

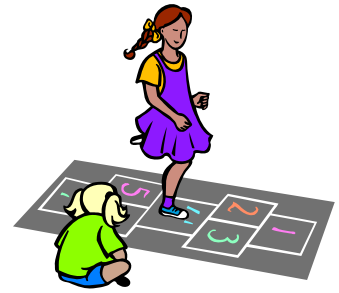


# World Kids

Fun for Kids!



True stories!



## PAL Project

Number 27 - August 2010

For many of us, the news that a new baby has been born is a time for rejoicing and lots of oohs and aahs as we rush to see the precious miracle of new life - but did you know that in some parts of the world, if it is announced that the baby is a *GIRL*, everyone starts to weep and wail! There are even some places where it is considered so terrible to have a girl baby that the mother takes the baby and leaves her to die in the jungle or throws her into the river! In parts of **India** back in 1834 when the first statistics were compiled, it was found that there were whole villages where only boy children were found, and there were no little girls at all! Now of course it is against the law to murder children there, yet still in many remote Hindu villages baby girls often "disappear" and thousands of little girls are found living on the streets abandoned by their families! In **China**, after the "one-child policy" was introduced by the Communist government in 1979, the number of girls compared to boys quickly began to decrease as most couples only wanted to have a boy, who would be able to help with the work and earn money for the family. A study in 1999 found that there were 111 million men in China who would not be able to find a wife since there were so few women!



Many years ago I lived for a while in East Jerusalem in **Israel**, where I worked at an eye hospital. One of the Muslim male nurses at the hospital was under great pressure from his family to divorce his wife because she had only borne him five daughters. In their culture it was considered a terrible disgrace on the whole family if there were no sons to carry on the family name. He loved his wife but was very worried he would have to divorce her, but fortunately the sixth baby was a boy! What rejoicing there was! When Arab men there were asked how many children they had, they only told the number of sons, never mentioning their daughters!



In fact in **MANY** countries around the world, girls are treated very differently to boys and their life is often extremely hard and sad, with little happiness or hope for anything better in the future. Girls in the **United States** and other more advanced countries that have made great changes through the centuries recognizing women's rights and enacting laws to bring equality to women find it hard to believe how girls (and grown women!) put up with such terrible unfairness and abuse. But the sad truth is that there is just a totally different attitude in cultures where women have no rights at all, and they are really just considered as property belonging to the man. The Koran teaches Muslims that two women's testimonies equal one man's, and that a man may beat his wife if she disobeys him or even leaves the house without his permission! Many Muslim women must have their faces covered completely when outside their home as only their husband is allowed to see them without the veil.

In some cultures, such as **Afghanistan**, girls as young as 7 years of age are sold in marriage so that the family can pay off debts. These little brides often become the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> wife of their husband, and are really no better than slaves, having to cook and clean, and often being abused. They have no chance of going to school and so never learn to read, and often are not allowed out of the home at all, so they have no way of asking for help - even if anyone cared and wanted to help them! In other countries such as **Cambodia** and **Brazil**, some parents also see their daughters as being nothing more than a way to make money, and so they sell them to businesses where the little girls are forced to work for men. Then the parents use the money to provide a better life for their sons! A United Nations report says that over 8 million children work in the worst forms of child labor where they have been sold by their parents or their wages go straight back to their families. Sadly their story doesn't end like Cinderella's!



In many countries around the world, such as in **Africa, Asia and Latin America**, it is very common for young girls, especially living in rural areas, to be sent by their family to live with relatives in the town or city. There, although often referred to as part of the family, they work as servants, receiving just a very small amount of money in addition to their food and place to live. They have no choice in the matter, and sometimes are unable to see their family again for years. Dr P.P. Job writes that in **India** the education of girls is often considered a waste of money since they will stay home to care for the family most of their lives, and 90% of poor families in India do not send their daughters to school!

In **Burkina Faso** in West Africa, as in many other developing countries only 9% of women over 15 can read and write!



For centuries all over the world life has been particularly hard for girls with men and boys being considered more important in most cultures. However over the past 100 years, laws for women's rights and more equality have greatly improved the life and position of women in many countries, especially in the West where Christianity has had a great influence. However there are still many places where this is not so. The Bible teaches very clearly that God created men and women as equally important both in the family and in society, although they have different strengths and responsibilities. (Galatians 3:28) In Ephesians 5 wives are told to submit to their husbands, but husbands are also told to love their wife in the same way Christ loves the Church. In fact all through the Bible we see that God did not just choose men as great leaders and examples of faith, but He also chose women.

See if you can match up the following famous women of faith in the Bible with their correct names from the list on the right:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. An orphaned Jewish girl who was willing to risk her life to save her people                                      | MARY      |
| 2. A godly leader who was not afraid to lead the Israelites into battle   | REBEKAH   |
| 3. A gentile woman who loved God and took care of her mother-in-law and later became the great grandmother of David | PRISCILLA |
| 4. The girl who was chosen to marry Isaac because of her willingness to help strangers                              | RUTH      |
| 5. The young village girl chosen to be the mother of Jesus  | DEBORAH   |
| 6. A woman who taught others about Jesus and who was the wife of Aquilla  | ESTHER    |

So if you are a girl reading this and you feel sometimes that life isn't fair to you or that you wish you could have a better life somewhere else, remember that for many girls around the world, life is even harder! And whether you are a boy or a girl, or even an adult, you can pray for those girls who are living in very difficult and even hopeless situations, and tell others what you have learned about their plight. Pray that these girls will come to know Jesus as their friend and Savior, and that the leaders of the government in their country will pass laws that will improve the situation for girls and women and give them the same rights as men.



This photo is of a 14 year old girl called Armandine who gave her life to Jesus and is very faithful in the church in Lomé, Togo in a neighborhood with many Muslims. She wants to write to an American girl of about the same age to learn more about the world and talk about the Bible. Togo is a very poor country in West Africa, and if you would like to write to her and learn more about her life there, let me know.

'Til next time, your friend, Shirley

Facts from various websites including: [www.gendercide.org](http://www.gendercide.org) <http://meero.worldvision.org/>

Answers to puzzle: 1. Esther; 2. Deborah; 3. Ruth; 4. Rebekah; 5. Mary; 6. Priscilla

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