



## Metropolitan Hilarion's talk with Lukoil staff

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Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, had on 18 February 2010 a talk with the staff of the Lukoil oil and gas company. He spoke about the role that Orthodoxy plays in the post-Soviet space.

The conference hall was overcrowded. The DECR chairman first reminded his audience of the major milestones the Russian Orthodox Church had passed in its history since the Baptism of Russia to this day.

In the present situation, the Russian Church has set itself as a priority the missionary and educational work, Metropolitan Hilarion said. This work should also be carried out with those who claim to be Orthodox but can be regarded as such only nominally because they are ignorant of the Orthodox doctrine and unchurched.

Among steps to be taken he pointed to the need to build churches in residential areas in large cities because there are often some ten or more thousand townspeople have to be served by only one church in such districts. This situation hampers an adequate pastoral and educational work.

'Now as the restoration of church structures is being completed, special attention will be given to the construction of churches in densely populated areas. In Moscow alone, as we know, very many churches have survived or have been restored in the centre, while there is an acute shortage of churches in 'dormitory' districts. It is planned to build some two hundred churches this year so that people could have a church nearby and avoid coming downtown for a church service. The churches of standard building type will be constructed to take half a year each', he said.

The rebirth of religious life in the country cannot be limited to the construction of churches, the DECR chairman stressed, as 'the Church has to learn speaking with the world and society in the language intelligible for the modern man. While with regard to the construction of churches we can state with gratitude to God that we have covered a part of the necessary journey, with regard to the missionary role of the Church and dialogue with society we should admit that we are perhaps only in the beginning of the road'.

Speaking about the Church's ministry and church life, His Eminence Hilarion also underscored the important role the Russian Orthodox Church plays in maintaining good relations with countries of the

former Soviet Union and compatriots abroad.

In the end of his talk, Metropolitan Hilarion answered questions from the audience.

Later that day, the DECR chairman met with Lukoil President V. Alekperov.



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