



The Life and Death of Brother Stahn

Excerpted from “Meditation at Day’s End” International Convention, Poitiers, 1994 by Bro. Henryk Purwyn, Poland.

With our imagination, let us go to far away Poland, in the east, near Bialystok, in the village of Lopusz. There, August 22, 1888, our brother in Christ, August Joseph Stahn, was born.

Do you know this name? Most of the brethren from the United States and Poland will say “yes.” Because, due to his labour, the truth came to Poland. What do we know about him? He comes from a numerous family. His father was a brick layer, from Germany. In 1911, due to the efforts of his older brother, he went to the United States where, in 1918, he began to know the truth. A little while later he was elected as an elder in the Syracuse ecclesia. He worked in a factory as a typist and saved some money which was devoted entirely to the work of the Lord.

Certain alarming news about various false brethren and doctrinal errors made him return to Poland where he began to work as an evangelist. He could not have imagined then that he would never again see the brethren in the United States. Brother Stahn, besides his obvious capacity for evangelism and persuasion, had the very extraordinary gift of captivating the hearts of the people. Due to his personality and force of character he succeeded in steering the work of the Lord in the true direction. During this period he held about 5000 sermons and conferences.

The 2nd World War found Bro. Stahn among the brethren at Lodz, where, September 2, he held his last discourse, extracted from Habakkuk 3:17-19. After this he returned to his native ecclesia, Bialystok, where on September 6 he used the same subject.

During the occupation, since it was known that he was German, he obtained work in an army hotel. The German authorities began to follow him closely both because of the contacts he had with the Poles, and because he never used the inevitable salute, “Heil Hitler.” When he had to go to renew his Identity Card he asked that under “Religion” would be written “Christian”, which, obviously, the officials did not want to do. This was the cause of the arrest by the Gestapo.

From prison, in March, 1943, he sent to the brethren the following letter:

Bialystok, March 19, 1943.

Dearly Beloved Bro. Bialkowski,

I greet you in the name and through the peace of our beloved Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

I feel very obliged to you and I thank you, dear brother, for the letter which you've sent me, and I must bear witness that, though my liberty has been taken from me and I am locked up between these walls, I thank the Creator that neither my faith nor my hope has been shaken, and your letter, dear brother, has consoled me, has sustained my morale, and has filled me with joy in such measure that my eyes filled with tears, preventing me from reading further.

You ask me, dear brother, to write you a few words, which I do with much pleasure, in spite of the very difficult conditions in which I find myself.

We are more than 70 people in a single cell. You can well imagine what this means; though even here I recognize the divine overruling because I can still maintain contact with you.

I would wish to inform you, dear brethren and sisters, that I have been brought many times before the authorities to answer if I would be willing to go against the enemies with a weapon in my hand.

I have answered, no, I would not be able to, because it is forbidden through the teachings of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. As a result of these declarations I was photographed, from the front and in profile, my hands were tied, and I was lead to the prison in which I found myself for one week.

A week passed, but as I have said already, this did not weaken me, but on the contrary, it drew me closer to God and our Lord and I rejoice in the privilege of suffering for the eternal Truth and divine principles, knowing that if we suffer with Him we will also live with Him.

Also, dear brethren and sisters, if a similar thing would ever happen to you, I urge you to persevere, in the precious name of our Redeemer, to show your strength in suffering, even if these sufferings would necessarily cost you your present life, that you could obtain eternal life which will never fade or be violated.

I'd wish to write you a few more words, dear brother, because if my life must end at this altar, my desire is that you would send this letter to Bro. Szatynski or Bro. Parfienowicz, so that they could make a few copies and send them to my dear Brothers Grudzien, Wojtkowski and Pencherk.

And if, through the Will of God, I will obtain my liberty, this thing would no longer be necessary. We will gather again with more zeal to praise and glorify our Creator and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I end these few words wishing you, dear brethren and sisters, the richest blessings, that you may obtain, together with all saints, the supreme recompense of the first resurrection, that we can be gathered together before the glory of God.

I wish this to all.

Your co-participant in the sufferings of Christ, who loves you very much,

August Stahn, Bialystok, March 20, 1943.

From this moment began the close for Bro. Stahn of the road of suffering through the Concentration Camps of Auschwitz, Szangerhausen, Buchenwald, until he came to Nordhausen where he ended his life.

Dear brethren, speaking often about the misery which so-to-speak surrounds us, let us remember what a day would be like in a Concentration Camp.

The wake up bell aroused the prisoners at 4 every morning, 5 during the winter. Since they lacked water they often washed in a puddle. They did this in great haste, amidst yelling and blows.

Food: Breakfast--half a litre of black coffee.

Lunch--three quarters of a litre of soup.

Supper--300 grams of bread with 15 grams of margarine.

According to the witnesses who were prisoners with Bro. Stahn in the camp at Nordhausen, his decease took place in the last days of March, 1945. He died as a result of blows with a stick to his head, administered by a soldier. His body was burned in the oven of the crematorium.

Personalbogen.P

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Name Stahn, August Haftl. Nr. 123911

Beruf Müller geb. am 28. 8. 88 in Lopauze

Anschrift der Angehörigen _____

Eingeliefert am 4. 6. 43 von Stapo-Eichenau/Schrotterburg

Strafhaft vom _____ bis _____ in _____

Die vorhandene Karte lautet auf LVA _____ Nr. _____

Letzter Arbeitgeber _____

| <u>Bibelforscher Pole</u> | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1245 | Stahn | August | 28. 8. 88 | Lopauze | Müller | Stpo Eichenau |
| <u>Russische Zivilarbeiter</u> | | | | | | |
| 1235 | Abramow | Iwan | 3. 6. 16 | Molostowo | Autoschl. | Sipo Minsk |
| 1230 | Alifanow | Petr | 28. 10. 20 | Budenowka | Schloss. | Stpl. Dresden |
| 1278 | Amelin | Wasilij | 25. 3. 23 | Orel | Schloss. | " Kattow. |
| 1276 | Andrejenko | Nikolaj | 12. 1. 25 | Scheptuchowka | Larb. | Stpo Troppau |
| 1233 | Andrijko | Iwan | 15. 8. 22 | Baljasne | Larb. | Sipo Krakau |
| 1245 | Andrijtschuk | Iwan | 20. 5. 24 | Pulin | Larb. | Stpl. Kattow. |
| 12982 | Antonenko | Iwan | 5. 6. 25 | Pologi Werguny | Larb. | SD Krakau |
| 1256 | Antonow | Alexandr | 2. 8. 25 | Janiv-Globidka | Larb. | Stpl. Kattow |
| 1282 | Antonow | Jefan | 23. 10. 19 | Studaniec | Larb. | Stpo Graz |

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