longer be able to blot it out”.¹ The word ‘event’ “identifies *the method* chosen and used by God to save man: God became man in the womb of a girl of fifteen-seventeen called Mary [...] The *way* in which God has entered into a relation with us to save us is an *event*, not a thought or a religious sentiment or feeling. It is a fact that took place in history”.

God entered in the history of man as a man. They could meet Jesus, listen to Him, follow Him, they could “argue, react, or adhere to what he said in the town squares, and he could answer and correct them. Something distinctively objective educated man’s subjectivity”, struck the hearts, but was a reality outside of the self. An entirely human presence, in fact, implies essentially the “method of the encounter”, which has “an exterior connotation just as decisive as the interior one”.

Now, all we have said certainly happened to those who met Jesus. But what about now? After two thousand years? “How can this wholly human presence be encountered by the man of today, two thousand years later?”² The crux of the “method” to which I alluded earlier (“for a hundred years, as Christians, we have failed on this point”), focuses on the response to this question.

Giussani refers in this regard to the Gospel accounts. More and more people wanted to meet Jesus, listen to Him, be healed by Him, but he could not go everywhere. So, in villages he could not reach, “He sent His men, two by two [...] and they returned enthusiastic, saying: “Master, what You do, we have also done; the miracles You perform, we have also performed. The

¹ *Christianity as an event today*, Traces, February 2024, p. 17

² *Why the Church?*, p. 20

people listen to us too!”³ Thus, observes Giussani, “even when Jesus was at the height of his earthly activity, the event that he was assumed form that was not merely his external, physical appearance, but was also that of those who believed in him; so much so that they were sent by him to convey his words – his message – to reproduce his prodigious acts, to bring the salvation that *his person* was”.

Saint Paul “sensed this when, thrown from his horse, he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’. He did not even know Christ, and yet he was persecuting people who believed in him”.⁴ Here emerges the problem of the method: Christ remains present in history, “and will be present until the end of the centuries through the unity of those He seizes and brings within His personality”. His presence “is visible, tangible, hearable, like the unity of the believers in Him, which historically also has a name – Church”.⁵

Communicating the Christian message (“The Mystery of God is among us”) while respecting the method that this truth implies means recognizing that “the *method* to reach Jesus Christ today, so as to *verify* whether His great claim is real, whether He is God or not”, is to encounter, to chance upon a reality made up of those who believe in Him. Indeed, “the presence of Christ in history – the visible appearance – visibly abides in the unity of the believers, which is the encounterable form of his presence”.⁶ Therefore, “just as back then those who followed Him became Christian and changed, so today a Christian is he who changes, changes as a person, by following this unity to which Christ gave a sign of absolute objectivity, which is the bishop of Rome”.⁷ What leads us to God is not our thoughts or feelings, but “following a presence”.

2. A Fully Human Experience

When Giussani begins to engage with the youth, he denounces a way of proposing Christianity that does not remain faithful to these “original features” of the announcement, to the method chosen by God to save man: the method of the event, therefore of the presence and the encounter, of following and verifying. Here is where the reduction takes place: Christianity is not presented and communicated according to its nature, that of a present event: an event that happened two thousand years ago and persists in history precisely as an event, as a “fully

³ *Christianity as an event today*, p. 22

⁴ *Why the Church?*, p. 21

⁵ *Christianity as an event today*, p. 22

⁶ *Why the Church?*, p. 21

⁷ *Christianity as an event today*, p. 23

human fact”, which happens and surprises us now, where we live, and has the face of the community that was born from Christ and has reached us, the Church, His body, the reality of His presence today, made up of flesh-and-blood people, guided as a guarantee by a living person, the Bishop of Rome.

Precisely the renewed proposal, clear and decisive, of this essential core of Christianity becomes in Giussani method of education to faith, pedagogical brilliance, and “art of the steps”.

Indeed, if Christianity is proposed in its originality, the journey of the apostles with Jesus is not just an experience of the past but an experience possible in the present: it is our own experience, with the same pedagogy, the same steps. Starting from the encounter with a person or a group, the Christian proposal appears to us as a “community that invites us to live a life: ‘Come and see’ [...] That is: ‘Follow me and you will see’. It calls for a willingness to apply ourselves that, much as it involves a working relationship, as we might call it, nonetheless implies throwing our entire life into the community of the Church, and seeing the life of the Church community as our own life. Then we ‘see’; that is, then we understand what the Church is for us. It is a true ‘verification’ carried out”.⁸

If, on the other hand, the original elements of the announcement are not respected, if Christianity is not “understood in accordance with its originality and its factual density”,⁹ an inevitable discontinuity arises between what the apostles experienced with Jesus and what we can experience today of Christianity. One can speak of “encounter”, “presence”, “discipleship”, “following”, “affection”, “experience”, but not in the same fully human sense that all this had for the first ones who were with Him. Such expressions end up becoming mere metaphors or carrying a merely inner and subjective meaning; the Church is then misunderstood in its sacramental and ontological value and reduced to an exclusively sociological phenomenon.

When the “method” of Christ’s permanence in history is not recognized and taken up as the starting point of the journey, the pedagogy of faith can no longer have the same meaning it had at the beginning. It fatally transforms into an invitation to observance of values and rules on one hand, and to doctrinal learning on the other, with the respective risks of moralism and abstraction. What dominates then is not a presence to follow, a life to engage in and to trust, but the solitary realization of an asceticism and the effort of one’s own intelligence. This is the scenario Giussani faced at the beginning of his engagement with young people and which also presents itself today in “common educational framework that may well be ‘religious’, but that

⁸ *The Risk of Education*, p. 76

⁹ “Religious Awareness of Modern Man”, in *Communio*, Spring 1998, p. 134

is individualistic, inward-looking, or coldly rationalistic”.¹⁰ The result is that rupture, the gap between faith and life and therefore that lack of personal conviction which Giussani noted in the 1950s and which led him to abandon the beloved study of theology to throw himself headlong into high school teaching and bring there what had been given to him.

At the root of Giussani’s educational proposal and its effectiveness is therefore the recognized fact of Christ contemporary to man, that is, the conception of Christianity not just as an event, but as a present event. From here, the education-oriented posture of the movement he initiated draws all its guidance and directives.

3. Changing Education

Since the encounter with the Christian Fact is a fully human experience, an education to faith cannot be alien to an authentic education to what is human: on the contrary, it maximizes “the pedagogical genius of nature”, as Giussani calls it. Therefore, in 1961, in front of a group of theologians, he emphasizes: “We must return to the most evident rules of nature to educate man”. The method that God uses for the growth of a child’s personality and for the growth of faith is the same.

By proposing again the Christian Fact in its integrality, Giussani aims at an educational revolution: “what matters to us is to change education as such; otherwise, we will always make an effort of one hundred to get 0.01 percent; while with an education that tries to be based on respecting the original factors, the original data of being and of the person, the results would be, instead of 0.01 out of one hundred, much more easily 7, 8, or 9 percent”.

Giussani reflects repeatedly on “an education that tries to be based on respecting the original factors”. Many of these reflections are collected in *The Risk of Education*, his most well-known “pedagogical” work.

Educating, in the most general sense, for Giussani, means “introducing” an individual “to total reality,” that is, promoting both the complete development of all his structures and the affirmation of all the possibilities of active connection of those structures with reality. With this aim in mind, Giussani outlines four fundamental cores of the educational dynamics, focusing his attention on the phase of adolescence, of the young people with whom he deals in school. He considers it absolutely crucial and normally undervalued.

¹⁰ *The Risk of Education*, p. 55

a) Loyalty to tradition. If we call “tradition” the cultural horizon and value system in which every human being is born, “We must say that the first guideline for educating adolescents is to loyally adhere to this tradition. This tradition serves as a sort of ‘explanatory hypothesis of reality’ for the young person”.¹¹

In the first stage of education – infancy and youth – there is no problem of adherence to tradition: the individual can only absorb the complex of meanings and values of the community in which he grows up, participating above all in family life and in the network of relationships he is part of. At the start of adolescence, however, things change: from absorption, one must move on to conscious and responsible assumption of the things he or she has received. Here, the educational drama opens up, of which Giussani intends to provide the fundamental features.

It is by no means obvious that parents and educators propose to the adolescent a loyal adherence to tradition as the path through which he or she can become creative and critical, mature a position of his own, be it a confirmation of the explanatory hypothesis received or a revision, more or less radical, of it. Acting in this direction requires, in fact, in the educators themselves (parent, teacher...), a conscious adherence to the tradition they transmit and at the same time, the awareness of how that loyal assumption of the traditional data is necessary for the balanced development of the freedom and personality of the young person. The mere proposal, to children first and to young people later, of a hypothesis of global meaning is often perceived by parents as an undue intrusion, a prevarication of their freedom. The widely dominant culture of today preaches a very early autonomy of children and adolescents, a drastic anticipation of their freedom of choice (think, for example, of gender issues). Giussani’s objection is that such a conception does not respect the structures and times of human growth and gives rise to results perfectly opposed to those theoretically pursued. The alleged autonomy turns into self-alienation, the presumed freedom of judgment and choice into an even more defenseless subjection to the conditioning of the social and cultural environment, to fashions and the imperatives of consumerism, with heavy consequences on the personality in formation: sense of being lost, insecurity, anxiety, depression, isolation, lack of desire and commitment.

A true freedom of judgment and a true freedom of choice require an intense development of the “hypothesis that is offered by a ‘history’ or ‘tradition’”.¹² This implies, first of all, that parents do not shirk their task, do not fear to propose those meanings and ideals in which they

¹¹ *The Risk of Education*, p. 28

¹² *The Risk of Education*, p. 33

recognize themselves, and are therefore attentive to the choice of collaborators in their educational endeavor, so that they are in continuity with such meanings and ideals.

b) The encounter with an authority. “The points of tradition who are most aware are the people who are ultimately responsible for an adolescent’s education. They are the ‘place of the hypothesis’ for that adolescent. This is the authentic idea of *authority* (from *auctoritas*, “what makes one grow”).¹³ The proposal of a tradition, of a hypothesis of global meaning, finds its existentially mobilizing moment in authority. It is important to note that Giussani’s concept of authority has nothing to do with illiberal authority, with pedagogical authoritarianism, with a suppression of freedom, or with forced indoctrination. It is exactly the opposite, and if one wants, one can use instead, as Giussani himself indicates, the expression “authoritative, or reliable presence”. The experience of authority is the encounter with a person in whom the richness of tradition becomes reality exemplarily, communicating itself in a lively way and conscious of itself, of its own reasons. In authority, the truth of a hypothesis of meaning is shown, that is, its correspondence to our ultimate needs and evidences and its ability to illuminate circumstances, to face problems and situations. For this reason, it fascinates us, sparks wonder, attraction, and respect, and we are naturally inclined to follow it. “Only authority educates the one who is to be educated. Education is the encounter with an authority, and that’s all”, says Giussani. In the encounter with authority, “the ultimate” and unavoidable “dynamic of any method of education” comes more explicitly into light: “the rule of following. [...] To advance towards the fullness of our personality is only truly possible in the concrete gesture of leaving behind our own limits to adhere passionately to the hypothesis of total meaning that authority implies. [...] The Christian community values and takes to the limit the natural rule of education, of following an authority”.¹⁴

Encounters with “authority” in the sense described mark one’s life, accompany it. They are the decisive element of every human existence. Of course, both in exercising the authoritative function and in following it, mortifying and sometimes terrifying reductions are possible. But the poor implementation does not overshadow the need for its dynamic which, as such, can not be replaced by any surrogate: we need to follow authentic authoritative and reliable presences. This is the path to self-appropriation, to the construction of one’s own personality. It is a path always yet to be traveled, well beyond adolescence, if one wants one’s humanity not to age,

¹³ *The Risk of Education*, p. 42

¹⁴ *The Journey to Truth Is an Experience*, p. 29

not to stiffen, and not to undergo an anticipated death. “It is a rule, a universal law since man exists: the person rediscovers itself in a living encounter, that is, in a presence he comes across and that releases an attraction, that is in a presence that is a provocation for ourselves”, and that it invites us to follow it.

c) *The verification.* “In order to adequately respond to the educational needs of adolescence, it is not enough to propose a meaning of the words in clear terms. Nor is it enough for the person making the proposal to have a certain intensity of real authority. Rather, one must cultivate a personal *engagement on the part of the young person with his or her own origin.* They must verify what tradition has offered them, and this may only be done *on their own initiative, and no one else’s*”.¹⁵ Therefore, it is not enough, as is often said, to “clarify ideas,” or to propose content and reasons; it is necessary to tirelessly awaken in the young person the commitment to subjecting the proposal to personal testing, so that they may discover its existential validity or, conversely, its insufficiency. This is the real problem of education: to provoke the commitment of energy and action necessary to verify the hypothesis. Without verification, in fact, tradition cannot become conviction, nor can it be consciously rejected in its points of partiality and inadequacy.

Perhaps it is precisely in the US that this aspect of Giussani’s pedagogy can be more immediately understood and felt in its importance. Giussani surprisingly uses the language of verification and experimental validation. Here comes to the forefront the heritage, entirely reelaborated, of William James’s pragmatism, which had greatly influenced American Protestantism, the subject of Giussani’s academic studies. He was well aware of the disruptive force of this concept, which no one in the Catholic sphere was using. But what does it mean, existentially, to verify? It means to put to the test what is being communicated to us, thus committing to address all the issues that life’s development exposes, starting from the proposal of meaning, received from and “seen” in the authoritative presence. Thus we discover whether and to what extent that hypothesis proves to be “vitaly linked with our own needs and projects”, “keystone for all other encounters”, “resolving light on our experiences”.¹⁶ It is not enough for a young person to be offered a value or an ideal horizon; it is necessary for them to “make themselves present to the ideal value, ‘by doing it’”, that is verifying it. Truth needs to be “done”, experienced, verified in a vital and affective engagement, in an adhering. The

¹⁵ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. 45-46

¹⁶ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. 46

educator, for his part, must help the young person “to experience the truth,” that is, “the correspondence between the real and his consciousness,” between the proposal and the demands of life.

Giussani interprets the urgency of verification and existential validation, presented in American neo-orthodox Protestantism, in the light of the Thomistic definition of truth, and vice-versa. The *adaequatio*, the correspondence, takes on the meaning of verification: to verify means to experiment the correspondence (or non-correspondence) “of what is being proposed with one’s life, with one’s self-awareness as it implies original needs and evidences”.

Without verification there is no education, conviction does not mature, and thus a complete personality is not being formed. Also in religious education, Giussani sees the presence of that pedagogical rationalism according to which you can achieve everything just through a clear exposition of formulas. But, he emphasizes, “If, for the four or five years after young people reach the age of fourteen, they are not persistently and systematically helped to see the connection between the given (“the tradition”) and life, then their new experiences will lay the groundwork for them to adopt one of the three attitudes that are enemies of Christianity:”¹⁷ indifference, due to the abstractness in which what has been transmitted to him remains; traditionalism, that is, a defensive entrenchment, aimed at avoiding that new challenges make him waver; hostility towards a God who, not showing himself in connection with life, hinders it.

Within the bold concept of verification lies, as a corollary, the no less bold one of “criticism” (from *krino*, to assess): “True education must be *education to criticism*”,¹⁸ that is, to the comparison between the proposal and the heart, in order to account for what has been offered and consciously grasp its truth. Following the authoritative presence that communicates to them the richness of the past and offers reasons in support of it, the young, from within an existential commitment, “have to take this past and these reasons and lift them before their eyes, compare them with their own heart, and say, “It’s true,” or “It’s not true,” or “I doubt it.” Thus, with the support of a companionship [...], they can say, ‘Yes,’ or ‘No.’ In doing so, they acquire their features as a person.”¹⁹ Giussani’s accusation is significant in this regard: “We have been too afraid of this criticism, truly we have. And those who are not too afraid have applied it without knowing what it was and have failed to apply it well. Criticism has been

¹⁷ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. 51

¹⁸ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. XXIX

¹⁹ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. XXX

reduced to negativity”.²⁰ Instead, it is primarily “the expression of the human genius that is in all of us – a genius that strains to discover being, to discover values”.²¹

Giussani underlines some conditions of verification. Firstly, the relevance to the environment. The adolescent must “be helped to seriously grapple with something *in their environment* in keeping with an ideal” because it is from there that the most challenging provocations and promptings come, in relation to which the validity of the received hypothesis of meaning will also become clearer. Secondly, the communal dimension. For criticism and verification not to become trivial or a sort of wishful thinking, pre-established from the start, the support of a place, of a community is necessary. Without the density of companionship, not only the young, but man himself is too easily at the mercy of reactivity. And reactivity, in addition to being “endogenous,” is artfully stimulated by the social context. There is nothing more obstructive, for an effective personalization of the proposal, than an individualistic approach to education. “Real dependence upon a total meaning of things demands, as a matter of psychology, that young people not carry out their verification in the environment in a solitary (and, therefore, independent or ‘abstract’) way. An adolescent needs to live out his or her way of facing all of reality in a *communal* way”.²²

To the extent that education is a permanent necessity of existence, the community does not cease, even after adolescence, to constitute a fundamental condition for verification understood as the “work of life.” “Communal life is like the soil on which the plant of freedom can bear mature fruit.” This holds from the day of our birth to that of our death.

d) Freedom and the Risk of Education. Criticism and verification carry with them the freedom of the experimenter, of the one who carries out the verification. With this, the human position of the educator is also put to the test, since he is called to respect and support this freedom, keeping himself at a distance from the two extremes of a libertarianism that resembles disinterest, and a protectiveness that invades the other’s space lest they make a mistake. Verification always implies a risk since its outcome is never guaranteed. But the more the educator is aware that the person entrusted to him or her attains his or her realization only through a free and critical comparison between what they have received and their original needs and evidence, their life situations, the more they will love their freedom, “up to the point of risk”. And the love for freedom does not entail any lack of interest on the side of the educator,

²⁰ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. XXX

²¹ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. 70

²² Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. 54

but an unwavering attention and help, equal to the awareness of what is at stake. “Our educational approach” – Giussani affirms – “emphasizes enormously the freedom of the person as a non-negotiable condition.” And, in the presentation of the 1995 edition of *The Risk of Education*, he reiterates: “We want to free young people (this is our purpose). We want to free them from mental slavery, from the homogenization that mentally turns others into slaves.”²³

5. Education, the Fundamental Issue for Human Development

Few have felt the urgency of education as Giussani did. In a meeting with university students, he observes: “Everything that is human is the fruit of an education”. What motivates such a demanding statement? Giussani quotes several times a work by André Gide, *The Pastoral Symphony*, which contains the story of Gertrude, a young girl who survived in a state of semi-neglect, precisely to emphasize that “man develops through a relationship, through contact with another. As much as the other is necessary for man to exist, so the other is necessary for man to realize himself, to discover his true self, to become more and more himself.” We do not become ourselves without the other, our process of growth depends on the presence and initiative of the other, of others, that is, in a word, from an education that begins from the very first moment, when we are still in our mother’s womb.

The unfolding of what is human takes place only where there is education. Education is the key to the humanization of life, and therefore it is the fundamental problem for the present and future of a society, the cornerstone of a civilization. And we must say at the same time the truth corresponding to this one: that is, there is education only where there is already that which is human. Our humanity has a dual status: it is both a prerequisite and a result, an original, “native” structure and a historical realization, a condition and an outcome.

The fact that what is human is not only the origin but also the result explains the profound and compelling meaning of education, and gives reason for its necessity. The disposition of an individual, of a community, a society, or a civilization is decided precisely in this space that goes from the origin to the outcome. The structural necessity of education is inscribed in the tension between our humanity as a presupposition and our humanity as a result.

The heart, that “complex of needs and evidences” with which we are originally endowed, as well as reason, freedom, affectivity, that is, these fundamental capacities of our being, do not realize themselves as the result of an evolutionary spontaneity, but of an education. Our

²³ Giussani, L., *The Risk of Education*, p. XXXI

original humanity is realized, as Giussani said, only in the encounter and by contact with another, with others in a community.

In our human experience, in addition to a factor that we can call structural or ontological, there is always, deeply intertwined with it, a historical factor, that is, the provocations in which we grow and that touch us, and the witnesses we find before us. It is not indifferent, then, whether we come into contact with this or that provocation, whether there is this or that type of encounters at the basis of the constitution of our human countenance and face. It is the second factor, in fact, that reveals and activates the first.

In fact, our original human experience “does not exist actively,” says Giussani, “if not within the form of a provocation. It does not exist if it does not act. Our original awareness does not act but within the form of a provocation, that is, within a modality in which it is elicited”. The “provocation” “is like a form that makes it act.” The human vocation is therefore activated in relation to the provocations we receive, to the encounters, to the testimonies, to the lifestyles with which we come into contact.

In this perspective, Giussani reiterates the scope of Christianity: it is the event of Christ, it is the historical encounter with Christ. This is the ‘form’ that reveals fully what is human in us, unveils it in all its potential. As the event of Christ corresponds to what is human in us, precisely because it corresponds to it, it activates it to the maximum degree, it brings it to the surface in its ultimate depth. The encounter with its incarnate origin and ultimate destination – the event of Christ, as a reality present here and now – reveals our human structure in its truth, frees within us what is original, and expands its experience by opening its awareness up beyond the imagination we have already developed.

It is not just a doctrinal content, but a historical experience to be enjoyed today, in the existential, human, and concrete encounter with the face that the presence of Christ assumes where we live. Only the happening of an encounter that clarifies and intensifies human life like no other can open us up, again and again, to a vital discovery of Christianity, or can push us to reconsider it. In every context, at every latitude.

Giussani was convinced of this, and out of the desire to be an instrument of such an experience, he asked to leave his theological career and to teach religion in high school. We are infinitely grateful that he did. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be here today, and our lives wouldn’t be the same.