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# “Just a Drop in the Bucket” : An Analysis of Child Rescue Efforts on Behalf of Korean Children, 1951 to 1964

Sydne J. Didier
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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Sydne J. Didier for the Master of Arts in History were presented May 5, 1998, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

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# ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Sydne J. Didier for the Master of Arts in History presented May 5, 1998.

Title: "Just A Drop In The Bucket" An Analysis of Child Rescue Efforts On Behalf Of Korean Children, 1951 To 1964.

From 1951 to 1964, American sponsored relief and adoption agencies evacuated more than two thousand children from the nation of South Korea, adopting these children into American families and inspiring some of the most intensive discussions about international adoption yet to occur in the United States.

Intervention on behalf of Korean children began in the 1950s when American GIs sought to aid child victims of war, a relief effort that was carefully documented by American media outlets seeking some means of understanding the U.S. intervention in Korea. When the Korean War ended in stalemate in 1954, many were inspired by media depictions of Korean waifs. Following the pioneering efforts of the Holt family of Creswell, Oregon, adoption advocates argued for the placement of children impacted by the Korean war, many of whom were fathered by American GIs. The Holt family quickly became the spokespeople for a national movement to aid Korean children and were depicted as model Americans in the numerous media outlets which followed their work.

The placement of Korean children in American families was seen as a means of healing the wounds of the Korean War and one way of saving the world from communism in a period of intensive Cold War fears. For many in the United States, the adoptions affirmed the superiority of American culture and illustrated the humanitarian instincts of a nation struggling with its responsibilities across the

globe. Legislative debates over adoption quotas and regulations reflected the lack of clarity about the American role in a changing global landscape and subsequent attempts to articulate the American mission and global purpose.

The legacy of the Korean period was that exhibitions of American strength and compassion could be extended to encompass the plight of children around the globe for whom many Americans felt a growing sense of responsibility. Relief efforts have become increasingly more common and while the magnitude and intensity of Korean adoptions from 1951 to 1964 was unprecedented, the evacuations effectively synthesized a number of issues which arose again during "Operation Babylift" in 1975, at the end of the Vietnam War.

# "JUST A DROP IN THE BUCKET"

# AN ANALYSIS OF CHILD RESCUE EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF KOREAN CHILDREN, 1951 to 1964.

by

Sydne J. Didier

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
HISTORY

Portland State University
1998

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# Introduction

In April 1997, the cover of USA Today held the headline "Death by Inches in North Korea." Focused on two photographs of babies in a North Korean orphanage, crying, rubbing their eyes, and clearly starving to death, the front page promised a "Tragedy in Pictures." The lead story which followed began with the tale of anonymous infants. "In an orphanage in this village near the Yalu River border with China, nine little babies lie in a row, placed together under one rough woolen blanket for warmth. Eyes running, noses clogged with mucous, their chests racked by deep hacking coughs, the infants hardly seem to benefit from their proximity." Detailing the famine facing North Korea, the article noted that the nation's troubles were impacting primarily women and children, and blamed the children's fate on the fact that "leaders have waited too long to ask for help."[1]

There was hope, however, in the form of American visitors and food aid and the article ended on a cautious but optimistic note, offering readers the addresses of humanitarian organizations to which they could contribute and acknowledging that the North Korean government now sought closer relations with the United States. "The Americans started the war in Korea," the story quoted one Korean, Kim Gyong Il, as saying, "repeating the propaganda North Koreans have been taught." But Kim also expressed his pleasure at meeting U.S. citizens. 'If you help us with our food troubles, you will be most welcome."[2]

Such coverage of the North Korean situation effectively encompassed perceptions and issues that were raised when the fascination with Korean children began more than forty years ago. By the late 1990s, images of this kind are not

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[1] Barbara Slavin, "Death by inches in North Korea," USA Today, 11-13 April 1997, 1,2.

unfamiliar to an American public long confronted with pictures of the starving children of Vietnam, Africa, Latin America, Romania, Russia, and countless other areas. Readers and television viewers have become accustomed to the use of images of children as means of emphasizing the troubles of other nations and justifying the potential for American intervention.

Such patterns began with U.S. involvement in the Korean War of 1950-53. At a time when memories of World War II were still strong and Cold War tensions were peaking, national attention turned to the series of "littlest victims" of international conflict in Korea. What began with a few newspaper and magazine stories about Korean "waifs" became an international relief effort, focused on the evacuation and adoption of the children of American GIs and Korean women. Largely inspired by the Holt family from Creswell, Oregon, the most intensive interest in Korean children spanned the years from 1951 to 1964. During this thirteen year period of extensive relief efforts, newspaper articles and legislative decisions reflected a national obsession with children, illuminated the ways that imagery of the young could be used to marshal support for particular causes, and raised questions about the responsibility of the United States across the globe. Through adoption efforts and other relief attempts, U.S. legislators and the general public created an open discourse about these issues and fundamentally altered the nature of and laws regarding international adoption.

This thesis documents the details of the adoption and relief efforts which occurred in this period and seeks to understand the social patterns and public discourse evidenced by such endeavors and the public discourse about them. It

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[2] Slavin, "Death by inches in North Korea," 1,2.

attempts to offer explanations for public fascination with Korean youngsters, how and for what purpose the children were represented in the American media, and how such images impacted the course of both public action and government legislation.

The power of images of children is undeniable. In the preface to his award winning book, Children of War, journalist Roger Rosenblatt recalled undertaking the project because of brief television coverage of an Iraqi boy surrounded by rubble after a bombing. Rosenblatt called the image "the same basic scene of pain and bewilderment, eliciting the same basic reactions in those who, like myself, look upon the faces of the children and feel an admixture of guilt, helplessness and curiosity as to how such children will ever survive."[3] My contention is that the sense of helplessness described by Rosenblatt has inspired periods of intensive relief efforts which, while not necessarily long-standing, have offered Americans one means of dealing with ambivalent feelings raised by U.S. foreign policy.

Throughout U.S. history, relief efforts on behalf of children have been common. It was during World War II, however, that the first extensive, twentieth-century efforts to aid foreign children began, focused on temporary settlement rather than permanent adoption. Children had been brought to the U.S. during the Spanish Civil War, but during World War II, changes in reporting meant images like that those of the Battle of Britain made the war "vivid to the American public" in a way that other conflicts had not been.[4] "As the news from Europe worsened,"

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[3] Roger Rosenblatt, Children of War, (New York: Anchor Books, 1992),vii.
[4] Keith A. Parker, "British Evacuees in America During World War II," Journal of American Culture 17 (Winter 1994): 33. For a detailed account of the Basque refugee children of the Spanish Civil War, see Dorothy Legarreta's work, The Guernica Children, (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1984).

one historian has indicated, "the American public indicated a willingness to receive the sons and daughters of Allied countries into their homes for the duration of the war. Gallup polls indicated that as many as five million families supported the idea."[5] Connecting the imagery of wartime to the call for action, an effort which was initially "slow, cumbersome, and limited in scope" became a coordinated and complex effort to aid British children.[6]

During W.W.II, Eleanor Roosevelt and others formed the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, and with Roosevelt's influence, the Committee pushed the U.S. government to extend 13,000 visitors visas to children. Making a distinction between children and adults, federal policy set a precedent for collaboration and aid on behalf of child victims of war.[7] Public support for evacuations, based on emotional responses to stark images, led to government action.

Similar interactions between pictorial imagery, public outcries, and government action occurred during the Korean War period. This project traces the development of efforts on behalf of Korean children from 1951 to 1964. The first chapter focuses on the first stage of relief efforts, founded by U.S. soldiers and an effective means of legitimating U.S. involvement in the Korean War. Those involved in aiding Korean children frequently invalidated Korean culture, presuming the superiority of the American way of life, and admired in Korean children attributes which were seen as embodying American principles of self-sufficiency, determination, and heroism. Such values were of paramount importance at a time when the U.S. feared losing stature across the globe.

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[5] Parker, "British Evacuees in America During World War II," 33-34.
[6] Ibid.

Chapter two follows a transition in media coverage from stories of individual assistance by U.S. GIs to a focus on the Holt family from Creswell, Oregon, the unofficial spokespersons for the civilian movement to evacuate and adopt Korean orphans and other children. Applauding the heroism of the Holt family, whose work began after the Korean conflict had officially ended, newspaper reporters recognized the Holts as models for all Americans and provided detailed coverage of each "baby-lift" they organized. Simultaneous changes in government legislation and the reliance of lawmakers upon newspaper accounts underscored the importance of images of Korean children and their saviors. As Americans were increasingly impacted by the images that bombarded them in the period from 1955 to 1959, popular support for aid operations and legislative aims created a movement that attempted to take responsibility for the "mixed-race" children of Korea, the offspring of U.S. soldiers and Korean mothers who faced difficult circumstances in a nation with a tradition of pride in its "pure" heritage.

Chapter three focuses on the end of an era, the transition between 1959 and 1964 from almost constant attention on the Holt family and their efforts to a period defined by increased controversies. Conflicts now arose over the admission of children with tuberculosis and the dangers of proxy adoptions which allowed representatives like the Holts to place children, sight unseen, with adoptive families. Media attention also expanded in this period, and embraced a number of opposing viewpoints which challenged the singular authority of the Holt family. The early 1960s witnessed legislative changes which fundamentally changed adoption rules and set still-standing precedents. Finally, the conclusion to this

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[7] Ibid., 34.

thesis explores the legacy of the Korean adoption movement and suggests avenues for further study.

Although this work approaches child rescue efforts from an analytic perspective, I do not seek to undermine the instincts of those involved in humanitarian efforts, but instead, to understand the cultures of these movements. For this reason, I have focused primarily on sources from Oregon, a region of the Northwest where the largest percentage of adoptions were arranged, and where there was consistent media attention to the children of Korea.

I chose to concentrate on media portrayals of these events because of my interest in the way that a medium which often proclaims objectivity chose to explore the evacuation of over 2,000 children. I have traced patterns which appeared in a variety of periodicals, reflecting trends which impacted the course of child relief efforts and set precedents that continue to shape the way media outlets look at children today. This work pinpoints the moment in history when children were acknowledged as an effective public relations tool, connecting their victimization as innocents of war to domestic aspirations and international efforts.

On a technical note, one difficulty I have encountered is the fact that many writers in the periodicals I have used were inconsistent in their treatment of Korean names. In Korea, the family name appears first, but it seems as though many writers took these surnames to be the first names of the children they wrote about, a fact which accounts for the seemingly unusual number of Kims other names which are actually family names in Korea. For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to use the names as they appear in each article.

# Chapter One--The Beginning

Less than a year after the start of U.S. involvement in the Korean War, a July 1951 Newsweek cover captured the sentiments of those observing the war and its outcomes. "Korean Kids," it read, "Peace or War, They Lose." Accompanying the title was a photo of "Tiny Kim," a "little basketful of Korean waif...symboliz[ing] a generation which has been all but lost in the military destruction of a nation." The text was strong and depressing. The visuals were compelling. Kim sat in a basket, legs crossed, smacking his lips as he snacked on bread and jam given to him by American GIs stationed in Chongju. He looked straight at the camera, his chubby cheeks filled with bread, and his oversized jacket snuggled around him. A pot of jam, with the word Utah written across it, sat on the ground next to him.[8]

The authors' intent was clear. The photo and accompanying text was designed to elicit a particular reaction on the part of the American readers, one of sympathy for and despair over the situation of Korean children impacted by the war. More subtlely, the text and photo indicated that there were some who cared for them, American GIs and relief workers who had given "Tiny Kim" his bread and jam.

Accounts of acts of kindness by GIs and others first inspired American media attention to the plight of Korean children. As a flurry of articles about Korean children began to appear, journalists reported that although children were being devastated by the war, there was hope and salvation in the form of caring American

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[8] "Korean Kids: Peace or War, They Lose," Newsweek, 9 July 1951, cover, 1.

GIs and others. It was a theme that would follow throughout the Korean war, marking one way that Americans grappled with the conflict and its outcomes.

The Korean conflict had begun in June of 1950 when North Korean forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel into South Korea, a move which sparked American fears about the spread of communist ideology and led to renewed military involvement in Southeast Asia. For the Truman administration, the North Korean invasion appeared to be the first in a series of calculated military takeovers plotted by communist governments, and the U.S. government responded accordingly.[9] In seeking military action, "[American] diplomats and military leaders believed that the reputation of the United States stood at risk. If America did not back its word--its principle of containment [of communism]--its image would tarnish and its power erode."[10] Until the war's end, with the signing of the armistice in July of 1953, the conflict was viewed as a pivotal moment for the United States, one which ultimately furthered the Cold War and contributed to increased international divisiveness.

Historian Rosemary Foot has argued that "during the early stages of China's intervention in Korea, [American] decision making bore some of the hallmarks of crisis: that is, a perceived threat to important national goals, which surprised policy makers by its occurrence, and was seen to require an immediate response."[11] Foot has also maintained that domestically, the Korean conflict played into the "paranoid element in foreign affairs," an outgrowth of internal espionage charges and the actions of Senator Joseph McCarthy, in addition to fears that the

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[9] J. Garry Clifford, Kenneth J. Hagan, and Thomas G. Paterson, A History Since 1895, vol. 2 of American Foreign Relations (Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1995), 317.
[10] Clifford, Hagan, Paterson, A History Since 1895, 318.

administration was "weak" on communism.[12] According to Foot, there was "widespread domestic and international consensus that the North Korean attack was Soviet inspired and represented a challenge that the United States had to meet at once, or face the consequences in the future."[13] The sense of impending doom was further enhanced by the issue of treatment of American POWs and documentation of atrocities against them, a discussion which received a great deal of attention in national publications and furthered the sense of outrage on the part of government officials and the American public.[14]

The U.S. had entered the Korean conflict with high expectations and the resolution of the war left an important legacy both domestically, and for American foreign policy. On July 27, 1953, "the adversaries signed an armistice...The conferees drew a new boundary line close to the thirty-eighth parallel, which gained South Korea 1,500 square miles of territory. The agreement also provided for a demilitarized zone between the two Koreas." Domestically, many Americans were disappointed because "the war had no victors--no dancing, cheering crowds in Times Square." In the U.S. "the Korean War wounded bipartisanship and fueled McCarthyism [and] helped set off a 'great debate' in the early 1950s over whether...the United States had overcommitted itself around the globe."[15] It was in

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[11] Rosemary Foot, The Wrong War, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 35.
[12] Ibid., 42-43.
[13] Ibid., 63.
[14] See "Question of Atrocities in Korea Proposed as Assembly Issue," United Nations Bulletin, 15 (15 November 1953): 453 and "The Record: Red Atrocities in Korea." Time, 9 November 1953, 24-26. Several other citations are available. A parallel post-armistice debate arose over the issue of 21 American POWs who declined repatriation. For details, see Adam J. Zweiback, "The 21 'Turncoat G.I.s': The Political Culture of the Korean War," The Historian 60 (Winter 1998): 345-362.
[15] Clifford, Hagan, Paterson, A History Since 1895, 324.

this context that the adoption of Korean children began, partially motivated by insecurities about the U.S. position in the international arena.

Up to the time when the Newsweek cover of "Tiny Kim" appeared, coverage of Korean children was random at best. Stories that did appear, however, contained several distinct themes, themes which became more fully articulated as the war progressed. Accounts from 1951 to 1953 focused on GI intervention in the lives of Korean children, orphans and others, who had been victimized by the war, examining the ways that children's lives had been devastated and how American troops were rising to the challenge of helping. Such emphasis provided an important means of validating the righteousness of an American presence in Korea. By proving the humanitarian instincts of American GIs, to both Koreans and the people of the United States, the war could be won on at least one front and a healing process could begin.

Early stories like that about "Tiny Kim" also documented a cultural superiority complex on the part of many Americans. Korean culture was portrayed as insufficient to ensure children a valid and appropriate upbringing, with or without the war, and it was up to Americans to "rescue" them when they could, a bias that was reflected in coverage which documented what I am calling the "Americanizing" of Korean children. Evidence of a child's progression toward becoming more fully American was indicated, in one way, by external, visual indicators--dress in American clothes, enjoyment of American toys, and development of American tastebuds.[16]

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[16] See Michael Rougier, "The Little Boy Who Wouldn't Smile," Life, 23 July 1951, 91-94+, and "A Famous Orphan Finds a Happy Home," Life, 14 May 1956, 129.

The other component of the Americanizing process was the recognition of values considered to be American, appreciated in Korean children as a sign that they could become "one of us" in spirit if not in citizenship. Writers admired children's' survival instincts, commented on their likeness to U.S. cultural heroes who had also taken initiative and made the best out of hard times, and appreciated in many young Korean boys the willingness to care for home and family--consistent with an American emphasis on males as breadwinners and family heads. The transition from Korean to American was considered a success when children were perceived to be adopting culturally specific value systems. Such discussion made these children familiar to a U.S. audience and suggested the possibility that aid efforts would begin to reach outside the parameters of GI camps.

Just two weeks after the Newsweek cover in 1951, Life magazine published "The Little Boy Who Wouldn't Smile," the story of Kang Koo Ri. Like "Tiny Kim," Kang was one of the young victims of the war, a reality that author Michael Rougier emphasized with his first photograph of the unsmiling boy, engulfed by a tall table, his eyes focused upon the food being served to him by unseen U.S. soldiers. Particularly striking for the graphic nature of his discussion, Rougier began his article by detailing the stark scene at which Kang had been found, alone in his home, surrounded by the "smell of death" and sitting near the decomposing body of his mother. Rougier described the way that Kang's small town was situated, in a valley between the artillery of UN and Communist forces, bearing the brunt of aggression by each side. At a time when peace talks were not going well,

this part of Rougier's article reflected a feeling of hopelessness, a sense that the future remained unknown and that the war had left many victims.[17]

Rougier's emphasis on the shared blame of both UN and Communist forces was unique. His focus was on the ways that conflict impacted the "simple" residents of this town, forced to evacuate or worse, stay on "clinging to whatever possessions were left." Unlike many who followed him, Rougier did not use his piece as a forum for condemning communist action. Instead, he lamented the trials of children like Kang, just one of those left behind and found only when American soldiers conducted a search of all homes. According to Rougier, as Kang was carried away, "he raised an arm in the direction of the house. Tears coursed down his cheeks and his body shook in spasms. The GIs thought that he was trying to say something but no sound came. All the way back he cried steadily, tears streaming from his eyes but no sound at all coming from his throat."[18]

While not easy to read, Rougier's text provided readers with a vision of the devastation of war that was based upon the reality of one child's life, leaving behind the ball his father had carved for him from a tree root and most poignantly, leaving the home he was raised in. This kind of description was certain to impact a U.S. public raised to believe in the sanctity of one's home and family, but Rougier did not end the story here. Instead, the bulk of his text focused upon the salvation techniques of the American soldiers stationed in Korea. His descriptions documented the positive nature of American intervention in Korea, while offering readers a respite from the graphic descriptions of Kang's early terrors.[19]

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[17] Michael Rougier, "The Little Boy Who Wouldn't Smile," Life, 23 July 1951, 91+.
[18] Michael Rougier, "The Little Boy Who Wouldn't Smile," Life, 23 July 1951, 92.
[19] Ibid., 92+.

Taken to a nearby base, Kang was handed over to the 1st Cavalry's "Operation Mascot," an informal means of collecting and caring for orphans and other children found "wandering aimlessly,...picked up by the GIs and taken back to camp where they became mascots or houseboys." Rougier documented that Kang's recovery and Americanization process began when he was given C-Ration candy, cleaned up, treated with DDT powder to destroy the lice in his hair, and dressed in blue jeans and a cowboy outfit like those of the other mascots playing in the camp yard. Rougier's intent was to underscore that Kang's situation was not unique but significantly, the piece also made it clear that children who benefited from such aid were being torn from all that they knew, and even while in their own country, asked to assimilate to American foods, modes of dress, and religion. A photo caption noted that the favorite song of these Korean orphans was "Jesus Loves Me," but it seems doubtful that the children understood the significance this musical choice had for the U.S. public reading about them. For Rougier and others, the evidence of American attributes was a sign of progress when it may have been simply the choice of a pretty melody or a desire to please those who provided food and shelter.[20]

The most intriguing element in Rougier's article was the treatment of Korean children as "mascots," a theme that continued throughout the early period of media war coverage. Dressing Korean children in American cowboy outfits was common, and photos frequently emphasized the adorable and incongruous look of Korean children outfitted in stereotypically American clothing, playing at and attempting to be like "real" Americans. In Rougier's article, one photo showed a

[20] Ibid., 92, 93.

group of mascots, in full cowboy dress including hats, cap guns, and holsters, sitting at a table waiting for their rations.[21]

Given the popularity of cowboy films and imagery at this time, such costumes were recognizable to American readers and audiences as reflecting a national spirit.[22] Korean children were made almost hyper-American with this clothing but there is a striking irony here. The idea of Korean children dressed in outfits that prepared them for a good game of "cowboys and indians" was meant to portray them as insiders to American culture, when in reality, their position was more like that of the "indians" themselves--tolerated in their difference, especially because of the devastation in their lives, but asked to acclimate and prove themselves in ways that white Americans of non-controversial ethnic background were not. In more ways than one, their costuming was more serious than a simple childhood game.

Such photos also illustrated the extent to which the Korean people, most specifically children, needed to be "saved" and how this would be done. The image of children in American dress, waiting for American food made it seem as though Koreans were quick to relinquish their Korean culture, rendering it inferior that of their American saviors. Media portrayals also made the children even more lovable, adorable to an American audience being asked to support the war effort. While enemy imagery was not yet a regular facet of journalistic coverage, it was becoming obvious that Korean children were the real victims of communist aggression.

[21] Ibid., 94.

[22] For discussion of 1950s cowboy films, please see Peter Biskind, Seeing Is Believing (New York; Pantheon Books, 1983), 229-240.

From their home with the U.S. soldiers, Kang and the others were taken to the Bo Yook Won orphanage in Taegu, a difficult parting for children who were now accustomed to life with the GIs and having trouble understanding yet another transition. Rougier noted that "the GIs had given them the best life that they had known, and they all felt that no matter where they were going, life would not be so good."[23] Kang, like most of the children, was unable to remember much of his early life, and Rougier's comment did not necessarily indicate a simple dismissal of whatever life these children may have had with their biological families. Some of Kang's most vivid, and indeed some of his only memories were of his mother's body, "the strongest...of the flies and maggots that crawled over his mother's lips and nose."[24]

Kang's transition to a happier childhood was certain to take time and Rougier did not attempt to piece together a happy ending to this first story. Several readers wrote to express the emotions that Kang's story had inspired. "The picture of the little Korean boy who wouldn't smile impressed me so profoundly that I burst into tears," wrote Helen E. Stevenson of Chicago, Illinois.[25] Pete L. Morse called the article "the most unforgettable series of pictures to come out of this or the last war."[26] In a testimony to the ways that such images inspired action, Mrs. Donald S. Miller said "my heart went out to Kang Koo Ri. I want desperately to send him gifts from time to time."[27] Finally, in one of the few public statements from a government official, Korean Ambassador You Chan Yang wrote to say that

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[23] Rougier, "The Little Boy Who Wouldn't Smile," 94.
[24] Ibid., 97.
[25] Helen E. Stevenson, Letter to the Editor, Life, 13 August 1951, 8.
[26] Pete L. Morse, Letter to the Editor, Life, 13 August 1951, 8.
[27] Mrs. Donald S. Miller, Letter to the Editor, Life, 13 August 1951, 11.

"Michael Rougier captures all the poignancy of our children. Our country today is a nation full of lost children, but my government is doing everything it can to build orphanages and minister to these innocent waifs."[28] While the article ended with Kang's first smile, readers were left with the sense that there was much to be done, and that the American presence in Korea would help to make just a few of the changes necessary.

Unlike most isolated and random stories from the early years of the Korean War, Kang's account was one of the few to be followed throughout the next several years. Less than one year later, Kang's portrait, complete with a vibrant grin, was the Picture of the Week in March 1952. He held his earlier and more sullen image in his hands and the caption noted that because of its power, it was to be used as a promotional poster for the Protestant United Appeal for Overseas Relief.[29] Although there was little text to accompany this new photo, the smile was enough to show readers that Kang's transition was a successful one.

Some years later, Kang was still the focus of media attention. In 1956, well after he was first introduced to the American public, ten-year-old Kang was shown riding a carousel horse in the U.S., shortly after his adoption by Mrs. Cordelle Lefer of Los Angeles, California. Lefer admitted that she had been struck by the hopelessness of Kang's expression in those early photos. "I got down on my knees and prayed," she said, "and was told to adopt him."[30] Lefer's statement clearly indicated the power of media portrayals of Korean children, the impact of images of

[28] You Chan Yang, Letter to the Editor, Life, 13 August 1951, 8,11.
[29] "Kang Koo Ri and His New Face," Life, 17 March 1952, 37.
[30] "A Famous Orphan Finds a Happy Home," Life, 14 May 1956, 129.

the young and disempowered who were victimized by a situation outside of their control. It was after seeing a simple photograph that Lefer was inspired to act.

More generally, actions like Lefer's reflected a sense of empowerment on the part of those Americans who felt that their intervention was necessary, righteous, and a means of assisting in the recovery process. Recovery was to come through Americanization and exposure to the modern elements of the American lifestyle. The photos of Kang in Los Angeles showed his amazement at hearing a voice from the telephone. The piece also noted that "watching television is a fascinating new experience for Kang. He prefers cowboy shows. Operating [the] set thrills him almost as much as programs."[31] Clearly Kang was becoming an American, and his interest in cowboy shows, reflecting a continuity with his early costuming, made this apparent. For audiences who read Life, the story documented Kang's transition from lonely, victimized Korean child to emblem of American good will and proven humanitarian instincts. The meaning of the story was epitomized by its final chapter and Mrs. Lederer was like many others--struck by images and words and motivated to the type of action she thought best.

Coverage of compassion and intervention by American GIs had begun with pieces like Michael Rougier's on Kang Koo Ri, but was not limited to that piece. By 1952 and early 1953, many popular periodicals contained such pieces and the public had several opportunities to bear witness to the horrors of the Korean conflict. By this point, Americans were ready for peace, but while longing for resolution, the nation was still enmeshed in cold war fears of communist aggression

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[31] Ibid., 130.

and insurgency. Articles in this period began to change and focused upon the ways that Americans were winning, if not in land gains, then in fostering ideological allies, beating the communists at their own game. Since many of these pieces were written by military commanders and soldiers themselves, it was fitting that they sought to both rationalize an American presence in Korea and prove the merits of such intervention.

In December of 1952, just in time for Christmas, Ladies' Home Journal published a story about the kindness of American military troops in their work with Korean children. Written by Commander Bill Lederer of the United States Navy, the story described "Operation Kid-Lift," the brainchild of Sgt. Harry Ball of Marine Air Group 12, stationed just south of the 38th parallel. A plan to rescue groups of children stuck in a "no man's land ravaged by the passage of four armies," the idea was to evacuate children previously exposed to great risks during a 12-bus trip typically necessary to move them to safer ground. Sergeant Ball sought to evacuate the children via air, in cooperation with the United Nations Civil Assistance Commission Korea (UNCACK).[32]

Although the story focused on the salvation of Korean children, it also depicted the sticktuitiveness of American military men--their determination to make things right no matter what the odds. "If they had made an estimate of the situation as they do for combat problems," Lederer wrote, "it might have looked like this:

MISSION: To help Korean war orphans.

BUILDINGS ON HAND TO HOUSE THEM: One house with no floors or windows.

[32] Commander William J. Lederer, "Operation Kid-Lift," Ladies' Home Journal, December 1952, 49.

FUNDS ON HAND TO SUPPORT THEM: None.

TRAINED PERSONNEL AVAILABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILDREN: None."

Clearly, the situation was bleak. As Commander Lederer described it, the children *and* American soldiers faced almost insurmountable difficulties. He also made it clear, however, that American determination and drive would allow the men of Marine Air Group 12 to persevere and establish a network of support and intervention for Korean children.[33]

After requesting and receiving permission to evacuate the children, the marines began to plan. They gathered clothing, made repairs to the orphanage where the children were to be taken, collected extra food, and even made Christmas presents for the children. Commander Lederer emphasized the men's persistence, "back at the base after a day of fighting" and spending nights sewing small overcoats made out of old blankets. The men also made cookie molds out of old tomato cans. The author proudly noted that "the cooky [sic] men even had slant eyes," as if that meant that all steps were being taken to ensure that these children would feel welcome and at home. "For the girls," Lederer further acknowledged, "cleaning rags from the planes were laboriously stitched and stuffed to become Raggedy Ann dolls.[34] This was indeed an endearing and effective image: rough-and-ready marines hunched over their sewing, piecing together dolls for the little ones they so desperately wanted to save.

For Lederer, this project was a team effort, even in terms of the religious diversity of the soldiers. "It certainly didn't occur to the marines," he wrote, "but it is an interesting note that this was strictly an interdenominational deal; Protestants,

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[33] Ibid., 122.

Jews, Catholics, and even a couple of Buddhists were all working together."[35] Americans, it seemed, could overlook the elements that made them different and work together for what they saw as the common good.

Shortly after the initial planning, the operation was approved, and the first planeload of children was brought back to the base. The flight had not been an easy one and Lederer constructed dramatic tension with a description of the plane fighting the wind, skidding from the runway and stopping just ten feet from a frozen river. Soldiers on the ground were ready, and ran to the plane with blankets and jackets, cuddling the underclothed children to protect them from the cold. They took the children straight to the mess hall where the they were served the first meal many of them had eaten in days.

Unlike Michael Rougier whose article emphasized the sad lives of child victims, regardless of which troops had been responsible for their situation, Lederer portrayed North Koreans as a threat to children. The Commander described children sitting before their steaming bowls of rice, afraid to touch them. Finally, a translator spoke for one of the group. "He says the North Korean soldiers told them how it would be. The Americans are fattening them before they eat them." As Lederer told it, the soldiers quickly counteracted this bit of propaganda by expressing their love for the children, and soon, all had gobbled their rice, snuggling against their individual soldiers and giggling as they began to get warm.[36]

In his description of the mess hall scene, Lederer employed the enemy imagery that would soon come to represent the North Koreans in many periodicals.

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

While in the United States, debate raged over the treatment of prisoners of war and accusations of torture and brutality on the part of the enemy North Koreans, such rhetoric had not been employed in the discussion of children. Clearly, however, the images evoked in the POW controversy must have lingered in the minds of American readers, especially considering that the atrocity question was one of the greatest stumbling blocks to armistice.

Lederer's anecdote clearly articulated the image of an enemy that utilized lies and fear as one way of waging war. Commander Lederer used his piece to indicate that because of the multiple techniques used by communists, war against them needed to be waged by a number of means. The implication was that the combination of American smarts, power, and kindness would insure success. Such optimism was epitomized by one of his final anecdotes, a remark by a Korean man who told Lederer that "if the communist soldiers could see this orphanage, they'd throw away their guns and go back to their farms and factories...I know what I say. I used to be a soldier in a communist labor battalion...I worked for the communists because they told us that Americans were evil people."[37] Returning to his home, however, had changed this one man's mind. "I saw the American marines," he said, "who are fathers and mothers to these poor children. At first I did not believe it, but I watched and then I did believe, and I deserted the communist army. They had told me lies.'[38] It was not American military victories which had changed this man's mind, but instead, the combination of kindness and concern on the part of Americans and perceived deception by North Koreans.

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 123.
[38] Ibid.

By 1953, newspapers and magazines contained a great number of salvation stories, which, like Lederer's, underscored the virtues of American GIs. In May of 1953, National Geographic Magazine published "The GI and the Kids of Korea." In one of the lengthiest essays to appear up to that point, author Robert H. Mosier, a Technical Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps, used photographs and text to detail many of the rescue projects undertaken by American GIs. His piece is particularly helpful in documenting the great number of these projects and ways that GIs collaborated with one another, a reality that Mosier wanted the American public to understand.

Mosier set his narrative structure by beginning with the story of his friendship with Kim, a 15-year-old Christian Korean who became the Sergeant's houseboy. Although slightly older than many of the young Koreans American readers had been hearing about, Kim's story was a typical one. His father had been killed in the war and while he did have family, they were far away. Like many others, Kim was making his way by relying upon the U.S. soldiers who let him work for them, gave him their cast-off clothing, and introduced him to American movies, food, and hobbies. Kim had met Mosier at a refugee camp and quickly asked him for work.[39]

Writers like Mosier emphasized the way young Koreans were becoming self-reliant in an unpredictable and unstable environment. Kim and others were portrayed as street smart and skilled, quick learners, and easily adaptable amidst horrific conditions--perfect as mascots for U.S. troops who were also

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[39] Robert H. Mosier, "The GI and the Kids of Korea," National Geographic Magazine 103 (May 1953): 635+.

complimented for their ingenuity, skills, and adaptability. Kim was an excellent example of survival because he had provided for himself after the death of his father, scrounging food from the base, doing odd jobs to earn goods he could trade, and eventually, developing an interest in Mosier's profession of photography and becoming an able photographer of Koreans because of his ability to converse with them.[40]

The enterpriser image was also epitomized by characterizations of children like the "greeter of Seoul," another boy called Kim who made his way by carrying bags of those arriving at the train station in Seoul. His father having died earlier, "Kim" was separated from his family and forced to make his way alone. A New York Times story detailed Kim's expertise in his particular niche--he knew the train schedules and important local phone numbers all by heart, and could provide lost and weary travelers with almost any information they might need. Writer Robert Alden described Kim "as bright and shiny as a Colorado silver dollar," and noted that Kim had been found "bustling about the passenger terminal of the Seoul railroad station like a puppet in the hands of an overenergetic master."[41] His talents had impressed one American GI who soon contacted his own mother who offered to adopt Kim. Alden let readers know that while the decision had been hard for Kim's birth mother, she ultimately agreed because of her belief that there would be greater opportunities for him in the U.S. The lesson here was that Kim's hard work and perseverance led to a better station in life. His adherence to American values, whether he understood them as such or not, led to his becoming a "real" American, leaving behind his Korean/inferior past.

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[40] Ibid., 637.

Mosier's anecdotes about his Kim were similar. The journalist told readers that Kim had taken great interest in American magazines, fascinated by the cars and seeing the U.S. through a Wild West mystique as presented through assorted mediums of popular culture. While Kim also helped Mosier to adjust to Korean life, and Mosier's stories introduced American readers to Korean customs they may have been unfamiliar with, it was clear that these were temporary fascinations or discomforts. Mosier recounted his own experiences assimilating, learning to remove his boots upon entering a home, struggling to fit his knees under a dinner table set at ground level, but readers were assured that he would never trade these ways of living for the comforts and luxuries of what was presented as a superior American lifestyle. Instead, samples of Korean culture made it even more understandable that Kim and others were so impressed by the American presence and culture.

By portraying stereotypical American values in the young Koreans befriended by U.S. soldiers, writers like Mosier enabled readers back home to identify with young heroes like Kim. In detailing the survival strategies of Korean children, journalists succeeded in enforcing a "Tom Sawyer" image of enterprise and survival, young Koreans who were learning how to play the new system and making their way.[42]

In addition to detailing the laudable attributes of Korean children, Mosier described the series of child rescue efforts headed by American GIs. As a military

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[41] Robert Alden, "Bright Korean Boy To Get Home in U.S.," New York Times, 8 March 1953, 58.

[42] For discussion of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn as literary figures, please see Eileen Simpson, Orphans (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 194+.

photographer, Mosier explained, he had been granted a unique insight and perspective on the events of the war. Readers saw grinning children, warm in the coats issued by their American guardian angels. In one photo, a child was being fitted for a new pair of shoes, while in another, one sad young boy "the kid who walks alone," boarded one of the rescue planes that was part of "Operation Orphan Annie."[43] The 1950 operation had evacuated 964 Korean children from Inchon and relocated them at Cheju Island, requiring 15 cargo planes to move them. Mosier's update on the relocation noted that one year after they transported the children, the men of the Air Force Cargo Command returned for Christmas, complete with lollipops, Christmas trees, toothbrushes, and other gifts. "Korea's 'Orphan Annies," Mosier noted, "hadn't been forgotten."[44] For Mosier, the photos were just one part of the story and he expressed pride at being an American because of the good works accomplished in Korea.[45]

To emphasize the virtuousness of American GIs, Mosier recounted the story of Harry L. Gary, of Springfield, Missouri who "took one look at the goose-pimpled, ragged kids around his base and wrote home...Inside of 12 days, his aunt and uncle and the local newspaper had put on a clothing drive and begun shipment of about three-quarters of a ton of sweaters, shoes, gloves, and things like that." He recalled the work of the Army's 40th Infantry Division at Kapyong, outside of Seoul, which stepped in to aid a town in need of a school. GIs raised the money for

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[43] Mosier, "The GI and the Kids of Korea," 652.
For further details about "Operation Orphan Annie," please see "Waifs of War," Time, 1 January 1951, 16.
[44] Mosier, "The GI and the Kids of Korea," 652.
[45] Ibid., 640.

the school and commissioned an architect to design it, working in collaboration with the Korean people to ensure that the youngest would have a place to learn.[46]

Finally, Mosier told readers that there was another aid project they "ought to know about." This was the development of the "Children's Democratic Town," designed to inform Korean children about self-rule by having them institute democratic principles as the means of governance. Started by Lt. Col. John C. Keele Jr., the project was perhaps one of the most unusual from the Korean War. According to Mosier, 190 children lived in the town, organized according to monthly elections of officials and a set of rules that applied to all residents. This was, Mosier believed, one of the most hopeful signs that Americans were "doing a lot, one way or another, to relieve the misery around us."[47] For Mosier, the Children's Democratic Town was another battle front in the fight against communism and provided a means of winning Korean loyalty through the recreation of American democracy. Showing children democratic principles through lived examples represented one way of saving them children and instilling true American ideals. Even if they did not leave their country, they were presumed to be invested with the spirit of democracy.

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[46] Ibid., 652-653. Other stories of GI assistance were designed to be equally compelling. In April of 1953, The New York Times noted that the crew of the battleship Missouri had become the foster parents of Choi Ok Bong, a nine-year-old boy. Sadly, the author noted that the plan for caring for Choi Ok Bong was one of the last wishes of the commander of the ship, Capt. Warner R. Edsall, who had died just a few weeks earlier. "Missouri Crew Becomes 'Papa' to a Korean Boy, 9" New York Times, 5 April 1953, 7.
In May, the same month as Mosier's article, The New York Times noted the departure of 11-year-old orphan, Song Yong Cho, who was traveling to Nebraska after being aided by U.S. soldiers. The boy had lost both of his feet to frostbite and U.S. GIs got him artificial feet and entrance to the U.S. "Orphan Leaves for U.S.," New York Times, 25 May 1953, 3.
[47] Ibid., 653, 656.

Despite the efforts he so admired, Mosier realized that "it still seemed a drop in the bucket, a big drop; but a big bucket too."[48] Perhaps it was for this reason that Mosier's essay ended less optimistically than others. Unlike the many stories which explained how individual Korean children were rescued, Mosier's story ended with Kim returning to Korean society, leaving the American comfort of GI tents, slick magazines, and ice cream after a military order asking all non-essential Korean civilians to leave the area. While Mosier was disheartened by their parting, it was clear that he also believed it was important for Koreans to develop self-sufficiency, and that it was unfair to provide false hope. "I didn't give him any forwarding address," Mosier said, "and I didn't write him. He had his own life to take up again, among his own people, and I figured it would only sidetrack him to keep alive his hopes--the hopes almost any Korean kid has-- of coming to America and living in the miraculous steel-and-chromium world of the illustrated magazines."[49]

It was unclear what would happen to Kim, but Mosier ended his piece with the words of thanks expressed by an anonymous Korean child. "This civil war," the child wrote, "have made plenty of poor orphans who are lost their parents and warm cradel [sic], they were wandered on the cold street during cold winter night, but now this orphanage fortunately have men like you who are very kind helper in

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 656.

This sentiment was echoed in a November 1953, New York Times Magazine photo essay entitled "So Long Charlie." The photos and accompanying text showed the parting of one American GI and the young boy he had befriended. Calling orphaned Korean children of the "larger tragedies left in the wake of the Korean War," the article showed "Charlie" crying as friend watched helplessly. "So Long Charlie," New York Times, 8 November 1953, Sec. VI, 78-79. One reader responded to this essay calling it "the most humane thing ever published in the Times Magazine. It teems with Americanism; it is democracy at its best; it is religion, 'pure and undefiled." Benignus Gallagher, O.F.M, "Pure Democracy," New York Times, 22 November 1953, Sec. VI, 6.

the world especially UN force. We have feeling very thankful day and night."[50] For Mosier, this was the legacy of American involvement in Korea. Having contrasted the elements of "inferior" Korean culture with the perceived superiority of American technology and aid, Mosier felt comfortable implying that all who could, would choose America. This was part of the myth of America that he and other writers ascribed to and that acted as an impetus in these relief efforts and subsequent civilian actions which appeared to be concerned with the validity of one lifestyle over another and the legitimacy of U.S. involvement in the Korean War.

While Mosier focused on larger scale aid operations involving U.S. military personnel, most of the coverage of Korean children in the early 1950s related to specific cases involving GIs, those which allowed individual names and faces to emerge and remain in the public memory. Indeed, by the time the armistice was signed in 1953, it was not unusual to find stories of American GIs adopting the special child they had made a connection with. In November of that year, Life magazine documented one of the most publicized individual GI adoption cases in a photo-essay on the arrival of Lee, the adopted child of Chief Boatswain's Mate Vincent Paladino. While the American public had been introduced to Lee nearly a month earlier, in a New York Times story documenting his adoption, the Life essay was the most comprehensive story of a GI adoption yet to appear.[51] Titled "A New American Comes 'Home," the article showed Lee dressed in a petite naval uniform, marching assertively down a footpath at an Alameda, California military base. The

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[50] Mosier, "The GI and the Kids of Korea," 656.

[51] For New York Times story, see "Waiting For That Letter," New York Times, 20 October 1953, 5.

brief text told readers that Paladino had found Lee outside the Navy mess hall in Inchon in November of 1952.[52]

Paladino, 35-years-old and a career Navy man, used his American ingenuity and "took [Lee] to the enlisted men's club, made a bed with slats to keep Lee from falling out during his frequent nightmares, and set about to track down the boy's family." Finding that Lee had no family, Paladino quickly became a father-figure to the boy, taking him to see American movies and enrolling him in a Korean kindergarten. After being ordered to return to the states, Paladino adopted Lee and the bureaucratic red tape grew complicated. Although the two had been stuck in Hawaii while they awaited the appropriate paperwork, the Life article showed their triumphant arrival in the mainland, and documented the ways that Lee had already become an American boy.[53]

Lee, it was noted, had learned to speak English from the American movies he had seen in Korea, and when "the reporters asked him, 'Do you want to be a cowboy?' Lee knew the right answer." Photos showed Lee eating an ice cream cone "manfully" while complaining of the cold, coyly hiding behind his father's legs, and digging in an ash box until accidentally burning himself on a lit cigarette butt. The final photo, which covered an entire page, showed Lee dressed in a full cowboy outfit, held in the air by Paladino who was in full Navy blues. Both, it seems, were in the uniforms befitting their positions--Lee as that of a new American boy, and Paladino as a sincere patriot. This "New American," cap pistol and all,

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[52] "Jon Brenneis, "A New American Comes 'Home," Life, 30 November 1953, 25.
[53] Ibid.

was clearly at home in his adopted country and both father and son looked relaxed and happy. [54]

As follow-up stories appeared in the New York Times, Lee and his father were welcomed in New Rochelle, New York. By the time he was to meet the rest of his new family, Lee was "already a television fan, and his personal hit parade is led by Roy Rogers. He has made the switch from rice and fish and kimche to hamburger and French fries without any evidence of nostalgia."[55] Again, the media discussion made it clear that this Korean kid was American at heart, and that he could easily make the transition from the food and traditions he had known to those befitting a "real" American boy. By January of 1954, Lee was baptized and his father was making plans to return to active duty, leaving his son in the care of his grandparents.[56] Not only had he been saved from a hard set of physical conditions, he had been rescued from the religion and foods of his birth culture.

To contemporary readers, what would seem most unusual about the Paladino case was that Vincent Paladino was a bachelor, lauded for adopting a child in a period with a primary emphasis on the nuclear family and the responsibility of women in the child rearing process. Surprisingly, appreciation of men like Paladino was not uncommon at the time, and stories of GIs like him grew in number. A photo titled "A Bit of Seoul Goes to Omaha," showed 5-year-old "Jimmie" holding the hand of his bachelor, foster-father, Pail Raynor and calling Raynor "the only father the boy has ever known." After Raynor was sent back to the states, he was

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[54] Ibid., 26, 27.
[55] "A Big New Family Hugs Korean War Orphan," New York Times, 22 December 1953, 18.
[56] "Korean Orphan Baptized Here," New York Times, 11 January 1954, 16.

unable to forget Jimmie and formally adopted him through the Korean orphanage where Jimmie stayed for 5 months.[57]

By the middle of 1953, as efforts to create a unified Korea were clearly ending in stalemate, the media paid greater attention to all aspects of aid to the nation. More consistent media exposure helped to inspire further outcries for intervention on behalf of children and familiarized the American public with various aid agencies. This helped to set the stage for more comprehensive efforts to come.

One organization which received sporadic coverage was the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children, directed by Dr. Leonard W. Mayo. In April 1953 Mayo visited Korea as a member of the American-Korean Foundation and returned to the U.S. with a plea to aid in relief efforts. While Mayo commended the work of American GIs, church organizations, the Korean people, and United Nations forces, he realized that much more would be necessary. According to writer Dorothy Barclay, Mayo believed that "if these [Korean] children are to get anything like the care they need, American families must realize their plight and support voluntary efforts to help them." Notably, Mayo commented on the insufficiency of GI assistance because of the fact that troops could be transferred at any moment. What was required, he believed, was a more sustained effort.[58]

Mayo provided Barclay with some startling figures. "Of 100,000 orphaned children, Mr. Mayo said, 40,000 are in 350-400 'orphanages' in the cities and provinces. However, he said, it is doubtful if 500 of these youngsters are receiving care equal to that which would be tolerated under the lowest standards in the United

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[57] "A Bit of Seoul Goes to Omaha," New York Times, 23 November 1953, A12.
[58] Dorothy Barclay, "More Help Needed By Korean Orphans," New York Times, 3 April 1953, 16.

States today."[59] In June of 1953, Mayo and the American-Korean Foundation issued more figures. In the midst of a capital campaign designed to raise $5,000,000 in relief funds, Mayo reported on the infant death rate in Korea, noting that it was "at least 100 for each 1,000 live births in North Korea and 75...in South Korea."[60] While there may have been cultural misunderstandings at work here, and there is little way to assess the validity of these figures or how standards were understood, it is clear that Mayo's words were compelling for American audiences who, within the next year, began to respond.

As coverage of devastation and anguish in Korea continued, others began coordinating relief efforts and sought to capitalize on the publicity such participation ensured. In April 1953 the Welfare and Emergency Relief Committee of Catholic Archbishops and Bishops of the United States gave $200,000 to buy food for Korean children. Less than two months later, on June 4, the Senate and House sent a resolution to the president asking him to proclaim an "Aid to Korea Week." A few months later, Governor Thomas E. Dewey asked New Yorkers to support a campaign to put together food packages for Korean children.[61] The message of

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[59] Ibid.

[60] "100,000 Korean Orphans," New York Times, 15 June 1953, 4.

[61] "Korean Children Aided," New York Times, 16 April 1953, 4 and "June 7-14 Named Korea Aid Week," New York Times and 5 June 1953, 2. "Dewey Sets Korea Child Aid Day," New York Times, 21 November 1953, 16. In May, close to the time that Mayo's work was documented, the New York Times also included two brief notes about Korean children being resettled in Communist countries. On May 11, a single paragraph stated that "thousands of North Korean children are being resettled or educated in the Communist satellite countries, according to newspapers from Eastern Europe. The Hungarian newspaper Esti Budapest said that 200 refugee Korean children had arrived in Budapest." "Satellites Train Korean Refugees," New York Times, 11 May 1953, 2. Just a few weeks later, the New York Times documented that "twelve thousand war orphans have been taken to Communist China, the Pyongyang (North Korea) radio said in a broadcast heard here." "Red Korea Orphans Go To China," New York Times, 24 May 1953, 3. These were the sole mentions of non-American or UN aid efforts and they received little attention.

these efforts was that American military intervention may have ended with a draw, but civilian efforts could still succeed.

By 1954, more sustained relief efforts included comprehensive adoption and aid operations. Media coverage in the periods to follow also changed. Based upon differences in types of intervention, press outlets contained lengthier accounts and more consistently followed stories through to their positive outcomes. Clearly, however, the early period of relief efforts and coverage had established several important patterns. As periodicals portrayed it, Americans were becoming increasingly invested in the fate of Korean children victimized by the conflict and there was much to be proud of in the work of American GIs assisting them. Further coverage continued to emphasize the virtuousness of such efforts and assured readers that "Americanized" Korean children could be accepted into the U.S. cultural landscape.

Such motifs continued in the early part of 1954. The New York Times began the year with the story of 80 Korean children rescued from a cave where they had been found hiding. Although they had been discovered the previous spring, the coverage discussed their movement to the Ok-Bong Orphanage, a facility which was "a gift to them by the Air Force." The children also had received aid from the American Red Cross as well as Chicago-area residents who had responded to a newspaper plea by an American GI.[62] This suggested that coordinated, sustained efforts might be on their way.

Another compelling story from early 1954 illustrated that Korean children were still willing to fight for themselves, an indication that they were deserving of

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[62] "Korean Children Saved From Cave Get New Help," New York Times, 2 January 1954, 13.

aid because of their desire to be self-reliant and independent--values that American audiences could recognize and applaud. One 17-year-old orphan, Joseph Ha, was caring for the residents of the Eden Orphanage, and had coordinated a project to repair damage to the building which housed them. Noting that the boy was from a Christian family, writer Robert Alden documented Joseph's strength in the face of adversity. The young boy and the other residents of the Eden Orphanage, had been forced to share their space with a group of government officials which meant that 80 children were living in two small rooms. Joseph, Alden noted, took on the responsibility of providing better conditions for the children and enlisted their aid in an act of civil disobedience. After removing the office furniture belonging to the government officials, Joseph and the other children formed a human chain and attempted to keep the government officials from re-entering the building.[63] While Joseph was unsuccessful in his efforts, Alden made it clear that the young man continued to care for the others while attempting to go through other government channels. In addition to portraying Joseph as a heroic figure, Alden's article subtly undermined the South Korean government, depicting its officials as relatively unconcerned about the fate of their own young.[64]

Sustained coverage of the plight of Korean children began in April 1954 with the tour of the Korean Children's Choir. The tour had been arranged to raise public awareness and collect funds for the $10,000,000 campaign of the American-

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[63] Robert Alden, "Orphan In Korea Seeks Good Deeds," New York Times, 17 January 1954, 4.
[64] Just one day later, Cardinal Spellman announced the "Beggar Boy Project," designed to "rehabilitate" homeless youth of Korea by sending them to "True Friend Island." The project was supported by various clergy. The term rehabilitation is an intriguing one because it seems to

Korean Foundation. The choir, which had been founded in 1945, was made up of twenty-five boys and girls, "most of them double orphans who lost their parents in the fight of South Korea against the Communists."[65] From the beginning, the children of the choir were used by tour leaders to elicit public sympathy and support for the plight of all Koreans. On the same day that the children landed in San Franscisco, President Eisenhower offered his support for Korean aid efforts. Tour planners arranged for the children to perform at fund-raising rallies in fifty cities within a six-week period.[66]

While initial reports on the choir's progress was limited to small blurbs in the back pages of the New York Times, coverage expanded as the tour went on. The choir provided the nation's first exposure to a group of tangible Korean children, the first opportunity to hear their stories, see their faces, and listen to their songs. Four days after their arrival in the United States, the children flew to New York, a story that the New York Times now put on page six. In a touching reminder of the children that had already been saved, the Choir was met at the airport by Lee Paladino, the son of Vincent Paladino whose adoption tale had been told to Life readers less than six months earlier. In a tearful moment, "Lee waved a Korean flag at the group, and for a moment or two, the only language heard was Korean."[67] The meeting was considered, by at least one writer, to be the high point of the evening reception, suggesting that Lee's story still had impact. For willing philanthropists and government officials, this was publicity at its best. The Choir

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indicate that homelessness was a chosen condition. "Help For Koreans Asked In Sermons," New York Times, 18 January 1954, 17.

[65] For quote, see "Korean Choir to Tour U.S.," New York Times, 8 April 1954, 25. See also, "Children's Choir Here From Korea," New York Times, 13 April 1954, 6.

[66] "Children's Choir Here From Korea," 6.

was also met by Henry C. Alexander, president of J.P. Morgan and Co. and chairman of the fundraising campaign, Choi Yong Chin, Korean consul in New York.[68]

Throughout the next months of 1954, the New York Times kept readers informed of the progress of the tour and the carefully coordinated sets of events that accompanied them. The children's first official stop was at the Statue of Liberty, where they sang the national anthems of both Korea and the United States. They posed for photos, dressed in traditional Korean garb, and later in the day, sang in the offices of the New York Times. Just five days later, the children performed at a ceremony celebrating the departure of the "Freedom Express," a fifteen-car train that was just one of three that was to pick up civilian donations to the South Korean people on a cross-country journey to California.[69] On April 21st, the children performed at the United Nations to offer thanks for donations. After their performance, Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold "wished the children 'peace, security and healthy life' in their war-troubled country. Korea is a 'special child of ours,' he said."[70]

The choir tour coincided with increased fundraising for displaced Korean children and on April 26th, a fundraising drive was tied to the start of the Geneva Conference on Far Eastern Problems.[71] The Geneva Conference included delegates "from France, the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, China, Bao Dai's

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] "Train Bearing Gifts For Koreans Leaves," New York Times, 21 April 1954, 12.
[70] "Koreans Sing Thanks," New York Times, 22 April 1954, 9.
On the same page, another article documented a $41,000 donation by the GIs of the Forty-fifth division. The money was to be saved as a trust-fund for the children of Cheju-Do Island. "45th Division Aids Korean Orphans," New York Times, 22 April 1954, 9.

Vietnam, the DRV, Laos, and Cambodia."[72] Less than a year after the signing of the Korean armistice, the conference focused upon problems in Vietnam, where the French had recently been defeated at Dienbienphu, and reinforced the sense that there was more trouble brewing in Asia. It seemed even more imperative that the U.S. establish a significant presence there, ideologically and otherwise.

New York Times coverage of the start of the fundraising tour showed the choir children, again in traditional Korean dress, and detailed the events of the opening ceremonies. That evening, comments by Dr. Howard A. Rusk, President of the American-Korean Foundation, most clearly represented the tidal wave nature of American civilian intervention. "Hailing the response to the campaign, he said: 'Never have I been associated with a movement that has enjoyed such a spontaneous eruption, like Vesuvius, as this one has had around the country.'"[73] The evening of festivities included a taped statement by Syngman Rhee, President of the Republic of Korea, and President Eisenhower.

Although Rusk's ranking as an Associate Editor of the New York Times may have facilitated coverage of the crusade, the story undoubtedly reflected a growing interest on the part of readers. The tour and subsequent coverage were carefully coordinated so that readers could see the success of fund-raising efforts. Americans knew that by investing in the effort to save Korean civilians, they were becoming part of a winning effort, unlike that of the war itself, allowing them to feel victorious as they contributed to a successful endeavor.

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[71] "Korea Fund Appeal Opens Here Tonight," New York Times, 26 April 1954, 16.
[72] Clifford, Hagan, Paterson, A History Since 1895, 380.
[73] "$10,000,000 Drive For Korea Opens," New York Times, 27 April 1954, 3.

Once again, magazine readers viewed pictures of young Koreans, wearing beanie caps and holding cap pistols, riding escalators for the first time, admiring themselves in hotel mirrors, and dancing beneath the Statue of Liberty. Perhaps most importantly, an April 1954 spread in Life piece showed choir members having the freedom to be children, while the text offered stories of children back in Korea. Choir members were having fun and enjoying modern novelties, "frills that many less fortunate children in Korea would gladly forego for a steaming bowl of plain rice."[74]

Shortly after, however, coverage began to fade. In early May 1954, just two weeks after the Life story, the Korean choir performed at the White House for First Lady Mamie Eisenhower and sang on the floor of the Senate yet by the time the children performed for former President Truman, on June 5th, coverage of the choir was dying out.[75] By the time the children returned to Korea, in July, there was merely a brief notice in U.S. media that Syngman Rhee had welcomed them home.[76] Interest in the Korean Children's Choir seems to have died out as quickly as it was inspired. Tales of the choir did not have the drama of other kinds of rescue stories and it was more difficult to sustain long-term interest.

Waning interest in the tour helped to account for a change in emphasis in a June Life magazine article by American-Korean Foundation President Rusk. Although the choir was still touring on behalf of his agency, Rusk concentrated on more graphic and sensational images than those of the choir members frolicking in an American hotel. Although the photo that greeted the reader was of a young

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[74] "Korean Tykes Sing for Aid," Life, 26 April 1954, 42.
[75] "First Lady Serenaded By 25 Korean Children," New York Times, 12 May 1954, 36.
[76] "South Korean Choristers Home," New York Times, 8 July 1954, 4.

Korean boy, his face covered with dirt and hand outstretched to beg for food or money, Rusk began his text with the story of another American GI he had met outside of Pusan. Like many others, Rusk noted that this young man just needed to talk. "It were the kids that got my goat," he told Rusk, "I wanted to cry and fight at the same time...but I feel better now. Mostly I even feel good--I have ever since my outfit adopted an orphanage."[77] Although the focus was on a GI, this piece had a different tone than those from earlier years. In addition to illustrating the humanity of U.S. soldiers, Rusk's article showed American readers the recuperative power of aiding others. For the head of an aid agency, this was a wonderful way of marshaling support for his cause.

Rusk was clear that there was still a lot of work to be done, and that it was impossible to forget some of the things he had seen. He wrote of devastating cases of leprosy, blind children begging for food, and a performance of the Presbyterian Leprosarium brass band. Amidst these stories were photos of children huddled under blankets as they tried to sleep on the street, young ones still learning to beg, and a boy nicknamed "Hunchy" who suffered from Tuberculosis of the spine. The situation was desperate, and Rusk noted the tears of many he passed on the streets, but desperate did not mean hopeless. "The kids did not cry," he said, "for we were Americans and Americans to them meant hope for the future."[78] While using the power of the negative images, Rusk focused on the positive work being done. "The agony of remembering is softened a little by the recollection of visits to the orphanages. It is heart-warming to know that, out of the generosity of their hearts, our American troops have given more than $25 million from their own meager pay

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[77] Dr. Howard A. Rusk, "Voice From Korea: 'Won't You Help Us Off Our Knees?" Life, 7 June 1954, 178.

to Korea to save its children." These donations, Rusk noted, had provided children with toys, play areas, handkerchiefs, and some other amenities. Most importantly, they were doing the work of saving children.

Rusk also included the address of the American-Korean Foundation in the article so that readers could send their own donations.[79] Readers did respond. Hugh H. Jones Jr. wrote to say "I have just returned from Korea, and Dr. Rusk's article...brought back sad memories...You are right when you say that one never leaves Korea. I hope Americans will again open up their hearts to these people--so little can do so much over there."[80]

Most importantly, Rusk's piece was consistent with the theme that the war in Korea had moved to another arena and that the battle against Communism was not over. "Through military measures, Communist aggression has been halted in Korea," he wrote, "but the same vigor and determination that marked our military efforts must now be devoted to the economic and social reconstruction of this war devastated nation. Otherwise we may lose through the 'back door' what we have gained at tremendous expenditure of lives and money."[81] Perhaps it was the sense that the battle had to continue that provided crucial inspiration for the significant home-grown effort on behalf of Korean children that began in 1954. As the nation moved into the mid-1950s, stories would reflect a collaborative effort between grassroots agencies and individuals, and federal government officials and politicians, taking relief efforts to an entirely new arena and leading to far-reaching changes in national legislation

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[78] Ibid., 180.
[79] Ibid., 184.
[80] Hugh H. Jones Jr., Letter to the Editor, Life, 28 June 1954, 5.
[81] Rusk, "Voices From Korea," 187.

# Chapter Two--Extensive Korean Adoption Efforts Begin

According to Bertha Holt, it was a fateful night in Fall of 1954 when she and her husband Harry, attended a World Vision presentation on Korean orphans and remained haunted by the images they had seen. Much like Mrs. Cordelia Lefer, who had adopted "the boy who wouldn't smile," the Holts were struck by the intensity of the stories they witnessed and felt compelled to assist in some way.[82]

World Vision was a sponsorship agency which sought funds to aid Koreans in-country, rather than concentrating on evacuation. The organization had been founded by Dr. Robert Pierce in September of 1950 "to care for the fatherless and widows, to help the poor and the starving, to care for the sick, and to seek to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people everywhere."[83] Agency fundraising brochures note that "since its earliest days, [World Vision had]...placed high value upon photographs as a link between people in need and the millions of generous donors who step forward to help them."[84]

Two years after the World Vision presentation they attended, Bertha Holt recalled the intensity of the images she and Harry had seen that first night. "We arrived just in time for the showing of the first film, 'Dead Men on Furlough," she wrote, "it was the touching story of a martyred Korean pastor. We were given a glimpse of the brutal manner in which the communists will separate a family, inflict bodily injury upon them and even murder them to achieve their own perverted

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[82] "A Famous Orphan Finds a Happy Home," Life, 14 May 1956, 129+.
[83] World Vision, 45 Years- World Vision Special Photo Edition, October/November 1995, Vol. 39, no. 5, 1.
[84] Ibid.

aims."[85] The film detailed the murder of six hundred Korean Christian pastors and was especially angering for the Holts because of their strong religious faith.[86]

The presentation of Korean Communists as particularly brutal had been enforced during the war with discussion of atrocities by North Korean soldiers. Time and Newsweek articles from the early 1950s had detailed the stories of soldiers like Private Roy Manring whose division had been captured by North Koreans. According to Manring, several of the soldiers were beaten to death, a fate he had only managed to escape by playing dead. U.N. Commission reports recorded mass graves in Seoul and Taejon, leading to a press explosion of tales of devastatingly horrific actions perpetuated against those who were seen as fighting for freedom.[87]

On the night of the World Vision presentation, it was a second film, "Other Sheep," that Bertha said "shattered our hearts."[88] More graphic than most of the photos in popular magazines and newspapers, "Other Sheep" detailed the work of World Vision by visiting several of its sites and documenting the agency's work with orphans, war widows, and amputees. For Bertha, the footage of Korean children was the most difficult. In her 1956 book, The Seed From the East, she wrote about the images that had stayed with her after the film, beginning with stories of child victims of conflict, disabled by the war and learning to sing "Jesus Loves Me."

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[85] Bertha Holt, A Seed From the East (Oregon: Holt International Children's Services, 1956), 19.
[86] The family was Fundamentalist Christian, and attended a Baptist church.
[87] "Massacre of Prisoners," Newsweek, 28 August 1950, 25. and "U.N. Commission on Korea Reports on Atrocities," Department of State Bulletin XXIII (23 October 1950): 649+.
[88] Holt, A Seed From the East, 21.

Most significant for her was the fact that aid from American Christians was responsible for saving these children. "As we watched these kiddies silently singing," she said, "I fought back tears. Were it not for the orphanages of World Vision, and other Christian organizations, most of these children would have died the agonizing death of starvation."[89] Holt noted this again when writing of the film's depiction of the children of lepers. The couple "shared the mingled emotions of heartbreak and joy," she wrote, "as we saw how the tiny children of these lepers were being cared for by the dollars of Christian American people."[90] As an American Christian, Bertha Holt felt a call to action, especially after what she saw as the film's most compelling and heartwrenching footage. "We saw before us," she remembered, "the tragic plight of hundreds of illegitimate children...GI-babies... children that had American fathers and Korean mothers...children that had been hidden by remorseful mothers until it was no longer possible to keep their secret. Finally, the children were allowed to roam the streets where they were often beaten by other children who had never known Koreans with blond hair...or blue eyes." The footage was followed by a discussion by Dr. Robert Pierce, who recalled driving past a Korean dump and finding the nearly lifeless body of a mixed-race boy who had been left to die. Pierce emphasized the difficulty that mixed-race children would face in Korea, a nation he said was extremely race conscious.[91]

For the Holts, as for many Americans, the kind of graphic descriptions they were hearing in the 1950s were new to them. Acknowledging their early naiveté, Bertha recalled that "we had never thought of such suffering and heartbreak. We

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[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid, 20-21.

had never seen of such poverty and despair. We had never seen such emaciated arms and legs, such bloated starvation-stomachs and such wistful little faces searching for someone to care," a testimony to the power of the images of Korean children.[92] While newspapers and other sources contain little primary documentation acknowledging the actual impact of imagery of children, Bertha Holt spent a great deal of time detailing the images she saw, the feelings that came as a result of this viewing, and the actions she and Harry decided to take. According to Bertha, both she and her husband felt guilt at their lack of knowledge about the problems facing such children, and shame at the comfort in their own lives. They felt a compulsion to do something for these Korean youngsters and soon gained the energy that can come with the attachment to a particular cause.[93]

On the evening of the World Vision presentation, the Holts signed up to sponsor two children and by January 1955, they had decided to sponsor more than ten Korean children. This was the same month that the New York Times published a photo of young Lee Paladino and a classmate in their first-grade classroom. The caption to the picture marveled at the change in Lee, reminding readers that it was "just a little more than a year ago," that he had borne a Korean name. Now, he was undeniably American. [94]

In Creswell, Oregon, the Holts were quickly growing as attached to their sponsored children as the American public had grown to Lee Paladino. In documenting the well-meaning nature of her family, Bertha Holt noted her children's' enthusiasm about helping the Korean youngsters. The children, she

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[91] Ibid., 21.
[92] Ibid., 21.
[93] Ibid., 22-24+.
[94] "A Long Way From Korea," (photo) New York Times, 10 January 1955, 3.

wrote, were excited about the possibility of having orphans of their very own and each wanted to sponsor their own child. The Korean children were presented to the Holt children through images and photographs, with brief stories attached, and became objects of fantasy. As the children made clothes for their sponsored "mascots," they fantasized about how they could play with them, dress them up as if they were human dolls, or teach them how to play sports.[95]

As they grew attached to their sponsored children, the Holt family began to discuss trying to adopt Korean children. At the same time, others were commenting on the continued difficulty of adopting children from overseas. Although focused on Europe, a New York Times article in May 1955 emphasized that it was difficult to adopt foreign children because many of them were not considered eligible for adoption. Quoting William T. Kirk of the agency International Social Service, the article also underscored potential difficulties with the adoption of a foreign child and cautioned many of those who made up the more than 2,700 requests that agency had received.[96] Kirk's warning may have been an attempt to avoid panic/guilt adoptions that were based more on a visceral reaction to a series of events than on a full awareness of what such adoptions could entail. The agency official "advised special counseling to help the couples understand, for example, the cultural and linqual aspects involved, to encourage them to give the undertaking careful and mature consideration."[97]

In the Spring of 1955 Harry and Bertha Holt decided to pursue the official adoption of at least eight Korean children of American GIs. Bertha Holt recalled that she and Harry felt that God had pointed them in the direction of these

[95] Holt, The Seed From the East, 24+, 32-35.
[96] "Adopting Child From Overseas Found Difficult," New York Times, 10 May 1955, 26.

adoptions, enlisting their aid in a special mission. They contacted World Vision to find out adoption procedures and began to make arrangements for Harry to travel to Korea. Most importantly, Bertha noted, "we fell on our knees and thanked God for making it possible for an Oregon farmer to go to a war-torn land to help tiny children who were innocent victims of the heartlessness of war."[98] In many senses, this was a story of classic American heroism. The simple farmer and his wife and children, god-loving, took it upon themselves to help the less fortunate, grappling with adversity to do what they believed God was directing them to do. This was a tale that the American public, and perhaps more importantly at the time, American legislators could embrace.

Despite the heroic nature of the Holts' intervention, the multiple adoption process was a slow one that required special permission. In May 1955, Harry Holt wrote to Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon asking him to sponsor legislation that would allow him to bring the 8 children back from Korea. It was at that point that legislative efforts and the aims of one family were combined. Senator Neuberger and the Holts began a collaboration that would span the next five years, until Neuberger's death in 1960.

Congress had begun to address issues of orphan relief in 1953 with the passage of the *Refugee Relief Act of 1953*. Faced with an influx of refugees attempting to escape from behind the iron curtain, President Eisenhower encouraged the passage of the bill on the grounds that "these refugees and escapees

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Holt, A Seed From the East, 42.

searching desperately for freedom look to the free world for haven."[99] The bill focused on "the steady stream of people fleeing...from the terrors of communism," and had repercussions for Korea as well.[100] As Eisenhower saw it "these refugees, escapees, and distressed peoples now constitute an economic and political threat of constantly growing magnitude. They look to traditional American humanitarian concern for the oppressed...We should take reasonable steps to help these people to the extent that we share the obligation of the free world."[101] Cold War rhetoric placed the U.S. in a position of being the world's savior, collaborating with others to protect the downtrodden. Such sentiment was especially intense because of the division in the world, the sense that the world was divided in a battle between good and evil--communism and democracy--and that one wrong move could tilt the balance in a dangerous direction. Relief efforts represented the desire to continue the reputation of the nation as fulfilling its humanitarian goals but were also a calculated political tool similar to the actions of GIs in Korea seeking to save helpless children while supporting U.S. strategic interests.[102]

The *Refugee Relief Act* permitted an increase in the number of refugees to be admitted to the U.S., including the admission of four thousand orphans who made up a small percentage of the 217,000 total. The legislation specifically called for "the entry of certain Korean orphans," stipulating that care be taken to provide for the children upon arrival. Children were to be placed in the care of their

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[99] Congress, House, Refugee Relief Act of 1953, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 974, United States Code. Vol. 2, (1953) 2104.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] For discussion of Cold War rhetoric, please see Sam Keen, Faces of the Enemy (San Francisco, California: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), and Rosemary Foot, The Wrong War (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).

sponsors or agencies that had arranged to provide for them. The main concern, as expressed in this section of the act, was that children must not become "public charges."[103] Nevertheless, the legislation set a precedent for emergency action on behalf of Korean children.

The refugee act also included an expansive definition of what was meant by "eligible orphan." Such status derived from the death of both parents, separation from one or both parents, or because of the "death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from the other parent and the remaining parent is incapable of providing care for such orphan" and signed the appropriate release.[104] This definition was significant because it provided for the adoption and evacuation of children who were not "orphans" in the more traditional sense, but whose parents may have thought they were giving a better life by allowing their adoption by American couples. More subtlely, it undermined the validity of Korean parentage--a child could have parents alive in Korea and still be considered an orphan.

Federal statutes also drew a sharp distinction between children and adults. Anti-Communist politicians like Francis E. Walter of Pennsylvania opposed the admission of additional refugees on national security grounds, protesting that there was no way to ascertain the backgrounds and past activities of such people, or the extent to which they had "cooperated with or assisted the communists" or "committed crimes involving moral turpitude."[105] Walter's openness to allowing the

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[103] Congress, House, Refugee Relief Act of 1953, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 974, United States Code. Vol. 2, (1953) 2120.
[104] Refugee Relief Act of 1953. United States Code. Vol. 1, (1953) 444.
[105]Congress, House, Refugee Relief Act of 1953, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., H.R. 974, United States Code. Vol. 2, (1953) 2121.

entry of orphans, however, was consistent with a distinction many made between children and other kinds of immigrants, reflecting a perception of the innocence of children, still young enough to be "rescued" and "saved" even if others from their countries were not.

The extent to which children were viewed differently was emphasized by the fact that Walter had been one of the joint sponsors of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952. The act replaced 1924 legislation which had ensured that those who were ineligible for citizenship, Japanese and Chinese nationals, would be prohibited from entering the U.S. The McCarran-Walter act allowed immigration from the "Asian-Pacific Triangle,' a large geographical region including most of South and East Asia. While ending exclusion, this new law was still racially discriminatory in intent and design: countries within the triangle were allowed only one hundred immigrants each."[106]

In 1953, as the discussion about relief efforts was ongoing, Congress allowed the entrance of 500 children who had been adopted by American GIs. With the passage of Public Law 162 in late July of 1953, these children were issued visas and admitted but were not included as part of annual immigrant quotas. The law also insured that the birth parents of refugee children would not be admitted to the United States, again making a distinction between the young and innocent, and the older and potentially subversive.[107]

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[106] Ronald Takaki, Strangers from a Different Shore (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), 417-418.

[107] For the actual text, see Alien Orphans--Adoption By United States Citizens--Entry. United States Code. Vol. 1, (1953) 276-77.

Earlier in the year, Senator Humphrey sponsored a measure to make adoptions of European children easier, allowing some children to be counted as nonquota immigrants. While it does not bear direct relation to the situation of Korean children, it indicates a willingness to look at children

By 1955, however, national attention was focused on more open adoption rules and on the specific plight of Korean children. The drive toward more liberal adoption procedures emanated from the efforts of the Holt family and when Harry Holt went to Korea to personally select the orphans he wanted to bring home, legislative efforts began in earnest. In June 1955, Oregon's Senator Neuberger introduced legislation "to permit Mr. and Mrs. Harry Holt, of Creswell, Oregon, to bring to the United States six minor war orphans." The resolution amended the *Refugee Relief Act of 1953* on the Holts' behalf and allowed them an exemption from the rule that "no more than two special nonquota immigrant visas may be issued to eligible orphans adopted by a United States citizen."[108]

In his discussion accompanying the bill, Neuberger lauded the Holts for their humanitarian effort, commending them for "performing a service to mankind in bringing about a better understanding among people."[109] He also noted that he believed the Holts were "well prepared to provide a wholesome Christian home in Oregon for these homeless Korean war orphans."[110] The Neuberger legislation was the first on behalf of Korean children that had specific parameters and saviors in mind and much like the newspaper articles that had preceded these efforts, focused on the characters involved. In statements to the Senate, Senator Neuberger was careful to mention the Holts' religious faith, their standing in the community, and used them as an example of model Americans. Neuberger characterized the bill as a

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from a different perspective than that which was typically used to examine the issues of adult immigrants. Humphrey's discussion, see "Immigration of Certain Children as Nonquota Immigrants," Congressional Record (23 January 1953), vol. 99, pt. 1, 518-519.

[108] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1955. Relief of Certain Korean War Orphans. 84th Cong., 1st sess., S. 2312. Congressional Record. Vol. 101, no. 7. Daily ed. (24 June), 9154.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

"worthy and humanitarian measure, of high spiritual purpose."[111] On July 24th, Senate Bill 2312 won approval, passed the House the next day, and received President Eisenhower's signature the following month. The legislation amended the McCarran-Walter Act allowing the Holts' adoptive children to be considered their "natural-born alien children."[112]

Just as the Neuberger bill passed, the Holts began to receive media attention. In one of the many anecdotes that Bertha Holt included in A Seed From the East, she recalled her first radio interview, in Eugene, Oregon. "I'm only a farmer's wife," she remembered saying when called, "I'm not a speech maker."[113] This, however, was exactly what the American public and media outlets were looking for, a family model who represented ideals that Americans could applaud, admire, and aspire to and the Holt family soon emerged as the voice of a movement to adopt forsaken Korean children. Bertha Holt began to receive repeated requests for advice on how to go about such adoptions and subsequently developed a form letter than could be sent to interested parents, a sign that their activities were becoming more public.[114]

In Korea, Harry Holt sought to select his first batch of children. Segments of his letters home were subsequently published in Bertha Holt's book, The Seed From the East. Like earlier press stories about Korean children, Holt underscored the ways that American culture was superior to that of Korea, most especially with regard to his distaste for rice, a staple of the Korean diet. Holt also addressed the

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[111] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1955. Korean War Orphans. 84th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 101, no. 9. Daily ed. (29 July), 12078.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Holt, A Seed From the East, 76.
[114] See A Seed From the East, 158.

rarely discussed issue of mixed-race children. Like Dr. Pierce whose lecture had so inspired him, Holt found himself struck by the situation of GI-babies. His letters referred to "colored children" who needed homes and he expressed a sense of American ownership of these children. In September 1955, Holt noted that "it is always somewhat of a shock to hear children who look American speak Korean. It just doesn't seem right."[115] For Holt, these children were ultimately more American than Korean, a belief that underscored the sense of the superiority of an American cultural and racial heritage as embodied by external features. Surely, it was presumed by the Holts and others, the Americanness of these children would override whatever Korean elements existed.

In a letter to Paul Davis, a family friend, Harry Holt asked him to "cry out to God for these colored children. There are hundreds of them; they all need to go to the United States. Korea has too many orphans of her own."[116] Holt made a clear distinction between those children who were not of purely Korean blood, indicating a sense of responsibility for them and obviously chagrined that it was so difficult to help them. In choosing children to adopt, Holt focused on mixed-race children, confident that children of pure Korean blood would have an easier time in Korea.

By October 1955, the first bit of red tape had been dealt with, and Harry Holt left Korea with twelve children, four of whom were being taken to other adoptive families. Holt's mission attracted attention from the New York Times which documented the Holts' progression from farming family to heroic saviors.[117] Media attention soon became almost overwhelming. Of Harry's trip home, Bertha

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[115] See A Seed From the East, 159, 145.
[116] Ibid., 149.
[117] See Greg MacGregor, "Oregonian Takes 8 Seoul Orphans," New York Times, 2 October 1955, 124.

Holt wrote that "the closer Harry and the children came to the United States, the more curious were the established sources of news information. Once again there were reporters and photographers."[118] While Harry Holt dealt with the press during stopovers on the trip back from Korea, Bertha Holt was interviewed at the Portland International Airport as the press waited for the arrival of the plane carrying the children. This was the largest experiment of its kind yet to occur, and journalists were curious about its progress. The Holt family spent their first several days bombarded by reporters who wanted photographs of everything from first baths to first meals to good night kisses.[119]

Popular interest was also increasing and Bertha Holt recalled receiving close to six hundred letters in the first week after Harry's return. According to Bertha, the majority of letter writers expressed their approval of the Holts' efforts. Many asked how they could adopt the children of American GIs and said that they were praying for the newly enlarged Holt family. Several grandmothers wrote offering to knit and sew for the family. In addition, the Holts received gifts of "bedding, diapers, bibs, stockings, underwear, caps, toys, a carton of washing powder, and a big box of raisins. Every gift was practical."[120]

Letters of dissent were in the minority, but Bertha Holt did remember "four who condemned us for what we had done. They were violently opposed to bringing oriental blood into the United States (they ignored the fact that the babies were returning to their fathers' land). One letter accused us of importing slave labor to work on our farm."[121] While this was certainly not a tidal wave of opposition,

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[118] Holt, A Seed From the East, 179.
[119] Ibid., 192.
[120] Ibid., 205.
[121] Ibid.

the documentation of any opposition was notable because it was not discussed in press coverage at the time. In fact, media reports made it appear as though everyone was supportive of international adoptions.

A November 1955 Reader's Digest article by the author Pearl S. Buck made it clear that there were some who questioned the validity of adopting from overseas when there were so many children who needed help in the United States. "While we Americans concern ourselves with orphans of war and famine," Buck wrote, "we are neglecting our own orphans. Thousands of children are destitute of the most profound needs of the human being--a place to belong in society, a family, love."[122] While Buck's complaint was about the social service agencies which made it difficult to adopt in the U.S., her piece indicated that some were reflecting upon the process of international adoptions and creating a space where questioning could occur.

In December 1955, the New York Times checked the progress of the Holt trial run. After reminding readers of Harry Holt's journey to adopt the children, the writer of the December 4 article noted that less than two months after their arrival, the children were assimilating well. While they did not yet speak English, they were walking and understood "universal things like love... They hunger for affection and the Holts supply it magnificently."[123] The writer also noted that while there were a great many children, and some things, like the disbursement of vitamins, were done on an assembly line, each child was "treated by the Holts as an individual."[124] This commentary on individualism meant that Korean children were being instilled with

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[122] Pearl S. Buck, "Must We Have Orphanages?" Reader's Digest, November 1955, 57.
[123] "8 Korean Orphans In Oregon Family," New York Times, 4 December 1955, 36.

truly American values. For the press, the Holts continued to be a model family and a compelling human interest story. They had participated in an unusual humanitarian act, and were fulfilling their obligations more than admirably.

Life magazine also wrote about the Holt family in December 1955. The Holts were included in an issue on Christianity which had a specific emphasis on "the new multitude of Christian sights and sounds that are everywhere across the U.S.--the world's largest and most dynamic Christian country."[125] The photo essay and text about the Holts was one means of documenting the Christian spirit of the nation in a decade when the words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance. Amidst photos of Joseph, one of the Holts' new children, in a Davy Crockett jacket, the text noted that "officially it was an act of Congress which enabled Betty, Christine, Helen, Joseph, Mary, Nathaniel, Paul, and Robert Holt to come to their new home in America. But it was the Christian spirit which moved Harry and Bertha Holt to bring them here."[126]

This was consistent with the continual emphasis on the Holt family's Christianity, a pattern replicated in most of the articles about them and which Bertha Holt also underscored. In the Life excerpt, she downplayed her and Harry's actions, claiming instead that "the Lord...is the real sponsor of these children."[127] The emphasis on the Holts' religious convictions reflected more than simply admiration for a virtuous family. Since the Holt family was pedestalized as a model for all Americans, this translated to a belief in the virtuousness of the nation itself and a means of rationalizing actions and behaviors because of the assumption that

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Title page blurb, Life, 26 December 1955, 13.
[126] "The Lord Is Their Sponsor," Life, 26 December 1955, 58.
[127] Ibid.

they were endorsed by God. In a period of Cold War fears and an era in which it seemed the world was divided between Good and Evil, the belief that God was on the right side had powerful implications for American actions.[128]

Such moral certainty surfaced when Life magazine began its Christianity issue with a speech by President Eisenhower that underscored the godliness of the nation and his belief that Christianity was an important tool of international diplomacy. "Application of Christianity to everyday affairs is the only practical hope of the world," Eisenhower stated. "Our forefathers proved that only a people strong in godliness is a people strong enough to overcome tyranny and make themselves and others free. Today it is ours to prove that our own faith, perpetually renewed, is equal to the challenge of today's tyrants."[129] Eisenhower's belief in the nation's special position in the eyes of God was further articulated when he proclaimed that the residents of the nation must pray to God to allow the nation to continue its mission of being a place of freedom amidst oppression. "The path we travel is narrow and long--beset with many dangers," Eisenhower admitted," Each day we must ask that Almighty God will set and keep his protecting hand over us so that we may pass on to those who come after us the heritage of a free people, secure in their God-given rights and in full control of a government dedicated to the preservation of those rights."[130] The Holts were a fine example of this, raising their rescued children to be good Christians and good Americans--two things which were seen as almost synonymous.

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[128] Elaine Tyler May has written that church membership raised dramatically from 1940 to 1960, and that "religious affiliation became associated with the 'American Way of Life," although there was little depth to this spirituality. Elaine Tyler May, HomewardBound (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 25-26.
[129] Dwight Eisenhower, 'The Testimony of a Devout President," Life, 26 December 1955, 12.
[130] Ibid.

The Holts spent the last part of 1955 getting used to having 8 new children, dealing with the continued media frenzy, and answering the hundreds of letters that arrived at their home. By 1956, however, they were growing more concerned with the plight of "negro" children and sought to match children with the writers of the letters they had received. In Bertha Holt's Outstretched Arms, the story of the fifteen years following 1955, she described Harry Holt's decision to return to Korea in March of 1956 with the intention of developing a program for American couples to adopt Korean children. While Outstretched Arms is a much more cursory account than Bertha Holt's earlier work, when used it conjunction with press accounts, it provides a useful chronology for the early years of the Holt Adoption Agency.

Although his first departure to Korea had gone almost unnoticed, Harry Holt's March 1956 departure inspired prompt media coverage. The New York Times noted that he was leaving fully prepared with two suitcases. "One was filled with vitamin concentrates and antibiotics for the children and the other with signed adoption papers...from families who had authorized Mr. Holt to adopt a child for them."[131] Holt represented American readiness and preparedness. His role as the heroic savior of Korean children was further emphasized in April 1956 when he returned to the states, flying on the same plane as twelve orphans who were being adopted through the American Social Agency. In another of her books, Bring My Sons From Afar, Bertha Holt recalled that although Harry was not responsible for

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[131] "Adopter of 8 Koreans Off to Get 200 More," New York Times, 26 March 1956, 31.

the adoption of these children, the press credited him with the rescue.[132] Harry Holt was a compelling heroic figure, and the media seized upon images of a simple farmer changing diapers on a transatlantic flight. Arriving back in Portland, Holt was quoted as saying "there's no man in the United States who's made more changes in Korea than I have."[133] The April 8 article contained no mention of the agency actually responsible for the adoptions and was clearly more interested in the colorful and sincere messages of the Holt family.

The following day, the Oregonian contained an editorial applauding Harry Holt for his work, and acknowledging the farmer who had done so much. "The property of greatness is the ability to reject...intimidating forces and push ahead, alone, if necessary, with the tasks that conscience directs. Harry Holt of Creswell possesses such a quality."[134] Casting Harry Holt as a biblical figure, the editorial writer said that "Mr. Holt left his plow and began the enormous task of shepherding the hundreds of remaining half-cast children across the North Pacific."[135] In summing up the message of Holt's work, the writer asked "given his example, can anyone doubt the power of the individual?"[136] Such portraits complimented earlier descriptions of the ways that the Holts treated each of their adopted charges as "individuals."

Just as earlier writers had applauded character traits of Korean children that allowed them to be recognizable to American audiences, writers in the mid-1950s

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[132] Bertha Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar (Eugene, Oregon: Holt International Children's Services, 1986), 15.
[133] "Oregon Farmer Brings 12 More Orphans From Korea for New Homes in America," Oregonian, 8 April 1956, 18.
[134] "Mr. Holt 'Moves the World," Oregonian, 9 April 1956, 16.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

continually recognized qualities they found admirable in two model Americans, Harry and Bertha Holt. Throughout this period of more intensive adoption efforts, journalistic reports contained little mention of other agencies involved in this work. In late April 1956, the Sunday Oregonian contained one of the few stories about the agency World Vision, but even that story contained photos of the Holts, focusing on the family as the "most publicized World Vision sponsor."[137] It must be noted, moreover, that coverage focused more on Harry Holt, with Bertha mentioned as more of a sidenote. Perhaps this was a by-product of the fact that she was working at home in Oregon, and her work did not have the drama of the story of an Oregon farmer, alone in Korea. Another reading would be that as a man, Harry Holt remasculinized the American presence in Korea after the emasculating experience of military defeat.

In April 1956, the Oregonian also ran an article detailing a press conference held on the day of Holt's return to Oregon. Speaking to reporters, Holt described the grief that many Korean birth-mothers expressed as they gave their children for adoption by American families. This was the first public mention of the stresses that birth-mothers were subject to and indicated the difficulty that came with the U.S. government's earlier, expansive definition of "orphan." Many of the adoptees were children with loving birth-mothers who felt that they simply could not care for a mixed-race child in Korea. Harry Holt's stories, wrote one reporter, "revealed his devotion to the task and the individual Korean heartbreak behind each child coming

[137] Mervin Shoemaker, "Mission to the Motherless," Oregonian Northwest Rotogravure Magazine, 29 April 1956, 15. Other prominent sponsors mentioned in the article were Roy and Dale Rogers "the ridin', shootin' couple who daily battle TV outlaws," who sponsored 25 orphans, and at the time, were planning their adoption of one child.

to this country."[138] Another reporter questioned Holt about the birth-mothers of the children, asking "did they want to give up the children?'... 'Would you want to give up your baby?' Holt asked gently. 'But gradually they are realizing that their children have no chance for a happy life in their home country. They know they'll do better over here, and many of the mothers bring their children to the orphanages.'"[139]

In Bring My Sons From Afar, Bertha Holt remembered that in this same period, "Harry wrote [a letter] about the heartbreak of the mothers, bringing their babies and leaving them for adoption. He wrote 'One poor girl almost had hysterics in the office. She thought she could keep track of her baby after he had gone to America. I had to tell her it is a clean break and forever. Poor girl, her baby wasn't weaned yet and she cried and cried. Pray for these dear mothers who choose to give up their babies.'"[140] The Holt's recognition of the heartbreak of Korean mothers lent a human face to Korean parentage, although focused exclusively on Korean women and not addressing the similar humanity of Korean men. Women and children were far less threatening than Korean men who were more presumably vehicles of Asian communism and received little media attention.

April 8 Oregonian coverage also pointed out a significant deadline faced by the Holts and others. The author noted that Harry Holt was attempting to evacuate as many children as possible, before the end of the year expiration of emergency legislation that allowed the entrance of more than two orphans per person. The

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[138] "Oregon Farmer Brings 12 More Orphans From Korea for New Homes in America," 18.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 13.

deadline became increasingly important as the year progressed and people felt an intense drive to adopt.

On the 30th of April, Senator Neuberger again acted on the Holt's behalf by introducing legislation to amend the *Refugee Relief Act*. Neuberger asked that the *Relief Act* be extended to change the expiration date from December 31, 1956 to December 31, 1959. The extension was to apply only to orphans, but raised the age limitation from ten to fourteen-years-old.[141] Neuberger also requested that the Children's Bureau of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare be given the authority to approve visas of children adopted in other countries.

Understanding the power of media imagery, Neuberger submitted press accounts of the Holts' work. The senator asked that the Oregonian editorial from April 9th be added to the record, and followed the editorial with the comment that "our country has always helped the poor and downtrodden and certainly there can be no nobler aim than to help thousands of unfortunate orphans who are born into such a bleak environment and whose futures are so clouded."[142] By using the piece to illustrate the power of a man he called a symbol of "the Biblical Good Samaritan" in a fight against the "massive inertia of human society," Neuberger tapped deep cultural roots.[143] If one man could do it alone, surely Congress could act to save these children.

Neuberger also included articles that underscored the difficulties facing mixed-race children in Korea, and the ultimate responsibility of American fathers. Using excerpts from a Cosmopolitan magazine article from March 1956, the senator

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[141] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1956. Amendment of Refugee Relief Act of 1953, 84th Congress., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 102, part 6. Daily ed. (30 April), 7247.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.

equated the situation of Korean children to Japanese children described in the article. "Because the Japanese believe that their race is unique and that it has remained unsullied by foreign blood for at least 6,000 years, any child who is of mixed blood faces cruel discrimination and abuse," the article read.[144] Neuberger followed this by saying that "the situation is far more desperate for the estimated 1,500 American-Korean orphans fathered by our military personnel. These children are not accepted by Koreans. They are mistreated, humiliated. Other children point their fingers at them and call them GI babies."[145] Neuberger believed that this was another justification for U.S. action, implying that Americans had a special responsibility for the children fathered by American men.

Although optimistic about Neuberger's work in the Senate but still facing the end of the year deadline, the Holts struggled to adopt out as many children as possible. In May 1956, Harry founded the Holt Adoption Program in Korea and officially made the break from World Vision, although the two agencies would continue to collaborate. According to Bertha Holt, the first group of Holt children arrived on May 13 of 1956 and included the child of Dale Evans and Roy Rogers. In June, a group of 21 children was brought over by Harry Larson, another Oregon resident who now worked with the Holts.[146]

In Congress, the debate over Neuberger's bill and another measure introduced by North Dakota Senator William Langer continued into July. On July 26th Oregon Senator Wayne Morse asked that the Langer bill, S. 3570, which

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[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Bertha Holt, Outstretched Arms, published as an epilogue to Seed From the East, Eugene, Oregon: Holt International Children's Services, 1972, 251. See "Nine Korean Waifs Reach Portland, Waiting Arms of Adoptive Parents," Oregonian, 27 June 1956, 7.

made essentially the same provisions as Neuberger's earlier amendment, be passed before the adjournment of the Senate.

Morse also introduced letters of support written by adoptive parents and their supporters which provided a unique insight into both the mindsets and adoption motivations of much of the American public at this time. Several of the letters came from Oregon clergy, but most were from those in the process of adopting who feared that they would be unable to bring their children home. Bertha Burch Babb wrote Senator Morse to say "we have two Eurasian children in Korea, fully adopted, but being held there because the quota has been filled. Knowing how much better these children will be in a country where they will get food, shelter, and love instead of persecution and want, we are most anxious to have the legal door opened to them." Explaining her motivations for adoption, she noted that "there is not only the moral obligation we Americans feel toward all uncared for children, but the more definite obligation, knowing our Armed Forces were responsible for these little Korean outcasts." Another letter, signed by over thirty Washington residents, argued that "these children have no chance at life in a Christian family without extension of this act. We feel that since so many American boys have proved themselves delinquent fathers, that other American families who feel so inclined should be given the opportunity of taking these children who so badly need a home."[147]

Many letter writers believed that mixed-race children would fair poorly in Korea and that they should be offered the opportunity to live what Mr. and Mrs.

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[147] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1956. Increase In Number Of Visas To Be Issued To Orphans Under The Refugee Relief Act of 1953, 84th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 102, part 11. Daily ed., (26 July), 14742.

Jacob Warkentin called "normal lives that they are deprived of in many foreign countries." The Warkentins saw adoption as "a wonderful missionary opportunity to bring these children into American Christian homes and raise them to be American citizens." Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Polson asked that Morse support legislation so "children of our American soldiers can be brought to the States to be brought up as good citizens in a Christian nation."[148]

By August 1956, there was no resolution to the quota issue confronting Congress, but during that month one of the most dramatic evacuation flights occurred. On August 9th, according to a story that appeared on the first page of the Oregonian newspaper, "Harry Holt, the Creswell farmer whose heart beats for every homeless orphan of mixed-blood parentage in Korea, arrived in Portland...that same heart strained from his self-imposed task of finding safe homes in the United States for 1000 children who might otherwise perish."[149] On the trip from Honolulu to Portland, Harry Holt had suffered a heart attack, but befitting his heroic image, survived the episode and "bounded off the Northwest-Orient stratocruiser with one baby in his arms and 23 others close behind. 'I'm still alive,' grinned the whiskery, tired-eyed Holt as assorted waifs, awaiting their adoptive parents, clung to his trousers..."[150] Once again, the media reinforced the heroism of Harry Holt, putting his own health at risk to care for the children of Korea. It seemed that Holt's efforts were clearly paying off because the Oregonian also noted the success stories of children who had been brought over earlier. "In

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[148] Ibid., 14743.
[149] Phyllis Lauritz, "Holt Brings 24 Tots from Korea," Oregonian, 10 August 1956, 1.
[150] Ibid.

contrast to the emaciation that was pitifully evident on the new arrivals, the older ones were wonderfully bright-eyed and pink-cheeked--and smiling."[151]

As Harry Holt recuperated, the adoptions continued without much fanfare. While the media was interested in the triumphant landings of planes filled with orphans, most reporters did not spend time concentrating on the logistical nightmares faced by the Holts. Instead, stories like that in the October issue of American Mercury began to follow a recognizable pattern. Journalist Ron Moxness' story retold the origins of the Holt agency, complete with the Holts attending the World Vision presentation and being struck by what they witnessed there. He told of their devotion to God and the sense that they were doing God's work. He wrote of the Holt family members, and how they worked together to care for the newest members of their family. He noted the expense of caring for eight additional children and how despite their own need, the Holts sent any donations they received to World Vision so that they could help care for additional children.

The most interesting part of the American Mercury article came at the very end, where Moxness noted that Harry Holt was now separated from his own family for long periods of time. There seemed an irony here in Holt having "saved" children from what was perceived as a life without proper parenting, but being absent for a good deal of their upbringing. While the author used this as a sign of Holt's dedication to his cause, he did mention Bertha Holt's fears that the children would forget their father. "But each evening," Moxness assured readers, "when the time comes for prayers in the nursery, a special ritual is performed. There is a double kiss on each tiny face--'Daddy kiss, Mommy kiss'--followed by a chuckle

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[151] Ibid.

of contentment from each child."[152] For Moxness, it was clear that there was enough love surrounding these children, and that they knew of the love their father had for them, regardless of whether he was physically present or not.

A Look magazine photo essay of October 1956 followed the same pattern. Photos of the children lined up in the Holts' front window were accompanied by the story of the origins of their work. The author noted that "the least-wanted children on earth today are the 'GI babies' of Korea. In cold numbers, they represent only a fraction of the illegitimate children left behind by the armies of World War II. But where most European war babies bear little physical evidence of mixed parentage, a Korean baby with Eurasian features bears an unmistakable brand."[153] According to the Look author, the apparent physical evidence of "mixed blood" led to a pariah status for these children that did not exist for the children of Europe, although this assessment ignored the fact that African-American and other GIs in Europe may also have fathered children who looked "different." The Look article left open to speculation the question of whether the desire to aid the Korean children was somewhat motivated by the sense that the "evidence" of activities by American soldiers was more intense than it had been in other nations. This time, there was no escaping the fact that American soldiers were having sex with women of other nations during wartime.

In October and November of 1956, the Holt family planned their largest evacuation effort to date, a chartered flight which was to bring almost one hundred children to the United States. Harry Holt left for Korea early in the month, his first

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[152] Ron Moxness, "Good Samaritan of Korea," American Mercury, October 1956, 88.
[153] "The Unwanted Find a Home," Look, 30 October 1956, 106.

journey since his August heart attack, planning to adopt children by proxy and bring them home to their adoptive parents. In late October, the President and Attorney General made provisions to allow children admission on a parole basis with the understanding that the necessary legislative amendments would need to be made when Congress was again in session. The desire to aid the children led to a flexibility and willingness to bend the rules that made the government seem truly interested in humanitarian efforts. President Eisenhower issued a public statement to that effect, saying that he was "particularly concerned over the hardship that ensues to American citizens who have adopted foreign born orphans."[154] To make the process easier for parents like those who had written to Senator Morse earlier in the year, Eisenhower agreed to allow children without visas to enter the U.S. on probation until December 31st.[155]

Eisenhower's order cleared the Holts to proceed with their large-scale evacuation. By the middle of December 1956, Harry Holt had prepped the majority of the children who were being left at his new Seoul reception center.[156] On December 17, after engine trouble during the Pacific crossing, Holt's plane landed safely in San Francisco.[157] In a photo with a caption labeled "Looking to the Future," readers of the New York Times saw children who looked tired and were described as "wide-eyed" and somewhat "bewildered."[158]

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[154] "Creswell Farmer Schedules Biggest Korean 'Babylift," Oregonian, 4 November 1956, 32. For additional information about this period, see Bertha Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 29-31 and Bertha Holt, Outstretched Arms, 252-257.
[155] See also "Adoptions Are Aided," New York Times, 27 October 1956, 23.
[156] See William Hilliard, "Holt Pushes Waif Airlift," Oregonian, 15 December 1956, 1+.
[157] See "Plane, in Trouble, Lands With 91 Korean Orphans," New York Times, 17 December 1956, 2.
[158] "An Airlift for 89 Orphans Flies Korean Children 'Home' to U.S." New York Times, 18 December 1956, 33.

Coverage was slightly different back home where the Oregonian's front page held the bold headline "New Parents Welcome 20 Korean Orphans." Emphasis on the triumphant flight was supplemented with a cover photograph of an African-American woman and her newly adopted child, a striking contrast to the frequent photos of white parents and their Korean children. The most surprising element of the day's coverage, however, was a story by William Hilliard.

Rather than focusing on the salvation of children, Hilliard concentrated on the story of a Korean woman who sought to raise her child on her own despite the obstacles presented. Hilliard had met the woman at a Seventh-day Adventist Sanitarium in Korea where her daughter was recovering from an unnamed illness. Miss Kim Soon Ja, the mother, had met an American soldier while working for a U.S. battalion near Pusan. As she recalled, the two had fallen in love and although she tried to convince herself that she should not love him because "Korean women should marry Korean," he was persistent and the two asked the Chaplain of his battalion to marry them.[159] The minister refused to marry them without the consent of the company commander but later agreed when the couple discovered that she was pregnant. Shortly after the marriage, Miss Ja's husband returned to the United States, telling her that he would come back for her and sending packages containing letters, money, and baby clothing. A short time later, however, the letters began to taper off, and ended with a final devastating note telling her that her husband had fallen in love with an American woman and could not love them both. Kim Soon Ja was now totally responsible for the child they had created together. Hilliard's article ended with the words of the young mother. "I love my baby, " she said, "and want

[159] William Hilliard, "Mothers of Mixed Bloods Have Hard Life in Korea," Oregonian, 18 December 1956, 1.

to live with her the rest of my life. I love my husband so much. He was my first love. Now I have only my daughter."[160]

Hilliard's story exposed the naiveté of the young woman but more importantly, applauded her determination to raise her child regardless of difficult circumstances and despite the callousness of the American. Her lack of knowledge about what the future might hold was clear. The article provided a stark contrast to the photos of American parents who held their new children and smiled broadly, able to offer their children a life far removed from the difficulties of the poor Korean mother. Stories like were designed to leave readers with the sense that more than three years after the armistice was signed, there was still a great deal of work to be done and encouraged Americans to continue to take responsibility for the actions of those like the American soldier who had deserted his wife and child.

### *1957- Legislative Issues Continue*

By 1957, the pattern of adoptions and media coverage seemed set and formulaic. In the first half of the year, national coverage was infrequent but Oregon reporters continued to document the work of the Holt family and recognized local adoptive parents.[161] In Congress, important dialogues were still occurring. On January 29th, Senator Neuberger documented his support for Senate bill 866, a bill he had introduced just four days earlier. Noting that a version was also being discussed in the House, Neuberger asked for the admission of ten thousand refugee orphans. Recalling his conversations with Harry Holt, Neuberger argued that Holt

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[160] Ibid.

[161] See "More Korean Waifs Arrive in Portland On Holt Airlift to Find New Homes," Oregonian, 3 February 1957, 13 and "Holt Returns With Children," Oregonian, 7 March 1957, Sec. 3, p.7.

had "done more than any other person to call attention the crying human need for us to accept our responsibility for the care and upbringing of the babies left behind in Korea..."[162] To marshal support for the bill, Neuberger asked that articles about the Holts' work be submitted to the record. This was the second time that Neuberger had made a request of this sort.

Neuberger used articles from a December 1956 series by William Hilliard to persuade his fellow Senators, stating that it was important for others to read these so that they would be "fully informed on the whole question of expanding our quota of refugee orphans."[163] Although many of the stories focused upon the work of the Holts, Hilliard's articles read more like a personal travel journal, documenting what he was seeing and thinking and feeling.[164]

His innovative series frequently focused on the work of the Holts and made pointed references to the "mountainous redtape caused by regulations of both the Korean and United States governments," emphasizing that this was detrimental to the children's cause. As an example, Hilliard noted the required physical exam which, although important, was difficult because "the American government recognizes only one hospital in Seoul. This is the Seventh-Day Adventist hospital,

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[162] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1957. Admission of 10,000 Refugee Orphans to the United States, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 1. Daily ed. (29 January), 1093.
[163] Ibid.
[164] One of the most compelling articles showed that Hilliard did not shy away from more controversial issues. In a piece which detailed the journey of the Benny Goodman band, on their way to a State Department sponsored Good Will Tour of Asia, Hilliard included a quote by band member Rex Peer who expressed his admiration for his fellow band members. "You[ve got to admire guys like Israel [Crosby] and Hank [Jones],' stressed Peer. 'Here are two fine musicians, both negroes, how have to put up with all the inconveniences and embarrassments of social life in America, but somehow managed to escape in their own minds and continue to perform in true artistic fashion." This was one of the few mentions, in any coverage of the adoption movement, that there were imperfections in the American system, and was a subtle reminder that amidst a movement to rescue Korean young, racism and discrimination was still a factor in the U.S. Ibid., 1094.

which also administers to hundreds of Korean patients daily. Sometimes the Holt youngsters have to wait as long as 8 hours to get their physicals, which is an agonizing delay for a man who is fighting the calendar to get the youngsters processed." Hilliard's pieces also emphasized the physical condition of many of the children who were plagued by tuberculosis, body sores, measles, worms, and other ailments--graphic descriptions of swollen bellies and imagery that was certain to shock all kinds of readers, government officials or not.[165]

In March, Neuberger again went before the Senate, calling for action on his bill which was to allow the admittance of additional children and allow children brought over under the parole provisions to become eligible for permanent citizenship. Neuberger criticized delays by the Secretary of State and the Attorney General, and mentioned that since his earlier speech, he had received a great number of letters in support, including a letter from author Pearl S. Buck, whose article on the state of American orphanages had appeared a year and a half earlier. Also included was a letter from the Robe family of Burns, Oregon, who hoped that their new son would be granted permanent citizenship after being admitted under the parole option earlier in 1955.

Most importantly, Neuberger made a distinction between his bill and more controversial immigration legislation which sought to raise immigrant quotas in a period where Cold War tensions appeared to be waning. "I know of no opposition to admitting to our country up to 10,000 orphans who have been adopted by American families," Neuberger said, adding that "the plight of these orphans in such countries as Korea, Japan, Greece, Italy, and in the Middle East, is urgent. I hope that the orphan bill, which is noncontroversial, will be considered on its own

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[165] Ibid., 1094-1095.

merits." Reminding Senators of the ease with which they could become heroes, Neuberger ended by saying "I know of no nobler effort than to help these homeless orphans in the distressed areas of the world..."[166]

By July 1957, there had been no resolution and Oregon's Senator Wayne Morse, went before the Senate once again, more insistent in expressing his frustration with delays and requesting immediate action. "I think the only moral thing to do is seek to make it as easy as possible for American families that wish to adopt these children to proceed to do so," said Morse, "There can be no question about the fact that those children are suffering greatly in Korea." He also complained that S. 866 had been "languishing in the Judiciary Committee of the Senate. It has not even been scheduled for hearings," a delay which prompted Morse to publicly acknowledge his own open letter to Senator James D. Eastland, head of the Judiciary Committee.[167] Reporters also acknowledged legislative delays. An Oregonian article in June 1957 mentioned that Harry Holt was leaving on a trip to survey the situation of children in a number of areas, but that legislative problems were frustrating his efforts to help children.[168]

In July, the Oregonian's William Hilliard attributed the deaths of several children in Holt's Seoul orphanage to the delays in relief legislation. "Korea's summer heat and disease are taking their annual toll of orphan children at Harry

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[166] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1957. Admission of 10,000 Refugee Orphans, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 3. Daily ed. (8 March), 3358.
[167] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1957. Adoption of Korean Orphans, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 8. Daily ed. (3 July), 10879.
[168] See "Holt Flies to Germany," Oregonian, 8 June 1957, 10. At the same time, Harry Holt was still gaining publicity in Oregon. In June, Holt received the Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews. An article about the award dinner also noted that Holt was planning to extend his efforts and was planning a trip to Europe to work on the problem of child

Holt's orphanage in Seoul," began Hilliard. "Seven of the orphans--who have never known the love and affection of real mothers and fathers--have died within the past three weeks. Deaths average two a week, Meanwhile, a congressional measure which would relieve the problem languishes in committee." "How long will the little ones remain in Seoul before Congress takes some action on Senator Neuberger's bill?" he asked. Hilliard also noted that because Congress was concentrating on Civil Rights legislation, the Orphan Aid bills were getting little attention.[169]

Neuberger soon returned to the Senate floor. Having read Hilliard's article, Neuberger was now even more alarmed. "I do not believe that we want the death of some of these children on our conscience. Every member of the Senate desires to avoid such tragedy." Neuberger submitted the text of Hilliard's article to the record as well as a letter from one of his constituents, Mrs. Haydn Waddington, whose adopted daughter had died in Korea that summer, unable to come to the United States because of the visa situation.[170] For the first time that Americans were faced with the tragedy of the deaths of these children. Senator Neuberger was just one of these now realizing that with legislation on hold, "the lives of many of these

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refugees in Europe. See "Comfort Pursuit Crowds Out Service For Many Americans, Editor Charges," Oregonian, 4 June 1957.

[169] William Hilliard, "Children Die in Holt's Korean Orphanage While Congress Holds Up Relief Legislation," Oregonian, 7 July 1957, 1. Bertha Holt's chronology of the same period, written in Bring My Sons From Afar, contains several graphic illustrations of the children the Holts were caring for. One photograph shows Harry Holt holding a child so emaciated that his hands look enormous in comparison. See pgs. 38+.

[170] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1957. Private Relief Legislation, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 9. Daily ed. (16 July), 11827.

children hang in the balance."[171] The problems adoption advocates were facing now seemed a far cry from the earlier, more triumphant accounts of salvation.

Senator Neuberger now connected a series of legislative issues. In addition to discussing the delay in getting additional visas, he spoke of problems facing military servicemen and their families who had adopted children abroad. Neuberger mentioned his own work on behalf of the Scarlett family, for whom he had introduced a private bill to allow them to bring their child home when Army Sergeant James Scarlett was reassigned to the U.S. "Unless the private legislation, or general orphan legislation, is passed during this session of Congress, this American family will be broken up," Neuberger stated.[172] Neuberger also discussed the expense of private legislation for each case, noting that four hundred such cases were being dealt with at the time as several legislators were acting on behalf of their constituents. Finally, Neuberger documented his support for an immigration bill sponsored by Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. Like the many other bills still pending, Senate bill 2410 contained a provision allowing additional numbers of orphans to enter the U.S. and Neuberger expressed his hope that at least this legislation would pass quickly, allowing some relief in Korea.[173] Pieces in the Congressional Record at this time consistently reflected a frustration and hopelessness with inaction and Neuberger was the most outspoken advocate of relief efforts.

On July 24th, less than ten days after Neuberger lent his support to Kennedy's bill, Senator Langer read a letter from John P. Smith of Virginia, just

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[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid., 11828.

[173] Ibid.

returned from Korea having adopted a Korean child, who described the conditions children were living in. His story was much like those of the countless others the American public had read about in earlier years but the fact that it was being read into the Congressional Record was a meaningful step. Smith's letter described the conditions in his son's orphanage, the constant threat of polio and tuberculosis, the infestations of flies, the potential for disease because of inadequate diets, and the discrimination suffered by "mixed-blood" children. "America is the hope of these children," Smith ended his letter, "There are many fine families waiting here to receive them. Legislation is the means."[174] Langer did not connect his reading of the letter with specific legislative efforts, but it stood as a testimony to his support of legislative action.

On the same day, Congressman Porter of Oregon made a similar statement on the floor of the House, calling for passage of H.R. 8123 which he was careful to label as "noncontroversial." Porter argued that it was essential for Congress to act quickly to allow the entrance of an unlimited number of children until June 30, 1959 and said the legislation, introduced by Representative Francis E. Walter, was "humanitarian and noncontroversial and benefits the proud heritage of our country."[175]

Ironically, on the same day that Langer and Porter delivered their statements, an Oregon event temporarily distracted attention from the Congressional debates. In Roseburg, Oregon, a grand jury indicted Mrs. Howard B. Ott, charging her with second degree murder in the death of her daughter Wendy Kay Ott, a

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[174] U.S. Congress, Senate, 1957. Admission of Alien Orphans Adopted By American Families, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 9. Daily ed. (24 July), 12530.

Korean child who had been adopted through the Holt agency. The parents of another child from Korea and two other adopted children, the Otts were accused of "neglect and barbarous treatment."[176] Just two days prior to the charges, a petition to remove the Ott's children from their home had been denied and while the murder case was ultimately dismissed, it did receive media attention.

Bertha Holt responded forcefully to the accusations against the Otts. "The fight in Douglas County is not between the Otts and their children but between the welfare department and the Holt adoption program," she said. The welfare people "are angry because they want jurisdiction' over the adoptions.' 'As soon as they...saw a chance they pounced in this wonderful Christian family...It's the devil at work."[177] These were strong words from a woman noted for her Christian devotion, kind smile, and tender care of her charges. Harry Holt also responded to the controversy. In a letter to the Oregonian, Holt said that "he felt that welfare people 'have always been opposed to our work with the Korean orphans, and we have known that they would attack us at the very first opportunity."[178]

Although Bertha Holt may have had reason to believe that welfare officials were against the proxy adoptions by the Holt agency, this was not evidenced in local publications.[179] Interviewed about the Ott family controversy, Andrew F. Juras, assistant administrator of Oregon state welfare, said that proxy adoptions

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[175] U.S. Congress, House, 1957. Orphan Legislation Needed, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 9. Daily ed. (24 July), 12637.
[176] "Woman Accused by Jury Of Killing Korea Orphan," Oregonian, 24 July 1957, 1.
[177] Ibid., 8.
[178] "Holt Sees Ott Difficulties as Attempt By Welfare Officials to Attack Him," Oregonian, 25 July 1957, 13.
[179] In Holt publications, there was no mention of the controversy surrounding the Ott family. In Outstretched Arms, Bertha Holt did allude to a lack of cooperation between welfare agencies and the Holt Agency, but there were no specifics mentioned.

meant that "Mr. Holt is assuming the responsibility in placing these children...I visited with him with our adoption supervisor and had a pleasant conversation with him. He feels that he is doing good work and we have no questions about his intentions."[180]

A legislative breakthrough on the orphan aid issue finally occurred in late August 1957. On the 21st of that month, the members of the Senate agreed to discuss Senate bill S. 2792, designed to address the situation of children adopted abroad. Senator Eastland of Mississippi noted that the bill was "a compromise," which did not "touch the basic provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act. It is designed to relieve certain hardship conditions which have arisen in the administration of that act" Eastland continued by detailing that the new legislation would allow orphans, "without any numerical limitation," to be admitted for a two year trial period that would allow legislators time to review the process at the end of that time.[181] Eastland also noted that the bill would clarify the term "stepchild" so that the children of women who had a child out of wedlock and subsequently married someone else could be eligible for entrance to the U.S. Additionally, the term "child" was expanded to allow "illegitimate" children the same rights as others.[182]

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[180] Ibid.

[181] U.S. Congress, House, 1957. Amendment Of Immigration and Nationality Act, 85th Congress., 1st sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 103, part 11. Daily ed. (21 August), 15487. S. 2792 also allowed the entrance of "specialists" who could fill a particular need in the nation and allowed waivers of certain people with tuberculosis. The bill was also to "stay to deportation of certain displaced persons who made false statements in order to prevent their repatriation to Communist-controlled countries." The quotas to be allowed entrance to the United States were 8,500, broken down into country of origin as was consistent with the standing quota system. Ibid., 15489.

[182] Ibid., 15489.

Although the legislation to expand the acceptance of child refugees raised the controversial issue of immigrant quotas, the Senate passed S. 2792 by a vote of 65 to 4 on August 21, 1957. On August 28, a similar bill passed the House, bringing the Holts and other adoptive agencies closer to bringing over the children who had waited so long in Korean reception centers. On September 11, the same day that the Ott murder case was dismissed, President Eisenhower signed the orphan bill into law."[183]

The press flurry had died down and the passage of orphan aid legislation received little attention but it was clear that public support had inspired legislative action. The Holt family had played a major role in shaping both federal policy and public attitudes. In Oregon, 1957 ended quietly with two November stories about Harry Holt's Thanksgiving flights, human interest stories that were apparently more compelling that those about legislative debates.[184]

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[183] Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 49.

[184] See William Hilliard, "80 Korean Orphans Celebrate Holiday on Landing in City," Oregonian, 29 November 1957, 12 and photo, "They Picked a Fine Day," New York Times, 29 November 1957, 19.

# Chapter Three--The Tuberculosis Controversy and Beyond

The year 1958 represented a turning point in the adoption discussion, and began the final phase of a movement to change and enhance efforts at international placement of foreign children. Increasingly, the press, the public, and government legislators debated how such adoptions should be monitored and what safeguards were necessary to protect both the children and their adoptive parents. It was at this point that the question of what to do about refugee children became entangled with debates over more comprehensive immigration reform. At the same time, the decreased intensity of adoption efforts, no longer dependent upon a "panic" mentality on the part of rescuers and others, emphasized the reality that the American public was perhaps finished apologizing for the Korean conflict and could move beyond guilt induced rescue efforts.

The change in the tone of adoption discourse emerged with the issue of safeguards in January of 1958 with the controversy over the admission of orphans who suffered from tuberculosis. In an article entitled "What Has Happened to American Spirit?" Oregon's Senator Neuberger noted that there was rising protest against the admission of those who were ill.[185] "When Harry Holt brought to our shores recently some Korean orphans with tuberculosis," Neuberger wrote, "my Portland office telephone rang with protest because I had assisted Mr. Holt in his efforts on behalf of these children of American GI's. The people on the telephone were indignant over the fact that we were accepting sick tots from Korea. They

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[185] Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 61.

wanted only healthy ones."[186] Incensed by the calls, Neuberger reminded readers of the legacy of the United States as embodied in the words on the base of the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shores send these, the homeless, tempest tossed, to me."[187] Seeking to shame readers and inspire purely humanitarian efforts, Neuberger counteracted the assumption that Americans *deserved* to receive only healthy children.

According to federal government regulations, children with tuberculosis were to be taken to hospitals as soon as they arrived and were to stay until they were seen as fit to be released. In Oregon, bureaucratic red-tape caused delays. The Eugene *Register-Guard* reported that the "TB Korean children in Oregon could not get treated in three state institutions because they were not citizens."[188] The problem was that there was no consistent means of dealing with those who suffered from the disease. Bertha Holt recalled that public fears about the spread of tuberculosis inspired "indignation" which continued for several months.[189]

In late January 1958, one hurdle was passed when the Oregon State Board of Health stated that it would "recommend [the] waiver of residency requirement[s] for treatment of Korean war orphans in state tuberculosis hospitals."[190] Instigated by a letter from Harry Holt, whose words now seemed almost golden, the waiver was issued against the protests of state Attorney General Robert Y. Thornton who argued that the hospitals must be limited to U.S. citizens who had been Oregon residents for at least one year.

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[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

At first, the voices of critics like Thornton were drowned out by the outpouring of public support that seemed to come whenever the Holt family faced an obstacle. Five days after the changes in state regulations and just two days after the Republic of Korea issued an official thank you to Harry Holt, a private Denver hospital volunteered to admit twelve orphans who were suffering from tuberculosis. The children taken to Denver were the second group of tuberculosis sufferers brought to the U.S. by the Holts and Bertha Holt recalled that the Director of the hospital was motivated to action because he was "furious about the adverse publicity. He phoned to say that he was saving nine beds for our tuberculosis children when the plane arrived, and that the treatment would be absolutely free."[191] The children's transport was arranged by another Oregon volunteer, Mrs. Herman Edwards of the 8 et 40, "a subsidiary group of the American Legion Auxiliary...active in supporting the hospital's program for tuberculous children."[192] Other offers quickly followed. "A very nice Catholic hospital in California said it would take ten children at $8.00 per day," said Bertha Holt, a reminder that the desire to aid children crossed religious denominations and of the continued popularity of the Holt efforts.[193]

At the same time the public wrestled with how to treat diseased children, newspaper articles began to focus on the health status of young refugees. On January 31, a front-page Oregonian article noted that one child had died of pneumonia on a Holt flight from Korea to Honolulu, and two others suffered from

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[190] "Board Lifts Orphan Ban," Oregonian, 23 January 1958, sec. 3, 5.
[191] Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 61.
[192] "TB Orphans Gain Entry," 13.

tuberculosis.[194] Perhaps to counteract sudden fears that children from Korea posed some kind of immediate health risk, a February 3 Oregonian article featured the headline "11 Korean Orphans Land In Excellent Health" and detailed the arrival of children who had been on the same flight as the young one who had died.[195] Readers were carefully assured that while some children had been ill, there was a quick response and diseases were contained.

While the public read these stories, Senator Neuberger spoke to his fellow Senators on behalf of the Holt family and said that he knew of "no family which has better symbolized the Biblical Good Samaritan."[196] By February, the Holts had arranged for the evacuation of "more than 600 waifs," and Neuberger spoke because he was still frustrated with the calls of protest he had received over the tuberculosis controversy.[197] Using newspaper images of the Holt family as an entree into the difficult subject of tubercular children, Neuberger referred to legislation he had co-sponsored in 1957, with Senator John F. Kennedy, which allowed the admission of people with tuberculosis "under strict safeguards." "Somehow, I feel" preached Neuberger, "that the author of the Sermon on the Mount and the writer of the Declaration of Independence would approve of granting sanctuary in American to abandoned orphans and other persons who are wracked by sickness and misery."[198]

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[193]Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 61.
[194] See "Death Takes Holt Orphan," Oregonian, 31 January 1958, 1.
[195] "11 Korean Orphans Land In Excellent Health," Oregonian, 3 February 1958, sec. 2, 12.
[196] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1958. Admission of Refugee Orphans To Citizenship In United States. 85th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 104, no. 2. Daily ed. (19 February), 2397.
[197] "11 Korean Orphans Land in Excellent Health," 12.
[198] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1958. Admission of Refugee Orphans To Citizenship In United States. 85th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 104, no. 2. Daily ed. (19 February), 2398.

Neuberger gave detailed assurances that sick children did not pose a threat and entered letters from John W. Cronin, Assistant Surgeon General, and a representative from the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service into the record. Cronin's statement explained the process by which Americans were safeguarded against spread of tuberculosis, noting that victims were not admitted until it was assured that hospital care and financial responsibility had been prearranged. The letter from the Immigration and Naturalization Service was similar, noting the statute numbers relating to tuberculosis and detailing the required X-rays, quarantine rules, and ways that tuberculosis was being defeated with the invention of new drugs.[199]

Neuberger closed his comments by reminding legislators that orphan aid operations had a larger purpose. "While our country spends many billions of dollars in the field of mutual aid, we can strike a blow for freedom and people-to-people understanding by our country's orphan program. These orphans are in no danger of bringing to our country foreign ideologies perilous to the American traditions of freedom and liberty."[200] Legislators were encouraged to continue the adoption program in the interest of the children involved, but even more importantly, in the interest of anti-communism. Safe from multiple forms of infection, the American public could ensure the extension of freedom to the world.

As a testimony to the effectiveness of the rehabilitation efforts and a means of personalizing the plight of "tuberculor children" the March 9, 1958 Oregonian contained a story about Peter Hood, one of the children who had been taken to the Denver hospital almost a month earlier. Portraying young Peter as a symbol of the

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[199] Ibid., 2398-2399.
[200] Ibid., 2399.

favorable outcomes of the Holt mission and the preeminence of American medicine, the article documented Mrs. Hood's travels to pick up her son. Peter's illness, it was noted, "had been arrested in little more than a month by drugs and treatment...[and] the youngster...son of a Korean mother and an American GI, clung happily to his adopted mother" on the journey home.[201] The second child to be adopted by the Hoods, Peter was the first orphan to be brought to Oregon under the change in state policy that allowed tubercular children entrance if their care was guaranteed.[202]

Additional stories in March 1958 continued the emphasis on health and contained photographs which showed U.S. Customs officials inspecting the recent arrivals, taking chest x-rays and providing general check-ups to make sure that the children were healthy.[203] It seemed as though the issue had been solved and Oregonians and others were assured that Korean children did not pose a significant health risk to the American public. Evacuations in the next few months continued without much fanfare. Although the Holts continued to receive coverage in local Oregon papers, especially after a March flight which raised their total to 773 children, public discussion did not become controversial again until late Spring.

Increasingly media savvy, Harry Holt used a series of local newspaper interviews in March 1958 as a forum to air his concerns and was more public about reservations he had previously only expressed in letters to his family. He raised the question of what to do about the children of "negro" GIs and Korean mothers. Preparing for another trip to Korea, Holt said that he was especially pleased that

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[201] "Flight Brings Orphan Boy," Oregonian, 9 March 1958, 25.
[202] Ibid.

"150 families in California" had signed up to adopt. "Many of them are negro people who want children, and that's good," Holt said, and reminded readers that "there has been some difficulty in finding homes for the dark-colored children fathered by our negro troops."[204] Consistently concerned about those children he feared would have the most difficult time in Korean society, Holt was insistent that the mixed-raced children of American GIs should receive the same kinds of care as others.[205] With the exception of photographs that showed African-American families with their adopted children, and articles by William Hilliard, an African-American journalist, there was no noticeable public response to the call for additional families to adopt and as the years went on, Holt continued to issue the same plea.

By late Spring of 1958, however, Holt's voice as an authority was waning. The tuberculosis controversy, which had seemed resolved months before, erupted once again. In May, Dr. W. W. Bradshaw, of Texas, wrote a letter to state and federal public health authorities asking for a stay of the Holt family's operation until a program "which meets the requirements of the law and the principles of good public health and social case work practice is established." The most emphatic protest yet registered, Bradshaw's request resulted from the death of a two-month-old orphan adopted by a Texas couple. According to the physician, the child was found to be "suffering from diarrhea, severe diaper rash and was infested with lice. An autopsy showed the infant died of pneumonia." Bradshaw contended that laws

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[203] See "Customs Check Orphans Here," Oregonian, 28 March 1958, 12.
[204] "Holt Leaves For Korea, Aims to Bring Orphans," Oregonian, 25 March 1958, 26.
For other details of evacuations in Spring of 1958, see "90 Orphans To Arrive," Oregonian, 26 March 1958, 15,
[205] See Bertha Holt, The Seed From The East, 62, 73+, 149.

concerning child placement and travel by persons with communicable diseases had been violated. He also insist that it was "inhuman to subject a sick child to the emotional as well as physical trauma that is connected with a long journey to a completely new environment."[206]

Bertha Holt responded promptly, and she later remembered the extensive publicity which "splattered [her answer] over the front pages of hundreds of newspapers."[207] Now handling the majority of press inquiries while Harry commuted between the United States and Korea, Bertha Holt maintained that evacuated children underwent a rigorous evaluation process, and that the Holt agency had full government support. "Of course out of 800 children it would be possible to have some slip up by the doctor," she acknowledged, "Here in America where medical facilities are the best, sometimes it takes years before a doctor can correctly diagnose a trouble. We do meet the requirements of the law."[208] She ended her rebuttal forcefully, dismissing criticism by insisting that "the devil wants to stop this program and he will do everything that he can to do so. But you know the Lord wants to continue this program and we have no fear that it will be stopped by any human being."[209]

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[206] "Babylift Protested By Texan," Oregonian, 8 May 1958, 1.
[207] Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 67. In her comments on this time, Bertha Holt wrote of protest by a Dr. Bradley of Texas. Although the name is different, she is clearly speaking about the same Texas doctor who registered his protest. I have chosen to use the name Bradshaw as the bulk of evidence points to Bertha Holt having made an error.
[208] "Babylift Protested By Texan," 13.
[209] Ibid.
Bertha Holt's books contained no mention of the actual text of her public reply to Bradshaw, and her memory of the period is considerably rosier than the newspaper account would indicate. She recalled speaking to the press and said that "letters flooded in about Dr. Bradley's [sic] accusation from people saying they were glad I answered as I did." She also remembered receiving a friendly letter from Dr. Bradshaw after she sent him a copy of The Seed From The East. See Bring My Sons From Afar, 67+.

Dr. Sidney H. Dressler, of Denver's National Jewish Hospital, also responded to Bradshaw's accusations and his response paired nicely with Bertha Holt's more visceral reaction. Dressler addressed the real cause of public protest; the fear that tuberculous children posed a threat to the American public. He said that the Holt tubercular children were "being handled under such safeguards that they constitute no danger to any one." In a rather lengthy explanation which concentrated on federal procedures, Dressler explained that "aliens suffering from tuberculosis must remain under treatment until clinical reports and x-rays have been submitted to and approved by public health authorities. The patient, therefore, is not discharged until he is no longer a source of infection." Dressler also reminded readers that the Holt children were harmless and that "most of the children are merely suspected victims of tuberculosis. Out of twelve admitted to National Jewish Hospital on Feb. 1," he declared, "only five actually had the disease."[210] The combined response issued by Holt, Dressler and others was the most public declaration of support that had yet been required.

Despite such public declarations, not everyone was convinced. In June 1958 the Oregon delegation to the American Medical Association (AMA) convention submitted a resolution "expressing concern over bringing sick Korean orphans to the United States." The physicians asked for an amendment to laws which allowed the admission of children with TB, "in the interests of public health and welfare." A June 24 Oregonian article summarized the declaration which "suggested that in the best interest of health and welfare of the children, their adoptive families and the new communities...[the children's] health status be

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[210] "Babylift Protested By Texan," 13.

determined preferably prior to their departure or most certainly at the port of entry."[211]

The response to the declaration was even more overwhelming than that which had followed the Bradshaw letter. Bertha Holt detailed the process the children underwent before and after entrance to the U.S., a description that was more graphic than her May response. Holt said that the children were examined in Korea and received several more examinations once they arrived in the U.S. Holt admitted that "some of them have worms that are easily cured, though they were passed in the physical--because they just don't always show up," but she assured readers that "the children's X-rays and medical records are also examined when they arrive by the U.S. Public Health" and there was no cause for alarm.[212]

Most importantly, Bertha Holt attempted to change the focus, describing the children's " poor condition from malnutrition when they come" and the need for "patience, good food, love and prayers to get them well enough to pass the physical."[213] Such support could come from American families, and she maintained that there were consistent public outcries for children which combined with the continued crises in Korea and the Lord's plans to make it essential that the Holts continue their work. "People are crying for children," said Holt, "and they want them as young as possible...If we left these children in Korea they would die."[214] Such sentiments from the woman considered to be the mother of countless Korean babes succeeding in making the Oregon AMA delegation appear cold and uninformed. Holt's strategy was further enforced by Philip Houtz of the National

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[211] "Oregon Medics Ask Ban On Korean T.B. Children," Oregonian 24 June 1958, 1, 10.
[212] Ibid., 1.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid., 10.

Jewish Hospital, who connected the entrance of Asian children to anti-communism. "We have provided these American children born in Korea with their only chance to live, be happy and lead normal lives," declared Houtz, "With all of the billions of dollars being spent by this government to make friends, the least we can do is offer help to some babies who need it."[215]

Seeking to resolve the variety of issues involved in the tuberculosis controversy, a June 1958 Oregonian editorial attempted to narrow the debate to two specific issues. "An unreasonable fear should not be permitted to limit the scope of this humanitarian undertaking," suggested the writer, "On the other hand, the adoptive parents, their children and the public have a right to expect protection from communicable disease borne by the children flown from Korea." Ultimately, the editorialist maintained that "the main problem appears to be one largely beyond the control of the doctors or the law. Hundreds of children are involved...The very size and urgency of the operations serves to limit the thoroughness of medical examination." While the writer admitted that "examination procedures could perhaps be tightened at both ends of the Holt route," readers were again assured that there was "no evidence to encourage the belief that the babies' entry under current law is a serious health menace to the country. It is surely not serious enough to bring disrepute on the project, which has already saved more lives than it will ever jeopardize."[216]

One day after the publication of the Oregonian editorial, the American Medical Association "adopted a resolution which seeks stricter medical protection in

[215] "Oregon Medics Ask Ban on Korean T.B. Children," 10.
[216] "Baby-Lift Hygiene," Oregonian, 25 June 1958, 16.

admission of such children who might have communicable diseases."[217] Although the AMA applauded families who had taken in children, the responding committee still believed that more elaborate medical checks were necessary. The most substantial protest to date, the statement did not translate to immediate government action and more widespread coverage of the tuberculosis issue soon decreased.

One indication of the continued support for the Holt family efforts surfaced in a July 18 Oregonian letter from Chung Shin, a Korean student at Linfield College. One of the few English-language pieces available from a Korean native, Chung Shin's letter said that he was "amazed that any Christian should protest against the saving of even one life. These orphans are the product of your country as well as mine, and why shouldn't some of the burden imposed on my country by the lax principles of some of the GIs be shared by your country?"[218] The Korean student's directness was unusual, and Chung Shin's letter also indicated the ways that the actions of American GIs had fundamentally impacted the nation of Korea. "Our ancestry goes back 4,000 years," he wrote, "and as an inhabitant of Korea let me state that we are not a mixture from any other country and are proud of it."[219] Such an admission validated the fears of those who believed that mixed-race children would be at a disadvantage in Korean society. More importantly, the statement of Korean pride offered American readers a new perspective on Korean society and contradicted a narrative which implied the superiority of America culture. Korea was also a nation with a history, populated by people who had pride in their national heritage.

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[217] "Orphans' Screening Demanded," Oregonian, 27 June 1958, 1.
[218] "Sharing the Burden," Oregonian, 18 July 1958, 28.
[219] Ibid.

By the summer of 1958, it was clear that although the Holts had survived criticism during the tuberculosis controversy, the Oregon couple had paid a personal price for their efforts. Stories reported that the Holts were still determined, but now exhausted, a contradiction from earlier stories which had optimistically portrayed Harry Holt as "bounding" off the plane after his mid-air heart attack. In July, Harry Holt arrived in Portland with another 80 children. Newspaper coverage described Holt as "weary and sweating," and as a "black-haired farmer, lined and stooped." The Oregonian disclosed the financial hardships facing the Holts, noting that Harry Holt had "sold some of his once-extensive farm to meet some of the expenses of his baby-lifts. Reticently, he said he has 'about 150 acres left." Tired and poor, Holt was undeterred and told reporters, "I love kids. I'll probably keep on doing this until I die."[220] Such fatalism also surfaced when the Oregonian reported the deaths of two more orphans in October 1958. "Man proposes and God disposes," Holt explained in an article which called him the "tired and disheveled Harry Holt."[221] In December of 1958, however, Holt pledged to continue "as long as there is a need to care for the abandoned children in Korea."[222]

Throughout the rest of the 1950s, the Holts continued to arrange evacuations but increasingly, did not participate in the actual flights. Media coverage changed accordingly. In December, 107 orphans were brought to

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[220] "Plane Brings 80 Orphans," Oregonian, 26 July 1958, sec. 3, 2.
[221] William Hilliard, "Death of Two Infants En Route Here Mars Holt's Arrival at Portland With Korean Orphans," Oregonian, 10 October 1958, sec. 3, 17.
[222] "New Homes Await Waifs," Oregonian, 25 December 1958, 1.

Portland, raising the number of evacuees to almost 1,200.[223] This time, Harry Holt was at home with his eight adopted children and the program could operate without his flying back and forth. The article about the December flight returned to a focus on the images of children themselves, much like the early years of GI intervention. The cover of the Oregonian focused on an image of two sleeping children, resting upon one another during the long flight to the U.S. An inside photograph showed another part of the plane, filled with lines of cardboard bassinets.[224]

By 1959, coverage was more sporadic and formulaic. Rather than the more consistent human interest stories which had followed the first few years of the Holts' work, stories in the last year of the 50s were related only to larger events: the landing of another Holt flight and additional changes in adoption legislation. In the absence of new surprises, it seemed that all was working according to plan. Boxes of medicine were packed and shipped, children received vaccinations, and Holt representatives traveled to and from Korea with children in tow.[225]

Less frequently, newspapers checked the progress of children brought over earlier. In March 1959, the Oregonian recorded that the fifteen Korean children sent to the National Jewish Hospital for treatment of tuberculosis had been treated and

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[223] "Holt Brings in 107 More Korean Orphans To Increase Farmer's Babylift Total to 1,176," Oregonian, 28 December 1958, 1.
[224] Ibid.
[225] There was a brief surge of stories about families in Oregon who were adopting Korean children. One family, the Coburns, received a great deal of front page attention when they adopted Charlie, a 12-year-old boy. See "Portland Family Plans Seattle Trip To Adopt Charlie, 12-Year-Old Korean," Oregonian, 7 May 1959, 1.
"Portlanders Adopt GIs' Korean Mascot," Oregonian, 8 May 1959, 1.
"Korean Joins His New Oregon Family," Oregonian, 9 May 1959, 1.

released.[226] Three months later, an Oregonian story focused on the story of little Jimmie Raynor, whose single father had adopted him at the same time as the Vincent and Lee Paladino adoption. Paul Raynor, Jimmie's father, was now married and Jimmie had a younger sister. The Raynors were arranging to adopt a second Korean infant, a testimony to the success of the earlier adoption. Noting that "bringing home an adopted son after a tour of duty is getting to be routine for Sgt. Paul J. Raynor," the article told readers that Raynor's older son was now a ten-year-old fifth grader and that the entire family had welcomed Buddy, their latest addition.[227]

While the pattern of evacuation and settlement seemed to have become regularized in the late 1950s, legislative concerns resurfaced when statutes setting orphan quotas near a June 30, 1959 expiration date. Although the tuberculosis issue had been resolved, long-term legislation faced new obstacles when a controversy emerged over the issue of proxy adoptions which allowed children to be brought over and placed in the U.S. without their parents traveling to meet them. Senate bill 1468, sponsored by John Kennedy, contained a provision to abolish proxy adoptions, a result of protests by social service agencies concerned about system abuses. A Kennedy aide noted that the bill would impact small agencies like the Holts' but stated that Kennedy "had nothing against the Harry Holt program." The regulations were deemed essential to allow parents to determine "if they like their new child before going through with the adoption." The bill required that one parent travel to the nation from which they were adopting. Newspaper coverage of the

[226] "Waifs Win Over Disease," Oregonian, 20 March 1959, sec. 3, 13.

legislation contained the reassurance that although the rules regarding proxy procedures might change, "some type of orphan program" would continue because of public recognition that "the continuing presence of U.S. military forces overseas results in more youngsters of servicemen and unmarried foreign women."[228]

Although Oregon's Senators Neuberger and Morse initially supported the Kennedy legislation, Senator Neuberger quickly introduced his own measure allowing proxy adoptions to continue. All three Senators agreed, however, on a provision which would mandate a home check of the adoptive parents, "to ascertain whether the child is likely to receive proper care." Reassuring readers that the Holt adoptions were safe, newspaper coverage noted that although no check was required, the Holt agency had instituted their own safeguards and that Holt made "an effort to check the character and credit of the parents."[229]

Offering the Senate his revisions of the Kennedy bill, Senator Neuberger regretted that he could not show legislators the photos he had received of Holt children in their adoptive families, saying that while "adequate safeguards must be written into the law to prevent abuses...proxy adoptions...can be both a useful and humanitarian technique."[230] Arguing for the revision but continuation of proxy adoptions, Neuberger's speech utilized a combination of tender rescue tales and charts and tables which detailed the scope of the adoption program. Neuberger said

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[227] "Second Korean Baby Brought Home By Soldier After Newest Tour of Duty," Oregonian, 15 May 1959, 24. See also "No. 2 Korean Adoptee Joins Portland Family," Oregon Journal, 16 May 1959, 2.
[228] A. Robert Smith, "Holt's Orphan Adoption Plan in Jeopardy Under Bill Sponsored by Kennedy," Oregonian, 4 May 1959, 5.
[229] Ibid.
[230] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1959. Legislation Needed To Extend Orphan Immigration Law Which Expires June 30, 1959. 86th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 105, no. 6. Daily ed. (15 May), 8248.

that from September 1957 to March 31, 1959, 2, 413 visas had been granted to children adopted overseas. Of those, 1,371 were for children from Korea. Neuberger insisted that there had been no problems with those adoptions and that "the existing orphan legislation has given these children a new hope and future in our country."[231] The issue before them, Neuberger said, was "whether legislation can be written to close existing loopholes and at the same time continue the program on a meaningful basis."[232]

Almost as a postscript, Neuberger once again supplied letters from many families who had adopted and wanted to tell their story, representing the successes of proxy adoptions. Mr. and Mrs. Floyd E. Mix wrote to say that their son had "taught us tolerance to all people, that all need and want love."[233] Robert and Dora Bersagel told Neuberger that it "would be difficult to describe the happy moments we have had since this little one came into our home...She is so lively...and a happy child...and we love her as our own. We...rejoice in the fact that we have the privilege of bringing up these little unwanted tots and give them a chance in life and a future which they would not have had in Korea."[234] Mr. and Mrs. Everett Clark, parents of two Korean infants, argued that God worked using the proxy system, saying "we know these are the Lord's children and he has surely picked them for us as they fit into our family just perfect."[235] "I am sure," Mrs. Clark wrote, "these children will make real good citizens as the people who are getting them are

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[231] Ibid., 8249.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid., 8250.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid., 8251.

Christian families who will raise their children to love the Lord."[236] These were the voices of proxy adoption.

As Congress continued to debate revision of proxy adoption procedures, the Holt evacuations continued and in May of 1959, the couple sponsored their largest flight to date, bringing a total of 121 Korean children to the U.S. In a story which was, oddly enough, published on the same page as the obituaries, the Oregonian reported that this was the first flight without either Harry Holt or one of his children. Although Holt posed with some of the evacuees when they arrived, he had stayed in Oregon to recover from an April heart attack.[237]

As the June 30th deadline approached, congressional debate intensified. On June 26, Representative Hiestand of California argued that the adoption law should be extended, criticizing "bickerings of small merit" and "lint-picking" which delayed action.[238] Dramatizing the deadline before them, Hiestand reminded fellow legislators that if the bill were to expire, "thousands of American homes may go without children; and thousands of unfortunate orphans may go without homes. There is a need. The heart of the Congress is big. Let us attend to this problem."[239]

Despite compelling pleas for extension, delays continued and it was not until July 15 that the Senate proposed to change the expiration date of orphan aid legislation to June 30, 1960. Responding to stories of difficult adoptions, such as that of a young Greek orphan, brought to the United States only to find that his adoptive parents were divorcing, Senators advocated "a program that will also

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[236] Ibid.

[237] See "Holt Flight Brings 121," Oregonian, 19 May 1959, 6 and "Record Flight of Korean Orphans Arrives," Oregon Journal, 19 May 1959, 3b.

[238] U.S. Congress. House. 1959. Special Nonquota Immigrant Visas For Foreign-Born Orphans. 86th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 105, no. 9. Daily ed. (26 June), 11965.

protect the child and the parents, both natural and adoptive, from bilkings by shady operators who deal in babies for the buck and care nothing for the human tragedy of a misplaced child." Others detailed their reservations that "defenseless children have sometimes been shipped like so much chattel to this country only to be rejected because their prospective adoptive parents did not like their looks."[240] In spite of these reservations, the Senate agreed to an extension and orphan aid legislation was extended another year. In the House, Representative Walter of Pennsylvania urged the House to approve extension of H.R. 6118 to match the Senate agreement and the House approved the amendment on July 16, adding several safeguards which ensured that the homes of adoptive parents would be suitable for child placement.[241]

A day after the House amendment was passed, Senator Neuberger took the floor to commend both Houses of Congress, reminding them that "the surest protection for a Korean and oriental orphan child is in speedy placement with a suitable family in the United States."[242] One year later, Congress once again renewed orphan legislation, although Holt ally Neuberger had died in March 1960. This allowed the Holts to bring over their next "contingent of waifs bound for new homes in this country" and on July 3, 1960, Harry Holt arrived with another 82 children. Eleven of the families who waited for the July flight were adopting their

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[239] Ibid.

[240] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1959. Nonquota Visas To Alien Orphans. 86th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 105, no. 10. Daily ed. (15 July), 13451.

[241] See U.S. Congress. House. 1959. Amending Section 4 and Section 6 Of The Act Of September 11, 1957. 86th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 105, no. 10. Daily ed. (16 July), 13593-13594.

[242] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1959. Extension Of Orphan Immigration Program. 86th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 105, no. 11. Daily ed. (17 July), 13670.

second Holt baby, one family awaited their third child, and another eleven were adopting two children simultaneously.[243]

This period was particularly striking because rather than being astonished by the nature and magnitude of these extensive efforts, readers were accustomed to the reality that a U.S. organization was consistently airlifting hundreds of children from another nation, a type of operation that was unprecedented. The evacuations seemed both a necessity and a right, and there was little reflection on the fact that these were unusual times.

Additionally, while Bertha Holt's books recorded that although there were several more infant deaths during the early 1960s, they were not reported in the Oregon press. The most horrific was the story of one child who waited at the airport and choked on her own vomit while lying face down in her bassinet.[244] The omission of these deaths from the public record implied that the mission and intent of the evacuations were considered more important.

More typical coverage, however, emerged with a William Hilliard story of the fourth annual Holt family picnic in August 1960. Hilliard's articles over the years were the most consistent in probing a variety of issues associated with the Holt efforts, and this article noted that more than five hundred people had attended the picnic. Hilliard focused on testimonials from parents of mixed-race children, the first such direct treatment of the issue to appear in the Oregonian. "The fact that most of the children are of mixed parentage causes no concern for their parents who are mostly caucasian," wrote Hilliard, "When you bring these children over here,

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[243] See "Orphan Act to Expire," Oregonian, 18 June 1960, 9 and Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 109 and "Holt Babylift Arrives At Airport With 82 Orphaned Korean Children," Oregonian, 3 July 1960, 13.

you don't worry about their color' stressed Mrs. Don M. Scott." Asked to speak about his child's future, Mr. Scott expressed his faith in the openness of other Americans. "Scott said he doesn't worry about whom his children will marry," Hilliard wrote, "He has confidence in America's free society and feels that by the time his daughters near the courting stage, 'they will take care of themselves." Mrs. Josephine Benton was also optimistic. "People worry about how these children will get along here," she declared, "It doesn't even enter my mind. I feel that my son will always love me. As he grows and hears about the difference in appearance, he will ask me questions and I will tell him." Admiring the families which surrounded him, Hilliard ended his piece by noting that "a stranger to the Holt farm Saturday would have blinked his eyes in wonderment at the mixture of races. It was a real melting pot."[245] At a time when Civil Rights legislation was under consideration by Congress, the racial tolerance of the Holt program families seemed the fulfillment of a particular American dream, an appreciation of difference but simultaneous inculcation of American values and ideals.

Despite positive domestic coverage, the Holts once again faced criticism in January of 1961, when the Republic of North Korea issued accusations that evacuated "orphans are now undergoing all sorts of humiliation and maltreatment after being resold to plantation owners and capitalists as children slaves. The same lot is in store for the orphans who are being carried away to Oregon." Upon hearing the accusations when he landed in Portland with another 107 orphans, Harry Holt "grinned, and said 'Oh, is that so. Well, that's something." According to reporter William Hilliard, in an article accompanied by photographs of children meeting their

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[244] Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 111.

adoptive parents, "snuggled" in snowsuits and smiling as they reached out to hug their families, "one had only to witness the drama which unfolded at the Portland International Airport Wednesday to see the folly in the charge by the North Koreans." The anonymous monolith of "North Korean Reds" was no match for the charismatic Harry Holt and the children themselves.[246]

One month later, the Holts brought over another 96 children and Harry Holt talked of the snowball effect of the adoption movement. "The head of the babylift is also pleased when a child goes to parents in an area which has no other Korean orphans. The youngsters are their own best advertisement, Holt says, and one in an area usually means other families in the same area will soon be asking to adopt an orphan."[247]

In May 1961, the Holt family prepared to make a permanent move to Korea so that Harry could supervise adoption plans and the family could establish an operation to care for disabled children. In the same month, Maureen Neuberger, who had been appointed to her husband's seat in the U.S. Senate after his death, proposed another amendment to immigration laws. Noting that she believed earlier legislation had corrected the problem of program abuses by instituting a home

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[245] William Hilliard, "Ex-Orphans, Families Hold Happy Picnic Reunion At Holt Farm," Oregonian, 7 August 1960, 1.

[246] William Hilliard, "Holt Babylift Orphans Arrive--Reds Claim 107 Children To Be 'Plantation Slaves," Oregonian, 12 January 1961, 1. Another controversy early in this year was the question of what would happen to a Korean orphan who was removed from his adoptive family and placed in the custody of the Juvenile Court. In language that was uncharacteristic of typical quotes from Holt, Harry Holt said that "the youth was reared in an Army barracks in Korea and was 'spoiled. He has been in an army barracks since he was five years old...Like most of the older children we have in our orphanages, he thought that life in America would be like the movies. He can't seem to adjust." See "Court Assumes Custody Of Holt Airlift Orphan," Oregonian, 15 February 1961, 8.

check, she asked that her fellow Senators support the extension of orphan legislation until June of 1964. Following the pattern that her husband had established, Senator Neuberger submitted assorted newspaper and magazine articles into the record as proof of the effectiveness of orphan resettlement.

More comprehensive discussions began in July when the Senate debated the amendment in one of the most extensive deliberations to date. Seeking to extend what he called the "Alien Orphan Adoption Act," Senator Keating of New York noted that the earlier extension had ended in June and that various sponsors had offered legislation to extend it. Frustrated by the lack of action, Senator Keating traced the history of the original amendments, reminding fellow Senators of the need that existed not only throughout Asia, but throughout the world. "All over the country," Keating emphasized, "prospective mothers and fathers have been weeping their eyes out...Little orphan children in nearly every country of the world also have been crying every night." Keating noted that more than 7,000 Asian orphans had been admitted to the United States, with Korea and Japan at the top of that list.[248] At the time of Keating's speech, children were still be evacuated but only on a parole basis, a temporary measure which would not extend to long-term benefits.[249]

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[247] James Lattie, "Baby Lift' Brings Tots," Oregonian, 26 March 1961, 6.
[248] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1961. 87th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 107., part 9. Daily ed., (12 July), 12366.
For more detailed coverage of Holt activities during this time, please see "Parents' Claim 97 Korean Waifs Here," Oregon Journal, 4 June 1961, 5 and "97 Korean Orphans Land In City," Oregonian, 4 June 1961, 20 and "Last of Harry Holt 'Baby-Lifts' Arrives Here Late," Oregon Journal, 11 June 1961, 11.
[249] For documentation of the process by which parole was offered, please see U.S. Congress. House. 1961 Immigration of Alien Adopted Children. 87th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 107., part 9. Daily ed., (11 July 1961), 12252-12253.

Senator Allott of Colorado added to Keating's statement, saying that "it seems to me that at a time when we talk of strengthening international relations and promoting mutual understanding among the peoples of the world through educational and cultural exchanges, nothing could better accomplish the purse or furnish better evidence of our intentions, than to renew the act which, unfortunately, has been permitted to expire." Senator Morse of Oregon agreed that such legislation would prove pivotal in U.S. foreign relations and used adoption as a tool in foreign policy by portraying the United States as a humanitarian nation. "We have a great public trust to perform in connection with the subject matter of the amendment. That public trust is great, not only from the standpoint of the human interests involved, but also from the standpoint of public understanding around the world of America's foreign policy...In the best interest of the orphans involved, of the adopting parents, and of America's foreign relations around the world, I hope...it will become law."[250] Senators continued to view these orphan children as a symbol of American humanitarianism, and feared that to fail them would surely signal other nations that the United States was not the power it presumed to be.

The Senate passed the alien orphan amendment in July 1961, yet when the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Bill failed, the discussion was tabled until August when the Senate voted to extend the Alien Adoption program until June 30, 1963 and sent the bill to the House.[251] The bill still required House

[250] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1961. 87th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 107., part 9. Daily ed., (12 July), 12369-12370.
[251] See "Alien Adoption Backed," New York Times, 15 August 1961, 16.

approval and with legislation pending, a Holt airlift in August admitted a final 66 children.[252]

On September 6, Legislator Walter of Pennsylvania asked that the House pass S. 2237, which amended the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit certain alien orphans to enter the U.S. but also required that proxy adoptions conform to the rules of individual states. The amendment said that "the purpose of the changes is to eliminate abuses and hardships resulting from the regrettable practice of adopting abroad a child, or children, never seen by the adoptive parents..." Walter noted that this amendment did not mean that prospective parents would have to fly abroad to pick-up their children. Instead, children would be brought to the U.S. and examined, would meet their parents, and a decision would then be made about their adoption. The act also provided that the admittance of alien orphans would be allowed on a permanent basis, a substantial change from the yearly revisions that had been required.[253]

The response to the amendment was animated. Some congratulated Walter on the bill. Legislator Roosevelt, of California, said "the bill will serve many humanitarian purposes without in any way hurting the security of our country." Legislator Conte, of Massachusetts, called the amendment "humanitarian legislation...The lives of thousands of helpless little children, as well as many American couples, will be brightened by the enactment of S. 2237." Others expressed reservations about the amendment and while applauding the aid to orphans, questioned changing rules regarding proxy adoptions. Legislator Widnall

[252] Marge Davenport, "66 Couples Welcome One More Babylift," Oregon Journal, 2 August 1961, 1.

of New Jersey said that the bill would make it difficult for many in his home state and that he could think only of positive examples of successful adoptions. Walter, however, expressed his fear that other kinds of imperfect children would be admitted. "The good cases you are talking about would not be affected by the new law. However, those cases where children have been brought to the United States that are imbeciles and insane and not placed in proper homes, and not subject to adoption in the State, which has happened, would not happen now."[254] Distinguishing between "good" cases and less successful adoptions, Walter insisted that Americans needed to be more selective in this process.

The proposal to modify adoption procedures indicated a substantial shift in public discussion. Unlike the earlier years, where it had seemed of paramount importance to get children out quickly and place them permanently with as little stress as was possible, the U.S. legislative debate now showed a freedom for deliberation and selectiveness that represented a departure from the more panic-inspired adoptions of earlier years. The fact that there were countless children to be adopted was now understood and meant that there were more to choose from. Although tubercular children were "fixable," it was clear that the nation was less interested in accepting the American heritage of those who were in some way handicapped. Under Walter's legislation, children could be brought to the U.S., evaluated, and then sent back if they did not meet with approval, yet the proposal

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[253] U. S. Congress, House. 1961. Amending the Immigration and Naturalization Act. 87th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 107., part 14. Daily ed., (6 September), 18284.
[254] Ibid., 18285-18286.

had provided for the admittance of alien orphans on a permanent basis, a substantial departure from the yearly renewals of legislation previously required.[255]

The Walter bill passed by two-thirds majority in September 1961, although a motion to reconsider was placed on the table. On September 15, a Conference Report presented to the Senate attempted to reconcile differences between Senate legislation and the Walter bill. While a large part of the legislation was unrelated to orphan aid, the most significant aspects of the proposed legislation were a provision that effectively abolished adoption by proxy and another which was to permanently approve the entrance of "certain eligible alien orphans."[256]

Representing many Senators who spoke out on behalf of more comprehensive revisions to immigration legislation, Senator Pastore of Rhode Island argued that the Senate must consider the countless families who awaited legislative action.[257] This effectively made a distinction between legislative debate which could drag on for years and the lived realities of those who waited. With several Senators having noted their frustration that they could not get "the whole loaf," the Conference Report was passed, making the "Alien Orphan Act" permanent. On September 26, President Kennedy signed the legislation, which also revised appeal procedures for aliens being deported from the United States.[258]

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[255] For information on the ways that the Holt operation eventually cared for disabled children, please see Bertha Holt, Created For God's Glory (Eugene, Oregon: Holt International Children's Services, 1982).
[256] U.S. Congress. Senate. 1961. Admission of Certain Alien Orphans--Conference Report. 87th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record. Vol. 107., part 5. Daily ed., (15 September), 19653.
[257] Ibid., 19655.
[258] "Immigration Bill Signed By Kennedy," New York Times, 27 September 1961, 22.

Now living and working in Korea, with Harry Holt's health declining, the family continued to collect children, and all members of the family traveled back and forth to the United States.[259] In December of 1961, Harry Holt began to speak out strongly about the new adoption regulations which meant that he could "no longer make proxy adoptions, although he can still act as go-between guardian if he fulfills the specific adoption laws of specific states. Oregon's law is strict, and henceforth, prospective parents can go to Korea to get their children, or they can be brought in with their guardianship turned over to recognized state agencies."[260]

In an interview with the Oregon Journal, Holt said that he feared that some families would be dissuaded from adoption because they did not meet the financial requirements and called several adoption agencies "pirates who make money off of suffering." He also said that some potential parents would "fear a welfare agency will take the child away. I've seen it happen...People spend a lot of their money to obtain a child, and them have lost the child, and that is wrong." Far from being dissuaded in his own work, Holt said that new regulations meant "that I'm just going to have to raise these kids here...You can't just let them shift for themselves. Not if you are a human being."[261] Holt's determination and character once again distinguished the Holts from more anonymous agencies involved in international adoption, but this distinction was to become less important over the next two years.

Although the Holts were living in Korea, they were still attempting to determine where their efforts fit within the context of the 1961 legislation. Other

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[259] See Holt, Bring My Sons From Afar, 142+.

[260] Ann Sullivan, "3 More Korean Orphans Arrive As Holt Scores Welfare Agency," Oregonian 20 February 1962, 13.

[261] Rolla J. Crick, "Holt Unhappy With Adoption Agencies," Oregon Journal, 25 December 1961, 7.

agencies also sought to make space for the founders of the Korean adoption movement. In February 1962, the Oregonian reported that that adoption division of the Oregon State Public Welfare Division had "made overtures to Harry Holt...to help assist him with future adoptions..." Recognizing Holt's importance, Mrs. Genevieve Forsythe, supervisor of adoptions for child welfare in Oregon, sought Harry Holt's cooperation with the welfare adoption division and Catholic Services for Children which were the only Oregon agencies still authorized, under the new rules regarding proxy adoptions, to "bring children here to be seen and for placement."[262]

Two days after the offer, Harry Holt arrived in Portland with four more children, and rejected the proposal of collaboration. "I don't think they're doing the job they should," he said of approved local and national agencies, and used as one example, the case of a child adopted by proxy into a Michigan family, a history that the International Social Service agency had published as an argument against proxy adoptions by agencies like Holt's. Holt said that in the Michigan case, "the father of the family which took the Korean child died six months after the child came to the family and the adoption agency took the child from the home. 'I was blamed for the failure,' Holt said, 'but I had nothing to do with the case...The fact of the matter is, if this had been a proxy adoption, the mother would have been able to keep the child as she wished." In addition to criticizing a process which he saw as separating a child from its family, Holt condemned private adoption agencies saying "their fees are too high. I don't see why adoptions should cost so much. What we want to do," he stated, "is keep fees down so ordinary people can adopt the children they

[262] "Assistance Offered Holt," Oregonian, 17 February 1962, sec. 3, 4.

want.'"[263] Harry Holt was still the ally of the "common man", now battling Washington and other agencies in a fight that pitted this American hero against state and federal laws.

In February 1962, Holt again responded to legislative changes, telling an Oregonian reporter that "Our children would die of old age before they could be adopted.' He [also] ridiculed welfare questionnaires of family background and habits: 'Trace 'em back to Adam and Even. And when did your father quit wetting the bed? And when did your mother first date?'"[264] Unusually scornful, Harry Holt's response indicated his intense frustration, and inspired quick response from other adoption advocates.

Raymond O. Riese, director of child welfare for the Public Welfare Commission, responded mildly, attempting to minimize conflicts with Holt. "We'd like to talk to him," Riese said, "I think there has been some misunderstanding. We want the same things--good homes for the children. All we want to propose is that we meet some certain standards for the good of the child.'"[265] Stuart Stimmel, director of the Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon, responded more adamantly, saying that Holt's accusations about the cost of private agencies were unfounded and that "some families obtaining children through Holt have had to pay more for expenses than they have through an adoption agency.'"[266] Finally, in a statement that directly contradicted earlier portrayals of Harry Holt as the singular child savior, Stimmel said "I think everyone will agree that no good can come from the claims of

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[263] Charles B. Steers, "Holt Continues With Babylift, Spurns Adoption Agencies," Oregon Journal, 20 February 1962, 4.
[264] Sullivan, "3 More Korean Orphans Arrive As Holt Scores Welfare Agency," 13.
[265] Ibid.
[266] "Child Aid Chief Raps Harry Holt," Oregon Journal 22 February 1962, 6.

any person that only he can help children. Every day there are more children who need help. The job is a tremendous one and it needs the combined efforts of all those who are willing to dedicate themselves to it."[267] The adoption movement had turned a corner, transforming itself from an operation reliant upon the goodwill and picturesque energy of one family to a more expansive effort requiring cooperation from a number of adoption advocates.

Stimmel's criticism of Harry Holt showed that while the heroism of the Holts was still applauded in the press, they no longer held the media spotlight or the sole attention of potential adoptive parents. In one sense, this was the fulfillment of what Harry and Bertha Holt had desired so few years before--a concerted effort to aid suffering children across the globe. What this meant, however, was that the family was displaced as the center of attention and whether Stimmel's accusations of Holt's self-absorption were valid, this direct criticism was the first which questioned Holts intentions.

Increasingly, coverage was spotty at best, although in December 1962, the Holts' orphan foundation was approved as "a child-caring and adoption agency" and while one member of the State Public Welfare Commission said that she thought Holt "should apologize for recent remarks he made criticizing the commission and other child welfare agencies,' the commission's action authorized Holt's agency 'to receive foreign-born children for adoption... [and] to provide for temporary care for such children."[268] Accreditation by Oregon Child Welfare

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[267] Ibid. See also "Harry Holt Gets Rebuff," Oregonian 22 February 1962, 24.

[268] "Orphan Fund OKd," Oregon Journal 29 December 1962, 4. See also "Welfare Group Approved Holt Orphan Foundation," Oregonian 30 December 1962, 17.

Authorities solidified the program's future and meant that the family agency could operate like the other approved agencies Holt had spurned.

Sixteen months later, in April 1964, Harry Holt died in Korea at the age of fifty-nine after suffering yet another heart attack. Although the family had moved back to Oregon, Bertha Holt traveled overseas for his burial saying "he wants to be buried with his babies there," and pledging that the agency would continue his work.[269] The last years of his work had placed Harry Holt in a more controversial position, but he had created a movement that was now solid and coordinated, and this was how he was remembered. Newspapers celebrated his legacy of having founded a movement which inspired action from both the American public and government officials.

Eulogizing Holt, Oregon Governor Mark Hatfield described Holt as "a rare individual who translated strong Christian beliefs into dynamic action in an eloquent demonstration of brotherhood." Stuart Stimmel, with whom Holt had clashed over the abolition of proxy adoptions, said "it's true we did not approve of the way he placed children in homes--sight unseen and with little investigation--but give Mr. Holt his due. He did a tremendous job in interpreting the plight of these children...When the people in a community decide that it is socially acceptable to adopt Oriental orphans, it is a long step toward recognizing that children of other races need adoptive homes too."[270] Others remembered that "grizzled, good-humored, usually needing a shave and rumpled from his long hours of feeding and

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[269] "Babylift 'Father' Holt Dies At 59 In Korea," Oregon Journal, 28 April 1964, 1.
[270] Ibid., 14.

diapering babies on the plane ride, Harry Holt always arrived with a smile."[271] An Oregonian editorialist said the adoption crusader was "one of the noblest Oregonians to have ever become a world figure."[272] The Oregon Journal commended Holt for "putting into practice the second great commandment, love thy neighbor."[273]

In mid-May, after placing two tubercular children in the National Jewish Hospital in Denver, Bertha Holt told reporters that the family would "carry on the work begun by my husband."[274]

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[271] "Harry Holt, 59, Dies In Korea," Oregonian 29 April 1964, 1, 8, 14.
[272] "Classic Compassion," Oregonian 29 April 1964, 18.
[273] "Glowing Life Of Harry Holt," Oregon Journal 30 April 1964, 14.
[274] "Holt Widow Pledges To Continue Work," Oregonian, 12 May 1964, 19.

# Conclusion

In the years following Harry Holt's death, reporters periodically checked in with families who had adopted through the Holt agency. In December 1965 the Oregonian reported on the successful adoption by the Babb family. Journalist Gordon G. Macnab noted that while not everyone had "been as fortunate as the Babbs to get alert, talented and healthy children, or as fortunate as Kim and Kip to join an understanding, loving family," the Babb adoption had been a sure success. "It is nine years since Kim and Kip came. They are Americans now, just as are their schoolmates and if there is a difference, you'd hardly know it."[275] There was still, however, work to be done in Korea, and other journalists still acknowledged that the enterprise would have to "go on as long as American occupation forces stay in Korea."[276]

Although the most intensive deliberations about the adoption of Korean children had ended, the United States had not reached closure on issues of national responsibility across the globe. Struggling with the question of who had a legitimate right to become an American, a discussion which has continued since the 1950s, the period of U.S. involvement in Korea tied the adoption debate to issues of U.S. power and global stature. During the 1950s and early 1960s, a burgeoning Civil Rights Movement began to "awaken the moral conscience of America, condemning racism in all of its forms, including immigration policies...Equality for Americans logically implied equality for immigrants entry to America."[277] Yet the adoption discussions of the Korean War era indicated a continued struggle with the

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[275] Gordon G. Macnab, "2 Adopted Koreans Fill Home With Spirit," Oregonian 24 December 1965, 6.
[276] Watford Reed, "Holts' Baby Help Still Needed," Oregon Journal, 19 June 1965, 9.

issue of racial heritage and Americans still wondered how to reconcile the legacy of U.S. involvement in Korea with a global mission that proclaimed American strength, supremacy, and righteousness, despite the drawbacks of an intervention which had been disappointing militarily and left tangible evidence of the sexual irresponsibility of U.S. soldiers,

Questions about U.S. hegemony were epitomized by what historian Elaine Tyler May has described as Cold War inspired fears of sexual degeneracy as a sign of national weakness. As May has argued, the era's foreign policy "rested upon well-articulated assumptions about masculine power."[278] While some GIs were criticized for shirking their responsibilities as the fathers of the "mixed" children, their sexual activity was also a sign of American strength and virility. Evacuations during the war and after were lauded on the basis that Korean children were being rescued from a presumed communist threat and poor conditions in their own nation, but the underlying emphasis of these relief efforts was that the United States could redeem its international position and heal the wounds of war by coming to aid of those who had been victimized. Child rescue efforts were another way of proving American strength and unity, particularly in a period defined by domestic battles over racial integration and debates over the U.S. role in the world. By coming to the aid of Korean children, the rescue efforts of American GIs embodied an ability to take responsibility, and to heal psychologically and materially what had been wrought militarily. Finally, the emphasis on indoctrinating adopted children with American ideals, through costumes and other physical manifestations, indicated the

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[277] Takaki, Strangers From A Different Shore, 418.
[278] Elaine Tyler May, HomewardBound (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), 98.

supremacy of the American way of life which could be preeminent regardless of one's racial heritage.

Debates over American strength were most contentious during discussions in the early 1960s which inspired fears that the United States was somehow being "infected" from without by tuberculosis, damaging the stature and prestige of the nation. While the illegitimate children of Korea were, in one sense, a sign of American virility, the sexual potency/world power of the nation was threatened by a disease carried by the children of American GIs and Korean mothers. The issue was resolved in a way that again displayed the preeminence of the United States, this time epitomized by medical technology, legislative safeguards and precautions, and ultimately, the love and compassion of American families willing to care for ill children.

The legacy of the Korean period was that exhibitions of American strength and compassion could be extended to encompass the plight of children around the globe for whom many Americans felt a growing sense of responsibility. Relief efforts became more common and while the magnitude and intensity of Korean adoptions from 1951 to 1964 was unprecedented, the evacuations effectively synthesized a number of issues which arose again during "Operation Babylift" in 1975, at the end of the Vietnam War. Similarly focused on the evacuation of mixed-race GI babies and their resettlement in a nation that was presumed to accept them, Operation Babylift reflected an American panic about the plight of Vietnamese children and their fate under communism in an area where the United States had not been militarily victorious. Although the Korean evacuations had inspired efforts like those in Vietnam, they more successfully raised questions which continued to haunt the American public than provided answers to the issues which confronted Vietnam

era relief activists. Ultimately, public discussion about Vietnamese children continued the dialogues on postwar healing, the self-avowed Christian good-will of many in the United States, and U.S. anti-communism which had been prevalent during the Korean period.

Perhaps most importantly, the Holt family and the Korean efforts they led and inspired succeeded in adding another dimension to a national discussion about race, expressing a surprising inclusiveness in the 1950s and '60s. In both the Korean and Vietnamese evacuations, many Americans struggled with how children of mixed-race parentage were to be incorporated into a nation grappling with civil rights issues. Although the Holt family inspired a movement toward the acceptance of mixed-race children, the issue of integration was secondary to what they saw as a Christian sense of mission. While still projecting some ingrained ignorance about Korean culture, a by-product of cultural misunderstandings which continue to this day, the Holts and others reflected a movement toward racial and cultural harmony similar to that of some religious activists in the civil rights movement. In some ways, the Holts were more progressive than their media image as a model of the traditional American family. The Holts insisted that children could be adopted from another nation, made "American," but still educated about the nation of their birth and imbued with a pride in their dual cultural heritage.

During Vietnam operations in which the Holt agency again played a pivotal role, the tone of the discussion changed a good deal but still reflected a struggle with racial issues. One topic which remained contentious in 1975 was the issue of African-American children. Many African-American activists spoke out against international adoptions of victimized Asian children which they believed ignored

domestic realities for African-American children in urban areas, a frustration that underscored the severity of national racial tensions. Others applauded attempts at American inclusivity and the willingness to adopt and raise children who were seen as different. Such a multi-faceted dialogue would not have taken place without the original activism of the Holt family. To this day, adoption advocates, critics, and legislators still debate the role of the United States in international relief efforts, whether such efforts can legitimately be connected to political aims, and how to deal with the issue of mixed-race children in a nation still confronting its own racism.

Ultimately, however, the Korean evacuations are remembered less for the controversial issues associated with the adoptions than for the symbolic nature of American aid to the victims of war. More than forty years after American intervention in Korea first began, fictional accounts have dramatized the U.S. rescue efforts in Korea, emphasizing the virtuousness of American soldiers and the military efforts in Korea while frequently obscuring the realities of military conflict. In December 1997, CBS television broadcast *A Thousand Men and a Baby*, the tale of a Korean child "adopted" by a U.S. Naval Air Craft Carrier after being abandoned and taken to a Catholic orphanage.[279] Identifying Danny as one of their own, sailors rallied around the boy they began to call their mascot, and far away from their own families, pitched in to fight this final battle of the war. Realizing that "it's like he's the reason we fought this war in the first place," the sailors and the ship's doctor overcome military restrictions because for them, "this war ain't over

[279] In the future, I hope to examine television coverage from the period covered by this work, an inclusion which cost and lack of access to archival materials precluded at this time.

until Danny's home." With the help of a sympathetic Captain who knew when to bend the rules, the men bring Danny home to America. Perhaps most importantly, Danny helped to make the ship's doctor's family complete--he and his wife had previously had two stillborn boys and Danny becomes their Christmas baby, happy and well adjusted when seen again nearly forty years later. The tidy packaging of Danny's story, broadcast just in time for Christmas, made it clear that one significant legacy of the Korean conflict was the orphan evacuations.

Fictionalized accounts like *A Thousand Men and a Baby* successfully ignore the irony that without American military intervention, Danny's future would not have been at issue. Instead, they applaud child relief efforts as a sign that the military intervention was justified and essential. Journalistic portrayals of child victims of war also have been indelibly impacted by the Korea period. The contemporary USA Today cover on the children of North Korea replicates coverage that American audiences view on television and in the newspaper on a daily basis. Other reports, like that of Diane Sawyer who recently traveled to North Korea and videotaped inside government orphanages, raise the question of whether after forty years of exposure to these kinds of images, they still have the power to sustain long-term relief efforts like those of the 1950s and 1970s. While a flurry of adoptions followed after coverage of children from Romanian orphanages and Russian orphanages, these efforts do not receive the more sustained coverage of earlier eras and it is unclear whether that is a by-product of their lack of connection to specific military operations by the United States. The media, however, continues to trumpet the superiority of American values with respect to children and their saviors and occasionally, one can find stories about Holt operations.

In Oregon, the Holt agency still operates today, and remains on the vanguard of discussions about international adoptions. Although consistently confronted by financial difficulties, the agency is now the largest intercountry adoption agency in the world, operating in ten countries and actively participating in legislative efforts to ensure continued adoption opportunities. Most importantly, the agency has articulated a policy of aiding adoptive parents in learning about their child's nation of origin. Bertha Holt continues to work in the agency. Increasingly, the Korean children brought to Oregon so long ago, have entered Holt operations to aid her.

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