



DECR chairman takes part in meeting of World Council of Churches Permanent Committee for Consensus and Cooperation

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The World Council of Churches Committee for Consensus and Cooperation took place on June 30 at the Danilovsky hotel compound. The

meeting was attended by representatives of Local Orthodox Churches and Protestant and Anglican Churches from various countries of the world.

Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, **addressed the participants**, stressing the importance of inter-Christian dialogue, and called them to rethink the paradigm of interchurch relations.

He said, 'To this end, we should seriously address the heritage of the Early Church and try to determine how the church unity was preserved at that time. On the other hand, as far back as in the apostolic times, the expression 'lex oranda est lex credenti' came into practice, thus establishing the link between prayer and faith. What has often become today, unfortunately, a stumbling block in relations between Christians points to the fact that this old Christian maxim has been forgotten and attention has shifted from faith and prayer to some other factors which concern the aims and tasks of Christian preaching only indirectly. Thus, in an attempt to attract the public attention, some inter-Christian organizations have fully adopted the language of the modern mass media, which, while being understandable to the modern society, conveys nothing about the specific nature of the Christian perception of the world or its values. In this way we equalize ourselves with other institutions of the civil society, becoming one of the many actors in the socio-political process. The Christian community should command a language understandable to people, but it should also possess of certain critical sharpness which distinguishes it from the language of social movements and public organizations. In other words, Christians should not adjust to public trends and standards but, according to St. Paul, should keep *the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle (2 Thes. 2:15)*.

'A special danger for inter-Christian cooperation lies in the liberalization of Christian moral norms as some trends in the modern Protestantism seek to present them as a new, 'humane' paradigm of Christian preaching. For the Orthodox it is an unacceptable point of view whereby the ethical ideals of

the Gospel are declared products of the far-gone era, which have lost their power in our time. This is also true for the questions of theology and church practice whose aims and meaning if placed in this perspective are no longer to bring people to God. These questions are rather reduced to an imagined 'humanization' of church life, now adjusted exclusively to the standards of 'this world'.

The discussion that followed dealt with urgent problems of interchurch relations.

Answering questions from participants in the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion pointed to the importance that theological discussion has in our days, at a time when the World Council of Churches speaks in the language of the mass media. In order to prevent the discussion on Christian moral values from being reduced to a debate on morals as cultural phenomena, it is necessary to return to biblical principles and the heritage of the Early Church. Recently, in dealing with problems of morality, the Orthodox have increasingly shared common points of view with the Catholics, while liberal views with regard to ethical problems, which have prevailed in some Protestant communities, have given rise to doubt as to being Christian at all.

The WCC Permanent Committee for Consensus and Cooperation will work till July 3.

DECR Communication Service

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