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By Marv Knox

Editor

The selection of Albert Reyes to lead [Buckner Children & Family Services](#) signals not only a decisive personnel change, but also a shift in vision and focus for Buckner International, Ken Hall insists.

Now, Buckner is poised to present Christ—not only spiritually, but also physically—to the world's poorest children, said Hall, president of Buckner International, which encompasses not only ministry to children and their families, but also care for senior adults, as well as fund-raising support for the ministries.

Ken Hall

"We were doing very well, and God was blessing us and giving us multiple opportunities to extend our outreach to hurting children," Hall recalled. "But I began to sense the need was so great for the children of the world. And the vacuum in our Baptist world regarding ministries to the least of these in the world was profound."

At the same time, Buckner possessed enough goodwill among Baptists to allocate the human and material resources for a tangible ministry worldwide, he added.

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“It comes down to Jesus’ parable of the talents,” Hall explained. “We had an abundance of blessings, and I felt it was time to invest them in a way that is less regionalized and more kingdom-centered.”

Once that trajectory was set, Hall realized he needed help to accomplish the new mission. “I couldn’t manage the overall organization and give attention to the growth,” he conceded. “And after 13 years on the job, ... I had to ask, ‘Am I the best person to lead the growth?’ I was going to have to force people to think of me differently.”

So, Buckner launched a search for the right person to lead its revamped children and family division. Reyes surfaced among a list of “magnificent names,” Hall said.

“Since I made the choice (to select Reyes) in October, I’ve had it affirmed hundreds of times,” he added. Specifically, he cited an early-January trip to Guatemala, where Reyes led an evening meeting of Guatemalan Buckner employees—entirely in Spanish.

“Where I have to struggle to be cross-cultural, Albert is in his element; he’s a natural,” Hall noted. “It was a wonderful thing to watch.”

For several months, some Texas Baptists have speculated Hall wants Reyes

in place at Buckner so Hall can succeed Charles Wade as executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas when Wade retires.

But Hall stressed he's staying put at Buckner. Much of his life and ministry points to child care: His wife, Linda, grew up in Louisiana Baptist Children's Home. His doctoral studies focused on creating effective ministries for children. As a pastor, he worked on ministry to children and the poor. And he's been at Buckner more than a dozen years.

"Just as I'm not the one to grow Buckner's ministries to the next level, I am the right one to consolidate our victories ... and to manage this \$350 million ministry," he said. "I'm still at a point where I can raise significant funds, and that frees Albert to focus on growing the ministry. Also, Buckner is larger than children and family services. Plus, I'm available to mentor and develop Albert. There's still a lot for me to do."

Besides, leading Buckner is more to his liking than leading the BGCT.

"I'm used to being a pastor and the CEO of a corporation, where you can do things quickly," he explained. "I can get really frustrated with all the steps and processes you have to go through to be a denominational bureaucrat."

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