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Anne of Bohemia (1366-1394), was the eldest daughter of Emperor Charles IV of the Holy Roman Empire. Her father was King Wenceslaus of Bohemia (who is the subject of a famous Christmas carol).

Anne was taught the truths of the Scripture from her youth. There were a number of faithful Gospel preachers in Bohemia at that time including Conrad Strichna, Johan Melice and Matthias Janovius. Anne asked many probing questions concerning Scriptural truth.

Anne was described as a Godly, intelligent young girl with an inquiring mind. She was renowned for her love of reading and for her possession of the Scriptures in three languages. Her favourite books of the Bible were the four Gospels, which she constantly studied.

Anne came to recognise the many errors prevailing in the Roman church and she persisted in praying for a return to Biblical faithfulness to the Doctrine of the Apostles and to the purity of the early Church.

The traditional alliance of Bohemia with France was shattered by their joint defeat at the hands of the English King Edward III and his son, The Black Prince, at the Battle of Crecy in 1346. Richard II's father, Edward was called the Black Prince because of his dark coloured armour. Then the Papal Schism further divided the Bohemians from their traditional allies, the French. As France supported pope Clement VII of Avignon, King Wenceslaus chose to support pope Urban VI in Rome. As the English also allied against the French pope, the Bohemians came into alliance with the English.

As King Richard II's father, The Black Prince, died in 1376 and his grandfather, King Edward III, the following year, Richard II became King of England at age 10. Negotiations began to solidify the alliance between Bohemia and England by the marriage of Princess Anne to King Richard.

At age 14, King Richard II showed remarkable courage during the Peasants Revolt of 1381. At Smithfield, at great personal risk, Richard II rode out to meet the violent mob and calmed them into ending the revolt.

In January 1382, when Richard II was 15 years old and Anne was 16 years old, they were married in St. Stephens Chapel, at Westminster. Although their marriage had been arranged by diplomats, it appears to have been a good, loving and positive partnership. Anne was undoubtedly an excellent influence on Richard during their 12 years together.

Reportedly Anne had been persuaded to accept the proposal because of positive reports that she had received of the Reformation work of Professor John Wycliffe of Oxford University.

The Archbishop of York, Arundel, one of the most vitriolic enemies of Wycliffe's Reformation work, was horrified to hear that the Queen owned copies of the Gospels, which she avidly studied.

Professor John Wycliffe was delighted to learn of Anne's love for the Scriptures, and he publically compared her to the Biblical Mary who sat at Jesus feet listening to what the Master had to say.

For her part, Queen Anne protected Wycliffe from his many enemies and intervened on numerous occasions to protect him from prosecution and to save his life.

At the encouragement of Queen Anne, Bohemian students came to Oxford to study under John Wycliffe. Many of these students carried back the Reformation writings and teachings of Wycliffe to Prague, Bohemia and throughout central Europe.

Many of Queen Anne's friends and servants became dedicated Christian believers.

The common people of England came to love the Queen. Her kindness and generosity to the poor was legendary. It is said that as many as six thousand people were fed daily through her benevolence.

Students sponsored by Queen Anne were soon taking the Reformation writings

and teachings as far afield at Lithuania.

Tragically, this bright and shining light was cut short on the 7 June 1394 as Anne died at age 27 from the plague. Her husband, King Richard II, was devastated and the people of England deeply mourned her.

Many of her Christian friends and servants returned to Bohemia with the translations of the Gospels and writings of John Wycliffe that had been so highly treasured by Queen Anne. These led to the conversion of Professor Jan Hus of Bohemia, the Hussite movement and later the Moravians. From them missionaries went out, literally, to the ends of the earth.

◆ These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.◆ 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Dr. Peter Hammond
Reformation Society
P O Box 74
Newlands 7725
Cape Town
South Africa
Tel: 021 689-4480
info@reformationSA.org
[www.reformationSA.org](http://www.reformationsa.org/)