

Russian TV Network Won't Air 'Simpsons' Episode Over Fears of Offending Christians

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Vuikos / YouTube

The Russian cartoon network “2x2” has decided not to air the latest episode of “The Simpsons,” following complaints by clergy in the Russian Orthodox Church, according to the news agency RBC.

In the episode, titled “Looking for Mr. Goodbart,” Homer becomes obsessed with playing “Peekimon Get” (a play on Pokemon Go), and wanders into Sunday Church looking for “Peekimons,” as does Jeffrey “Comic Book Guy” Albertson. When Reverend Lovejoy asks the two to stop, Albertson responds, “Look, this game is — or at least was — bigger than Jesus. Okay?” Lovejoy then says, sighing, “Hmm. It’s a pretty low bar, these days.”

Embed:

The scene bears certain similarities to the real-life case of Ruslan Sokolovsky, the young video blogger who filmed himself last summer playing Pokemon Go inside a Russian Orthodox cathedral in Yekaterinburg, and then uploaded the video to YouTube. Sokolovsky, an atheist, says he wished to challenge warnings in the news that such actions could be considered a crime against “religious sentiments.”

Last September, he was arrested for the stunt, and he faces a 3.5-year criminal sentence, if convicted. The verdict is expected later this month.

Related article: [How Pokemon Go Led a Russian Blogger to Prison](#)

Anastasia Shablovskaya, 2x2’s publicity director, told RBC, “We don’t air content that might compromise the network or cause social controversy, therefore we won’t be showing this episode.”

This Wednesday, the news agency TASS published comments by Russian Orthodox Church theologians, who advocated raising the age restrictions on The Simpsons. Andrei Novikov, a member of the church’s synodal biblical theology commission, said the latest episode of The Simpsons is a “clear confirmation” that Hollywood produces “powerful propaganda” to “disintegrate society,” particularly in Russia. “Therefore, we must strengthen control over media products,” Novikov concluded.

A Russian Orthodox cleric in Ivanov told TASS that the scene showing Homer disrespecting a church could “shake the moral foundations” of younger viewers.

An unnamed clergy source told RBC that the church won’t comment officially on the new Simpsons episode, saying that priests are entitled to their own opinions.

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