



A Century of Service:

**Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church
and House of Neighborly Service**



A Century of Service:
El Divino Redentor/
Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church
and House of Neighborly Service
San Antonio, Texas

Written and edited from existing material by
Reverend Krin Van Tatenhove, D.Min.



*Dedicated to the unbroken chain of those who have carried on
God's work through these ministries in San Antonio, Texas*

Front cover: Historic photo of groundbreaking day for the HNS facility, April 10, 1927; the communion table of Divine Redeemer, 2016. **Back cover:** *Una Mesa para la Gente*, a mural partially painted by youth from the church.

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I am confident of this, that the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion... – Philippians 1:6



Close of worship at Divine Redeemer, August 28, 2016



Editor's Note:



In the Old Testament—Joshua chapter three—we hear how the Israelites, after 40 years of wandering, finally crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land they believed was their destiny. According to the myth, God instructed Joshua to choose one elder from each of the 12 Tribes, then have them proceed into the middle of the river with the Ark of the Covenant. There, God promised, the waters would stop, allowing the nation to walk across on dry land.

Enter the story. Imagine how those Hebrew pilgrims must have felt when they finally passed that boundary. So much lay behind them. The legacies of Abraham, Issac, Jacob, and Moses. Their time in Egypt and the wilderness. So much triumph, loss and struggle. At the same time, so much hope beckoned from the horizon.

Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church crossed over the symbolic threshold of 100 years of service in 2015. House of Neighborly Service will do so in 2017. What an opportune moment to reflect on the legacies of their ministries!

Marcus Aurelius—warrior, emperor, philosopher—once said: “Time is like a river...for as soon as a thing has been seen, it is carried away, and another comes in its place, and this will be carried away too.”

True, but let this short volume freeze those waters for a moment so that we can look backwards and forwards, celebrating faithful service and praying for another century of fruitfulness.

Reverend Krin Van Tatenhove, D.Min.

October 2016



Preface



Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church, a Hispanic/Latino congregation in the heart of San Antonio's near west side, has been in existence for nearly 101 years. I am fascinated that for over 55 of these years, the pastors have been two *gringos*. Reverend Robert Brown, from 1946 to 1977, and myself from 1994 to the present. How that came about is hidden in the mysterious ways of God, the personal journeys of Robert and myself, and the movements that shape a collective people like the congregation of Divine Redeemer.

For Robert Brown, that journey included being born and raised in Mexico, a son of missionaries who returned to the U.S. because of violence during the Mexican Revolution. For me, the journey was more circuitous. Early in life, believing I would become a doctor, I travelled to Central America to give vaccinations and subsequently fell in love with Latino culture and people. Five years ago I discovered that my paternal grandmother actually lived about five blocks from Divine Redeemer during the 1920s, and I felt an eerie sense that somehow I had been destined to serve in this community since before I was born.

I cannot speak for Reverend Brown, but I know that another reason I have stayed is because this church has been, and continues to be, an agent for the *common* good in this neighborhood. Ignoring the historic divisions between Protestant and Catholic, Divine Redeemer and her partner, House of Neighborly Service, have steadfastly declared, “We are here for the *entire* community, not simply our own people.” And that, for me, is Jesus’ way.

But perhaps the most important reason that both Robert and I stayed so long has to do with the people of Divine Redeemer.

We always felt like one of them, a testament to the welcoming, open spirit that prevails in this congregation. They adopted me, as they adopted Robert and Agnes Brown and their children before me. They allowed us to become part of their lives and futures. They loved us and allowed us to love them deeply. It has simply been, in the words of an old hymn a “love that will not let me go.”

As we walk into the next century of ministry in this place, we keep dreaming...of lifting young lives from poverty one at a time, of sending them to college one scholarship at a time, of graduating Eagle Scouts one boy at a time, of helping a family receive a house one at a time. We keep dreaming because we are convinced God isn't done with us yet! - **Reverend Rob Mueller,**

October 2016



**Reverend
Rob Mueller
has served
DR with
passion,
providing
years of
stability and
visionary
leadership.
Behind him
on the wall is
a painting of
Reverend
Robert
Brown.**

The Beginning/El Comienzo

◆ (822 Austin Street) ◆

There's a technique used in countless movies. It's called an "establishing shot." We see a panoramic view of a city or landscape, then the camera zooms in to focus on the story's subject.

Let's do the same for *el nacimiento*, the birth date of Divine Redeemer (DR): November 15, 1914.

Internationally that year, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria triggered World War I, a global conflict that would soon embroil the United States. Construction began on the Panama Canal, Mohandas Gandhi left South Africa to embrace his place in history, and the Mexican Revolution raged fiercely.

In America, Woodrow Wilson was President. The first commercial airline began its route between St. Petersburg and Tampa, the last known passenger pigeon died in the Cincinnati Zoo, Babe Ruth made his Major League debut, the Federal Reserve Bank opened for business, and Charlie Chaplin appeared on the silver screen for the first time.

In Texas, the town of Irving was incorporated, the completion of the Houston Ship Channel secured that city's prominence in the oil industry, and Zion Hill—Nagodoches' first Black Baptist church—was erected.

In San Antonio, the banks of its namesake river flooded the city once again. Nearby, across the international border, the Mexican Revolution led to a feverish exodus of refugees and political exiles fleeing the violence. A number of them settled in San Antonio *barrios*, seeking new life.

And on November 15, 1914, in a building at 822 Austin St. near the old Sunset Station by the railroad tracks which brought immigrants to the city, Reverend Harry Phillips—himself a refugee from the Mexican Revolution—began a Sunday school class at 3:30 p.m.

Both the southern and northern Presbyterian churches, split ideologically and politically during the Civil War, saw San Antonio as a prime mission field. Phillips, a missionary with the northern strand uprooted from his work in Mexico, was ideally positioned to begin a new ministry. One of the missionaries who assisted him was Kate Spencer. Besides the oral history of those to whom she ministered, we have scant information about her, only a single line in the “Guide to the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations Records.” *Esta es la verdad:* over the centuries, countless individuals have poured out their lives for others in relative obscurity, living for love as its own reward.



*Early Sunday school class outside the building
on Austin Street*

The newborn Sunday school by the railroad tracks would touch a spiritual hunger for faith and community, growing quickly to two officers, four teachers, and twenty-two students. By the end of 1914, enrollment increased to fifty, all of this despite the condition of its locale.

"The building is old, dilapidated, unattractive, condemned," wrote Tabitha Morales, one of the first teachers. "The hall which we use for both Sunday school and church is dangerous, for it is in such bad condition these last few days. The second floor gallery is falling down and it leaks so much that it seems to rain inside as much as outside."

Despite these obstacles, the fledgling fellowship flourished, adopting the name El Divino Redentor. With Reverend Saul Gallegos as their Supply Pastor, its members petitioned the denomination to become an officially recognized congregation, an entreaty that was granted in 1915 by the Austin Presbytery.

As you read the following pages and savor the images, consider this recent declaration from DR:

"We have matured from a congregation that was once an object of mission into a self-supporting community with a core vision to transform our neighborhood together with our ministry partners."

A New Location/Un Nuevo Local

◆ (1302 Morales Street) ◆

Another early Presbyterian missionary displaced during the Mexican Revolution was Reverend J. T. Molloy. Encouraged to survey San Antonio for potential new mission projects, he wrote in a letter: "The best field for our work is north of Commerce Street and west of North Flores Street."

This is probably why DR moved to its second location in 1917, an abandoned saloon on the corner of Morales and Las Moras Streets. The first assigned pastor there was Reverend Ramon L. Lopez y Lopez (1883-1963). A Spaniard, he was educated for the priesthood, having studied for thirteen years at the University of Madrid. Though he would become a Protestant in the Methodist tradition, he had taught at a Catholic School in Havana, Cuba. Lopez came to DR from a Methodist Church in San Marcos, Texas, allowed to serve once he had taken courses to become a Presbyterian minister. He lived in a small house on the same lot as the saloon, holding first services there on November 19, 1917.



Early congregants outside the saloon on Morales Street



Outside the saloon, Reverend Lopez y Lopez on the right

The old saloon was an improvement, but far from ideal, demonstrating once again how this work of grace and faith would not be quenched. The church continued to grow. When you think of the fact that these early worshippers chose to attend services in such a dilapidated setting, it's amazing. These were people accustomed to cathedrals as their holy places. Only love and supportive fellowship could have drawn and kept them.

Hortensia Velasquez Trinidad, a former DR member, said they nicknamed the early congregation "*La Iglesia del Reverend Lopez y Lopez.*" He would serve DR faithfully from 1916-1925, helping establish its roots. Many missionaries from both Texas and elsewhere in the U.S. worked hand-in-hand with this ministry. They were the seeds of what was to become the House of Neighborly Service (HNS): Bessie Sneed, Mary Turner, Kate Spencer, Wilma Callaghan, Sophia Theiler, Lela Weatherby, Tabitha Morales, Mrs. James Tafolla, Mrs. M.T. Mendez, Izel Phelps. These women were deeply involved and committed to Christ's work during those early years. Their names, if researched

in the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society, contain few words, if any, simply stating that they “worked in the mission field.” Records for U.S.-based mission workers were minuscule when compared to those going abroad. You will hear more about some of these women in the “Treasured Memories” section of this book, but here are some brief details about two of them.

One is Tabitha Morales. In the summer of 1914, she accepted an invitation from the Texas Synodical (Presbyterian Women) to move from the State of Aguascalientes in Mexico, across the border to San Antonio. Her desire was to be educated as a teacher. The Texas Synodical supported her financially, paid for her tutelage, and secured her lodging in the home of Mrs. O.M. Fitzhugh. Morales used her training to assist in the Sunday School on Austin Street, then became the first instructor in a new kindergarten established by Reverend Lopez. Her steadfast intention was to return to her native home, but she had grown so attached to her work in Texas that it was a tearful goodbye when she finally left.

The other is Bessie Sneed (1883-1965), first supervisor of HNS. She was a Texan, a graduate of the College of Industrial Arts in Denton (now Texas Women’s University) before receiving special training in the Mission School Department of Vanderbilt University. She had been a public school teacher as well as a mission worker in Utah. Her peers described her as “wise, patient, understanding, sympathetic, hard working, deeply spiritual.”

This book is partially dedicated to Tabitha, Bessie, and all those who poured out their lives in the simple daily acts of love that come from following Jesus’ model of servanthood. They may not have gained notoriety, but they understood a simple truth spoken by Saint Teresa of Calcutta: “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

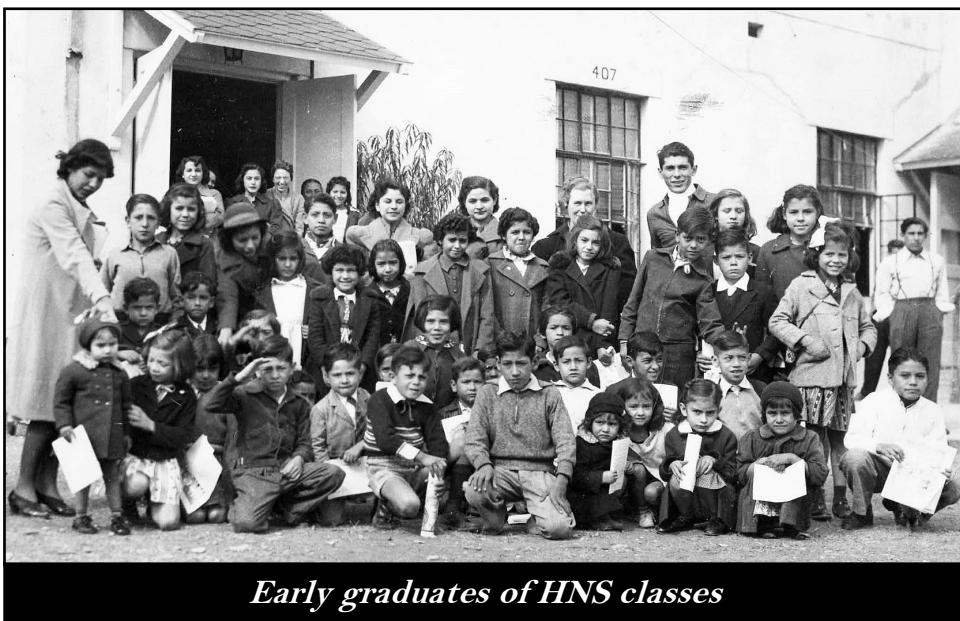


*Early Mission Workers standing on the porch of the cottage
at 1515 Lakeview Avenue, first home of HNS*

Home of Neighborly Services/ ◆ Hogar de Servicios al Barrio ◆ (1515 Lakeview/Martin Street)

The model of “missionary work” has (thankfully!) evolved over the centuries. It is no longer a paternalistic enterprise of “ministering to,” but a partnership of “ministering with.” It is no longer concerned with evangelism for its own sake, but seeks to join others in a common struggle for justice and peace.

One of the many roots of this change goes back to a Presbyterian movement called “The Home of Neighborly Service,” initiated by Reverend Robert McClean, Jr. Born on the mission field in Concepcion, Chile, McClean spent his youth in the U.S., where his father served various Presbyterian pastorates. Educated in both America and Mexico, the younger McClean developed a passion for the Spanish language and education. He left a teaching position at Dubuque University to succeed his father as head of



Spanish work in the Presbytery of Los Angeles. The year was 1918.

McClean soon had a change of heart about his calling, reflected in these words from a report to the Presbytery.

“One of the failures in Mexican work has been the point of social contact. For years it has been our custom to enter a field by opening up preaching services in some house or hall. To a people who have been Roman Catholic for centuries, we have come simply with a ministry of evangelization. They have been warned against us by the priests. Consequently, our work has not made the progress which our effort has deserved. Our experiments convince us that the most effective work is done when a social ministry is made to cooperate with our evangelistic efforts.”

McClean launched the first two HNS ministries in southern California, and the third in Texas. Wisely linking with the work being done since 1917 at 1515 Lakeview Avenue (a cottage rented by the Texas Synodical/Texas Presbyterian Women), HNS became official under its new banner on September 14, 1920 with Bessie Sneed as Supervisor. Early ministries in the community included (just to name a few!): Bible studies; classes in sewing, nursing, ceramics, English, cooking, citizenship, quilting, nutrition; a simple medical clinic; summer recreation; a Mother’s Club.

But service didn’t stop in the cottage. The women warmly reached out to homes in the neighborhood, teaching, attending to the sick, comforting those who were grieving. When the local public school was overcrowded and understaffed, HNS workers filled in by teaching overflow classrooms.

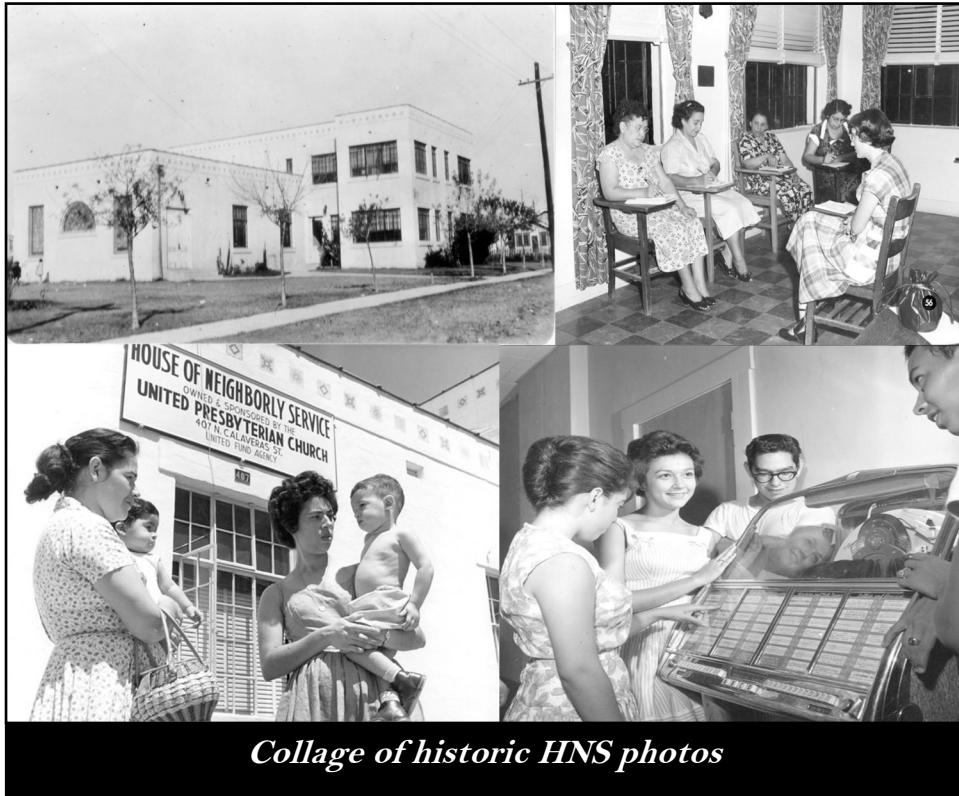
As HNS uncovered deeper levels of community need, it was clear that it required a larger facility. Eventually, through the generosity of the national Presbyterian church, a new home for



Early HNS Mission Workers, Wilma Callaghan and Izel Phelps. Phelps (L) got her education in Chicago, where part of her training was to minister to those in the “Mexican box car camps” along the railroad tracks.

HNS was built at 407 North Calaveras in the heart of the city's Westside barrio. Harvey P. Smith, who would eventually supervise the renovation of San Antonio's historic missions, designed the multiuse facility.

Groundbreaking occurred at 3 o'clock, April 10, 1927. Bessie Sneed dug up the first shovelful of earth. Mexican church members—young and old—formed a long line, each turning over spades of soil. Mexican children took handfuls of the earth and excitedly scattered it about the lot. The building was dedicated November 29, 1929 “to the glory of God and the service of man.” Much of the \$20,000 raised for the new edifice came from the Presbyterian Women of the Synod, who each donated \$1.00. Robert McClean was one of the speakers on groundbreaking day.



Collage of historic HNS photos

This would also be the new home for DR as a congregation. They moved from the old saloon and began worshipping in the HNS multipurpose room. Essentially, the two ministries had joined forces, becoming one in spirit and locale, a union that would shape *both* their histories to this day.

Toward the end of her tenure, Bessie Sneed wrote about her experiences at HNS. A natural communicator, she immediately told success stories, like this one about an unnamed woman. It highlights the perennial HNS/DR emphasis on education and self-improvement.

“The newly elected President of the Woman’s Auxiliary, a widow with four girls, has steadily climbed from a tiny two room house, where she sewed all day and into the night, to head inspector in the factory and a modern four room cottage with

electric lights and gas. Her oldest girl, now working in the factory, continues her high school studies at night school. She is Vice President of the Christian Endeavor Society. The second one, Vice President and pianist of the Intermediate Sunday School class, is in the Junior High School Glee Club and President of the Girl Reserves. The third one is ever dependable in program and sports, and the last one did the telling work on the poster that won first prize in the Texas Synodical Poster Contest. How did (HNS) help? English for the mother; lending influence to get work; teaching the girls English so they could go on with their grades; encouraging them in Sunday School, Christian Endeavor, Week-Day Bible School; giving music lessons to the pianist; teaching them Christian principles."

Over the years, HNS has worked alongside countless families like these, many of them new immigrants. (Note: Angie Abrego, a longtime member of DR, teasingly remarked that they changed the name to HOUSE of Neighborly Service because "Some people were taking the word HOME too literally.")



Boys' HNS softball team during the 1930s

Reflexiones

Cambios en las Relaciones con HNS y con los Vecinos

Desde 1929, la oficina nacional de Misiones Domésticas ‘casó’ al Divino Redentor y HNS, creando un ‘matrimonio’ que hoy celebra 87 años unidos, la relación entre los dos se ha vivido como una pareja...a veces muy amorosa e íntima, y a veces conflictiva. La época de ‘luna de miel’ se vivió por un periodo extendido. Mientras las dos instituciones recibieron liderazgo misionero de la iglesia nacional, todo marchaba bien. Durante la semana las misioneras sirvieron a la comunidad, desarrollando relaciones con las familias del barrio que caminaban a sus programas por las calles de tierra. Los fines de semana, las invitaban venir a las clases de escuela dominical y a los servicios religiosos. Habían momentos en que el pastor servía como Director de HNS y como pastor de la iglesia. La misión era una, y los esfuerzos de todos los trabajadores contribuyeron al éxito de la misión. Tanto la iglesia como el HNS crecían a través del trabajo efectuado por las misioneras del HNS.

Durante las décadas de los '60-'70 cuatro ‘buenos’ provocaron un ‘malo.’ 1) Gracias al éxito de la misión, muchas familias de la iglesia recibieron el beneficio de una educación presbiteriana en las escuelas formadas para educar a los Latino y Nativo Americanos. Menaul School, Pres Mex y Tex Mex recibieron varios niños y jóvenes de nuestra comunidad, y muchos de ellos siguieron sus estudios en las universidades presbiterianas también. Esta inversión resultó en el avance social de muchas personas en la comunidad, lo cual provocó su salida del barrio para otros sectores más desarrollados de la ciudad, dando como

consecuencia la desconexión de la iglesia con la comunidad.

2) La iglesia se hizo auto suficiente bajo el liderazgo del Reverend Brown. Se independizó del apoyo financiero de la iglesia nacional y fue reconocido como una iglesia independiente...no era más una misión. A la misma vez, el HNS, se constituyó como una corporación no-lucrativa y se unió al nuevo organismo comunitario, United Way, recibiendo por primera vez ayuda independiente de la iglesia Presbiteriana. Nadie se fijó, en aquel momento, de la importancia en definir un mecanismo para garantizar una coordinación futura de la misión que ahora se llevaría a cabo como dos entidades independientes.

3) Los movimientos políticos y sociales de esta época también dejaron su marca en el Divino Redentor y el HNS. El Movimiento Chicano confrontó el liderazgo del HNS criticándoles de ser muy 'gringo' y sin representación étnica de la comunidad en las decisiones del organismo. Respondiendo a esta crítica, se indigenizó la Mesa Directiva del HNS y su Director. Emplearon personas que no eran ni miembros del Divino Redentor, ni presbiterianos. Sin empleados comprometidos con *ambos* la iglesia y el HNS se disminuyó el flujo de nuevos integrantes a la vida de la iglesia.

4) Se inició una nueva iglesia: Edgewood Presbyterian Church con varias familias del barrio. Es admirable que una comunidad recién independizada del dinero de la iglesia nacional, pudo ser la iniciadora de una nueva iglesia, pero así era la fe y el compromiso del pastor y de los miembros del Divino Redentor. Desafortunadamente, el envío de estos miembros de Divino Redentor a Edgewood redujo aún más la intersección de la iglesia con el barrio en su derredor.

El 'mal' problemático que fué provocado por todas los 'buenos' contadas arriba es que al entrar a la época de los '80, El

Divino Redentor carecía del contacto con la comunidad con que co-habitaba.

En el año 2000, mirando al nuevo milenio, la iglesia, bajo el liderazgo del Reverend Rob Mueller, inició una nueva proyección hacia la comunidad. En un periodo de 3 años, y después de muchas entrevistas con vecinos y miembros, se lanzaron una pléthora de nuevos ministerios, cada uno dirigido por un miembro de la iglesia. Entre ellos habían programas para niños y jóvenes después de la escuela, clases de inglés para inmigrantes, clases de zumba para la salud de la comunidad, un grupo de 12 Pasos para Comedores Compulsivos, el renacimiento de la Tropa 52 de los Boy Scouts, una celebración comunitaria de Thanksgiving, y una Posada Navideña entre muchos más. Hoy día, la iglesia disfruta siendo reconocido como una de las 12 iglesias más involucradas en su comunidad. ¡A Dios la Gloria! - **Reverend Rob Mueller**



A New Sanctuary/ Un Nuevo Santuario

(407 North Calaveras Street)

As DR grew, the need became apparent for a larger sanctuary in which to worship. Such a financial challenge was daunting. The congregation had grown in numbers, but it was still humble in its economic status.

In a capital campaign brochure seeking help from friends and neighbors, Reverend Robert Brown, then Pastor of DR, said, "Certainly the outstanding characteristic of this congregation has been faith. The membership of the church has been around 135. Many of these people are without a permanent job, none of them



Historic groundbreaking and construction photos

are well-to-do, and it has taken faith to undertake the building of the present unit. Our prayers are that the Lord God Almighty will give us the vision and needed consecration to see to it that His House be erected."

Brown had accepted his call to DR in 1946, following his service in WWII as a navy chaplain. He would labor as a much-beloved pastor for over 30 years, a source of stable leadership as the congregation became increasingly self-sufficient.

Once again, plans for DR's Spanish-style mission church were designed by noted architect Harvey P. Smith, who had helped renovate both the Governor's Mansion and two San Antonio Missions during the Depression. Smith was an early preservationist dedicated to restoring and maintaining the historical beauty and traditions of San Antonio. His legacy lives on today.



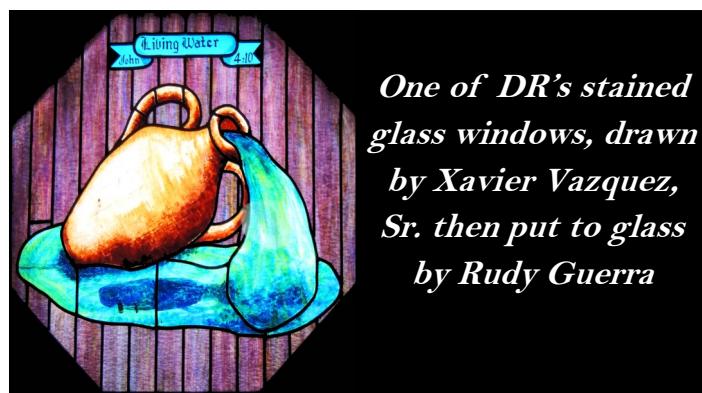
Exterior of DR, September 2016

Groundbreaking took place in 1949, and the building was dedicated two years later at a civic ceremony with the following inscription on its cornerstone commemorating the moment: “El Divino Redentor, Dedicada Abr 29, 1951, Rev. R. A. Brown, Jr., Pastor.”

Words written by Reverend Brown for that capital campaign still ring true. “Our Chapel, built according to the architecture of the Old Missions, offers a sanctuary of simple beauty and one that is also familiar to all who know and live in the great Southwest. The Old Missions still standing in and around San Antonio, and some of them put into use under the direction of Mr. Harvey P. Smith, indicate the strategic structure and style of our chapel.”

In 1960, DR undertook a major remodeling. It included an extension to the front of the worship space, a small pastor’s office, a choir/Sunday School room, and a kitchen.

Over the years, DR members Fred San Roman, Xavier Vazquez and Rudy Guerra all contributed significantly to the beauty of the sanctuary with their wood and stained glass craftsmanship. In 2000, Eric Martinez designed a chancel renovation enabling the incorporation of projection technology, and Robbie Diaz De Leon crafted a new cross. All these members of DR gave freely of their gifts.



Reflexiones

Cambios en la forma del Culto

Desde el inicio, la divina adoración que se llevó a cabo en el Divino Redentor ha sido sumamente Reformada. Nacido de misioneros que sirvieron a Dios en México, los pastores que lanzaron esta nueva congregación preservaron fiel las formas de adoración heredadas de sus antepasados. Formal y reverente, el culto fue marcado por su orden y su decencia. Cuentos de los miembros ancianos reflejan que el ambiente del culto era muy digno y solemne. Los feligreses llegaban los domingos en su mejor ropa, y los niños y las niñas no se atrevían a hacer ruido durante el culto o habrían consecuencias después. Más de una historia es contada del Rev. Brown regañando a un miembro dormido y roncando en su banca durante el sermón!

La música fué elemento central desde el inicio. El uso de himnos contemporáneos y clásicos eran acompañados por el piano, a veces tocado por el ministro mismo—como el caso de Reverend Lacy Simms. Cuenta la historia, que Xavier Vazquez Sr. (quien llegó a ser pilar de la iglesia) fue invitado por un amigo que deseaba impresionarlo con la música que tocaba su pastor al piano, el cual lo hacía ¡sin manos! Mas tarde bajo el liderazgo de la Sra. Agnes Brown, el coro floreció, cantando partituras acompañados por ella en el nuevo órgano. Vestidos con togas de color y sentados adelante junto al pastor en su toga negra, alegraron a los miembros con sus antemas. Bajo el liderazgo de Yolanda Ortiz, directora del coro durante el pastorado del Reverend Carlos Lopez, el coro se atrevió a cantar Pulanc's *Gloria* acompañado por miembros de la sinfonía de San Antonio.

Hoy en día el culto es marcadamente diferente, aunque la

música sigue siendo un elemento central, y el coro (aunque más pequeño) se ha mantenido una calidad extraordinaria. Cada domingo ofrece una variedad de estilos musicales, de clásico hasta 'rock and roll,' y del 'gospel' aфrico-americano hasta 'country' y tejano. En adicióп al coro, ahora tenemos Holy Gente, nuestra banda contemporánea. Ni el coro ni el pastor usan toga ya, sino con su ropa diaria ofrecen sus dones para una congregacióп tambiéп c omodamente vestido. El ambiente es amigable e informal con mucha conversaci on y a un m as abrazos. Se siente, como siempre, en familia. -

Reverend Rob Mueller



Reverend Rob Mueller sharing a Christmas message

Two Outreach Ministries: West Durango Plaza Apartments/ Edgewood Presbyterian Church ◆ (5635 West Cesar Chavez ◆ Boulevard/330 South 34th Street)

From their inception, both DR and HNS have had a passion for serving their community. We see this through two milestone outreach ministries into which they poured their time, talent, and treasure.

The first was the West Durango Plaza Apartments, a complex of 84 units built in 1968 as a partnership between HUD and HNS. HUD called Rudy Guerrero, then Director of HNS, to propose a million dollar loan and collaboration. He and Reverend Brown, along with other leaders of DR and HNS, jumped at the opportunity. It fit perfectly with their vision of ministry. These Section 8 apartments would provide housing for low-income families, and over the years DR made contact with many of them as an extension of its outreach. They did this through onsite Sunday school classes, a yearly Vacation Bible School, and food distribution.

A farsighted and proactive Board of Directors managed the property, its membership composed equally of representatives from HNS and DR. In 2008 they helped retire the mortgage on the property, then negotiated a seven million dollar renovation. Finally, they sold the upgraded units to Housing and Community Services, a local nonprofit, ensuring that generations of low-income families would find adequate shelter. The substantial windfall from that sale went into an endowment that still supports



Groundbreaking ceremony for the West Durango Plaza Apartments, Reverend Brown with the shovel

the ministries of DR and HNS.

The West Durango Plaza Apartments have changed management over the years, but even today the entirety of its units qualify for HUD's Section 8 program, providing part of the safety net for San Antonio residents.

The second major outreach project was DR's role in a new church development (NCD) for the Alamo Presbytery. It was to be called Edgewood Presbyterian Church.

As San Antonio grew and expanded, especially northward, many of the historic *barrios* were overlooked and under-resourced. The Edgewood area was a prime example. Over the years, it declined from a neighborhood of dignity and hard work to one of struggling poverty and other inner-city issues, compounded by a high percentage of immigrants who didn't speak English. The NCD was an extension of a shared theology by both the Alamo Presbytery and DR to become more inclusive and indigenous, serving those with the least resources.

DR helped in two ways. First, they provided wise counsel stemming from years of struggle and victory in a similar Westside *barrio*. Second, a number of DR members who lived close to the NCD moved their membership to Edgewood, anchoring it with a core of seasoned workers.

Edgewood Presbyterian Church was chartered in 1960 with Reverend Porfirio Romero as its first pastor. After many years of service to its neighborhood, it was unable to sustain the resources to survive. The building was eventually sold to a non-denominational church whose pastor remains a friend of DR today.



Commissioning Elders at Edgewood Presbyterian Church



Collage of images from DR's neighborhood in 2016

Today & a Vision for the Future/ Hoy y Una Visión para el Futuro

The title of DR's monthly newsletter is *The Westside Story*, and after a century of service, this congregation's saga is full of hope and vision. This is especially true because of its longstanding partnership in caring for its neighborhood. These partners (including HNS) are all currently housed either on the campus at 407 North Calaveras or directly across the street.

MEYO (Multi-level Educational Youth Outreach): DR's immigrant membership has benefitted immensely from the Presbyterian Church's dedication to education as the best vehicle to overcome poverty. Early members were provided college preparatory education by Presbyterian-Mexican and Texas-Mexican schools, and many acquired college degrees at Trinity University and Austin College, both Presbyterian institutions. This blessing created a commitment to education, which is now being passed on through the congregation's highly successful **Multi-level Educational Youth Outreach (MEYO)** program. MEYO blesses the at-risk children of the neighborhood by creating a community of learners who pursue personal development, service to others, solid character formation, and dedication to post high school learning. Over its 13 year history, MEYO has a 100% high school graduation rate, in a community where 47.5% of adults have not completed high school. It instills a love for learning and creates a support group of peers and adults who promote successful education. Our final blessing is often a scholarship from MEYO's **Juanita Rivera and Maria Martinez Scholarship Funds** as they begin their college journey.

Lea Watson, current MEYO Director (2016), reflects on

DR at this juncture in its history.

“Divine Redeemer’s legacy for 100 years has been to meet the needs of our community. For instance, after asking residents at a breadline what they needed, one of our seminary interns, Clare, created House of Teens. When those youth brought younger siblings to the program, exposing another need, we created Peace Pals. Out of these, MEYO was formed, and has been serving fervently in this neighborhood ever since.



MEYO Director Lea Watson at “the yellow house” owned by DR, directly across the street. House of Teens meets here. For years, Minnie Cook—a long serving mission worker at HNS—lived here with her widowed mother. Cook ran the afterschool Girl’s Club and HNS Day Camp. Her Grandfather, Charles Cook, ministered with the Pima Indian Tribe in Arizona, establishing the Cook School for Christian Leadership, still run by a foundation that bears his name.

“I started volunteering at MEYO my freshman year of college and, similar to Clare, being in the Westside changed my perspective and awakened my passion for ending the cycle of poverty. That summer I noticed that there was no program being offered until school started in the fall. So, true to the legacy of Divine Redeemer, we met that need. My sister and I started a summer camp program called Peace Camp that just had its fifth successful summer. Since 2011, I have seen MEYO represent Divine Redeemer’s outreach to the families of our neighborhood. I have seen youth become the first in their families to go to college, and I know that the benefits of that will spread throughout their families and this community. It is stirring to be a part of a legacy that is ending the poverty cycle one family at a time.”

HOUSE OF NEIGHBORLY SERVICE: As HNS nears its 100th Anniversary in 2017, its menu of services has changed, but not its steadfast commitment to the needs of its neighborhood. With a strong Board, HNS embraces its continued ties to DR and celebrates its rich heritage stemming back to those early Presbyterian missionaries.

Today, HNS has adopted the following vision statement: “House of Neighborly Service is a community where basic needs are met, where dreams and hopes are nurtured, and where neighborly support is a way of life. We provide opportunities which encourage, educate, and empower the families of our Westside community.” HNS carries out this mission with programs that range from early childhood intervention to free senior lunches and activities.

Sandra Morales is the current Executive Director. She shares a story about the impact HNS had on one family through its Kid’s Place Child Development & Treatment Center.

“A single 29-year-old Hispanic mother moved back to San Antonio in February of 2012 when she separated from her abusive husband. She and her two-year-old daughter moved in with her own mother but had to leave due to conflict with her mother’s boyfriend. She was left with no support system.

“When she came to HNS, she was visibly depressed, crying easily, but unwilling to get care for herself because her primary concern was her daughter. Despite her mood disorder, she had been **very** resourceful in trying to build a future, seeking services



Women browsing the HNS Thrift Store, 1960s

for shelter, employment, and financial aid for college. Her daughter, 2 years, 8 months old at the time of registering with us, was severely delayed in speech/language, motor skills, problem-solving, and social interactions. While enrolled in our Kid’s Place, this young girl made great improvements.

“The mother was seen by one of our parent educators

on a weekly basis, where she learned techniques to enhance her daughter’s development. This family did not have a vehicle, so they would take several buses to get across town and participate. They are both doing well. The daughter attends public school, and mom received a dental assistant certification that led to new employment. Mom was **very** pleased with our services and with the significant improvements her daughter made at HNS.”

TIME DOLLAR: In 2001, a group of community leaders came together as a result of the Making Connections - San Antonio

Neighborhood Family Summits. Among them were elders from both Divine Redeemer and John Calvin Presbyterian Church. Later that year, the group took a trip to Miami, where they learned about the Time Banking System, a system that allows volunteers to earn credits and exchange them for needed services.

The group agreed to work in San Antonio neighborhoods through beautification projects, meeting a critical need for food, promoting neighborly trust, and organizing for sustainable change. San Antonio Time Dollar Community Connections (known locally as Time Dollar) was born. In 2006 the group became an official nonprofit organization united around a simple mission statement: *Creating Community One Hour at a Time*. Time Dollar has received accolades from the San Antonio community and is a past recipient of Self Development of People funds through the national Presbyterian Church.

Though they now use the Time Banking system on a limited basis, Time Dollar faithfully carries out the following programs in a center across the street from DR.

- **Jardin de la Ezperanza:** In this community garden, residents can meditate in a prayer grotto, as well as take classes in “Square-Foot Gardening” or “Gardening and Sustainable Living.” There is also a kiosk book-lending library for all ages.
- **Community Table Food Pantry:** Residents receive healthy staples through the pantry once a month, including vegetables grown in the garden.
- **Summer Children’s Junior Master Gardener Workshops:** Open to children ages 4 to 11, this nationally recognized curriculum fosters environmental stewardship through hands-on horticulture experiences. Graduates from the program have demonstrated that it bolsters their education in the public schools, especially in the subject of science.

- **Parent to Child Math:** This program, intensely 1:1, helps mothers gain basic math proficiency that they can pass on to their school-aged children.

Silbia Esparza works as the Director of Time Dollar, a volunteer position due to budget restrictions. “This is my calling,” she says. “I find deep satisfaction in seeing the immediate and long lasting effect of our programs.”



Silbia and Edward Esparza in front of a mural in Jardin de la Esperanza called “Three Sisters.” It shows the three staple crops of Native Americans, often planted together: squash, beans, and corn. There are also images of foods deeply rooted in Mexican-American identity: chiles, magay (agave), nopalitos, and amaranth.



Treasured Memories



Sandi Guerrero Rivera is a fifth generation Presbyterian, her family's history deeply entwined with DR and HNS. Her Irish grandfather, Samuel Buchanan Hodge, immigrated first to Mexico, then Texas, his family part of the great wave of those fleeing Ireland in the 1890s. Her grandmother, Manuela, grew up in Saltillo, Mexico, immigrating later to the United States.

After the young couple married in San Antonio, choosing a church was problematic. Manuela had a Baptist background; Samuel, Catholic. They compromised. Samuel attended Sacred Heart Catholic, and with no Baptist church nearby, Manuela chose DR, which then worshipped in the HNS multipurpose room.

Her choice would have long-lasting ripple effects.

Manuela became very involved at DR, bringing her children with her. Sandi's mother, Becky, went to kindergarten at

HNS under Minnie Cook, and when the rest of her siblings married Catholics and returned to that faith, she remained, directing the youth group. Through church connections, Becky met her husband, Rudy Guerrero, an active member of a Presbyterian congregation in San Marcos, Texas. They were the first couple to get married in the new DR sanctuary in 1951.

Sandi has many rich memories of DR and HNS, especially of her father's involvement. Rudy was a legendary, much-beloved track coach at Fox Tech, San Antonio's first downtown high school. Early in his career, he would supplement his income by working summers at HNS. Later, he and Becky did summer missionary service in Dixon, New Mexico, where they offered sports, VBS, plays, and general social work.

Because of his exemplary service, HNS called Rudy in 1958 to ask if he would become their Director. He agreed and had an enormous impact with his frugal, hard-working approach. He led a remodeling/renovation of the HNS building, expanded programming (especially sports and the weekly food bank), and was the one who took the initial call from HUD that led to the West Durango Plaza Apartments. It was a project that he and Rev. Brown collaborated on closely. Years later in retirement, Rudy and Becky led Sunday School classes and VBS at those same apartments on behalf of DR.

Following HNS, Rudy became the Director of Hispanic-American Ministries for the Synod of the Sun, expanding his sphere of influence. All through those years at HNS and the Synod, many of his former students continued to seek his counsel. Sandi says that when he died in 2013, many of them attended his packed memorial service, honoring the man who had touched their lives forever. They wore their Fox Tech polo shirts as a tribute.

In an interview, Sandi smiles and tells a story about her

father's relationship with one of those students.

"Dad was a penny-pincher. Behind his back, some people called him Jack Benny. One of his students became a plumber, so Dad hired him a lot to fix the plumbing at our house, but also at HNS. His name was Frank, and whenever he gave Dad the bill after the work, Dad would say, "Gracias, Frank, que te lo page Dios." (Thank you, Frank, may God repay you.) Frank told this story at Dad's funeral, saying 'I didn't really care, because it was for coach, and he **did** pay me for work at his house.'

"But one time the bill at HNS was huge, a substantial amount of money for a long, hard job. Frank had even hired other workers to help. When Frank presented the bill, Dad said his usual thing, and Frank responded, 'Bueno, entonces que usted pagame a mi, y despues que te lo page Dios a Ud.' (OK, you know what, you go ahead and pay me, and **you** can collect from God.)"



Rebecca (Becky) Alvarez has been an active part of both HNS and DR most of her life. In addition to serving on the Session of DR for numerous terms, she is now the secretary of HNS, and in 2017 she'll assume the role of co-president with her friend, Olivia Valdez. Here she describes her earliest memory of this place that would forever shape her life.

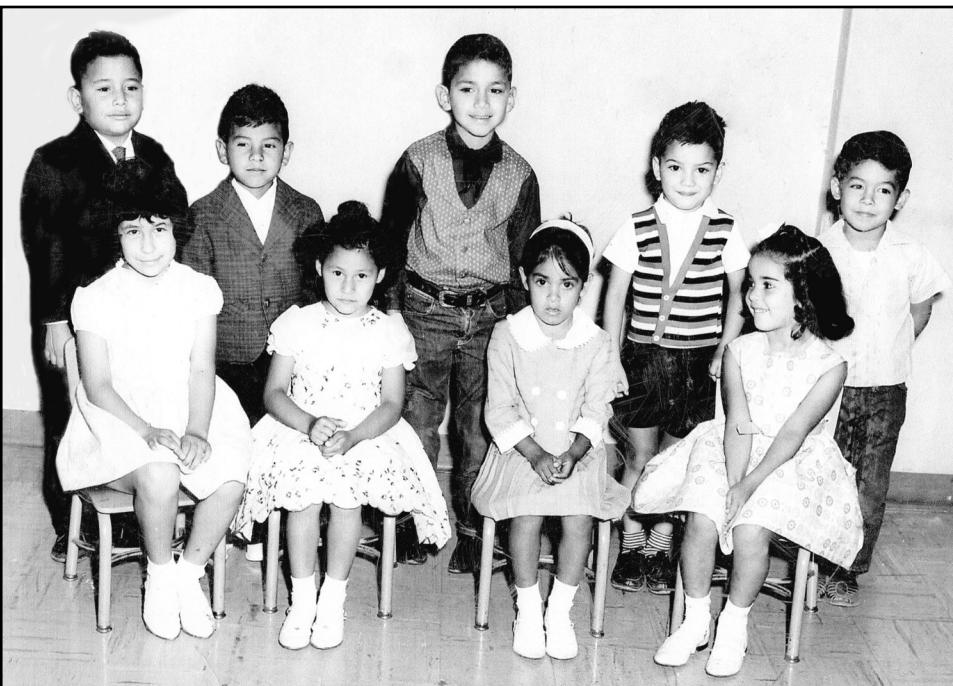
"My first experience with HNS was in September 1962. I came with my dad and my aunt Eloisa, a member of DR, to enroll in kindergarten. I was very apprehensive that first day because I'd had a humiliating experience at my former school on Travis Street. The teacher there had punished me by standing me in the corner of the cafeteria stage because I didn't want to eat the stew they served for lunch. I went home crying, vowing never to return to their school. I'm sure that after some persuasion I was convinced to try this other little school at my aunt's church.

"When we got to HNS, I remember Daddy and Eloisa standing in the hallway with Mr. Guerrero, the Executive Director, talking about enrolling me. I grabbed onto the post that is just inside the Kindergarten room and refused to budge. If I had to be there, I wasn't going to cooperate!

"Well, at that point a beautiful woman with her hair made up, in a perfectly pleated dress and high heels came over to me and said, 'Now young lady, stop this nonsense and come over here and play.' That's all it took. She had the kindest voice, and her casual manner in addressing me made me think it might not be such a bad idea to play with the others. That beautiful lady was Mrs. Agnes Brown, Reverend Brown's wife. I think she must have been volunteering that day. She made me feel welcomed, and then I got to meet my teacher, Miss Wilma Callaghan and her assistant, Miss Lupita Davis, and I knew all would be well. I was home from that point on, a place where I also met my lifelong friend, Olivia

Valdez, *mi hermana en Cristo*, a gift from God for which I am eternally grateful.

Those early experiences helped shape who I would become as a person and teacher. Miss Callaghan had a loving yet firm style in the classroom. She never had to raise her voice. If we weren't listening while she was talking or reading, she would just stop. That pause would get our attention, and we would gently be redirected back to our task. She was truly a master Early Childhood Educator.



Becky Alvarez, front left, kindergarten class at HNS, 1962. Her lifelong friend, Olivia Valdez is front right

"The coincidence that Mrs. Brown was there on my first day at HNS shows me the connection that Divine Redeemer and House of Neighborly Service have always had. Together they have served God, each in their own way, and the connection has led to 100 years of strong ministry. I have so many wonderful memories

of my experiences at HNS—from kindergarten with Miss Callaghan, to day camp with Miss Cook, to camping at John Knox Ranch Summer Camp where Mr. Guerrero taught me how to swim and his wife Becky Guerrero cooked meals for all the kids. Along with Reverend and Mrs. Brown and Reverend and Karen Lopez—all of them had such an impact on me. They committed their lives to the ministry of Divine Redeemer and HNS. We are who we are as a congregation today because of their service and commitment to God at 407 North Calaveras.”

Hispanic Protestants are a minority within a Roman Catholic milieu, and Hispanic Presbyterians find themselves a minority within their own denomination. Both these realities are clear in the story of **Hiram Rivera** (no relation to Sandi).

Hiram was born and raised four blocks from DR. His father hailed from Mexico, Catholic by tradition, a man who strongly emphasized education. Hiram recalls having to memorize and recite Spanish poetry on Sunday afternoons, as well as take the piano lessons that were mandatory for him and his siblings.

Hiram’s first exposure to DR—like so many of his neighbors—was through HNS. He visited the medical clinic which was open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, where he received early immunizations. He attended kindergarten at HNS, and as he moved into public school he returned to HNS for afterschool instruction in arts like woodworking, leather-crafting and ceramics. He relished the four-week summer day camp followed by two weeks of VBS.

When Hiram’s father died, he left explicit instructions that he wanted to be buried with a Masonic Rite. Their Catholic priest strongly objected, criticizing the family sharply. This caused the Riveras to move their affiliation to DR.

Hiram never looked back. He attended Westminster

Fellowship as a teen in the 1950s, part of a national Presbyterian movement for young people ages 12-23. He went on to be an elder at DR, serving on Session multiple times, and also became a faithful delegate to the Synod of the Sun. To this day, at age 76, if there is need for an additional representative to a Presbytery meeting, he volunteers.

During all of this, Hiram remained part of a distinct Presbyterian minority. He attended a year at Park College in



Hiram Rivera in front of a mural on the wall of the “gym” at the rear of DR. The painting, finished in 2016 by House of Teens, covered over a previous mural marred by graffiti. To the youth, the man reaching out his hand in a clasp of welcome represents the inclusive love of Christ for the neighborhood of DR.

Minnesota, a Presbyterian institution, the only Hispanic in a class of nearly 400. His service at both DR and the Synod of the Sun happened during the rise of Chicano influence and explosive Hispanic population growth in Texas. Yet the number of Hispanic Presbyterian churches sadly declined. Nonplussed, Hiram remains positive about his Presbyterian affiliation to this day.

In an interview, he shared memories of his involvement with another predominantly Anglo institution—the Boy Scouts of America—through DR’s Troop 52. Hiram’s two oldest sons attained the rank of Eagle, which only 4% of scouts ever reach. He credits this to Xavier Vasquez, Sr. longtime Scoutmaster of Troop 52.

“I first met Mr. Vasquez in our Sunday school, and then he was my Scoutmaster at Divine Redeemer. I left the troop when I was 18, but after my three boys turned 11, we came every Tuesday to be part of the program. I vividly remember the 50th Anniversary of Troop 52 here at DR, which included the Eagle Scout ceremony for my sons. We filled the church! There were three members of the local school board there, and Mr. Vasquez had invited many of the men who made Eagle Scout through Troop 52, including some lawyers and a judge.

“What made Mr. Vasquez unique is that he did so much of it on his own without a parents’ committee or other support. Whenever a boy attained any kind of rank or award, in addition to the pin or patch, Mr. Vasquez attached a personal note.”

The story of Boy Scout Troop 52 is inseparable from the annals of DR and HNS. It has been one of the character-forming outreach ministries of the church throughout its existence.

The troop was founded by Judge James Tafolla, but was

lead by Xavier Vazquez, Sr. for most of its history. He became Assistant Scoutmaster at age 18, then went on to serve as Scoutmaster for decades. The names of Troop 52 and Mr. Vasquez were synonymous in most people's minds, and the building where the Scouts now meet is called the Xavier Vazquez, Sr. Activity Center. When he retired, so did the Troop.

But that was not the end of the legacy. Today (2016), **Xavier (Buddy) Vazquez, Jr.** carries on the tradition of his father, and he does so with a number of motivations dear to his heart.

First of all, he grew up at DR and HNS. He went to kindergarten here, was baptized here, attended faithfully with his family, and when he got married in 1973, Reverend Brown was one of the officiants at the ceremony. He credits his years of scouting under the guidance of his father as a great preparation for



Buddy & scouts outside the Xavier Vazquez Sr. Activity Center, built by members of John Calvin Presbyterian Church

the Navy in particular and life in general.

After Buddy moved from the neighborhood around DR and raised his own family, he slowly drifted away from regular involvement. Then a painful series of events set the stage for a meaningful homecoming.

First, he suffered a catastrophic accident when a ramada he was decorating fell down on top of him. He still walks with a limp from that trauma. Even more tragic, his dear son Jason died in a car accident three months later.

“It took me two years to get back on my feet,” says Buddy. “There were times when I felt like surrendering, but I could always hear Jason saying, ‘Dad, don’t give up.’”

As he slowly moved on with his life, Buddy had an encounter with Reverend Rob Mueller at DR, the pastor who had given a moving eulogy at Jason’s funeral.

“Rob was very direct with me. He said, ‘You and Jason enjoyed the outdoors so much—hiking, hunting, fishing. Why don’t you come back and lead Troop 52?’”

Initially, Buddy helped a man named Wendell Russell, whose attempts to resurrect the Troop’s status were hampered by his lack of fluency in Spanish. Eventually, Buddy became the Scoutmaster, and his leadership is born of a deep empathy for the boys who participate.

“I know how hard it is to get out of this neighborhood,” he says. “There are so many influences that can lead you astray, and many of these boys come from broken homes with no fathers. I teach them that their honor is their greatest gift. Be a man of your word and carry yourself with dignity.”

“It’s not easy. Scouting is not cool in this neighborhood, and many of the boys are embarrassed to wear their uniforms in public because they get called sissies. I tell them, ‘Let’s take one of those name-callers on a campout in the wilds, just one night, and we’ll find out who the sissies are.’”

“We are the poorest Troop in our Council, which is based mostly on the north side of San Antonio. I think we are their token Hispanics, and it requires a lot of fundraising just to get our boys to summer camp. Yet our persistence is paying off. In the past seven years, we have graduated four Eagle Scouts out of these mean streets. That’s an accomplishment that can never be erased.”

Buddy says that by giving back to these young men, it’s like giving back to Jason. And in the room of the Xavier Vazquez, Sr. Activity Center where Troop 52 meets is a large picture of Xavier, Sr. You can’t help but think that his smile grows ever broader as he watches Troop 52 carry on its mission under the guidance of his son.



Growing up a “preacher’s kid” has its blessings and drawbacks. **Helen San Ramon**, the oldest of Rev. Brown’s seven children, can attest to both.

First there were the drawbacks. Her father, who served DR for 31 formative years, was deeply dedicated to working in *barrios* that struggled with poverty and other socioeconomic issues. This was part of his character, his calling, a philosophy of ministry inherited from his missionary parents and his birth outside Mexico City. Live and work where God has placed you! But it presented challenges to the family.

“We really had no extra money,” says Helen, “and our clothes were always from rummage. I remember asking my father one time, ‘Why don’t you take a bigger church, a place that has more salary to pay you?’ He said, ‘I’m not here to live in a big home or drive a fancy car.’ I remember on one occasion he would not accept a raise from Divine Redeemer because of budget issues.”

The Browns lived in small houses in the DR neighborhood, filled with five children, both parents, and Helen’s grandfather. Along with those humble standards, she knows firsthand the special expectations projected on a pastor’s family.

Her late husband, Fred San Roman, was a divorced member of DR, the congregation where he and his former wife had sung in the choir; a place she *still* attended. Helen and Fred got romantically involved, even though he was 18 years older than her. No one in the church or family approved of their union, so they got married by a justice of the peace. It took a while for the gossip and judgment—the scandal—to subside, but it did. Today, Helen has no regrets about the 55 years she and Fred spent sharing their lives. Ironically, Fred would go on to become one of Reverend Brown’s best buddies.

Then there are the blessings, and ultimately, Helen has no

regrets about having a pastor as her father. His example lives on in her spirit.

“He was what I consider a *real minister*,” she says. “If someone needed a place to stay, he would find them lodging. He got to know rival gang members in the neighborhood and would break up fights. I remember him getting up at 4:00 a.m. numerous times a week to walk to an elderly widow’s home and administer her medication. And he worked so hard to raise the money to build our sanctuary.

“We’re all human,” she goes on. “My Dad had a temper at times, but he also had a deeply compassionate heart.”



Helen seated in the backyard of her San Antonio home

Never underestimate the power of a simple gesture. When **Angie Abrego**, 89, was seven years old, a neighbor invited her mother to DR. From that time onward, the DR family would be a vital part of Angie’s life.

When she lost both parents to tuberculosis by age 10, Angie and her siblings faced an uncertain future. But they quickly found support through Wilma Callaghan and Izel Phelps, two of the missionaries serving at HNS. The women helped find placement for Angie at the Presbyterian School for Mexican Girls in Taft, Texas. There, the strong emphasis on education became deeply engrained in her. Later, when she graduated from a nursing school in New Mexico, she returned to San Antonio and her roots with DR.

Over the years, Angie would gratefully give back to the denomination that became her extended family. She served at every level of the Presbyterian structure—her local church, Presbytery, Synod, and finally at the national offices in Louisville, Kentucky as Head of the Racial-Ethnic Ministries Department. She has lived a lifetime of exemplary service.

Angie has fond memories of many of DR's pastors. She recalls how Reverend Lacy Simms would visit her mother every week during her illness, walking across the neighborhood to bring her bulletins from the worship services, pray with her, and lift her spirits. "He was a beautiful pastor," she says.

And Angie was especially close to Reverend Carlos Lopez.

"From the moment he came to DR," she says, "we were thrilled with him, his wife, Karen, and their children. He was happy, always smiling, an excellent preacher, teacher, and counselor. He was not only a pastor to us—he was a friend."

Lopez was meticulous in tending to the DR flock, staying in touch with members of all ages. Angie took it upon herself to drive him to the homes of the elderly and those who needed special attention. 'Their faces would light up when they saw him,' said Angie. "They hung on his every word."

Early in his tenure, Lopez quickly showed his leadership and ingenuity. DR discovered that their sanctuary roof needed

replacing. Angie recalls, “Carlos led the efforts to accomplish this great task by mobilizing our members under the direction of a roofer. Even our youth helped remove clay tiles. By doing the work ourselves, we saved \$20,000. Reverend Lopez showed such faith in us, believing we could accomplish this.”

Angie also has fond memories of the trips DR took to Camp Loma Linda in New Mexico.

“It was a chance to bond with Reverend Lopez and his family,” she said. “We fell in love with his constant kidding as well as his deep spiritual leadership. He connected with our young people right away and that connection remained a part of his ministry the entire time he was with us. He was the *manos de Cristo* to our congregation, leaving a lasting imprint on all of our lives.”

(At this writing, Reverend Lopez was under Hospice care, living out his last days.)



*Angie Abrego and her husband, Frank, kidding around with
Reverend Carlos Lopez (middle) outside DR*

◆ Additional Historic Photos ◆



*Scouts from Troop 52 posing in front of The Alamo,
downtown San Antonio*



*DR, Christmas Eve, 2007, Reverend Rob Mueller seated next
to Reverend Chavez*



Ms. Callaghan with her HNS kindergarten class, 1960s



Reverend Lacy Simms, who played piano despite his physical disability



Reverend and Rebecca Rodriguez with their son, Abiu, early 1940s



*Reverend Alfonso Baez sitting with his family on the porch
of the DR manse, early 1930s*



*Children from DR delivering homemade dollhouses to a sick
child in the neighborhood, 1950s*

**Installed Pastors who have
served Divine Redeemer**

Reverend H.A Phillips, 1914

Reverend R.R. Gregory, 1914

Reverend Abelardo Marquez, 1914—1915

Reverend Saul V. Gallegos, 1915—1916

Reverend Ramon Lopez y Lopez, 1916—1927

Reverend Earl C. Welliver, 1927—1929

Reverend C. Harry Sarles, 1929—1931

Reverend Alfonso Baez, 1931—1933

Reverend Lacy Simms, 1933—1939

Reverend Juan Rodriguez, 1939—1941

Reverend A.V. Lucero, 1941-1946

Reverend Robert A. Brown, 1946—1977

Reverend Carlos Alberto Lopez, 1978—1990

Reverend Robert Walker Mueller, 1994—Present



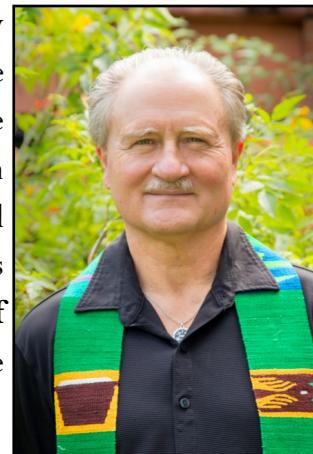
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR/EDITOR: The Reverend Doctor Krin Van Tatenhove has 30 years of experience as a Presbyterian Pastor, with parishes ranging from rural to suburban to inner-city East Los Angeles. He has also served as a Hospice chaplain, an Army Chaplain, a substance abuse counselor, and coordinator of projects with Habitat for Humanity. He is Chairperson of the Mission Outreach and Justice Committee of Mission Presbytery, and the Communications Director for Partners for Sacred Places, Texas Office. His service has been marked by a passion for ministries of justice, both in the U.S. and abroad. He has an extensive bibliography of published articles for both secular and faith-based magazines and newspapers, and has also produced numerous books through his nonprofit, **Torch of Faith**. He lives in San Antonio with his wife and son.



Editor's Afterword

Shane Claiborne, author and Christian activist, briefly served alongside Saint Teresa of Calcutta before her death. She told him, “Shane, thank you for coming across the globe to be here, but when you return, find the Calcutta outside your own back door.”

Wherever a community of faith is rooted, immediate needs surround them, and the Biblical admonition that runs deepest in the Christian tradition are Jesus’ words to serve “the least” in our midst.

When theological jargon fades and liturgies grow silent, when doctrines and creeds become archaic, when buildings crumble into dust, what remains is our persistence in showing God’s love, especially to those who struggle in hard conditions. This is at the core of the entire century of DR’s history. Today, if you were to worship with them on a Sunday morning, you would exit the front doors of the sanctuary to see this house directly across the street. The work will continue!



The exact hour of its birth—*el nacimiento*—was November 14, 1914, 3:30 p.m. In a dilapidated building along the railroad tracks in San Antonio, a missionary named Rev. Harry Phillips began a Bible class for refugees from the Mexican Revolution.

That humble seed, planted with love, would flourish into a ministry that would help transform the Westside of San Antonio for a century to come, offering *una mesa para la gente*, a place of grace and restoration.

