

BIOGRAPHY OF ALFONSO EARNEST INTENBERG



Alfonso Earnest Intenberg was born on October 15, 1914 in a Ukrainian city of Chorol governed by Poltava. The parents had eight children - 5 boys and 3 girls, and he was the fifth. His father owned some livestock, and was relatively strict. He taught the children to work from their childhood. Since during the work season there were up to ten employees, he was considered the “kulak”¹ and exploiter of work.

During the process of collectivization, the father predicted a bad outcome for the livestock as well as for the entire family. He was a wise man who through some connections and bribes secured the necessary paperwork for his family members that assured that they were «serednaki»². Because of that, the government did not oppress them. In 1929, the father became sick. During this time, he received a secret message: «Your family is already on the list to be deported to Siberia. Make an appeal to the government to sell all your possessions due to your sickness since you will not be able to handle all the livestock». To their surprise, the appeal was granted. This was purely God's grace in their lives, which they did not realize at the time. They sold everything and had enough resources to move and be established at the new place.

In January 1930, the father died from internal hemorrhage. After burying their father, the family moved to the city of Suma. This city had a big car-manufacturing factory, which employed 7,000 people, and had Factory-Industrial College (FIC). Alfonso enrolled into this college, which accepted people based not on the desire for specialty, but on the health conditions. That is how in spite of Alfonso's wishes, he was made a blacksmith, which will greatly help him in the future.

After the successful completion of the FIC and an additionally evening trade school, Alfonso enrolled into a five-year Institute of Physical Education in the city of Harkov.

¹Kulak is a wealthy farmer who hires other people to help on the farm. The term of the Soviet era. The government could arbitrarily call any farmer a kulak, take away all his property, and send his family to Siberia.

² Serednyaki – farmers who work for themselves, don't hire any help, and produce food for their families only

After he graduated from the institute³, in 1940, he taught sports at the Second Medical Institute, and was a gymnastic trainer. In 1942, Alfonso married Melany Talpa.

After the Germans retreated at the end of the II WW, he took his wife, brother and parents of the wife and moved to Germany. They encountered much fear and anxiety, but miraculously the Lord kept them safe until the end of the war. While in Germany, they settled in the refugee camp in Munich. During their stay in this camp, they met Aleksandr Filippovich Kuzichev, who tried to witness to them about the Lord. However, that was not successful at the time.

In 1947, the entire family moved to Belgium because Alfonso and his brother Earnest secured a contract to work in the coalmine. Alfonso worked in the underground shaft for only 3 months, after which he eagerly accepted a newly available position of a blacksmith.

Belgium did not participate in the war and did not suffer the consequences of war. They had an abundance of everything and especially of food supplies, which was why they attracted many immigrants of different nationalities.

Aleksandr Kusizhev continued his care for them and informed Pastor Greekman about the Intenberg family in Belgium. The pastor later visited them and gave them the Bible and other Christian literature. They lived in dormitories, which were reconstructed from the war barracks and formed the entire camp.

The Nicolaychuk family also lived in this camp. They hosted evangelistic services in their residence and were constantly inviting the Intenberg family. While attending these services, the Holy Spirit opened their minds and they began understand the truth. After a short time, these services made their way to the Intenberg residence. Because the neighbors next door did not like the singing, they turned up the volume of their radio during the worship portion of the service.

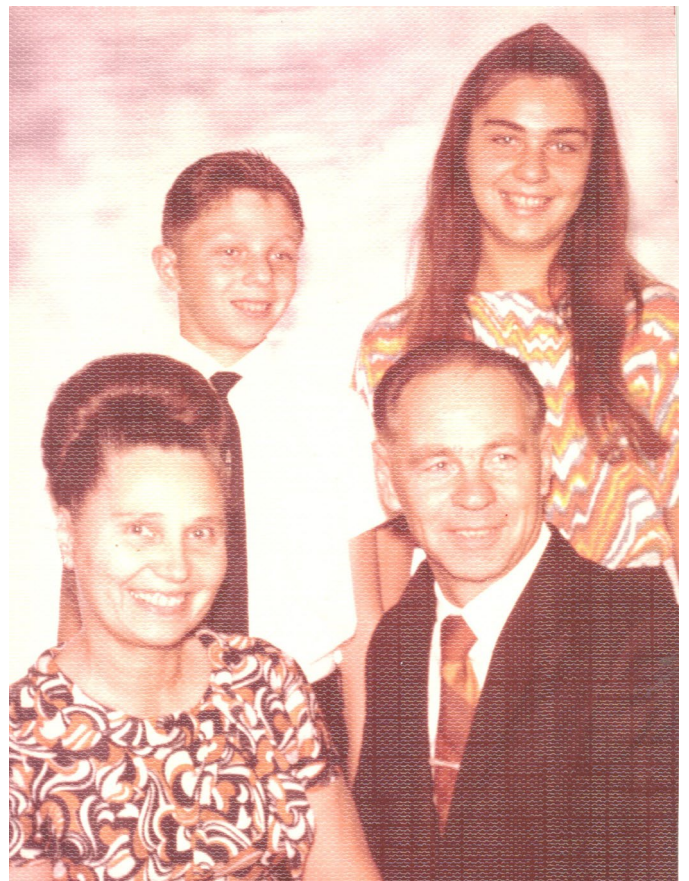
While reading the Word of God and listening to the sermons on Fridays, the Holy Spirit touched their hearts and Melany was the first in the family to accept Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. On November 5, 1949, she was baptized by faith. In 1950, Alfonso also believed, and was baptized by faith on May 28.

³ Institutes in the Soviet Union Republics practically had status almost same as universities. Universities were allowed mostly in big cities of Russia.

After working for 3 years in Belgium and saving money for their move to Canada, the whole family moved to Toronto in June of 1950. Brother Osipovich from Ukrainian Church greeted them and invited them to stay with him. Since they still had some money to be established at the new location, they rented a single room residence after one week.

Alfonso and Melany became members of the Ukrainian Church, which had morning services at 10:00 a.m., and was across the street from a Russian Church that had services from 12:00 p.m. They always attended both services, but because of the language and the pastor Pastor Guk, they were more inclined to the Russian church. After about two years, they asked the Ukrainian Church elders to allow them to move their membership to a Russian Church. With great heartache, and with many persuasion attempts, they were allowed to leave the church in peace; however, they always cultivated a friendly relationship with the Ukrainian Church.

Shortly after their move to Canada, Alfonso was hired as a factory worker. This factory built railroad bridges as well as steel and concrete buildings. This factory was just established and they did not have the cranes needed for moving the heavy metal, —that had to be carried on the shoulders. While carrying heavy loads, Alfonso damaged his back. Because of the pinching of the nerves, he had terrible pain in the legs. He had a back surgery, but he fully recovered only after about two years. During this time, he was very gloom, but the Lord encouraged Alfonso through His Word, especially through Habakkuk 3:17-19 «He has made my feet like hind's feet». Praise the Lord! He fulfilled His promise.



In 1964, with the help of the Dohmashevskiys, the Intenberg family moved to Santa Anna, CA. Shortly thereafter, Alfonso got an easy job fixing photo cameras. However, his wife Melany had a difficult job working next to hot stoves of plastic casting of

electric parts. With their arrival, they became members of the Hollywood Church, which was pastored by their long-time friend from Germany, Aleksandr Kuzichev

During this time, the Church of Hollywood had 20 members from Santa Anna, and with children - about 30 people. After over two years, it became difficult for some to go to Hollywood from Santa Anna. After some deliberation, they decided to form a church in Santa Anna. Brother Alfonso and sister Melany Intenberg went to the pastor Aleksandr Filippovich Kuzichev in Hollywood with an offer to open a new church. At first, Aleksandr Filippovich was absolutely against even considering this suggestion. However, they explained to him that because of the long distance, the Christians are unable to come to Hollywood all the time to attend the church. In addition, the Orange County had many Russian-speakers. If they were to do evangelism and invite them to church to Hollywood, they will not come because it is too far. On the other hand, if there was church in Orange County, they may come. After similar arguments, he agreed and asked: «When would you like to begin services? » and was told «next Sunday».

January 23, 1966, there was the first service in Santa Anna at 2:00 p.m.

Aleksandr Filippovich Kuzichev attended the grand opening ceremony and encouraged the congregation with the Scriptures. He also prayed so that the Lord would abundantly bless the ministry of the Russian group in Santa Anna. Brother A. Dors who, by this time, moved from Canada, was a tremendous help to the ministry. He was the main speaker and head pastor at Santa Anna church. In May of 1966, the Pacific Coast Slavic Baptist Association sent brother A. Dors as an evangelist to San Diego as a church planter. The church leadership of Santa Anna church was fully in the hands of Alfonso Intenberg.

From January 5, 1969 until December 9, 1977 for the duration of 9 years and 11 months, Mikhail Kopich who moved from Chicago was the church pastor. After almost 10 years, the Lord called him home. From January 1, 1978, Moses Timopheevich Bogdanov was leading the church for one year and 19 days. Brother Yakov Fedotovitch Kozlov served as a pastor the longest time of 20 years and 6 months.

Unfortunately, many church members moved to live in other places, some went to be with the Lord, and eventually only two families were left at Santa Anna: Alfonso and Melany, brother and sister Kozlov, and Maria Dohmashevskiy, with an occasional visit from the unbelievers. One time, in the moment of despair, brother Kozlov

suggested to brother Intenberg that perhaps it is time to close down their church. He replied: «Brother Kozlov, if it is not difficult for you to come, let's continue». His wife Melany said: «He wants a big church to be here».

In time, more unbelievers started to come, which was a huge encouragement. Later on, 6 people accepted the Lord as their savior, and brother Kozlov baptized them by faith. Brother and sister Kozlov were devoted ministers of the church, and their ministry was not in vain before the Lord.

Sometimes when brother Kozlov was absent because of the missions ministry which he was a part of, Yuriy Ovcharenko from Los Angeles was invited to preach.

On April 15, 1999 with the invitation of the church, Rudy Vince became the pastor of the church. On January 5, 2003, during the annual members meeting, Pastor Rudy Vince asked to be released from the pastoral ministry due to his involvement in the missions. In addition, he asked to put his assistant Yuriy Ovcharenko in his place and agreed to be assistant pastor to help brother Yuriy. Alfonso Earnest wrote: «In my eyes, we now have a large church, with my beloved pastor Brother Yuriy Ovcharenko. I praise and thank the Lord that my desire is fulfilled. During the time on earth, there are joys and sorrows. In 1988 on my birthday, I buried my 33-year-old son Leon, and in 2003 on Christmas, my beloved wife Melany went to be with the Lord. Without her, I felt incredibly incomplete. However, the Lord is merciful. He gave me a wonderful daughter Vera, who is extremely caring and helps me in all things. She lives close by. In addition, He gave me dear grandchildren: Amy, Lorry, and Denny who are doing everything in the home and outside. The Lord balances both the joys and the sorrows. Let His name be praised for everything!”

Looking back, in 1966 brother Alfonso Earnest Intenberg was the initiator of what will be Slavic Evangelical Church of Orange County. From the very first day of the church until the last day of his life, he was an active church member. A few times, when the church was without a pastor, he was leading the church. He tried to understand all the church issues and tried to help in any way that he could. He prayed a lot for the ministers, for all the church members, and for many others. He was especially concerned for his daughter Vera so that the Lord would give her wisdom in spiritual upbringing of children, as well as for the grandchildren: Amy, Lorry, and Denny, so that they would avoid the corruption of sinful life and would

wholeheartedly follow the Lord. Alfonso Earnest always prayed that the Lord would be merciful to him and not allow him to be a burden to his family and friends in his old age. The Lord answered his prayers. Until the very last day of his life, although with difficulty, he could walk by himself. During his last church service in June, he prayed: “Lord you called my wife home a long time ago, she is resting with You, take me also, I am so tired of this life”. And the Lord granted his prayer.

On September 7, 2018 at 1:00 p.m., the Lord called him to Himself. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! Yes, says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them (rev 14:13). The Lord also says this of him: “He did a good deed for me. He did what he could”. (Mark 14:6, 8).

Rest in peace our beloved Alfonso Earnest!

“Then you will enter into rest and rise *again* for your allotted portion at the end of the ^[o]age.” (Dan.12:13).