The first ever dissertation council for theology established in Russia as part of Ministry of Education and Science system

On May 30, 2016, the deputy minister of education and science, Ms. L. Ogorodova, issued a permission to establish a United Dissertation Council for Candidate's and Doctor's academic degrees for Specialty 26.00.01 – Theology at the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies (CMI), the St Tikhon Orthodox University of the Humanities, Moscow State University and the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA).

Unprecedented in Russian history, this event is a follow-up of the long and hard work, which has been carried out by the Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional religions since the 1990s to build the academic sphere of theology in a secular educational space.

The Dissertation Council is chaired by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relation and rector of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute. It includes doctors of philosophy and history. The vice-chairmen are Prof. Archpriest Georgiy Orekhanov, St. Tikhon University, Prof. Andreyev, head of the CMI chair of history, and Ms. O. Vasilyeva, head of the RANEPA chair of state-confessions relations. The council also includes Metropolitan Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk, chairman of the ROC publishing board. The Rev. Dimitry Safonov, CandHis., CMI academic secretary and deputy head of the chair of external church relations, has been appointed as secretary of the United Dissertation Council.

The council includes representatives of the CMI – V. Katasonov, A. Fokin, D. Shmonin; the St. Tikhon University – K. Antonov, A. Kostryukov, N. Sukhova; Moscow State University – M. Bibikov, N. Borisov, D. Volodikhin, K. Panchenko, V. Savrey; RANEPA – A. Sitnikov; Russian Acedemi of Sciences – G. Vdovin, A. Nazarenko; St Petersburg University – S. Firsov; Russian Christian Academy of the Humanities – M. Shkarovsky; Perm State University – Archpriest Aleksey Marchenko, head of the chair of theology; and Samara State University – Archpriest Dimitry Leskin. The ministerial order and list of the council are published on the website of the Supreme Attestation Commission.

Theology was recognized as an academic specialty by the decision of the presidium of the Ministry of Education and Science Supreme Attestation Commission on October 12, 2015.

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