

POLISH ORTHODOX CHURCH REJECTS GENDER IDEOLOGY OF ISTANBUL CONVENTION



The Polish Orthodox Church issued a statement yesterday on the “Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence,” commonly known as the Istanbul Convention, noting that while it has praiseworthy elements, it also unfortunately departs from the Biblical conception of mankind, and thus the Church cannot support it.

The Church’s statement comes amidst societal tension on the matter after Polish Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro declared in July 2020 that he would begin the formal process to withdraw from the Convention, which was previously ratified by the Polish government in 2015. Hundreds of people demonstrated against the withdrawal in Warsaw in July.

While the Convention’s main focus is preventing gender-based violence against women, conservative critics believe it also introduces a gender ideology that contradicts the Biblical teaching that man was created as male and female.

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church also spoke out against the Convention in January 2018, which prompted Bulgarian deputies to postpone the

vote on ratifying the Convention. In July of that year, the Bulgarian Constitutional Court ruled that the Convention is incompatible with the Bulgarian constitution.

In its new statement, the Polish Church writes that, in the context of the ongoing debate on the Istanbul Convention, “we would like to remind that the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church has always been guided by the thought derived from the Holy Scriptures, which state: So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them (Gen. 1:27).

“This expression teaches us to respect woman and man as the crown of God’s creation, leaving no room for any other gender,” the Church’s statement reads.

Thus, in accordance upon Biblical principles, the Church calls upon its faithful children to love all people, whether man, woman, child, family member, strange, etc., for God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him (1 Jn. 4:16).

While the Polish Church is “pleased that the so-called Istanbul convention speaks of tolerance,” it is also, “concerned that in its content it is also a denial of Biblical teaching.”

“This fact makes us very sad and we cannot agree with it,” reads the statement.

While it is not the Church’s job to fight against political decisions, it does give opinions on these decisions, the Church states, thus the Polish Church notes that it “rejects many of [the Convention’s] provisions that contradict the teachings of the Bible, nor do we accept making religion and the Church responsible for social pathologies.”

In conclusion, the Church “urge[s] the faithful to strive to preserve the traditional Orthodox teaching about women and men, remembering the exhortation: So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself (Eph. 5:28),” and encourages them to support initiatives that seek to put Biblical teachings into practice.

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