Interreligious dialogue is much in demand today

A viewer of the Church and the World TV-programme offered an idea to found an international discussion platform for the religious organizations from all countries of the world on the model of the United Nations Organization. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations said in his comments: "This is a very interesting issue and a sensible initiative. There is no world organization uniting all religions, but there are international forums of different format and inter-Christian organizations, for instance, the World Council of Churches with a membership of over three hundred Christian churches and organizations, but no world inter-religious forum."

The DECR chairman pointed out the complexities on the way to the implementation of this idea. 'I believe it would be difficult to found such a forum. There are over two hundred UN member states, but millions of religious organizations. Not all of them are centrally managed, as, for instance, the Russian Orthodox Church. Also, the representation of religious communities in such a world organization is not quite clear.

Metropolitan Hilarion is convinced that a dialogue among religions is an imperative of modern times. "As for these organizations, I suppose, the more the better," he said.

Some people say: you must withdraw from the inter-Christian and inter-religious organizations, from the World Council of Churches. We ask a reasonable question: what would be the point? Metropolitan Hilarion suggested to think about what a withdrawal to isolation might give us in the present difficult situation, whereas it is important to keep the dialogue going, present our positions and exchange opinions.

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