



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk presides over panel discussion on the role of theology in education and upbringing of a contemporary person

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, rector of the Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies and head of the department of theology at the National Research Nuclear University (MEPhi), presided over a panel discussion on the role of theology in education and upbringing of a contemporary person. The discussion was held in the framework of the 1st All-Russian academic conference on Theology in Humanitarian Education which is taking place at the MEFhi.

Metropolitan Hilarion summed up the discussion, saying: "I believe we will agree that the changes of the recent months mark the end of a very important stage. Theology has received official recognition and does not have to disguise itself in the garments of any other academic subject under the names of 'poetics' or 'aesthetics' as persons devoted to ecclesiastical scholarship had to do during the Soviet times.

“I would like to underscore that theology in the secular education is a joint project of traditional religions in the Russian Federation and the secular academic community. Representatives of traditional religions come out in ‘a united front’ since there are no contradictions among us on the academic subject of theology and we understand only too well that theology cannot be supraconfessional or nonconfessional. Theology differs from secular religious studies because it is bound to religious experience which cannot envelop different religions. Theology develops inside a single confession, and we are building a basis for the deepening of interconfessional and inter-religious cooperation.

“It is not fortuitous that the first textbook in the project of manuals for theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church was a book on the history of non-Christian religions. I am confident that our brothers belonging to religions presented in the book will find nothing contradicting their self-understanding or insulting their religious feelings.

“So far we have managed to build a frame of an academic subject called ‘theology’ on the level of higher education, but religious education should be present in colleges and in schools, as it was fairly noted in our discussion.

“I think there are many tasks we have to solve in our country, and, being glad at our achievements, we understand that we all have a vast field of work and interaction in future.”

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