

Open letter to the missions department of Word of Life

Since 2004 and up until now we, Obadja AB, have supported Word of Life's mission efforts in China, which we now intend to end. There are three reasons for this:

1) Baptism

We believe that baptism should be done on the basis of personal confession. First you get saved and then you confirm your salvation by getting baptized. This means in short: first faith, then baptism. It is impossible to accept infant baptisms as a confirmation of someone's faith.

The leadership of Word of Life has already made the decision that they will change the statutes so that also people who were baptized as infants can become members. The decision will be formally announced shortly. In the long run, allowing people who were baptized as infants to become members of the church means that the church will also baptize infants. He who is baptized as a baby and becomes a full member of the church does that believing that affirming his infant baptism is enough. When this person becomes a parent he or she will also want to give the same opportunities to the newly born son or daughter, and their child will be baptized as an infant. The Pastors and leadership will in the long run also baptize infants.

The following can be found under the headline "Baptism" on the Swedish Pentecostal denomination's website: *"We only baptize people who believe, because that is the only baptism that can be found in the Bible. Every story of baptisms in the Bible is about people who have listened to the preaching, started believing and chosen to be Christians. There are no words about baptizing small children who do not have a chance to choose whether or not to follow Jesus."*

I do not share the acceptance of infant baptisms; I stick to the classic Pentecostal view of baptism – first comes faith, and the next natural step is baptism.

I am told Hans Weichbrodt has baptized Jonathan Ekman's youngest child. Jonathan Ekman was both baptized as an infant and as an adult, but he has said he affirms his infant baptism and considers his baptism as an adult as an act of confirmation. That his daughter would not become a member of Word of Life seems like an impossible hypothesis. By the time of her Christening, if not before, Ekman decided to accept infant baptisms.

Ekman also advocated for infant baptism in a leader in *Världen Idag*, November 2013, like this:

"To therefore accept baptism of children to believers and church service visiting parents should not be considered unbiblical or void. The children are taught and will grow into the grace that they received in baptism. The problems arise when baptisms are put in a context in which baptism does not lead into a Christian life, but rather a social name ceremony and the real content of faith is lost."

Ulf Ekman

For those who want to understand the power and necessity of baptism from a Biblical perspective I recommend Daniel Wörn's book "Låt alla döpa er!" from 1980. It will be republished in January 2014.

2) Catholicism

To me it is unthinkable that my salvation, based on the death and resurrection of Jesus, is not enough. This is what Catholics think about us, Protestants. To be completely Christian you must receive Jesus, his father and his mother. I have never acknowledged Mary, and according to Catholicism this means that I am not on my way to heaven but to the purgatory or perhaps even to hell. In purgatory I will suffer for a while and then I will be welcomed to heaven. To me, this faith is completely unthinkable.

It is also completely out of the question that I would ever pray to saints. Some of the leaders of Word of Life do not think it is wrong to worship or pray to saints. I could never show that kind of reverence to a dead holy man or woman. I worship the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. That is how I was taught, that is what I do and that is what I will continue to do. In the same way, many other Catholic dogmas are unthinkable to me.

The Catholic dogmas that I refer to in this letter are, among other, papacy, the Pope's infallibility, worship of saints, icons, the sacraments, the new way of thinking when it comes to unity and ecumenism, Mary's position, infant baptism, purgatory and Rome's authority. However, I am not saying that the Catholic Church does not carry any Biblical truths and are heretic in everything. But it is just that – the mixture of true Biblical dogmas and a plethora of other influences – that makes it all so deceitful.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus"

1 Tim 2:5

It is always only Jesus, never Mary or any other saint beside or instead of or Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

3) Word of Life's implementation of Catholic dogmas

I have been a business man my whole life and because of that I have met a lot of people who are members of different orders – something I have never even considered being part of. The structure of an order is this: To the uninitiated it is presented as a gentlemen's club where the members support and help one another in a network, and where you also help out in society through some sort of public organization. The latter is done to gain the society's acceptance and an official reason for the order to exist. To mention one example, when you join the Freemasons order you swear that you will be cursed if you break this fellowship. In the lower levels of the order you don't know much of what is really going on. On the middle levels you learn that you, as a member of this order, have a guardian angel named Lucifer. On the higher levels, where you are completely aware of the order's structure, you are well aware that you worship Lucifer. I want to make it very clear that Word of Life in no way is an order.

However, the flow of information at Word of Life works just like that when it comes to implementing the Catholic dogmas.

The pattern is similar to that in Word of Life: From the outside the church should be considered a Protestant evangelical-charismatic church that is also doing various forms of social work. The average member should think of himself as a charismatic church member where ecumenism has gained a more prominent role. The ecumenism in this case, however, has really come to mean something like "we will gradually accept and close in on Catholicism on a theological level without expecting the Catholic Church to accept our faith". This was for instance expressed in Ekman's message about unity from October 20th 2013. A certain part of that message was removed from the podcast (but it has not been removed from my memory), he said that he who does not accept Catholicism was "arrogant and a sinner". Therefore he was to pray for the forgiveness of sins and assent to the idea of ecumenism as something that Jesus is striving for. If a Protestant tries to share the communion with a Catholic, he won't allow it. Catholics think Protestants are "less" Christians than they are and can't or won't share communion with us. Ecumenism is strived for on a one-way street, and this is gradually moving Word of Life into a Catholic theology, but the Catholic Church is not expected to move toward Word of Life or any other Protestant church.

To me as a believer, sticking to the truth goes without saying. When it comes to the way the Catholic Church evangelizes the Protestant Church they seem to think that the end justifies the means. It is a different moral and ethical system. To a Muslim, lying is okay as long as it is not one Muslim to another, but this is unthinkable for Lutherans. If we as Protestants are on our way to purgatory the whole truth about Catholics' view on Protestant is not presented. Keeping us away from purgatory is considered a good cause and for that reason the whole truth is not told. The same goes within Word of Life; there is a hidden agenda and different agendas for different levels. It resembles the structure of orders.

So Word of Life has begun to distance itself from what it stood for in the 1980s and 1990s. Back then I was very attracted to it all and I know many members miss it. The strive to reach ecumenism forces us to accept Catholicism – but those that are really in the midst of it all should not just accept Catholicism, they should also leave the Protestant faith and convert to Catholicism. That is the only natural consequence of the road on which they walk, and even though they are not (yet) recommending that their members convert to Catholicism they encourage and are happy about those to take the step. All the warm and sincere congratulations in regards to Benjamin Ekman's conversion testify about that. Had the church been more open about their position in this matter, there would have been a cleft in the church. As I just mentioned, one of the former members who has taken this step is Ulf's and Birgitta's son Benjamin. Benjamin used to be editor in chief for the magazine Keryx (published by Word of Life), and their present editor in chief, Henrik Engholm, has also converted to Catholicism. Henrik also teaches at Word of Life Theological Seminar (LOTS).

"Focusing on unity creates separation, but focusing on the harvest creates unity."

Lewi Pethrus

Those who study at LOTS will read about the church fathers, which have strongly influenced the Catholic faith. Peter Halldorf has for many years been a Protestant Pentecostal Pastor but during the last decade he has left that position little by little. This has been expressed in numerous ways, as I'm sure you already know, for instance by his attitude toward Mary, saints, sacraments and baptism. At Hönö Conference Peter Halldorf said something that Catholics have always said, namely that "to receive Jesus we need to receive both his father and his mother". Peter Halldorf has no ambition of becoming a Catholic; he often stresses his ministry as a Pentecostal Pastor. His mission is to get Protestants, from the Pentecostal and Baptist denominations, to embrace the Catholic faith. Many doors would most likely close, should he become a Catholic. That is why it is important to Peter Halldorf that he can always entitle himself a Pentecostal Pastor, which he often does when writing articles for Christian newspaper Dagen and on other platforms. Despite his strong roots in the Pentecostal movement since many decades, today he is not preaching a classic Pentecostal theology according to the early roots of the Pentecost.

Martin Luther stressed that "Scripture should interpret Scripture" and "Scripture alone". To a Protestant this means that there is only one source – the Scripture. The teaching at LOTS is to a large extent based on the church fathers and the Christian tradition. This is a clear Catholic foundation, where the catechism and the church fathers are considered important supplements to the Bible. The catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the Scripture does not hold all wisdom. Tradition carries as much weight and as much authority as the Scripture.

"As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 82

Catholicism means that Scripture and Tradition should be two equal sources that complement one another. It was from that kind of thinking the Papacy was born. It was from Tradition, not Scripture, the infallible papacy was made possible. The Mormons have Mormon's book in addition to the Bible. That is what separates Protestants from Catholics and Mormons. We have one source – the Bible.

The Catechism also teaches that the Muslims, who share Abraham's faith, are also included in God's salvation plan.

"The Church's relationship with the Muslims. "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 841

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll"

Rev 22:18

"Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, 'Do not go beyond what is written'. Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other".

1 Kor 4:6

When studying theology in Swedish universities a big portion of the studies are based on books about, views on and comments to the Bible, instead of reading the actual Bible. At a discussion with a female priest she spoke on and on about all the literature she had read and she referred to different authors who had written about the Bible's gender perspectives. But she did not have a single argument based on the Bible itself. It surprised me how little she knew about the Bible – despite her 4.5 years of theology studies.

The fact that Joakim Lundqvist wrote a chronicle on Word of Life's website, saying that Word of Life will not become Catholic, is astonishing in itself. Why is there even a need to deny it? Just a decade ago it would have been completely irrelevant to deny something like that. Could it be that more and more people are suspecting that that is the direction in which the church is being led? The chronicle is also wrong in some of its claims. Firstly, it is Lundqvist that says the church is not becoming Catholic. Word of Life is controlled by a board where the Ekman and Ekh families are completely dominant. The board has not denied that Word of Life is on its way of becoming a Catholic Church. Lundqvist does not make the calls, the board does. Yes, he wrote that chronicle, but he is outranked by the board. Secondly, the Catholic Church could probably not incorporate Word of Life into its community because of the type of organization we are. Therefore it is out of the question that we could ever become a Catholic Church in our present form. The third and most important thing is that even though we are not becoming a Catholic Church in terms of organization, they seem to want the church members to have a Catholic faith. They implement more and more Catholic dogmas in their theology and every part of the church is influenced by it – the Sunday Services, the books, the educations etc. In the end the members will either have accepted the Catholic faith or even taken the step of converting to Catholicism.

If Lundqvist is serious about what he writes there is nothing that stops him from removing the Catholic elements and stop giving the most prominent services at the Europe Conference and Youth to Catholic preachers. The main speaker at this year's Youth Conference, Lady Caroline Cox, is a Catholic. Raniero Cantalamessa, the Pope's own court chaplain has also been given a lot of time at Word of Life, as well as several other Catholic speakers. These Catholic speakers have not mentioned a word about Protestants not being completely saved. Instead they have spoken on many other subjects, wanting us to loosen up. The Catholic speakers' purpose, as well as that of Word of Life's leadership, is to change Word of Life from within.

Also, more and more of our services' framework is Catholic. We have an altar on the podium, which Catholics think one should have both in Church and in one's home. We have stopped calling ourselves an assembly and started calling us church. We have started to tie ourselves together with the church from all times, which is based on a Catholic way of thinking that says that because Jesus started the first church through Peter there should only be one Catholic Church that continues through the centuries. We have a Catholic cross on the pulpit. We have two candles on the altar, and if the candles flicker out that will symbolize the Spirit leaving us. For that reason there is a glass cloche around them to avoid wind puffs to put the light out. We use wafer in Eucharist, which is now done with the Catholic idea that the bread and the wine become the physical body and blood of Jesus. At our conference and retreat facilities, Ribbingebäck, we offer a large quantity of literature that is plain Catholic, written by Catholics, from Catholic publishers. There are several icons and crucifixes in our pastors' offices and at Ribbingebäck. If Lundqvist is serious about his claim that Word of Life is not becoming a Catholic Church, I welcome him to show it in action by removing the above named Catholic elements. He is also welcomed to publicly dissociate us from purgatory, saints, infant baptisms and worship of Mary, to show that he is serious about Word of Life not becoming Catholic. None of these things have been done. For that reason his chronicle must be considered as a rhetorical attempt to avoid the real issue. We would happily see that he put his words into practice. We welcome him to publicly announce which Catholic elements he will remove from the church. Lundqvist obviously wants to deal with the question and remove the Catholic elements; why else would he write the chronicle? So again we welcome him to put his words into practice – it is time to act!

When we try to bring this topic up to discussion we get responses such as "it's not that big a deal" and you are ridiculed. Well, if it is not a big deal – why not remove it? If Lundqvist would remove the Catholic elements he would sign up for a fight against the board and in the end with the Ekman and Ekh families. Lundqvist was offered to serve as lead Pastor because he shares Ekman's view on infant baptism and Catholicism. If Lundqvist would resist these things there would be a struggle where he would face Ekman, Ekh and Gerdmar. Lundqvist has brought fresh winds and many new concepts into the church, and this is welcomed. But he, as well as those who sent him, has a hidden agenda to implement Catholic dogmas to an ever increasing extent. They sneak it in, using one very small step at a time.

What Word of Life teaches today is the complete opposite of what Ekman wrote in his article "What does the Pope have to do in Uppsala?" in the magazine Magazinet in June 1989. There he writes the following about the Catholic ecumenism:

"From the Pope's perspective ecumenism has always been important. But to the Roman church this has always meant that the "scattered brothers" would come back to the "mother church" in Rome. This is the actual meaning of ecumenism!"

Ulf Ekman

Ekman continues by calling it *"a game [that] is being played out right before the eyes of thousands of believers"*. He calls the Catholic dogmas *"justification by works, false religion"*

and superstition" and he calls their ecumenism a "*false ecumenism*". Ekman continues by saying that the Catholic sacraments will not save anyone – it is grace alone that saves. The sacraments will lead to the worship of saints, legends and religious traditions, said Ekman in 1989. Luther is called a hero of the faith, while the Roman Church is described using terms such as "*very false religiosity*" and "*full of religious spiritual forces*". Today Ekman would express himself very differently in this matter. Today he and his co-pastors are preaching a theology that to a large extent is the same as what Ekman in 1989 called "*a religious system that is anti-Christian*".

The change in theology can be seen in all departments of Word of Life. One example is that Ekman is revising his classic book "Doctrines" in a new version that not only contains a more up-to-date design and a more modern language, but also a new theology. What we have stood for during the past decades is to some extent removed in favor of this new teaching. The rewritten version of "Doctrines" will soon be released.

During the fall of 2013, Ekman has had evening seminars on Tuesdays where he has been teaching these new doctrines which to a great extent are based on church fathers and on a Catholic foundation. This teaching has been held in English and the last seminar will be held on December 10th. The teaching will then be sent to all Word of Life centers and their respective churches, all with the intent of leaving large parts of their Protestant convictions in favor of a Catholic faith.

This process of change has been going on for almost 10 years, with small steps. It can be described with the metaphor of how to boil a frog, which Stefan Salmonsson sometimes uses in his messages. If you wish to boil a frog you cannot drop it into boiling water – it would then jump right up. Instead you would want to place it in cold water and then slowly increase the heat. When the water has reached such a high temperature that the frog wants to jump out it can't, because the frog's body is paralyzed from the heat. The frog will be boiled. In the same way Catholicism has not been implemented just over night, if it were the majority of the members would protest loudly. Instead, Ekman and the leadership have implemented the new dogmas step by step, slowly and during a long time. The temperature may vary from department to department. The temperature in LOTS and Keryx is high, in some areas it is already boiling. Those who have studied there for four years have most likely accepted the Catholic faith or perhaps even converted. Ekman's closest and those with higher positions are already in 60 or 70 degree water and can no longer jump out. In the Bible school the temperature is lower, perhaps only 20 degrees. Out in the mission field, like in China, the temperature has been raised from 5 degrees to a few degrees higher, metaphorically speaking. It will however increase further, and this is one of the reasons why our financial support will be cancelled.

Ekman has participated in the Eucharist, the Catholic communion. The Catholic Eucharist is not open for all believers, only for those who confess the Catholic faith. In the canonical law (which can be found on the Vatican's website) number 844 is described that the Catholic Bishop or Priest is only allowed to share the sacraments with other Catholics, who in turn can only receive Eucharist from Catholic priests. However, there are exceptions, which is described in paragraph 3 in the same context, and one such exception is that the person belongs to a

church that does not have full community with the Catholic Church, if it happens on that person's own initiative and is found suited.

Anders Arborelius, Catholic Bishop, wrote in the "Katolskt magasin" number 14, 1999: *"Attending Eucharist in a Catholic Church is not a private matter, but a public position for the faith and doctrine of the Catholic Church"*. Anders Arborelius has also visited Word of Life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 838, confesses that the Orthodox Church has a deep connection with the Catholic Church, *"so profound that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord's Eucharist."* The Lutheran church, however, is not close, partly because we do not recognize the Pope's position and lots of other Catholic doctrines. Because of this a Protestant is not allowed to share Eucharist with a Catholic.

In Ekman's article "Does church view matter?" in Keryx, number 3, 2013, he expresses a church view that is Catholic and he dissociates himself from much of what he preached for decades. After the article a Catholic teacher from Bergen in Norway, Ragnhild Helena Aadland Høen, writes that *"Ulf Ekman cannot remain a Protestant much longer considering the church view he expresses in this article..."* Ekman is aware of the breakup with Lutheran faith that this article represents, and in the Norwegian newspaper Dagen from November 2013 he says this:

"This article expresses my own very personal theological reflections and does not have any normative function in terms of Word of Life's theology".

Ulf Ekman

This is highly remarkable. It is probably the first time ever that Ekman's theology deviates from that of Word of Life. The question is for how long this will be the case, and why it deviates. Is Word of Life not ready yet? Or will Ekman continue to develop his own theological position in relations to Word of Life on more areas than the church view?

This is however not the first time his process of change has been described in Keryx. One other example is when he criticizes the Lutheran dogma "Sola Scriptura":

"In this line of thoughts, which is about how to read the Bible, the problems with Sola Scriptura will surface. When the reformation more or less replaced the old teachers with the individual's conscience, many problems arose. Just the fact that thousands of people, who all believe in the Bible's authority, still reaches so many different conclusions, have perhaps more than ever contributed to the fragmentation of the Body of Christ".

Ulf Ekman in Keryx

Ulf and Birgitta Ekman have also had a Mary statue in their garden outside their house. This is not an expression for an increased ecumenism or understanding of their brothers and sisters in faith – it is taking a position against what they have believed and preached for decades, and for a Catholic faith. Word of Life's new ecumenism leads to Catholicism.

Swedish Christianity is going through an identity crisis on an even wider scale. The Sofia Church, a Church of Sweden, in Stockholm has hired an imam (<http://www.kyrkanstidning.se/nyhet/imam-far-jobb-i-kyrkan>), the large Pentecostal churches Filadelfiakyrkan in Stockholm and Smyrnakyrkan in Gothenburg now accept infant baptisms for their new members, and the new Arch Bishop Antje Jackelén questions several foundational Christian doctrines. Unfortunately Word of Life, once such a strong Bible based church, has been pulled down into this spiritual confusion.

Conclusion

We in Obadja can no longer support Word of Life's mission efforts in China. Word of Life's mission there is running Bible Schools and publishing Ekman's books. We have decided to end this support because we know that some of the teachers who fly in do not think worshipping saints is wrong, see Mary as part of the salvation, believe in purgatory etc. In the longer run we see that if Ekman's books that he wrote in the 80s and 90s become well spread in China, he as an author will also become famous and his new books, which go against what I so strongly believe, will also be published.

China has many believers already today, and their situation in the country stabilizes every year. Many churches are still under ground, but they are more and more accepted. Chinese authorities have seen the positive sides of the Christian faith and how it affects society in a positive way. There is a much more open attitude toward Christians in China. However, there are still many Chinese Christians who are threatened and persecuted. Because of that we feel it is unwise to let Word of Life influence the believers in a Catholic direction, which could cause division and in the longer run could jeopardize the security of the Protestant Christians in China. They are my concern.

I will remain in the clear Protestant evangelistic-charismatic faith, the same faith as Word of Life has had for decades. I strongly believe in:

- Scripture alone
- Grace alone
- Faith alone
- Christ alone
- Glory to God alone

What is so important that we are willing to jeopardize what has been built up and dissociate ourselves from the centre of what we have taught and preached during the last 30 years – without even bothering to explain so that every member can understand?

Lester Sumrall taught at a service at Word of Life in 1994 about "if the Pope (back then John Paul II) is now ready to be saved?". Lester died convinced that Catholicism was wrong. If he thought that the Pope, who according to the Catholic Church, is infallible – how much more does then an average Catholic need to get saved?

Because of this change in regards to baptism, the implementation of Catholic doctrines and not least because of the way the change is being done, we can no longer support the mission efforts of Word of Life. However, I do want to encourage all Jesus believing Protestants – do

not forget the Catholics. It is our responsibility as Christian, in accordance with the Great Commission, to preach the Gospel to all people. That includes Catholics, Mormons, Muslims and everybody else who do not believe and has not received Jesus alone as their Savior and Lord.

Sigtuna, 5th December 2013

Best regards,

Obadja AB



Kjell-Roger Holmström

P.S. Over the years I have seen many Christian leaders, both internationally as well as in Sweden, backsliding or significantly diverge from their faith. The Bible too gives us such examples. Abraham lied, David committed adultery and murdered (but thank God for Nathan who lead by God spoke correction into his heart), Jonah refused to prophecy and Peter denied Jesus. All these people repented and came back to a strong relationship with their God. But there are also examples of leaders who did not repent, Judas being the most tragic example.

When I personally see people who have meant so incredibly much to me go wrong I just feel a great fear of God and I am once again reminded of how important it is to prioritize prayer, the Word and the fellowship with the church and your Christian friends. Can these great leaders fall all of us can fall. Show me a Christian who has never fallen or sinned and I'll show you a person who is lying.

In this context the pride comes from knowledge, when people implicitly say that he who has most knowledge knows best. Or in its even more incorrect form, that he who has the most knowledge of God serves him the most. Jesus had the same kind of problems when he lived on earth. Ordinary people received him. It was the people who had studied the Scriptures year after year, the teachers of the law, who could not see the obvious – that He was the son of God and the Messiah.

The Bible does not tell us "The greatest of these is knowledge". Had that been the case the Bible would more than anything else have been an instruction, a user's manual. Instead it says "*The greatest of these is love*". Because of that, the Bible is more than anything else a book of relationships, between God and man and between man and man. That's why John 3:16 tells us: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*". The entire Old Testament is based on this too, which Jesus shows us in Mathew 22:37-40: "*Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'. All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments*".

Our first and foremost job as Christians is to continue to love those who are going through tough times, and pray that they get it right again. Our fight is not against people or faith orientation but a fight in the spiritual realm. That fight can only be won through prayer and by loving one another. D.S.

P.P.S. I would personally like to thank Ulf Ekman for what he and Word of Life did during the 1980s and 1990s. Without that teaching I would not be standing on such firm foundation as I am today – I would probably not even be saved. D.S.S.

The following appendices are attached to this letter:

- **Appendix 1a.** Ulf Ekman's article "What does the Pope have to do in Uppsala?" from Magazinet, June 1989. 3 pages. A translated version of Appendix 1b by best ability.
- **Appendix 1b.** Ulf Ekman's article "Vad i hela världen har påven i Uppsala att göra?" from Magazinet, June 1989. 2 pages. The original text by Ulf Ekman in Swedish.
- **Appendix 2a.** An excerpt from "God's Sevenfold Covenant", by Sten Nilsson, published by Word of Life. 2 pages. A translated version of Appendix 2b by best ability.
- **Appendix 2b.** An excerpt from "Guds sjufaldiga förbund", by Sten Nilsson, published by Word of Life. 2 pages. The original text by Sten Nilsson in Swedish.

What does the Pope have to do in Uppsala?

Scandinavia is preparing for a Papal visit. For the first time in the history of papacy a Pope will visit Sweden. The comments in Christian newspapers and magazines are generally positive. It seems people feel flattered by such a distinguished visit. In the Christian sphere his visit is considered positive, judging by the books about the Pope that is now being published by Christian publishers.

The Pope will visit three places in Sweden: Stockholm, with a mass in Globen, Vadstena, which was the home of Sweden's only Catholic saint, and Uppsala.

In an interview the Catholic Bishop in Stockholm described the necessity of the Pope's visit in Uppsala. It's not too farfetched, one might think, considering that the Arch Bishop, Scandinavia's biggest Cathedral, several Christian institutions, a huge theological faculty and much more is located in Uppsala. But according to the Catholic Bishop this is not the reason – rather the fact that it was in Uppsala (at Uppsala congress in 1593), that Sweden became an Evangelical-Lutheran country. That is the reason why it is important for the Pope to visit Uppsala, according to the Catholic Stockholm Bishop.

The Curia has said that the Pope will not come to Sweden as some Billy Graham on a crusade, but to meet with his peers. That sounds fair, but then why Uppsala? Because before the reformation, Sweden was a Catholic country. The Pope's sovereignty and power reached far up north, from Rome all the way to the Nordic countries. Roman-Catholic faith and practice ruled in Sweden.

Reformatory truths

This influence was broken when Luther's reformation reached Sweden through Olaus Petri. The evangelical doctrine was ratified as the official faith in Sweden in Uppsala, in February 1593. As opposed to the Catholic faith, they said that one should stick to "the pure and sanctifying word of God" alone, and stick to the foundational reformatory truths, such as a) "Scripture alone", b) "Grace alone", and c) "Faith alone". They dissociated themselves from "all the Papal... delusions". This decision led Sweden in a completely new direction, away from the papacy's supremacy and the Catholic doctrines of justification by works. That is why it is important for the Pope to visit Uppsala!

The Pope has not for a second changed all the foundational Catholic dogmas that the Roman Church has kept for centuries. Nor has he changed in terms of believing he is infallible when he speaks as a Pope, nor has he changed his claim to be Christ's representative on earth and by that claiming every nation on the earth.

When the Pope arrives, he will kiss Swedish soil. To many this is considered a gesture of humility, but what is really happening is something else. By kissing the ground he is claiming the country to which he is about to be welcomed. Every time he visits a country he is claiming that the country will be under the authority of "the holy chair".

"Scattered brothers"

In the religious "ecumenical" climate of Sweden a wider fellowship with the Roman-Catholic Church is welcomed. Representatives from virtually every denomination will walk in the procession in Uppsala Cathedral and there the Pope will say his blessing. From the Pope's perspective ecumenicism has always been important. But to the Roman church this has

always meant that the “scattered brothers” would come back to the “mother church” in Rome. This is the actual meaning of ecumenicism!

So what kind of game is being played out right before the eyes of thousands of believers? If we take a look at the papacy’s history we see that it has always resisted, stopped and crushed all revival Christianity of all times. For centuries, the Catholic Church has defiled their hands with martyrs such as Savonarola, Huss, and Tyndale to mention a few. The Catholic dogmas are nothing but justification by works, false religion and superstition.

When Christianity became state religion through Constantine in the fourth century, a devastating development took place. They went from revival Christianity to a religious-political power system. They went from Spirit filled ministry gifts to bishops, cardinals and popes whose power depended on the state. They started using outer tools to gain power, instead of spiritual authority. One of the most respected Catholic Church fathers, Augustinus, seriously meant that the army should go after the heretics. Outer tools of power became the way to maintain the doctrines and practices.

Monks and nuns

Quite soon Monasticism came about. One of the pillars of Monasticism and the system of orders is asceticism. By dissociating and despising the materialistic world and mortifying the flesh here on earth you would gain what is up there. Monks and nuns could even score points through their lives that could benefit other people’s salvation.

Asceticism has nothing to do with Christianity. It is Gnosticism that despises the materialistic world. Christianity considers all created things as a gift from God, it does not despise the creation – it treasures it. 1 Tim 4:1-3 teaches that it is demons that inspire the doctrines that despise and reject marriage.

Justification through works, in the sacraments, is foundational to the Catholic faith. By using the sacraments you will receive God’s grace and help to get to heaven. But it is not the baptism, the Eucharist or any of the Catholic sacraments that can save a person. A person is saved solely by the grace of God, through faith in what Jesus did on the cross. Only by receiving in faith what God did on the cross can a person be born again. It is repentance and a new birth that graft people into the body of Christ – not baptisms, masses or papal blessings.

Superstition

Through the strong faith in sacraments, superstition grew rapidly with effects such as worship of saints, fetishes, fables, legends and religions traditions. From wax candles, crucifixes and Madonnas, to vestments and numerous holy days were developed. All these things adorned the religious life and gave the people a false security by making them believe that they would get to heaven if they only participated in these things.

But the way to heaven is not through all these things but only through the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Behind this deceitful system are religious spiritual authorities who affect people massively. The question is how many people now are eternally lost due to the worship of Madonna statues, instead reaching heaven by putting their faith in Jesus alone.

Wherever the Pope goes he spreads the Mary-cult and Madonna worship. In European countries it happens in a more intellectual and sophisticated manner than in other parts of the world, where they have mixed Madonna worship with native occultism more openly.

Occult elements

The Roman church is full of occult elements, which is rooted in very false religiosity. It also claims a great deal of power and has throughout the ages persecuted revivals. Because of that, heroes of the faith, such as Johan Huss, Luther, Wesley etc. called her the great prostitute who drinks the blood of the saints. Whether or not she is identical with the great prostitute in the Book of Revelations I couldn't say, but of this I am sure: Many traits, throughout the history and today, resemble her.

In this religious system, of course there are some saved people. The greatest Pentecostal church in the world is the Catholic Church – it has many Spirit filled Jesus-believers. But they are people whom God has saved through His grace, in a system full of religious spiritual forces. It is these forces that wish to recapture areas that they have lost. As a believer it is important to strongly resist this in the Spirit. Jesus loves all people and so do we. But our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers of the dark world and the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms.

Purification in the blood of Jesus

It is a tragic thing to see that intellectual, secularized Christians happily receive a religious system that is anti-Christian. The rites and processions that are taking place will not call down the glory of God; they will open the door to the religious spirits. The only thing that will save Sweden is the purification in the blood of Jesus – not false ecumenicism.

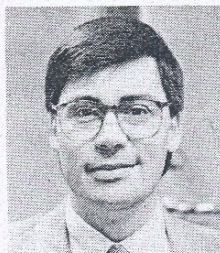
This is why we take a strong position in the Spiritual realm and bind all the unclean influence over the Nordic countries, and demand that the religious spirits' every plan will fail. What Sweden needs is not more religiosity, but overflowing life in Jesus Christ, through people whose lives have been purified in the blood of Jesus and experienced what it means to live in the power of Jesus' victory.

The church is not going back to religious captivity; we are on our way into more freedom and more of God's glory and power. God's glory, not religiosity and captivity, will strongly characterize the church in the 1990s.

Ulf Ekman

Magazinet, June 1989

Vad i hela världen har påven i Uppsala att göra?



Skandinavien rustar sig för påvebesök. För första gången i påvedömetts historia besöker en påve Sverige. Kommentarer i kristna tidningar och

dagspress är uppsluppet positiva. Man verkar känna sig smickrad av så celeberrt besök. Bland kristenheten verkar besöket ses som något positivt, inte minst med tanke på de böcker om påven som nu har kommit ut på kristna förlag.

Tre platser i Sverige skall besökas: Stockholm, med mässa i Globen, Vadstena, där Sveriges enda katolska helgon verkade, och Uppsala.

Den katolske biskopen i Stockholm, uttalade sig i en intervju om nödvändigheten av att påven besöker Uppsala. Självklart kan man tycka, eftersom ärkebiskopen, Nordens största domkyrka, en rad kyrkliga och frikyrkliga institutioner, en diger teologisk fakultet m m finns i Uppsala. Men det var inte detta den katolske biskopen anförde som skäl, utan det faktum att det var i Uppsala, nämligen på Uppsala möte 1593, som Sverige blev ett evangeliskt-lutherskt land. Därför är det viktigt för påven att komma till Uppsala, enligt den katolske stockholmsbiskopen.

Kurian i Rom har uttalat sig och sagt att påven inte kommer till Sverige som en slags Billy Graham på korståg, utan för att träffa sina trogna. Det må så vara, men varför då Uppsala. Jo, därför att före reformationen var Sverige ett katolskt land. Påvens överhöghet och makt sträckte sig långt upp, från Rom ända till Norden. Romersk-katolsk tro och praxis rädde över Sverige.

Reformatöriska sanningar

Detta inflytande bröts i och med Luthers reformation som nådde Sverige

genom Olaus Petri. Den evangeliska läran stadfästes som Sveriges rikes tro i Uppsala, februari 1593. Man slog fast att, tvärtemot den katolska tron, skulle man hålla sig enbart till "Guds rena och saliggörande ord" och hålla sig till de grundläggande reformatöriska sanningarna, såsom a) "skriften allena" b) "nåden allena" och c) "tron allena". Man tog skarpt avstånd från "alla de påviskas... villfarelser." Detta beslut ledde Sverige i en helt annan riktning, bort från påvedömetts överhöghet och katolsk gärningslära. Därför är det viktigt att påven kommer till Uppsala!

Påven har inte för en minut ändrat alla de grundläggande katolska dogmer som den romerska kyrkan i århundraden har bevarat. Inte heller har han ändrat på sin uppfattning om att vara ofelbar när han talar å ämbetets vägnar eller på sitt anspråk att som "Kristi ställföreträdare" på jorden kunna göra anspråk på varje nation i världen.

När påven kommer, kommer han att kyssa svensk jord. För många ter sig detta som en gest av ödmjukhet. Men egentligen är det något helt annat. Det är ett anspråkstagande av det land han beträder. Varje statsbesök han gör är ett anspråkstagande att landet skall komma under "den heliga stolen".

"Skingrade bröder"

I Sveriges religiösa "ekumeniska" klimat välkomnas en större gemenskap med den romersk-katolska kyrkan. Företrädare för i stort sett varje samfund skall gå i procession i Uppsala domkyrka och påven kommer att uttala sin välsignelse i gudstjänsten där. Från påvens sida har ekumenik alltid varit betydelsefull. Men för den romerska kyrkan har detta alltid betytt att de "skingrade bröderna" skall komma tillbaka till "moderkyrkan" i Rom. Detta är den ekumenikens egentliga mening!

Vad är det alltså för spel som pågår framför tusentals troendes ögon? Ser

man på påvedömetts historia, har det alltid stått emot, stoppat och krossat all väckelsekristendom i alla tider. Katolska kyrkan har i århundraden besudlat sina händer med martyrer som Savonarola, Huss, Tyndale m fl. De katolska dogmerna är inget annat än gärningslära, falsk religiositet och vidskepelse.

När kristendomen blev statsreligion, genom kejsar Konstantin på 300-talet efter Kristus, skedde en mycket olycklig utveckling. Man gick från väckelsekristendom till en religiös-politisk maktapparat. Från andefyllda tjänstegåvor gick man till biskopar, kardinaler och påvar som fick sin makt från staten. Man började använda yttre maktmedel istället för andlig auktoritet. En av kyrkohistoriens mest ansedda katolska kyrkofäder Augustinus, menade på fullt allvar att villolärare skulle man skicka armén på. Yttre maktmedel blev alltså vägen att upprätthålla lära och praxis.

Munkar och nunnor

Ganska snart växte munkväsendet fram. En av grundpelarna i munkväsende och ordensväsende är askesen. Genom att ta avstånd från och förakta det materiella och spåka sig från det jordiska skulle man uppnå det himmelska. Munkar och nunnor kunde t o m samla poäng genom sina liv, som kunde komma andra människor till godo för deras frälsning.

Askas är inget kristet. Det är gnosticismen som föraktar det materiella. Kristendomen ser allt skapat som en gåva av Gud och föraktar inte Guds gåvor utan förvaltar dem. 1 Tim 4:1-3 talar om att det är demoner som inspirerar läror som föraktar och förkastar äktenskapet.

Grundläggande i den katolska tron är gärningsläran i sakramenten. Genom att använda sakramenten får man del av Guds nåd, och hjälp att komma till himlen. Men det är inte

Kommentaren

dop, nattvard eller något annat av de katolska sakramenten som frälser en människa. En människa blir frälst av nåd allena, genom tron på Jesu verk på Golgata. Endast genom att i tro ta emot vad Gud har gjort i Kristus på Golgata, kan en människa bli född på nytt. Det är omvändelse och pånyttfödelse som gör att människor blir lemmar i Kristi kropp, inte dop, mässor och påvliga välsignelser.

Jesu fullbordade verk på Golgata. Bakom hela detta bedrägliga system finns religiösa andemakter som har en enorm påverkan på människor. Frågan är hur många människor som genom madonna-tillbedjan har gått evigt förlorade, istället för att genom tron på Jesus allena, komma till himlen.

Överallt dit påven kommer sprider han Maria-kulten och madonna-till-



"Överallt dit påven kommer sprider han Maria-kulten och madonna-tillbedjan. I europeiska länder sker det på ett mer intellektuellt och sofistikerat sätt..."

Vidskepelse

Genom sakramentstron utbreddes en väldig vidskepelse som yttrade sig i helgondyrkan, fetisch, fabler, sägner och religiösa traditioner. Allt ifrån vaxljus, krucifix och madonnor, till klädedräkter och ett otal högtidsdagar utvecklades. Allt detta smyckade det kyrkliga livet och invaggade människor i en falsk säkerhet om att få komma till himlen, om man bara deltog i sådant.

Men vägen till himlen går inte genom allt detta utan enbart genom

bedjan. I europeiska länder sker det på ett mer intellektuellt och sofistikerat sätt än i andra delar av världen, där man mer öppet har blandat Maria-dyrkan med inhemsk ockultism.

Ockulta inslag

Den romerska kyrkan är full av ockulta inslag och har sina rötter i mycket falsk religiositet. Man har också oerhörda maktanspråk och har i alla tider förföljt väckelser. Därför har troshjältar i alla tider, såsom Johan Huss, Luther,

Wesley m fl, kallat henne för den stora skökan som dricker de heligas blod. Huruvida hon är identisk med den stora skökan i Uppenbarelseboken kan jag inte uttala mig om, men en sak är säker, många drag, genom historiens gång, och idag, påminner om det.

I detta religiösa system finns det naturligtvis människor som är frälsta. Världens största pingstsamfund är katolska kyrkan. Det finns många andedöpta Jesus-troende där. Men de är människor som Gud av nåd har frälst, i ett system som är fullt av religiösa andemakter. Det är dessa andemakter som gärna skulle vilja återerövra områden som de har tappat. Som troende är det viktigt att i anden ta en stark ställning. Jesus älskar alla människor och det gör vi också. Men den kamp vi har att kämpa är inte en kamp emot kött och blod, utan mot andefurstar och andemakter i himlarymderna.

Rening i Jesu blod

Det är tragiskt att se, att intellektuella, sekulariserade kristna med glädje tar emot ett religiöst system som är antikristligt. De riter och processioner som utförs drar inte ner Guds härlighet, de öppnar för religiösa andemakter. Det enda som kan rädda Sverige är reningen i Jesu blod, inte falsk ekumenik.

Därför tar vi en stark ställning i andevärlden och binder upp allt orent inflytande över de nordiska länderna och begär att det som de religiösa andemakterna önskar skall gå om intet. Vad Sverige behöver är inte mer religiositet, utan överflödande liv i Kristus Jesus, genom människor som själva blivit renade i Jesu blod och upplevt vad det innebär att leva i kraft av Jesu seger.

Församlingen är inte på väg tillbaka till religiös fångenskap, utan på väg ut i mer frihet och mer av Guds härlighet och kraft. Guds härlighet, inte religiositet och humanism, kommer att prägla henne starkt under 90-talet.

Ulf Ekman

A short extract from **God's sevenfold covenant by Sten Nilsson**, published by Livets Ord.

It is happening again!

In the spiritual semi-darkness of our time people begin to reach out to the Catholic Church for "conversations", which expresses a wish to approach one another. What does this mean to the evangelical church? It is not hard to understand. The confession of the evangelical church is that Jesus Christ is Lord. But the Catholic Church worships the queen of the Heavens, though under the name of Mary, the mother of God. The icon depicting the woman with the child was worshipped long before Christ. The original mother was Semiramis, Nimrod's queen, who was the antitype of the dissolute lust. She was identified with Venus, the mother of impurity. The same woman with the child and the cup is in fact worshipped all over the world under different names. In Egypt the mother and the child are worshipped under the names Isis and Osiris; in India Isi and Iswara; in East Asia Sybele and Deoris; in pagan Rome Fortuna and Jupiter; in Greece Ceres or as Irene with Plutus in her arms. Shing Moo, the spiritual mother of China, is also represented with a child in her arms. From where did these nations get their mutual Mother of God if not from Babylonia? Worshipping Mary as the mother of God and with a baby boy on her lap is originated in Babylonia. In the Bible we can not find a single trace of such worship. The list of false doctrines of the church that was united with the Babylonian mythological religions seems to have no end. We will just mention a few dogmas that different Popes have established.

- The oldest unbiblical doctrine is praying to the dead and the sign of the cross – a sign that was not related to the cross of Christ but to the letter T in the mystical "Tau" from the Babylonian cult.
- Worshipping Mary, the mother of Jesus, and using the phrase Mother of God began in year 381 and became an acknowledged dogma at the church council in Efesus in year 431.
- The priests' clothes and vestments were used from the 6th century.
- The doctrine of Purgatory was taught from year 593, when Gregorius the Great was Pope.
- People started praying to Mary 600 years after Christ.
- The title Pope is of pagan origin and was given to the Bishop of Rome in year 600.
- Worshipping crucifixes, icons and relics was authorized in year 787.
- The canonization of dead people began through Pope John XV in year 995.
- Celibacy for priests became statutory law in year 1079, when Bonifatius was Pope.
- The Eucharist dogma saying that the bread is transformed into the physical body of Christ, to be eaten alive, was introduced by Pope Innocentius III in year 1215. The worship of the communion bread was something that Pope Honoratius instituted in year 1220. The Catholic Church worshipped a God made in a bakery!
- Laymen were forbidden to read the Bible at the Church Council in Toledo in 1229.
- The doctrine of Purgatory was proclaimed as an official doctrine of the church at the church council in Florence in 1439.

- Papal inerrancy was proclaimed as a dogma in 1870 by Pius IX. As late as 1931 Pius XI confirmed the teaching that Mary is the mother of God.

What religious folly will be proclaimed next? Perhaps the Church of Sweden and the free churches, who now reach out for "conversations", will be granted the Pope's forgiveness for being grafted in among the false olive tree? I read that the Global Church Council will have – or perhaps they have already had – conversations with representatives for Islam. Surely we are getting close to the end times, when Rev 17:1-2 will be fulfilled:

"One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters. *With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.*"

Until then we can find comfort in the fact that one of the Catholic Church's great cardinals, Newman, in his book "The Development of Christian Religion" has admitted that "The temples, the incense, the oil lamps, the sacrifices for dead, holy water, the priests' vestments, monks and nuns, icon worship – all of it is of pagan origin".

Mindre utdrag ur **Guds sjufaldiga förbund av Sten Nilsson**, utgiven på Livets Ords förlag.

Det håller på att ske på nytt!

I det andliga halvmörkret börjar man i vår tid ropa till den katolska kyrkan med begäran om ett "samtal" som innebär en önskan om ett närmande till varandra. Vad innebär detta för den fria evangeliska kyrkan? Det är inte svårt att förstå. Den evangeliska församlingens bekenntelse är att Jesus Kristus är Herre. Men den katolska kyrkan tillber Himladrottningen fast under det skyddande namnet Maria, Guds Moder. Bilden av kvinnan med barnet tillbads långt före Kristus. Den ursprungliga modern var Semiramis, Nimrods drottning, som ju var mönsterbilden för den tygellösa lutan. Hon identifierades med Venus, orenhetens moder. Samma kvinna med barnet och bågaren tillbads praktiskt taget över hela världen under skilda namn. I Egypten tillbads modern och barnet under namnes Isis och Osiris; i Indien Isi och Iswara; i Östasien Sybele och Deoris; i det hedniska Rom Fortuna och Jupiter; i Grekland Ceres eller som Irene med Platus i sina armar. Shing Moo, Kinas andliga moder, är också representerad med ett barn i sina armar.

Varifrån fick dessa nationer denna gemensamma gudamoder om inte just från Babylon? Tillbedjan av Maria som Guds Moder och med en gosse på sitt knä har sitt ursprung i Babylon. I Bibeln finns inte ett spår av sådan tillbedjan. Listan på villolärorna i den kyrka, som förenade sig med den babyloniska mysteriereligionen, kan göras hur lång som helst. Vi skall bara nämna några dogmer, som olika påvar infört till minne av sig själva.

- Den äldsta, obibliska läran är bönerna till de döda samt korstecknet – ett tecken som inte hade med Kristi kors att göra utan var bokstaven T i det mystiska "Tau" i den babyloniska kulten.
- Tillbedjan av Maria, Jesu moder, och bruket av titeln Guds moder började år 381 och blev erkänd dogm vid kyrkomötet i Efesus år 431.
- Prästkläder och skrudar togs i bruk på 500-talet.
- Läran om skärselden antogs år 593, när Gregorius den store var påve.
- Bönerna till Maria började 600 år efter Kristus.
- Påvetiteln har ett hedniskt ursprung och gavs först åt Roms biskop år 600.
- Tillbedjan av kors, bilder och relikier auktoriserades år 787.
- Helgonförklaring av döda personer började genom Johannes XV år 995.
- Celibat för prästerskapet blev lag år 1079, när Bonifatius var påve.
- Nattvardsdogmen att brödet under mässan förvandlades till Kristi fysiska kropp för att ätas levande, antogs av påven Innocentius III år 1215. Tillbedjan av nattvardsbrödet var något som påven Honoratius hittade på att införa i kyrkan år 1220. Katolska kyrkan tillbad alltså en Gud, gjord i ett bageri!
- Bibeln förbjöds att läsas av lekmän och blev förbjuden vid kyrkomötet i Toledo år 1229.
- Läran om skärselden proklamerades som kyrkans troslära vid kyrkomötet i Florence år 1439.
- Påvens ofelbarhet proklamerades som dogm 1870 av Pius IX. Och så sent som 1931 bekräftade Pius XI läran att Maria är Guds moder.

Vilken religiös dårskap kommer att proklameras nästa gång? Kanske att Svenska Kyrkan och frikyrkorna, som nu söker "samtal" skall få påvens förlåtelse för att låta sig inympas i det falska olivträdet? Jag läste att Världskyrkorådet skulle ha – eller redan har haft – samtal med representanter för Islam. Jo, men visst nalkas vi den yttersta tiden? Då skall ordet i Upp 17:1-2 bli uppfyllt. *"Och en av de sju änglarna med de sju skålarna kom och talade till mig och sade: Kom hit så skall jag visa dig hur den stora skökan får sin dom, hon som tronar vid stora vatten, hon som jordens konungar har bedrivit otukt med och av vilkens otukts vin jordens inbyggare har druckit sig druckna."*

Till dess är det en viss tröst att en av Katolska kyrkans stora kardinaler, Newman, i sin bok *The Development of Christian Religion* erkänt att "Templen, rökelsen, oljelamporna, offren för anhöriga döda, heligt vatten, helger och processioner, välsignelse av fälten, prästerliga skrudar, upptagningar i det andliga ståndet av präster, munkar och nunnor, bilddyrkan – allt har hedniskt ursprung" (se sid 359).