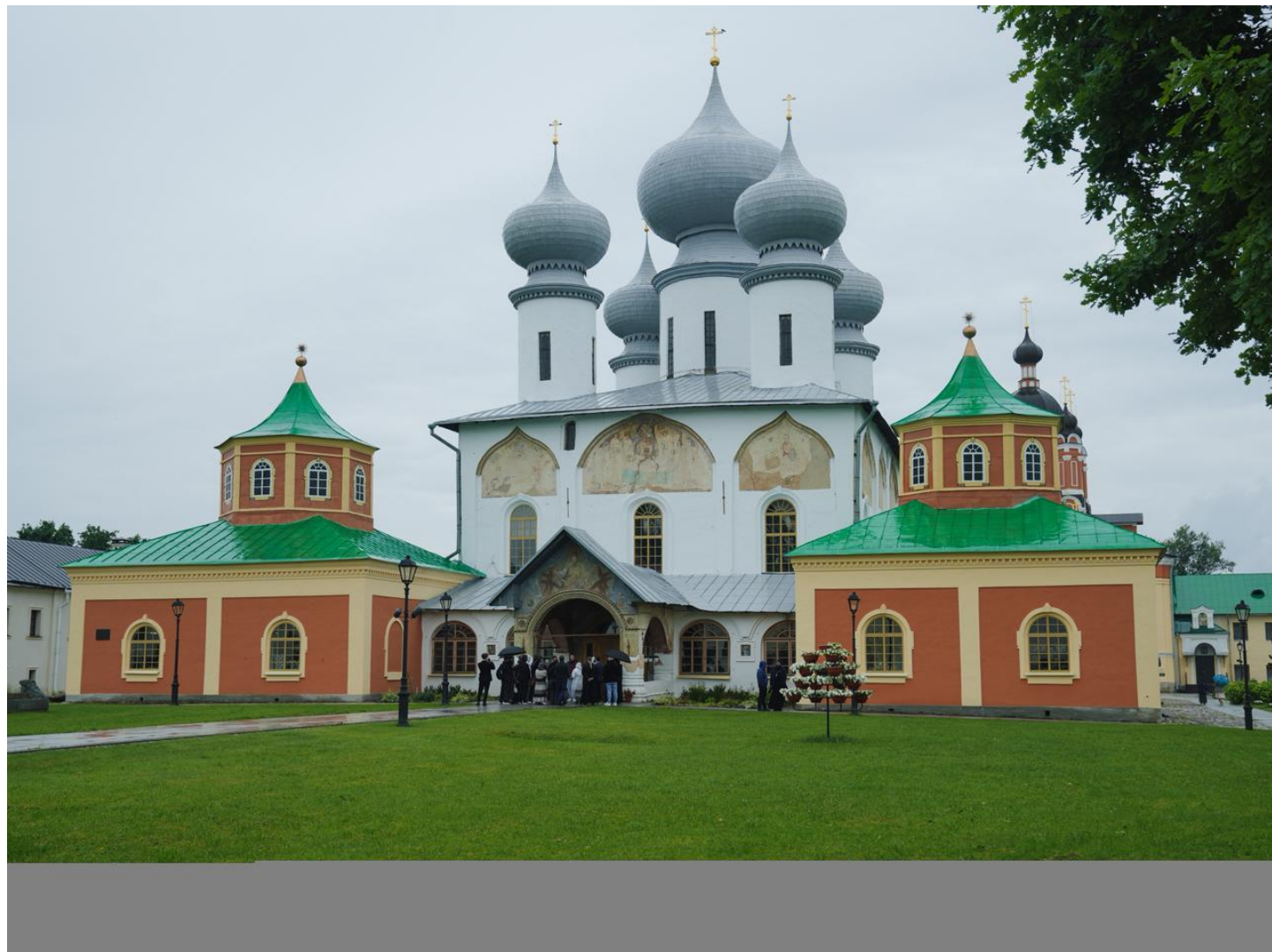




The 4th Christian Youth Forum of the CIAC takes place in Tikhvin



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The 4th Christian Youth Forum was held in Tikhvin under the auspices of the Christian Interconfessional Advisory Committee (CIAC) from June 30 to July 4.

The forum, entitled “Historical and Spiritual Heritage of Generations,” brought together over 70 Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants from Russia, Belarus, and Armenia. There were participants from the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Moscow, the Armenian Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria, the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians Baptists, the Russian United Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals), the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the All-Union Fellowship of Evangelical Christians.

Opening the forum was Bishop Mstislav of Tikhvin and Lodeynoye Pole, who welcomed the participants on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'. In his address, the bishop said that the first and foremost aim of the meeting is to bring those gathered to the understanding of their unity in Christ. "We are children of God, we believe in the crucified and risen Christ, we believe in the Holy Trinity. Let this forum help us realize that we are one and that there are still people who believe in Christ," the hierarch emphasized.

Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), secretary of the DECR for inter-Christian relations and secretary of the CIAC, addressed the audience with greetings from Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the DECR and co-chairman of the CIAC.

Among those speaking at the opening ceremony were Mr. Yury I. Shorokhov, head of the Tikhvin district and Tikhvin urban settlement; Mr. Mikhail A. Sokolov, first deputy chairman of the Committee on Youth Policy of the Leningrad region; and priest Alexei Solovyov, deputy chairman of the Synodal Department for Youth Affairs.

During the days of the forum, the participants talked about their faith, analyzed passages from the Gospel and got acquainted with religious and cultural sights of Tikhvin, including the Transfiguration Cathedral and the Dormition Monastery of the Mother of God, the venue of the forum.

The speakers touched upon such themes as the continuity of generations and preservation of spiritual heritage, activity of Christian Churches in the context of modern challenges, and the role played by Christianity in the socio-cultural environment at present. Sharing the Orthodox views were priest Nikolai Svyatchenko, chairman of the Missionary Department of the St. Petersburg Diocese, and priest Pavel Ostrovsky, rector of St. George's church in the rural town of Nakhabino, Moscow region.

The young participants presented projects that contribute to the strengthening of evangelical family values, to Christian education of young people and care for the older generation, and promote interdenominational dialogue.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented by hieromonk Mark (Akhmatkhanov) of the DECR Secretariat for inter-Christian relations; priest Gennady Titov, head of the Youth Department of the Tikhvin Diocese, and deacon Yevgeny Yesaulenko, a staff member of the Synodal Department for Youth Affairs.

The Christian Youth Forum is an annual meeting of young people from Russia and neighboring countries who represent various Christian denominations. The Forum is held under the auspices of the Christian Interconfessional Advisory Committee.

The Committee was established in 1993 and is one of the largest inter-Christian platforms in Eurasia. Its goal is to coordinate joint activities of Christian denominations in matters of peacekeeping, traditional Christian morality and ethics, ensuring harmony and stability in society, interdenominational cooperation and defending the rights of Christians.