

EARTHLY ANGELS AND HEAVENLY HUMANS: REVISITING GENDER IN CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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Abstract

In the late modern era, many conventionally accepted issues have been challenged by various political agendas, secularized categories, and social ideologies. One of these fundamental issues is the understanding of the human body and its role and destiny. This issue is at the core of defining gender. The rising popularity of ideologies about gender fluidity has been seeking to obliterate difference in gender, transform the body, and refashion gender roles. However, in Orthodox theology, the God-given roles, qualities, and functions of human beings ought to lead to one essential calling: holiness. Diverse living experiences of human beings, married and single alike, point to a greater mystery beyond cultural and social differences and technological advances. All Christians, regardless of gender (male or female) and status (married or single), are invited to become earthly angels and heavenly humans. This paper revisits various patristic views on the body in both its protological and the eschatological dimensions and its impact on gender. It also analyzes the implication of the patristic understanding of Christian anthropology and its impact on today's gender ideologies. It attempts to present anthropology from the experiential life of the Church, taking into consideration that postmodern thought doubts all metanarratives. It draws on various living models of Christians, whether male or female, who are icons of divine faces reflecting beauty and light of God's glory. These models express the Divine mystery of how the power of the Holy Spirit inhabiting the human beings in body and soul transfigures them in Divine Light and renders them earthly angel, without losing their gender identity.

Keywords: Anthropology, Gender, Patristics, Postmodernism, Eschatology, Body, Soul, Creation.

Introduction

In this era of postmodern thought, conventionally accepted issues affecting human life and existence have been challenged by various political agendas, secularized categories, and social