

Vietnam Orphans Still Need Funds

By Alan Dawson

SAIGON (UPI)—The orphans left behind in South Vietnam are alive and well and the orphanages continue to operate.

Those previously supported by donations from Americans would like to continue to receive money, but there is no word yet on whether the new government will allow such aid.

"I hope to receive help from any and all benefactors so long as, people sending donations do not put conditions on spending the money," said Sister Trom of the Viethoa Roman Catholic orphanage in Cholon.

The new director of the Anlac orphanage, one of the oldest in Vietnam, said government officials had told him that all donations would be welcomed so long as no politics were involved in the gifts. Nguyen Xuan Trinh took over Anlac after its director of 25 years, Mrs. Vu Thi Ngai, fled to France before the capture of Saigon on April 30.

A random survey of half a dozen orphanages in the Saigon area showed that all have the same problem—lack of money because banks remain closed and accounts are frozen. But at those orphanages where cash has run out, government officials have provided rice to feed the children.

Directors of all the orphanages said they had been assured by government officials that the facilities would remain open and there would be no harassment. And so far they said there has been no trouble.

One of the worries of foreigners involved in the orphanages was that the Vietcong might mistreat the mixed-blood offspring of Vi-

etnamese women and Americans.

If anything, the opposite has proved true.

"The troops who come here make no distinction between the Vietnamese and mixed-blood babies," said Mrs. Thanh Kiu, director of the Ducanh orphanage, which has 529 children of whom 12 are mixed-blood.

"They pick them up and carry them around and kiss them," she said.

Virtually all the orphanages in Saigon have been visited by officials of the Social Welfare Ministry, which is headed by a woman doctor, Duong Quynh Hoa.

"The ministry gave us 1,320 kilograms (2,800 pounds) of rice which is enough for another two weeks," said Mrs. Kieu at Ducanh.

So far as is known, only one foreigner involved in helping the orphanages has remained in Vietnam. She is Patricia Toop of the Tom Dooley Heritage Club of New York City.

Miss Toop, who works for Pan American World Air-

ways in New York, was in Vietnam on a visit when the Provisional Revolutionary Government took over.

"I hope these [foreign aid] programs to help the kids can go on," she said. "There are more problems and diseases here, and a lot of the kids are treatable with Western help."

More children are being abandoned and turned over to orphanages now than at any time in the past few months.

"The kids are abandoned because people are poorer

now," Miss Toop said. "When the war refugees in Saigon go back home, they leave their kids. Also, there are a lot of American babies."

Other foreign-assisted programs have not continued.

One of the best known, the plastic surgery team at Cholon's Cho Ray Hospital, has closed down at least temporarily because its British surgical team fled in the foreign evacuation of Saigon.

"We don't have the technical ability to do this kind of operation now," said a man at the center who asked not to be identified. Many of the disfigured war wounded were in the middle of lengthy treatments, and nobody knows what will happen to them now.

The Seventh Day Adventist Hospital has come full circle. Formerly the U.S. Army 3rd Field Hospital, the facility was handed over to the religious group in 1973. Now the Adventists have turned it back to the military.

"This is a center where our military heroes are treated for their illnesses and wounds," said a soldier guarding the gate at the hospital near the edge of Tansonnhut Air Base.

Adventist pastor Nguyen Xuan Son said he had turned over the entire hospital and all medical supplies to the new government several days after they captured Saigon. The entire American staff fled the hospital days before the takeover.

Son has refused communication with American Adventists, ignoring a telegram from friends in Michigan out of "prudence to avoid complications for believers who still remain in Vietnam."

He said he was angered at the "foreigners" who fled the country "because what they told us about the Provisional Revolutionary Government bore no similarity to what the PRG is really like."

Son said government officials have treated him well and caused no problems for him or other Adventists.