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Moral Collapse at Ms. Magazine — Sex-Selection Abortion as a 'Problem'

How can Ms. muster any genuine outrage about sex-selection abortions in India when it has demanded unfettered abortion access in our own country? It cannot, and it does not.

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For almost forty years, *Ms.* magazine has been the most famous voice of the feminist movement in print. Co-founded by Gloria Steinem in 1972, the magazine is stalwartly feminist, retaining the language and spirit of the feminism of the 1970s. In other words, *Ms.* is the voice of feminist ideological orthodoxy. And the demand for unrestricted abortion rights is at the center of that ideology.

That's what makes the Winter 2011 edition of the magazine so interesting — and so disturbing. The issue features an article by Madeline Wheeler entitled "Saving the Girl Child," which offers a report on "India's epidemic of female infanticide and sex-selection abortion."



The appearance of that article does come as something of a surprise. After all, *Ms.*, and the feminist movement it represents, insist that a woman must have the right to abort a pregnancy for any reason or for *no* reason. This claim, they have long insisted, is central to the very idea of reproductive freedom. So, what about sex-selection abortions — when it is female babies who are most commonly aborted?

On this issue, *Ms.* seems to have found cause for feminist concern. Wheeler explains that Indian women "are under severe pressure to bear sons." She continues: "In fact, female infanticide and sex-selection abortion over the last two decades has led to a dearth of baby girls and an unnatural gender ratio." This dearth of baby girls is described as a "problem."

The article also reveals that even though sex-selection abortions are illegal in India, they remain common. The arrival of sophisticated prenatal imaging technologies, such as the ultrasound, have allowed the identification of fetal gender, leading to the targeting of baby girls in societies like India and China, which are marked by a clear "son preference."

So far, so good. If anything, the article fails to indicate the full scale of the tragedy — but it also fails to describe "the problem" as tragic in any sense. In reality, the targeting of female babies by abortion and infanticide has meant over 100 million missing girls in India and China, as documented by *The Economist* earlier this year.

Madeline Wheeler does describe the "problem" of sex-selection abortions targeting girls, and then she writes: "Even worse, families unable to afford ultrasound procedures often resort to infanticide." She cited the report of filmmaker Nyna Pais-Caputi, who was told by the director of an orphanage that the facility was located on the shore of a lake in order "to encourage families to give their infant daughters up for adoption rather than drown them in the lake."

The article points with hope to a campaign led by the government. "Save the Girl Child" is an effort to "save girls." How? By addressing the morality of abortion? Of course not. Instead, the campaign will include fashion shows, special

birthday cards for girls, doctors who will argue against sex-selection abortions, and “government schemes offering cash incentives to families to raise girls.”

Wheeler ends her article by quoting filmmaker Nyna Pais-Caputi: “Women need to be seen as valuable, positive role models. People need to feel the magnitude of the problem.”

On that statement, we can all agree. But the obvious question is this — has *Ms.* magazine felt anything even close to “the magnitude of the problem”?

Their feminist ideology does not even allow them to acknowledge that sex-selection abortions are perfectly legal in the United States, and that feminists have insisted that any woman has a right to an abortion at any time for any reason or for no stated reason at all. The pro-abortion ideology is so extreme that any opposition to the targeting of girls by sex-selection abortion is undermined by the movement’s enthusiasm for unfettered abortion rights.

The moral bankruptcy of their situation is revealed by the tepid language employed in the article and the lack of moral outrage. But how can *Ms.* muster any genuine outrage about sex-selection abortions in India when it has demanded unfettered abortion access in our own country? It cannot, and it does not. This monumental tragedy is described only as “the problem.”

The moral collapse of their position is seen in the fact that this murderous rampage against female babies cannot be described in the language moral sanity demands. The only morally sane response to this tragedy is outrage against the killing of all babies — followed by the affirmation of the sanctity and dignity of every human life.

We can only pray that embarrassment over this article might force some readers of *Ms.* magazine to rethink the entire question, for, as tepidly expressed in the closing words of the article, “People need to feel the magnitude of the problem.”

I am always glad to hear from readers. Write me at mail@albertmohler.com. Follow regular updates on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AlbertMohler.

Madeline Wheeler, “Saving the Girl Child,” *Ms.* (Winter 2011). Article not available in digital form. For the table of contents of the issue, see <http://www.msmagazine.com/winter2011/index.asp>

Albert Mohler, “[The Scandal of Gendercide—The War on Baby Girls](#),” Thursday, March 11, 2010.



