

Editorial

Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae is 40 years old!

The subject journal of the Church History Society of Southern Africa, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, is forty years old ... and I am in my tenth year as its editor.

I therefore hope that you will allow me to ponder on a few memories.

I was a student of theology in my final year of the post-graduate *Baccalaureus Divinitatis* when, in 1980, I was accepted by the *Church History Society of Southern Africa* (CHSSA) as a member. I was accepted because, in the previous year, I had obtained a Master's degree in Greek (History of Antiquity) with a dissertation on Eusebius of Caesarea, widely regarded as Christianity's first historian. At least a Master's degree in a subject related to church history was necessary to get you nominated and accepted into membership. At the same meeting of the CHSSA, held on 29 and 30 January 1980 at the University of South Africa, Koos Vorster of the then Potchefstroom University and David Whitelaw of Unisa were also accepted as members of the Society.

The 1980 meeting was, in a sense, a breakthrough in the history of the CHSSA which, in that year, was 10 years old. Since its establishment in October 1970 at the University of South Africa, the Society had been exclusively Afrikaans-speaking and male. The only exception was Dr Margaret Donaldson of Rhodes University in Grahamstown, whose attendance was limited due to considerations of distance and language. Acceptance of Whitelaw and myself as members marked the start of a change in the face of the Society. We were both appointed permanently in the then Department of Church History at Unisa later that year, in October 1980, and have now been members of the Society for 35 years.

Female membership was strengthened the next year when Mandy Goedhals, now a professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, became a member. Black members became part of the Society in 1987 with Radikobo Ntsimane and Dr Lizo Japhta being accepted into the fold. However, it was only in 1991 that the theme of the Society conference was, for the first time, formulated in English. The writing of the minutes in English followed from 1992.

In 1997, Prof Koos Vorster took over the editorship of SHE. As he explains in his article published in this celebratory issue of SHE, for the next eight years the ground was prepared for the journal to become ecumenical and inclusive of race and gender.

In 2005 I became the editor of SHE. Looking back at the ten years behind me, there are three things that, for me, are especially noteworthy. For these, of course, I give the honour to the authors who have contributed to SHE over the past decade. The first aspect is that in every issue – and there were three annually – more than half of the authors were black. Amongst them were developing scholars who, by means of editorial assistance, faced peer-reviewing and published good articles based on novel and previously unexplored material.

Secondly, the scarcity of women church historians was acknowledged. In 2008, therefore, a special issue of SHE on “The histories of women of faith in Africa” was published with 19 women contributing. Consequently, and in the third place, SHE has created space for South African scholars of historical significance to be honoured through *Festschriften*. Thus, an issue of SHE in 2010 was dedicated as a *Festschrift* to Prof Simon Maimela, in 2012 to Prof Philippe Denis and in 2013 to Prof Cornel du Toit.

In 2010 SHE was evaluated by the Department of Higher Education and it retains its accreditation. Since 2011, articles published in SHE are placed in the Unisa Institutional Repository and, in 2013, SHE was accepted by Assaf to be placed on the SCIELO platform.

The present issue of SHE is in celebration of the Journal’s 40th anniversary.

The seventeen articles published, are divided into five themes. The first two articles tell the story of a Society and its Journal, and are written by Prof Koos Vorster who was the previous editor of SHE, and Prof HOFFIE Hofmeyr, both of whom are long-standing members of the CHSSA.

For the second part, authors were invited to present life reviews of local religious leaders whom they considered to be significant. Here, Alpheus Masoga wrote on Gabriel Setiloane, Dr Charles Flaendorp on Prof Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel, and Plaatjies van Huffel herself wrote on Prof Christina Landman. Significantly, two of the religious leaders whose life reviews are revaluated here, are women. Moreover, they are “women of the cloth”.

Authors were also invited to present manuscripts based on their personal research interests. These form the third part of this special issue of SHE. Dr Dion Forster wrote a charming article on the religious Nelson Mandela, asking whether Mandela’s institutional affiliation to Methodism is of any academic relevance at all. Prof Mokhele Madise follows with an analysis of black Methodist leadership in the 80s and 90s. An array of black scholars present their research results in excellent historical studies on the LMS (Mgadla), Pentacostalism in Botswana (Nkomazana), the Southern Baptist Convention (Maples), and the history of family empowerment through Black Theology (Molobi).

Since SHE gave space to the important but academically under-represented history of Black Theology during the past 10 years, the fourth section of this issue is dedicated to essays on Black Theology. It also serves as a partial *Festschrift* for Prof Takatso Mofokeng, a prominent Black Theologian of the 80s and 90s. Of the manuscripts submitted, three were chosen through peer-reviewing to be published in this section. They are by Professors Dolamo, Nel and Manala, incidentally all of the University of South Africa.

The final section of this celebratory issue of SHE confirms the position and importance of women in the history of Christianity. Innovative research is presented in the forms of a vhusadzi (Venda womanhood) theology (Mudimeli & Landman), a cultural-gendered pastoral care model (Chisale), and a post-feminist perspective on Shona culture (Chimhanda). Finally, Jennifer Slater shows her expertise as an ethicist in dealing with affirmative action and how it has failed the women of South Africa.

The third and final issue of SHE for 2014 will be published in December and manuscripts can be submitted until the middle of September. This issue will contain mainly the peer-reviewed papers read at the 44th annual conference of the CHSSA, held from 14–16 August 2014 at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, South Africa, on the theme “Church, war and peace”. However, manuscripts on any aspect of church historical importance are welcomed.

In the spirit of celebration

Kind regards

Prof Christina Landman

Editor – SHE