

GENERATION 2000

by Ian Allsop

Generation 2000 is a package of resource materials to help people throughout Australia to gather together in groups to explore and discuss the wisdom that children have to offer adults. **Generation 2000** is whatever happens in those groups as people meet, explore, discover, discuss and decide. **Generation 2000** is about getting ready for the future with the liveliness, spontaneity, honesty and directness that children continually offer adults for their learning. It is an opportunity for adults to explore the world of children and to evaluate their values and attitudes.

The program is based on a series of four sessions which enable participants to work through and recall their own childhood and an examination of our current lifestyles and patterns of living and assessing how these affect the people close to us. It uses the strategy that as we re-enter the world of children, we re-experience the richness and value for life that children have to offer.

An important aspect of the program is the homework assignment for participants to share with children during each week.

Session One is aimed at helping participants recall their own childhood. It asks the question 'Hey there! What was it like when you were a kid?' Through a series

Mr. Ian Allsop is Director of the Churches of Christ Federal Board of Christian Education working with the Joint Board of Christian Education.

He is co-ordinating the Generation 2,000 programme.

of questions which include 'What were my favourite games and activities? Who was important to me? What kept me on course?', the participants identify important aspects of their childhood and are then helped to record insights, values or realisations which they can share with the group.

Session Two aims to help participants look at their lives now. 'We've grown up . . . Our lives have become a cycle of duties, demands, delights and distractions: And that is the hard fact of the matter.' Through a strategy of identifying our current life pattern the participant is asked: 'Is this the kind of life pattern you want for yourself? How does your life-pattern affect the children close to you?' Then the session helps people to identify changes necessary to create a more satisfying lifestyle, and what effect this would have on children.

Session Three explores again the world of a child. It encourages adults to discover the spontaneity and creative insights which children have to offer.

Session Four encourages the participant to work out some action procedures that affect our personal living and in relation to those structures that shape our lives. It asks, 'In our community what structures need changing so that we can have a better quality of life with children? Does something need to be opened up, closed down, built, turned around, demolished? Can we do the changing? What contacts do we have? What support do we need?'

Generation 2000 originated with the National Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and some community groups in New Zealand as a contribution to the International Year of the Child. It was developed by a representative group of people involved in the churches' educational work in close co-operation with a number of other agencies. It will be promoted in that country during the June-July 1979 period and has received widespread support from church, school, parent and community groups.

The Australian edition of the resources and the Australian **Generation 2000** program is provided by The Joint Board of Christian Education of Australia and New Zealand, which is the national education agency of the Uniting Church in Australia. It is being supported and used in Anglican, Roman Catholic, Churches of Christ and Baptist groups as well as a number of community based organisations. **Generation 2000** is an offering to the community in the International Year of the Child.

Because the program is being offered to the whole community the material is not overtly religious and it does not exclude people who do not hold a Christian commitment. The program does uphold certain values which are at the heart of the Christian understanding of human life together, e.g. love of other people, openness to change, honest communication and the priority of people over things. People of varying religious and cultural backgrounds will be welcome to contribute their own values and beliefs as these relate to the program.

The ease of implementing **Generation 2000** in the local church or community is one of its major advantages. Any existing group of adults can use the resources which have been attractively and colourfully presented. Existing group leaders can be equipped with the leader's guide which has easy to follow instructions that will help them to enable the participants to use the work book to the full.

Generation 2000 is an easily implemented and particularly appropriate program for local parent and adult groups to conduct during the International Year of the Child. Further information and resources can be obtained from The Joint Board of Christian Education, 5th Floor, 177 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000. (03) 654-4988.

NATIONAL SURVEY OF NON-GOVERNMENT CHILDREN'S HOMES AND FOSTER CARE

The Children's Bureau of Australia's survey of voluntary children's homes and foster care agencies is well underway following the receipt of generous grants from the Myer Foundation and the Sidney Myer Charity Trust. Mr Les Rabinowicz joined the Bureau in April to carry out the major research tasks.

The survey is the first national study of non government substitute residential care to be conducted in Australia. Voluntary children's homes, babies homes, foster care agencies and homes for children who are physically handicapped or mentally retarded, are included in the project.

Children's Bureau executive director, Graeme Gregory, is visiting all States during July to discuss the survey with representatives of agencies involved.

Late in July, child care agencies will be asked to complete a questionnaire and to fill out a card for each child in substitute residential care. The confidentiality of this information is assured by the Children's Bureau.

The Survey will produce a comprehensive picture of the caring characteristics of the voluntary child care field and of the children in substitute residential care. This information has been previously unavailable and will be valuable in negotiations with State and Federal authorities.

The Bureau looks forward to the co-operation of all the agencies concerned in order that the project is successful. A report of the findings of the survey is to be forwarded to all the agencies participating in the project.

Further information can be obtained from:
Mr Les Rabinowicz,
Children's Bureau of Australia,
P.O. Box 18,
North Melbourne, Vic., 3051.
Telephone: (03) 329-6277.
