

## Pandering to male preference?

A new clinic in Hong Kong is offering couples fairly good odds on having the son they want, for about US\$2,000 in counselling and initial treatment fees. The Gender Choice Center claims its sperm separation and artificial insemination service provides prospective parents a 75-80 percent chance of conceiving a boy. Anyone wanting a girl can have a 70 percent chance, but relatively few couples want daughters. More than 600 inquiries were made after the clinic opened last November, and 48 couples came in for counselling, almost

all seeking sons, according to clinic owner *George Rose*. Is the centre pandering to prejudice in the form of son preference? *"I think you should look at it as family planning"*, *Rose* says. *"A lot of them say, 'We're going to go on trying until we get the boy we want, and without your help we're going to end up with a much bigger family than we might really want'."*

Source: **Women Living Under Muslim Laws**, Vol. VI No.2, 1994.

## (Mixed) victory for lesbian mothers

Legal history was made in London in July 1994 when a lesbian couple won a High Court ruling making them joint parents of a 22-month-old child. They were granted a joint residence order under the 1989 Children Act, which gave the mother's partner equal parental responsibility for the boy. The order could also be an option for lesbian couples caring for the children of a previous marriage or relationship and lawyers expect the ruling to lead to similar applications.

However, under current Child Support Agency (CSA) rules, because both women are living on state benefits the biological father of the child has a duty to pay maintenance and the CSA have confirmed that they would be seeking his name. If the women refuse to name the child's father their benefits will be cut. Other lesbian couples on benefit have had to declare biological fathers.

Source: **Everywoman**, August 1994, Freepost, London N1 8BR, U.K.

## About Isis International

**Isis International** is an international non-governmental woman's organization, founded in 1974 to promote the empowerment of women through information sharing, communication and networking. Its network reaches over 50,000 individuals and organizations in 150 countries.

Isis International's activities include resource centers and information sharing, publications and multi media communications, health networking, advocacy of women's issues and skills sharing. Isis has two offices, one in Manila Philippines, that has a special focus in its international work on the Asian and Pacific regions; and an office in Santiago, Chile that coordinates the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network. Each office produces a regular magazine: *Mujeres en Accion* in Spanish (comes out quarterly) from our Chilean office and *Women in Action* in English (comes out three times a year) from our Manila office, which also produces the monthly update bulletin *Women Envision* with news on preparations for the 1995 World Conference on Women.

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Isis international acknowledges the support and financial assistance of the following partner-donor organizations:  
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