

Another Reason Christian Women Should Be Grateful to Live in America

Many Turkish women were doubled over with laughter Tuesday after their country's deputy leader said in a speech assailing "moral corruption" that women should not laugh in public and should not talk on their mobile phones so much.

Speaking Monday night at a celebration marking the end of Ramadan, Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc took aim at contemporary life in Turkey, arguing for more chastity, humility and reading of the Quran and less consumerism, oil consumption and sex in the media, the *Hurriyet Daily News* reported.

Social media lit up as news of the speech spread, with hundreds of Turkish women posting photos of themselves and friends laughing in public places. Popular hashtags included #kahkaha (laugh) and #direnkahkaha (resist, laugh).

The *Hurriyet Daily News* offered this excerpt from Arinc's remarks: "Chastity is so important. It is not only a name. It is an ornament for both women and men. (She) will have chasteness. Man will have it, too. He will not be a womanizer. He will be bound to his wife. He will love his children. (The woman) will know what is haram (sin) and not haram. She will not laugh in public. She will not be inviting in her attitudes and will protect her chasteness."

He also sniped at women for what he considers unnecessary or trivial topics for cellphone talk.

"Women give each other meal recipes while speaking on the mobile phone. 'What else is going on?' 'What happened to Ayse's daughter?' 'When is the wedding?' Arinc said, mimicking

a woman using her phone. "Talk about this face to face."

Arinc is a co-founder of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamist-based Justice and Development Party, known as AKP. Erdogan is running for re-election in August.

Opponents accuse the ruling party of working to dismantle the strict separation of religion and state, which was the core principle of the founding of modern Turkey after the Ottoman Empire collapsed in the early 20th century.

Erdogan's main rival, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, laughed at his opponent's deputy.

"We need to hear the happy laughter of women," he tweeted.

Michael Winter writes for USA Today.

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