Christianity in Iraq VII: Synopsis

The churches of Iraq have preserved some of the most ancient liturgical material in Christianity. The Syriac ‘Anaphora of Addai and Mari’, commemorating the apostle of Edessa and his disciple who evangelised in Mesopotamia, dates back to the second or third century. It is one of the few complete liturgies to survive from a time when bishops improvised the text of the Eucharistic Prayer.

The ‘Anaphora of Addai and Mari’ fell somewhat into abeyance after 410 when the Synod of Isaac at Seleucia-Cteisphon declared that the liturgy would thereafter be celebrated in accordance with the Western rite. Over the centuries, the liturgical traditions have been far from static and have undergone many changes. In the Early Islamic era, the canons of the Hudra (East Syrian Office book) were rearranged by Patriarch Isoyab III (647-657). In the thirteenth century the Lectionary readings of the Hudra were revised to accord with the Peshitta. Changes are still being made today.

The East and West Syrian churches developed a very rich repertoire of liturgical literature. Manuscripts from the monastery site at Turfan (dated 9-12th centuries) provide particularly important insight into the evolution of the East Syrian liturgical tradition with the emergence of significant variants. The manuscripts also underscore the cardinal role that Syriac assumed in its role as the language of the liturgy throughout the far-flung, ethnically and linguistically diverse dioceses.

The churches of Iraq are facing particular challenges, not the least being the exodus and growth of diaspora communities in the Middle East, Europe, America and Australia. In these cosmopolitan, multicultural environments, the liturgy remains a vital artery linking communities back to their unique and precious heritage.

PROGRAMME

Morning Session.
[10.30 A.M. – 1.00 P.M.]

The morning session will consist of four papers exploring the dynamics of liturgy in the Syriac traditions, both Eastern and Western.

Fr. Baby Varghese (Kerala, India)
Images of Christ in East and West Syrian liturgy.

Dr. Aho Shemunkasho (Salzburg, Austria)
Changes in West Syrian liturgy without liturgical reform

Mr. Steven Ring (Bristol, U.K.)
The structure and history of the Hudra in the Church of the East: preliminary observations

Dr. Sebastian Brock (Oxford, U.K.)
Early witnesses to the liturgical tradition of the Church of the East

Afternoon Session.
[2.00 – 4.30 P.M.]

The afternoon session explores the role of liturgy within modern communities, highlighting its function and contribution 'beyond the mass' as a marker of cultural and religious identity.

Speakers include:

Ms. Tala Jarjour (Cambridge, U.K.)
The living tradition of liturgical chant among the Suryani community of Aleppo.

MS. Tala Jarjour has conducted her doctoral fieldwork amongst the erstwhile community of Edessa who relocated to Aleppo en masse in the 1920's. This talk will be accompanied by musical examples and illustrations.

Christianity in Iraq VII: Application Form

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

Day time tel.no.
e-mail address:

Please circle fee enclosed

Full £30.00
BISI Member £24.00
JAMECA Member £24.00
Student £12.00*

*Please send proof of student status.

Includes lunch, tea/coffee.

Do you require disabled access? Yes/No

Please send this form with your remittance by Tuesday April 20th (cheques payable to Dr. Erica Hunter):

Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter,
Centre of Eastern and Orthodox Christianity, Dept. for the Study of Religion, School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square LONDON WC1H 0XG

You can also register and pay on-line at www.easternchristianity.com

For further details, please write to the above address or contact by e-mail.

e-mail: eh9@soas.ac.uk
CHRISTIANITY IN IRAQ VII

SATURDAY 24th APRIL 2010

Enquiries to:

Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter
Centre of Eastern and Orthodox Christianity
Dept. for the Study of Religions
SOAS
Thornhaugh St.
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

E-mail: eh9@soas.ac.uk

For further details visit:
www.easternchristianity.com

Centre of Eastern and Orthodox Christianity
DEPT for the STUDY of RELIGIONS
SCHOOL of ORIENTAL and AFRICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY of LONDON
in conjunction with

The British Institute for the Study of Iraq
&
Jerusalem and Middle Eastern Churches Association

Presents

CHRISTIANITY IN IRAQ VII

A seminar day on the liturgical traditions of Iraq

SATURDAY 24th APRIL 2010

to be held at

The Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre
SCHOOL of ORIENTAL and AFRICAN STUDIES
Thornhaugh St., Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

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