

# SFChronicle No Rush To Empty Orphanages

## Saigon

Despite prospects that Saigon might be engulfed by the war, the registered adoption agencies operating here have decided to evacuate only those orphans who have parents already assigned abroad, the head of one of the largest agencies said yesterday.

"We are not going to attempt to empty out the orphanages" of the 18,000 to 20,000 children now in registered institutions in Saigon, said Bob Chamness, director of the Holt Relief Agency based in Eugene, Ore.

The agencies have moved up their schedules, he said, but they "met yesterday and decided to send out only the children from one orphanage in Vietnam to another in the United States. "We want to keep on operating here, whatever happens," Chamness said.

Of the 18,000 to 20,000 children in 125 registered orphanages in Saigon, about 700 were of mixed race, Chamness said. Most of these had American fathers of which about 275 were black.

He said many children were ill or handicapped with afflictions ranging from malnutrition to polio and cleft palates.

Chamness and other directors said their orphanages had been besieged by Vietnamese mothers with racially mixed children whom they were anxious to get to America.

"They are frantic and unsure of what the future holds . . . but if a mother comes with a child, we won't necessarily take it," he said, explaining that social workers must screen out those who would benefit by adoption."

*Associated Press*