

# MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MY LIFE

by Paul Gabanek

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*Gabanek's personal testimony describing his conversion and the Holy Spirit's transformative work in his life, beginning from his birth in Slovakia through his experience of spiritual rebirth and sanctification by the Spirit.*

13 Chapters

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## 03. Introduction

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Introduction The ministry of the Holy Spirit is very important in spiritual life. In the third chapter, verses 2 Corinthians 3:6-12 of his second letter to Corinthians the apostle Paul wrote about two different ministries: the first, “ministry of the letter” in the time of the Old Testament, and the second: “ministry of the Spirit” in the time of the New Testament. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is also said to be glorious.

Why are there so many different religions in the world? Why are there so many different churches in the world? Why are there so many different teachings, so many different convictions etc? This problem can be only solved by one true answer. The answer is: people don't follow God's commandments and orders of Jesus Christ! It wasn't so from the beginning. The Word of God is the only light for life, especially spiritual life. The apostles lived with Jesus for 3 and a half years. I am sure they had perfect theological teaching. He taught them and they saw His miracles. But it wasn't enough for their future ministry of spreading the Gospel. Jesus commanded them: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.” (Acts 1:4) And later: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8) This command was not only given to the disciples, but also to all believers, because we read: “The promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:39) The order “wait for my Father's promise”, i.e. for the baptism with the Holy Spirit, is the most serious message for all who want to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is most important for all believers because Jesus said to the apostles: “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13) But when we don't receive the Holy Spirit, how can He lead us into the truth? It is impossible. Nowadays it is the greatest problem in Christianity, because there are more than 1,000 kinds of Christian believers and Christian teachings today. In the time of the apostles there were 3 types of Christians:

(1) Strong believers who obeyed Jesus' commands: they repented, were baptized and then they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-39)

(2) Disciples in Samaria: they believed in Jesus and were all baptized in water, but none of them received the promise of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the apostles from Jerusalem came to Samaria and “prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 8:15-17)

(3) Disciples in Ephesus: Apostle Paul asked them: „Have you received the Holy Spirit, since you believed?” And they answered: „We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit!” (Acts 19:1-6) But after that, all of them received the fullness of the Gospel. The main result was: all of them started to teach only one teaching and preached the same Gospel. And therefore in those times “all the believers were one in heart and mind.” It was the work of the Holy Spirit. They shared everything they had, nobody was needy or poor, they gave testimonies with great power and great grace was upon them all etc (Acts 4:32-34). But today there are very few Christians who want to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Therefore there are so many different teachings and groups of believers

because they have never received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Many Christians have forgotten what Jesus said: “Nevertheless I tell you: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the COMFORTER (the Holy Spirit) will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7)! The Comforter has a great role in the life of the Christian church. He is the main builder of the Church now because he takes place of Jesus Christ on the earth. We can do nothing without Jesus – because he told us so (John 15:5). The same is valid for the Holy Spirit, because only He is the representative of Jesus Christ. Nobody can substitute for him. This is very important. Even the best theological school cannot substitute the Person of the Holy Spirit.

## 04. MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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### MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in everyday life

I was born on February 19th 1932 in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. My father came from Púchov and my mother from Budapest, the capital of Hungary. My parents were believers, they attended church and led us to fear God and to worship Him. They lived in Bratislava, but attended the church in Kittsee and also in Vienna, Austria. My parents prayed for their children fervently. My mother died during the Second World War. I believe my mother's prayers came to the throne of God. God spoke to me by His Holy Spirit. I was convicted of being a sinner. God gave me His grace, and I repented. It was the greatest grace of God given to me. During my life as an unbeliever I was many times ill and led poor life. After returning to God everything in my life changed as Jesus had promised in John 10:10 : "The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." To return to God means to return to proper life. After I had repented, my character was changed and I began to live a new life.

I felt that the angels had great joy in heaven. Never before had I felt such a joy in my heart. It seemed to me that the world around me changed: people, friends, nature and everything. I didn't realize at that time that the real change took place within me. The Holy Scripture says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8) We can see God already here on the earth. And therefore: "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the L o r d ." (Hebrews 12:14) The entrance to the Kingdom of heaven must take place during our life on the earth. Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24) Most believers think that the entrance to the kingdom of heaven will happen after their death. No, it must be now and it starts in our life when we are born-again. As Jesus said to Nicodemus: "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit." (John 3:5)

## 05. The first appearance of an angel: God's calling to follow Jesus

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The first appearance of an angel: God's calling to follow Jesus

It happened in 1948. Once I woke up in the middle of the night. It was very dark in my room. Suddenly a strong light was shining in my room. An angel of the Lord appeared in my bedroom, so it became very bright. He stood close to my bed, his face was bright, his eyes were like fire, his clothes were white as snow. I could not look at him. Holy fear came upon me. He spoke to me: "Come and follow Jesus... follow Him and be His witness... I shall be with you all the time of your life." When I started to pray he disappeared from my sight and the bedroom got dark again. I could not sleep then. I still felt the holy presence of God. I prayed till morning. The room was full of holiness. Even the walls, chairs and windows appeared very special because of the presence of God. I had never had such a revelation before. I realized that stories about angels were not just fables. I was amazed. The second time an angel appeared to me was in the woods of the Sitno mountains. It was midnight when I was wandering in the woods and got lost. An angel helped me and led me out of the woods. I knelt down and gave glory and thanksgiving to God.

Then I understood that God is real and also the heavens are real – closer to us, than we can imagine. Most believers think that heaven is very far away from us and the earth, but it is very near. When we get saved, it must take place within us! (1 John 4:12) At that time there was only a little Pentecostal group of believers in Bratislava who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. They prayed and sang in angelic tongues, they were enthusiastic. It was a glorious look. I felt the presence of God there. There was the Kingdom of heaven among them. Then I was baptized in water, as Jesus said: "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved." (Mark 16:16)

## 06. Receiving the Holy Spirit or being baptized into the Holy Spirit

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### Receiving the Holy Spirit or being baptized into the Holy Spirit

I also longed to be baptized into the Holy Spirit. I prayed for this for three months, fasting from time to time. I prayed at home, also in nature, in the woods. Once at midnight when I returned from the woods I became sure that God had heard my prayers. I received a great joy and was not sad any more. If God hears our prayers, we can be sure of it, as it is written in 1 Samuel 1:13-18. A week later I was at home alone, singing spiritual songs. Inspired by the Holy Spirit I started to pray. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon, biblically the ninth hour. I felt the presence of God in my room. A few minutes later I saw a tongue of fire come through the window and fall upon me. I could not continue praying in my natural language, just to be filled by the Holy Spirit and I started to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled me. I spoke in nine different languages, glorifying and praising God. It was like heaven on earth. Also, I was singing new songs in other tongues. It was 6 o'clock in the evening when I finished. Even my elder brother who came home asked me: "What happened to you?" When answering him I also spoke in the other tongue and interpreted the prophecy to him. The Holy Spirit predicted his converting to God. One year later he converted to God and was born-again. In the same evening the Holy Spirit led me outside. As I was walking along streets, I met two boys passing by and one of them said to the other, pointing at me: "Look, this man drank better wine than we did!" They were just leaving the inn. It was the same experience like that of the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:12-13).

It was the nicest day in my life. We met together every day to pray and praise God in houses. God gave us several gifts of the Holy Spirit, e.g. the gift of revelation, prophesy, interpretation of tongues, singing hymns in tongues... etc. In these ways God was preparing us for spreading the Gospel, at first in our town and then in our country. Later we spread the Gospel also in other countries of Europe. It was as Jesus said: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) I had a great burden in my heart for missions. Many times we have to pray as Jesus said to his disciples: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field!" (Matthew 9:37-38) I could not stay at home. The Holy Spirit sent me out...

## 07. Start of the ministry of the Gospel

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### Start of the ministry of the Gospel

God gave me many opportunities to testify about Him and preach the Gospel to many people. On one occasion the Holy Spirit sent me to a cemetery. There I found a woman wailing over a grave. I shared with her the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She listened attentively and her tears of sorrow turned into tears of joy. She believed in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ. On another occasion an angel told me: "Go to the church building which I showed you." I saw St. Martin's church in Bratislava. He showed me this place twice. By the way, I wanted to go to the post office, but the angel didn't let me go there. I could not see the angel's face, just his back with his beautiful wings. When I came to the church building a young man came out, greeted me and said: "Paul, Paul, how is it possible that we meet here?" I answered: "The Lord sent me here through His angel!" The young man was one of my friends-theologians. We had met in the military service in a work camp where we spent just a short time together. Then he lived in Nitra and at that time was only visiting my city. When we met at St Martin I preached to him the full Gospel – he was blessed and received a great joy A few days later another theologian came to me who had been excluded from a theological school because of his zeal for God. The Lord showed him the truth and he decided to be baptized in water. He found out that living according to Roman Catholic theology is not quite biblical. He said he would not go home without being baptized in the Danube River...

We prayed for him and God gave us revelation about him: he was going along a narrow road, carrying Jesus' cross and following the Lord Jesus. On that day he was baptized in the Danube River and went back home rejoicing

Also one catholic priest converted. He was zealous for God, too. The Lord revealed to him the truth of the Gospel. He was ministering in the Catholic church for seven years, but was disappointed with the teaching there, because every morning believers went to Mass, but in the afternoon they used to spend time in taverns, drinking alcohol and cursing God. He converted and was baptized in water and also into the Holy Spirit and became a zealous preacher of the full Gospel. Several priests from the catholic office came to him and offered him a new car, new house and a new church building etc, if he would come back. But his answer was: "I have received much, much more from God than you can give me."

One time the Holy Spirit sent me to a crossroad in the city. While I was standing there, it started to rain and I wanted to leave. But the Holy Spirit did not let me go. After a short time two women came to me. I walked in the same direction as they did and heard them talking about faith in God. They were asking each other questions, and I could answer them. They were amazed. I invited them to the church, and the same evening they decided for Jesus Christ. One of them was baptized into the Holy Spirit

Another opportunity came when I was returning home. I was inspired by the Holy Spirit to go to a hospital. I just sat down on a bench when a woman came up to me and asked me for help. She

said: "Sir, help my friend to get home, please, because she had an accident." We were waiting for an ambulance for a long time but it did not arrive. So we started off with her. During our journey the patient told me: "Only God might send you here. We had been waiting for a long time to get help." I answered: "Yes, that's right. I was sent here by God. I had received an inspiration on my way home." They were amazed to hear that. When we entered into their house, I looked on the table, and there was a Bible. I took it and opened it at John 3:16 and began to read and preach the Gospel. They were very joyful and we prayed together. God saved this household. Praise the Lord!

Once again I was on a mission. As I was walking to a village an ambulance stopped by me and the driver spoke to me. I told him that he rescued people from their physical illnesses, but that they also needed to be saved from their spiritual diseases and spiritual death. Then I preached the Gospel in the village and afterwards intended to leave. However, the Holy Spirit led me to a house where only the wife was a believer. But her husband was against the faith. I spoke to him about Jesus Christ and prayed with him and then we sang some Christian songs, playing the guitar. After that I noticed that the man's face changed and he respected me. The next day as I wanted to leave the house, the man took me outside and told me: "If you did not come to our house yesterday, I probably would be dead by now. I wanted to hang myself. But you brought a new hope into my life. God helped me and He saved me!" In this way he also converted, thanks to God!

Another time the Lord led me to an unknown house in a very special way. I entered the hall, but nobody was in there. I looked up and there was an inscription on the wall: "Do not fear, for I am with you." Hallelujah! It gave me hope. Then the man and woman who lived there came in and welcomed me. They were very joyful. They were Baptist believers and wanted to be baptized into the Holy Spirit. As we were praying together, the woman was baptized into the Holy Spirit and praised God in new tongues. She said: "We have been praying for this gift for many months and today God answered our prayers. Praise the Lord!"

## 08. Gods help by the Holy Spirit and several miracles

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### God's help by the Holy Spirit and several miracles

While living in my own house I had a great desire to have church meetings in it. I prayed about it for some time. And one Sunday morning I was inspired by the Holy Spirit to furnish one room and prepare it for meetings. It was about 6 a.m. I put a lot of chairs there and laid the table for a pulpit. I finished it at about 9 a.m. Then I went out into the yard and there were a lot of people there. The first question was: "Is there a meeting here?" – "Yes," I answered, "I have just prepared the room." If I had not prepared it, there would not be space enough for everyone. Since then I used to prepare the largest room. There were meetings for many years and God blessed us.

One day I was invited to a mission about 60 km away from Bratislava. I travelled there by the last train that day. When I got off the train I found out that I lost the address of my friends. I said in my heart: "Oh God, what shall I do now?" It was the last train and there wasn't any telephone booth in the station. It was a cold winter night and there was a lot of snow. I knelt down and prayed and after a few minutes I saw a great light in the sky and there was written the lost address and it also showed me the direction. Praise the Lord! I glorified God aloud and walking in that direction I found the village and the house. God helped me wonderfully. Hallelujah! (Psalms 46:1)

Another time I travelled by train. When I entered into a compartment a passenger sitting there took a big book out of his bag and started reading it. After a while I asked him if he was reading a Bible. He answered: "Yes, but I don't understand everything." So I started to explain the Word to him. When I finished I asked Him: "Who gave you the Holy Bible?" He replied: "My best friend Peter G." I was amazed, because Peter G. was my own brother.

## 09. The Lord heard our prayer and gave rain

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The Lord heard our prayer and gave rain

There was a severe drought in the sixties because there had been no rain for several months. I was on a mission journey in Hungary. As I was travelling by train to the village Tapio (there is a great church there) a man said: "There will be great hunger in the land, because it has not rained for a long time." I answered: "Only God can help us in this situation." But they laughed at me. When I arrived at the church the preacher told me: "Paul, you must preach the Gospel tonight!" I opened the Bible, and there were verses about the prophet Elijah in James 5:17 : "Elijah was a man alike we are, and he earnestly prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit." And I preached about this event. The presence of the Lord was great in the congregation. The heavenly blessing came down. I said: "Now we should pray for the rain to come..." All believers prayed and glorified God with loud voices and in tongues. We finished the meeting late that night. As I looked up there was a great moonshine. Only a few little clouds were gathering on the sky, but it was very silent night. After that we went to bed. At midnight I had a dream. I saw the prophet Elijah together with some other prophets. Suddenly I heard a sound of a strong wind and all at once a heavy rain started. I went out and praised God after midnight. It was raining until morning. In the morning the pastor told me:

„It was the answer to our prayers yesterday. God's blessing came over our land.”

We said to each other: "The God of Elijah is alive, and He is the same today and forever. Hallelujah, Amen."

Once I was in quite a different situation. It rained very much. Crops in fields were under water. It was dangerous also for farmers. After that I travelled from the town Košice to the village called Háj. The village was 4 km away from the railway station. When I got off the train the sky turned dark and it started to rain. While walking I prayed in tongues and didn't turn my eyes neither left nor right, but was keeping them on heaven only. After a while the clouds divided in two and between them the sun started to shine. Despite having no umbrella or raincoat, I came to the village quite dry. The first question they asked me was: "How is it that you are not wet at all and it was raining so much?" I answered: "God helped me, putting a shelter over me. Praise be to Him!"

God helped me wonderfully also in spreading the Gospel. He is the same as He was in the time of the first apostles. We can read in the Bible that when they went preaching the Gospel, the Lord worked with them and confirmed the Word with signs and wonders. He does the same things even today. Many people want to see miracles, but they never want to come near to God. God is the God of miracles even today! But without our faith and obedience to Him He doesn't perform them.

## 10. Several miracles of healing

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### Several miracles of healing

Many people want to be healed but they don't want to live according to God's Word. Many people want to have God's blessings, but they don't want to keep His commandments. Sorry, it doesn't work this way. Already in the Old Testament we can read the covenant of healing and it is very important until now:

"IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS EYES, IF YOU PAY ATTENTION TO HIS COMMANDS AND KEEP ALL HIS DECREES, I WILL NOT BRING ON YOU ANY OF THE DISEASES I BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS, FOR I AM THE LORD, WHO HEALS YOU." (Exodus 15:26) This holy commandment holds true until these days. All of God's promises are valid for all of them who obey the Word of God, living according to His will. It's a pity that many start living for God too late. Very often it is when we are in a great need that we turn to God. Now I would like to share some testimonies about God's miracles.

Once as I was travelling by train from the town Levice to Bratislava I got an inspiration. It was right in the railway station Nové Zámky. I understood I had to get off the train. I did not know the reason. I got off and walked to the house where the church meetings used to be. It was Monday. I came to the house and spoke to the landlord and landlady. When I was thinking about the reason God sent me here one lady knocked at the door and came in, mourning and wailing over her disease. She suffered from rheumatism of her hands for many months.

I opened the Bible exactly on the page where God healed the crippled man in Lystra through the apostle Paul: Acts 14:8-10. When reading this passage, I noticed that the woman had received great faith. We knelt down and I commanded loudly: "Stretch out your hands in Jesus name!" She stretched out her hands and moved her fingers and cried out: "I am healed, I am healed!" She was weeping for joy and was healed completely. Then she told us how she was prepared to go to the hospital, but she got an inspiration to come to that place. "I don't have to go to the hospital any more because God has healed me, Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" We met again after 6 years and I asked her about the rheumatism. She answered: "I am totally healed."

Another miracle like that happened near Lake Balaton in Hungary. I heard that there were many believers in the town of Siofok. I longed to visit them but didn't have their addresses. So I prayed for an opportunity. As I was travelling in that direction by train for the first time, two passengers got on the train and sat down across from me. As they were talking together I found out that they were believers. I gave thanks to God and prayed in the Spirit to ask them for an address. They were glad. After a while one of them invited me to his house. I thanked God again. Being a guest in his family, I had a dream that night. I saw many angels walking in the house from one room to another. The following day the man told me: "One brother from our church is very ill, so let's go and visit him!" When we entered the house the man was lying on his bed without any movement.

We started to pray for him. Maybe an hour later I saw an angel who came and brought some medicine for him. After a few minutes the man started moving his legs and eyes, but he couldn't stand up yet. When we prayed a little bit longer God gave me a following vision: The man stood up and walked, praising God. It didn't happen exactly at that moment, but on the next day when I was already gone. When I came home there was a letter waiting for me with a message: "The paralyzed man stood up on the next day and he is quite well, he is even riding a bike! Hallelujah!"

I visited Budapest, the capital of Hungary. One day I told the landlord: "The Holy Spirit is sending me out into the street. Let's go together." I didn't know why or where we should go. As we were walking along the street, I told him: "We are right at the place". He answered: "I don't have any friends here."

Nevertheless, after a while he said: "Sorry, I have forgotten, I do have a friend here." So we entered the building and from the corridor we could see into the man's apartment. And there he was, lying in his bed with a high fever. When he saw us he cried out: "Friends, please, call the physician immediately, because I am very ill." But I told my brother: "God sent us here, therefore we must first call Him!" And we started to pray together. After a few minutes the man prayed with us too! A few minutes later he stood up and told us: "God healed me, God healed me, I don't need any physician now!" And he glorified God loudly: "Hallelujah, hallelujah!" The fever left him and after that we went to the church together.

Once as I was travelling from Košice to Bratislava, I got an inspiration to get off in the station Tatranská Štrba. I went into the house where church meetings were held. The preacher's wife was very ill. She wailed with pain. She had a backache. We started to pray and command the spirit of illness to leave her body. All at once she said: "I don't feel the pain, praise the Lord!" At first I saw in a vision how the lion gnawed her back, but then the lion was killed.

## 11. Wonderful help in hard situations

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### Wonderful help in hard situations

Once I was invited to the church in the suburbs of Budapest. I travelled there by subway. When I came to the place I couldn't find the street where the church was. I was walking slowly back to the subway station, praying in my heart. When a train came, many passengers got off. Inspired by the Holy Spirit I came up to one of them and asked him about the street. The man looked at me and asked: "Who are you looking for?" I answered: "A man called Fogarassy!" I showed him the address. I was surprised when he said: "God bless you! I am that man!" And we hugged each other, weeping for joy! Praise the Lord! Such things happen many times during my ministry.

God helps me wonderfully in spreading the Gospel. Once I was staying in a Christian family in the region of ■eský T■šín. While I was praying God gave me a vision: I saw an emergency vehicle driving to T■inec. On its roof it had plenty of the books of Bibles. I understood the Holy Spirit sent me there. When I arrived I found a good family. We had an opportunity to share the Gospel with many friends every evening during my stay there. Some of them accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. A few weeks later their number increased over twenty. I asked the Lord what I should do then. The Lord answered me by a vision:

I saw all of them in a large sheet being let down to earth. All of them were dressed in white. I understood that they had to be baptized. I explained the vision to them and everyone was willing to obey it.

God helped us to find the place for the baptismal service. After the water baptism some of them were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Thus the church in T■inec was founded. Today there are more than 100 members there. And the same church takes care of six other new churches. Thus were founded new churches in other places as well (the first baptismal service – , the body of elders with their families). God also helped us to found churches in the towns Uherský Brod , Lu■enec , Tur■ianské Teplice , Senica n/M. , Dubnica n/V. and in other places in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. We know it was not we, but the grace of God that was with us (1 Corinthians 15:10).

## 12. God takes care of His children in their needs

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God takes care of His children in their needs The preacher from the Pentecostal church in Burgas, Bulgaria, Georg ■ernev, longed to visit me in Bratislava. So he sent me a telegram. But the telegram came at the same time when his train arrived to the railway station in Bratislava. It was a difficult situation for him to find me. In spite of this I went to the railway station by bus. During the way God inspired me to get off the bus at the bus stop close to the Danube River. I continued going on foot over the bridge. In the middle of the bridge I noticed a person stretching out his hands. It was the brother ■ernev from Bulgaria. We embraced each other and praised God: "Hallelujah." On another occasion I got a telegram from Germany that about ten believers wanted to visit me in Bratislava. It was also too late when the telegram arrived. Therefore I could not prepare for my visitors. I was thinking about what I should do. But the Holy Spirit led me to pray. After praying God gave me peace in my heart and I was not worried. Through inspiration I stood up and went to the window. As I looked out I saw a woman carrying a big package. She came into my house, brought me the package and put it on the table. When we opened it I was surprised - it was full of slices of roast beef, there were salads and a lot of cakes too. Hallelujah! I was moved by how God had provided for my visitors. He cares for his people in a wonderful way. There was enough for all the visitors and still some remained!

Once we had big expenses and no money in our purse. What shall I do, I was thinking. After a few hours, God led me by inspiration to go to the post box. There was a letter inside. I opened it and inside were 500 Slovak crowns. At that time it was enough for two weeks' livelihood. Of course, the Holy Spirit often led me to take some food, clothing or money to other families. Once I went to the town of Jindřichův Hradec in the Czech Republic. When I arrived in the town I went shopping and bought some food. Then I entered the pastor's house and put all these things on the table. The pastor's wife said aloud: "You brought me all the things which I had to keep off the shopping trolley because I had not enough money to buy them."

Once I was inspired by the Holy Spirit to go to a widow and bring her some money. She said: "All year I had enough money, but now I lack money, because I had large expenses."

Another time I brought a suit to a poor family. A few weeks later I received a package from the USA and inside there was a beautiful new suit. We had a lot of similar experiences in our daily lives proving how God cares for common people.

All these experiences we had during the time of persecution of Christians. The persecution was taking place from 1948 to 1989. At that time we did not have official permission for gatherings. All our ministry had to be done illegally. Meetings, baptismal services, burials, holy communions etc. It was not easy. But we lived in the first love and therefore we were closer to God. He helped us in this hard situation. In the first love we can bear and do more for Him.

Therefore Jesus asked Peter three times: "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?" We must have great love for Jesus if we want to follow Him sincerely.

We were persecuted and sometimes also arrested. I was in prison three times. But God was with me there and blessed me through many wonderful experiences. We know that the first disciples had no easy situation. They were also persecuted. Therefore the apostle Paul said: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Jesus also said: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).

## 13. MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT on the path of the cross Experiences from the Time of Persecution In the Bible it is written: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake!" (Php 1:29). God gives us abundant life in Jesus Christ. He said: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). We obtain this kind of life through His salvation. He won the victory for us by sacrificing Himself on Calvary. He also gives us His Holy Spirit. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are supernatural love, victorious faith and blessed hope. True believers are in the hand of the Almighty God and Jesus Christ. No one can snatch them out of His hand (John 10:28). They have also supernatural joy and peace which passes all understanding. But Jesus Christ also said: "In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Yes, we have temptations and many troubles and persecutions in this world. But we can also overcome the world by the power of God. The apostle Paul said: "We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit." (Romans 5:3-5). That's the way into eternal life. If we have love of Jesus, nobody can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39). Yes,

God is with us in every situation of life. We need the love of Jesus Christ. Without His love we cannot suffer, we cannot bear tribulations or temptations. In these times when atheism reigned in our country many believers were persecuted. Students who protested against violence and outrageous acts carried out against believers had to leave schools. Others denied their faith and accepted atheism. But true believers held on, meeting in private houses and in the woods. Meeting any place was dangerous. Despite all the hindrances we were gathering and God was hiding us in His wonderful ways. Even at that time the revival began in our town. Many people converted to God. They repented and were baptized in water and many also into the Holy Spirit. I was 16 years old when I received baptism into the Holy Spirit. God was preparing us for difficult times so that we could be heroic witnesses of Jesus Christ and spread His Gospel without fear or doubts. It was not easy, but it was glorious. Many times the Lord warned us of the danger through the Holy Spirit. Nobody could touch us except with God's permission. And when He allows persecution, then suffering for His sake is glorious. I heard about various experiences of believers. Here are some of them:

Once a group of non-believers was planning to attack believers as they were leaving their meeting at night. They hid behind trees. But as the believers were approaching, the enemies saw fully armed soldiers around them. Great fear gripped them and they ran away. God protected his people again, hallelujah! Later, one of the persecutors received Jesus Christ and told his experience in the church. In the same region lived an atheist who persecuted believers in various ways. He even killed one. But before long people heard the following news about him. It was after the Second World War and there were many mines left in the woods. One night as he was going home through the woods he stepped on a mine and it exploded... only a few pieces of his body

were found hanging in the trees. So the word we read in the Bible was fulfilled: "For whoever touches you touches the apple of the Lord's eye"! It is written in the book of Zechariah 2:8. The secret police were looking for us many times, but we always gathered at a different location. They couldn't find us because God covered us. I remember, once I came shortly before a meeting and I heard the voice of the Holy Spirit. He instructed me: "Leave the house right now!" I didn't know why, but I obeyed. I left the house and went away. About one hour later I heard the voice of the Holy Spirit again. He said: "Now you can return!" When I came back the landlady said to me: "Where have you been?" When I told her, she said: "Just after you left, the police came in, looking for believers. And just before you returned, they had gone away!" All of us thanked God for His protection and left the house. Then we had a blessed meeting at another place God showed us through the Holy Spirit

Many times I baptized new converts. We always prayed for God's protection and help and then the Holy Spirit showed us where we should go. Once, when baptizing in the Danube River I experienced this: As we went down into the water I saw clouds and mist around us and in it were angels . Another time I was baptizing in ■eský T■šín, Czech Republic. There were about 100 people gathered in a large house and the secret police spied on the believers. The whole church prayed zealously to God and I had a vision. I saw a great angel standing at the entrance of the house. His wings covered the door and nobody could enter. The whole church sang and glorified God. Hallelujah. They couldn't find us .

Many years ago we gathered in my parents' house. In secret, naturally. Sometimes I had a vision of an angel sitting on the roof and guarding the house . But from time to time God allowed our faith to be tested. It is called the baptism into fire. To live according to the will of God and to suffer for Jesus' sake brings us blessing. Jesus said: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10) The proverb says: "The bigger the cross, the nearer is Jesus." That's true.

## 14. Experiences in Prison

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Experiences in Prison At the time of the totalitarian regime all our spiritual activities were considered illegal and constituted breaking of the law § No. 178: to testify, preach the Gospel, gather, baptize or to take part in Communion, even to bury was strictly forbidden to us. When caught and accused we could be put in prison for 2 up to 15 years. And then came the day when I also was put in prison. I understood it was allowed by God. Never in my life had I felt so strongly the presence of God as at that time. I had heavenly joy in my heart and glorified God, singing praises all the time. Heavenly world came down into that prison. There was no sorrow or distress in my heart. I heard angels singing and rejoicing with unspeakable joy. But those around me knew nothing about this. I could love my enemies, I could endure evil things done to me. In this way I conceived that the love of God is the greatest power in the world. When I came into a cell, I first knelt down and gave thanks to God for the privilege of being persecuted for Jesus' sake. I felt like being in Noah's ark and even in the heavens. Sometimes the heavens were open. I desired to stay there for a long time. At first I was alone and only later I got a fellow prisoner. I prayed and sang Christian songs. If anyone came into my cell I told him the Gospel about salvation in Jesus. The guards could not understand it. When they took my food away from me I didn't feel hungry. When they took my blankets or even my clothes from me I didn't feel cold, because the Lord's presence was upon me. After that they gave me prison clothes – it seemed to me they were the most expensive clothes I had ever worn. They were precious and glorious, because I wore them for Jesus' sake. Then I could understand why suffering for Jesus was precious.

Once in a vision I saw the hands of an angel who handed me two cups. In one was a bitter drink, in the other a fresh sweet drink. After I had drunk from the bitter one, I was allowed to drink from the sweet one. And the angel said to me: "Don't fear Paul, because I am with you and I will change your situation to a good one". Then, in front of me I saw a great beautiful Bible. It came down from the Heavens and was open. I was reading from Peter's first letter, chapters 3 and 4. The letters were beautiful as if written in silver. When I had come into the prison they took my Bible away from me. But I heard a voice telling me: "My words are spirit and life, nobody can take them from you. You must be full of the Word of God and testify to many people." On another occasion when I felt weak, in a vision I saw the whole spiritual armour of God. It was the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And I heard the voice: "Take up all this armour, because you need all of it. Without it you cannot hold out or stand. You must know that your enemy is defeated and he only looks like a roaring lion. But all the power is given to Jesus Christ. And He is the only true lion from Judah, because He overwhelmed the devil. The evil one shoots his arrows against you, but I gave you the full armour of God." Living here was like living in a heavenly mansion or palace. I smelt the odour of heaven and was very happy.

Once one of the prisoners looked at me and asked: "How can you be happy in this place, behind iron bars?" I answered: "I am happy because I am free in my soul and Jesus Christ lives in my heart. Therefore I have heavenly joy." I preached the Gospel to them and they were amazed.

Every day a guard led us to work in a factory. One day as he was leading me, he got angry with me and wanted to beat me... But he was just turning around and couldn't hurt me. At that moment I saw an angel standing between him and me. The man looked around wondering, but could not understand. As I was sweeping the pavement, I felt like being in the streets of New Jerusalem... Hallelujah!

Once I witnessed one brother who was beaten by the prison guards. He remained silent, did not cry at all. I looked at him and blood was flowing down his face. Suddenly I saw a glorious crown shining on his head. To be wounded for Christ brings glory and honour to a Christian. I had this privilege twice too. I was thrashed by guards. They beat me, pulled my hair and beat my legs, but I felt no pain. After I returned to my cell I had a vision: I saw an angel who came and touched me with his hands. Instantly my wounds were healed and I was very glad and began to praise God. I had many opportunities to give testimony to prisoners and guards. However, it was not easy, because it was forbidden. If anyone was caught giving a testimony he could be transferred into a solitary cell. I was isolated in such a cell three times. But God was there with me.

It was also there that I was caught up to the Heavens. One day when I returned into my cell and prayed, suddenly I heard a strong wind and my spirit was caught up... After a while I could see the Moon not far from me, then the Sun and some planets. At last I saw the stars - maybe they were the Milky Way stars. It was a wonderful sight. I had never seen anything like that before. Then I noticed an angel standing beside me and showing me the space. I had great longing to stay there, but the angel told me I had to return to earth, because there was much work for me to do. As the wind and gale subsided I opened my eyes and was in my cell again.

After some weeks I heard the same sound of wind around me. I knew I would be caught up in the Heavens again. At once I saw a heavenly chariot of fire coming down to me from the heavens and it took me up. I did not know how long we were flying, because there is no time in heaven, and we arrived to a crystal-clear river. We were in the Paradise.

I got off and walked around. There were nice woods, all kinds of vegetation, various trees with many sorts of fruit. I hadn't seen such sorts on earth. There were many kinds of flowers with nice odour. The leaves and the flowers don't wither there, all things are eternal.

I spoke a new language and understood it well. I could name all the things I saw around me. It was something like in the Garden of Eden that we read about in Genesis 2:15-20. There were many birds and animals. I saw a lot of precious stones there too. The city of New Jerusalem will be built of such stones we read about in Revelation, chapter 21: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth and amethyst. I also saw white stones with names of these who would overcome. And the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17). I had great desire to stay there, but was not allowed to. I had to get back to the chariot of fire standing by the river and it brought me back to earth. When I opened my eyes the wind stopped. For the next 5 minutes I could speak in the heavenly language. The experience was great encouragement for me in the days of persecution. On another occasion the Holy Spirit caught me up and carried me to France. It was in the evening and I saw the capital Paris at night. The streets, squares and the Eiffel tower. My spirit hovered and entered a church. Just at that time the service was going on. The assembly was praying, preaching and glorifying God, singing in tongues. I watched the whole service, but they could not see me. I received a great blessing from that meeting and the Holy

Spirit took me back to my place. I testified to other prisoners about it and one of them received Jesus and became a zealous and faithful witness of Jesus Christ. He was persecuted in prison too, but held out. In the prison there were also a lot of traitors. In every prison (or camp) were disciplinary cells. Any troublesome person was put into such a cell. Here the prisoner was given no food (or very little) and could not sleep due to cold in winter. Many believers were thrown into this cell and some of them died there. In winter some had to stand naked between barbed wire fences in the snowstorm. I was in the disciplinary cell three times. Once we got a Bible into prison in an amazing way. There were believers from several denominations there. From time to time we got together in small groups. We prayed, read the Bible and showed loving care to each other.

Sometimes we were checked by guards very strictly. Even at that time I was hiding a Bible. It happened twice that they couldn't find it. Once it was revealed to me by the Holy Spirit that I would not be checked. Everyone had to go through a little room and the guards checked everything he had. As I was entering the room, immediately I heard a voice telling me: "Go out!" I didn't open my bag and left the room. Nobody told me a single word! Thus I could experience God's wonderful protection, praise the Lord! The word of God cannot be chained. The Gospel must be spread at every time and in every place. God's arm isn't short. He can save in every situation like in the days of the apostles. And if God allows us to go through a hardship, we come out of it stronger and purified like gold that is also purified in fire (Revelation 3:18). It is because: "All things work together for good to them, that love God." (Romans 8:28) From the jail we were transported to various camps. In one camp there used to live between one and three thousand prisoners. There I had to work hard. First I worked deep underground in an uranium mine. Every day they were counting the prisoners. If somebody was absent or asleep, the whole camp had to wait for him. Every prisoner had his number; no one used their real name. I haven't forgotten my number. It was: A - 018 801. We were given a meal twice a day, but it was not enough for the hard and difficult work. When we came back from the mines to our camp, we were terribly tired, but most of us had to go on brigades. Some of us broke down psychically and committed suicide. Then I realized why it was so important to be a true believer. The non-believer has no faith, no love or hope, and therefore it is more difficult for him to cope with hardships.

It is written: "Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes...?" (1 John 5:5) and "...this is the victory that overcomes the world, our Faith!" (5:4) It is a great privilege which we believers have. We can have great faith and hope in our hearts and therefore also God's love. We can dominate over any bad situation and have victory in every fight against the devil, sin or this world. Because: "Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

Also, we have a great protection from God. Never in my life was God so near to me as in those days I am testifying about. If God is for us who can be against us? Praise the Lord for His wonderful grace! Three times in my life I saw our Lord Jesus Christ. I remember these experiences well. I knew it was not an angel, but the Lord Jesus Christ. Once I saw Him in a similar way as John did on the island of Patmos. Jesus is the most powerful spiritual person. Therefore John the apostle couldn't stand in front of Him and fell at His feet as dead (Revelation 1:17).

It took place in the jail. The Lord Jesus appeared in great light and clouds were around Him. He was clothed in a white robe with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool. His eyes were like blazing fire and His voice like the sound of rushing waters. I heard Him

clearly saying:

“I am the first and the last... Fear not, for I am with you. There is no power against my power, there is no strength against my strength. He who touches you, touches my eyes. Be bold in your heart... all power is given to me in heaven and on earth, don't forget... ” and many other encouraging words. I felt holy fear in my spirit. I could not look in His face, it was awesome and wonderful. I was strengthened in my soul and I was able to boldly proclaim the Gospel further on. I had many more experiences but I hope these are sufficient to encourage you too. The last days of my imprisonment were approaching. Of course, I didn't know that. It was already the second time that I was in prison. Altogether I spent 6 years in jail and one year in a severe work camp. God can make the difficult days shorter and the blessed days very long. He can also make the bitterest times into the sweetest times. He can change every situation in our life for our benefit. He is the Almighty God also in tribulation. In those last days of my imprisonment they put me in a disciplinary cell for eight days. It was a little room like a tomb in underground. Only a little of light came in. The guard took me down and locked the iron gate. As I lifted my eyes in prayer I had a vision: I saw Jesus Christ with His apostles at the table eating and drinking at the last supper. And immediately I heard Jesus saying to me: “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,” (Luke 22:15) and when He was saying: “before I suffer” He looked at me. I understood Him, but I was not sorrowful. He suffered much more for us than we can ever suffer for His sake. And our suffering for Him is blessed, because it is for righteousness' sake. His suffering for us was much harder, because it was for our sins. (1 Peter 3:14)

Also in those days I was always in God's presence and I had some visions from heaven. The Holy Spirit was teaching me to understand the book of Revelation and also showing me what was going on at home, in the church and in the camp. In this way I knew what I needed even in this dark cell which I couldn't leave. I could also see the spiritual fight between the holy angels and evil spirits.

One day I saw, besides other things, the city of Prague - the capital of former Czechoslovakia and the castle of Hradčany. Then I saw the president sitting by the table and signing a document of amnesty for prisoners. I saw him sealing the document. Then I saw a great group of prisoners standing in front of the iron gate and the commander of the camp read out the names of the released prisoners. And then I saw us leaving the prison. Some days later exactly all of this happened but at that moment I doubted a little bit. The Holy Spirit showed me in a vision all my dear friends who were not released at that time. It was nearly midnight and I was still sitting in the dark cell alone and without food. It was also very cold there. I was tired and hungry.

Heavenly silence was around me. Then I looked up to the roof and there was light shining on me from above. The Heavens were open and beautiful flowers were falling down into my cell. I could smell a heavenly odour again. Heaven greeted me farewell on my day of amnesty.

Then it was dark there again. I heard the chains clattering and the guard opened the iron gate and called my number and name and led me out... It was like a dream for me... They led me to another building. Seeing me, the prisoners didn't know the reason. But I knew, because it was revealed to me. When I told them about the amnesty they did not believe me. But the next day it came true. The amnesty was declared and all the Lord showed me through the Holy Spirit two days before that was fulfilled. We were standing in front of the iron gate of the camp and the commander was reading out our names. It was a lovely sunny day, everything was green outside and the birds

were singing on the fence nearby. For me it was like the day of resurrection...

Then he read my name. As I was going through the iron gate of the camp, I heard the voice: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature..." (Mark 16:15) I understood it very well. With the heavenly joy in my heart, I travelled home to Bratislava.

Since then I have been preaching the Gospel in many places, towns, cities and foreign countries. They were about 20 altogether. The Lord has always been with me and I could see His great power and leading in His beautiful work. I consider preaching of the Gospel to be very important in the believer's life. Nobody can stop the work of the Lord and the Gospel cannot be chained! Yes, now I can testify that the Gospel cannot be chained. Because "it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." (Romans 1:16) Jesus is the same yesterday, today and for ever. Glory and praise to Him. Hallelujah. Amen.

## 15. AUTHOR PROFILE

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**A U T H O R ' S P R O F I L E** A mission worker and an evangelist, Paul Gabanek, has been working for spreading the Gospel for 55 years. He lives in the capital of Slovakia - Bratislava. In his parents' house the Pentecostal church in Bratislava was started. His parents were Pentecostal believers and his father was a preacher for many years. They brought their children up in the fear of God and worshipping of God. From 1930 to 1945 they were also attending Pentecostal churches in Austria (Kittsee and Vienna). But many times there were gatherings in their house. During the Second World War we lived in Germany for 7 years, because the area where we lived belonged to Germany. It was a difficult time, but God was helping us. My parents prayed for their children very seriously and then God gave them grace for repentance.

After the Second World War in 1948 the author of this booklet repented and converted to God. At that time his mother did not live. He received the first revelation in his house. An angel brought him a message and told him: "Come and follow Jesus Christ." After this experience he was baptized in water and received an amazing gift of the Holy Spirit. God sent him to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He started proclaiming God's message from Bratislava and continued into all the country. This experience he recorded briefly in the book: "Ministry of the Holy Spirit in My Life". From those times the persecution against Christians began (1948-1988). He was also persecuted by the communist regime: was imprisoned 3 times, altogether for 6 years and he was also in a work camp. He was accused and framed as "a Pentecostal preacher", because at that time all Pentecostal or charismatic churches were forbidden. At that time, with the blessing of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit he also established some new churches and groups of believers. It was not easy, but it was glorious, because God has made it and the Word of God cannot be in jail. His experiences prove that God is always with His servants and even in the hardest times He can demonstrate His greatest power and glory. After the velvet revolution in 1989 when liberty started, he visited about 20 countries in the world, proclaiming the Gospel, mostly in West Europe, Middle East - Israel and in the USA. For several years he was working as a full-time mission worker. Now he has retired, but he did not stop working for the Lord. In all, he wrote five books, but only two of them were translated into English. All his books demonstrate that "JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, today and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

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