

# A Christian view on selection

The question of whether children should be selected by schools for Form One places or assigned at random is a subject which has been much debated since the Working Party's report on the Replacement of the Secondary School Entrance Examination was published.

In a recent newsletter of the Hongkong Christian Council, the Rev. Joyce Bennett writes: The Christian needs to remember the following points as he considers the subject:

● The doctrine of selection is seen in many sections of the Bible - Israel was a chosen

people and they had to learn the responsibilities that were attached to their privileged position.

● Jesus chose 12 disciples to learn specially from Him the meaning of His message and His mission. Many others were actually excluded from this intimate circle.

● Parables Our Lord told certainly encourage a belief in the value of rewards and punishments. Why should we permit the lazy child to have the same chance as the industrious child to enter the school of his first choice? A class of Form



Rev Joyce Bennett

Four students (incidentally not the brightest academically), when asked about random selection for entry into secondary schools, protested most vehemently that such a system would be most unfair on the hardworking and good students.

● Throughout life each of us has to learn to accept the crisis that comes to us when we discover that we have not been selected. It is wrong to pretend that competition and selection on merit are not part of life in this imperfect world.

● Fears of the damage done to the child could be considerably eliminated by better family education and more concern on the part of the Government (the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department) for the whole education of the child in the community.

● There would be a great advantage to Hongkong to maintain any system by which children are educated in one institution from the age of six to 15 or 18. There would be a growth of stability, the sense of community and the sense of belonging - all qualities most desperately needed by the citizens of Hongkong.

● How tragic for a child to change schools from kindergaten to primary, from primary to junior secondary school, from junior secondary to Form Five for the Certificate of Education course and then again (for the fourth time) for the matriculation course. This situation will be even worse for the student when each school is run on different educational principles: Christian or Buddhist, humanist or atheist,

to mention a few possibilities.

● Christians must surely desire a Christian education for their children - members of the same family will surely benefit by having all the children of the same family educated under the same method and principles. Provision for this must be ensured in any new system.

● It is certain that we must continue to maintain good standards of education in Hongkong. If there is no incentive to schools by permitting some form of selection at the secondary school level, many schools will have less incentive to strive for the highest and to continue to improve their methods. Some form of selection will help ensure that staff and students will continue to work together for high achievement.

● Clearly in the present educational structure in Hongkong Church members and churches desire their children to be educated in church (Christian) schools. On what grounds should they be excluded from them? This is not to exclude all others from them, but to urge that children of church members should have the opportunity to study in church schools.

● It is important that the churches should provide all types of schools in all areas of Hongkong. People may criticise selection because they are afraid of exclusion. Surely the answer to that is to ensure that all church members contribute more to the developing of more schools in the new areas so that Christian education of an excellent standard is provided in those areas.

Our Lord called the little children to come to Him. The 20th century church members must make sure that the little children are not deprived of the opportunity to come to Him. He condemned those who tried to stop the little children coming to Him.

Beware that the Churches are not forced into a position where doctrinaire theories with seemingly high sounding principles deprive our parents of their right to have their children educated according to Christian principles.