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THE 2015 CHSSA CONFERENCE ON 'MEMORY'

This is an exciting issue of *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* with innovative research on 'Memory'. It contains the papers delivered at the 2015 annual conference of the Church History Society of Southern Africa. A minority of the papers were not delivered at this conference, but speak to the topic. Of course, all papers were subjected to a double peer-review process.

The CHSSA conference mentioned was held from 13 to 15 August 2015 on the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University. The theme was: 'The history of commemorations, celebrations and anniversaries.' Sub-themes were: Celebrating martyrs; Memory in the works of the Church Fathers; Conflicting views on the history of the Church in the age of the Reformation; Jubilee in Christian history; Statues and monuments of Christian heroes in southern Africa; Saints or collaborators? The debate focused on the legacy of the missionaries; commemorating Christian anti-apartheid activists in the post-apartheid era; African ways of celebrating the memory of spiritual leaders; and commemorations, celebrations and anniversaries of the liberation struggle and the church.

The emphasis was on the method of memory; on the ways in which people remember.

And this is a very relevant topic in South Africa where people are fighting for control over the past, with race and gender playing an important but not always a healthy role. South Africa needs inclusive histories. It is, therefore, important to reflect on how we remember. What are the agendas determining our thoughts and memories? What is the role of trauma in remembering events and life stories? Do we remember differently when we are young from when we are old? Do men

presuppose that women remember differently than them? Do races acknowledge the pain in each other's histories?

There are strong heritage movements established and developing in South Africa (many of them initiated, for example, by the Department of Arts and Culture). While acknowledging the energy and importance of these movements, one also has to admit that South Africa's histories are highly contested, especially the contributions and presentation of religious histories. Therefore, an issue on how religious people are remembered, and how they themselves remember, is important and it is to this theme of remembering and commemoration that this supplement of SHE is dedicated.

The first essay comes from the pen of Philippe Denis. The suggestion that the 2015 conference should concentrate on 'Memory' originated from him. In this article he theorises on the role memory plays in the formation of identity and the enhancement of social cohesion. Johannes Vorster indicates how masculinity rules the memory of the dead body, in this case that of the mother of the seven in 4 Maccabees. Itumeleng Mothoagae and Boshadi Semenya explore how memory has operated in David Moffat's (1795-1883) translation of the Setswana Bible.

Cogitator Mapala problematises remembering by asking why the Edinburgh 1910 International Missionary Conference should be remembered in Malawi, or in Africa, for that matter. In the same line of thought, Robert Vosloo asks how the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, which happened worlds away, should be celebrated by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa in 1917.

In his article, Julius Gathogo celebrates the memory of the Anglican, Thomas Kalume (1925-75) who was the first clergyman to become a Member of Parliament in Kenya. Also, he was the composer of the Kenyan national anthem. Retief Muller problematises the memory of Johannes du Plessis (1868-1935) who was vilified by his own church, the local Dutch Reformed Church, for his progressive ideas on mission.

Jim Maples discusses the view that the Baptist Church did not originate from the Reformation but directly from the 1st century church. Marius Nel remembers John Lake's legacy in South Africa after a hundred years.

Mxolisi Sokupa reflects on the memory of Richard Moko as part of the Seventh-day Adventist heritage. Wim Dreyer looks at how Albert Geyser's story was told by the media. Finally, Sam Tshehla remembers the way in which his family history has been recorded.

This issue of SHE indeed contains a variety of reflections on how individuals, ethnic groups, churches and rituals are remembered. The essays expose historical agendas and societal discourses, and the role they play in remembering. This is an issue which the Church History Society of Southern Africa and its members can truly be proud of.

THE 2016 CONFERENCE ON “FAITH AND SOUTH AFRICAN REALITIES”

In 2016 the CHSSA will join the Third Joint Conference for Societies of Theology and Religion. This will be held from 11 to 15 July 2016 under the general theme of ‘Faith and South African Realities’.

The CHSSA has specified its theme as ‘Popular faith and canonical faith of the church in southern African Christianity’. The sub-themes are: Church pronouncements on faith matters in southern Africa; Doctrinal dissent and heresies in southern Africa; Ecumenical discussions on the faith of the church in southern Africa; Women’s changing beliefs in southern Africa; Faith matters in southern African Pentecostalism; African beliefs and Christian faiths in the history of the Christian churches in southern Africa; and Faith in a secular age.

The second issue of SHE for 2016 will contain the peer-reviewed papers read at this conference. We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference and receiving your papers.

Kind regards

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Editor: *Studia Historiae Ecclesiae*