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Patriarch Kirill Hails Stronger Chinese Ties After Visit

By The Moscow Times

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Patriarch Kirill expressed optimism on Wednesday for the future of the Russian Orthodox Church in China after a visit to the country.

"We have specific plans to strengthen the Chinese Orthodox Church," Kirill told journalists in Shanghai while wrapping up his visit to the country, Interfax reported.

Kirill noted that developing closer ties between Orthodox religious communities in both countries would have "very positive consequences for Orthodox Christians in China."

He stressed that the Orthodox Church, which has existed in China for 300 years, is currently experiencing a rebirth, and he said Chinese society's positive development made his visit possible.

Kirill also praised the Chinese authorities for understanding the importance of religion in the

lives of the Chinese and the value of the Orthodoxy for the development of mutual relations between Russia and China.

The Patriarch recalled several liturgies that he performed during his visit, including ones at the Russian Embassy in Beijing and the former Russian enclave of Harbin in Northeast China.

He expressed hope that his visit would contribute to further development of Russian-Chinese relations, which he said "had great importance for the two peoples and two countries, as well as the whole world."

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