

Apostle of Truth: The True Story of John Hus

*A 60 minute documentary coproduced by
Comenius Foundation and the Moravian Church
Interprovincial Board of Communications*



Significant Anniversary

2015 marked the 600th anniversary of the martyrdom of John Hus. There has been substantial deepened interest in the early Unity and their Hussite precursors among Moravian Churches. Sadly, there is very little popular level material for churches to use in educating members. There is a distinct need for a well-produced, popular level video which can be used in Moravian Churches, particularly in a Sunday School class context.

Currently available materials are limited:

- The 1977 movie ***John Hus***, produced in 16mm film, funded by the 7th Day Adventist “Faith for Living” program. The program is usable but quite dated and does not reflect recent research.
- ***Truth Prevails***, a direct-to-DVD production released in 2007, is a disappointing and amateurish documentary which fails to acknowledge any current groups deriving from Hus. While they do include an interview with scholar Dr. Thomas Fudge, they failed to interview any Moravian scholars, members of the Unity of the Brethren (Texas), or any others who trace back to the Hussite movement. There is a long and tedious interview with a Vatican official explaining why Hus is still not “OK” with the Roman Catholic Church. It does not even acknowledge the formation of the *Unitas Fratrum*. After reviewing the program, Rev. John Jackman informed the distributor that we could not really recommend this program for use in Moravian Churches due to the shortcomings.
- As part of the 2015 anniversary, Česká Televize produced an excellent six-hour dramatic miniseries, ***Jan Hus***, funded in part by the Czech government, and produced in the Czech language. Unfortunately, the language issue means that the series is virtually unusable outside of the Czech Republic.*

BetaFilm (the US representative of Česká Televize) and Comenius Foundation are separately exploring possibilities for a US market re-edit of **Jan Hus, about two hours in length and dubbed in English. No funding source has yet been identified for this project, which will cost approximately \$65,000-\$75,000 US.*



Laying the Foundation

As the 2015 anniversary of Hus' death approached and we became aware of an anniversary a trip to Prague (hosted by the Rev Dr. Craig Atwood and the Rev. Dr. Riddick Weber of Moravian Theological Seminary), we began laying the plans for a cost-effective documentary. The Rev. John Jackman (Comenius Foundation) and Mr. Mike Riess (Moravian Church Interprovincial Board of Communications) discussed location footage and photos needed from Prague, Kunwald, Husinec, and

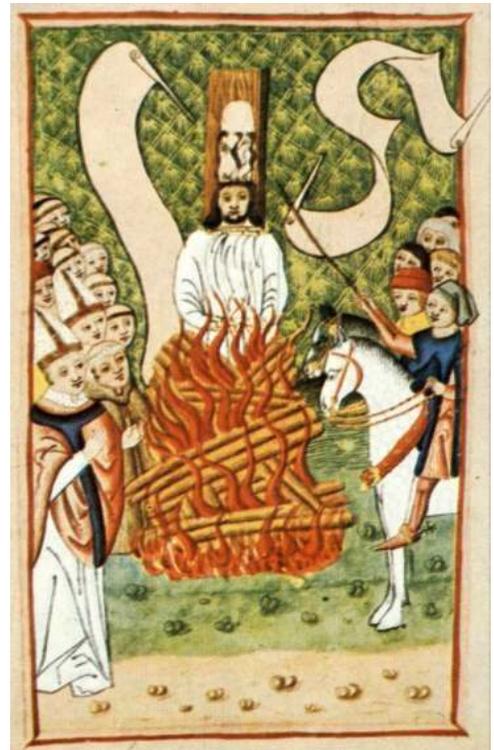
other areas. Mike Riess went on the Prague trip and came back with excellent HD footage and print quality photography of the pertinent areas.

The Rev. John Jackman has since conducted extensive HD video interviews with Dr Thomas Fudge (University of New England/Australia), one of the top academic authorities on Hus; the Rev. Dr Craig Atwood (Moravian Theological Seminary); and the Rev. Dr. Riddick Weber (Moravian Theological Seminary). Further interviews are planned with the Rev. Dr. Daniel Crews (Moravian Church Archives, South), Dr. Paul M. Peucker (Moravian Church Archives, North), the Rev. Dr. Larry Koslovsky (Unity of the Brethren – Texas), and others.

More Progress

Jackman and Riess originally planned to film costumed reenactments of critical scenes in Hus' life, borrowing the technique often used in recent History Channel programs: costumed reenactors recreating the actions, close-ups of hands with weapons, feet of horses, etc. but without audible dialogue. This is much less expensive than full-blown dramatic scenes with actors and dialog. Amateur volunteers can be used for most roles rather than professional actors.

However, the high quality of the footage from the Czech dramatic miniseries Jan Hus suggested another approach: that we license scenes from the Czech film, leaving the Czech dialog with subtitled translation. These scenes are much more dramatic and effective than the reenactments would be. Rev. Jackman has negotiated a licensing deal with BetaFilm, the North American representative of the Czech miniseries. The agreed price is slightly less than the originally planned reenactments.



What is Needed Now

We have completed the gathering of material that could be done on limited funds. To proceed, we need to raise \$50,000 to finish research, write a script (reviewed by an authoritative scholar), conduct the remaining interviews, film the introductory and wrap-up segments, research and license authentic period artwork to illustrate the narration, create or license appropriate music, license the footage from BetaFilm, and then edit the program into final form. The web domain **www.johnhus.org** has already been purchased, and an ongoing web resource will be constructed with popular level articles – much as Comenius Foundation did previously with **www.zinzendorf.com**, a web resource which is actively visited by people around the world over fifteen years after its original launch. **BUDGET IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**



We have identified a number of likely sources of funding for this Moravian Church specific production, and have begun fundraising. A number of grant applications are in process, as well as appeals to individual donors.

Larger Life Foundation, Salem Congregation, Bethlehem Area Moravians, United Brethren's Congregation (Staten Island), Society for Promotion of the Gospel, Home Moravian Church, Central Moravian Church, Morongo Moravian Church.

We have received significant donations from the **Rev. Dr. Hermann Weinlick** and development funding from **Comenius Foundation**. Other individual donations are being actively sought.

- ✓ **As of November, 2016, the Larger Life Foundation has approved a grant.**
- ✓ **Mrs. Sallie Greenfield will MATCH private donations up to \$5,000!**

Timeline

Production (all interviews, artwork research, filming of introduction, etc.) and licensing arrangements should be completed by the end of 2016. Provided funding is in place, postproduction will commence in early 2017, with release of the program by summer, 2017.

Vision Video, a leading Christian DVD distributor based outside of Philadelphia, has expressed interest in distributing the program. They have distributed several other programs directed by Rev. Jackman, including *Hymns of Praise*, *An Uncommon Union*, *Zinzendorf*, and *Wesley*. They have effectively been able to place these programs on faith-related television, cable, and satellite channels worldwide.

Track Record

The Rev John Jackman has an extensive track record of producing top quality, award winning documentaries and feature films (see attached sheet). His production company, Inspirata Films, is a fully equipped state-of-the-art digital production facility which can produce a high quality end product meeting all specifications for theatrical release, network broadcast, and commercial DVD duplication. His latest feature film, *Newton's Grace*, is in the final stages of post production and will be released later this year.

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2001 Gold Aurora Award -
Zinzendorf Documentary Miniseries