

"Father" R. C. Buckner, A Very Special Dad

Kathy Hillman—Woodway, TX

The children's big eyes stare longingly from a page of *The Baptist Standard*. Hopefully, Russian orphans Natasha and Denis will spend next Father's Day adopted by loving parents through Texas Baptist's Buckner Benevolences and the dream of a very special dad, R. C. Buckner.

Those who knew him said that Baptist minister Robert Cooke Buckner possessed a heart big enough to hold every orphan in the world. In the 1870's, Buckner wrote, "What should the Baptists of Texas do for the comfort and education of orphan children?" Buckner helped form a Deacon's Convention that established an orphanage and named him superintendent.

R. C. and his wife Vienna tirelessly pursued the vision and on December 2, 1879, opened Buckner Orphan's Home with three children in a rented cottage in Dallas. In 1881, the institution moved to 44 acres purchased at a reduced price from Josiah T. Pinson, the great great-grandfather of BGCT Executive Director Emeritus William Pinson.



The three children grew to hundreds. Buckner believed that God put them at his door, and he loved them all. One evening, a ragged, eight-year-old knocked. The boy told Buckner he had "no papa or mamma" and offered 35 cents for a place in the home. Of course, they found a bed.

A seventeen-year-old came with her younger brothers and sisters. The Buckners admitted her so she could stay with her siblings. The first Sunday, she cried because she had nothing to wear for church. Other orphans who had little more shared their clothes.

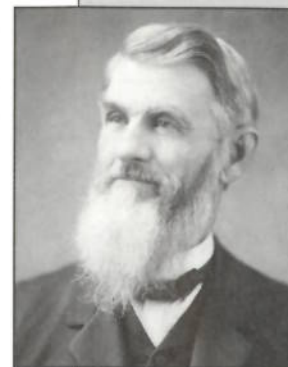
Among the first to arrive in Galveston after the 1900 hurricane, Buckner helped arrange homes for the nearly 100 orphans. In one family, only a little boy survived. When asked how, he replied, "I just held on the raft and prayed." R. C. helped answer his prayer for a future.

Early on, the children began calling Mrs. Buckner "Aunt Vi" and R. C. "Father Buckner." He told them "...it gratifies me for you to address me thus affectionately...God bless you, my sons, my daughters!"

At age 86, Father Buckner suffered a heart attack after preaching to the girls and boys. Hundreds of his children, including his own six, mourned their daddy's death but rejoiced in his eternal legacy.

On this Dad's Day, thank the Heavenly Father for earthly daddies who offer loving guidance to those who call them "Father."

For more information about adoption through Buckner, call (214) 381-1552.



*The three
children grew
to hundreds.*

*Buckner
believed that
God put
them at his
door, and
he loved
them all.*