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ADOPTION IN THE UNITED STATES

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## ADOPTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

### I. FOREWORD

Adoptions in the United States continue to increase every year, although the rate has decreased in recent years. There were eight thousand more adoptions in 1968 than there were in 1967, but only five thousand additional in 1969. Despite this diminishing rate of increase, child welfare workers are still optimistic of continuing increases in adoptions because of the advanced techniques and new ideas which are taking place in the field. While agencies still continue to seek the best-suited parents for a child, there is much less emphasis on the traditional "Perfect match" adoption philosophy which is illustrated by the matching of children and parents according to physical characteristics.

Immediate adoption after birth continues to dominate the adoption scene. Statistics show that the median age of an adopted child is less than two months old. Most social workers feel that the earlier age at placement, the better the chances are for successful adjustment by both the child and the adoptive parents. "Adoptive parents seek to simulate the experiences of biological parents as closely as possible."<sup>1/</sup> The advantage to the child is that he will only have to adjust to one environment, rather than to an institution, or a foster home, and then an adoptive home.

<sup>1/</sup>

Alfred Kadushin, *Adopting Older Children* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) p. 3.

Authorities point out that older children suffer not only from the physical deprivation of not having a permanent home of their own, but also from the emotional stress of feeling unwanted. By "older" most adoption agencies mean over two years of age. Five years old is considered "over-age." This only adds to the problem of placing an older child. The feeling of being unwanted, as well as the change of routine brought about by adoption, makes adjustment far more difficult for the older child. Social workers indicate, however, that the problems of difficult adjustment by an adopted older child are nothing compared to those of the child who is not adopted. "The problem is likely to be compounded by the fact that there is an increasing tendency on the part of state legislatures to provide for termination of parental rights in the case of children in long-term foster care who have remained unvisited and ignored by their natural parents over a long period of time, and where the likelihood of the child's return to home is minimal."<sup>2/</sup> The increase in the number of these older children, so-called "orphans of the living," adds to the already large number of unplaced children.

According to estimates by the United States Children's Bureau, three out of every ten children available for adoption will not be placed. This thirty percent is made up almost entirely of children of non-white, or racially mixed parentage, and of physically or mentally handicapped children. Of the approximately sixty thousand children whom the Federal

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<sup>2/</sup>

Kadushin, op. cit., p. 4.

government says need homes, forty thousand are non-white. "The Child Welfare League of America thinks there are more: perhaps 80,000 non-white, plus 110,000 in foster homes and institutions who haven't been placed in permanent adoptive homes because they're in a legal limbo, or handicapped, or too old to be wanted."<sup>3/</sup>

Research and statistical information continues to indicate that the forgotten child of adoption has been the black child. One of the reasons for this is the low rate of adoption of black children by black parents, as compared with white children by white parents. Social agencies and university sociology departments have been conducting various studies on this subject. In one study, done by the Children's Bureau and George Washington University, one hundred people were interviewed in an attempt to discover why black families hesitate to adopt. The people interviewed included community members, social workers and adoptive parents. "Economic insecurity was mentioned by at least two-thirds of the respondents. Again and again, they pointed out that black families have lower incomes, less job security, fewer economic reserves than white families."<sup>4/</sup> Lack of information about adoption was also cited as a reason for the low percentage of black applicants. "The deterrents to adoption mentioned most often and most vehemently, concerned the policies and practices of child-placing agencies.... The social agency, they said, is widely perceived as forbidding,

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<sup>3/</sup>

Joseph Morgenstern, "The New Face of Adoption", Newsweek, Sept. 13, 1971, p. 66.

<sup>4/</sup>

Elizabeth Herzog, Cecilia E. Sudia, Jane Harwood, "Finding Families for Black Children", Children, July-August, 1971, p. 143.

threatening, as 'screening out rather than screening in,' as demanding perfection in adoptive parents, as sitting in judgment with power to give or withhold. Within this general image, the respondents mentioned three major criticisms of agencies: (1) Middle class bias; (2) white orientation; (3) readiness to reject."<sup>5/</sup> Since 1968, concentrated efforts by a greater number of agencies have shown a marked increase in the number of black children adopted.

Adoption agencies have made extensive efforts to modernize their techniques in the past ten years, and they are continuing to review, revise and expand their services and procedures. "The primary reasons for changes in agency practice have been the decrease in ratio between white adoptive applicants and children, and the still desperate position of the hard-to-place children."<sup>6/</sup> In an effort to improve their public image, agencies have increased their services for both the natural parent and the adoptive parents, and have recognized the need for greater flexibility. The Child Welfare League of America Standards for Adoption Service (in its fifth revision), published as a guideline for adoption agencies, reflects the growing trend away from the rigidity which previously characterized placement procedures. "Agency eligibility requirements for adoptive couples are receiving increasing intensive and critical scrutiny with respect to working mothers, the age of adoptive applicants, family make-up, income, housing, the cause of infertility, the length of marriage, and other such factors."<sup>7/</sup>

<sup>5/</sup>  
Herzog, et al. op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>6/</sup>  
Bernice Q. Madison, "Adoption: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow - Part I", Child Welfare, May 1966, p. 14.

<sup>7/</sup>  
Hyron R. Chevlin, "Adoption Outlook", Child Welfare, February 1967, p. 78.

Basically, there are two ways in which a child, eligible for adoption is placed. These are through an agency (public or voluntary) or independently (through a lawyer). Most independent adoptions are by related petitioners (that is, the adoptive parents are related to the child by blood or marriage), but there are some unrelated petitioners who adopt children independently. Because of an increasing shortage in the supply of healthy white babies, the development of a "black market" trade in these children is inevitable, and many child welfare workers are suggesting legislation which would "...prohibit courts from entering a decree of adoption for any child not related to the petitioners, unless the placement was made by a licensed child welfare agency."<sup>8/</sup>

Many parents, however, prefer to avoid the lengthy delays, personal questions, and waiting lists of agency procedures by adopting a child independently. With the high demand for healthy white infants, adoption agencies can be far more selective about the parents they choose, and quite a substantial number of people who are unable to get a child through an agency have been successful in adopting independently. Many child welfare workers feel that this sort of placement is often detrimental to the child and, in some cases, to the adoptive parents. They feel that few lawyers are either willing or capable of the investigative studies that agencies do on prospective parents, and that there is a greater chance that the natural

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<sup>8/</sup>

Bernice Q. Madison, "Adoptions: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow - Part II," June 1966, p. 343.

mother will try to get her child back in an independent adoption. Child welfare workers maintain that, despite agency shortcomings, they provide better facilities for prenatal and postnatal care of both the natural mother and the baby, at a lesser expense to the adoptive parents. Because of the background of their staffs, proponents of agency adoptions feel that they are better trained to evaluate the suitability of the prospective parents for the maximum protection of the child, and that they are less inclined to mistakenly place a physically or psychologically handicapped child with parents who are unwilling to accept such a child.

In order to find homes for the hard-to-place children, adoption agencies have, in recent years, looked with more favor on the concept of single parent and interracial adoptions. While they would still prefer married adoptive parents of the same race as the child, some agencies believe that both single parent and interracial adoptions are of far more benefit to the child than the loneliness of institutionalization, or the lack of permanence of foster homes. Such placements, while not commonplace, have begun to increase as the number of hard-to-place children grows. Agencies realize that there may be problems in these adoptions, but most child welfare workers feel that the advantages of these placements far outweighs the disadvantages in terms of the happiness of the child.



## II. STATISTICS ON ADOPTION IN THE UNITED STATES - 1969\*

About 171,000 children were adopted in the United States in 1969. Slightly more than one-half of these children (88,900 or 52 percent) were adopted by persons who were not related to them and the rest (82,100) were adopted by stepparents or other relatives.

The steady upward trend in adoptions over the past dozen years continued in 1969, though at a lower rate than in recent years. In States from which reports were received for both 1968 and 1969, the total number of adoptions in 1969 was 2.1 percent greater and the number of nonrelative adoptions was 2.3 percent greater than in 1968. The average annual increase in both total adoptions and nonrelative adoptions for the five preceding years was about 5 percent.

Three-fourths (66,700) of all nonrelative adoptions were arranged by social agencies in 1969, approximately the same proportion as in 1968. This proportion has risen substantially over the period for which information is available. A wide range in the proportion of agency adoptions is still found among the States. In 1969, agency placements comprised 90 percent or more of all nonrelative adoptions in 11 States, but 65 percent or less in 9 States including Alaska and Puerto Rico, where independent placements considerably exceeded agency placements.

The 66,700 agency adoptions included approximately 38,000 arranged by voluntary child welfare agencies and 28,000 by public child welfare

\* From: "Adoptions in 1969," Supplement to Child Welfare Statistics - 1969, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Social Statistics.

agencias. Adoptive placements by voluntary agencies were more numerous in 25 States, and placements by public agencies in 16 States. Voluntary agency adoptive placements predominate in Northeastern and North Central States except in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Missouri. In contrast, public agency placements outnumber those by voluntary agencies in Southern States except in Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. These three States, however, account for a majority of the children in the South who are adopted by non-relatives. Among Western States the division among States is even. Thus, public agency placements are more numerous in California, New Mexico, Alaska, Montana and Nevada; and those by voluntary agencies in Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Utah, and Hawaii. However, in California alone the number of adoptions arranged by public agencies in 1969 exceeded the number of voluntary agency placements in all Western States for which information was available.

Of all the children adopted in 1969, an estimated 109,000 -- about two-thirds -- were born out of wedlock. Almost three-fourths of these were adopted by nonrelatives, and they comprised nearly 90 percent of all non-relative adoptions. Those adopted by relatives represented 37 percent of all relative adoptions. The 109,000 children represented about one-third of the total number of children born out of wedlock in the United States in 1968.

The percentage of all children adopted who are black or belong to other minority races has not risen significantly despite special efforts by

social agencies to find adoptive homes for them. In 1969, children from these groupd represented an estimated 11 percent of all children adopted -- 12 percent of relative adoptions and 10 percent of nonrelative adoptions. They numbered nearly 19,000, of whom about 14,000 were black children. The largest numbers of adoptions of children of minority races are reported from California, Texas, Illinois, and Michigan. The percentage of such adoptions is highest in Hawaii, Alaska, the District of Columbia, South Carolina, and Louisiana.

Two-thirds of all children adopted by unrelated persons in 1969 were less than 3 months old when placed in an adoptive home. The median age at the time of placement was 1.9 months, compared with 2.0 months in 1968. The median age for placements by voluntary agencies, 1.7 months, is now almost as low as the median of less than one month of age for independent placements. For placements by public agencies the median age in 1969 was 3.5 months.

Table 1.--Children for whom adoption petitions were granted: Number and percentage distribution by relationship of petitioner to child, by State, 1969

State	Number			Percentage distribution		
	Total	Adopted by unrelated petitioners	Adopted by related petitioners	Relationship not reported	Adopted by unrelated petitioners	Adopted by related petitioners
United States estimated total <sup>1/</sup> ...	171,000	88,900	82,100	---	52	<sup>2/</sup> 48
Alabama.....	1,400	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Alaska.....	790	450	340	---	57	43
Arizona.....	2,600	1,100	1,400	54	45	55
Arkansas.....	890	390	490	6	44	56
California.....	19,800	10,200	9,600	1	52	48
Colorado <sup>3/</sup> .....	---	---	---	---	---	---
Connecticut.....	2,000	1,100	930	---	54	46
Delaware.....	330	150	180	---	44	56
District of Columbia.....	800	570	230	---	72	28
Florida.....	7,200	3,300	3,900	---	45	55
Georgia.....	3,300	1,500	1,800	---	45	55
Hawaii.....	1,000	430	580	1	43	57
Idaho <sup>3/</sup> .....	---	---	---	---	---	---
Illinois.....	9,500	<sup>4/</sup> 5,700	<sup>4/</sup> 3,800	---	<sup>4/</sup> 60	<sup>4/</sup> 40
Indiana.....	4,900	2,200	2,700	5	45	55
Iowa.....	3,000	1,500	1,400	26	52	48
Kansas.....	2,200	1,300	910	30	58	42
Kentucky.....	1,700	860	810	9	52	48
Louisiana.....	2,900	1,200	1,600	5	43	57
Maine.....	1,300	450	760	110	37	63
Maryland.....	3,900	1,300	1,500	1,100	47	53
Massachusetts.....	(3/)	2,400	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Michigan.....	7,700	3,900	3,800	2	51	49
Minnesota.....	3,700	2,300	1,300	1	64	36
Mississippi.....	1,500	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Missouri.....	2,700	1,400	1,300	67	53	47
Montana.....	1,000	480	540	25	47	53
Nebraska.....	1,700	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Nevada.....	780	310	470	1	40	60
New Hampshire.....	610	270	330	11	45	55
New Jersey.....	3,800	2,300	1,500	1	60	40
New Mexico.....	1,200	550	610	4	47	53
New York.....	10,300	6,500	3,800	---	63	37
North Carolina <sup>5/</sup> .....	3,200	1,400	1,800	---	44	56
North Dakota.....	520	300	230	---	57	43
Ohio.....	8,300	4,100	4,100	1	50	50
Oklahoma.....	2,400	800	170	1,500	(6/)	(6/)
Oregon.....	2,900	1,500	1,400	7	52	48
Pennsylvania.....	7,600	3,900	3,700	15	51	49
Puerto Rico.....	320	150	170	---	47	53
Rhode Island.....	680	300	380	---	44	56
South Carolina.....	1,800	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
South Dakota.....	580	320	260	---	55	45
Tennessee.....	1,700	930	770	12	55	45
Texas.....	12,000	5,100	6,000	820	46	54
Utah.....	(3/)	800	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Vermont.....	520	240	280	---	47	53
Virgin Islands.....	35	18	17	---	(7/)	(7/)
Virginia.....	3,800	1,800	2,000	16	48	52
Washington.....	4,500	2,600	1,900	52	58	42
West Virginia.....	1,500	510	960	---	35	65
Wisconsin.....	3,900	2,400	1,500	---	61	39
Wyoming.....	540	140	3	400	(6/)	(6/)

<sup>1/</sup> Estimates for United States by relationship of petitioner based on reports from 43 State departments of public welfare.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes 42 percent adopted by stepparents and 6 percent by other relatives.

<sup>3/</sup> Data not reported.

<sup>4/</sup> Adoptions by relatives other than stepparents included under adoptions by unrelated petitioners.

<sup>5/</sup> 1968 data.

<sup>6/</sup> Percent not computed because relationship of petitioner to child not reported for a large proportion of children.

<sup>7/</sup> Percent not computed (number of cases fewer than 50).

From: "Adoptions in 1969," Supplement to Child Welfare Statistics - 1969,  
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Center  
for Social Statistics.

Table 2.—Children for whom adoption petitions were granted: Number and percentage distribution by race, by relationship of petitioner to child, by State, 1969

State	All children adopted					Children adopted by unrelated petitioners					Children adopted by related petitioners 1/				
	Number			Percentage distribution		Number			Percentage distribution		Number			Percentage distribution	
	White	All other	Not reported	White	All other	White	All other	Not reported	White	All other	White	All other	Not reported	White	All other
United States estimated total 2/...	152,000	18,800	---	89	11	80,000	8,900	---	90	10	72,200	9,900	---	88	12
Alaska.....	440	340	3	56	44	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Arizona.....	2,000	130	490	94	6	930	83	120	92	8	1,000	49	370	95	5
Arkansas.....	730	130	26	85	15	330	59	2	85	15	400	72	24	85	15
California.....	9,600	1,300	8,900	(4/)	(4/)	9,100	1,100	1	89	11	520	210	8,900	(4/)	(4/)
Connecticut.....	1,900	160	---	92	8	1,000	67	---	94	6	840	90	---	90	10
Delaware.....	260	67	1	80	20	120	24	1	83	17	140	43	---	77	23
District of Columbia.....	460	330	10	58	42	440	130	7	77	23	19	210	3	8	92
Florida.....	3,400	440	3,400	(4/)	(4/)	3,000	290	---	91	9	360	160	3,400	(4/)	(4/)
Georgia.....	2,900	400	10	88	12	1,300	180	6	88	12	1,600	230	4	87	13
Hawaii.....	340	660	9	34	66	180	250	2	41	59	160	410	7	29	71
Illinois.....	8,600	920	---	90	10	5,200	530	---	91	9	3,400	400	---	90	10
Indiana.....	4,500	320	82	93	7	2,000	180	36	91	9	2,500	130	46	95	5
Iowa.....	2,900	91	2	97	3	1,500	62	2	96	4	1,400	29	---	98	2
Kansas.....	1,200	220	780	(4/)	(4/)	1,000	200	31	84	16	160	27	750	(4/)	(4/)
Louisiana.....	2,200	670	---	77	23	1,100	160	---	87	13	1,100	500	---	69	31
Maine.....	1,300	5	---	100	(5/)	450	1	---	100	(5/)	860	4	---	100	(5/)
Maryland.....	2,300	410	1,100	85	15	1,200	140	7	89	11	1,200	280	1,100	(3/)	(4/)
Massachusetts.....	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	2,200	160	1	93	7	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Michigan.....	6,900	870	---	89	11	3,500	360	---	91	9	3,300	500	---	87	13
Minnesota.....	2,600	230	840	91	9	2,100	230	22	90	10	510	11	820	(4/)	(4/)
Missouri.....	2,400	310	---	89	11	1,200	160	---	89	11	1,200	150	---	88	12
Montana.....	920	120	---	89	11	400	75	---	84	16	520	42	---	93	7
Nevada.....	440	48	300	(4/)	(4/)	180	27	99	87	13	250	21	200	(4/)	(4/)
New Hampshire.....	590	19	---	97	3	260	9	---	97	3	330	10	---	97	3
New Jersey.....	3,500	330	1	91	9	2,100	180	1	92	8	1,400	150	---	90	10
New Mexico.....	1,100	89	6	92	8	480	65	---	88	12	580	24	6	96	4
North Carolina 6/.....	2,600	620	---	81	19	1,200	210	---	85	14	1,400	410	---	77	23
North Dakota.....	520	5	---	99	1	290	5	---	98	2	230	---	---	100	---
Oregon.....	1,700	160	1,100	(4/)	(4/)	1,200	140	200	90	10	530	19	860	(4/)	(4/)
Pennsylvania.....	6,900	640	41	92	8	3,500	350	25	91	9	3,400	300	16	92	8
Puerto Rico.....	280	36	---	89	11	130	17	---	89	11	150	19	---	89	11
Rhode Island.....	640	42	---	94	6	280	20	---	93	7	360	22	---	94	6
South Carolina.....	1,400	430	---	76	24	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
South Dakota.....	550	35	---	94	6	300	29	---	91	9	250	6	---	98	2
Tennessee.....	1,400	160	180	90	10	840	83	7	91	9	540	75	170	88	12
Texas.....	10,800	1,000	190	91	9	4,700	340	60	93	7	6,100	670	130	90	10
Utah.....	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	720	45	40	94	6	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Vermont.....	510	11	---	98	2	230	11	---	95	5	280	---	---	100	---
Virgin Islands.....	6	11	18	(7/)	(7/)	5	4	9	(7/)	(7/)	1	7	9	(7/)	(7/)
Virginia.....	3,200	530	69	86	14	1,600	230	30	87	13	1,700	300	39	85	15
Washington.....	3,800	440	310	90	10	2,200	320	150	87	13	1,600	110	160	94	6
West Virginia.....	1,400	110	6	93	7	480	22	5	96	4	880	85	1	91	9
Wisconsin.....	3,700	250	---	94	6	2,200	170	---	93	7	1,400	76	---	95	5

1/ Includes a few children for whom relationship to petitioner was not reported.  
 2/ Estimates for United States by race based on reports from 43 State departments of public welfare.  
 3/ Data not reported.  
 4/ Percent not computed because race not reported for a large proportion of children.  
 5/ Less than 0.5 percent.  
 6/ 1968 data.  
 7/ Percent not computed (number of cases fewer than 50).

Table 3.--Children for whom adoption petitions were granted: Number and percentage distribution by birth status, by relationship of petitioners to child, by State, 1969

State	All children adopted					Children adopted by unrelated petitioners					Children adopted by related petitioners 1/				
	Number			Percentage distribution		Number			Percentage distribution		Number			Percentage distribution	
	Born out of wedlock	Born in wedlock	Not reported	Born out of wedlock	Born in wedlock	Born out of wedlock	Born in wedlock	Not reported	Born out of wedlock	Born in wedlock	Born out of wedlock	Born in wedlock	Not reported	Born out of wedlock	Born in wedlock
United States estimated total 2/...	109,000	61,600	---	64	35	79,100	9,800	---	89	11	30,300	51,800	---	37	63
Alaska.....	360	430	---	45	55	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Arizona.....	1,400	1,100	96	56	44	990	110	31	90	10	400	920	65	29	71
Arkansas.....	470	400	16	54	46	310	73	13	81	19	160	330	3	33	67
California.....	9,800	1,000	9,000	(4/)	(3/)	9,400	700	110	93	7	380	340	8,900	(4/)	(4/)
Connecticut.....	1,400	660	2	67	33	1,000	70	2	94	6	340	590	---	37	63
Delaware.....	220	110	2	67	33	130	14	2	90	10	88	95	---	48	52
District of Columbia.....	730	68	6	91	9	560	12	3	98	2	170	56	3	75	25
Florida.....	3,100	560	3,600	(4/)	(4/)	2,800	310	130	90	10	260	250	3,400	(4/)	(4/)
Georgia.....	1,800	1,500	47	55	45	1,300	170	27	88	12	500	1,300	20	28	72
Hawaii.....	610	400	2	61	39	400	33	2	92	8	220	360	---	37	63
Illinois.....	5,000	4,500	---	53	47	4,300	1,400	---	75	25	750	3,000	---	20	80
Indiana.....	2,500	2,300	57	52	48	1,800	390	23	82	18	730	2,000	34	27	73
Iowa.....	1,600	1,100	230	59	41	1,300	130	140	91	9	370	990	90	27	73
Kansas.....	1,200	270	750	(4/)	(4/)	1,100	170	23	87	13	110	100	730	(4/)	(4/)
Kentucky.....	1,100	590	16	65	35	780	62	13	93	7	290	520	3	36	64
Louisiana.....	1,800	1,100	43	62	38	1,100	130	25	89	11	670	940	18	42	58
Maine.....	680	450	190	60	40	380	42	27	90	10	290	400	170	42	58
Maryland.....	1,800	950	1,100	65	35	1,100	160	30	87	13	670	790	1,100	(3/)	(3/)
Massachusetts.....	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	2,100	230	20	90	10	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Michigan.....	4,800	2,900	10	62	38	3,300	600	10	85	15	1,500	2,300	---	40	60
Minnesota.....	2,600	1,100	24	70	30	2,200	170	16	93	7	420	910	8	32	68
Missouri.....	1,500	1,100	51	58	42	1,200	190	32	86	14	360	940	19	28	72
Montana.....	510	530	3	49	51	400	76	2	84	16	110	450	1	20	80
Nevada.....	350	390	45	47	53	270	38	6	88	12	82	350	39	19	81
New Hampshire.....	330	72	200	(4/)	(4/)	240	28	---	90	10	89	44	200	(4/)	(4/)
New Jersey.....	2,500	1,300	25	67	33	2,100	200	19	91	9	450	1,100	6	30	70
New Mexico.....	640	510	9	56	44	480	55	6	88	12	160	440	3	27	73
New York.....	7,400	2,800	70	73	27	6,000	360	66	94	6	1,400	2,400	4	37	63
North Carolina 2/.....	2,000	1,200	14	63	37	1,200	150	10	90	10	770	1,000	4	43	57
North Dakota.....	340	180	---	66	34	280	19	---	94	6	67	160	---	30	70
Oregon.....	1,700	1,200	64	58	42	1,300	140	46	91	9	320	1,100	18	23	77
Pennsylvania.....	4,500	3,000	130	60	40	3,200	620	100	84	16	1,300	2,400	32	35	65
Puerto Rico.....	200	110	9	65	35	110	33	6	77	23	90	76	3	54	46
Rhode Island.....	400	270	1	60	40	280	12	1	96	4	120	260	---	32	68
South Dakota.....	350	230	---	60	40	290	32	---	90	10	60	200	---	23	77
Tennessee.....	1,000	670	25	60	40	790	150	2	84	16	230	530	23	31	69
Texas.....	4,700	5,000	2,200	49	51	2,900	370	1,800	(4/)	(4/)	1,800	4,600	390	28	72
Utah.....	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)	710	80	13	90	10	(3/)	(3/)	---	(3/)	(3/)
Vermont.....	340	180	3	65	35	220	18	1	93	7	110	160	2	41	59
Virgin Islands.....	32	3	---	(6/)	(6/)	18	---	---	(6/)	(6/)	14	3	---	(6/)	(6/)
Virginia.....	2,400	1,400	47	64	36	1,600	210	27	88	12	640	1,100	20	42	58
Washington.....	2,700	1,700	100	61	39	2,300	290	68	89	11	440	1,500	35	23	77
Wisconsin.....	2,800	1,100	7	72	28	2,200	150	7	94	6	560	940	---	37	63

1/ Includes a few children for whom relationship to petitioner was not reported.  
 2/ Estimates for United States by birth status based on reports from 43 State departments of public welfare.  
 3/ Data not reported.  
 4/ Percent not computed because birth status of a large proportion of children not reported.  
 5/ 1968 data.  
 6/ Percent not computed (number of cases fewer than 50).

Table 4.--Children adopted by unrelated petitioners: Number and percentage distribution by type of placement, by State, 1969

State	Number <sup>1/</sup>				Percentage distribution				
	Total	Agency placement			Independent placement	Agency placement			Independent placement
		Total	Public	Voluntary		Total	Public	Voluntary	
United States estimated total <sup>2/</sup> ...	88,900	66,700	28,400	38,200	22,200	75	32	43	25
Alaska.....	450	86	86	---	360	19	19	---	81
Arizona.....	1,100	740	290	450	380	66	26	40	34
Arkansas.....	390	270	260	9	120	69	67	2	31
California.....	10,200	8,200	6,000	2,100	2,100	80	59	21	20
Connecticut.....	1,100	1,100	160	940	7	99	14	85	1
Delaware.....	150	140	15	120	6	95	10	86	4
District of Columbia.....	570	540	78	460	33	94	14	81	6
Florida.....	3,300	2,200	330	1,900	1,100	67	10	97	33
Georgia.....	1,500	960	730	230	230	65	50	16	35
Hawaii.....	430	260	110	140	180	59	26	33	41
Illinois.....	<sup>3/</sup> 5,700	3,200	880	2,300	<sup>3/</sup> 2,500	<sup>3/</sup> 56	15	40	<sup>3/</sup> 44
Indiana.....	2,200	1,700	1,000	670	520	76	46	30	24
Iowa.....	1,500	1,100	67	1,000	410	73	4	69	27
Kansas.....	1,300	780	230	540	490	61	18	43	39
Kentucky.....	860	770	530	240	92	89	61	28	11
Louisiana.....	1,200	800	140	660	440	64	11	53	36
Maine.....	450	310	130	180	140	69	29	40	31
Maryland.....	1,300	1,000	690	330	290	78	53	25	5
Massachusetts.....	2,400	2,300	620	1,700	110	95	26	69	5
Minnesota.....	2,300	2,300	340	1,900	62	97	15	83	3
Missouri.....	1,400	1,200	750	440	210	85	54	31	15
Montana.....	480	380	230	140	100	79	49	30	21
Nevada.....	310	290	180	100	20	94	60	33	6
New Hampshire.....	270	230	100	120	43	84	38	46	16
New Jersey.....	2,300	1,900	370	1,500	410	82	16	66	18
New Mexico.....	550	360	210	160	170	68	39	29	22
New York.....	6,500	5,100	2,100	3,100	1,400	79	32	47	21
North Carolina <sup>4/</sup> .....	1,400	1,000	600	440	360	74	43	31	26
North Dakota.....	300	280	9	270	19	94	3	91	6
Ohio.....	4,100	3,600	( <sup>5/</sup> )	( <sup>5/</sup> )	480	88	( <sup>5/</sup> )	( <sup>5/</sup> )	12
Oregon.....	1,500	960	390	570	580	62	25	37	28
Pennsylvania.....	3,900	2,600	1,600	1,000	1,300	67	41	27	33
Puerto Rico.....	150	26	19	7	120	17	13	5	83
Rhode Island.....	300	280	25	250	17	94	8	86	6
South Dakota.....	320	290	69	220	31	90	21	69	10
Tennessee.....	930	690	520	170	240	74	56	18	26
Texas.....	5,100	<sup>6/</sup> 3,100	550	2,600	<sup>6/</sup> 2,000	<sup>6/</sup> 61	11	50	<sup>6/</sup> 39
Utah.....	800	580	92	490	220	73	12	61	<sup>6/</sup> 27
Vermont.....	240	230	63	170	14	94	26	68	6
Virgin Islands.....	18	10	5	5	8	( <sup>7/</sup> )	( <sup>7/</sup> )	( <sup>7/</sup> )	( <sup>7/</sup> )
Virginia.....	1,800	1,300	850	420	570	69	46	23	31
Washington.....	2,600	1,800	600	1,200	740	71	24	47	29
Wisconsin.....	2,400	2,300	990	1,300	55	98	42	56	2

<sup>1/</sup> Includes a few children for whom type of placement was not reported.  
<sup>2/</sup> Estimates for United States by type of placement based on reports from 43 State departments of public welfare.  
<sup>3/</sup> Children adopted by relatives other than stepparents included with those adopted by nonrelatives.  
<sup>4/</sup> 1968 data.  
<sup>5/</sup> Data not reported.  
<sup>6/</sup> Estimated.  
<sup>7/</sup> Percent not computed (number of cases fewer than 50).

Table 5.--Children adopted by unrelated petitioners: Median age at time of placement (in months), by type of placement, by State, 1969

State	Median age in months <sup>1/</sup>				
	All children placed	Agency placement			Independent placement
		Total	Public	Voluntary	
Total <sup>2/</sup> .....	1.9	2.3	3.5	1.7	0.5
Arizona.....	0.5	0.5	4.9	0.5	0.5
Arkansas.....	4.9	5.5	5.6	(3/)	0.5
California.....	1.9	2.2	2.4	1.6	0.5
Connecticut.....	2.5	2.5	31.2	2.2	(3/)
Delaware.....	2.5	2.6	(3/)	2.3	(3/)
District of Columbia.....	1.1	1.1	4.4	0.5	(3/)
Florida.....	0.5	1.6	9.7	1.2	0.5
Georgia.....	1.8	2.8	2.6	2.1	0.5
Hawaii.....	0.5	1.8	3.2	0.5	0.5
Indiana.....	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Iowa.....	0.5	0.5	21.6	0.5	0.5
Kansas.....	0.5	0.5	5.9	0.5	0.5
Kentucky.....	2.5	2.5	2.9	2.0	3.9
Louisiana.....	1.7	2.1	8.7	1.8	0.5
Maine.....	(4/)	1.2	6.8	0.5	(4/)
Maryland.....	4.1	4.3	5.3	2.6	0.5
Massachusetts.....	2.7	2.7	6.7	2.3	1.3
Minnesota.....	2.6	2.6	18.0	2.3	4.8
Missouri.....	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.0	2.7
Nevada.....	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	(3/)
New Hampshire.....	1.9	2.1	3.4	1.6	(3/)
New Jersey.....	2.1	2.3	8.1	2.0	0.5
New Mexico.....	0.5	1.4	3.0	0.5	0.5
New York.....	3.1	4.3	5.2	3.6	0.5
North Carolina <sup>5/</sup> .....	2.8	2.8	4.7	2.2	1.9
North Dakota.....	2.0	2.1	(3/)	2.0	(3/)
Oregon.....	0.5	2.0	4.8	0.5	0.5
Puerto Rico.....	3.2	(3/)	(3/)	(3/)	2.0
Rhode Island.....	2.8	2.8	(3/)	2.7	(3/)
South Dakota.....	1.6	1.7	4.0	1.1	(3/)
Tennessee.....	3.1	3.3	4.1	2.1	1.3
Texas.....	0.5	0.5	7.2	0.5	0.5
Utah.....	0.5	0.5	40.8	0.5	0.5
Vermont.....	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	(3/)
Virginia.....	2.4	3.0	3.8	2.5	0.5
Washington.....	2.1	2.7	4.5	2.3	0.5
Wisconsin.....	2.5	2.5	4.0	2.1	0.5

<sup>1/</sup> An entry of 0.5 indicates a median of less than 1 month.

<sup>2/</sup> For 38 reporting States.

<sup>3/</sup> Median not computed (number of cases fewer than 50).

<sup>4/</sup> Data not reported.

<sup>5/</sup> 1968 data.





# The Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon

2301 N.W. GLISAN STREET • PORTLAND, OREGON 97210 • TELEPHONE 222-9661

## 1970 SURVEY OF ADOPTION OF BLACK CHILDREN

For the third consecutive year the OPPORTUNITY division of Boys and Girls Aid Society has made a survey of agency adoptive placements of children of black ancestry in the United States. Figures for 1970 show a significant increase over 1969, both in the number of agencies reporting and the number of children placed. The following table gives totals for the three years:

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
Total black children placed	3,122	4,336	6,464
Placements in black families	2,389	2,889	4,190
Placements in white families	733	1,447	2,274
Number of agencies reporting	194	342	427

The percentage of black children placed in white families has continued to increase. In 1968 this percentage was 23%, in 1969 it jumped to 33%. In 1970 the percentage is 35%.

One might assume that the total number of children placed increased because the activity of a greater number of agencies was recorded. We are convinced that the increase was not only because of this factor, but that most agencies increased their efforts to develop opportunities for the adoption of the children. We analyzed the activity of 105 agencies which reported for each of the three years. These agencies showed the following increases:

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
Total black children placed	2,150	2,484	3,333
Placements in black families	1,650	1,768	2,154
Placements in white families	500	716	1,179

Another examination was made of 228 agencies which reported for 1969 and 1970, but not for 1968. This showed the following increases:

	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Total black children placed	3,733	5,062	36 %
Placements in black families	2,593	3,171	22 %
Placements in white families	1,140	1,891	66 %

The 22% increase in placements in black homes is a very healthy and encouraging indication of the concern of agencies for developing black homes. The 66% increase in placements in white homes indicates the ever increasing potential for opening more and more opportunities for black youngsters through interracial adoption.

## 1970 SURVEY OF ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN OF BLACK ANCESTRY

Compiled by OPPORTUNITY  
Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon

STATE	NUMBER OF AGENCIES	CHILDREN PLACED		STATE	NUMBER OF AGENCIES	CHILDREN PLACED	
		BLACK HOMES	WHITE HOMES			BLACK HOMES	WHITE HOMES
Alabama	2	32	0	Nebraska	5	27	13
Alaska	1	7	3	Nevada	1	6	2
Arizona	4	22	15	New Hampshire	3	0	20
Arkansas	1	44	0	New Jersey	8	270	131
California	19	438	187	New Mexico	2	19	16
Colorado	4	41	42	New York	39	618	168
Connecticut	9	49	38	North Carolina	3	90	1
Delaware <sup>2</sup>	3	20	10	North Dakota <sup>2</sup>	3	2	9
Dist. of Columbia	4	131	17	Ohio	33	217	95
Florida	6	119	6	Oklahoma	4	47	5
Georgia	2	98	3	Oregon	7	34	81
Hawaii	2	5	2	Pennsylvania	57	144	137
Idaho	3	2	4	Rhode Island	4	6	16
Illinois	33	294	174	South Carolina <sup>1</sup>	2	20	0
Indiana	11	59	42	South Dakota	3	1	12
Iowa	12	20	50	Tennessee	5	57	5
Kansas	4	83	28	Texas	10	184	14
Kentucky	4	46	20	Utah	4	5	12
Louisiana	2	52	0	Vermont	4	1	9
Maine <sup>1</sup>	3	1	6	Virginia <sup>2</sup>	6	37	6
Maryland	16	130	20	Washington	8	51	107
Massachusetts	18	60	149	West Virginia	2	18	19
Michigan	18	406	161	Wisconsin	8	29	107
Minnesota	9	24	246	Wyoming	3	1	6
Mississippi	1	33	0				
Missouri	9	89	52				
Montana	3	1	8	TOTAL	427	4,190	2,274

<sup>1</sup> No report received from State Department of Public Welfare or other public agency.

<sup>2</sup> Public welfare does not have an adoption program

### III. CONGRESS AND ADOPTION

#### 1. Discussion

Under the new Child Welfare Services provision of H.R. 1 (passed by the House and reported by the Senate Finance Committee), an amendment was adopted increasing the annual authorization for Federal grants to the States for child welfare services to \$200 million in fiscal year 1973, rising to \$270 million in 1977 and thereafter. A substantial amount of these funds would be used for foster care and adoption services.

\$1 million would also be authorized through an amendment to H.R. 1 introduced by Senator Griffin and approved by the Senate Finance Committee, for a federal program to help find adoptive homes for hard-to-place children. This would be done through a national adoption information exchange system which would utilize computers and modern data processing methods to find both children available for adoption and parents who wish to adopt. This is similar to the ARENA program which is discussed in Part IV of this multivolume.

Quite a few bills have been introduced by Senators and Congressmen to encourage adoption. Most of these have been introduced as amendments to the Internal Revenue Code to allow a deduction for expenses incurred in connection with adoption. Several bills have also been introduced in an effort to facilitate the adoption of foreign (particularly Vietnamese) children. The following section contains a list of bills related to

adoption which were introduced during the 90th, 91st and 92d Congress, 1st Session. As of June 1, 1972, none of these bills have been enacted into law.

2. Bills related to adoption introduced during the 90th, 91st, and 92d Congress, 1st Session

90th Congress 1st Session

Tax Deductions

S. 1336 -- Mr. Magnuson

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 to allow a deduction from gross income for social agency, legal and related expenses incurred in connection with the adoption of a child by a taxpayer. To Committee on Finance.

H.R. 19 -- Mr. Zablocki

Similar to S. 1336. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 141 -- Mr. Talcott

To amend Internal Revenue Act to provide that certain expenses of child adoption shall be treated as medical expenses. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 813 -- Mr. Lipscomb

Similar to S. 1336. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 3353 -- Mr. Foley

Similar to S. 1336. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 5932 -- Mr. Matsunaga

Similar to S. 1336. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 7999 -- Mr. Helstoski

Similar to S. 1336. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 10620 -- Mr. Brasco

Similar to S. 1336. To Committee on Ways and Means.

Immigration and Nationalization

H.R. 9638 -- Mr. Tunney

To amend the Immigration and Nationalization Act to provide that children adopted by U.S. citizens shall acquire U.S. citizenship automatically upon the fulfillment of certain conditions and for other purposes. To Committee on the Judiciary.

90th Congress 2d Session

H.R. 16546 -- Mr. Matsunaga

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to facilitate the entry into the U.S. of children adopted by U.S. citizens. To Committee on the Judiciary.

Tax Deductions

H.R. 18284 -- Mr. Howard

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1951 to allow a deduction from gross income for social agency, legal and related expenses incurred in connection with the adoption of a child by the taxpayer. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 19404 -- Mr. Frelinghuysen

Similar to H.R. 18284. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 20247 -- Mr. Cleveland

Similar to H.R. 18284. To Committee on Ways and Means.

91st Congress 1st Session

Immigration and Nationalization

H.R. 278 -- Mr. Matsumaga

Same as H.R. 16546 (90th Congress, 2d Session). To Committee on Judiciary.

Income Tax Deductions

H.R. 918 -- Mr. Zablocki

Same as H.R. 18284 (90th Congress, 2d Session). To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2369 -- Mr. Helstoski

Same as H.R. 18284. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 4860 -- Mr. Talcott

Same as H.R. 141 (Sec. 213) (90th Congress, 1st Session). To Committee on Ways and Means.

S. 1867 -- Mr. Inouye

Same as H.R. 18284. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 8864 -- Mr. Waldie

To amend Internal Revenue Code to allow deductions from gross income for legal and other expenses connected to the adoption of a child by the taxpayer. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 9519 -- Mr. Cleveland

Same as H.R. 813 (90th Congress, 1st Session). To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 11933 -- Mr. Corman

Same as H.R. 18284. To Committee on Ways and Means.

91st Congress 2d Session

Tax Deductions

H.R. 16944 -- Mr. Michel

To amend Internal Revenue Code to treat adoption fees in the same manner as medical expenses for income tax purposes. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 19618 -- Mr. Schadeberg

To amend Internal Revenue Code to allow deductions from gross income for costs incurred in connection with the adoption of a child by a taxpayer. To Committee on Ways and Means.

92d Congress 1st Session

Tax Deductions

S. 455 -- Mr. Inouye

To amend Internal Revenue Code to allow a tax deduction from gross income for costs of adoption up to \$1,000. To Committee on Finance.

S. 1578 -- Mr. Young

To amend Internal Revenue Code to allow a tax deduction from gross income for expenses incurred in connection with the adoption of a child. To Committee on Finance.

S. 1979 -- Mr. Hatfield

Allows a deduction from gross income for following expenses incurred by an adoption: (1) Legal costs and fees; (2) agency costs and fees; (3) medical care expenses in connection with an adoption; (4) other expenses directly related to adoption. Deduction may not exceed \$1,000. To Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3873 -- Mr. Waldie

Similar to H.R. 8864 (91st Congress, 1st Session). To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 4005 -- Mr. Talcott

To amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow a tax deduction for necessary expenses incurred for adoption of a child. The child must be adopted through an authorized placement agency. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 7087 -- Mr. Cotter

To amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow a tax deduction for adoption fees and other related costs up to \$1,500. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 7727 -- Mr. Cleveland.

To amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow a tax deduction for expenses incurred in adoption so long as those expenses are not allowable under another section of the Code. To Committee on Ways and Means.



H.R. 10975 -- Mr. Roush

Similar to S. 455 but allows a deduction of up to \$1,250 for adoption expenses. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 11915 -- Mr. Aspin

Similar to S. 7087. To Committee on Ways and Means.

Adoption Fees

H.R. 1451 -- Mr. Michel

To amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow an income tax deduction for adoption fees if the fees exceed 3% of adjusted gross income of the taxpayer. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 1736 -- Mr. Zablocki

Adoption Opportunity Act. To amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow deductions for fees related to adoption expenses. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 2464 -- Mr. Corman

Similar to H.R. 1736. To Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 7738 -- Mr. Thone

Similar to H.R. 1736. To Committee on Ways and Means.

National Adoption Information Exchange

H.R. 11595 -- Mr. Esch

Authorizes the Secretary of HEW to establish a National Adoption Information Exchange System. Authorizes \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 1972 to carry out the purpose of the act. To Committee on Education and Labor.

## Adoption and Vietnam

S. 2071 -- Mr. Moss

Provides for the care, housing, education, training, and adoption of orphaned children in Vietnam who were born after August 5, 1964 of one alien parent and one U.S. citizen parent. To Committee on the Judiciary.

S. 2497 -- Mr. Williams, et al.

Authorizes the President, through the Vietnam Children's Care agency established by this Act, to establish and administer a program for all children living in South Vietnam who are: (1) sixteen years of age or younger; and (2) orphaned, abandoned or living in poverty as a direct result of the hostilities in Vietnam or conditions related to such hostilities. States that such program shall be administered only with the consent of the Government of South Vietnam and in accordance with such agreements as may be agreed upon by the Agency and that Government.

States that the agency may provide: (1) assistance to aid such children in growing up in their own or foster families through the establishment, expansion, and improvement of day care centers and the improvement of school feeding programs; (2) assistance to orphanages in which such children are living, including food and clothing assistance and assistance for the improvement of the physical facilities of such orphanages; (3) for the training of persons employed in day care centers and orphanages in Vietnam; (4) for the training of persons on matters relating to child health care and prenatal and postnatal care; and (5) assistance for the improvement and expansion of the existing hostel program which provides housing for children who do not live with their families.

Provides that not more than 60 percent of the funds appropriated shall be used for the child care program. Authorizes the President, through the agency, to enter into negotiations with the Government of South Vietnam to facilitate the adoption by United States citizens of children in South Vietnam who are ten years of age or younger. Authorizes the Agency to enter into agreements and to make grants to State and local governmental agencies and private nonprofit organizations to assist in arranging for such adoptions.

Provides that not more than 10 percent of the funds appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act may be expended in carrying out this adoption program. Establishes in the executive branch of the Government a temporary independent establishment to be known as the Vietnam Children's Care Agency. Provides that such agency shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Provides, further, for the appointment of a Deputy Director by the President by and with the consent of the Senate. Authorizes the Director to make a report to the President, after the end of each fiscal year, for submission to the Congress on the activities of the Agency during the preceding fiscal year.

Authorizes the President to undertake negotiations with the United Nations or such other multilateral organizations as the President considers appropriate to have such organizations agree to perform the child care functions described in this Act. Provides that the authority and responsibility of the Agency with respect to such child care functions shall cease

at such time as the President determines that such functions are being satisfactorily performed by the United Nations, other multilateral organizations or nonprofit organizations.

Authorizes to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. Authorizes to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to assist the United Nations or other organizations to perform functions which would otherwise be performed by the Agency under this Act.

Provides that not more than 10 percent of the funds appropriated may be used by the Agency for administrative purposes.

To Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.R. 10788 -- Mr. Kyros

Authorizes the President, through the temporary Vietnam Children's Care Agency, to enter into arrangements with the Government of South Vietnam to provide assistance in improving the welfare of children in South Vietnam and to facilitate the adoption of orphaned or abandoned Vietnamese children, particularly children of United States fathers.

Authorizes necessary funds to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Authorizes additional funds that may be necessary to assist the United Nations or any other multilateral or nonprofit organization to perform functions which would otherwise be performed by the Agency under this Act.

To Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.R. 10900 -- Mr. Kastenmeier

Same as S. 2497. To Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.R. 11796 -- Mr. Dwyer

Same as H.R. 10900. To Committee on Foreign Affairs.

## IV. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ADOPTION (SELECTION OF STATEMENTS AND ARTICLES)

1. Interracial Adoptions

- a. "The Multiracial Family", by Gary Booten, New York Times Magazine, September 26, 1971.
- b. "Adoption Crises: White Families, Black Children", Washington Post, June 13, 1971.
- c. "The New Face of Adoption", Newsweek, September 13, 1971.
- d. "Hard-to-Place Children", Washington Star, May 30, 1971.

2. Single Parent Adoption

- a. "One Parent Adoptions", Ethel Branham, Children, Vol. 17, No. 3, May-June 1970.

3. Adoption and Vietnam

- a. Congressional Record, 92d Congress, 1st Session, Harrison A. Williams, September 8, 1971.
- b. The Special Needs of Vietnamese Children -- A Critique, Wells Klein, General Director, International Social Service, American Branch, Inc.

4. ARENA Program

- a. "Adoption Resource Exchange", Editors' page, Child Welfare Volume XLVII, No. 1, January 1968.
- b. "ARENA Breaks the Adoption Barrier", Readers Digest, November 1970.

5. "Black Market" Babies

- a. "Black Market Babies: Couples Pay Big Fees to Get Children Fast", Wall Street Journal, September 14, 1971.
- b. "Supply of Adoptable White Babies Shrinks", New York Times, Sunday, July 18, 1971.

1. Interracial Adoptions

# The multiracial family

By **GARY BROOTEN**

**N**OT long ago, a black youth confronted a Minnesota editor who had just given a talk on how interracial adoption was working out in his family.

"Is this the 'in' thing now for you white people?" the young man asked angrily.

What do you say to a skeptical black about whites' motives for adopting black children?

The question is certainly pertinent. Interracial adoption—"transracial" to purists — is no longer rare. Surveys indicate that white adoptions of blacks (and "black," incidentally, is socially defined; many of the adopted children are of mixed race) doubled from 1968 to 1969, redoubled from 1969 to

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1970, and are expected to do the same this year.

White-black adoptions are by and large a middle-class phenomenon, although the adopting couples vary greatly in education, income, occupation and religion. The typical couple, if such an entity exists, want a child but can't have one biologically or don't want to add to the population. When they investigate adoption, they find that white babies are scarce and that thousands of black babies need homes.

Some couples, adoption agencies report, come in with "white man's burden" or rescue fantasies, but most of these people drop out during orientation. As one father put it, "It's one thing to love humanity at a meeting, but it's something else walking the floor at 2 in the morning."

The editor managed a reply to

his black inquisitor. "It's not an 'in' thing," he told him. "It's something you do because you think it's right. My wife and I could waste all our time agonizing over our motives. Deep down, did we want to make this child white? Or something? But it's what we do now that matters."

**W**HAT adopting parents do and why they do it differs from family to family to family. If there is a common thread, one psychiatrist speculates that it is a healthy self-assurance and a lack of strong ethnic ties.

Fourteen years ago, a newlywed Houston couple, Bob and Martha Gwyn, started worrying about the population explosion. They decided to have two natural children and adopt "unwanted" Mexican-American youngsters to fill out their family. Today he's a professor at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and their family bears little relation to their early decision. They have one biological child, one Chinese, one Korean-black, one Vietnamese,



three black children—and only one Chicano, bubbly 6-year-old Brian.

Few interracial broods are this large, but the Gwyns' account of how theirs grew is similar to that of other adopting couples. They wanted children, found children of other races who needed homes—and took them in.

There are other motives, of course, but they are far from any desire to do the "in" thing. The Howard Knutsons of Burnsville, Minn., had three boys and wanted a girl. They decided to adopt a black girl. "Then we thought that Amy should have a sister," Mr. Knutson says, "so we adopted another black girl." Like many other couples, the Knutsons hoped that the adoptions would enhance the boys' understanding of race issues.

It did.

Interracial adoption doesn't necessarily improve racial understanding among the family elders. Grandparents are difficult to win over. Sometimes the adoption results in a complete break.

When one adopting father introduced his new son, the grandfather interrupted with a curt "Don't ever bring that child here again."

Such an outright break is unusual. A permanent coolness is more common. Some grandparents take the adoption as a personal affront. A Philadelphia woman described her mother's reaction: "She made it clear that it wasn't in keeping with the family's social status. She's always perfectly polite and proper. It's just that she treats our son as if he were—well, a little lame."

Much grandparental resistance is based on fears about what people will think. This usually lessens as the anxiety fades. A teacher in a small Arkansas city was so afraid she would lose her job that she wouldn't even meet the plane when her daughter came home to show her the baby. But a Tennessee woman who was afraid of her friends' reactions was surprised and relieved when they praised her out-of-state son's adoption of a black child as "a fine Christian act."

Some grandparental opposition is based on nothing more than apprehension for the adopting couples. "If the grandparents have genuine concern for you," says Earl Gustafson, a lawyer in Duluth who has both biological and adopted children, "they will worry—and often advise against white-black adoptions." And a mother points out, "My folks were worried sick before I had my biological children, too."

**A**LTHOUGH relatively few families encounter community problems, there is certainly no reason to believe that white-black adoption is viewed with general approval, let alone as an "in" act. In 1966 a California minister gave up his adopted black son after the family suffered such harassment that it made newspaper headlines.

There are occasional hate calls. ("Whatcha gonna do when he gets a white girl pregnant?") One woman reports she has been taunted as a "nigger lover"—and worse. "It drives me right up the wall," she says. "It's frightening to think anyone in this neighborhood could feel threatened by seeing a little boy run past the house."

Friends are often as difficult as strangers. Well-intentioned remarks like "It's wonderful that you could take this child," and references to

biological children as "your own children," bother parents and children alike, because they subtly ascribe an inferior status to the adopted child.

"It's really that we don't have a language for talking about adoption," one mother says. "We're stuck with words that aren't appropriate and they can really threaten the kids. I think it's a problem of adoption though, not race."

**R**EVERSE discrimination may be even more difficult to cope with. Many of the children are so lionized that discipline suffers.

"I've had to bear down extra hard on Jerry," relates one father whose 9-year-old black son has older white brothers. "Jerry gets so much attention

that he tends to regard himself as special—above the rules." Jerry's teachers had let him get by "until he figured all he had to do was smile and it wouldn't matter if he hadn't done his homework." It took a couple of emphatic meetings with school authorities before Jerry began to receive equal treatment.

"Some of this is inverted white racism" says Dr. Jerome F. X. Carroll, a clinical psychologist in Philadelphia and consultant on adoptions. "They're sometimes treated like cripples," he says. "Cripes, I wouldn't want that for my kid."

**T**HE biggest surprise for adopting couples has been black hostility like that the Minnesota editor faced from the young man who accused whites of trying to be "in" by adopting black babies. Many adopting couples never encounter this unless they've had personal friends turn militant. Nor do all militant blacks agree. But bitter opposition by some blacks and other signs of racial polarization make parents uneasy. Most assign black hostility no more weight than white hostility, but it has spotlighted a problem none foresaw 10 years ago—identity.

Identity is an issue in all adoptions. But for blacks it looms larger, more significant. The search for a black identity is central to efforts by blacks to alter their circumstances in a society dominated by whites.

As critics see it, white-black adoption leaves the child having to cope simultaneously with adoption and with immersion in white values.

"No matter how broad-minded and tuned-in the family, there's so much unconscious white bias in minute-by-minute family living that the child can't escape it," says Mrs. Audrey Russell, a leader in the loosely federated Alliance of Black Social Workers. When black children who have been adopted by whites grow up, she says, they won't be able to reconcile their self-image with the status prescribed for them by a racist society.

There's some evidence for this. One black youth, raised among whites on the philosophy that "color makes no difference," broke down as a college freshman when his Middle West campus began to polarize. "I'm black on the outside and white on the inside," he told friends. "I don't know who I am." A transfer didn't help, and he dropped out for psychiatric care. In a 1966 follow-up of 15 Los Angeles adoptions, the two serious problems—both in school-age children—centered on identity.

Many parents agree that it "might be better," for such reasons, if black homes could be found for the children; but this draws debate. "If you tell a child that because he's black he belongs in a black family in a black neighborhood, what kind of a message is that?" asks Clayton Hagen, director of adoption for Minnesota's Lutheran Social Services. "We've got to break these lines which strengthen racism." (He doesn't shrink from a corollary: "Maybe we should tell people we can no longer place white children in white families in white ghettos.")

For parents, the issue is practical: Their black child will be treated differently, when he's on his own, from their white child; it follows that they have to prepare him differently. Most try a dual strategy based on professional advice and the experience of the last 10 years: Teach each child to be proud of his racial heritage; emphasize individual worth and ethical values above race.

Most adopting parents try to give black friends, black art, black literature and culture an honored (but not dominating) place in the home. Many find that black studies begun out of parental duty have evolved into a fascinating pursuit.

There are pitfalls in emphasizing racial heritage. "If you announce every hour on the hour that black is beautiful," one mother remarks, "pretty soon that kid's going to wonder." Group sessions among parents of adopted Chinese

children a few years ago revealed that one father's diligence in preparing his daughter "to face future race problems" actually was expressing his own racial hostility; he was holding her at a distance by harping on her race. That's one hazard of interracial adoption. The goal is balance, and the ideal is to listen for subtle clues of anxiety and to respond on an upbeat.

"My first father was brown and my first mother was white," one 6-year-old remarked thoughtfully.

"Well," said her mother, "don't you think it's lucky to have some of both?"—a direct response, respectful of both races, that left the child beaming; she hadn't thought of that.

In most interracial families, the parents stress moral values, religious culture, the family as a value in itself, the beauty of human diversity and the child's own uniqueness. "He'll figure out black identity later," says the Rev. Charles Akre, a Minnesotan

whose black son is 8. "First he's Jeff Akre, one of a kind, and he's going to make his own terms with the world."

Dr. Samuel C. Bullock, a black psychiatrist and consultant to New York's Louise Wise Services, doubts that anyone knows enough about identity development to make a final judgment about its role in interracial adoption.

The problem is genuine, he says, especially if the child is in an all-white setting. But he adds: "All blacks have had to go through some fairly intense conflicts about their identity. This is a special case, but I wonder if it's really all that far removed from the general problem."

As any campus counselor knows, too, identity isn't a problem for blacks alone. Some parents think the adopted blacks may even have some advantages, one of them being the parents' unusual concern about identity. Other things being equal, the racial difference could help some of the children establish their independence. Indeed, a few already have used it as a weapon of adolescent rebellion. One couple with an adopted black teen-ager admits wincing when their son, in fits of anger, has called one of them "whitey" or

"honkey." But they have refused to take that kind of bait, and gradually the boy has abandoned it. Other parents philosophize that their children's adolescent "black anger," though discomfiting, may be less destructive for the children than, say, drugs.

Is interracial adoption working? It's not a simple question.

There have been some outright failures. Mrs. Muriel McCrea, Montreal pioneer of interracial placements, says the failures have come "not because of color, but because we concentrated so much on interpreting color and the problems it might cause that we forgot to tell applicants about adoption, and didn't get to know them too awfully well as people."

The evidence on lesser failures—serious adjustment problems—is fragmentary. Canadian sociologist H. David Kirk, author of the classic adoption study "Shared Fate" and father of adopted black teenagers, says it's "too early to do a good piece of research" on outcomes.

The nearest so far are studies of American Indians in white homes; the most comprehensive, by Dr. David Fanshel of Columbia, ends at age 6. ("Society," says Fanshel, "can be reassured. So far it's working.") Some follow-ups of black adoptions have shown favorable findings, but their significance is doubtful. A long-term study of 25 adoptive families now is under way at the Louise Wise agency. "Very frankly," says Mrs. Florence G. Kreech, the director, "I don't think the field as a whole has any very solid information on the results."

Some experts say interracial adoption has encouraged new thinking about adoption, and about the family itself; a few consider it an exciting new laboratory of family dynamics. It could influence racial attitudes, if only as a conspicuous demonstration of the parents' commitment to racial harmony.

But its logic lies in the circumstances of children who lack homes, and in the character and values of the adopting couples. As to the question of whether, on balance, it's a good thing—well, "There's just no yes or no answer," says Kenneth Knowlton, father of a mixed family. "It's a choice between one kind of a life and another. ■

# 'Hard-to-Place' Children

By PAT LEWIS  
Staff Writer

Tom D. has large, dark brown eyes and a cute, chubby face. But he's not like other little boys, because he has no parents. He was put up for adoption shortly after he was born in March, 1970. Black, with light-colored skin, he also has an enlarged heart and will have to have open heart surgery in five or six years.

One of his friends is Susie J. She's now five years old and still without parents. She's a friendly, healthy little black girl with dark skin and curly hair.

Then there's John T., who's also healthy and black. He has lived in three foster homes in his seven years and he can't stay in his present home indefinitely.

Tom, Susie and John are not alone in their situations. There are thousands of children like them who adoption agencies consider "hard-to-place" because they are older, black, have a physical or emotional problem, or must be placed with a sibling.

But Tom, Susie and John are lucky in one respect—they are available for adoption.

## In Limbo

There are other such children unavailable for adoption—many of them stranded in foster homes because of a reluctance by the courts to release them. But parents are increasingly eager to adopt hard-to-place children because of a shortage of healthy white infants.

"We do have many children in limbo," said Mrs. Elizabeth Alexander, chief of Licensing and Consultant Services for the District.

"We know they are never going to get back to their natural homes, and that these children are entitled to adoptive homes. When we can't get the legal backing, we do the next best thing—put them in foster homes. But that's second best."

Mrs. Alexander strongly favors the courts' support of a proposal which would limit the children's stay under foster care. "If every effort has been made to return a child to his natural home and there is no reaction from his parents after two years, then the courts should take the responsibility of releasing him," Mrs. Alexander said.

Albert Russo, associate director of the D.C. Social Services Administration, also favors the idea. The courts, he said "should be more liberal in the kinds of commitments they place on the children so they may be freed for adoption."

The District now has from 25 to 40 hard-to-place children, a D.C. Social Service Administration official said. In 1970, 129 children were adopted.

There are 1,890 children under foster care. (Not all children under foster care will need adoption; some are there for only a short time.)

Prince Georges County has 25 to 30 children available for adoption and 750 under foster care.

Montgomery County now has two hard-to-place children ready for adoption, 517 under foster care and 97 under pre-adoptive care.

## Resources Exchange

In Maryland, there are 110 hard-to-place children registered with the State Resource Exchange. Agencies having trouble placing children or finding children for parents may register both parents and children with the exchange.

Virginia also has an exchange and 93 children are currently registered. About five children are available for adoption in Alexandria. The city's children under foster care hovers between 225 and 230.

Arlington has one sibling group available for adoption and 250 to 300 under foster care.

Seven hard-to-place children are available in Fairfax County, which has approximately 500 under foster care.

Mrs. Alexander and Russo are also hopeful for subsidized adoption. It would enable adoption by prospective parents with limited incomes.

In December, the SSA requested an opinion from the Corporation Counsel on whether existing statutes would allow subsidized adoption. The counsel has not yet replied.

Some private adoption agencies use subsidized adoption and Maryland has such a plan. However, Maryland officials aren't satisfied with the state's program.

## Manpower Shortage

"It does not underwrite medical expenses and the income scale for determining which families are eligible is too low," said Mrs. Elizabeth C. Taylor, supervisor of the Maryland Resource Exchange.

For a family of two, the income must be under \$1,826; three, \$5,651; four, \$6,210; five, \$7,954, and six, \$9,253.

Maryland's Social Services Administration has another problem—manpower. SSA adoption staffs in Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties recently were cut in half to two full-time employees and one part-time employee.

"The cut makes it harder because we can't do as much placing," Mrs. Taylor said. "It's a long job and requires careful work and time with the adoptive families, foster family and the child."

Adoption authorities generally try to find black homes for black or biracial children and, if none are available, consider white homes. "However," Russo said, "we need to be absolutely sure that these kinds of interracial placements will be in the best interests of the parents and children."

More and more black couples are applying for adoption. They are seen immediately since the majority of the hard-to-place children are black. But more black couples are still needed.

Authorities are also concerned about unscrupulous persons taking advantage of the adoption situation. In Maryland, a mother has the right to give her child to whomsoever she wishes. If a mother can be persuaded into giving her child up, the promoters can charge high prices to parents weary of waiting in long lines for adoption.

"We are concerned that the children will not go to parents who are best for them," said Mrs. Rosine Bender, adoption supervisor for Montgomery County Social Services. "We hope to point out these practices and perhaps change the law."

A group of parents also concerned with hard-to-place adoptions is the Council on Adoptable Children (COAC—360-3167). Started in Ann Arbor, Mich., COAC now has

several chapters across the country, including a new chapter in this area.

Inspired by Tom and Suzanne Jones, the local group helps adoption agencies find parents for children with special needs and talks to prospective adoptive parents. Many of the parents have adopted hard-to-place children themselves.

The Joneses, who adopted a biracial daughter while in Ann Arbor, show a slide-talk show to parents and civic and school groups.

## Attitude

The Joneses feel the parents' attitude is crucial in interracial adoptions. And, Mrs. Jones said, "It's our reaction to people's questions that is important. We don't try to flaunt the fact that we have a biracial child, nor do we try to hide it."

Mr. and Mrs. Ira Landsman of Silver Spring have adopted two hard-to-place children. A daughter has a congenital heart defect. She has had open heart surgery and will have another operation soon. The Landsmans will receive medical assistance until the final operation. Their son is of Negro-Caucasian parents.

The Landsmans have always lived in an integrated neighborhood. "To us a child is a child," Mrs. Landsman said.

"Right now we can't answer questions about what happens when he gets older. We'll just try to give him a positive atmosphere."

The Joe Rainey of Bethesda, had a child of their own before adopting a Negro-Caucasian daughter. They had to face one of the early problems of interracial adoption—acceptance by relatives.

Mrs. Rainey told of her parents-in-law's first visit with their new granddaughter:

"It was awkward at first. And not until their second visit was my mother-in-law real in her love for the child. But when they saw the baby crying and that she needed to be picked up, they were no longer talking in abstractions. She was something real and human and they loved her more and more."

The Rainey's are members of COAC and are eager for their daughter to meet other children in the same situation and to communicate with other parents about their experiences.

Interracial adoption is so new that most of the children are still young, and problems of living in a white family are not fully known. However, some members of the black community are opposed to white families adopting black or biracial children. One black opponent said parents will never know the subtleties of prejudice their adopted children will have to cope with.

Mrs. Peg Winegarden, adoption supervisor at the Family and Child Services Adoption Agency, said:

"It's much too early to know all the problems. The world is changing; it's hard to say what it will be like in 10 to 15 years when the children are older."

# Adoption Crisis: White Families, Black Children

By Peter Benchley

Newsweek Feature Service

It used to be that childlessness was a matter of personal choice. A couple that wanted children but was unable to have any could simply and easily adopt. Usually, moreover, they could specify not only sex but ethnic and religious background as well.

Today, though, a white couple that wants to adopt a healthy white baby faces the agony of long, sometimes interminable delays, countless flat rejections, huge expenses and — because of some Byzantine state laws — the prospect that even if they do get a child, it may be taken from them.

For in the past couple of years, the market in white children has virtually evaporated.

There are still a great number of illegitimate births every year in the United States (more than 300,000 annually, according to federal statistics) and the adoption mill still has about 250,000 children. But most fall into one of three categories generally regarded as extremely difficult to place.

They are either (1) black or racially mixed, (2) handicapped or (3) too old because they have shuttled from one foster home to another until they are well out of infancy.

Some adoption agencies have shut down their operations for white children and are refusing applications. Others still try to fill re-

quests but with an increasing sense of futility.

"It is impossible to find a white infant," says the director of a New York adoption service. "The number of white babies started to decline about two years ago as it became more acceptable for mothers to keep their babies and as birth-control measures became more widely used."

Liberalized abortion laws have contributed further to the infant shortage. In 1963, there were about 18,000 legal abortions performed in the United States. Last year the figure had climbed to 200,000. Because of all the obvious social and economic factors that work against the poor and the black, most of the mothers who have taken advantage of the new laws have been white.

The result, says a report from the research center of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), is that nationwide there now are 116 approved white homes for every 100 white children and only 39 such homes for every 100 nonwhite kids.

In some cities—notably New York—the ratios are even worse. "There are 10 white families for each child," reports one city official, "and 10 black children for each family."

Recently, the muddle has been compounded by three legal battles—all in New York and all, coincidentally, involving the same issue: the justice of the state's adoption law, permitting the natural mother to have a

change of heart and reclaim her child at any time prior to the final legal adoption (which can take a year or more).

In one case, a 3-year-old was taken from the adoptive parents, and television viewers saw the child crying for his "mommy" as he was led away by his natural mother. In another, the famous "Baby Leonore" DeMartino case, the adoptive parents moved to Florida where more sympathetic laws may thwart the natural mother's attempt to reclaim her child.

Faced with the terrible prospect of losing a child they are fighting so hard to get, some prospective parents have withdrawn their applications altogether. Others are trying desperately to find less orthodox ways of obtaining children.

Some are dealing with agencies that literally import babies, a complex procedure but one that usually gives greater assurance that a child won't be reclaimed. Babies are coming from as near as Canada and as far away as Korea.

But most couples realize that the chances of losing an adoptive child are statistically miniscule and they are, therefore, exhausting every conceivable means to get a child in their homes.

Those who can afford substantial legal fees are working through the "gray market" which are nonagency adoptions arranged privately by lawyers between the natural mother and the adoptive parents. (These

adoptions are legal in all states except Connecticut and Delaware.)

One couple, who wanted a child not only white but Jewish, waited for months before they were privileged to pay a lawyer \$6,000 for arranging the adoption. A baby girl was flown cross-country (first class) and now the parents are poorer but delighted.

Those of less ample means are still scouring every agency they hear about. "We've been to about 35 or 40 agencies, from Maine to Texas, over the past 18 months," says a New Jersey arts critic. "About 45 per cent of them told us they'd closed out their service in Caucasian babies. The others took our name but I don't imagine we'll ever hear from them."

"So now we're beginning to consider the multiracial aspect. It's a horrible emotional problem. Do we have the stability? Are we really bigoted after all? Can we cope? You find yourself thinking you could probably handle a child with Asian or Indian blood, but what about a black baby? You wonder what kind of person you really are."

The agencies wonder, too, and the problem makes it difficult to place black or other minority children with even the most eager white families. Are they expressing parental need or white liberalism? Are they driven by love or social conscience? Are they used to associating with blacks or are they ex-

pressing a need to test themselves?

Some states insist that black children can only be placed in white families that already have children; in other words, if you don't have a baby, you can't get one. Some states have explicit laws against transracial adoptions.

In March, the CWLA issued recommendations for loosening parental requirements for adoption on the logical theory that, though some 170,000 babies are adopted in the United States every year, at least 80,000 more could be adopted--and, thus, saved from spending

their early years either in a series of foster homes or, worse still, in institutions.

Most are black, but thousands of others are handicapped or too old to be appealing to most parents; in some cases they were removed early from their natural parents because of a family tragedy or proven child abuse.

The CWLA urges, among other things, that agencies relax their standards on race, religion, age and income of parents. Even single men and women are now being more readily considered as satisfactory adoptive parents.

# The New Face of Adoption

CRS-37

BY JOSEPH MORGENSTERN

**SPECIAL REPORT**

Once upon a time, when there were plenty of orphans in the United States but not so many adults willing to give them homes, agencies tried to find the perfect adoptable baby. It had newly been born to a strong, young, unmarried girl who was ashamed of herself. It had blue eyes (except when the eyes of its adoptive parents-to-be were brown). Its skin was white as Ivory Snow. Its health, intelligence and vivacity were covered by a money-back agency guarantee.

Later on, shortly after World War II, it seemed as if the supply of adoptable babies was running short, while more and more adults wanted to adopt. So agencies began searching for the perfect adoptive home. It was surrounded by grass, then a picket fence, then suburbs. It contained one white man and one white woman, legally married, devout, respected in their community, good eaters, prosperous but still unhappy because they couldn't have a baby of their own.

Now, in this imperfect present, homeless children are scattered around the world like throwaway bottles. The first World Conference on Adoption and Foster Placement will be held later this month in Milan, Italy. In this country the Federal government says at least 60,000 children need homes. Of those, 40,000 are non-white. The Child Welfare League of America thinks there are more: perhaps 80,000 non-white, plus 110,000 in foster homes and institutions who haven't been placed in permanent adoptive homes because they're in legal limbo or handicapped or too old to be

wanted. On the orphan circuit you're a geriatric loser if you've hit kindergarten.

Anywhere between 60,000 and 190,000 children, then. Nobody knows for sure. Americans keep computerized tabs on credit ratings and airline seats; they publish nationwide litter lists describing the age, sex and physical characteristics of thoroughbred puppies. But no one keeps comprehensive count of this hidden nation of children who need permanent homes and parents. No one even mentions the 10,000 to 20,000 babies of mixed blood who've been sired by Americans in Vietnam and have little hope of adoption in the U.S.

What is known is that there are nearly 2.5 million children under 18 in the United States today who are adopted. There were about 171,000 legal adoptions in 1969, the latest year for which statistics are available. Slightly fewer than half of these children were adopted by stepparents or relatives, the rest by persons unrelated to them. Only 19,000 of those adoptions involved minority children. As Billie Holiday used to sing: "God bless the child who's got his own, who's got his own..."

*Our new daughter is six months old, her name is Anna Grace, and I'd love to show some baby pictures here but don't dare. At this point I don't even dare say where we got her, from what agency, state or country, for fear of attracting the natural mother's attention. Fear is endemic to adoption where we live. Under the laws and practices of New York State, a natural mother can reclaim her child from its adoptive parents any time until the adoption becomes final, which takes a minimum of six months and sometimes much longer. This is what Olga Scarpetta sought to do late this spring with her baby Lenore, and this is why Nick and Joan DeMartino, with whom the child had been placed for adoption, had to flee with her to Florida. Adoption is a lottery, and we've drawn the grandest of grand prizes. To win and then lose would be intolerable.*

The DeMartino case may have scared off a few prospective parents for a while, but it isn't the main reason why, with a few regional exceptions, the national trend in adoption has been static or slightly down. One major factor is minority placement. Federal figures show no significant increase in adoption of non-white children, even though the population is growing and adoption agencies are trying to place the children as they've never tried before. The other factor is white babies. They're vanishing from the market.

Applicants for white infants in some parts of the country can look forward to a two-year wait. Elsewhere, agencies are simply closing their application lists for white infants, and a black market is opening. The price per little white head may go as high as \$1,000 in Michigan. In California, there are stories of couples who offer doctors and lawyers as much as \$10,000 cash. (A campaign has begun in California, Illinois and elsewhere to outlaw non-agency adoption, which thrives on black markets and offers little or no guidance to adopting parents or surrendering parents.) Twenty years ago, thousands of babies languished in California institutions and foster homes while would-be parents had to buy children on the black market because they were disqualified by laws requiring an adoptive male to be more than 43 years old, his wife to be at least 38 and one of them to be infertile. Now all those restrictive laws are gone, and the bootie is on the other foot.

One reason for the shortage of white babies is legal abortion and the Pill. (Some adoption experts believe abortion and contraception have begun to reduce the availability of non-white infants as well.) Another reason is that increasing numbers of unwed white mothers are having their babies and

"We cannot wait until society is prepared," insists Clayton H. Hagen, adoption supervisor of the Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. The important question is what needs to be done now, and transracial adoption is a way to do it. If an adoptive parent can make a child feel he's someone of value, and help him value others, that may be all the parent needs to worry about at the moment. "If the child has a good concept of himself," Hagen says, "he can meet all the problems we fear he'll encounter, and not be overcome." Hagen is a leader in new thinking about adoption, and transracial placements at his agency have been doubling annually. "That wouldn't be happening," he says, "if people were not in general happy about the way things are going."

But the happiness is not universal. "It's a cruel trick to play on a child," says Allen Coates, a spokesman for the National Association of Black Social Workers. Dr.

Alvin Poussaint, a black psychiatrist, thinks black caseworkers are almost essential to screen conscious and unconscious attitudes in white applicants, and he's skeptical of white liberals who "might keep telling the child that color doesn't matter."

Transracial adoption first came to prominence in this country when some 2,300 Korean orphans were brought here in the 1950s, but it remains statistically insignificant in most areas today, even though the placement of biracial and multiracial children with white families is distinctly on the upswing. In Los Angeles, only 130 of the 25,500 children placed by the County Department of Adoptions since its inception in 1949 have been blacks placed with white families. Billboards and public-service TV commercials tell people how easy it is to adopt a black child these days. What they don't say openly is that they're aimed at black families who want to adopt. Most agencies and judges, no more adventurous than the country at large and often much less so, place black children in white homes only as a last resort. As a result, transracial adoption offers little immediate hope to those 40,000, 80,000 or however many thousand non-white children who need permanent homes this very day.

In the past, when white Americans spun those tales of matching perfect babies to perfect homes, it wasn't just for their own bemusement. Blacks believed them too. They believed that to adopt a child you had to have a house, car, Ivy League diploma and Philadelphia lawyer. Often, of course, they were right. Until the 1960s, adoption was almost exclusively a white, middle-class affair. Adoption mentioned by the courts, that is. There are more unofficial adoptions in the black communities," according to a study by the U.S. Children's Bureau and

keeping them. Just how long they'll keep them, though, remains to be seen. "A mother now is much more apt to take her baby home and take care of it as long as it's still a toy," says Elton Klibanoff of the Massachusetts Commission on Adoption and Foster Care. "Once the child has reached the age where he can do things for himself and may get in the mother's way, the mother will put the child into foster care. This is a very cruel thing. The older child's chances for an upbringing in a healthy home have been greatly diminished." In San Francisco, sometimes a bellwether for youth trends, mothers 12 to 15 years old are starting to bring their babies in for adoption once they find out they can't live within welfare allowances.

*Our baby is white and has beautiful blue eyes. Our Siberian husky pup also has blue eyes. We tracked the puppy down through one of those national litter lists, but we never said we wanted a white baby. We asked only that it come from healthy and, hopefully, drug-free parents. My wife hoped the baby would be black; I had misgivings about that. Not because of dumb questions we'd run into on the streets, or disparaging remarks in supermarkets. The really hard question is what you're doing to a black baby's future when you give him white parents in a race-crazy society. I may have stopped posing the question by the next time we adopt, but I can't deny that it frightened me this time.*

George Washington University, "than of local adoptions through agencies."

Unofficial adoption means the black custom of "taking in" children of relatives or friends. It is an Old World thing. It exists in the extended family system of West Africa, where your tribe has to take you in, and in the ghettos of Birmingham or Pittsburgh. Of the 184,000 non-white babies born out of wedlock in 1968, says the National Urban League, some 165,000, or 90 per cent, were informally adopted or retained in existing families.

Even in Black Africa, though, the extended family system is under severe pressure from urbanization and industrialization. Homeless children wander the streets of Nairobi, and Kenya is setting up its first state adoption agency. Similarly, in Black America, the old system is under pressure from poverty, unemployment and a welfare system that hits the family structure like a wrecking ball. Informal adoption can only be a makeshift response to such vast social dislocation, and a saturation point must someday be reached. Out of the turmoil, however, another response may be emerging. In many parts of the country adoption workers are predicting an imminent upturn in the number of black families adopting black children formally, through agencies and the courts.

They base their predictions on hunch, hope, changing attitudes and a few states and cities where a measurable upturn has actually begun. While over-all adoptions were down 7 per cent in Georgia last year, the number of black babies placed with black families rose from 12 to 17 per cent of the total. A similar pattern has appeared in the District of Columbia. In Detroit, a black-run group called Homes for Black Children has placed 277 children since it opened in 1969. "There's no reason why this couldn't be done elsewhere or couldn't have been done before," says co-director Sydney Duncan. "There are plenty of qualified black families who'd like to adopt a child. There always have been."

One stumbling block, Duncan notes, has been traditional black fear of white bureaucracy. "The black person says to himself, 'If I adopt a child I'll have to go to court. Man, I can't do that. That's the cops.' We not only show them they don't have to be afraid of the court procedure, but help them put together their application and cut through the red tape." Some applicants were born in the South at a time when blacks weren't given birth certificates because they weren't committed as people. Cutting through red tape for them means that the agency must go back to the South and find witnesses who can solemnly swear that said applicant did enter this world at a given place and time. Adoption can be a rebirth for parent as well as child.

A more serious stumbling block has been white insularity and inertia. The civil rights movement called America's attention to a whole infra-nation of need,

but awareness led only slowly to action. The country didn't do much about its drug problem until white kids started shooting up, and it didn't do much about its adoption problem until the supply of white kids started drying up. Now agencies are shedding their old, elitist notions of who's fit to adopt whom. Now they're finally starting to recruit adoptive families in the black community and, predictably, finding them. It's not just the movement of blacks into the economic mainstream, but a movement of the mainstream toward the blacks. "Now," says Kenneth W. Watson of the Chicago Child Care Society, "there is an awareness on the agency's part to help all children waiting for homes."

Agencies that were once concerned exclusively with white adoption are changing their names and attitudes, reaching out into the ghetto to help those who really need it. A few months ago, the Michigan Children's Aid Society merged with several family-and-marriage counseling services. Now it's the Child and Family Services of Michigan. Many changes of agency orientation are long overdue. A few began decades ago and parallel the evolution of America's changing needs. The Free Synagogue Child Adoption Committee was founded in New York in 1916, when Jews were entering the middle class as blacks are

today. By the 1950s it had become Louise Wise Services and undertaken an active program of interracial adoption. Last year, faced with declining adoptions of all races and great numbers of ghetto children who needed homes, the agency expanded its foster-care program. Today, it offers pre-natal and post-natal counseling; it helps young mothers find housing, jobs and day care; it is into the center of society's seamless web.

*Our daughter is an amnesiac. Part of her past is permanently beyond recall. Her birth records are sealed by law, preventing her from finding out who her natural parents are. There was a time when all this secrecy seemed a perfectly logical thing, a necessary thing to protect the sanctity of the nuclear family. Even today Dr. Spock says: "The good agency stands like an impenetrable wall between the two sets of parents." But what of the child, left there in no man's land? Many people today suffer from vague, incurable identity problems. Why should an adopted child have to suffer from a specific and curable one? I don't know if it's wise for adopted children to search out their natural parents when they grow up, and I confess to a fugitive fear or two that we might lose our daughter if she did. But she isn't a chattel. She isn't ours to hang on to or lose. She's hers.*

Many mothers want to know who adopts their child, says Philip Adams, a San Francisco attorney who's been handling independent adoptions since 1943, and many adoptive parents want to meet the natural parents. Adams finds no magic in the traditional anonymities of adoption. A recent series in The New York Daily News told of adopted children who had embarked in later years on consuming, compulsive searches for their natural parents. By the same token, a majority of a group of adults who'd been adopted as children said, during a discussion at the Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, that they would not want to locate their natural parents. Two members of the group had done so and regretted it. "There are doors that should never be opened," one woman said, "and once they are, they are so difficult to shut."

*We've never met the foster mother who cared for our daughter during the first few months of her life. We probably never will, unless we bump into her at an airport or restaurant and the baby says, in her first tinkling words, "There's my real mother, why don't you two creeps give me back to her?" Our only concrete knowledge of the foster mother*



*is her handwriting (a note about the baby's eating and sleeping habits), her taste in clothes (the baby came with a charming dowsy) and her concept of diet (she fattened the kid up like a prize heifer at a county fair). But we also know, from our daughter's behavior, that the foster mother was a calm woman, maybe even a serene one, surely a loving one. How can someone love an infant she knows she's going to lose?*

"I can't picture myself without a baby," says Mrs. Deborah Mara, who has cared for 74 foster children, one or two at a time, since 1939. This in addition to raising four of her own and one adopted child. At 61, the soft-spoken Irish grandmother still wishes she could "have a baby in every room" of her Staten Island, N.Y., house. Her babies usually stay five or six months. When they leave, her husband and children act as though there'd been a death in the family. "I don't approve of that. With the first few, it took my heart right out of me to give them back. But then I told myself, 'You know what you did for them and you know they're not yours. They have to go.'"

Mrs. Mara is a far cry from the old stereotype of the wicked foster mother who took in children for pay, then starved them and beat them like rugs on a clothesline. Foster parenthood fulfills needs on both sides of the crib fence. But it can entail grave risk for foster parents who can't bear to lose a child in their care and attempt to adopt it. Only last week a Massapequa, N.Y., couple who had raised eighteen foster children as well as five of their own, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Polk, lost a confused custody battle over Angela, a 3-year-old Chinese girl who had been in their foster care since she was three months old.

Foster care has also become a kind of sweet Sargasso for thousands of children whose natural parents will neither keep them in their own homes nor let them go entirely free for permanent adoption. "I've had kids come in here who have been in as many as seven foster homes," says Kay Donley of Michigan's Spaulding for Children. "I've even heard judges talk about a 'permanent temporary foster home,' just because they couldn't bring themselves to let the child go for adoption. There are still too many judges in this state and elsewhere who are more concerned with the rights of the parent who has neglected a child than the rights of the child. We've got to get these kids out of foster homes. That's where the thrust has to be."

The thrust has begun, but slowly. At what point does a judge tell a natural parent, "Sorry, but you've lost your child forever"? In some states a child isn't legally abandoned if the natural parent sends an annual birthday or Christmas card; "Happy Birthday to Johnny. Better luck next year." Part of the thrust consists of legislative campaigns to abolish such Hallmark parenthood and shorten the time required for a declaration of abandon-

ment or permanent neglect. Another part consists of forcing agencies to conduct constant, case-by-case inventories to find out why children are in long-term foster care and, when possible, to spring them from their legal limbo.

This means helping the natural parent make a clear-cut decision to keep or not keep a child. Failing that, it means urging the court to make one. It means an activist role which some basically conservative agencies resist, just as they've resisted the idea of compulsory inventories as an infringement on their own casework. Other agencies, though, have acknowledged the need for activism and sound accounting procedures, and a new search for adoptable children is under way. In the past six months in Los Angeles alone, the County Department of Adoptions, working with the Department of Social Services, has freed 120 children from long-term foster care; 97 already have permanent homes.

One way in which agencies and government are now finding homes for children is by subsidizing adoption. You can't buy love, but you can buy fertilizer for love's soil. This is a revolutionary notion in a situation that should not have needed a revolution. Instead of paying adults to be temporary foster parents, you pay them to be permanent adoptive parents. Before adoption could be subsidized, though, as it already is in ten states, institutions and individuals had to rethink their notions of that perfect adoptive family. Now they're recognizing belatedly that a poor family can be as richly loving as a wealthy one. "Oilcloth is just as good as carpet," one adoption worker says. "It's even better to play with paints on." In Illinois, where adoptive parents get lower subsidies than foster parents, the majority of foster parents are still opting for adoption. This decision is unex-

pectedly saving the state millions each year, says Nicholas Stevenson, a leading Chicago adoption expert. "The parents are actually losing money on the deal, but they seem to have the idea that 'it's our kid and we'll sacrifice for him.'"

*My daughter has flung herself over from her back to her stomach. She tries crawling toward a big felt ball near the corner of her playpen, but crawling is for November or December; in September she can't pull it off. She lunges forward, falls back, wills herself an inch or so forward on her elbows with one huge, final effort, then collapses on the playpen floor in utter exhaustion and tears. As she weeps, forehead on right forearm, left fist pounding the floor, I think of Willy Loman near the end of his rope. That*

*this usually joyous baby will weep and battle and laugh her way into young womanhood and beyond is barely imaginable. That she was brought to us by an adoption agency seems perfectly plausible. We saw each other's want ads. She needed a home, we had one.*

The U.S. is an exuberantly mercantile nation, and now it is merchandising children. Newspapers run adoption columns and Adoptable-Baby-of-the-Week photos. Like helicopter traffic reports on radio, adoption features on television are becoming a prominent part of the mediascape. The prototype, the adoptive granddaddy of them all, is "The Ben Hunter Show" on KTTV in Los Angeles. Since it began in 1967, the program, sponsored by the County Department of Adoptions, has placed some 600 "special needs" children. The idea of merchandising young flesh is repugnant to some adoption workers, and there's certainly a pornographic component in the appeal of all these TV shows: zoom

in on a chortling 2-year-old with acute anemia, cut to a 4-year-old hemophiliac, cut to an 8-year-old senior citizen, dissolve to a tiny girl born deformed and unable to walk—no, she was the subject of a recent Detroit Sunday News adoption column. Yet the column and shows do tangible wonders. Couples came forward last month to adopt three of the four children loosely described above. The fourth, the child with severe physical defects, may also be close to placement. Less tangibly, the column and shows may be instrumental in, or symptomatic of, changing public ideas of hard-to-place kids and easy-to-place kids and what adoption is all about. Last month a California agency placed a complete Indian family of five children under the same adoptive roof. It may only be a straw in the wind, but some straw.

"We've reached the point where the term 'easily placed' extends to almost any normal, healthy child of any race up to school age," says Emmett Turner, himself an orphan and the adoption specialist with the Michigan Office of Youth Services. "This is almost a complete turnaround from earlier years. It's really an exciting time to be around." At Michigan's Child and Family Services, casework director Phyllis Cornell says: "We're beginning to have trouble locating biracial and even black pre-schoolers for the families that want them. The focus now is going to be on placing older children and handicapped children."

Michigan is admittedly a special case, one of the few areas where over-all adoption figures are sharply up. It has some of the most liberal adoption laws in the nation. Judges may no longer consider race, culture or other environmental factors in deciding a child's adoption, and may consider religion only if the child is more than 7 years old. Elsewhere one finds a crazy quilt of restrictive, antiquated laws. One also finds bewildering variations in the length of time a mother has in which to change her mind after she's surrendered a child for adoption. In New York State, where much recent social legislation has been retrograde, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller vetoed a com-

promise measure that would have reduced the period of indecision from a minimum of six months to a maximum of 30 days. Only sixteen states have put a definite end to parental rights at the moment the mother or father signs a surrender document and hands the baby over to an agency. This eliminates the intermediate step of foster care in many cases, and avoids the nightmarish ambiguities of a DeMartino-Scarpetta contest, where the baby is almost adopted but not quite.

Yet special cases and special states of mind are on the increase. The most striking nationwide change involves religion. Recently the New Jersey Supreme Court reviewed a county court's refusal to grant an adoption to a couple who testified they didn't believe in a Supreme Being. Far from siding with Supreme Beings, this Supreme Court declared that such a disqualification of parents on religious grounds violates their First Amendment rights. Lip service is still paid to religion in most places—Catholic babies should go to Catholic homes, Jewish babies to Jewish homes, and so forth. Down in the fine print, though, many state laws now require religious matching only "wherever practicable"—and with the number of non-white children who need homes it's decreasingly practicable. There is also a new attitude toward adoption within the Roman Catholic Church. One big-city Catholic adoption official says the church's traditional resistance to non-Catholic placement has gone

by the boards and "the applicants determine the policy, not the other way around." Babies at the Catholic New York Foundling Hospital are no longer given baptism, and they are placed, when circumstances dictate, with non-Catholic families.

Some of the most influential notions in adoption have come from Clayton Hagen in Minneapolis and Betty Schultz, of the Lutheran Child and Family Services in Chicago. Their "enabling approach" concentrates on enabling families to adopt by giving them help and information about adoption, not screening them to see if they're fit. Critics of the approach, which does away with those inspections of eating, sleeping, working and praying habits, feel an

agency must exercise judgment and sometimes veto applicants. Hagen and Schultz provide for a veto in some cases, but their method is unquestionably more educational than judgmental. It seeks to develop a relationship based on mutual goals and respect, rather than to cast applicants as children and the agency as omnipotent father.

Necessity is clearly the mother of adoption. There are too many children and too few potential parents, and so new pairings and permutations must be tried out. Adopted children are being brought into large existing families as well as childless ones. Exotic racial mixtures are becoming an allure instead of an impediment. A small but growing

number of people who can have children of their own are having only one or two, out of concern for population problems, and adopting others. A few children are being placed with single parents, though less often than the media's fascination with such cases might suggest. One prominent adoption expert in the Midwest expects applications soon from communal families, and thinks the idea is "very feasible indeed."

And it is not just the institution of adoption that's being redefined. At a time when the entire human family may be menaced, people are beginning to question the importance of traditional blood ties. In a period of vast social change and experimentation, they are putting new constructions on the terms "parent" and "family." "In the broadest possible context," says Chicago's Kenneth Watson, "my definition of a family is a 'nurture base' which is able to meet the needs of the developing child while at the same time continuing to meet the needs of other members, to the satisfaction of all." Adoption, says Clayton Hagen, depends on how you define the words mother and father. "If you define them in terms of biological reproduction, then adoption may be impossible or at least difficult for you. You'll always be raising someone else's child and trying to do the right things for him. Many things are possible, though, if we can understand that parenthood, apart from producing a child, means nurturing him and raising him up and letting him go."

*Our daughter was delivered in a Pontiac sedan, and she seems to be here to stay. It's "The Man Who Came to Dinner." I'd hardly ever touched a baby until three weeks ago, except to hold some toddler's hand in mine for a moment. The most startling thing is her fontanel, the unclosed part of her skull. I touch it barely, as if it were a soap bubble. The rest of her is so chubby and tough, and that soft spot on her head is so vulnerable. It's contagious, too. Some kind of fontanel has been opening in me since she's here. At one point or another the process of adoption has slipped into the process of parenthood, and that gigantic hand around hers could be my father's around mine.*

## White Parents, Black Children: Transracial Adoption

"We had three children and we wanted one more. I was about to go off pills when I read an article about American Indian children and I thought, why not?" That, as Housewife Judy Meredith of Boston explains it, is how she and her husband—both white—came to adopt a 13-month-old Indian called Tommy and a two-week-old black baby named Jackie. The Merediths' decision is part of a growing phenomenon known in sociologist's jargon as transracial adoption. Last year 2,200 black babies

were adopted by white U.S. families, compared with only 700 in 1968. Today there are more than 10,000 "T.R.A. families" in all 50 states and in the ten Canadian provinces.

**Today's Child.** The trend is due partly to changing racial attitudes, but even more to an acute shortage of white babies brought about by the pill, easier abortion laws, and an increasing number of unwed mothers who keep their offspring. Because of the shortage, adoption agencies have changed their tactics. Instead of catering to childless parents in search of "perfect" white infants, many now concentrate on the needs of hard-to-place youngsters who are beyond infancy, physically or emotionally handicapped, black—or even all three. One such is Cindy Skilton, a seven-year-old black girl who wore braces on her legs until last month. She is now the adoptive daughter of Dave and Audrey Skilton of Los Angeles. To get such children out of temporary foster homes and mind-withering institutions, some agencies even cooperate in efforts to ad-

vertise them. Generally this is done by picturing particular children in columns such as "Today's Child," which appears in the Toronto *Telegram* and is syndicated in 130 Ontario newspapers, or on TV programs like the *Ben Hunter Matinee* in Los Angeles and its imitators across the country.

As another spur to adoption of "special-needs children," agencies have relaxed eligibility rules for prospective parents. A capacity to understand youngsters who are "different" has become more important than marital status, youth, education, income, race or religion. Instead of charging fees, private agencies—and public ones in seven states—sometimes offer subsidies to families. Despite such changes, average T.R.A. parents are still much like conventional adoptive parents: 98% are married; most are under 40; well over half are college educated; two-thirds earn at least \$10,000 a year; and a majority go to church regularly. Psychologically, Los Angeles Psychoanalyst Judd Marmor told the National Conference on Social Welfare, T.R.A. families are likely to be self-confident, self-aware, and given to judging people as individuals.

Not that T.R.A. parents are without prejudice. Families in the West or Southwest, for example, have more readily adopted blacks than Indian or Mexican kids. Asian children are often welcomed in the South, though blacks are usually not. A study in Britain recently found that some T.R.A. parents tended "to deny their child's color, or to say he was growing lighter, or that other people thought he was suntanned and did not recognize him as colored. Sometimes the reality was fully accepted only after the very light child had grown noticeably darker after being exposed to bright sunlight on holiday."

Though parents may try to ignore a child's blackness, the child himself cannot. Establishing a sense of identity, hard for many adopted children, is even harder for the T.R.A. youngster. One black Montreal teenager, brought up by whites, refers to Negroes as "them" and to whites as "us." Similarly, Bill Kirk, who was adopted at age three by Ontario Sociologist H. David Kirk and is now 17, reports that "I think like a white man, and when I get out into the world, that is maybe going to hang me up a bit."

**Common Fear.** To deal with these problems, adoptive parents—most notably those in Montreal's Open Door Society, a pioneering organization in transracial adoption—sometimes sponsor seminars on black history or meet to discuss mutual difficulties. They may encourage their children to get together regularly with black youngsters, to study their heritage and to remember their natural parents. For example, Kirk's 18-year-old daughter Debbie, a Puerto Rican, spent a month working at a day-care center in Puerto Rico. She explains: "I wanted to see the people that I was from—the culture, the language and society."

Besides the special problems of mixed adoptions, interracial families must face all the other dilemmas common to conventional adoption. How and when should they tell a child about his origins? How can a youngster learn to master what psychiatrists say is a common fear—that his natural parents abandoned him because there was something wrong with him? How should adoptive parents respond to a youngster's curiosity about his biological family?

Psychoanalyst J. Cotter Hirschberg of the Menninger Foundation favors telling kids the facts between ages four and seven, "when the strength of the family is at its greatest" for the child. He urges mothers to tell about adoption only when they feel comfortable and do not see it as a guilty secret. In addition, he advocates letting children express their feelings freely, especially "their anger at having been separated," and he believes they should be helped to understand that their natural parents gave them up because they could not look after them. As for the common longing to seek out natural parents, American experts are shifting from the old view that reunion is always

had to the idea that it can be helpful in some instances. In other cases, it helps children just to be reminded of their natural parents. Judy Meredith, for example, tells her youngsters on their birthdays, "I bet your mommy is thinking of you today."

**Between Worlds.** Most whites who adopt children of other races are managing the problems remarkably well. But there are opponents of mixed adoption. Most vocal among them are the black separatists, who fear loss of the Negro's heritage through assimilation. Even integrationist blacks and whites worry about the ability of white parents to equip black youngsters for survival in a prejudiced world. They are concerned over all sorts of seemingly minor problems, such as a white parent's lack of experience in combing a black child's kinky hair ("There's just no way to do it gently," says Urban Planner Thomas Nutt). Another danger: stereotyped ideas of black intelligence that may crop up when an adopted child is the only black in his school and neither his teacher nor his classmates expect him to do well. Both blacks and whites are wary of civil rights crusaders willing to sacrifice a child to prove a point or to promote integration. "A child should be loved for himself, not as a symbol," observes an official of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

T.R.A. youngsters, says Sociologist Kirk, can become "people between worlds." Other things being equal, Montreal's Open Door Society concedes, placing black children with black parents is best. The trouble is that other things rarely are equal; too few black families can afford adoption, and most are reluctant to apply for children because they are afraid of being rejected by white adoption agencies. But given a choice between leaving black kids (or children of other racial minorities) in institutions or placing them with willing white families, most experts would vote for the latter. Says Clayton Hagen of the Lutheran Social Service in Minnesota: because children need homes, "we cannot wait until society is prepared. A person who finds his identity in his race cannot bring up a child of another color. But a person who finds his identity as a human being can well be a parent to another human being."

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2. Single Parent Adoption

# ONE PARENT ADOPTIONS

ETHEL BRANHAM

One of the axioms of our child-centered society is that every child needs a permanent home of his own. Yet some children are threatened with having to spend their childhood shifting from one temporary foster home to another because no permanent home can be found for them. Faced with a rising number of "hard-to-place" children, child-placing agencies have in recent years been expanding their resources for providing children with permanent homes, to include, among other couples, those who will provide long-term foster care, subsidized adoption, guardianship,<sup>1</sup> and adoption across racial lines.<sup>2</sup>

Another resource, less frequently tapped because it was long considered "outside the pale" of social agency policy, is the adult who has no marital partner but wishes to adopt a child. Only a few agencies have turned to this resource on the theory that a permanent home with but one parent, if carefully selected, can provide a homeless child with the security and love he needs. One of these is the Los Angeles County Department of Adoptions.

When the County of Los Angeles Department of Adoptions (then called the Bureau of Adoptions) was established in June 1949, it was charged with the special responsibility of finding adoptive homes for children who are difficult to place—children of minority racial groups or of mixed racial parentage and children with severe medical problems. The agency services were also offered to all mothers or expectant mothers who were considering relinquishing a child for adoption.

At that time in Los Angeles County, independent and black-market adoptions were prevalent, and the need for another adoption agency was plainly evident. Families wishing to adopt healthy babies of Caucasian background through licensed agencies usually waited several years before they received a child. Since the various adoption agencies had, on the average, about 10 suitable homes for each healthy

white child, the rejection and dropout rates among applicants for children were high. Nevertheless, the child with special needs was usually overlooked. With so many prospective adoptive parents available, the new agency was optimistic about its ability to find homes for these overlooked children.

The intervening years have brought significant changes in the adoption picture. More healthy Caucasian babies are available for adoption, the waiting period between application and placement is shorter, and the qualifications for adoptive parenthood set by the agencies are related more to the applicant's ability to nurture an adopted child than to the scarcity of children. None of these changes has solved the difficulty of finding homes for children with special needs. Therefore the Department has supplanted its spotty and spasmodic recruitment efforts with an aggressive, full-time publicity program. It has also reconsidered a longtime policy of automatically rejecting lone adults as potential adoptive parents. Late in 1965, it began placing selected children for whom no other homes could be found with persons who had no marital partner in their home.

This practice became possible because that year the California State Department of Social Welfare revised its adoption regulations to allow acceptance of single persons as adoptive parents. The new policy clearly reiterated the established principle of adoption practice that *a two-parent family is the best of all possible choices for an adoptable child*, but it recognized the fact that two-parent families could not be found for all children needing the security of a permanent home.

In late 1965 the Los Angeles Department of Adoptions had registered with it more than 300 children available for adoption for whom adoptive couples were not readily available. This group included about 275 healthy Negro and part-Negro children of various ages,<sup>3</sup> 60 Mexican-American babies, 18 children of mixed racial background other than part

Negro, and several Caucasian, Negro, and Mexican-American children who had severe medical problems. When intensive efforts to find two-parent adoptive homes for these children failed, the Department decided to look into the possibility of finding them one-parent families.

The Department made its first one-parent placement in December 1965. At about the same time it launched a publicity campaign to make known its needs for adoptive parents, whether single or married, the first time any such campaign had invited single persons to apply. In the following 3 months it received 1,813 applications for children, the largest number in a comparable period since 1949. Most of the applicants were couples, but even so, the Department did not have enough suitable two-parent homes for all children with special needs. During the 2 years 1966 and 1967, the Department placed 40 children for adoption in homes with only one parent—approximately one-half of 1 percent of all the children placed by the Department for adoption during that period. They were placed with single women, divorcees, widows, and even a single man.

To learn what kind of parents these children acquired, the agency in 1969 reviewed the records of 36 of these 40 placements. Of the four children whose cases were eliminated from the review, two had been placed as the second adopted children of lone women; one, a school-age child, had been returned to the agency by the prospective adoptive parent; and one, an infant, had been removed from a questionable placement.

### Parents' characteristics

In the 36 one-parent placements, 35 of the adoptive parents were women, 21 of whom were Negro; 10 were what is known in the Southwest as Anglo—Caucasian of non-Mexican background; and five were Mexican-American. The one man was a Negro.

These parents ranged in age at the time of placement from 30 to 54. Their educational backgrounds ranged from incomplete high school to achievement of postgraduate degrees. Half had at least some college work.

The review showed that the kinds of people likely to become lone adoptive parents are limited by self-selection as well as by the agency's selection standards. They seem to share many of the characteristics and life-styles of couples who adopt across racial lines. Marmor has described the latter as "people with a relatively high level of emotional maturity,

high capacity for frustration tolerance, and an ability to pursue a relatively independent course in life, without being overly influenced about what other people think."<sup>4</sup>

These qualities stand out clearly in the descriptions in the agency records of the lone parents who have taken children for adoption. Moreover, the very fact that women with no husbands to give them financial and moral support are willing to form a family indicates that they are not greatly influenced by what other people might think. Their willingness to tackle the job of raising a child without the support of a husband suggests that they have a high degree of frustration tolerance. The adoption workers have described them as both self-aware and self-confident—strong enough to accept the likelihood of encounters with those who would imply that the adopted child was a child born out of wedlock and secure enough to handle the innuendo. For the most part they were well-organized systematic managers. They exhibited good intelligence, although some did not have a good education. They tended to be employed in jobs that gave them opportunities to deal with people rather than with things. Their lives included self-enhancing interests, hobbies, travel, and church or community involvement. Their motive for adoption was what they could do for a child rather than what the child could do for them.

"Vigor," "stamina," "patience," "understanding," "sensitivity," "sense of humor," "relaxed," "level-headed" appeared frequently in the records in describing these parents. For the most part, they seemed to have full lives, enjoyable occupations, and something to give a child.

### The children

The children placed with these parents ranged in age at the time of placement from 3 months to 5 years.

Six children of mixed racial background—five Anglo-Negro, one Mexican-American-Negro—and 15 Negro children were placed with Negroes. These children ranged in age from 3 months to 5 years, but the majority, 15, were under 2 years of age. They included more than twice as many girls as boys, although both sexes were about equally represented among all the Negro children available for adoption. The preponderance of girls placed with lone Negro women reflected the women's requests.

Four of the children placed with Anglo women were of mixed racial background; three of them had

one Negro parent and one Anglo parent, and one had one East Indian parent and one Anglo parent. Of the six other children placed with Anglo women, two were Mexican-Americans for whom no other homes could be found, three had serious medical problems, and one had emotional problems. Eight of these children were less than 1 year old and the other two were under 4 years of age.

Of the five children placed with Mexican-American women, three were Mexican-American in heritage. The two others were placed with Mexican-American women because of their religion: both were born of Catholic mothers—one was a part-Negro child and the other, an Anglo child with bilateral club feet. The Mexican-American homes were chosen for the latter two children because they offered a Catholic upbringing. Three of the children placed with Mexican-Americans were less than a year old and the other two were under 2 years.

Most of the Mexican-American children placed with single parents were boys; two-parent homes are easier to find for Mexican-American girls, who are frequently accepted by Anglo couples.

### Male companionship

The need for children, especially boys, to have a father figure to serve as a role model for sexual identification has been a major reason adoption agencies have avoided placing children in one-parent homes. But as Herzog and Sudia have observed, "children learn about maleness and femaleness from many sources, including adults in their homes, their peer group, TV, movies, and other mass media, and especially the persons—children or adults—who influence them particularly."<sup>5</sup>

The records show that the workers have paid special heed to the availability of male companionship for both the adoptive mother and the adopted child. Most of the 35 lone women with whom children were placed had close male relatives interested in the adopted child—fathers, brothers, sons, nephews, and, in a few instances, even former husbands. Thus the children had grandfathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, and adult male friends who could give them the kind of intimate contacts needed for male identification. Many of the women also had close male friends who took an interest in their plans for adoption and in the child after placement. In some instances the male friend had been interviewed during the adoption study and had been present when the child was first shown to the prospective adoptive mother.

Ethel Branham has worked for 15 years at the Los Angeles County Department of Adoptions, for 3 of them as assistant director. Because of family responsibilities she is now with the department on a part-time basis. She has also worked with the Los Angeles County Department of Welfare and for voluntary agencies in Los Angeles. She earned her master's degree in social work from the University of Southern California.



But even without male figures close to the family, children with an emotionally mature mother can be expected to develop an appropriate sexual identity. As Kadushin<sup>6</sup> has pointed out—

... the child in a single parent home has many secondary sources of identification through which to learn male behavior. Sex is working on our side in this matter. The boy possesses the observable, palpable, physical properties and attributes of a male (and) society expects him to behave as a boy. His mother, assuming she is reasonably normal, responds to the boy as to a male, approves of and encourages appropriate masculine behavior.

Two-thirds of the women had been married. This prior experience plus a yearning for the opposite sex, evident in all of the mothers, suggests that these single parents could compensate effectively for not having a man in the home. Most of them dated regularly. Many had interests and hobbies involving group activities that included both sexes. Men, both in and outside their families, seemed interested and willing to become father surrogates.

This proved to be true in the case of Mrs. O, who had been divorced after a marriage of many years. A 5-year-old boy was placed with her.

Mrs. O has three married children and six grandchildren. In spite of the divorce, her family is closely knit and all the members have welcomed the adopted child. Mrs. O has a large capacity for fun, patience, and understanding, and obviously enjoys children. A vigorous, self-assured person, she holds a professional civil service position and owns her own home. Although she was not interested in any man at the time of her divorce, she has since developed a close friendship with a man who is devoted to the child.

Placing a child for adoption with a mother who is over 50 is also a departure from traditional practice. The agency had already raised its age limitation for adoptive couples, first only with members of racial minorities and eventually across the board.

In approving homes of older single persons for adoption, the agency's workers were alert for elements that offered protection for the child's future as well as opportunities for normal development. This was so, for example, in choosing Mrs. D, a divorced Catholic woman, also in her early 50's, as an adoptive parent for a 7-month-old baby.

Mrs. D has a steady income and can well afford to support a child. Since she is no longer working she can give the baby full-time care. A 40-year-old man, a godchild of hers, has offered to sign any legal paper necessary to assume responsibility for the child in the event that something happens to Mrs. D. He lives across the street from her with his wife and five children.

In this case a family very close to the adoptive mother was readily available to take over if needed and also to provide the male models for helping the adopted child grow up to understand the difference in the social roles of the sexes.

### Income and employment

The 36 lone adoptive parents had annual incomes ranging from \$3,000 to \$12,996 a year. All but six had yearly incomes of \$5,000 or more and all but 13, incomes of \$6,000 or more. Many, like Mrs. D and Mrs. O, owned their own homes. All but two were employed, and most of them had adequate health insurance and life insurance. A few had income from property or other investments. The two who were not employed had independent incomes and preferred to devote full time to the care of their children.

Two of the mothers had incomes as low as \$3,000. Both, however, had good management ability, good prospects of improving their economic positions, and the emotional support and interest of close relatives or friends. One of these women, for example, was a young widow, Mrs. N, who was chosen to be the adoptive parent for a 5-month-old girl.

Mrs. N works on an assembly line from 4:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. These hours allow her to be with the child most of the day. Mrs. N's sister and her family live next door to her and take care of the child while Mrs. N is at work.

Mrs. N is the sixth child of a large, closely knit family. All but one of her brothers and sisters live in Los Angeles County, as do both her parents. She also has 18 nieces and nephews, 15 of them children and three adults. Before the adoption, Mrs. N was the only childless member of her sibling group. Cooperation is a well-ingrained characteristic of this family. Mrs. N's sister, from whom she rents, lowered Mrs. N's already low rent to help her support the child.

Mrs. N manages well. She owns a car, which is fully paid for—as is all her furniture. She carries adequate life insurance

and enough health insurance to cover medical expenses for herself and her child. She has completed a course as a grocery checker, which she expects will help her obtain employment with a better salary. Moreover, she may eventually have the support of a husband, for she is a handsome, warm, cheerful woman who gets along well with men.

Placing children for adoption with women who are employed full time is another break with traditional adoption practice. But today the working mother is commonplace. The agency has therefore not regarded such employment as a sufficient reason for keeping a warm, emotionally stable woman from becoming a parent of a child desperately in need of a home of his own. It does, of course, look into the adoptive applicant's plan for providing child care while she is at work.

The records show that all the working adoptive parents took a leave of absence at the time they received the child, the majority for at least a month and only five for as little as a week. Nearly a third of these mothers had relatives or housekeepers living in their homes or next door who cared for the child in the mother's absence. The rest had arranged for child care in the homes of relatives, licensed day-care facilities, and nursery schools during their working hours. Three worked only part time and so could spend most of their time with their children.

### Attitudes toward children

Almost without exception these lone adults had had rather deep relationships with children before ap-

The happiness on the face of this child reflects the security of a home of his own in an atmosphere of tender loving care. Such an atmosphere can be provided in an adoptive home, even when there is only one parent, some social agencies believe.



plying for a child to adopt—either through their own families or through their employment. Eight of the women had raised other children—born to them or adopted—before applying to the department for a child. The one man with whom a child was placed had previously had sole responsibility for 3 years for the support and care of two young nephews. One of very few male applicants for a child, he came to the agency after his nephews' mother had found herself in a position to take her children home with her.

Mr. R was the youngest of a large group of brothers and sisters, who had helped their mother keep the home together after their father deserted the family. He had matured into a relaxed but meticulous and sincere person. He wanted to adopt a child not only because he missed his two nephews but also because he wanted to help a child grow up with less of a struggle than he had had.

A 4-year-old boy was placed with Mr. R. He made a home just for the child and himself for 3 months so that they could get to know one another without other distractions. During this period he employed a part-time housekeeper, who came to the house early to prepare breakfast and take the child to nursery school. He even bought a car for the housekeeper's use. Later Mr. R and his son moved in with his mother, who assumed the responsibility of household management while Mr. R took over the task of taking his son to nursery school.

Mr. R spends a great deal of his leisure time in church activities. Through these he has met a woman whose company he enjoys and who he hopes will soon become the child's mother.

Because Mr. R and the 35 women without husbands to help them each took a child for adoption, 36 children who otherwise might never had achieved a feeling of permanence now have families of their own. Admittedly these families are incomplete, but they are "for keeps." Only with some assurance of permanence can a child develop a basic sense of trust.

Undoubtedly the incompleteness of a one-parent home presents some difficulties for the parent and the child. But these difficulties need not be regarded as insurmountable obstacles to healthy child development. They can be compensated for to a large degree by support from the parent's relatives and friends and by other persons in the community.

### Evaluation planned

The Los Angeles County Department of Adoptions has shown that many persons without marital partners do have a great deal to offer children and that

they will do so when given an opportunity. The review of these 36 case records strongly suggests that the children involved have found true "familiness." It does not tell us, of course, anything about how the children are responding to the experience. Only time can tell—time for the children to grow up and for the agency to make a careful evaluation of their adjustment at periodic intervals.

The Department is now planning such a longitudinal study. When completed it could have important implications not only for adoption policy but also for an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of one-parent families of all types.

At the present time, the Department is making fewer one-parent placements than it did a few years ago because more couples are applying for children to adopt. More couples are asking for Negro children, although not yet enough to take care of all the Negro children needing adoption. The supply of families for other hard-to-place children fluctuates.

The one-parent home is just one resource for helping to close the gap between available hard-to-place children and adoptive families. Communities committed to the welfare of their children will explore every feasible plan for providing children with adequate permanent care. The best plan for one child with special needs may be a single person who is especially qualified to meet those needs. A better plan for another child, who feels secure with his foster parents, may be to encourage the foster parents to keep the child on an agreed upon permanent basis or to grant them a subsidy so that they can afford to adopt the child. When the luxury of choice is available, the placement worker can think through the alternatives so as to best meet the needs of the child to be served.

<sup>1</sup> Branham, Ethel: Coping with change—more children than adoptive homes. An unpublished paper presented at Northwest Regional Conference, Child Welfare League of America, Seattle, Wash., April 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Garrett, Beatrice L.; et al.: Meeting the crisis in foster care. *Children*, January-February 1966.

<sup>3</sup> Jordan, Velma; Little, William: Early comments on single parent adoptive homes. *Child Welfare*, November 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Marmor, Judd: Some psychodynamic aspects of transracial adoptions. Presented at the National Conference of Social Work under the auspices of the Child Welfare League of America, May 26, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> Herzog, Elizabeth; Sudia, Cecelia E.: Fatherless homes—a review of research. *Children*, September-October 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Kadushin, Alfred: Single parent adoptions—an overview and some relevant research. Presented at Northwest Regional Conference, Child Welfare League of America, May 1968.



South Vietnam to provide assistance in improving the welfare of children in South Vietnam and to facilitate the adoption of orphaned or abandoned Vietnamese children, particularly children of U.S. fathers. Referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE CHILDREN:  
THE VIETNAM CHILDREN'S CARE AGENCY

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. President, as the tragedy of the Vietnam War goes on, the toll continues to rise among the most helpless victims of that war, the young people.

Day by day, more and more children are orphaned, abandoned or forced into situations of abysmal poverty. In human terms, the situation is intolerable. And, as a waste of mankind's most precious natural resource, the loss is incalculable.

The situation clearly is critical yet little is being done to remedy it.

Vietnam has faced the most destructive war conditions of any country in modern times. The tides of war have swept back and forth across its landscape. The tactics of war—free fire zones, rocket and mortar attacks, retaliation, saturation bombing and the frequent destruction of villages and relocation of their inhabitants—have decimated the quality of human life.

Because of the emphasis on the war and defense, a pitifully small amount of money has been allocated to the problems confronting the country's people particularly, the young children.

Our Nation has committed an extraordinary amount of resources to the military conflict in Vietnam. It follows that we have an overriding obligation to involve ourselves fully in the social rehabilitation of the country.

And, nowhere is the need more paramount than among the young people.

A child crying out in hunger or loneliness knows no politics. He knows only a need.

We have the means to make a commitment toward meeting those in need. Today, I am introducing, along with Senators HUGHES and HATFIELD, a bill which will improve the care and protection of children in Vietnam who are the victims of war and which will facilitate the adoption of Vietnamese orphans, particularly those whose fathers are American.

My interest in this problem began when I became aware of the difficult problems facing American-Asian children in Vietnam. Very often, the child experiences intense racial discrimination, often resulting in ostracism or abandonment. However, it was evident that in addition to the problems of abandoned half-American children there are insurmountable problems facing many of the children in Vietnam, even those who have not been abandoned. Despite the fact that 43 percent of the population of Vietnam is 14 years old or younger, a remarkably small amount of money goes to the assistance of these children.

The enormity of this problem is exemplified by the Vietnamese Ministry of War Veterans figures of June 30, 1971, which state that 210,000 applications for status as a "ward of the nation" have been approved. Such children had a fa-

ther who was killed or disabled in the war, and they receive a small living allowance plus an amount for education. In addition, 92,000 applications for status as orphans—child of a deceased war veteran—have been approved. These children receive a small amount of money regularly. I think it is very important to note that these figures only refer to the large number of children who are receiving support because their father was disabled or killed while in the Vietnamese armed services. The number of children whose civilian parents suffered similar tragedies is unknown but undoubtedly significant when the style and impact of the war is considered and understood.

The purpose of this legislation is to assist the Vietnamese in rebuilding a significant aspect of their social structure. Specifically, it aims to help Vietnamese children adversely affected by the war. It will establish the Vietnam Children's Care Agency, a temporary independent organization which will carry out the two major functions of this bill. The Agency will work with representatives of the Vietnamese Government, particularly the Ministry of Social Welfare, involved U.S. Government representatives, and public or private nonprofit organizations. Together they will study the problems of child care and welfare and initiate programs designed to improve the conditions in which the children live.

The first major function of this bill is to work through private or public nonprofit organizations to improve the care and protection of children orphaned, abandoned, or poverty stricken as a result of the war.

Improving and expanding day care facilities could undoubtedly provide a conducive environment for healthier family development, thereby avoiding the growing incidence of abandonment which has accompanied the withdrawal of American troops. The advantages of day care are particularly relevant in Vietnam because of the burden of raising children in that difficult environment. Well run day care centers provide preschool education, two meals a day, and the mother with the opportunity to work so that she can support her children. Many orphanages now in Vietnam have children whose parents are living; because of their poverty however, they cannot afford to keep the child at home and place him in an orphanage. The few day care programs in effect have been met with considerable approval and success, and would greatly alleviate the overcrowding which characterizes most orphanages.

Since the major purpose of this legislation is to improve the home atmosphere so that fewer children are left to institutions, there is an emphasis on improving existing orphanages rather than building new ones. Along similar lines, there is an existing but currently inadequate hostel program which provides housing for children who support themselves and do not have a place to live. The program would be expanded and improved so that the independent children involved could have a place to live.

Finally, the program necessarily involves training of Vietnamese to work

By Mr. WILLIAMS (for himself,  
Mr. HUGHES, and Mr. HATFIELD):

S. 2497. A bill to authorize the President, through the temporary Vietnam Children's Care Agency, to enter into arrangements with the Government of

in day care centers, orphanages, and in the area of child health care, especially prenatal and postnatal care. In the early stages of this program when considerable expansion will occur, training of Vietnamese to staff and sustain these programs will be essential.

The second approach of this legislation is directed toward children who have no family or guardians, are therefore eligible for adoption, and for whom an acceptable home can be found in the United States.

Intercountry adoption following wars is well precedented. After World War II, the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children arranged the transportation of many orphaned Europeans who came to New York where adoptions were arranged. In Vietnam, the French had an extensive program which granted French citizenship to children whose fathers were French and permitted them to go to France for their education.

In our bill, the emphasis focuses on facilitating the adoption of orphaned or abandoned children who had American fathers. By no means does this exclude the adoption of all-Vietnamese children who are homeless.

At present, American parents wishing to adopt Vietnamese children experience interminable delays and are required to pay exorbitant fees.

A net result of the existing situation is that would-be American parents simply are unsuccessful in their attempts to give these children a home.

The new Agency's function in this area would be to negotiate with Vietnamese and United States Government officials in order to standardize the forms and procedures used in intercountry adoption. Furthermore, such negotiations might lead to an easing of the Vietnamese requirement for the issuance of exit permits. Unlike the U.S. committee's program or the French program, adoptions under this program would be placed strictly on a case-by-case basis.

Hopefully, these negotiations would result in a major reduction of the processing time involved. In addition, the Vietnamese Children's Care Agency would act as a clearinghouse of information on adoption, and serve to expedite procedures in certain cases where complications arise.

As the Agency develops and improves the conditions mentioned above, hopefully the political and military climate in Vietnam will permit the United Nations or another multilateral organization to assume the child care and protection role of the Agency. It is likely that the program would be more acceptable in the long run if it was administered by such an organization. That part of the Agency concerned with intercountry adoption could continue to function as long as the President deems desirable. The role of the U.S. Government should be to initiate strong positive action with the goal of transferring its functions to the U.N. or another multilateral organization as soon as practicable.

We intend to seek an initial appropriation of approximately \$5 million to begin the program. This is a very modest amount, given the scope of the problem,

and the fact that many times this amount are being spent each day by the United States to continue this war. However, this level of spending seems appropriate to an area where the needs are not yet completely defined and the scope of the problem not yet accurately gaged.

The South Vietnamese Minister of Social Welfare, Dr. Tran Nguon Phieu, recently estimated that 1 billion piasters—approximately \$3.6 million—would considerably alleviate the situation of Vietnamese children, in particular the orphans. According to Dr. Phieu, not only could children living in orphanages be adequately taken care of, but in many cases it would allow a Vietnamese mother to bring up her children within a family context, instead of being compelled to send them to orphanages. Such an assistance would also particularly benefit racially mixed children, who are among the first to be abandoned and the least likely to be adopted.

Mr. President, this legislation is not presented as the definitive answer to the terrible conditions facing Vietnamese children as a result of the devastation of their country and the disruption of their families. I would hope that as a result of hearings and the testimony of persons involved in this field, that the details of such a program could be refined even further.

There are many uncertainties involved, particularly in untangling the snarl that has developed in the intercountry adoption process.

By all indications, there are an abundance of American parents willing and qualified to provide a home for a child and, most certainly, there are large numbers of children who could be made eligible for such a program.

Therefore, we must not allow any difficulties and uncertainties to discourage us from making positive and imaginative attempts to remedy this situation which has produced anguish and heart-break for prospective parents and left Vietnamese children to spend their formative years in institutions.

Just as it was necessary to launch bold initiatives of assistance in Europe following the Second World War, it will be necessary to assist in the recovery of Vietnam after this tragic conflict is ended.

There can be no finer or more appropriate beginning for such a commitment than a program of aid directed to the children of Vietnam.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the bill we are introducing be printed at this point in the Record.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

#### S. 2497

A bill to authorize the President, through the temporary Vietnam Children's Care Agency, to enter into arrangements with the Government of South Vietnam to provide assistance in improving the welfare of children in South Vietnam and to facilitate the adoption of orphaned or abandoned Vietnamese children, particularly children of United States fathers

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress declares that—

(1) the United States has a moral responsibility to assist the Government of South Vietnam in the care and protection of all South Vietnamese children, particularly those orphaned or abandoned, and

(2) the United States has a special responsibility to assist in facilitating the care or adoption of children in Vietnam whose fathers are United States citizens and who are not living with their Vietnamese families.

#### CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Sec. 2. (a) The President, through the Vietnam Children's Care Agency established under section 4 of this Act (hereinafter referred to as the "Agency"), shall establish and administer a program for all children living in South Vietnam who are, as determined by the Agency, (1) 16 years of age or younger, and (2) orphaned, abandoned, or living in poverty as a direct result of the hostilities in Vietnam or conditions related to such hostilities. The program shall be administered only with the consent of the Government of South Vietnam and in accordance with such arrangements as may be mutually agreed upon by the Agency and that Government.

(b) In carrying out the program established under this section, the Agency may provide—

(1) assistance to aid such children described in subsection (a) of this section in growing up in their own or foster families through the establishment, expansion, and improvement of day care centers and the improvement of school feeding programs.

(2) assistance to orphanages in which children described in subsection (a) of this section are living, including food and clothing assistance and assistance for the improvement of the physical facilities of such orphanages;

(3) for the training of persons employed in day care centers and orphanages in Vietnam;

(4) for the training of persons on matters relating to child health care and pre-natal and post-natal care; and

(5) assistance for the improvement and expansion of the existing hostel program which provides housing for children described in subsection (a) of this section who do not live with their families.

(c) The Agency is authorized to provide, on such terms and conditions as it considers appropriate, direct assistance to public or private non-profit organizations which provide any of the types of assistance referred to in subsection (b) of this section, and to assist in coordinating the activities, services, and programs of such organizations.

(d) Not less than 60 per centum of the funds appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be used for the purposes specified in clause (1) of subsection (b) of this section.

#### ADOPTION OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE CHILDREN

Sec. 3. (a) The President, through the Agency, shall enter into negotiations with the Government of South Vietnam to facilitate the adoption by United States citizens of children in South Vietnam who are ten years of age or younger. Adoption procedure shall be carried out strictly on a case-by-case basis, but the President shall attempt through such negotiations with the Government of South Vietnam to obtain a standardization of forms and procedures in South Vietnam and the United States which would significantly improve and hasten the entire adoption process and shall seek to obtain an easing of the South Vietnamese requirements for the issuance of exit permits for adopted children.

(b) The Agency is authorized to enter into agreements and to make grants, on such terms and conditions as it considers appropriate, to State and local governmental agencies and private non-profit organizations to assist in arranging for the adoption by United States citizens of children in South Vietnam who are ten years of age or younger.

(c) In conducting the negotiations referred to in subsection (b) of this section, the Agency shall be primarily concerned with, and shall facilitate, to the maximum extent practicable, the adoption of children in South Vietnam—

(1) whose fathers are determined by the Agency and the Government of South Vietnam to be United States citizens, such determination to be made on the basis of a statement by the father, mother, or relative, or on the appearance of the child, and,

(2) (A) whose mothers are deceased, (B) whose mothers have irrevocably relinquished all parental rights, or (C) who have been abandoned and are living in orphanages in which no family has assumed responsibility for their upbringing, and the whereabouts of the mothers are unknown.

(d) Not more than 10 per centum of the funds appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act may be expended in carrying out this section.

#### Vietnam Children's Care Agency

Sec. 4. (a) There is established in the executive branch of the Government a temporary independent establishment to be known as the Vietnam Children's Care Agency. The Agency shall be responsible, under the direction of the President, for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(b) The Agency shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. There shall also be in the Agency a Deputy Director appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Deputy Director shall act as, and exercise the powers of, the Director during his absence or disability. The Director shall prescribe the regular duties to be performed by the Deputy Director.

(c) (1) The Director is authorized to appoint and fix the compensation of such officers and employees, and prescribe their functions and duties, as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(2) The Director may obtain the services of experts and consultants in accordance with the provisions of section 3109 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) Section 5314 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

"(58) Director, Vietnam Children's Care Agency."

(4) Section 5315 of such title is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

"(95) Deputy Director, Vietnam Children's Care Agency."

(5) The Director may delegate any of his functions to such officers and employees of the Agency as he may designate, and may make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out his functions.

(6) The Director is authorized to appoint, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, such advisory committees as may be appropriate for the purpose of consultation with and advice to the Agency in the performance of its functions. Members of such committees, other than those regularly employed by the United States Government, while attending meetings of such committees or otherwise serving at the request of the Director, may be paid compensation at rates not exceeding those authorized to be paid experts and consultants under section 3109 of such title, and while so serving away from their homes or regular places of business, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of such title, for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

(d) In order to carry out the provisions of this Act, the Agency is authorized—

(1) to adopt, alter, and use a seal

(2) to adopt, amend, and repeal rules and regulations governing the manner of its op-

erations, organization, and personnel, and the performance of the powers and duties granted to or imposed upon it by law

(3) to acquire by purchase, lease, condemnation, or in any other lawful manner, any real or personal property, tangible or intangible, or any interest therein to hold, maintain, use, and operate the same to provide services in connection therewith, and to charge therefor and to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of the same at such time, in such manner, and to the extent deemed necessary or appropriate;

(4) to construct, operate, lease, and maintain buildings, facilities, and other improvements as may be necessary;

(5) to accept gifts or donations of services, money, or property, real, personal, or mixed tangible or intangible;

(6) to enter into contracts or other arrangements or modifications thereof, with any government, any agency or department of the United States, or within any person, firm, association, or corporation, and such contracts or other arrangements, or modifications thereof, may be entered into without legal consideration, without performance or other bonds, and without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes, as amended (41 U.S.C. 5);

(7) to make advance, progress, and other payments which the Director deems necessary under this Act without regard to the provisions of section 3648 of the Revised Statutes, as amended (31 U.S.C. 529); and

(8) to take such other action as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(e) The Director shall, as soon as practicable after the end of each fiscal year, make a report in writing to the President for submission to the Congress on the activities of the Agency during the preceding fiscal year.

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT

Sec. 5. Within ninety days after the date of enactment of this Act, the President shall take such steps as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of section 4 of this Act and to initiate the program under sections 2 and 3 of this Act.

Sec. 6. (a) As soon as practicable, the President is requested to undertake negotiations with the United Nations, or such other multilateral organizations as the President considers appropriate, to have such organizations agree to perform the functions described in section 2 of this Act. Any funds made available for the purposes of section 2 of this Act may be made available, as the President deems appropriate, to such organization to carry out such purposes.

(b) At such time as the President determines that the functions described in section 2 of this Act are being satisfactorily performed by the United Nations, other multilateral organizations, or nonprofit organization, the authority and responsibility of the Agency with respect to such functions shall cease to exist.

#### AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 7. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. In addition there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to assist the United Nations or any other multilateral or nonprofit organization to perform functions which would otherwise be performed by the Agency under this Act.

#### LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Sec. 8. Not more than 10 per centum of the funds appropriated to carry out this Act may be used by the Agency for administrative expenses.

Mr. HUGHES. Mr. President, the war in South Vietnam is supposed to be ending. For American fighting men, that appears to be the case. Thousands of Amer-

icans are being brought home. Eventually, and I hope soon, all of them will be withdrawn.

But just as peace is not merely the absence of war, but a state of security and contentment, neither does the end of direct U.S. involvement in the fighting mean the end of our obligation to the people of South Vietnam.

Until, and after, the fighting ends, the United States must work to alleviate the consequences of our involvement in that small, war-torn country. We must see to it that peace is not merely the continuation of suffering by other means.

The ravages of the war are staggering. Since 1965, the United States has dropped twice as many tons of bombs in Indochina as we dropped in all of World War II and the Korean war. These bombs have destroyed homes and rice paddies as well as suspected enemy units. In addition, we have sprayed defoliants over one-eighth of the territory of South Vietnam, thereby destroying crops which otherwise might feed several hundred thousand people each year. Over 6 million people have been made refugees.

Whatever the tactical benefits from such actions, the fact remains that we have contributed to widespread destruction in South Vietnam and must now begin to restore normal conditions.

There is much that we have done, but much more that remains to be done. In the months and years to come, I hope that the Congress of the United States will approve legislation to help repair the tremendous damage which has been inflicted on Vietnam.

The particular problem I wish to highlight today is that of the children of South Vietnam. Thousands of children have been wounded in the fighting. Thousands more—exact figures are impossible to obtain—have been scarred emotionally by the loss of parents and homes. Saigon's streets are filled with urchins, living day to day in conditions which rival the worst of Charles Dickens' London.

There are hopeful signs, of course, but they do not go very far in dealing with the immense problem. We have all read the newspaper articles or seen the television reports on the medical care given to wounded children and on the hostels run by volunteers to care for the homeless children. American soldiers, acting individually or through their military units, have aided schools and orphanages and hospitals throughout the country.

When the Americans withdraw, will this assistance end? We must see that it does not, by assuming that responsibility ourselves.

Over 40 percent of the South Vietnamese population is under the age of 14. Millions of children thus face the harsh realities of staying alive, earning a living, and preparing for adulthood. Estimates of the number of Vietnamese children with American fathers run from 15,000 to 200,000. These children face the additional stigma of being racially mixed in a society which discriminates against them and they deserve our special care and attention.

To deal with this tragic situation, I am cosponsoring legislation, with Senator

HARRISON WILLIAMS and Senator MARK HATFIELD, to establish a temporary Vietnam Children's Care Agency. This agency would be empowered to operate a child care program which would support or establish facilities and personnel in day-care centers, hostels, orphanages, medical units, and the like.

In addition, the legislation would help facilitate the process of adoption of Vietnamese children, paying special attention to those with American fathers.

We envision a small beginning—only \$5 million in the first year—but it is a downpayment on human betterment which we must make.

The compelling motivation for this bill is the moral responsibility inherent in the tragedy of Vietnam. Now, after so much death and suffering, we must not shirk this responsibility to these children.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I am happy to join with two of my colleagues today in cosponsoring legislation which will bring an amount of redress to the suffering children of Vietnam who have been abandoned by their American fathers or who have, because of the war, become its tragic victim as an orphan or refugee.

Mr. Don Luce, who was for years with the International Volunteer Service in Vietnam, estimates that our servicemen have fathered 200,000 children. For the most part, these children have been sheltered by their relatives, but those little babies who are darker skinned, fathered by black Americans, have been the most discriminated against.

The United States has a moral obligation to help care for these outcast children; the abandoned women and the Vietnam Government cannot do it alone.

But we do not want to focus the spotlight of attention and money on the illegitimate alone. They already suffer enough from being "different." So in this legislation we are directing our attention on abandoned and needy children.

We envision a temporary program, spending as little as \$5 million the first year, until we know the real dimensions of the problem. Inasmuch as we are reducing our forces in Vietnam—hopefully with a complete withdrawal by the middle of next year—there are still 220,000 men there—our expenditure of money will gradually be reduced. We are setting up a Vietnam Child Care Agency. Its function would be to work with the Vietnam Government agencies and private relief groups to aid these children, either in their own or foster homes, with day care and food feeding centers or in orphanages. The bill also provides for the adoption of children.

Mr. President, I need not belabor the moral point of our real obligation to care for these children. Everyone knows that we have spent \$120 billion dollars in Vietnam to set a little country "free." In the process, we have decimated the land and a people. Our bombs have laid waste a productive rice-exporting land and forced the Vietnamese to import that needed staple. There are estimated to be 6 million refugees in Vietnam—a country of 18 million—crowding the cities. Children roam the streets, living as best they can. Women uprooted from

the villages have become prostitutes as well as temporary wives for our men and in the process given birth to thousands of children—no one really knows the correct number.

We need to begin to acknowledge the problem and our responsibility to help the children, the innocent children. The private agencies and the South Vietnamese Government cannot solve the problem alone. It is not enough to say that all wars have produced half-caste, unwanted children who have survived somehow. Justice demands that we not allow these bitter, alienated children to grow up in hate—this is what breeds future wars.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to insert in the RECORD several newspaper articles and other pertinent material.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Aug. 7, 1971]  
CHILDREN WITH NO COUNTRY: A CHAMPION IN PEARL BUCK

(By Michael Kernan)

Pearl S. Buck, America's only surviving Nobel Prize writer, is 79 years old and wears a wide-brim garden party hat. She was in town yesterday to talk about the Pearl S. Buck Foundation's efforts to educate the many thousands of children born in Asia who have American GI fathers, and to write it all off as a sentimental gesture by a fragile old lady is to make a serious mistake.

For one thing, the problem is very real. The Vietnamese place all responsibility for children on the fathers. The American government takes the position, Mrs. Buck said, that the very idea of American servicemen fathering babies overseas is unthinkable, therefore, the children (200,000 of them in Vietnam alone, by one estimate) do not exist.

For another thing, Mrs. Buck is not fragile. When she was barred from speaking at segregated Cardozo High School here in 1951 because of an "unclear" record with the Un-American Activities Committee, she fired back, not only refuting the innuendos but adding that the real reason for barring her was her public stand against discrimination in the District. She then mailed the speech to those who were to have heard it.

Mrs. Buck has seen race prejudice in many forms. In Asia, where light skin is preferred in some circles, children of black GIs have the worst time of all. She pays special attention to these, urging adoption by Americans where the child is young enough.

Two of the five children she has adopted herself have black fathers. (Adoption, however, is not a foundation activity.)

"These children who have no country are going to be a menace," she said as she nibbled at a salad before a Nation Press Club conference. "They're angry. They're very angry. And our men have been abroad so long that some children are now 20 years old. Not only that, some of the Amerasian girls, who are often very attractive to Americans, more so than Asians, have had GI children in turn. So now we have three-fourth Americans who are still not accepted by our government."

The French and Dutch, she added, make provision for children of their soldiers to receive citizenship.

"I'm afraid there's a danger the Amerasians will go over to the Communists. There is so much to do. We are the only foundation working specifically on this problem. What we do is only a scratch on the surface. We're helping about 2,000 now."

The cost averages \$16 per month per child.

The Pearl S. Buck Foundation's main concern is to educate the children in local schools when possible and to improve their health.

"We don't run an adoption agency," she said. "We're not a relief organization, but if they are sick we'll try to help. Next month we're starting in on Vietnam, and we expect to have extra problems there with the bomb victims."

The foundation now works in Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Okinawa and the Philippines. In a few weeks Anthony Tidel, who has been in Asia nine years, will leave his foundation post in Taiwan and start collecting a small staff in Saigon.

Mrs. Buck has given her \$1 million estate to cover stateside operating expenses of the foundation—which in 1969 survived a flap over its ex-director's management—and she has handed over the income from several books to it, including her latest novel, "The Three Daughters of Mme. Liang," a book club nominee that has just been translated into Chinese by Tidel. (Mrs. Buck still writes, by the way: five or six hours a day. She has done at least 70 books since her Pulitzer-winning "The Good Earth.")

But much more money is needed; a few years ago the foundation opened a drive for \$10 million. The writer drove down yesterday from her farm at Perkasie, Pa., to get her message out to the American public. Since the foundation (2019 Delancey Place, Philadelphia) is tax-exempt, no political approaches are being made, but Mrs. Buck has been watching the progress of twin bills presently in Congress to aid Amerasian children.

One fund-raising plan has been abandoned: the Fathers Anonymous scheme, which tried to get guilt-ridden ex-GIs to send money "in memory of a beautiful evening"—no questions asked.

"Almost all the letters we got were from women who feared the worst," the writer said. "We did get a check from one man who said he had never been to Asia but expected to go soon and wanted to make a deposit."

#### EMBASSY IN SAIGON CALLS BABIES OF GIs A "SERIOUS CONCERN"

(By Tad Szulc)

WASHINGTON.—The United States Embassy in Saigon has informed the State Department that "responsibility for American-fathered illegitimate children" in South Vietnam "has become a matter of serious and continuing concern."

A major concern, it said, is the illegal but "lucrative" practice of allowing some of these children to be adopted in foreign countries without protection for them or their families.

The Embassy's message to the State Department on July 4 emphasized the problem of children of American black men and Vietnamese women, noting that "the black child may have a more difficult time growing up in Vietnam than other children, either in Vietnamese homes or orphanages."

The Embassy noted that "there is no accurate way to estimate how many illegitimate children in Vietnam" had been fathered by Americans or other foreigners. It said, however, that a recent survey found a total of 350 to 400 such children living in 122 orphanages throughout South Vietnam.

"The magnitude of children living with mothers or close relatives outside of institutions is more difficult to estimate," it added.

In a memorandum on July 9 the South Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare estimated that there were 10,000 to 15,000 "racially mixed children" living at home, mainly offspring of Americans.

The Embassy said it was encouraging the passage by South Vietnam of a "modern, up-to-date adoption law" that would allow children born out of wedlock to be adopted by

persons in the United States while protecting "the rights of children and adopting families."

The present South Vietnamese policy on adoption, according to the Social Welfare Ministry, is that "if a racially mixed child is recognized and requested by his parents to be reared abroad, our Ministry sees no objection because it is not prohibited by the Vietnamese laws."

The Ministry said that "if the racially mixed orphan is not recognized by anybody, and in case a foreigner wants to adopt him, this man must process paperwork following current procedures and regulations."

According to the Embassy, however, "the practice the Government has acquiesced in permitting children to be adopted by foreigners usually through proxy arrangements with private Vietnamese orphanages."

"This has resulted," that "more than 100 children each year for the past two years may have been sent to the United States for adoption, most of them under private auspices."

#### AMER-ASIAN CHILDREN IN VIET NAM (By Don Luce)

More than two million Americans have served in Viet Nam during the past ten years as soldiers, construction workers, embassy officials, and advisors of various types. These men have left behind 400,000 Amer-Asian children. For political reasons, the United States has virtually ignored the care of the mothers during pregnancy and the future of the children.

"To admit the problem would add fuel to the American peace movement," one American social welfare advisor in Saigon told me. American mothers would be upset to know that their sons were sleeping with Vietnamese girls. And what about their grandchildren? If they knew that the little American/Vietnamese children were often used by beggars to get more money when they begged from American soldiers, what would they do then?"

The girls are most typically farm girls who, along with their mother, brothers, and sisters have been forced from the farms (the men are with one army or the other) and become refugees. Because the family has no money, the girl goes to work in a bar. This leads to occasional prostitution (her reputation has already been destroyed by working in the bar). Then she becomes a "temporary wife." She usually has a child by her "husband." In fact, she wants a child because she hopes that the child will cause her "husband" to want to officially marry her and bring her back to the U.S. Then her child will have a father and the child's education and future will be assured. Sometimes this happens, but, more likely, she will be passed on to one of her American "husbands' buddies or have to return to the bar.

As a research officer for the World Council of Churches, I interviewed several of the girls who worked in the bars at Vung Tau.

Mal was nineteen years old and eight months pregnant. She still came by the Olympia Bar in Vung Tau to talk to the other girls and run odd errands.

"Bill has gone back to America," Mal said with more sadness than bitterness. "No, he doesn't send me any money."

"I tried to get rid of my child. But the doctor said that it is too big inside me. It's too late now."

"American babies are very healthy and very beautiful. I shall keep it. But I'll have to go to work right after it's born. American babies are very expensive to raise," she said, adding, "American babies eat more."

Yes, she planned to go back to the bar. Where else could she earn enough money? Then she asked me if I wanted to buy her child. Only \$150.

Mal was one of approximately 4500 bar girls working in the seaside resort town of Vung

Tau which serves as R and R (Rest and Recreation) Center for American and Australian soldiers. Before her pregnancy she earned about two hundred dollars a month in the bar (except for her six months with Bill who paid all of her expenses and gave her a hundred dollars a month).

The number of bar girls, prostitutes and temporary wives was estimated to be between 100,000 and 300,000 by a World Council of Churches team (including this writer) studying post-war reconstruction in 1969. A Vietnamese congressman, Ngo Cong Duc, estimated the number as 400,000 in 1970. The number of "marriages" between Americans and Vietnamese is around 80 per day, one voluntary agency estimated.

Most of the girls are from rural areas or the city slums. They have no special skills but have become accustomed to a relatively luxurious life. Presently, they earn two or three hundred dollars a month—payments often being made in Tide, cooking oil, Salem cigarettes, hairspray and other items that sell well on the black market. When the war ends, most will be without jobs. Will they be willing to go back to the farm where the average monthly earning is about twenty dollars a month?

"I want to sell fish and shrimp when the war is over," claims Miss Ngoc who works at the Blue Angel Bar.

Why doesn't she do that now?

"Because I must make a lot of money for my children."

But won't she always need a lot of money for her children?

"When the war is over, prices will be low and it won't cost much to live. I'll sell fish and shrimp then."

One 18-year-old girl said she became a bar girl because her father was killed in the 1968 Tet offensive. She hopes the war will be over soon because she wants to go home.

"My mother sent me here because our family needs money," she said. "But when the war is over I can go back to the farm and plant rice. That will be very nice."

The lady who sells coconut milk and yogurt in front of the Blue Angel doesn't agree.

"The girls who work in the bars won't go back to the rice paddies or even be willing to work in the factories," she said. "I don't know what they'll do. But I don't want my son to marry one of them."

The girls who have been temporary wives for American soldiers do not understand the morality that allows a man with another wife to live with them, have children by them, and yet not accept them as second wives. They ask how ethics and morality can make a man disown his own children.

Take Miss Lien, for example. She's twenty-one years old and has two children by an American captain who left seven months before the second child was born.

"When Captain Cobb left, he said, 'I'm very sorry. I'm very sorry.' He said an American can't have two wives and his American wife won't give him up," Miss Lien explained with a great deal of emotion.

"I don't care if he doesn't send me money. I can make lots of money here. But he should write. Why doesn't he write me a letter? How can I explain to my children about their father?"

Later Lien said she really is worried about money because of the future of her children.

"How can I make money when I'm old? You can't make much money working in the fields. American children can't be coolies or cyclo drivers. They must be businessmen or engineers. I must send them to school."

Sometimes she becomes bitter, Lien said.

"The Americans take five minutes of fun and forget about the consequences. The French were better. When they had a child, they paid for his education. Why don't you Americans do the same thing?"

The philosophy of many of the GIs was expressed in the words initialed on the cigarette lighters sold by Vung Tau street vendors for two dollars each: If you're not with the one you love, love the one you're with.

At the Hoa Binh (Peace) Hotel, a young girl was spending her last few days with her soldier boyfriend.

"He is leaving for the United States in a few days," she said. "Then he will get his discharge and in ten days come back to Viet Nam as a civilian. Then we will get married."

The soldier returned after paying the bill for their last night together. He introduced a soldier who had been sitting in the lobby.

"This is George," he said. "He'll take care of you while I'm gone."

They got into a jeep and drove toward the airport together.

[From Parade Magazine, July 18, 1971]

#### FATHERLESS CHILDREN: GI BABIES IN VIETNAM

(By David Detweiler)

Nicholas Ruf, the 3-year-old boy pictured above with his American family by adoption, is one of approximately 5,000 babies abandoned in South Vietnam by their GI fathers.

Nicholas was one of the lucky ones. He was adopted by Dr. and Mrs. David Ruf of Darlington, Wis. "It's working out just fine," says Dr. Ruf. "We have a normal, happy, sometimes angry 3-year-old son."

Most of the children find temporary homes with relatives or in one of the Buddhist or Catholic orphanages of South Vietnam. Some lead a limbo street life in the alleys of Saigon.

#### NATIONAL OBLIGATION

"They are unwanted, unloved and often uncared for," says Sen. Harold Hughes (D., Iowa), one of several Senators studying possible legislation in behalf of the children. "As a decent, compassionate people, I believe we have a national obligation to them."

Of the 5000 fatherless children, roughly 600 have been abandoned by their Vietnamese mothers as well, according to Welles Klein, general director of International Social Service (ISS), a worldwide nonprofit family agency. And of the 500 that have been totally abandoned, half are black, which is a liability in South Vietnam.

"The white-Asian baby is accepted better," says a newsman who has spent several years in Saigon, "and the black child is at a definite disadvantage."

"We have to help these children," says Klein, "but we have to be careful. There are no simple solutions."

Two solutions Mr. Klein would emphatically not recommend are:

1. Provisions for large-scale adoptions by U.S. parents. (Even if the South Vietnamese government would allow such a mass exodus, there would be enormous language and orientation difficulties in the U.S.)

2. An aid program to provide special care for these children in Vietnam. (This would further alienate them from "normal" children, and U.S. support for such an aid program might end abruptly together with our involvement in Vietnam.)

#### POSSIBLE LEGISLATION

"We'll have to proceed on a careful, case-by-case basis," says Klein. "You can do more harm than good by relocating a child too hastily."

Klein suggests that possible legislation might include measures to make it easier for an American father to find and identify his child if he wants to adopt. Also, it might be made easier to confer immediate citizenship on these children.

At present, an American-fathered child is a citizen if he has five years of residency in

the U.S. between the ages of 14 and 28. This requirement is of course nearly impossible for an abandoned Vietnamese child to fulfill.

In 1970, there were 80 Vietnamese children adopted by American parents. This figure is notably lower than for Korea (851) or the Philippines (154), partly because adoption of a Vietnamese child by an American family is a one- or two-year process that can cost up to \$2500.

#### "TOOK A LONG TIME"

"It took a long time for the red tape to crank through the machine," says Dr. Ruf, "but it was worth it. We wanted very badly to adopt a Vietnamese orphan. We're frankly dismayed at the military adventure over there and we had heard that American-fathered children weren't getting cared for.

"We have a feeling there are a lot of people who would adopt a Vietnamese-American child if they thought they could do it," says the doctor.

ISS, which is sponsoring a national conference on the problem at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., tomorrow, is trying to broaden concern in the U.S.

Says Mr. Klein: "To my mind we owe something not only to the Vietnamese-American child whose father is back in the States, but also to the 100 percent Vietnamese child who lost both parents in an American bombing run."

#### [From the New York Times, Apr. 30, 1971] ANOTHER WAY THE UNITED STATES HAS LEFT ITS MARK ON VIETNAM

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM.—Although she is only 4 years old, Nina Dang remembers the day her father, a United States Navy chief petty officer, went back to the states and his American wife. Her mother, Dang Thi Hoa, carried her to the door and tearfully waved good-bye. Her father cried, too. He kissed them and promised to write every week.

"He cry, but he forget too easy," Hoa said in halting English. "He never write, never send money and he been gone two years."

Nina is one of the tens of thousands—some say hundreds of thousands—of illegitimate children left behind in Vietnam by American servicemen and civilians. They can be seen begging and shilling shoes in the streets of major cities, abandoned in orphanages or, if they are lucky, living with their mothers or sympathetic grandparents.

Sometimes, if their skin and hair are exceptionally light, these children are prized and pampered by their families. But most have little money for schooling and are likely to grow up to be cycle drivers, prostitutes, servants or soldiers. Moreover, many Vietnamese resent them since their round eyes and broad shoulders remind them of the unpopular American soldiers.

Private agencies help a few of the half-American children indirectly through refugee or feeding programs, but most struggle alone. Neither the South Vietnamese nor American Government offers any aid. The Vietnamese say the children are "not a problem" and the Americans say, "the problem is not a Government responsibility."

Nina is luckier than most because her mother has a little money. Like many of the sentimental, free-spending Americans who take "temporary wives" during their stay in Vietnam, her father found Hoa a small apartment and bought her furniture, a tape deck, a television set and a set of gilt-edged dishes from the PX.

Hoa, a former bar girl whose looks have begun to fade, earns enough working part-time in a Saigon record shop to pay the rent and send her little girl to kindergarten.

"I hope I can make enough money to send Nina to high school," Hoa said. "Then I will send her to the United States to find her father."

Many young Vietnamese women work in bars until they become temporary wives of

Americans. Pregnancy often follows—birth control pills and diaphragms are in short supply here—but the woman usually wants the baby, hoping that because of it the American will marry her and take her to the states.

Others know that the American has a wife back home. In Vietnam, where it is traditional for men to take a concubine, such an arrangement is not dishonorable.

"What these women want, even more than money to raise their children, is for their husbands—they think of them as husbands—to send them letters after they return home," said Don Luce, a writer and an American authority on Vietnam. "They expect the American to treat them as a second wife. They don't understand a system of morality that allows a man to have kids by two women but only one wife."

Mr. Luce estimates that there are at least 200,000 half-American children in Vietnam. American and Vietnamese officials call the figure high, but say they have none to put in its place.

Pham Thi Ly, who is 6 years old and lives on the island of Xom Chal near Cantho in the Mekong Delta, has been abandoned by both parents.

When Ly was 3 years old, her father, an American airman, left for the states leaving no address but giving her mother a million piasters (\$3,000). The mother and child, who were then living in the coastal city of Nha Trang, moved to Xom Chal. By that time the daughter of a Vietnamese couple on the island had died and they wanted a new child. So Ly's mother gave the girl to them and went back to Nha

"Where is your father?" Whenever an American man comes to the island, they point to the foreigner and tense the child by saying, "Look, there is your father, he has come to get you."

Ly used to run away and hide, but now she tries to protect herself by carrying a small picture of herself and her Vietnamese stepfather hidden in her clothing. The little girl shows this as proof that the Vietnamese is her father—not some unknown American.

The stepmother wants to dye the child's brown, curly hair black, so she will look Vietnamese, but the stepfather is against it.

"It's a waste of money," Pham Van Ni, a militia man, said "It won't do any good."

Despite cases like Ly's, the Vietnamese Government says the half-American children are not discriminated against.

"They are the same as any children. If they have difficulties it is because in normal life every Vietnamese has difficulties."

Son, who is 11 years old and lives in a home for shoeshine boys in Saigon, has only vague remembrances of his Vietnamese mother and American father. Another thing he cannot recall is his last name. Richard Hughes, the American who runs the home, said he thinks the boy has lost his memory because life has been so hard for him.

"People tell me I was sent to an orphanage when I was little," Son said, as he sat in the dirty, bare house. "I have a stepmother somewhere in Saigon, but she is not rich enough to keep me."

"My friends call me 'Mixed Blood!' I feel very angry when people talk about my round eyes, my white skin and my upturned nose."

The boy cannot read or write. He would like to go to school but cannot afford to because he earns only 200 piasters (70 cents) on a good day. Some days he makes only 30 or 40 piasters and cannot even buy supper.

"I think of my father's country as a wonderful place, and I wish to go there sometime," he said as he fingered his bits of polish and rags.

Since Son is not an American citizen, he is not considered an American problem. The official American position on illegitimate

children born to American fathers abroad, as stated in a paper issued in 1970 by the Defense Department, is that "the care and welfare of these unfortunate children . . . has never been and is not now considered an area of Government responsibility nor an appropriate mission for the Department of Defense to assume."

"I guess the policy grew up as the easiest way of doing things," said Robert Lewis, the American Consul General in Saigon. "Our way of doing business is to approach the problem from the point of view of the lawyer and leave social considerations aside."

"But several things fill the vacuum," Mr. Lewis said. "First there's the money the American people give to voluntary agencies that help these children. Then there's the basic decency of the American soldier overseas who attaches himself to an orphanage, maybe with the consciousness on his part that the children were put there by him."

"Perhaps you shouldn't put a delicate social problem in the hands of bureaucrats. Why, the United States Government isn't very good at the whole welfare problem in the United States."

Prospects are bleakest of all for the illegitimate children of black Americans.

"For the black children, I think it is very important for them to go to America," said Sister Françoise, head of the Caritas Orphanage in Saigon. "The Vietnamese do not like black people. Why? It's a natural reaction. They do not like the way they look."

As the nun spoke Xuan Hai, a pretty 4-year-old girl with dark skin and tightly curled hair, held her lovingly around the knees.

"Xuan Hai's family is alive but they abandoned her because her dark skin would have brought shame on them," Sister Françoise said. "It is good for the family but sad for the child."

A few Vietnamese orphanages, such as Kim Long and Nuoc Ngot in Hue, also have a few children abandoned by French fathers.

Unlike the half-Americans, the metisse can obtain French citizenship if a Vietnamese tribunal concludes the father was French or if the father recognizes the child. As in the United States, this does not require him to marry the mother.

Mme. Jeannie, the mother of three teen-aged metisse, owns the Princess Bar on Saigon's bustling Tu Do Street. Twenty young girls work there selling Saigon tea and beer to American G.I.'s and businessmen. Each girl has one, sometimes two, American offspring.

"My children have French passports and receive a monthly stipend, but all my girls can do to support their children is find another boyfriend," Jeannie said in English as she sat at cash drawer.

"I cannot understand how the Americans are so big and rich and don't do anything about the children."

#### SOLDIERS, BAR GIRLS, AND THE WAR'S BEAUTIFUL BABIES

(By Daniel Southerland)

SAIGON.—A young American soldier named Steve walked into the Lili Bar on Saigon's Ngo Duc Ke Street to see his girl, Margie.

The air conditioning wasn't working and the bar was stifling. Saigon was suffering one of its frequent blackouts.

Margie was sitting on a bar stool enticing another G.I. to buy her a \$1 drink of colored water called "Saigon Tea."

After a police interval she slipped away and joined Steve at a table in the back of the room. She had some important news to tell him. She was pregnant.

She gave Steve the news in barely intelligible English and with a giggle, but the message was unmistakable.

How the girl got the name Margie, Steve wasn't sure. All the girls in the bar had



adopted Western names, much easier for their customers to learn than their real names.

#### COUNTRY GIRL

Margie is a slender country girl from Binh Duong province north of Saigon. She once told Steve she had an uncle who fought for the Viet Cong. But, according to her story, the uncle left the Viet Cong and returned to the government side.

"No good," she told Steve.

Aside from this story and a few other details, Steve knew little of her past. Anyway, she was just a girl.

Steve had told her from the start he would never marry her. Their relationship was based on that understanding. And she knew he would be going away some day—actually the day in this case was only a few weeks away.

The young soldier told Margie he would pay for an abortion.

Her reaction surprised him.

Yes, she knew he was going away, but she wanted the baby. She wanted it because it would be "beautiful." And her mother would take care of it while she worked in the bar.

The Vietnam war is a war of many statistics, but nobody has compiled statistics on the number of illegitimate children fathered by American servicemen.

Almost every Saigon bar has one or more pregnant bar hostesses—usually made pregnant by American soldiers.

This "baby boom" cannot be measured accurately because most of the babies are being accepted by the Vietnamese and absorbed into Vietnamese families as fast as they are born. Only a few have been abandoned to orphanages.

The Vietnamese Social Welfare Ministry recently made a check of 20 orphanages containing about 1,500 children. Only 29 were reported to be of mixed blood.

Most mothers of mixed blood children in Vietnam are bar hostesses. Although many of them will sleep with a man if they like him, they are not all prostitutes in the usual sense.

The mixed-blood children are accepted and cared for because of the nature of Vietnamese family ties. In many cases, they are even treasured because they are indeed considered "beautiful."

"I've gotten to know several hundred of these girls," said an American social worker with long experience in Vietnam. "I have yet to meet one with any feeling of repentance or shame. They are proud of their babies."

"In Korea, after the war, the adoption societies carried off children by the dozens on the grounds that it was not a society into which they could be assimilated," he said.

"But illegitimacy or unwed motherhood has no social stigma here."

"The family structure here is very strong. There are extraordinarily few children in orphanages for a country that has been at war for 20 years."

Many of the bar girls who want to have mixed blood children can afford to take care of them and they do.

According to an estimate of a Saigon city councilman, there are 10,000 bar hostesses working in nearly 600 bars in Saigon alone.

The successful ones make as much as 50,000 (\$420) piasters a month, or more. This is a high wage by Vietnamese standards, higher, in fact, than the salary of a Vietnamese general or that of Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky.

One wealthy Saigon bar girl has had two children by a Frenchman and two by an American. All four children stay with a nurse at the resort town of Dnlat in the mountains 150 miles north of Saigon. The two oldest children go to a private school there.

On weekends, the children fly down to Saigon on the Air Vietnam plane with the nurse. The mother, who once was a penniless

refugee from North Vietnam, sheds her tight-fitting bar "uniform," dons a respectable dress and takes the kids to the zoos and the movies.

#### THE MELODY BAR

Not all the bar girls with mixed blood children are doing this well, of course. Some are victims of protection rackets. Some make a lot of money but spend it as quickly as they earn it.

The situation is toughest in some of the shabbier bars where the girls are encouraged to practice prostitution. When they become pregnant they are of little use to the bar. And some of the bar madams don't hesitate in this case to kick them out without much ado.

The old woman—the Americans call her "Mama-San"—who runs the Melody Bar down the street from the Lili where Margie works said three of her girls have mixed blood children. One of the fathers is an Australian soldier and the other two are Americans.

"Mama-San" herself had seven children by a Frenchman she married at 17.

Next door to the Melody is the Reno Bar. It's "Mama-San" had two children by a French "husband," an Army Captain who died in 1954 at Dien Dien Phu.

"Vietnamese love American baby," she said. "He get big fast in three or four months and look very beautiful. Everybody like him."

"If she doesn't like to have baby, girl can go to doctor and take him out," she added, referring to the Saigon "doctors" who perform abortions for as little as \$25.

#### NOT NEEDED NOW

Pearl Buck, the prize-winning novelist who has devoted herself to helping mixed blood children of American servicemen in Korea, recently sent a representative to Saigon to investigate the possibility of setting up a center for such children and their mothers in Vietnam.

Frank J. Davis, vice president and executive director of the Pearl Buck Foundation, was told by experts at the Vietnamese Social Welfare Ministry that the help he wanted to offer wasn't really needed for the time being.

This was also the conclusion drawn by a meeting of all the major social welfare agencies located in Saigon earlier this year.

"We compared notes and decided it was definitely not much of a problem," said Miss Anna Forder of the Catholic Relief Services.

But when the American troops pull out of Vietnam someday, what will become of these children they are leaving behind?

When the money no longer flows into the Saigon bars, it may become rough indeed for some of the bar hostesses who have no other means of making a living. And it may be difficult for them to find Vietnamese husbands.

The children will probably be discriminated against when they grow up by Vietnamese society as a whole, if not by their immediate families, because they are "different" and because their mothers were "bar girls."

#### NEGRO-VIETNAMESE

This discrimination will be especially tough on the Negro-Vietnamese children, judging by the current discrimination against children of West African troops who served with the French Army in Vietnam.

An American advisor to the Social Welfare Ministry said, "the problem for the future is going to be the Negro-Vietnamese children. Their skin will be dark and they will stand out. A Vietnamese girl will keep a half white child but not a Negro."

Several Negro-Vietnamese children have been adopted by American Negro Servicemen ending their tours in Vietnam.

American aid to children fathered by Americans has been limited to a relatively small number of adoptions, gifts to Viet-

namese orphanages, and soldiers' donations to their mistresses.

"If an American Serviceman has a child here, he gets a guilt feeling," said Tazewell Mooney, director of the Catholic Relief Services. "He gives the mother money and when he gets back to the states, he probably sends more money. And she probably finds another American boy friend."

#### U.S. PASSES DUCK ON GI BABIES

(By Tom Tiede)

PHILADELPHIA.—Whether or not the Vietnam war is, as some say, winding down, the social consequences of U.S. involvement there are assuredly winding up.

Take Pham Duc Minh, alias Eddie. He is the illegitimate result of a careless alliance between an American soldier and a Vietnamese whore. He is half white, half brown, half East, half West—and, at eight years of age, all orphan.

What is he? A bastard. Who is he? A social consequence.

Last seen he was smoking a cigarette on a street in Pleikua, abandoned by his mother, never known by his father, waiting to shine the shoes of passersby.

There are thousands like him in Vietnam. Nobody knows precisely how many. Since, as the French say, in Vietnam "c'est un pays approximatifs" (everything is approximate), concerned observers can only estimate the total of orphaned GI babies. A conservative guess is 20,000. Some feel it might be many times that. Novelist Pearl Buck has written that of every 10 GIs sent to the Orient, at least one "becomes the father of a child by an Asian girl," usually indiscreetly.

But the statistics are not the ultimate shock of GI babies. The real pain is that not only are they ignored by their parents, but by their nations as well.

Vietnamese officials admit they are powerless (haven't enough money) to look after GI babies. And as for the United States? It has the money but, sadly, not the will. It seems absurd to write it, but officially the United States doesn't recognize that GI babies exist. White House aides say: "It's a Defense Department matter." The Defense Department says: "It's a State Department matter." And the State Department, through an official of the Agency of International Development, says: "We have no program for the children, and none is contemplated."

So the future of Pham Duc Minh, alias Eddie, is as bleak as the past. He has little chance of getting into one of the nation's few orphanages—all of them are overcrowded as is. He has almost no chance of formally educating himself—public schools in Vietnam take money and responsibility. And because of his mixed blood he suffers the additional burden of social ostracization—a stigma that has pressured some GI babies to try to dye their blond hair black for some escape.

"There is one more thing," says a U.S.-based South Vietnamese diplomat. "We have reason to believe that some of these children are being sold into slavery."

Disgusting? Of course. But though the problem cries out for compassion and solution, there is little hope for either, at least on a governmental level. History itself is testimony. The United States has never recognized GI babies in any war (except where paternity was proven), preferring instead an almost puritanical aloofness.

"I was in Korea in 1953," says a Pentagon veteran. "I remember a general saying, 'Our men don't do that (make babies), they play volleyball for relaxation.'"

U.S. apathy was so infuriating after Korea that novelist Buck founded the Pearl Buck Foundation in hopes it would shame or maneuver the nation into some action. "I spent years beating on official doors," the writer says now. "I couldn't get anything but sympathy. I remember a meeting I had with

Robert Kennedy. Even he turned me down. I sat there for many minutes explaining the plight of these Korean orphans. I pleaded with him to do whatever he could to get help for them. But in the end, all he said was no. He didn't even give a reason."

Miss Buck, a Nobel Prize-winning author of some 70 books, herself was born in the Orient (of missionary parents), continues her interest in and lobby efforts for GI babies today. Her foundation is presently caring for some 1,700 "Amerasians" in five countries. She gets donations from around the world. "Many women will send in money, I suppose, because they think their sons or husbands are involved." But as for an ultimate solution, she thinks it's in Washington's hands:

"In all my years of urging, I've never come close to getting the government to do anything. Now I'm convinced that we'll never get moral about it, but I hope and pray we'll get practical about it. There is nothing more important for our nation right now, for our image in Asia, than for our government and people to respond to these helpless babies and say, 'We recognize our responsibilities.'"

Miss Buck's plea for American liability has some international precedents. The French, most notably, have for 25 years granted automatic citizenship to French-fathered Vietnamese orphans. Some 10,000 have thus been taken from the streets.

Yet the French solution—citizenship and adoption—is probably not the answer for America. U.S. citizenship is difficult because of laws. And mass adoption, says Rev. John Shower of the Church World Service, would be an insufferably snobbish activity: "Adoptive parents usually want nice, cute, cuddly kids. Therefore we would ignore the many wounded, blind or handicapped Vietnam orphans. No, what the children need is not a U.S. upbringing, but a Vietnamese upbringing. They need love, care and understanding, by and in the company of their own people."

In sum, Shower adds, they are not Americans. "They are Asian Americans."

Thus the onus shifts again to the U.S. government. Vietnam, still hopelessly torn apart by war, cannot, will not, give high priority treatment to GI babies. But, says a ranking spokesman at the Vietnamese embassy in Washington: "If the United States wishes, we will be very responsive to working something out." In other words, with American help. "We would help these children in every way possible."

Mr. Nixon, do you hear?

"If the United States wishes . . . we would help these children in every way possible."

THE COMMITTEE OF  
RESPONSIBILITY, INC.,  
Berkeley, Calif., July 9, 1971.

MISS YVONNE FRANKLIN,  
Office of Senator Hatfield,  
Old Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MISS FRANKLIN: My apologies for taking so long to reply to your request for suggestions on care of the illegitimate children of American soldiers and Vietnamese girls. It is probably too late now for any ideas to be useful, however:

The best and most direct help we could give to the Vietnamese and their children, legitimate and otherwise, is to withdraw all American forces and materiel from Vietnam at once and let the Vietnamese handle their own problems, to request aid on their own terms as they need it. I have been to North Vietnam, looking particularly at their medical program and care of children, and I know they have great organizational skill and real competence. All their programs are simple, perhaps primitive by our standards, but they are effective in Vietnamese terms and because of the effectiveness their measures are acceptable to the Vietnamese people. After a

period of confusion (and what could be more confused than the present?) the Vietnamese in the South could manage their own programs, with assistance when they ask for it, with administration in their hands.

The second and indirect help we might provide, in the knowledge that withdrawal from Vietnam is probably a plastic rainbow, is to make American people accept responsibility for what has happened to the Vietnamese people at our hands. A bill to be introduced to provide for the illegitimate American-Vietnamese children is a step towards increasing American awareness of our responsibility and, perhaps, the need for us to get out and stop making more illegitimate babies.

Provision for care should concern approximately 400,000 such children. This figure comes from an article in the NY Times by Gloria Emerson, I believe. (Our staff—Committee of Responsibility staff—in Saigon, is in touch with Gloria Emerson much of the time and we could, with a cable, chase this down.)

There should be three aspects to such a program. (1) Subsistence allotment for mothers who are raising their own children. Again, our staff in Saigon would be helpful in determining such a sum, but off-hand, from experience we have had, ten dollars a month is a lot of money and adequate to feed a child if that is what the money could be used for. (2) Support of a foster parents plan comparable to the one in practice here in the United States. Parents with a child or two are encouraged to take in foster children and are paid for maintenance and care of such children. Often a family will have two or three such children. In Vietnam before the US came in force, there were few orphans, for the extended family of seven aunts and eleven uncles took care of children whose parents might have died, or who might simply had an abundance of children with some to spare. These families are broken now, whole family villages destroyed and when we return our own war-injured, and now repaired children, we often cannot find any of the nearly 100 known relatives the child had behind him as social security and emotional stability and strength when he came. But, if families can be reestablished and refugee camps opened up—and many, as you know, are locked at night—these relatives might be the foster parents. (3) Social Service staff must be trained, minimally at least, to organize and implement such a program. These must be Vietnamese, and I think it not impossible to recruit young students for this purpose. The Buddhist school for social service once had a good training program, but because of their political position for peace and neutrality their program has been curtailed, many of their workers kidnapped, assassinated and/or jailed. They are suspicious of being involved with Americans, or of accepting American money. Still, ways might be found to enlist their help. Social service staff would have a hell of a time to determine if a child was American-Vietnamese. Often it is hard to note the distinction—if any—in children, and many poor will claim such parentage if there is money involved. Similarly, the foster parents are likely to take children for the money and not use it for the children; or, possibly to exploit the children, so this must be carefully supervised and the program designed to assimilate the children into Vietnamese society. Again, this has been done with French-Vietnamese in the North and surely could be done in the South. But in the South, and this is an important point, the destruction of the off the land has made for poverty, corruption and demoralization. Survival and self-interest, selfishness, is a consequence and it must be expected that little altruism will manifest itself in child care.

Evacuation of the children to the U.S. for any long term period is a bad idea. Chil-

dren, even these, are the last natural resource of a country and we cannot add to our other sins by the exportation of children. In five years they will be American, not Vietnamese, in orientation. If they do not come to resent America, they will resent Vietnam, and be resented if they are sent back. In short, you will be creating a new set of massive problems. We have enough.

All this may be of no useful purpose now, but perhaps can be filed in the mind for some future time. Like when we are out of Vietnam.

Please call or write if you have any question. Next time I assure you I will respond promptly.

Hoa Binh, the best Vietnamese I know—Peace.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) MADDELINE DUCKLES.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POSITION REGARDING CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES WHERE U.S. ARMED FORCES ARE ASSIGNED

The command in Vietnam is not complacent about the morals of the servicemen and associated activities. In this regard, responsible military commanders strive to curb the problem at its sources by making it clear that irresponsible and immoral behavior on the part of servicemen is never condoned, including the conditions which tend to induce or encourage immoral behavior and in particular, where it contributes to the problem of children born out of wedlock.

Separation from family and placement in an alien environment, coupled with the differences in mores which frequently prevail, are recognized as conditions which require unusual efforts. Accordingly, special command emphasis is given to character guidance and other programs to provide servicemen an opportunity to channel their off-duty activities into wholesome pursuits. Such programs make wide use of the services of our chaplain. In addition, direct, control measures are employed as warranted. These include such measures as the enforcement of curfews, off-limits restrictions, bed checks, and disciplinary actions. Areas and establishments can be and are placed off-limits by our commanders concerned when such is necessary to protect the interests and welfare of our servicemen.

Personal conduct of servicemen in Vietnam can be governed by forcible measures only on a transitory basis. In general, service personnel are neither more nor less moral than when they enter the service; unfortunately, some persist in engaging in immoral conduct despite counselling and advice to the contrary.

The presence of children born out of wedlock in foreign countries where our Armed Forces are assigned has been a subject of continuing sympathetic concern for many years. Both public and private agencies have been involved in studying ways of alleviating the plight of these children. Accordingly, the Department of Defense fully cooperates with American and International social agencies which make valuable contributions for the care and welfare of these unfortunate children.

There is not any truly happy or complete solution; however, the Department and responsible commanders remain ever mindful of the problem and will continue to address with urgency the activities of our servicemen where it contributes to the problem of children born out of wedlock.

We recognize that emotion and compassion often lead to a distorted view of the magnitude of the problem of illegitimate children by some persons. Accordingly, the number of such children fathered by American servicemen overseas is frequently exaggerated. Official reports from authorities in Vietnam state that the problem there is not of substantial magnitude. For example, it



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has been reported that the Vietnamese Social Welfare Ministry made a check of 20 orphanages containing about 1,500 children and found only 29 to be of mixed parentage. Another survey of a representative number of institutions for children in Vietnam shows that children with possible U. S. parentage account for approximately 2.8% of the total. A United Press report indicated that less than one half of one percent of the children in Vietnamese orphanages are thought to be Vietnamese-American.

Similarly, in 1952, when estimates of children of mixed parentage born out of wedlock in Japan during the United States occupation placed the number at 200,000, the American Consul General enlisted the cooperation of the Japanese Ministry of Welfare in evaluating the true extent of the problem. The Ministry's subsequent report placed the official figure at 5,013, of whom 1,000 were born to parents who were legally married subsequent to the birth of their child. (Evland, Virginia D., "Welfare Program for Children of Mixed Parentage," *Foreign Affairs Association of Japan*, Tokyo, 1956). Again in 1963, allegations were made that there were about 100 orphan children in an orphanage on Okinawa of whom the majority were illegitimate children of American service personnel. However, an official investigation established that, of the 85 children assigned to the orphanages by the Ryukyuan Government, only six were of mixed parentage.

The other side of the story often goes untold. We take pride in the fact that the American serviceman, through his generosity in all foreign lands, has adopted many of these alien children.

In regard to the legal responsibility of individual fathers, it should be noted that when, through due process of law in a foreign country, paternity of an alien child is established to be the responsibility of an American serviceman, the same treatment is accorded the judgment of a foreign court as that of a court in this country in dealing with individual cases. In short, this means that as a minimum the Department of Defense expects the serviceman to support the child. The same principles apply, of course, when a serviceman acknowledges paternity of a child.

## THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF VIETNAMESE CHILDREN - A CRITIQUE

February 1972

Wells Klein, General Director  
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In recent months there has been mounting publicity and expressions of concern regarding the welfare of children in South Vietnam - particularly those fathered by Americans. It is apparent that the general public is becoming increasingly concerned with these children and is looking for ways to be of assistance. However, like many considerations relating to Vietnam, this question is emotionally laden and much of the information disseminated in this country about children in Vietnam is either erroneous or exaggerated.

In an attempt to place the question of American-fathered children in a realistic perspective and suggest some useful channels through which public concern can be expressed, ISS convened a meeting in Washington on July 19th 1971 to consider the "Special Needs of Vietnamese Children." Although no formal consensus was arrived at by the participants, some of the information developed at the Conference and some of the actions taken since July will be of interest to those concerned with children in Vietnam.

#### The Status of Children

Part of the confusion relating to American-fathered children derives from lack of accurate information as to the numbers involved and their acceptance in Vietnamese society. Although no actual count of American-fathered children has been taken, estimates by the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, as well as by American and Vietnamese voluntary agency personnel and others, place the total number between five and fifteen thousand. It is important to note that most of these children are living with their mothers and families at the present time.

This is a relatively small group among the children in Vietnam, but one that can be identified and appears to have special problems. However, it is important to realize that these children cannot be considered separately from other Vietnamese children. Their condition reflects the general problems of children in a country at war with limited resources for child welfare services. The children with American fathers are part of Vietnamese society, and their culture and life style will be determined by that society as long as they remain within Vietnam. Also, these children, born of Vietnamese mothers in Vietnam, are Vietnamese citizens and any consideration of their future requires recognition that the Government of Vietnam does not differentiate between racially mixed and other children. The Vietnamese have a deep sense of responsibility towards their children and the Vietnamese

Government is not insensitive to the special problems that racially mixed children may face. However, the Government is reluctant to see them further differentiated from their siblings and other children by being treated as a group apart.

Some further statistics may be useful in placing the question of children in perspective. There are some 120 registered orphanages in Vietnam caring for approximately 19,000 children. In addition, there are another 40 (an estimate) unregistered institutions caring for about 6,000 additional children - a total of approximately 25,000. While these 25,000 children are in institutional care, the term "orphanage" is misleading. Well over 50% of the children are neither orphans nor abandoned. They have families or close relatives, and have been placed in orphanages because of economic difficulties or because their families are in movement around the country as refugees or military dependents. Children left in orphanages are frequently reclaimed by their mothers or relatives when family circumstances permit. Despite more than 25 years of war, the Vietnamese extended-family is still a strong institution.

Almost all of the orphanages are organized and supported by private groups. Those that are registered with the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare receive monthly payments amounting to approximately \$2.00 per child. Over the past five years a number of orphanages have also received substantial help - food, clothing, financial assistance and equipment - from American servicemen. This assistance will be reduced and in many instances totally discontinued as American troops are withdrawn. A serious and immediate problem is the development of substitute sources for this essential support.

Although physical and child care facilities in orphanages are significantly better than several years ago, they still remain poor in many areas. Medical care is minimal and access to educational opportunities, even at the elementary level, is often unavailable. The infant mortality rate in institutions is very high - some estimates are as high as 90%. This rather alarming statistic is the result of: (1) poor infant care facilities and staff resources; and (2) the often moribund condition of infants brought to the orphanage. The future, for those that do survive, is not bright from a medical viewpoint.

Of the 25,000 children in institutional care, fewer than 1000 appear to have American fathers. About half of these are Negro-Vietnamese children. The remaining, and vast majority of the American-fathered children are living with their Vietnamese mothers and families interspersed among the general population.

One of the primary concerns in our own country regarding American-fathered Vietnamese children is the question of their acceptance in Vietnamese society. Vietnam has a history of contact with other racial or ethnic groups including the French, Chinese, Khmer (Cambodian) and Indians. As a result of Vietnam's colonial experience, the Caucasian-Vietnamese child is not a new phenomenon. Unlike Korea, and, to some extent, Japan, Vietnamese culture does not place great emphasis on racial purity.

It is nevertheless difficult to predict what degree of acceptance the Caucasian-Vietnamese children will face growing up in Vietnamese society where light-skinned infants are thought to be the most attractive. There seems to be a consensus that the Caucasian-Vietnamese child will face few difficulties because of his racially-mixed background during pre-school years, particularly in urban areas. Once a Caucasian-Vietnamese child enters school, however, there is some indication that he may have problems relating to his peers, though such problems may result as much from the implication that the child is illegitimate or that his mother was a prostitute, as from the fact of racial mixture itself. Much of this is conjecture and many Vietnamese are unclear as to the future status of the Caucasian-Vietnamese children.

Prognosis for the Negro-Vietnamese child is quite different. There is general agreement among Vietnamese that the part-black child will encounter many difficulties because of his color. The experience, and present social position, of children fathered by French-Senegalese troops during the 1945-1955 period would seem to bear out this contention. Stated simply, the part-black child in Vietnam faces dim prospects because of his color. Furthermore, because there is no black community in Vietnam, he will grow up and live in relative social isolation.

Concern is being expressed in some circles in this country regarding the possible effects of future political events upon the attitudes or acceptance in Vietnamese society of children fathered by Americans regardless of race. In the absence of any evidence on this, the answer to such questions can only be a matter of speculation, and if raised at this stage may not be to the best interest of any Vietnamese child of mixed parentage.

In viewing the special needs of Vietnamese children, including those fathered by Americans, it should be borne in mind that Vietnam is now in its 27th year of almost uninterrupted warfare and that it is also, in the world spectrum, one of the poorer nations with no well established system of social welfare services. Social security and provision for socially dependent members of society has always been a concern of the extended family and, to a lesser extent, the immediate community. With the impact of 27 years of war, traditional patterns of social welfare are no longer capable of caring for the now vast numbers of dependent persons. For example, in addition to American-fathered and institutionalized children discussed above, there are several hundred thousand children who have only one remaining parent (usually the mother) or more distant relatives upon whom to depend for care and sustenance. In addition, there are tens of thousands of other people - the aged, wounded, widowed - who cannot care for themselves because of the war.

#### Current Programs

Vietnamese and foreign voluntary agencies provide a significant share of existing child welfare services in Vietnam. These range from institutional care to medical treatment, day care services, direct financial assistance, and programs which support the child within the family structure. Though

the voluntary agencies provide valuable assistance and demonstrate good child care services, they offer relatively limited and geographically uneven coverage.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare has a very small budget and has not yet developed a comprehensive child welfare plan to augment the role of the extended family. The Ministry contributes nominal support to orphanages and day care centers, and has some programs to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents and to house the street boys. The bulk of its programs, however, are directed towards care for refugees and benefits for civilians suffering injury, loss of their homes, or death as a result of the war.

The United States Government, through the Agency for International Development (AID), provides some technical assistance to the Ministry of Social Welfare and major material assistance for refugees. A substantial number of these are children, and they directly benefit from U.S. Government programs. While child welfare needs in Vietnam have had low priority in United States Government programs and funding, it is nonetheless true that substantial Food for Peace commodities (surplus food) have been made available to orphanages, day care centers, and other recipients recognized by the Ministry of Social Welfare. Also, as discussed below, the U.S. Government has recently agreed to allocate about two million dollars in local currency for expanded child welfare services in Vietnam to be carried out through the Ministry of Social Welfare. However, there has been no consideration of continued funding beyond calendar year 1972.

### Intercountry Adoptions

Intercountry adoption of American-fathered Vietnamese children is one form of assistance that has received a good deal of attention in the United States. Numerous American couples and interested groups see intercountry adoption as a specific and meaningful way to assist Vietnamese children.

Over the past years there have been various programs to send Vietnamese children abroad for adoption, medical care, or special educational opportunities. Some of these enterprises were clearly ill-conceived. After several unfortunate experiences and attendant unfavorable publicity, the Vietnamese Government - in 1969 - issued a decree barring any group or mass emigration of children. While this decree did not directly affect case-by-case intercountry adoption, it tended to make such adoptions more difficult and very slow.

Vietnamese law, which must be followed in intercountry adoptions, requires that adoptive couples be married ten years, be childless, and that one partner be over 30 years of age. Prospective parents not meeting these requirements must secure a special waiver signed by the President of the Republic before they can adopt a child from Vietnam. Present procedures affecting the issuance of passports also requires that children be legally adopted within Vietnam prior to their departure overseas. Vietnamese authorities are currently reviewing a proposed revision of the adoption law which would relax these provisions. The new law, still under review, places greater emphasis on providing a home for a child, rather than a child for a home. It also provides more realistic safeguards for children being adopted either locally or abroad.

As with many people, the Vietnamese are ambivalent about intercountry adoption. While they see it as a meaningful solution to the needs of specific children, pride of culture, nationalism, and perhaps resentment of foreign involvement - all rather understandable - are factors that may tend to inhibit intercountry adoption from Vietnam. While it is true that a number of adoptions are taking place from Vietnam to Europe and the United States each year, most of these are going through private channels and do not involve social agency participation either at the Vietnam end or in the country of the adoptive parents. As might be expected, a number of bad placements have resulted, including instances where children were placed abroad for adoption without their parents' knowledge or consent. The Vietnamese Government is very sensitive to these facts. Unfortunately, until there is adequate intercountry adoption service available in Vietnam, misplacements will probably continue to occur.

With this background, it is obvious that the Vietnamese Government will not be willing to see large numbers of intercountry adoptions, whether we agree or not, even though they may permit and even encourage adoption on a case-by-case basis where adequate safeguards are available for the children. When one considers that fewer than a thousand American-fathered children are now in institutional care, and that many of these may not be legally available for adoption, it is apparent that intercountry adoption is a realistic alternative for only a relatively few part-American children. Thus, concern for children - including this special group - must by and large be exercised through programs of assistance in Vietnam.

#### Special Programs in Vietnam

At the time of the French withdrawal from Vietnam in 1954 there were tens of thousands of French-Vietnamese children whose future status was in question. France has historically recognized children born of one French parent as having the right to French citizenship regardless of place of birth and whether or not the child's parents were legally married. After 1954 many of these children went to France as French citizens and were provided with special institutional care funded by the French Government. In addition, the French established special educational and other programs of assistance for French-fathered children staying in Vietnam. Even today there are some 400 French-fathered children receiving special schooling in Vietnam with assistance from the French Government.

The historical relationships of France and the United States to Vietnam are decidedly different, as are our respective legal systems with regard to paternity and citizenship. It has been suggested that the United States establish special programs for American-fathered children in Vietnam along French lines. Under such programs the United States would provide educational, medical, and perhaps financial assistance to American-fathered children without requiring that they come to the United States for adoption.

On the surface, at least, this suggestion would seem to have merit. It is, however, unacceptable to the Vietnamese Government which would have the final say on any such program. Also there are many who believe that special programs for part-American children would tend to exacerbate the problems these children face by setting them up as a special privileged group - thereby working against their welfare.

In a letter dated July 9, 1971 the Minister of Social Welfare stated:

"My Ministry's policy is not to distinguish racially mixed orphans from the others, for the former, although they are racially mixed, are Vietnamese-born citizens. Therefore, my Ministry has no intention of establishing separate orphanages for racially mixed children for this would have a traumatic effect on them."

The Ministry's position as expressed here and referred to earlier in this paper not only applies to orphans but to consideration of all racially-mixed children.

Aside from this official view, following the French pattern of special programs also raises problems in terms of the children's welfare. Most of the American-fathered children are living in Vietnamese families and have full Vietnamese brothers and sisters who would not benefit from special assistance. If special programs were established, they would identify and isolate the American-fathered child who, by and large, must grow up and make his home in Vietnam.

Thus, both because of the views held by the Vietnamese Government and the impact such special programs would have on the children, this approach to the welfare of American-fathered children is unacceptable. Whatever we do for American-fathered children in Vietnam must be done for the broader group of disadvantaged and dependent children, including those having American fathers.

#### Alternatives

It is apparent from a review of existing programs that, to date, child welfare has a low priority in South Vietnamese and United States Government plans for the future. In fact, both Governments seem to be relying on the voluntary agencies for new and improved, as well as existing, services. This reliance, however, is unrealistic. While a number of American and International voluntary agencies have provided useful child welfare assistance, and will continue to do so, the private agencies have increasingly scarce resources and can, at best, reach only a limited number of children.

With these considerations in mind, following the July 19th Conference, five voluntary agencies - Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, Foster Parents Plan, International Social Service, and the Urban League - met with AID and White House officials to urge that the United States Govern-

ment provide priority and reasonable funding for child welfare services in Vietnam, to be channeled through Vietnamese institutions - particularly the Ministry of Social Welfare. The agencies were not urging massive funding. We talked in terms of three to five million dollars, a small expenditure, indeed, given our responsibilities and our commitments of funds to other purposes.

While the agency representatives did not discuss specific program details, we were suggesting such areas of need as: (1) the prevention of abandonment of newborn infants; (2) improved institutional care; (3) improved infant care and medical services; (4) programs that would encourage and facilitate reunion of families; and (5) efforts to keep children within family settings. We also emphasized the need to channel augmented child welfare funds through Vietnamese government and voluntary agency structures to stimulate long range capacity to provide needed services. A final recommendation was that the United States Government look for multilateral mechanisms (e.g. UNICEF) through which to channel assistance on the assumption that child welfare needs will continue for some time, while direct American aid programs may not be as welcome in future years as those under international auspices.

These representations to the Administration were made in late July and early August. In October the Administration agreed to allocate approximately two million dollars in local currency for child welfare services in Vietnam for 1972. We like to think that this resulted, at least in part, from the representations made by the voluntary agencies.

Initiatives on behalf of Vietnamese children are also being taken in the Congress. Over the years Congress, and in particular Senator Kennedy and the Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, has shown greater sensitivity to the needs of the civilian population and the human consequences of war than either the Democratic or Republican Administrations. In recent months several bills have been introduced to Congress on behalf of Vietnamese children, especially in response to concern for American-fathered children. The most comprehensive of these, S.2497, introduced by Senators Williams, Hatfield, and Hughes on September 8th, states that:

- (1) ...the United States has a moral responsibility to assist the Government of South Vietnam in the care and protection of all South Vietnamese children, particularly those orphaned or abandoned, and
- (2) ...the United States has a special responsibility to assist in facilitating the care or adoption of children in Vietnam whose fathers are United States citizens and who are not living with their Vietnamese families.

This legislation and its companion House bills call for the establishment of a temporary Vietnamese Children's Care Agency to provide assistance to children through the Ministry of Social Welfare and voluntary agencies, and to facilitate the adoption of Vietnamese children. The bills also



request the President to determine what multilateral mechanism can be utilized to channel continuing child welfare assistance. They state that the Vietnamese Children's Agency will be discontinued once multilateral channels have been established.

Any piece of legislation represents a compromise, and these bills may not represent all things to all people concerned. They are, however, major new initiatives and deserve careful consideration. The Williams-Hatfield-Hughes bill has been referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and it is important that it receive hearings in the near future, both to determine what additions or modifications may be desirable and to move this important response to a critical situation through the legislative process.

Even though today may be the eleventh hour in terms of our opportunities to assist children in Vietnam, there is clearly concern in this country to do so. The voluntary agencies operating child welfare programs need direct financial support from the public. Theirs is an important role which must be maintained and which is presently endangered by lack of money. However, the voluntary agencies cannot go it alone. The American Government must also step in and provide continuing assistance through Vietnamese institutions - either by means of legislative initiative or through a policy decision within the Administration. We still have an opportunity to recognize our responsibilities in this area. But, time is growing very short, for us, and for some children in Vietnam.

# Editor's Page

## Adoption Resource Exchange

This month marks the beginning, after months of preparation, of operation of an adoption resource exchange to help agencies in the United States and Canada to place children with special needs. The program, called Adoption Resource Exchange of North America (ARENA), has been developed by the Child Welfare League of America as an additional resource for state and regional exchanges as well as for individual adoption agencies. The Exchange may be used when an appropriate home or child is not available for a placement within the community or state.

It is a three-year project which, it is hoped, will demonstrate that there are adoptive families for children of minority groups, children with physical or emotional handicaps, older children, and groups of siblings, as well as for the normal white infant. The mobilization of adoption resources in the United States and Canada should produce families willing to accept and offer a loving home to any child regardless of his age, sex, religion, race, or physical or mental handicap. If the child is adoptable, there must be a home for him in the United States or Canada.

There is no doubt of the availability of children who will need its services, but the success of ARENA will depend on the willingness of agencies to study and make available homes for children

with special needs. These families will differ from the old-fashioned type of adoptive family that had to meet some traditional eligibility factors that are now largely discarded. For example, they may be young, have natural children, or be able to have natural children. They may frequently be of modest circumstances, wishing to share their home with a child who needs them. They will not be seeking a child to complete their families, but wanting to help a child and to express their concern for children who lack the opportunity to grow up in a normal family. In considering such families for adoption, agencies that have not kept up with the dramatic changes in this area will have to reexamine their eligibility standards for adoptive families. Are there still artificial residence requirements that were originally developed to reduce the number of applicants? Is there a requirement that the marriage must be of a certain number of years' duration? How rigid are the age requirements? Will an application be accepted from a family if the prospective adoptive mother is working? Are boarding parents eligible? Are families being rejected because there is insufficient staff to make the adoption studies?

We can no longer afford practice that is so restrictive, either in kind or extent. With the number of children waiting for adoption homes today, every agency has an obligation to help serve their needs.

Brochures are available for agencies that wish to participate in ARENA. The brochures describe the program and outline in detail how an agency may participate. Registration forms for children and families may be purchased from ARENA. These will be used for the registration of individual children and homes. On the basis of these forms, ARENA will assist agencies to get together to exchange more detailed infor-

mation and, if they agree on its suitability, to plan the placement.

Because there is a variety of practice among agencies, there is an outline for the summaries to be used for the exchange of additional information that will insure the minimum material necessary for making an adequate decision. These standards for interagency placements will not preclude experimentation and innovative practices. Such innovations will be encouraged in order to allow us to continue seeking new and better ways to help children. The standards will, however, assure a minimum level of practice.

Cooperation between agencies in deciding on a placement and in planning for it is the very essence of an exchange. There must be mutual concessions on procedure. One agency cannot supervise another's practice. By working together to plan adoption for a child, each agency can learn from the other. New methods will constantly need to be devised. ARENA will have some policies or ground rules, but these will be kept to a minimum. Nothing can take the place of willingness to cooperate and to put the needs of a child and a family before agency policy and practice.

The Indian Adoption Project, which has been sponsored by the Child Welfare League and financed by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs for the past eight years, has been incorporated into the Adoption Resource Exchange of North America. The experience gained by the Indian Adoption Project in the placement of almost 400 children has been invaluable in developing ARENA. With the incorporation of the Indian Adoption Project into ARENA, the policy and procedures for the placement of Indian children will be the same as for any other children referred to ARENA.

A workshop devoted to the practical aspects of using ARENA will be held

at each Regional Conference this spring. By the time of the Regional Conferences, we will have had some experience. By sharing our successes, failures, questions, and reservations, we can continue to develop and refine our methods. ARENA is a mutual effort, and the contributions of participating agencies in developing it and making it successful are vital.

A part of each workshop will be devoted to considering possible exchange placements. This will help us to put into practice our deliberations. These workshops will be open to the adoption staff of any agency in the region. It is hoped that these workshops will be the beginning of continued meetings by participating agencies to discuss adoption practice and exchange.

ARENA has an Advisory Board, with Mrs. George T. Heintzman of Toronto, Canada as Chairman. Members include board members of the Child Welfare League of America, representatives from national organizations, and professional representatives from adoption agencies and exchanges throughout the United States and Canada. Their guidance has helped in the development of policies and in determining the direction of the program.

The Adoption Resource Exchange of North America is a program open to all agencies that need help in placing children for adoption and to all agencies that have approved adoptive homes for whom children are not readily available. The needs of children are so immediate, and our obligation to them so strong, that every possible way must be considered to achieve adoption for each child for whom it is the appropriate plan. We cannot be satisfied with less.

Clara J. Swan

*Director, Adoption Resource  
Exchange of North America*

# ARENA Breaks the Adoption Barrier

Condensed from CONTEMPORARY  
EVAN MCLEOD WYLIE

"LIFE CAN be lonely out here on the prairie," Rose Nordquist told me. "And we had no hope, just no hope."

The middle-aged farm woman's brown eyes clouded as she recalled how, for years, she and her husband had dwelt alone in the white farmhouse amid the immense wheat fields of northwest Minnesota's Red River valley. Three babies were lost through miscarriages, and another survived only briefly after birth. Mrs. Nordquist's doctor told her there could be no more pregnancies. Adoption agencies said that she and her husband were by then too old to be eligible as adoptive parents.

Now she pointed across the yard to a gaily painted swing, where two sturdy little girls played, their black hair shining silkily in the clear northern sunlight. "If having these two come into our lives isn't a miracle, what is?" she asked.

It is indeed somewhat miraculous, for the children who have found a new life on the Nordquist farm were born in faraway Alaska, of Eskimo-white parentage. Until recently, there would have been no way for the Nordquists to learn of them and their need for a home. But now, thanks to a new system called the Adoption Resource Exchange of North America (ARENA), thousands of families, and thousands of children spending lonely lives in institutions, can be brought together.

ARENA was founded in the mid-1960s by the Child Welfare League of America to meet an adoption crisis in the United States. Illegitimate births had doubled since the 1940s—to 300,000 a year. The number of adoptions had also risen, but the supply of children in greatest demand—healthy, white girl babies only a few weeks or months old—was dwindling. At the same time, adoption agencies were struggling to find homes for other children classified as "unwanted" because they were too old (more than one year), of mixed or minority racial parentage (slightly more than half the babies born to unwed mothers in the United States are of non-white or mixed race), or physically handicapped.

Searching for solutions, the Child Welfare League noted that traditional adoption procedures—matching children and adopting families by religion, nationality, physical characteristics, and economic and cultural backgrounds—were falling into disuse. Might there not be many more potential adoptive parents who would respond to children's needs rather than their backgrounds, if they could be reached? What would happen if a clearinghouse were set up to bring together available children and families across the whole of the United States and Canada?

Funds for a pilot project were obtained from foundations and offices were set aside at the Child Welfare League headquarters in New York. ARENA would function primarily as an information exchange. Fieldwork, investigations and adoption arrangements would continue to be carried out by the individual agencies, and final decisions would rest with them. Thus ARENA would not work directly with the families but only with these agencies. Expenses would be borne by the local agency or the adoptive parents. ARENA would charge no fee.

"We were betting we could demonstrate that local prejudice might work for a child instead of against him," says Joseph Reid, director of the League. "If an agency felt that a child had a poor chance for adoption locally, he could be listed with ARENA and thus brought to the attention of thousands of families all over the United States and Canada. His chances for adoption were bound to shoot up."

ARENA's very first case made the point. Malcolm, a seven-month-old boy of Scotch-Irish and Syrian parents, was registered with ARENA by an adoption agency in the South. Although the agency wanted a white home for the child, his light-brown skin made this impossible locally. ARENA arranged a contact with a Minnesota family that wanted to adopt a child regardless of color and, within a few weeks, Malcolm was on the way to his new home.

During its first year, ARENA successfully placed more than 100 such children within a wide range of ethnic mixtures, as well as 17 others whose local agencies had been unable to place them because they were considered "too old" for adoption. In addition, Protestants, Catholics and even two Buddhists were placed according to religious request. "In some states, you couldn't find a home for a Buddhist child," one agency worker told me. "But with ARENA there's the whole country to look over for a Buddhist family that wants a child."

ARENA has broken many barriers. For instance, from upper New York State came a call for help from an agency seeking to place four brothers and a sister, ages four to nine. The children clung to each other, and no foster home would take them all. In less than a week, ARENA had the answer: Mr. and Mrs. William T. Dillard, of Tennessee, whose own young daughter was lonely now that her brother had grown up and moved away, and whose large house and spacious grounds seemed empty. They had told a local agency they needed more children and would like to adopt a few. Speeding consultation by long-distance telephone, ARENA workers in New York City put the upstate agency in touch with the Tennessee adoption service that had agreed to help the Dillards.

Soon their big house was overflowing with the shouts, tears and laughter of five new children.

Wanting to make ARENA the new hope for children with all kinds of adoption problems, director Clara Swan appealed to agencies to register infants and children with physical handicaps that might be corrected by surgery or aided by specialized medical attention. An ARENA bulletin listed one such child, a little girl who was deaf. "Corinna," explained the bulletin, "needs a family. Won't you help?"

The bulletin went out to adoption agencies in the United States and Canada in October 1968. A case worker in a Massachusetts agency recalled that George Cobb, a lobster fisherman, and his wife had told her that the youngest of their four children, five-year-old Robert, had been born deaf and that they might like to help another child with the same handicap. She called the Cobbs immediately.

Now, two years later, Corinna Cobb attends deaf classes in a nearby public school with her new brother and, for the first time in her life, is making progress in learning to talk. She has become the delight of the whole family. "We just can't imagine life without her now," Mrs. Cobb told me recently.

Another of ARENA's big concerns is working for black children and multi-racial families. Take the Lindseys, for instance. Mr. Lindsey is white, Mrs. Lindsey is black. After Mrs. Lindsey suffered several miscarriages, her doctor advised them to adopt a child. But when they applied to an Illinois adoption agency, the worker assigned to their case informed them that no children were available. A rebuff at another agency a few months later so discouraged the Lindseys that they abandoned further adoption efforts for several years. Then last year they applied to an agency participating in the ARENA program. Shortly afterward, the couple received a phone call: "Would you consider adopting multi-racial twins?" The case worker explained that through ARENA she had discovered twins of Negro-Polish descent in New England. The Lindseys flew there to see the children, a brother and sister, age three.

"I stood in the door looking at them playing," Mrs. Lindsey recalls, "and fell in love with them." The next moment she was down on the floor playing with them—and soon they were all off to Illinois.

In addition to the obvious human benefits of ARENA's adoption pro-

gram, Child Welfare League director Reid points to simple arithmetic. At an approximate cost of \$2500 a year to maintain a child in a foster home or institution, bringing up an unadopted child may cost a state up to \$40,000. By contrast, to place a child with a family through ARENA usually costs less than \$500.

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There are now 350,000 children living in foster homes or institutions. Hopefully, families will elect to provide the homes that so many of these children so badly need. Their rewards for that generous decision are almost sure to be great.

Says Mrs. Nordquist, who adopted the two children from far-off Alaska, "People say to me, 'Now you know what it's like to raise children,' but all I can say is, 'It's wonderful.' From the start they've known that they're loved and that we need them."

5. "Black Market Babies"

## *Black-Market Babies: Couples Pay Big Fees To Get Children Fast*

*Abortion, Birth Control Cut  
Supply Through Agencies;  
A Lawyer Earns \$165,000*

By LIZ ROMAN GALESE

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

NEW YORK — A well-dressed young man and his wife climb four flights of stairs in a dirty tenement and knock on a door. A woman they know only as Helen lets them into the flat, empty except for an infant girl wrapped in a blanket on the bare floor. After a few words, the couple leave with the gurgling baby. It now is theirs—for \$3,300.

The young man and his wife have just completed an adoption on the so-called black market. It's a black market because of the huge fee—illegal in most every state—that they had to pay. The market, nonetheless, is growing, largely because the supply of babies—particularly white babies—available for adoption through legitimate channels is fast declining. It's harder even to adopt a nonwhite baby than it used to be, though the supply of black babies up for adoption still is relatively plentiful.

"We have reports that the black market is flourishing," says Ursula Gallagher, an official in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare's office of child development.

### Waiting Lists Closed

Liberalized abortion laws, widespread practice of birth control, and a trend among unwed mothers to keep their babies have abetted the decline in legitimate adoptions. California's state adoption agency placed only 6,503 infants in foster homes in 1970, down from 8,066 a year earlier. Massachusetts found parents for 400 in 1970, down from 700 in 1969. The shortage of babies is so acute that many agencies have closed their waiting lists.

In many cases a black-market adoption is shrouded in secrecy. The young New York couple, who had been vainly seeking a baby through a legitimate adoption agency, were told by an agency employe they might have better luck if they looked up a certain woman in a nearby restaurant. They met Helen there and set up the deal in the flat.

In many other cases, though, what's essentially a black-market transaction takes place in a plush-carpeted lawyer's office, and the adoption is legalized by a court. The lawyer charges his usual fee for legal work involved, usually not more than a few hundred dollars, but he may also get thousands of dollars under the table if he has done the work of finding the black-market baby.

The high costs don't seem to deter childless couples. On the black market they can get a baby within months. Legitimately it may take two to five years. To a natural mother who doesn't want to keep her baby, the black market has an obvious appeal: money. Often she may have all her medical expenses paid, and sometimes "something extra," the bonus coming from the fee charged by the lawyer or other go-between who arranges the adoption. Normally, legitimate adoption agencies don't pay for an unwed mother's medical expenses.

### Risks, and Contempt of Court

Adoption agency officials say a black-market adoption is fraught with risk for the child. That's because nobody usually inquires as to whether the adopting couple would make reasonably satisfactory parents. "One infant girl was given to two psychotic parents," says a Portland, Ore., social worker.

That situation was discovered when the parents got involved in a legal proceeding and the court assigned a social welfare agency to investigate their home.

Even when a black-market adoption is discovered, judges usually leave the child with the adoptive parents for the sake of the child's emotional well-being. Even in the case of the psychotic Portland parents, the social worker involved says she will recommend that the court permit the child to remain with them. The girl had lived in their home for six years when the situation was uncovered, the social worker says, and it would disrupt her life more to take her away than it would to leave her there.

Some black-market adoptions are thought to be secure because the judges who order them are paid off. Social workers say they strongly suspect one judge in a Midwest state is cut in on black-market deals because adoptions from all over the country are channeled to his court. The judge denies the charge.

In any case, the traffic in babies is profitable for the black marketeers. Nicholas Stevenson, former chairman of the Chicago Bar Association's committee on adoption, tells how one operates. "This fellow, who is a lawyer in a Midwestern city, uses a hospital as his main source of supply of babies," Mr. Stevenson says. "He apparently has some doctors cooperating with him, and they channel unwed mothers to him."

The lawyer lines up couples to adopt the babies mainly through word-of-mouth advertising by satisfied customers. In 1970, the lawyer arranged adoptions for at least 55 couples, charging about \$3,000 each in addition to his modest legitimate fee and the mother's medical expenses. That means he collected at least \$165,000 in illegal fees.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JULY 18, 1971

# Supply of Adoptable White Babies Shrinks

## Officials of Agencies Fear Growth of a 'Black Market'

By STEVEN V. ROBLIKS  
Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES—Intense pressures are starting to build on adoption agencies throughout the country as the supply of available white infants continues to dwindle.

Many officials are worried that the pressures could lead to a "black market," in which babies are adopted through private channels for excessive fees. These private, or independent, procedures are legal in all but two states, but established agencies feel they place more priority on a couple's ability to pay a good fee than be a good parent.

At the same time, many adoptive parents who have used the independent adoption procedures insist that there is often no other way to get a healthy white baby, since agency red tape makes that avenue difficult or impossible.

In any event, evidence of abuses is very sketchy, because all the transactions are so private. So far they seem limited to larger states, such as California, and less scrupulous lawyers. But as Superior Court Judge Lester Olson, who handled adoptions in Los Angeles County for two years, said:

"The situation has only one direction to go, and that would be to get worse."

### Stricter Rules Seen

The California Legislature recently held hearings on a proposal to tighten the rules governing independent adoptions, and a parade of agency officials warned that a "black market" was virtually inevitable as the shortage of babies grows.

The source of concern is simple: supply and demand. The number of children placed for adoption has plummeted sharply in the last few years. For instance, the Children's Home Society of California, one of the country's largest private agencies, placed 1,903 children in 1968. This year, if present trends continue, it will arrange only 883 adoptions. As of last month, the society is no longer accepting applications from persons who want only white infants.

But the demand is rising. Families that are worried about the population explosion are deciding to have no more than two natural children and adopt the rest, and adoption in general is becoming more acceptable, and laws are becoming more flexible.

One good result of this situation is that many more "hard to adopt" children—those who are either nonwhite, handicapped or older—are finding permanent homes and not languishing in foster institutions.

### The Pill and the Law

There are three main reasons for the baby shortage: the increased availability of birth control devices, particularly the Pill; liberalized abortion laws, mainly in California and New York; and a drastic increase in the number of unmarried girls who decide to keep their babies. Add it all up, said one lawyer, "and it's as if someone had turned off a giant spigot."

As a result, more prospective parents are turning to independent adoptions. Regulations governing these procedures vary, but in most states a couple seeking a child goes to a lawyer who specializes in adoptions. The lawyer then tries to find them a child, usually through a friendly obstetrician who has an unmarried patient, or through other lawyers who refer pregnant girls to him. In all cases the adoption must be approved by the courts.

Established agencies have traditionally opposed these procedures, mainly because they feel there is a greater chance the mother will try to get her baby back. (However, the famous Baby Lenore case was handled by a prestigious New York agency). In addition, the agencies do exhaustive studies of prospective parents, which lawyers are seldom willing or qualified to conduct.

### Find Standards Rigid

Independent procedures are defended by people who say that agency standards are too rigid and their examination too degrading. One prime example is in New York, where most agencies continue to insist that children be placed with couples of the same religion. Independent adoption is thus the only way that many couples, particularly Jews, can find children.

According to the experts, independent procedures have always been abused by a few unethical lawyers charging exorbitant fees to couples who could never qualify for an agency baby. In a time of shortage, the abuses get worse. And adoption officials report that in recent months, the growing

drought—and the growing desperation of childless couples—has produced the following incidents:

One Los Angeles obstetrician has been approached by several lawyers who have clients looking for babies. The lawyers offered to pay an obstetrical fee of \$1,000, considerably above the normal price of \$400, if the doctor referred an adoptable baby to them.

"When someone offers that kind of money, I feel it's dishonest," said the doctor, who has two adopted children of his own. "That's not a fee, that's a bribe."

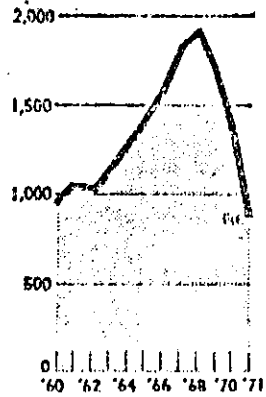
The Los Angeles County Department of Adoption, the nation's largest adoption agency, recently heard of two cases in which lawyers here placed babies in New York before the mother had completely decided what she wanted to do. To get her baby back, the mother would have had to go to New York and hire a lawyer—which she could not afford to do.

A man came to Vista Del Mar, the Jewish adoption agency here, looking for a baby. He told Mrs. Annette Baran, the director, that in Florida it would cost him \$10,000 "to knock the first person off the top of the list." Legitimate independent adoptions usually run about \$1,000 to \$1,700, including the lawyer's fee, obstetrical costs and expense money for the natural mother, all paid by the adopting parents. But reports keep filtering in to the agencies that the going rates run from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

"Obviously," said one lawyer in the field, "there is a great temptation to gouge for fees when you have one baby for every 20 couples in your file."

In California, all costs of an independent adoption must be reported to the courts, but judges concede there is no way to tell if a couple is lying.

Children placed for adoption by Children's Home Society of California



The New York Times July 18, 1971

Frances Mansfield, chairman of the Maryland State Advisory Committee on Adoptions, said she had evidence that "all obviously pregnant girls" on the campus of Georgetown University in Washington were approached by strangers asking if they wanted to put their babies up for adoption. Adoption officials here have heard similar reports of lawyers paying high school students \$25 for referring pregnant classmates to them.

Lawyers specializing in adoption are scouring the country for babies. For instance, David Leavitt, one of the leading lawyers in Los Angeles, discovered a legal loophole in

Florida. In that state, if a woman is separated from her husband and becomes pregnant by another man she must still have her husband's consent to place the baby for adoption. In California, if the mother can prove that her husband was not the father, she can place the baby herself. Mr. Leavitt has imported five babies because of that law.

In addition to their traditional objections to independent adoptions, agencies denounced the "black market" for several reasons.

"Just as a person, I react negatively to it," said Julian Brantley, president of the Children's Home Society. "We did away with buying and selling people after the Civil War."

#### Aiming at Good Home

The main issue, however, is whether the child will get a good home.

One Miami lawyer put it this way: "It's obvious that a childless family with an income of \$15,000 a year will never get a baby through a lawyer whose file is full of millionaires willing to pay almost any amount for a white, healthy child."

The other side of the shortage picture is the boom in "hard to adopt" children: Those with nonwhite racial backgrounds or physical handicaps, older children, or siblings who want to stay together.

Prospective parents fall into two broad categories: those who want to reproduce themselves and thus want children resembling the ones they would have had, and those who want to give needy children a home. Most "hard to adopt" are still taken by the latter group, but a few of the former group are

biting over. One survey shows that 35 per cent of the Negro children placed last year were adopted by white couples. The figure was 23 per cent two years ago.

At the same time, the established agencies are now able to spend much more time finding homes for problem children.

#### Have to Be Understood

"These children have to be worked with and understood," says Walter Heath, head of the Los Angeles County Department of Adoptions. "Sometimes they even need therapy, especially older children who have been kicked around in a dozen foster homes—and now we have the staff available to do that."

"You really have to find homes one by one for these kids; you have to individualize them. No one really wants the idea of a 'crippled child,' but when you say, 'How about this particular child,' that's different."

The department can now find a home for virtually any child, except for older, black children. The private agencies here place virtually 100 per cent of their cases. In fact, some

agencies are now combing the rolls of foster children, trying to find those who would be eligible for adoption. In the past thousands of foster children, who were abandoned by their parents, could not be adopted because no one would do the necessary paper work.

In addition, some agencies are able to provide more services for mothers who decide to keep their babies, including day care centers and nutrition classes. Others now offer outpatient counseling to families after they adopt children.

#### Artificial Insemination

There are also signs that as the shortage gets worse, a few couples are considering artificial insemination or even a "baby maker," a woman impregnated by the husband.

"They used to say, 'If it can't be both of ours, we'd rather adopt,'" said Mrs. Baran. "Now that they find it hard to adopt, a few are considering alternatives, but the psychological problems are still tremendous."

Most experts agree that the shortage is likely to get more severe, and this has prompted a re-evaluation of some existing laws. In states like California, adoption agencies are pressing for tighter regulations of independent adoptions, so that fees will be limited and prospective parents will be subject to a stricter review.

In states like New York, where the law has helped create shortages among certain religious groups, some forces are arguing for a more liberal approach on the religious issue. Today Roman Catholic children still go unadopted even though Jewish couples are willing to take them.

All these efforts can only go so far. In the end, unless more change sharply, many couples are going to have to face the sad reality of a childless future.



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