



Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk meets with the USA Ambassador to Russia John R. Beyrle

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On 28 January 2010, Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the DECR, met with the Ambassador of the United States of America John R. Beyrle.

Archbishop Hilarion told the USA Ambassador about Church-State relations in Russia at present, and about social ministry of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Chairman of the Department for external church relations called the work of the US State Department on preparing the annual report on religious freedom important and said that the Russian Orthodox Church could take part in preparing materials for the document thus making it more impartial. He underscored positive dynamics in the contents of the document evident in the last few years.

Ambassador Beyrle appreciated the DECR's response to the State Department report and expressed his willingness to cooperate with the Russian Church.

Archbishop Hilarion remarked that traditional religious communities in Russia have made a decisive contribution to the shaping of the statehood. This affects both their status and specific features of the realization of religious freedom in Russia and should be taken into account in the analysis of Church-State relations.

Also discussed were initiatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in the field of education. Archbishop Hilarion emphasized that the Church has always favoured the freedom of students' choice between Orthodox, Islamic, Jewish, and Buddhist cultures, or secular ethics.

In conclusion of the meeting, the DECR chairman and rector of the Church "Joy to All Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God in Ordynka Str., invited the USA Ambassador to visit his church.