

# **Hungary Elects Bible-Believing Woman With Passion for Family Values as President**

Katalin Novak, Hungary's family minister until 2021, was elected president with a resounding 137 votes in the first round of the March 10 presidential election, giving her the needed two-thirds majority while her opponent, economist and lawyer Peter Ronai, received just 51 votes.

Novak has an impressive resume. She began her political career in 2001 at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs where she first worked in European affairs. In 2010, she became an advisor to the foreign minister and from 2012 to 2014, she served as chief of staff of the Ministry of Human Resources. In 2014, Katalin Novak started as secretary of state for Family and Youth Affairs and in 2018 she was elected to the country's parliament.

In October 2020, she was appointed minister for Family Affairs, a position she held until the end of 2021 when the governing Fidesz party nominated her as its presidential candidate. Novak was the vice president of Fidesz from 2017 to 2021.

In addition to studying in Hungary, Novak picked up degrees in the United States and France in economics, international politics and law. She is fluent in English, French and German as well as Hungarian.

## **A Passion for Families**

But the mother of three is particularly known for her strong pro-family policies, which are a top priority of Novak's. The

Hungarian government has implemented a range of financial incentives to correct long-declining birth rates and declining populations.

Perhaps the most noteworthy reform Hungary has enacted is a life-long income-tax exemption for mothers who have given birth to four children. Large families—households with at least three children—also receive several benefits including an interest-free mortgage of approximately \$51,000 and a subsidy of \$33,000 to purchase a larger home.

In addition, the government helps large families purchase vehicles and pays maternity allowance to grandparents who care for children.

According to Novak, the government's family support policies have borne good fruit: The number of marriages has doubled in 10 years—the highest rate in Europe—and divorce is at its lowest rate in 60 years. Abortions have decreased by 41%, and the birth rate has increased by 25% in 10 years.

Indeed, Novak has been the most prominent face in family politics and often appears in photos and publications with her children and husband. You can follow Novak's official Facebook page [here](#).

## **Politics From Eternity's Perspective**

I had the opportunity to meet this 44-year-old—a soft and sunny Iron Lady—in Budapest last October during the Hungarian National Prayer Breakfast. I interviewed her for TV7, the Finnish Christian channel, regarding Hungary's Christian family policy.

Novak spoke about the Christian values she brings to the table and her family-oriented policies which take a long-term perspective.

“Yes, we hear [criticism] from all over. But if we think of

the Bible, the right decision is not always acknowledged in the same moment," she said. "It is a question of whether we think about the future in the short term or in the long term, from eternity. If we keep in mind eternity, we don't have to worry so much about the criticism we receive."

I learned that Novak, as a strong believer, puts prayer as an important priority on her daily agenda.

"It was not very easy to start reading the Bible every day, but I have been doing so for a long time. I start my day with the Bible, and I get a sense of security from it," she said. "The Bible reminds us every day that our land does not belong to us but to God, and power does not belong to us, but belongs to Him. Nor should we be proud of our accomplishments, but He also deserves credit."

"If I remember these things every day, I hope I make better decisions."

In an interview published on Nov. 22 on the news site of the Hungarian Reformed Church, Novak described her attitude to her post.

"Since I have been in public office, the relevance and meaning of the Lord's Prayer has changed. At the end of the prayer we say 'for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,' but often the emphasis is on the words 'kingdom,' 'power' and 'glory' when it should be on 'thine,'" Novak noted. "Every time I recite the Lord's Prayer, this is the moment where I realize that the kingdom, the power and the glory are not mine, not ours, but God's. It is also clear from the sentence that power, office and mandate are given by grace. This insight gives me strength, energy, a real sense of security."

She continued: "I know that the kingdom belongs to God, but this does not make me inactive, rather liberates me, because I have the opportunity to participate as a servant in His realm. This makes my work and my life meaningful."

After the interview, I presented Novak with my book, *The Miracle of Israel and President Truman*, which tells a story about a Bible-believing man who accidentally became president of the United States of America in 1945 and played a critical role in the founding of the Jewish state.

Truman didn't know about his destiny until a few months prior to Election Day. I can sense similar providence with Novak.

God's ways are mysterious.

Novak will assume the office of president during a ceremony on May 10. May God bless Hungary and President Novak. {eoa}

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