



ALL GIRLS ALLOWED

In Jesus' Name, Simply Love Her

THE ONE-CHILD POLICY

China's One-Child Policy was formally instituted 30 years ago on September 25, 1980, in an "open letter" by the Chinese Communist Party. Up until that date, the government campaigned locally and nationally for voluntary birth control and discouraged excess reproduction.

The policy was initiated as a response to China's growing population during the 1970's—with birthrates of over 4 children per family—and relative lack of food, employment and education. This resource shortage stemmed partially from Mao's failed economic-planning of the Great Leap Forward, which resulted in 30 million deaths due to starvation during famine. By 1980, however, the birthrate had dropped below 3 children per family.



Propaganda poster for the One-Child Policy in China.

The One-Child Policy restricts at least one third of Chinese families to one child each, and the consequences for having a child without a birth permit vary by province. The policy was originally introduced as a temporary measure that would only be in place for 20 to 30 years.

To enforce the One-Child Policy, the Chinese government uses a quota reward system for the family planning officials who carry out the birth control policies. In 1984 the policy was relaxed slightly, with rural families and other demographic groups able to receive permits for a second child. But those new exemptions varied dramatically from province to province. The policy continues to be a major concern for parents who are at the mercy of local officials to approve their eligibility for exemptions.

The Chinese government boasts that the One-Child Policy has **prevented over 400 million births**. The real numbers may be higher—in March 2013, government document revealed that it had performed **336 million abortions** in the name of the One-Child Policy, along with millions of sterilizations and IUD insertions.

DIRE CONSEQUENCES

A growing **demographic crisis** is emerging in China as the population ages, leaving a smaller workforce to care for a massive number of elderly citizens. Some call this the "4-2-1" problem because multiple generations have grown up as only-children: now, 1 child is often tasked with caring for 2 parents and 4 grandparents. Chinese scholars have pointed to the demographic situation as a major concern in calling for the government to change the One-Child Policy.



Feng Jianmei after a forced abortion last June.

The policy also draws criticism because of its **brutal enforcement**—officials meet quotas by compelling pregnant women to undergo abortions, often under threat of job loss, colossal fines, and even personal harm. Women who still refuse such coerced abortions have been arrested and restrained for **forced abortions**.

Another significant consequence of the policy is China's **growing gender imbalance**. Coupled with a traditional preference for males, the policy causes parents to get rid of daughters through abortion, abandonment, or infanticide. This elimination of girls is called **gendercide**. Experts predict that by 2020, China will be home to 40 million more men than women under the age of 20. That number is equivalent to the total population of men under 20 in the U.S.