

THE HISTORY OF SLAVIC EVANGELICAL CHURCH ORANGE COUNTY

Believers who lived in Orange County for a long time attended the Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church in Hollywood. But in 1966, when it became clear that a fair number of believers lived in Orange County, they began to consider a possibility of starting a worship service in Orange County, so as to avoid the lengthy drive.

Brother Alfons and Sister Milania Intenberg brought this matter to the pastor of the Hollywood church, brother Alexander Filippovich Kuzichev, and at first he plainly refused to satisfy their request. But the Intenberg presented some good reasons. First, the distant location would prevent some believers who lived in Orange County from coming to Hollywood for a church service. Secondly, there were many Russian-speaking people living in Orange County. If they were evangelized and invited to a church service in Hollywood, they would not come - they would have to drive far away.

Having heard the arguments, brother Kuzichev agreed with them and asked: «When would you want to start services there? » Brother and sister replied: «Next Sunday».



*The picture was obtained with consent of Hollywood Church
from www.sebchurch.org*

January 23, 1966, at 2 pm, in the house of brother Paul and Sister Nina Sirota, at 981 South Newhope, Santa Ana, California, the first worship service was held. Brother Alexander Filippovich Kuzichev visited this service, preached the word for edification of those who were present and prayed that the Lord would abundantly bless the ministry of the Russian group in Santa Anna.

On January 30, 1966, believers living in Orange County gathered for a meeting where, with the prior consent of the Hollywood Church committee, it was decided to hold services in Santa Anna. Brother Alfons Intenberg was elected as the group leader, and brother Adolf M. Dors was elected as honorary leader.



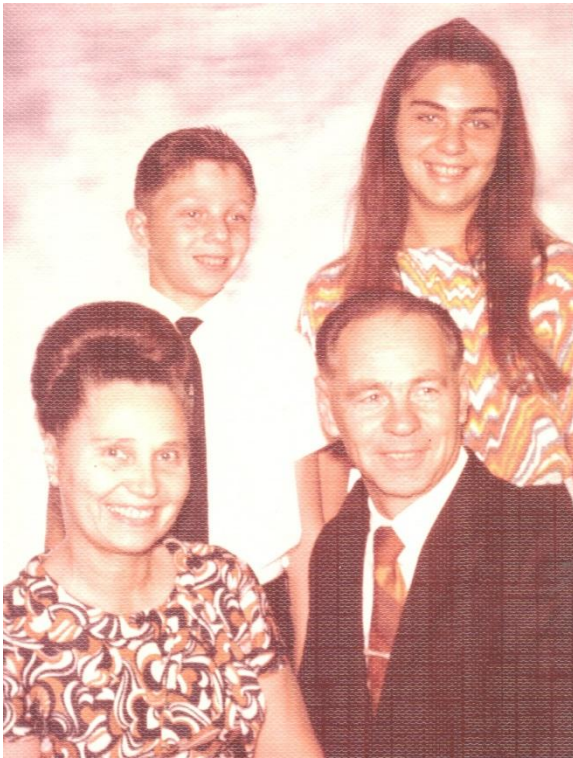
Adolf Mikhalovich and Olga Dors

Since then, the worship services were held in the house of brother and sister Sirota, brother Victor and sister Lucy Pronenko, Sergei and Tatyana Zayarnyh as well as in the homes of other church members. Sometimes the meetings were held in the house of brother Peter and sister Nina Lomakiny, who, although they were members of the American church, loved to attend worship services in the Russian group as well.

The worship services were supported by scheduled preaching done by brothers, congregational hymn singing, youth participation, and were beautified by the singing of the sisters Lucy Pronenko and Alexei Dohmashevsky. Preachers from other churches were

invited to participate in the ministry. The Russian group was visited by such prominent brothers as Alexander Kuzichev, Rodion Beryozov, John Mark (Galustyan) and others. Brother A. Dors was exceedingly helpful in the ministry. But in May of 1966, the Pacific Coast Slavic Baptist Association (PCSBA) sent brother A. Dors as evangelist to San Diego. At this time there were several Russian-speaking families, but there was no church.

On May 27, 1966, a Slavic group of believers from Santa Anna wrote a letter to the PCSBA, earnestly requesting that brother A. Dors be returned to Santa Anna, but their plea was denied, and so brother A. Dors relocated to San Diego. Although brother A. Dors was visiting Santa Anna, brother **Alfons Intenberg** was fully responsible for the leadership of the group.



*Alfons Ernestovich, Milanya Petrovna (the wife),
Veronika (the daughter) and Leonid (the son)
Intenberg*

Alfons Intenber was born October 15th 1914 in Ukriane, Horol city of Poltava region.

When Germans retreated, he and his wife, his mother, his brother, his father, and his mother in law were evacuated to Germany

In a Munich refugee camp, their family met with brother Alexander Kuzichev, who testified to them about the Lord. After a while, their family moved to Belgium, since Alfons and his brother signed a contract to work there in the coal mines. In Belgium Alfons was saved and on May 28, 1950 he was baptized. Soon after, they moved to Toronto, Canada.

In 1964 brother Alfons with family moved to California, and settled in Orange County.

August 12, 1966, a Slavic group of believers in Santa Anna sent a letter to the PCSBA Committee requesting independent status, and on August 26 sent a request to be accepted into the Association as “The Slavic Evangelical Church of Orange County”, which was affirmed in November at the 29th congress. At that time the church consisted of fifteen members. Together with the children and visitors, there were about 40 people.

In order to have a permanent service place, they decided to search for a property. In November of 1966, an agreement was made to rent a space in the American church “Broadway Baptist Church” at 1144 South Broadway, Santa Ana, CA, and they began to gather there.

In December 1967, brother Michael Kopich, sister Anastasia Kopich and sister Maria Kopich, who moved from Chicago, became church members. Brother Michael Kopich was ordained as pastor while he was living in Canada, therefore at the annual church meeting on January 5, 1968 he was elected as church pastor, brother Alfons Intenberg as deacon, sister Maria Dohmashevskaya as secretary, and Victor Pronenko as cashier.

Since in late 1976 the leadership of “Broadway Baptist Church” decided to sell their

building, the Slavic congregation had to find a different premise.

A rental agreement of a building adjacent to the main church was reached with the leaders of “Greenville Country Church” at 3501 South Greenville Street, Santa Ana, CA 92704.



Greenville Country Church

On December 9, 1977, at the Slavic church members’ meeting, brother Mikhail Kopich asked to be released from the service of church pastor by January 1, 1978 due to his poor health condition. His request was granted by the church.

Brother Mikhail Kopich was the pastor of the church from January 5, 1968 to December 9, 1977 - 9 years and 11 months.

Not having anyone who could take up leadership, the church decided to fast and pray, seeking God's guidance.

Soon after time of fasting and prayer, brother Moisey Bogdanov had visited *Slavic Evangelical Church of Santa Ana* and served there by preaching.



Moisey Timofeich Bogdanov

After some consideration, they decided to invite brother Bogdanov to assume the leadership of the church beginning January 1, 1978.

An invitation was sent to brother Bogdanov, to which he responded with consent.

January 1, 1978, Moses Timofeevich Bogdanov and his wife Nadezhda Fedorovna Bogdanova joined the Slavic Evangelical Church and Moses Timofeevich was elected as church leader. Brother Alfons Intenberg was elected as deacon, Arthur Davidson as assistant, Nina Dohmashevskaya as

cashier, Maria Dohmashevskaya as a secretary.

As much as possible, the church was financially supporting the lepers in Paraguay, the orphans in Argentina, the poor, the sick and the missionaries.

On January 19, 1979, brother Moses Bogdanov withdrew from his duties of a pastor due to family circumstances, regretting that he could not carry this work further. Brother Moses Bogdanov was the leader of the church from January 1, 1978 to January 19, 1979 - 1 year and 19 days.



Yakov Federovich and Vera Ananyevna Kozlov

Yakov Fedotovitch Koziol (Kozlov) was invited to lead the church.

Yakov Fedotovitch Kozlov was born March 20, 1919 in Rivne, Poland. When he was 17, his parents and family immigrated to Canada. There he graduated from the Bible College and married Vera Muzykova. After a conversation with Peter Naumovich Deineko from the Slavic Evangelical Society, Yakov and Vera decided to devote themselves to missionary work. In 1957, they left for Korea, where for 12 years they served as missionaries under Slavic Evangelical Society at the HLKX radio station. In 1969, they moved to Manila, Philippines, and in 1978 moved to Los Angeles, to the center of the Far East Broadcasting Company.

On March 16, 1979, Yakov Fedotovitch Kozlov was formally invited to be the church pastor and sister Vera Ananevna was elected as church clerk.

In the April 25, 1987, membership meeting, members unanimously decided to register the church. The church was registered as Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church of Orange County.

February 26, 1999, the church pastor, brother Yakov Kozlov, asked to be released from the pastoral duties due to his great work load in the mission and advanced years. It became difficult for him to drive in the evenings, covering a distance of about 100 miles in both directions.

Yakov Fedotovitch Kozlov pastored the church from September 23, 1978 to February 26, 1999 - 20 years and 6 months.

Sister Vera Kozlova asked to be released from her duties as the church cashier. Both requests were approved.



Rudy Vince



Anna Vince

Rudy Vince was invited by the church and assumed the position of church pastor on April 15th 1999.

Brother Rudy Vince was born on 20th of June 1954 in a small town of Orsk, Ural region, and grew up in Omsk, Siberia. When he was 15, his family moved to Estonia. In 1972 Rudy entered into the covenant with the Lord by holy water baptism. In 1975 his

family moved to Germany. In 1979 he graduated from a Bible school in Germany. In 1981 Rudy got married to Anna Martins. In 1982 they moved to Los Angeles and became members at *Slavic Evangelical Christian Baptist Church of Santa Anna*.

In 1986 Rudy graduated from *Biola University* with a Masters of Divinity. In the same year, Rudy and Anna, as missionaries with "*Far East Broadcasting*" (FEBC), left to Saipan Island, where they worked at Christian radio station. In 1990 they returned back to Los Angeles.

May 22, 2002 Yuri Ovcharenko, Gerta Ovcharenko, Timofei Ovcharenko and Elena Ovcharenko, former members of Bethany Church in Los Angeles, were admitted to the church membership at a membership service. Brother Yuri Ovcharenko was elected as pastoral assistant.



Maria Dohmashevskaya

By early 2003 the church already had 27 members.

On January 5, 2003, at the membership meeting, sister Maria Dohmashevskaya requested to be released from the duty of church secretary due to health condition. Sister Maria Dohmashevskaya served as church secretary from January 1968 to January 2003 - 35 years.

Elena Ovcharenko was elected as the new secretary. Timothy Ovcharenko was chosen as a youth leader. Pavel Ermakov was chosen the third deacon, in addition to the deacons Alfons Intenberg and Boris Badrak.

Then the church's pastor Rudy Vince requested to be released from the ministry of the senior pastor due to his great engagement in the mission, and to transfer this service to his co-worker Yuri Ovcharenko. He did not refuse to be the pastor's assistant and to help his brother Yuri. All unanimously agreed with the proposal.

On January 5, 2003, brother Yuri Ovcharenko was elected as the senior pastor of the *Slavic Church of Evangelical Christian Baptists*.

Yuri Ovcharenko was born in Mogocha, Chita region. His childhood and youth he spent in the Northern Caucasus. At the age of 14 he was saved and was baptized at the age of 16. In 1982, he married Herta Hofmann. In 1988 they immigrated to America with their three children Timothy, Elena and Anton, settled in Los Angeles and became members of the "Bethany" church. In 1992, brother Yuri was elected to lead "Bethany" church, and in 1994 he was ordained to pastoral ministry. In March of 2002, he left the "Bethany" church and joined the *Slavic Church of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Orange County*.



Yuri and Gretta Ovcharenko

When the leadership of the Greenville Sutungu American Church substantially raised the rent, the Slavic church had to move. An agreement was reached with the management of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa at 3800 South Fairview Rd., Santa Ana, CA 92704

On May 30, 2006, they began to have worship services at Calvary Chapel Church on Sundays from 2:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. In July the Bible study was added and prayer meetings were held on Tuesdays from 7:30 pm in room No. 11.

By November 1, 2006, there were 38 members in the church.

In 2007, Yuri Ovcharenko, the church's pastor, graduated from the seminary, and on June 17 the church celebrated the obtaining of the Master of Divinity degree by their pastor.

Since the youth choir was organized by this time and there was a desire to have youth Bible studies, a need arose to use classes on Sunday evening. Since there were no available buildings in Calvary Chapel at that time, they decided to look for another location. Brothers and sisters of the Chinese church from Irvine city offered their house of prayer. Saying farewell to the ministers of Calvary Chapel, the church gatherings started in November 2009 in the Chinese Community Baptist Church at 6 Hughes # 160, Irvine, CA 92618.

On January 16, 2011, at 3:00pm the ministers' ordination service took place in the church. Badrak Boris Petrovich, Lubyano Vitaliy Nikolaevich and Surgai Andrei Vladimirovich were ordained to deacon service and Ovcharenko Timofey Yurievich was ordained for the pastoral ministry, he was also entrusted with youth work.

The following ministers were invited to attend the ordination: Nikolai Alekseevich Bugriyev, Ivan Vladimirovich Mileev, Anatoly Petrovich Ageev, Viktor Petrovich Shakha, Iosif Danilovich Bondarenko, Adolf Andreyevich Pikhai, Valery Zhakevich, Dr. Bruce Baloyan from Azusa Pacific University, pastor David Manne from Calvary Chapel, Rudi Vince and Yuri Ovcharenko. After the prayer of ordination, the new ministers received certificates. At the end of the service a photo was taken, later they shared a festive meal.



The ordination service. Top row: Yury Ovcharenko, Bruce Baloyan, Adof Pikhai, Ivan Mileev, David, George Kuzichev. Bottom row: Viktor Ovcharenko, Timofey Ovcharenko, Rober Ovcharenko, Andrey and Elena Surgy.



The ordination. Top row: Valera Zhakevich, Rudy Vince, Anatoliy Ageev, Joseph Bondarenko, pastor (unknown name), Nikolay Bugriev. Bottom row: Valentina Badrak, Boris Badrak, Vitaliy Lubyanyoy, Ludmila Lubyanyaya

Since a substantial number of children were added to the local church, in February of 2013 the children's Sunday school was opened.

In 2015, the local church had 47 members, the largest number ever.

The church's slogan is: To live in peace, in love, and understanding. The church continues its ministry on earth."The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end" Lam. 3:22.

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The history of the church was recorded by Yuri Ovcharenko using information from the minutes of the membership meetings recorded by the secretaries of the church Alexei Dohmashevsky, Maria Dohmashevskaya, Elena Ovcharenko, as well as oral testimonies of brother Alfons Intenberg, Victor and Lucy Pronenko, sister Tatyana Zayarnaya, brother Adolf Dors and Rudy Vince. David Ovcharenko, Andrei Surgai and Elena Surgay helped in drafting the history of the church. The photos were provided by Elena Ermakova, Hollywood Church and Timothy Ovcharenko.



CHURCH PASTORS AND LEADERS



Intenberg Adolf
Ernestovich
Founder and Leader
1966-1968 r.



Dors Adolf Mikhalovich
Honorary Leader
January –May 1966 r.



Kopich Mikhael
Church Pastor
January 1968 -
December 1977 r.



Bogdanov Moisey
Timofeevich
Leader
January 1978 - January
1979 r.



Kozlov Yakov Fedorovich
Church Pastor
September 1978 -
February 1999 r.



Rudi Vince
Pastor
April 1999 - January 2000



Uriy Ovcharenko

Pastor

January 2003