

# Hannah's Heartbeat

touching hearts, instilling hope

## Worth Saving

It was supposed to be great news for India's women when a prestigious medical institute touted sex-determination testing in 1974: Now mothers wouldn't have to keep having babies until they produced that coveted boy child.

Only one flaw in that thinking: It means millions of female fetuses have been aborted since then while officials pursued population control and traditional society favored dowry-attracting sons over dowry-costing daughters. The truly good news is that India outlawed dowries in 1961 and that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last year labeled infanticide a "national disgrace," urging action to save baby girls. The ongoing bad news, though, is that dowries are still popular and more costly than ever and that a leading activist says government isn't doing much to crack down on feticide.

The unequal and often deadly treatment doesn't stop with babies, either. The BBC reported the story of Kulwant, a mother of three daughters whose family forced her to have three abortions before she finally delivered a son. She said her in-laws threatened that her husband would leave her if she didn't have a son and even tried to set her on fire.

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The BBC quoted Kulwant as recalling her first abortion this way: “The baby was nearly five months old. She was beautiful. I miss her, and the others we killed.”

Of course, India is far from being the only country struggling with certain traditions that continue to be disastrous for women. China’s one-child policy is cited as the reason it has a sex ratio more sharply skewed against girl babies than that of any other nation, second place going to its giant neighbor to the south. At the top of the list explaining such skewed ratios are infanticide and feticide, along with abuse and neglect of girl children.

In many Arab societies, traditions of patriarchy, honor

and tribal identity are bound up in legal systems run by authoritarian regimes. The effect is seen in hundreds of Arab proverbs belittling women as having “half a mind, half a creed, half an inheritance,” according to Time magazine.

Since going on the air in India in 2005, *Women of Hope* has addressed this and many other issues as the broadcast grew to encompass seven languages. The program’s vital contributions to the global struggle against gender inequality are made possible by supporters of Project Hannah and by prayer intercessors around the world.

*Read more at [projecthannah.org/india](http://projecthannah.org/india).*



## *It's a Girl!*

Girls still are less likely to be in school than boys. Two out of three illiterate adults are women. Every 90 seconds of every day, a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth. Violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic, violating women’s rights and perpetuating harm in every country and community. One core issue is child marriage, a practice that can tear girls from school and spurs high rates of maternal illness and death. Millions of women and girls face abuse in what should be the sanctuary of their own homes.

U.N. Women Annual Report 2010-2011

*Be part of the gospel solution. Learn more and join us at [projecthannah.org/itsagirl](http://projecthannah.org/itsagirl).*

## LISTENERS RESPOND

*Asha Bhari Nariyan [Women of Hope Hindi] is an awesome program. In my community there are many women who are looked down on and not treated with any respect. As a result they are discouraged and depressed. Your program brings a ray of hope for such women.*

*We have been listening to your Mangiar Ulagam [Women of Hope Tamil] program since it started. We have been introducing it to all our friends. Your special program for the women dealing with issues like family life, bringing up children, and how Christian women should live is so meaningful and useful for our personal and family lives. Pray that we can introduce this program*

*to our non-Christian neighbors so that they can also come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.*

*Greetings to the Mangiar Ulagam [Women of Hope Tamil] team. I am a regular listener of your program. Your program about the hope and confidence of Naomi was very good and valuable. I learned a good and helpful lesson through that program. It made me ask myself a question. If Naomi, a woman who lost her husband and sons, had that much faith in God, how much faith should I have? I humbly gave myself to the Lord and asked Him to forgive my distrust and disbelief.*



## HOPE AND HARMONY

Ask the Ari women of Ethiopia how marriage is supposed to work. Is it just a social formality in which anything goes as long as one partner – usually the man – is satisfied?

Cultural norms certainly differ from place to place, the Ari women may say, but that doesn't mean mothers and their children will thrive however much the family structure is contorted. Project Hannah's Ethiopian team traveled to a remote village to hear firsthand from Ari speakers about the worst problems facing women. Ari is one of three *Women of Hope* languages in Ethiopia.

"Many women cried because of polygamy, and we cried with them," the team wrote. "... They openly discussed the harmful traditions of their culture."

Polygamy undermines the family in numerous ways. Men spend lots of money on new brides stretching limited financial resources even thinner. Intimate relationships become impossible. A husband can't love two wives or 14 wives the same way he would love one, the team was told.

And the problems get worse. Men often resort to beating their wives, and some wives retaliate, killing their husbands and ending up in prison. Having multiple sexual partners increases the likelihood of HIV and other diseases being spread. Finally, when mothers can no longer feed their little ones properly and families are forced out of their homes, the

children may be scattered or sold off as laborers.

Project Hannah seeks to learn all it can about issues such as these facing women around the world so that it can reach out to them with physical and spiritual answers through radio broadcasts and local prayer groups. In fact, the Ari ministry centers on distributing handheld devices that play audio programs aimed at preventing fistulas, a debilitating condition that often results from early pregnancy or poor maternity care. In one village, the team visited a fistula patient who had been married at the age of 8.

Along with the steps toward aiding fistula sufferers, the team reported encouraging news regarding the enlistment of men to help raise women's status. After presenting Project Hannah's goals to classes of male theology students, who then asked biblically based questions about the ministry, team members were pleased to hear many of the men vow to support the equality of women.

"To restore women's hope, we have to work hard so that a man should humble himself and lift up women so that they will live in harmony," the Ethiopian Project Hannah team reported.

*Read stories of hope at [projecthannah.org/estafrica](http://projecthannah.org/estafrica).*

## Global PRAYER MOVEMENT

More than 40,000 Project Hannah intercessors in 120 countries pray the same requests each month in 70 languages. Join us and invite your friends, Bible-study group or Sunday-school class to add their voices to this global community praying for hurting women.

Receive the prayer calendar each month by email (or mail):  
[projecthannah.org/prayer](http://projecthannah.org/prayer)

View or download resources for each month or a day:  
[projecthannah.org/monthlyprayercalendar](http://projecthannah.org/monthlyprayercalendar)  
[projecthannah.org/prayeroftheday](http://projecthannah.org/prayeroftheday)

Receive daily prayer requests via Facebook or Twitter:  
[projecthannah.org/facebook](http://projecthannah.org/facebook)  
[projecthannah.org/twitter](http://projecthannah.org/twitter)

Join our annual 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting:  
[projecthannah.org/40days](http://projecthannah.org/40days)

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.

Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8&9

# IT'S A GIRL – THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

by Marli Spieker  
Project Hannah Founder and Global Ministry Director



## MISSION STATEMENT

Project Hannah's purpose is:

- to raise awareness of and empathy for the plight of women worldwide.
- to pray for women who are being abused emotionally, physically or spiritually.
- to broadcast the gospel of Jesus Christ to women around the world, encouraging them to:
  - experience God's love, freedom and power as they face life's daily challenges.
  - embrace their God-given destiny and glorious inheritance in Christ Jesus, whatever their cultural, social or economic situation.
  - pass on to their children a legacy of faith, wisdom and godly character.

## CONNECT WITH PROJECT HANNAH:

**TWR**  
P.O. Box 8700  
Cary, NC 27512 • USA  
1-800-456-7TWR  
www.projecthannah.org  
hannah@twr.org

**TWR Canada**  
Box 25324, London, ON  
N6C 6B1  
1-888-672-6510  
hannah@twrcanada.org



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Nothing melts my heart more than a little girl's face! No matter where they come from or who they are, they always fascinate me. I see sacredness in their eyes – life in its freshest form – purity, innocence, hope and the promise that life will go on. Even though they are the most vulnerable members of our society, little girls are the embodiment of Hope. And “Hope,” someone said, “is the ability to listen to the music of the future. Faith is the courage to dance to it in the present.”

It's hard to fathom that these precious little human beings – carriers of Hope, even players of the music of the future – have been the target of a conspiracy against their gender. Why is it that millions of them are missing today? “It's a girl” are the three deadliest words in many cultures today. If a baby girl takes her first breath, she has already beaten the odds. Based on a simple ultrasound exam, her life can be snuffed out.

Since 1979, China's “one-child-per-couple” policy has eliminated millions of girls killed still in the womb or abandoned to die. India outlawed dowries in 1961, but the practice remains rampant, making baby girls a costly expense. Women need no longer “produce endless children to have the right number of sons.” No wonder it is said that “A mother's womb is the most dangerous place for a baby girl to be.” And God's sacred place to perform His miracle of creation has been defiled! Life itself passes first through the heart and body of a woman; even defenseless girl embryos carry the DNA of life givers. Yet their very lives are in danger even before they are born! Female feticide and infanticide have become a “national shame,” acknowledged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In fact, there is a genocide taking place today that dwarfs Hitler's holocaust!

And each time a precious girl's life is terminated, hope and the ability to listen to the music of the future is also forever silenced. And the world suffers a great loss! As a Christian, a woman, and a mother, I must do something about it. We all must! How? You can join Project Hannah's prayer movement and PRAY for this evil to stop. We've seen how the powerful God-given resource of prayer is dismissing Satan's lies to women about their value and purpose, as well as about the value of their little girls. You can give so that Project Hannah can continue educating and giving spiritual insights over every media platform available, sharing the life-transforming message of God's love with women everywhere. You can reach out to women in our global community. Are you ready to preserve the “music of the future, courageously dancing to it in the present?”

So ... shall we dance?