

## DIVIDED KOREAN FAMILIES: WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO REMEDY THE UNHEALED WOUNDS?\*

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*This paper examines the issues of psychosocial impact and consequence resulted from the Korean conflict on the lives of ten million Korean families. The suffering and unresolved grief of those who lived under the hopes of family reunion and reunification of their divided motherland are mounted high as the older generations are either already gone or dying fast while the younger generations become disconnected from their intergenerational continuity. Case studies are used to assess intergenerational patterns of prolonged separation and loss associated with family dispersal. Special attention will be given to the discussion of remedial strategies for national and international network of family advocacy and healing processes.*

### INTRODUCTION

The divided families, wherever they reside, still exist in distress under the counterforces of peace promoting goals of humanity. Regardless of ideological disparities, geopolitical situations, and socioeconomic conditions, it appears that families maintain basic universal values in meeting biopsychosocial needs of humanity through time (Lee 1990). It is indeed a human tragedy that nearly ten million Korean families<sup>1</sup> have been denied their fundamental human rights of family reunification nearly half a century (Chee 1989; Korean Red Cross 1976). Since Korea's division by external forces in 1945, the prolonged impact of family separation on both sides of divided Korea and the issues of family reunification have been dealt with the most unfortunate cold war circumstances of denial, mistrust, repression, fear, betrayal, persecution and divided loyalty (Lee 1985a, 1985b). The political solution may be forth-

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<sup>1</sup>According to the estimation of the Korean Red Cross, there were approximately 10 million Korean families resulting in the dispersion at the outbreak of the Korean Conflict in 1950.

coming, but the more profound psychosocial issues demand much more sensitive approaches to the recovery of those denied fundamental human rights, the solemn rights of family reunification rather than mere political and economic overtures. Prolonged human suffering from the damages of cold war and the consequences of divided Korea make the cost of remedy too high for those affected family members alone to bear. The scope of human tragedy is far-reaching with their consequences being often repressed in the minds of millions of people. When such channel of social outlet was made possible for those individuals and families residing in South Korea and overseas to express their desires of seeking out dispersed relatives through the news media, it was like an erupting volcano which was felt nationwide, revealing the profound impact of prolonged family separation (Lee 1985a, 1985b; Jun and Daya 1985).

Social reconstruction calls for the restoration of human linkages among the divided generations of Korean families as in the case of many other nationality groups<sup>2</sup> who have been subjugated to similar circumstances (Moeller 1989). While talks between South and North Korean government representatives have been attempted without much fruitful breakthrough in resolving the issues of divided family reunification (Kim and Chee 1983; Korean Red Cross 1976; National Unification Board 1988), it is just within recent years that only limited numbers of overseas Koreans could write and/or visit relatives in the North through third countries including China and Japan.<sup>3</sup> The stories of individual encounters in search of their separated and lost relatives (Yang and Kim 1988; Hong 1988; Chung 1990), when they appear on the news media, open up many unhealed emotional scars of dispersed family members who have been silently suffering, too long, from the paradox of denied freedom of family visitation and unfulfilled wishes of Korean reunification in this time of redefinition of the global order. While few began to engage in the process of family reunification through the channels of the North Korean government system and its unilateral arrangements with selected overseas private mediators,<sup>4</sup> heavy burdens and responsibilities are placed on individuals and participating parties who pursue the trail of home-

<sup>2</sup>Dispersions of Chinese families, Cuban families, Southeast Asian families, East European families including Soviet Jewry in recent decades.

<sup>3</sup>North Korea has chosen an informal network system including Rev. T. G. Hong in Los Angeles, USA and Mr. C. R. Chung in Toronto, Canada to facilitate visitation for Koreans in North America.

<sup>4</sup>According to D. Kim (1992), two private organizations (see Footnote 3) in North America have assisted Koreans overseas in cooperation with the Committee for Aid to Koreans Abroad in Pyongyang to find and/or visit their separated family members in North Korea. These organizations have assisted 6,000 and 4,000 Koreans respectively in recent years.

coming and searching for kin.

The purposes of this article are twofold: (1) to examine the issues associated with the impact of prolonged separation on divided Korean families from intergenerational perspectives, and (2) to propose the agenda for social reconstruction from social welfare perspectives with special consideration given to psychosocial dimensions of healing and global network building processes. The data are primarily based on analysis of case materials, interviews, and literature review. The absence of both longitudinal and cross-sectional empirical studies on the impact of prolonged separation of divided Korean families limit the scope of this inquiry.

## ISSUES OF DIVIDED KOREAN FAMILIES

### *Definition, Scope and Meaning of Divided Families*

Divided families are referred to here as those family members whose kin are separated, lost, or dispersed under the tragic circumstances of national division and disaster. The term, divided, is used interchangeably with separated or dispersed. Lee (1985a, pp. 4-5) defines "the separated family" from a sociological perspective as "the direct lineal family such as parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, grandchildren, and first cousins who have been separated or divided in the process of national disaster such as a seizure of national sovereignty by a foreign power, national division, or war."

Kim and Chee (1983, p. 8), upon review of legal perspectives on dispersed families, first examined the scope of families, and then elaborated various aspects of dispersed families in terms of location, period, and causes. Although there were variations in the definitions of families from country to country, and from one circumstance to another, the basic unit of family in general consists of: (1) husbands and wives, (2) parents and children, (3) grandparents and grandchildren, and (4) brothers and sisters. For instance, experts on international humanitarian law claim that the family should include: husbands and wives, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, and their spouses.

The term, "dispersed" denotes distress or even despair as those dispersed families are often "prevented from returning to their home despite their wishes to return home" (Kim and Chee 1983, p. 10). From the biopsychosocial perspectives of family therapy, the family emotional system often includes both multigenerational and extended family members who contribute to the continuity of shared culture, genetic endowments, identity formation, cultiva-

tion of social networks, emotional channels, and many other aspects of human resource development (Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark 1973; Bowen 1978; Framo 1976). Family researchers have also formulated theoretical propositions to understand the psychosocial impact of grief, loss, and traumatic experiences associated with war, torture, and family separation (Bowlby 1961; Genovese 1992; Haley 1963; Kerr and Bowen 1988; Krupp 1965). The implication for mental health for those dispersed family members over the two generational period (1945-1992) is far beyond the scope of this paper.

### *Historical Backgrounds and Demographic Characteristics*

When the military demarcation line was initially drawn on the 38th parallel by the United Nations Commander-in-Chief on September 2, 1945, it divided Korea into South and North. This division was reestablished in the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953 when the Korean War was halted, thus creating the estimated 10 million family members divided, separated or dispersed not only into divided South and North Koreas, but also, subsequently, into many different foreign countries (Kim & Chee 1983). The causes of family dispersal may vary, but the majority of dispersed Korean families were divided under the calamities of war disaster, both in the political and economic senses. Historically, the precursory conditions under which Korean families were dispersed predate the above as witnessed during the harsh Japanese colonial period, 1910-1945 (Chee 1989; Kim and Chee 1983; Korean Red Cross 1976).

Although it is not easy to establish the exact categorical accounts of all those missing and dispersed family members, the following statistics (Table 1) show the scope of the North Korean Refugee population. Based on the estimated total number of the refugees (5,143,000), South Korean government officials project that at least ten million Koreans are affected by the division of the nation (Korean Red Cross 1976, p. 85).

The great majority of these refugees came down south with hopes and promises to return home as soon as the war was over. Among them were those separated from their migrating family members, those lost on the refugee trails, those who came alone, or those who left their elderly parents, wives, children, siblings, or other close relatives behind (Korean Red Cross 1976, p. 92). Associated with the war, the human losses and damages that occurred during the three year period, June 25, 1950~July 27, 1953, were tremendous as shown in Table 2.

Kim (1992) found from his survey of 208 Korean immigrants residing in the U.S. (N = 134) and Canada (N = 74), who have been to North Korea during the five year period of 1987-1991, that the majority (83.0%) of respon-

**TABLE 1. REFUGEES DISPERSED FROM NORTH KOREA BY THEIR HOME PROVINCE AND CURRENT RESIDENCE AREAS, 1976\***

Home Province in N. Korea	No. of Refugees
Hwanghye	1,364,000
Pyong-Nam	1,132,900
Pyong-Buk	843,200
Ham-Nam	1,205,600
Ham-Buk	596,700
TOTAL	5,143,000
Current Residence in S. Korea	No. of Refugees
Seoul	1,314,000
Busan	600,400
Kyonggi	636,900
Kangwon	545,000
Chung-Buk	166,600
Chung-Nam	1,318,200
Kyung-Buk	438,100
Kyung-Nam	450,400
Cheju	16,700

\*Reconstructed from Table 7 in *White Paper on the Separated Korean Families* published by the Korean Red Cross (1976, p. 85).

**TABLE 2. CIVILIAN CASUALTIES DURING THE KOREAN WAR**

Types of Casualty	No. of Persons
Dead	224,663
Expelled	128,926
Wounded	229,625
Kidnapped	84,532
Missing	303,212
TOTAL	890,958

Source: Korean Red Cross (1976, p. 77, Table 6).

dents were males and over 50% had left their homes in 1950 when the war started. The median age was 62 years old. The primary reasons given for family separation include:

- Brief refuge during fighting (41.7%),
- Voluntary escape to South (33.0%),
- Voluntary escape to North (6.4%),
- For study (6.0%),
- Kidnapped (3.7%),
- To find spouse (2.3%),
- Lost on the road (2.3%),
- Drafted to army (2.3%),
- Prisoner of war (1.8), and
- Road closed (0.5%).

It is indeed a human tragedy that, over a span of 40 years, one fifth of entire Korean families remain still divided and their fundamental human rights of family reunion have been violated under the paranoia of cold war. The divided families living in both South and North Korea still cannot write, call, or visit each other. Kim's (1992, p. 23, Table 3) study reveals that even among those who have been able to initiate family reunion through third

TABLE 3. LIST OF CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAMILY SEPARATION AND REUNION

Case No.	Descriptive Characteristics	Data Source
1	The Man Who Left Behind His Wife and Youngest Child	Korean Red Cross (1976)
2	The Wife Whose Husband Was Kidnapped	Korean Red Cross (1976)
3	The Dramatic Meeting Between Daughter and Father Under an Unusual Circumstance	Newspaper
4	Telephone Contact Between the Separated Brothers and Sisters	Newspaper
5	The Man Who Observed Ceremonial Burnt Offerings for the Deceased Parents at <i>Ch'usok</i> Holiday	Personal Interview
6	Memories Are Fading Away In Longing for Husband	Korean Red Cross (1976)
7	Telephone Contact between Brothers in South and North Korea	Newspaper
8	Death Upon Visiting: Voyage of No Return	Newspaper
9	The Son Who Fulfilled the Wishes of His Deceased Father	Personal Interview
10	The Couple Who Renewed Kinship Network in the North	Personal Interview
11	A Lone Man Whose 60th Birthday Is Void of Joy	Personal Interview
12	Three Days Still Have Not Passed for the Millions	Chung (1990)

countries in recent years, the fear of harm to family in North or in South, and political exploitation were the chief reasons why they had delayed their search. Other reasons included legal violations of immigrant countries and not knowing where and how to find family. Lee (1990) found that one out of five Korean American families ( $N = 50$ ) attending a church in the Midwest U.S.A. was a dispersed person. Only three were able to visit their relatives in North Korea after many years of struggle.

### *Case Illustrations of Family Separations*

Twelve case examples are presented here to illustrate many unresolved issues of family separation and to assess the nature of psychosocial stresses associated with prolonged separation and intergenerational discontinuity, as well as the nature of newly emerging issues that are currently encountered in family reunion efforts. The following Table 3 shows the nature of separation illustrated in the case presentation.

#### *Case One: The Man Who Left Behind His Wife and Youngest Child*

Rev. Y., at age 55, left his wife and a 3-year-old youngest son home when his two children and he took refuge down South during the military retreat of January 4, 1951. He promised his wife that he would come back home when the war ended. Twenty years have passed by in 1971 with his promise still being unfulfilled. A letter written in 1971 contained the following:

- An unfulfilled promise of return to his wife,
- Recollection of the situation at departure,
- Imagination about the growth of his youngest child,
- Introduction of his current life situation,
- Continuous prayer for the family reunion,
- Request for current family pictures,
- Self appeasement and promise, and
- Reassurance of keeping up with mutual commitment.

Twenty years have altered the family configuration as depicted in the following genogram (Figure 1) which shows the cutoff of two households, before and after the family separation.

#### *Case Two: The Wife Whose Husband Was Kidnapped*

This is the case which involves the head of household being kidnapped to the North by the People's Soldiers on July 1, 1950. He is a noted scholar in literature. His wife expresses her painful sorrow in an open letter addressed to her kidnapped husband which appeared in a Korean newspaper (Korea

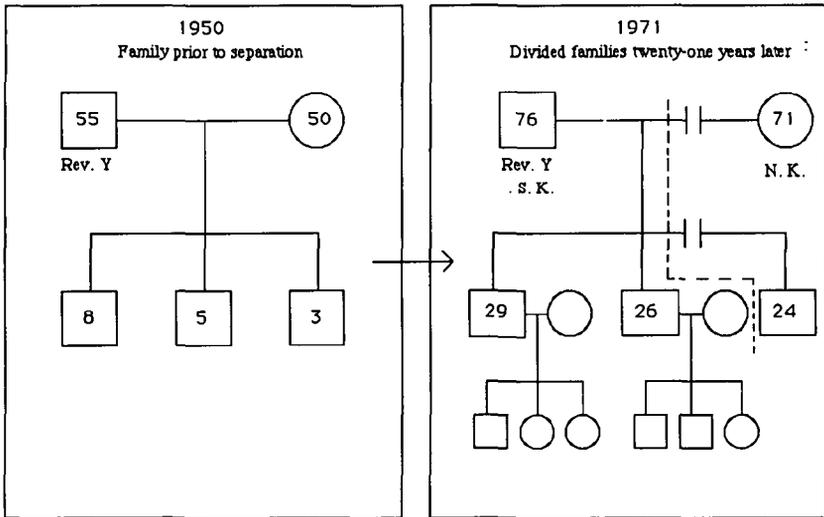


FIGURE 1. GENOGRAMS OF REV. Y'S FAMILIES BEFORE AND AFTER SEPARATION

Red Cross 1976, p.23):

I am already an 80-year-old lady, too.  
 I wish I could see your face  
 even once before I close my eyes at death.

The contents of her letter had: ecstasy in hope of reunion, concern for his health, family news update, remembrance of his appetites, and prayer for reunion. Figure 2 shows the family life cycle of the family, before and after

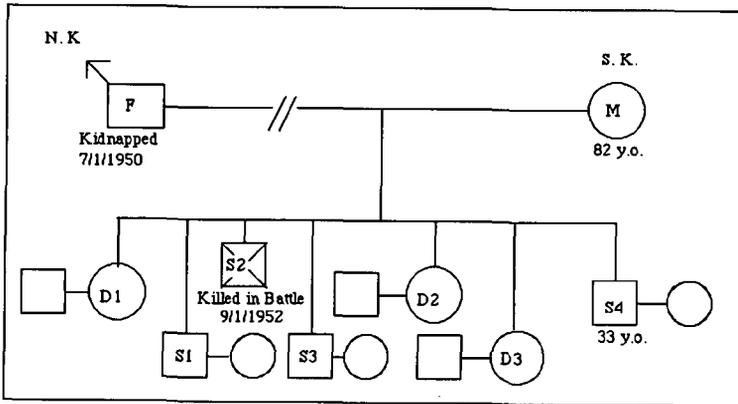


FIGURE 2. GENOGRAM OF THE KIDNAPPED FAMILY

the kidnapping.

*Case Three: The Dramatic Meeting Between Daughter and Father Under An Unusual Circumstance*

This is the case when a divided parent and a child had a miraculous rendezvous in a third country. On the occasion of the 1964 Tokyo Winter Olympics, the daughter was participating as one of the North Korean champions, and her father who learned about her identity flew to Tokyo to meet her from South Korea. Her father fled South at the outbreak of war leaving her, her mother and two other younger ones behind. They had a 40-minute rendezvous which was allowed them. The newspaper reporter made the following observation from what took place between them during their brief encounter:

- Emotional eruption triggered by outburst of tears and crying,
- Expressing determination to work toward a more permanent family reunion,
- Advice for maintaining good health,
- Asking about family regards,
- Inquiry on the burial of the deceased grandfather.

*Case Four: A Brief Telephone Contact Between the Separated Brother and Sister*

Like the previous case, this case depicts the episode of sibling contact via the international telephone system on the occasion of the 1971 Winter Olympic at Sapporo, Japan. A North Korean team member was led to contacting her eldest brother who got separated from his family during the war. Her eldest brother is married to a South Korean and has five children. His family of origin consists of the 78-year-old father, mother, aged 67 years, one brother, and two younger sisters. The sister whom he contacted is married to a Pyongyang University professor and has two children. Their telephone conversation, as reported in a newspaper, contains the following:

- Self introduction to each other,
- Confirmation of their parents' identity,
- Recollection of their early family life,
- Regards to family members and other relatives,
- Introduction of their own family members, and
- Appeal for another opportunity of family reunion.

Although such a surprise telephone contact between the divided sibling was brought about by a mediating newspaper agency, it was all too brief for the siblings to share many unspoken life passages of their past as it abruptly ended less than one hour.

*Case Five: The Man Who Observes Ceremonial Burnt Offerings for the Deceased Parents*

An artist, born in 1927, observes the rite of ancestral worship at every *Ch'usok* (Harvest Festival) since 1971. He prays for the unification of the divided motherland, reunion of his dispersed family members in South and North, and the spiritual well-being of his deceased ancestors. This ritual allows him to mourn his grief over the losses of his close relatives including his parents and grandparents, and unfulfilled wishes of those million dispersed Korean people who, like him, still long for reintegration of their relatives and countrymen. Among the overseas Koreans, like this man, many observe the rite of ancestral worship at *Ch'usok*, kindling candles of prayer to comfort the spirits of the deceased and to share their agony and guilt for their inability to take care of the burial sites of their ancestors or to perform their duties of filial piety.<sup>5</sup> Many are living in doubt and guilt without having the benefits of knowing whether or not their parents, spouses, children and other close kin are still alive or gone.

*Case Six: Memories Are Fading Away In Longing For Husband<sup>6</sup>*

A woman, born in 1911, a former designer prior to her refuge in the South, is giving up her hope for family reunion or to return to the native place of her childhood. She misses those yearned for places including the pond where she used to play as a child, the foods her mother used to cook for her including the fish of local catch, and the Yellow river, etc. She suffers from the feelings of guilt over those unfulfilled filial duties in taking care of her aged parents. Her cherished memories are now fading away, and she becomes desperate as she sees her wish being still unfulfilled.

*Case Seven: Telephone Contacts Between Brothers in the South and the North<sup>7</sup>*

Mr. B. M. Lee, 60 years old, a North Korean athletic team director, while staying in Beijing, China, made his first telephone contact with his two younger brothers who are living in South Korea, through the mediatory arrangement of a newspaper agency. This dramatic event made it possible for the

<sup>5</sup>Members of the Korean Assembly for Reunion of Separated Families, Chicago Branch observe similar ancestral homage during the *Ch'usok* Festivity.

<sup>6</sup>From "The Longing Essays for Homeland by 24 Dispersed Persons", Korean Red Cross (1976, p. 167).

<sup>7</sup>The *Chung-Ang Daily News* September 12, 1990.

separated brothers over 40 years to be reconnected. Their conversation, reported in the newspaper, reflects in deeply-seated emotional pains (*h'an*) felt by many dispersed family members whose internalized suffering needs the comforting opportunities of catharsis. The following excerpts contain poignant expressions of their grief, *h'an* over the loss of their mother who longed for family reunion without ever seeing her eldest son again, the one who remained in North Korea:

Is mother still alive?

She just passed away on this past January 14th...

This is what she said while still alive:

"If I had two more years,  
I could have seen my son" (you, brother)...

O, my God! I have to cry.

I failed to serve her  
with even a warm soup.

My chest is pounding so heavily  
that I might die dreadfully.

How could death take her  
without giving her a chance to see me?

O, what a remorseful thing on earth  
to deal with her unfulfilled wish!

The contents of these three brothers' dialogue had the following points:

- Confirmation of identity,
- Inquiry of parents' and in-laws' status, living or dead,
- Introduction of their own family members,
- Expression of sorrow over loss and separation, and
- Wishes for fulfilling their unfulfilled filial obligations.

*Case Eight: Death Upon Visiting: Voyage of No Return*<sup>8</sup>

The sudden death of Rev. K. Y. Kim from a heart attack while making his long awaited homage to North Korea has shattered people's minds everywhere, leaving many uneasy questions to be pondered upon. Rev. Kim, a 69-year-old pastor of a Korean immigrant church in Los Angeles, was able to make his first visit to North Korea to meet his separated family members, including his wife, 69 years old and his son, 43 years old who were living in Pyongyang. It was 50 years ago when he left his family during the war. His wife then was 29 years old like himself, and his son was only a 3-year-old toddler. He also left his parents and brother home. When he visited North

<sup>8</sup>The Korea Times Daily September 21, 1990, p. 6.

Korea, both of his parents were already buried in his hometown, Shinuiju. It was soon after his visit to his parents' burial site, he had a sudden heart attack and died at his brother's house on September 20th while his kin were watching on. Those four days of excitement in meeting his wife and son that he had waited for, 40 years, that long exile of forbidden family reunion, was too quickly ended with a voyage of no return. At the point of facing the lingering consequences of a devastating war again, the emotional excitement, and the accumulated physical fatigue and mental stress were thought to be contributory to his heart attack; what a tragedy that took away the rekindled hopes of Rev. Kim and his reunited family. What a sad end to the 14,600 days of their sustained prayers for this occasion of homage to happen.

The newspaper carried two pictures: one with his reunited wife, son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, and his brother's widowed wife; the other picture was of his own tomb, his widowed wife, son's family, and brother's widowed wife. What a paradoxical and yet mystic message these two contrasting pictures contained! A man of conviction at a crossroad of joy and sorrow completed, in his own way, a journey of no return.

*Case Nine: Son Who Fulfilled The Wishes of His Deceased Father*<sup>9</sup>

J. H. Kim is a young campus minister working in the Chicago area. He led a tour group composed of second generation youth of the dispersed Koreans to North Korea despite much apprehensive advice he had received from their parents. The occasion was the 13th World Students Celebration Assembly which was held recently in Pyongyang.

Since his father passed away without fulfilling his wish to reunite with his dispersed family in North Korea, J. H. Kim felt a sense of filial piety to carry out his father's wish. This trip was for him, as for others, an opportunity to connect his forgotten generation. Up until the moment he actually met his aunt, it was more thought than feeling that preoccupied him in this pursuit of meeting his relatives (his father's sister and her family). But when he saw her in resemblance of his own father, he felt instantly connected to her with warm feelings and began to appreciate this kinship tie which had not been exposed to him before. He is convinced, as result of his own experience during his visit to his fatherland, that the unification of divided Korean families must be rigorously pursued, not only by the first generation of divided families, but also, by the affected second generation like himself. The following excerpt from his report reflects such conviction:

<sup>9</sup>Personal interview with Rev. Kim and report on his visit to North Korea.

Those dispersed families must go  
in order to meet their own blood related kin.  
How long do they have to face  
denial of meeting their own relatives  
under the repression of anti-communism?

The young generation also need to go  
in order that they can better understand  
the pain of their parent generation.  
Moreover, they must go  
in order that the history of suffering be finalized,  
and the history of reunion be pursued.

*Case Ten: The Couple Who Renewed Kinship Network in North*<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Park and his wife in their early 60s are devoted Christians, and they own a small grocery business in a midwest city, U.S.A. When they left their relatives in North Korea at the outbreak of war, they were young adults. Through the help of Mr. Chung's organization in Toronto, Canada, their long held dreams of visitation to their homeland for reunion of their relatives came true in 1991 when they finally met many of them in North Korea. Their initial search through correspondence for their kin, took a couple of years with patience, persistence and hope. When Mr. P. first received a letter from his 80-year-old mother in North Korea on July 1, 1990, it made him emotionally choked and determined to visit her at whatever cost or consequences it might take before anything happened to his aged mother. A recent picture of Mr. Park's mother, two younger sisters, his brother and his wife and daughter made it even more real to them, rekindling hopes of family reunion. His mother's letter had the following contents:

- Her overwhelming joy over the news about the lost elder son being alive and well,
- Her burning wish to see him,
- Comments on the Party's protective role in contrast to the situation of his abandonment,
- Family news update,
- Urging him to return to his motherland,
- Emotionally overwhelming experience,
- Refrain from comments on his father.

Mr. P. and his wife who also found out about her relatives were able to meet them including his mother while visiting North Korea. Both fulfilled

<sup>10</sup>Personal Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Park on November 24, 1990.

their long held wishes of family reunion. Both claimed that their visit was not only meaningful in resolving their internal conflicts of guilt associated with failure in meeting their duties of filial piety, but also in overcoming their fear of political retaliation that might have been imposed on his relatives. Mr. P. fought against the People's Army when he got into the South Korean Marine Corp during the latter part of the war. He always feared the adverse effect of political retaliation on his family for his past history. This was an invaluable opportunity for him to repair some of the destitute fate of his own family in exile. Even though the cost of this visit was substantial, Mr. P. contends that the psychological benefits he was able to receive throughout this process far exceeded those monetary costs involved. The couple closed the shop for a month and got substantial support from their four grown-up children and friends for this very important homage journey to be carried out at the peak of their life cycle.

The following points are outlined as the benefits of the Park couple's recent voyage to their homeland:

- Relief from his fear of persecution,
- Sense of fulfillment in carrying out their lifelong wishes of family reunion,
- Resolution of his sense of guilt,
- Satisfaction in making contributions to increase their life quality,
- Sense of mission to assist others to achieve similar fulfillment,
- Renewed sense of hope for national reunification,
- Revision of biases and misconceptions about North Korea.

He even disclosed his desire to bring his mother to the U.S. if the diplomatic relations between North Korea and the United States is normalized as in the case of the People's Republic of China.

*Case Elven: A Lone Man Whose 60th Birthday Is Void of Joy*<sup>11</sup>

Mr. G is a senior information analyst in the headquarters office of a large insurance company in a Midwest city. He is happily married to a South Korean wife whose brother and his family are living nearby. His wife has three other siblings and their families living in Seoul. They have two grown-up daughters, and Mr. G. is particularly proud of their outstanding academic accomplishments. Both Mr. and Mrs. G. attend a local Korean church where they have drawn their emotional comfort through a supportive network of Christian fellowships. Lately, he began encountering conflicts with church politics and felt angry toward a divisive nature of authority. Perhaps his anger

<sup>11</sup>Personal Interview, in April 1992.

has a deeper root than his recent experience with a local church, the engulfing waves of his rage might have originated from the winds of war and ideological tyrannies that had afflicted many other souls like him.

Despite the fact that he has succeeded and has many blessings of comfortable living in a comfortable environment in the U.S. as an immigrant, Mr. G. could not hide his deep seated feeling of loneliness and internal turmoil associated with his uprootedness and prolonged separation from his family of origin. He left his family and home in North Korea during the war, and prior to his study abroad in the U.S. in 1960, his life was interwoven with struggles for existence, as it was with many other dispersed people in those days. On his 60th birthday, Mr. G. felt void of joy reflecting on the tormenting moments of leaving his parents and siblings, his forty years' lonesome journey, and still an unsettled life task of reuniting with his own relatives in North Korea.

*Case Twelve: Three Days Have Not Passed For the Millions*

D. K. Chung is a successful medical doctor practicing in Long Beach, California, and authored a book, *Three Day Promise* (Chung 1990). His story of the Korean War and its impact on him, his dispersed family, relatives and countless others has touched many people's emotions like a strong volcanic eruption. KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) Channel 2 TV has broadcast in South Korea the drama made of his book fifty times (every Tuesday and Thursday) in Korea. The drama was later telecast over in the Los Angeles and Chicago areas.

Dr. Chung was born as an eldest son to his family on February 6, 1932 at Juwool, south Hamkyung province. The Korean War broke out when he was junior at the Chungjin Medical School. He was forced to join the People's Army, but instead, he hid himself for a while and joined the south bound refugees. It was during the retreat period of 1951 when he bid a tearful goodbye to his mother and youngest sister who begged him not to leave them. But he promised them that he would return home within 3 days. The three day promise took him 33 years to keep when he visited North Korea to meet his divided family in 1983. Then, his mother had already passed away and one of his sisters living in Pyongyang told him about how much he was missed by their mother who used to keep his spoon on dining table and to place a rice bowl under blanket to keep it warm. This story made him cry out. His sorrow reached at its peak when he kneeled down in front of his mother's burial site. The following excerpt (Chung 1990, pp. 316-317) carries the flood of tears and grief as he mourned:

“O, mother! It was impossible to keep  
 my three day promise of return,  
 but, I came back to you even this late.  
 And I am now in your bosom, don't you see?  
 Why won't you respond to me?  
 Mother, please answer me, please...”

His agonizing monologue continued. He asked for her forgiveness over his broken filial piety, and tried to tell her about how strongly he stood against the toils of his hardship for the past thirty-three years, and how much he felt her love all along. Unlike Dr. Chung who finally kept his “three day promise” through his recent visit to N. K. after 33 years of his painful waiting, there must be numerous people who still hope to fulfill their unkept “three day promises,” too.

#### *Assessment of Prolonged Impact on Divided Families From the Intergenerational Perspective*

As illustrated in the forgoing case descriptions, the impact of prolonged family separation on mental health is profound. Several issues are discerned here from an intergenerational perspective.

#### *The First Generation*

Among the multiple issues facing the first generation of divided Korean family members, the most salient issues including (1) uprootedness, loss and mourning, (2) deprived resources, (3) psychological stresses, (4) moral and ethical dilemma, and (5) unfulfilled wished, are discussed here.

*Uprootedness, Loss, and Mourning.* For those who are forced to leave their family, friends, relatives, home and native land under the most unbearable circumstances of war, political exploitation, and other calamities, they often experience uprootedness in their foreign environment. Levy-Warren (1987, p. 311) posits that those who have avoided mourning over their cultural loss may have never left their culture of origin as they “had never allowed (themselves) to leave.” Many Koreans overseas immigrants encounter a host of acculturation stresses, cultural and social alienation, and sense of marginality. Similar experiences are shared by many other types of dispersed people like refugees, immigrants, captives, and the kidnapped; their current living situations are regarded transitory as depicted in the following poem:<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>“The Shadow,” poem by Yu Chae-Young in Korean Red Cross (1976).

For those who left their homes in the North,  
leaving home is not a fact of the past,  
but something that is going on now.  
That fact will become a past only  
when the road back home is open again  
or when I die and my consciousness dies with me too.  
So long as the road home is not open and I am alive,  
the fact of going home will be an eternal present  
that can never be buried in the past.

Such a tenuous position undermines their assimilation into new environments. Maintaining their dual sense of realities, dispersed people often experience marginality, identity crises, and cultural discontinuity leading to a sense of alienation. It is not surprising to note that many of the former refugees continue emigrating to the U.S. and Canada (Chung 1990; Lee 1985b). For those refugee generations who have moved from one culture to another, it becomes necessary that the mourning process be completed by effectively recalling various aspects of the lost culture and allowing themselves to engage more fully in the culture in which they plan to live (Levy-Warren 1987, pp. 310-311).

*Deprived Resources.* Not having significant others, including immediate family members, extended kin, childhood friends and teachers, many of the dispersed members suffer from a deprived source of support systems — emotional, social, cultural, and economic. The extended family network in the Korean culture brings a host of needed resources aiding family members to meet both developmental and situational needs to share a common history and group identity, to provide recognition to their success, to buffer adjustment difficulties, and to access information vital to problem-solving and community building processes. Absence of such kinship network and extended family resources deprives the sense of wholeness and deflates collective memory banks from which are drawn the rites of passage and communal efforts which enrich family traditions and communal cohesiveness.

*Heightened Sense of Guilt and Fear of Retaliation.* As were obvious in the foregoing case illustrations, prolonged family separation has caused multiple psychological injuries to many individuals who have been silently suffering from a complex emotional mix of guilt, fear, anger, grief and anxiety as their fundamental human rights of family reunion have been denied over so long that their hopes and desires for restitution of filial piety continuously be shielded by harsh realities of the political seesaws between conflictual principalities. Having failed to keep their promises to return, many young sons, husbands, brothers, and fathers who left their elderly parents or their wives

with minor children and other siblings and relatives behind, continue to suffer as they do not know whereabouts of their surviving kins, or worry about consequences of political retaliations of their family members by either sides, North or South. It is indeed a tragedy that forty and some odd years have been passing by without relieving multitudes of dispersed people from their guilt, anxiety, fear and desperations. They still harbor a heightened emotionality of *h'an* or suppression of suffering, even symptoms of post traumatic stress disorders. Their inability to fulfill familial obligations including ancestral worship and burial site visitations, care for the elderly, or maintain kinship ties, only exacerbates their sense of helplessness and hopelessness.

Why does it take so long to remedy the unhealed wounds? The following excerpt reflects family trauma, psychological torture for fear of political persecution over an escaped son:

Even if I knew you were alive,  
I couldn't bury the malignant souls without you...  
I removed your name from the family register, too.  
I reported you dead.  
The surviving ones should go on living... (Lee, H. 1985a, p. 16).

More recent traumatic experiences that the Southeast Asian refugees have been subjected to during and after the Viet Nam Conflict remind us of similar experiences that the refugees and victims of the Korean Conflict must have in terms of the psychological impact of war trauma and tortures. Over 700,000 refugees from Southeast Asia have settled in the U.S. Mollica and others (1987) report that serious multiple traumas including torture, serious emotional distress associated with the escape, refugee camp and resettlement experiences is not uncommon to detect among those refugees. Traumatic experiences included: deprivation, physical injuries or torture, incarceration or indoctrination, and witnessing killings or torture. Other issues pertaining to the widows, orphans, kidnapped, the disabled, rape and sexual abuse victims have left permanent scars and wounds to millions of innocent people. Lee (1985b) points out that the residual effects of war generated social pathology need to be more fully studied as they continue to play a significant role in shaping the patterns of personality development and family relations.

*Moral Binding and Ethical Dilemmas.* Although few still remain loyal to their matrimonial vows despite of such prolonged involuntary separations from the external division of the country, many have found it necessary to impose on their secondary homes and families unrealized expectations and broken hopes of return and unforeseeable reunification. Men, more than women, have sought solutions to their solitude through remarriage. Many had to resort to disguise their identification associated with refugee status to avoid political

hassles. On the other hand, those women who have maintained fidelity over nearly half a century show their sympathy over those who have broken their chastity. These might forgo any sense of betrayal in their fading years of life, or if not, really how much can any one claim by revenge of lawsuits? And yet, the wells of affection that have been covered over could be tapped again for those who still wish to fulfill their unfulfilled wishes and desires. Moral obligations may still bind those who value traditional role expectations of filial piety transcending the gulf of time and space of over forty years.

I will be your wife again when the country is reunified, you see.  
That's right. The first one is the best one, after all.  
So I'm going to leave this husband of our separation  
and I hope you'll stop that extramarital affair in separation, too...  
(Lee H. 1985a, p. 16)

Many incomplete issues are bound to haunt these people, disturbing their dreams, reminiscences, and are even carried to their deathbeds. Unfulfilled filial piety is a source of guilt for many who are supposed to carry out family obligations, but failed to do so. In the following letter dated July 1, 1990 from the North, the mother who found her eldest son alive in the U.S. wrote:

My dear son: ...You have abandoned me but the country has been benevolent in taking care of our family. ...My son, come back to your country and to the bosom of your mother...<sup>13</sup>

The son wishes to bring his mother to where he has settled when the diplomatic relations between the North and the U.S. become normalized, to fulfill his delayed filial piety even though it has taken such a long agonizing period, and his own age is now reaching into the 60s.

*Unfulfilled Wishes.* Even if one may appear free from mental distresses, a recent nationwide mass media campaign of family reunification in search of dispersed Koreans clearly detected a sign of massive distresses stemming from many unhealed scars of WWII and Korean Conflicts. The event made the nation become aware of the gravity of those unresolved grief, losses, and bereavements one must deal with constructively. The opportunities to express their inner feelings and to actively engage in the search for the reunification of their dispersed families and relatives were welcomed by those who saw the merit in bridging the emotional gulf created by the dehumanization of political impasse in dealing with fundamental human rights of family unification.

During 1974 and 1976, the *Korea Daily* newspaper agency initiated identification of missing family members caused by the division of the nation which

<sup>13</sup>See Case Ten and Footnote 10 herein for cross-references.

contributed to raising national conscience toward realization of the suppressed emotionality of its people's grief, agony and distress. Soon followed by a nationwide TV and radio campaign (KBS) in 1983 which resulted in actively searching for tens of thousands of families across the South peninsula and beyond. A sociological analysis of such a campaign (Lee, H. 1985a) indicates that of 3,499 searchers, 62.6% were men. In D. Kim's (1992) study of 228 recent visitors to the North, 79.7% were male. It is suggested that many of them fled to the South to avoid the indoctrination of communist military camps and remained silently in fear of political retaliation by revealing the lives of their separated family members (Lee, H. 1985b). The majority (82.3%) of the participants in this campaign were between ages, 59 and 20 or younger during January, 1974 and March, 1976. The remaining 12% were in their 60s and over. Many of the elder generations are gone by now without fulfilling their deep seated wishes and desires of family reunion.

*Three Days Promise* (Chung 1990) depicts a secondary solution to unfulfilled wishes of many fading generations of dispersed families in a sad saga of human misery when its author's best friend requested in his will that he carry his ashes to the North to dispose them on his native land. As the majority of the first generation of the young adult Korean War refugees have reached their 70s, it is understandable why many of them become distressfully desperate at the end of their life cycle. An organization for promoting family reunification for the ten million divided families found that the youngest applicant was 76 years old when the selection for the Panmunjom (DMZ) tour group was limited to 104 people. There were 750 applicants aged 70 and above.<sup>14</sup> It is common and only natural for them to find ways to realize their unfulfilled wishes even through emigration to the U.S. and Canada if such voyages shorten their delay of a long awaited journey in search of their missing kin.

### *The Second Generation*

The impact of prolonged separation of first generation divided families spills over onto their succeeding generations. Issues of intergenerational discontinuity, emotional irregularity, and unfulfilled family obligations need to be studied for a comprehensive understanding of Korean family dynamics in the post Korean War era.

*Intergenerational Discontinuity.* The loss or absence of significant others including grandparents, aunts and uncles remains a major missing link for many divided families, first and second generations. The intergenerational linkage between grandparents and grandchildren serves not only as cultural continuity

<sup>14</sup>Korea Times Weekly on June 4, 1992, p. 10.

and role models but also as emotional buffers. The absence of grandparents creates an emotional vacuum as they often mediate intrafamilial and trans-generational affairs; they serve as matchmakers; they resolve family conflicts, give advices and serve other multiple roles. Grandparents often serve as surrogate parents and in the instance where they are absent, these additional role models are not readily available to the second or third generations. This may also provide them a less complete sense of security which one can draw from an extended family support system as illustrated in the following case.<sup>15</sup>

A 26-year-old grandson of dispersed grandparents decided not to get married. He observed that none of his married uncles desired to have offspring. He was the only third generation survivor from his paternal lineage. Kinship deprivation and social isolation became intensified when he came to study abroad. His sense of aloneness became increasingly acute.

As many of the first refugee generation have emigrated to the North America and procreated the second generation children in culturally dissimilar environments, losses are doubled as their children become assimilated into the host society. Transmitting their traditional family customs and culture to their third generation as grandparents may become harder as intergenerational derailments may have likely occurred in the processes of being refugeeed and immigrating. Value conflicts, loyalty disputes, and identity diffusion issues may not be uniquely tied to these population groups, but they heavily press on the families of secondary migrations across the border of the 38th parallel, and the Pacific Ocean.

*Emotional irregularities.* Recently, the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) were recognized as a psychiatric disorder that requires clinical attention. Many traumatized individuals who experienced war hysteria, torture, and other life threatening events suffer from a host of physical, psychological and social malaises over a prolonged period of time as delayed reactions. Families of PTSD victims often are not aware of the emotional irregularities exhibited by their first generation refugee adults. As portrayed in the *Three Day Promise* (Chung 1990), sudden grief reactions to a triggered memory of painful events such as loss of combat comrades, a vision of his mother, etc. are so erratic that people surrounding him find it difficult to relate to him. The second generation of refugee families may become ambivalent about their parents' guilt, their restlessness, and unsettledness affected by losses and separation anxiety. The following case<sup>16</sup> illustrates these points:

<sup>15</sup>Personal interview with a student enrolled at Ohio State University, 1989.

<sup>16</sup>This was a case where professional consultation was made to ease the family's distress.

Woo became a young refugee from the North during the Korean Conflict. He came to the U.S. to study and got married to a South Korean woman who provided him a substitute family and he is married to her for 25 years. As his first daughter, June, a college junior, began expressing her dispute against parental control over her decision-making on the issue of emancipation, family conflicts flared up. On the surface it appeared to be more of a developmental issue common to the launching stage of family development. His daughter's impending separation from the nest was extremely painful. His overreaction could be only understood from a reference point of his unresolved grief, reactivated at the crossroad of his daughter's emancipation. He even verbally threatened to cut her off from the family tie, if she insisted to leave him and family in her own way. The situation was exacerbated by recent deaths in his wife's family. It was obvious that Mr. Woo had never resolved his own grief over the losses of his own family as a young boy and his deep seated guilt in leaving his parents behind during the War as a refugee. June, 21 years old, a bright and independent person capable of handling her own decisions, could not nearly understand the tempest of her father's emotionality in objecting to her pursuit of independence — educational and career goals away from her family, appropriate to her own age and development. To the end, Woo and his family needed professional consultation in healing his old emotional wounds to let his daughter grow into her own social orbit.

*Unfulfilled Family Obligations.* Due to delaying the national and international solutions to the divided family issues, nearly ten million Korean families still suffer from denial of their solemn human rights of family unification and fulfilling their familial duties of filial piety over four decades. This tragic, *h'anful* human condition should not be allowed to continue. The cumulative effects of political impasse in dealing with divided families must be uplifted from their disturbing consequences. They are already falling upon the innocent succeeding generations of the populations. When the ghosts of foreparents' unfulfilled wishes, wills of dying parents, and the internal and external pressures of seeking divided kin are surmounted, they have far-reaching implications for the rest of Korean families to work on for years to come.

As illustrated in Case Nine where Rev. K. who took a group of second generation dispersed Korean immigrant families to visit North Korea, he carried out his father's unfulfilled wish, and he met his paternal aunt. His experience of kinship made him convinced to advocate for importance of intergenerational bridges that have been cut off so long: "The young generation also need to go in order that they can better understand the pain of their parent generation. Moreover, they must go in order that the history of suffering be finalized, and the history of reunion be ensued," he wrote.

## AGENDA FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

What steps are required by the affected nations, the divided families, those concerned professionals in solving political impasse, human sufferings, and social barriers toward a more humanized society? Kim (1992, pp. 6-7) critically observed the political impasse of both governments in handling the unification issues of dispersed families: "On both sides of Korea, any individual attempt to contact families on the other side, let alone to visit with them, is a crime punishable by national security laws. The separated family issue has been an exclusive government domain and politically exploited in the past 40 years." Despite the numerous efforts of the international Red Cross and South-North Korean Red Cross Talks, it has taken four decades for both governments of South and North Korea to agree upon an initial visitation schedule for those refugees in their final stage of the life cycle to have opportunities to visit North Korea in 1992. The number is set only for 100. The intended spirit of humanitarianism in resolving these issues of family reunification have not yielded much fruit (Kim and Chee 1983; Korean Red Cross 1976; Kim 1992). Kim and Chee (1983, p. 30) noted: "...but, the South and North talks which aimed at resolving reunification of divided families from humanitarian principles were pushed toward political issues, and consequently they failed to deal with this (pivotal) humanitarian issue. Due to unilateral withdrawal of the North delegates, the efforts to resolve reunification issues through the Red Cross became stalemated."

Hass (1984, p. 55) argues that when the pressure of family reunification diminishes due to aging factors of the first generation refugees, the unification issue will be less attitudinally urgent. He points out that conceptual framework has not been fully developed in mediating the issue, and that the issue of family reunion visits among members of the divided families, as a social lead, has been stalemated at high level negotiation. Similarly he gave four other reasons why there still exists pessimism with regard to a breakthrough on the Korean unification issue:

- 1) The rising of new generations which has lived under divided rules longer than under unified rule;
- 2) Southerners differ from Northerners as the former tend to legitimize division rather than unification;
- 3) the lack of cordiality that characterized official communications between North and South; and
- 4) the belief that states back information for political reasons in public while opposing such efforts in private as contrary to the status quo.

Chung (1989, p. 2) provides an economic model to ease intra-Korean tensions and to promote economic cooperation which would reinforce positive attitudes toward a common goal, but omits humanitarian perspectives on family reunification issues in his proposal:

Intra-Korean economic cooperation would contribute to tension-reduction in two major ways. First, economic cooperation through exchange of goods as well as technology and managerial know-how would reduce the tension-creating disparity in economic performance and welfare and either minimize or make obsolete the concept of an economic race. Second, economic cooperation entails mutual personal contact between the two parties. If carried out successfully over a sufficient time, these contacts would build confidence, trust, and cooperative spirits which could spill over to political or politically sensitive areas of inter-Korean relations. Interlocking the mutual welfare of the two Koreas and mutual contacts in a suitable organizational structure that must be devised to set policies and manage day-to-day operations of intra-Korean economic cooperation would greatly foster such trust and reinforce positive attitudes toward a common goal and contribute toward reducing tensions.

The Liberation Day Address delivered by President Roh Tae-Woo on August 15, 1989 (*Korea Observer*, 1989, pp. 395-405) stressed human rights and universal values, but without direct reference to the urgency of family reunification for 10 million Koreans. However, in the wake of a new global order following the end of the cold war, and the recent development of cooperative negotiations between South and North, there appear to be much brighter signs of reconciliation as implied by the December 13, 1991 Agreement On Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchange and Cooperation between South and North Korea with regard to dispersed families.<sup>17</sup> It has taken four decades for both governments to agree upon the initial visitation schedule for those refugees who are reaching their final stage of the life cycle, to have opportunities to visit North Korea on August 15, 1992. The number is set only for 100. It is hoped that this symbolic beginning sets a stage for more constructive reunification works to follow, firstly accommodating the needs of millions of other dispersed families so that they can be assisted in healing their emotional wounds and rebuilding their intra-family relations.

Based on the foregoing case illustrations, it is not too difficult to discern some salient issues confronting divided families in terms of psychological impact, intergenerational family discontinuity, intra-ethnic relations, and

<sup>17</sup>Article 18 contains: Both parties shall permit free correspondence, reunions, and visits between family members and other relatives dispersed south and north, shall promote the reconciliation of divided families on their own and shall take measures to resolve other humanitarian issues (Kim, D. 1992, p. 8).

national and global implications for social reconstruction of divided families and nations. As noted in D. Kim's (1992) study, there have been over 4,000 persons who have arranged to seek their divided families and kin through a Toronto based organization since 1980, and 6,000 through a Los Angeles-based organization since 1987, with cooperative assistances from a semi-government agency, the Committee for Aid to Koreans Abroad in Pyongyang, North Korea. In the D. Kim's (1992) study, it was found that the majority of those who have visited the North felt that the voyage was beneficial as it aided in relieving them from a long-held melancholic nostalgia. Meeting their families after 40 years of separation was, understandably, one of the most emotionally overwhelming experiences for them to bear. A common complaint, however, was that their visits were too short and that they wished more privacy and freedom. If several scenes from the "Three Day Promise" TV show are to be treated as true-to-life, it is rather unfortunate that humanitarian pursuits of family reunification efforts had to be undertaken with exterior conditions of possible governmental propaganda or politically motivated strategies. Having their photos taken and their painful encounters with kin being watched by public figures, for instance, may hinder their processes of healing and reconciliation among dispersed kin.

So long have Korean refugees been subjected to paranoiac conditions of torture, exploitation, and many other forms of inhuman treatment from either sides since the division of the nation, it requires an extremely sensitive and careful approach for those authorities or assisting agency staffs to engage in the facilitative works of family reunification, however good intentions they pronounce. The accumulated experiences of U.S. mental health teams in assisting returnees and their families of those missing in action and prisoners of war suggest that preparatory assessment, debriefing processes, and ongoing support services are proven to be effective in minimizing stresses and trauma-associated disorders. H. Lee (1985b, p. 263) states this point poignantly:

Under this pathetic reality where the succeeding generations are burdened with suffering and revenge accumulated from various inhuman experiences individual family members had undergone during the harsh era of national division, one must find creative and positive ways to heal their wounds and to overcome their revenge.

As pointed out by H. Lee (1985b), women's conditions during the war and their impact on the current status of women's reconstructive movements need further investigation for a more comprehensive understanding towards humanization of Korean society. Moeller (1989) provides a feminist perspective in reviewing women's experiences during the reconstruction era of Germany. More sensitive public policy developments in rebuilding Korean families

should be advanced beyond mere legalization or bureaucratization of social services for needy families. Empowerment of Korean women in uplifting their tormented *h'an* of inequality and harsh exploitation need to be advocated, and furthermore, their creative participation in healing and reconciliation should be actively enlisted during the era of social reconstruction.

The respondents (92.9%) in D. Kim's (1992) study strongly agreed to a statement that the first priority in the anticipated movement towards Korean unification should be on *an expeditionary resolution of family reunification issues*. Since the majority of affected divided families reside in South and North Korea, it is much desirable that national unification efforts be proceeded by social reconstruction of divided families to realize the principle of Universal Declaration of Human Rights in terms of "freedom of movement and residence, the right to leave and the right to return,"<sup>18</sup> guided by Red Cross agreements on reunification procedures of dispersed families. The respondents wishfully projected between 1993 and 1995 that the procedures be followed in incremental steps from finding family's whereabouts, letter exchange, exchange of packages, limited meetings, guided group visits, free visitation, and finally, to resettlement (Kim, D. 1992, p. 17).

The author strongly proposes that within the next two to three years, a family reunification bureau and its regional centers be established in Panmunjom and in every province of the South and the North and designated overseas locations including Japan, China, U.S.A., Canada, Switzerland and Russia to carry out the mandates of joint agreements between the South and the North under the guidance of international and national Red Cross agreements. Such undertaking should be proceeded by national and international hearings and supported by institutional research efforts. Various related issues and needs must be comprehensively and systematically assessed, analyzed, and reviewed in the course of this most pious and historical undertaking in the new era of global social order as a promising showcase to the rest of global societies to follow. Although official sanctions, endorsements, and support must come from both governments, the United Nations, the Red Cross, supportive nations and related organizations, the mission must be coordinated and governed under the principle of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the light of past political impasse, the gravity of human suffering and the multiplicity of related issues in resolving multi-dimensional complexities of psychosocial, legal, economic and political concerns, it is important that the nature of the governing body by trustworthy,

<sup>18</sup>United Nations Document, General Assembly Resolution III: 217 (December 10, 1948), in Kim and Chee (1985, p. 15). Also, see M. Kim (1989).

free from exploitation of political, or business sectors from which these families should be emancipated at all costs. The staffing of proposed organizations and services needs to be carefully sought out on the basis of mission-fit qualifications, backgrounds, value orientation, technical competence, and commitment to the welfare of dispersed families. Volunteers can be trained to assist the entire operation at various stages of its developments. The first resources and their management need to be adequately maintained to support the operation at all levels. Support — fiscal, technical, personal and other forms — will be needed from both governments, corporations and voluntary organizations as well as individual donors and beneficiaries.

Healing many forms of emotional scars and resolving both legal and ethical dilemmas bearing of those dispersed members and their related kin call for active participation of empathetic practitioners from human service professions including social work, psychology, ministry, law, nursing, psychiatry, family therapists, and other related human service professionals. No any single profession is equipped to undertake such a complex human venture. Sociological and anthropological research experts can aid the helping professionals to incorporate micro and macro perspectives of family relations and structures, migration, crosscultural adaptations, and other related issues of dealing with filial piety, death and dying, and other salient societal concerns. Social reconstruction of divided families can serve as a joint national monument of healing the wounds of past, the scars of war, and the *h'an* (suffering) of hatred. As Dongsoo Kim (1992, pp. 20-21) succinctly puts, if empowering the divided Korean families, who have so long been resigned to self pity, destructive tendencies and depressive fears, will help them to overcome both external hostilities and internal suffering by achieving a sense of reconnectedness and reclaiming their denied identity. In this era of social reconstruction, human service practitioners are challenged to join the cause of humanization by empowering them to be free from these conditions.

If there is a role of religion and the healing ministry in reconciliation and serving those divided families in distress, it should go beyond mere offerings of prayer, mass events of worship or missions to proselytize others. It should join more actively in uplifting the yoke of inhuman treatments, fear of injustice, despair of losses, confusion of distortions, and adversity of mistrust, divisiveness and hatred. As Epps (1986, p. 369) notes, the World Council on Churches and National Council on Churches are concerned with global peace and Korean unification issues. Only since 1984, worldwide ecumenical efforts to broaden hopeful new openings towards the unification of Korea have been made and only a few selected Korean-American church leaders, who themselves were refugees, were able to visit North Korea recently. As an obser-

ver, Epps saw what was possible (renewal of family relationships) and what was hopeful (healing the pains of division) during his brief visit to North Korea. He posits: "Though each of these personal histories is filled with poignancy, just one is recounted here as an example of the tragedy shared by millions of Koreans today." Christian churches in Korea and abroad have declared joint prayer goals for a peaceful unification of divided Korea to be achieved by 1995 when the country commemorates its 50th anniversary of its Independence Day from the Japanese colonial occupation in 1945. The following excerpt from the text of the 1991 Common Prayer Week for the Peaceful Unification of South and North Korea<sup>19</sup> reflects the Jubilee Year's hope for divided families:

Connect our parents and siblings with one blood line.  
 Let those wandering Koreans in distance come home freely.  
 In order that the children of South and North can play together,  
 and that the boys and girls of South and North can mate each other,  
 help us to remove nails from the waist of the peninsula,  
 to lay down all guns from our hands and all knives from our waist,  
 and to plow those soils spoiled by nuclear arms and pollutions.  
 Let the cutoff rivers flow into one stream.  
 And let Koreans work in unity. Glory to the Lord!

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<sup>19</sup>The prayer text was distributed to a Midwest church the author attended during the week of this prayer.

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