

## Conclusion

While finishing this letter written by four people, I want to stress five aspects of this campaign for the Rights of the Child.

- a) I have met Brothers and Partners who were annoyed by this campaign insisting on Rights. I was told: *'what about the rights of adults, of teachers? and the duties of the child?...*' This annoyance can be understood and sometimes has good reason to be expressed. We must, though, look further on. In fact as you go through the Convention you realise that the title RIGHTS of the Child does not do justice to the philosophy of the text. A title which would encompass it completely would be RESPONSIBILITY of Adults. That is where we must begin. It opens with our responsibility; then the Rights of the Child; then the DUTIES of the Child are put down when he has understood he is welcomed and respected. We must not turn the process upside down.
- b) I notice that our concerns are very similar to those of BICE, with which we are very closely associated. BICE stresses the psycho-social and spiritual needs of children: education, family environment, sense of responsibility and education as citizens, self-confidence and spiritual development. It has also greatly developed the concept of resilience.
- c) This campaign is envisaged for 2001-2002, but it is very evident that a continuous commitment is needed in order to bear fruit. This is also the sense of other campaigns foreseen by the circular N°448 p.29. You will notice that the following campaigns are seen as a strengthening of this campaign for the Rights of the Child: the approaches are different.
- d) There is one question. Once the districts have done work according to their local situations, should we take an international symbolic and political initiative? We will certainly have to discuss it with the delegates from the different districts when the time comes.
- e) I would like to finish with a reflection I heard in Madurai, India.

***“When we were speaking about the Rights of the Child, ten years ago, we did it in a context of demands, and aggressively. Today we have left that attitude behind. Now we are doing it in a calmer way as a celebration of life. It is not now a question of fighting but of making people understand that every human being, and particularly the Child, is a gift of life, a gift to the whole of humanity and that we have the sacred duty of allowing this fragile plant to grow, to attain its full being, to go to the end of its celebration of life in itself; and we have to receive the present which it makes of its intelligence, its liberty, its responsibility, its zest for life.***

***To fight for the Rights of the Child is to celebrate the Life in it, but also to celebrate the Life in us. That is what the celebration of Life means. Everyone can understand that.”***

I am at your disposal. You can write to me.  
Best wishes,

**F. Nicolas Capelle**  
October 2001

*The BICE was founded in 1948 to answer the call by the Pope in the Encyclical Quemadmodum for children who were victims of deportations, sickness and famine during the second world war. It is the brain-child of Father Gaston Courtois, Director General of the UOCF (Union of Catholic workers in France) and several chaplains of the Coeurs Vaillants (Brave Hearts) movement. Many Christian movements in Europe and beyond were consulted. The founding Congress of BICE was held in Paris from 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> January 1948 under the auspices of Cardinal Suhard and the Nuncio Roncalli. Priests and lay people from eight countries were present and representatives from four organisations: the Pontifical work of the Holy Childhood, the Salesians, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the Jesuit review Lumen Vitae. Since then it has been unceasing in extending its action to the most disadvantaged children on the earth irrespective of belief or denomination. BICE stresses the psycho-social and spiritual needs of the child: self confidence and spiritual development. It works in the medium and long term and makes each child the actor in its own development. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a founder member and vice-president.*