**John Huss** - A Resounding Response from Bohemia (1369-1415)

1. Bohemian students studying at Oxford in England brought Wycliffe’s writings and ideas back to Bohemia (what is now Czechoslovakia).

2. These writings reached a devout and thinking professor and preacher who lived in the city of Prague. His name was John Huss.

3. He became a vocal critic of the abuses in the papacy. Along with Wycliffe and others, he called for humility and simplicity in the church’s leadership.

4. This eventually led to his excommunication.

5. When the pope began to sell indulgences to support a war, Huss attacked the papacy more openly than ever, which, of course, did not earn him any more appreciation from the pope.

6. In response to demands for him to take back what he had said, Huss responded, “I have said that I would not, for a chapel full of gold, recede from the truth.”

7. A great church council was called at the city of Constance in the year 1414. The emperor asked Huss to come to the council to explain his views and promised him a “safe conduct,” in other words protection from being killed. In hopes that the church would move toward real reform, Huss went to the council.

8. Upon arriving, Huss’s hopes were dashed. He was not given a fair hearing; he was just commanded to recant, or else. He steadfastly refused, so he was thrown into prison.

9. He wrote, “O most holy Christ, draw me, weak as I am, after Thyself, for if Thou dost not draw us we cannot follow Thee. Strengthen my spirit, that it may be willing. If the flesh is weak, let They grace precede us; come between and follow, for without Thee we cannot go for Thy sake to cruel death. Give me a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, a perfect love, that for Thy sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy. Amen.”

10. On July 6, 1415, Huss was taken out and burned alive at the stake. When he was given one last chance to recant at the site of his execution, Huss responded in prayer, “Lord Jesus, it is for thee that I patiently endure this cruel death. I pray thee to have mercy on my enemies.”