

# *Carina & Kjell-Roger Holmström*

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Joakim Lundqvist  
Livets Ord  
Axel Johanssons gata 3  
754 50 Uppsala

## **The reason why we leave Word of Life**

*[This is a translation to the best ability of our resignation letter to Word of Life in Swedish]*

We see that there are two versions of Word of Life that differ essentially. One Word of Life from the 80s and 90s - the way it was from the beginning in 1983 and up until Ulf and Birgitta Ekman decided to move to Israel. From their return back to Sweden and until today a completely different Word of Life has been formed - and its expiry date is well passed. Word of Life of the 80s and 90s was the reason why we became members of the church a number of years ago. That includes the faith, the values and the foundations that we believed the church still clung to.

In an open letter dated December 6th 2013 we wrote to the missions department of Word of Life, explaining that we could no longer support the church's missions work. *[Find a copy by googling for "Kjell-Roger Holmström open letter". An English PDF version is also available.]* The response we have received since then has been incredible; e-mails, phone calls and meetings with people who have asked us to meet them for a talk about this. From the support and the information we have received from these dear people we have decided that we will not only stop supporting the church's missions work financially. We can no longer be members of the church. We have been members of Word of Life for a fairly short period of time, some four years, but we have partaken its teaching for a much longer time. When we became members we got no information on the ongoing changes what so ever, nor did we initially see the Catholic elements.

We now know that a Pastor contacted Ulf Ekman in 2004 by sending three e-mails warning him for the sources from which Ekman was starting to be influenced. Ulf Ekman replied that he no longer wished to receive e-mails of that kind or even any communication with this Pastor, and they have not been in contact since. A few years later two other Pastors met with Ulf Ekman, Robert Ekh and Joakim Lundqvist to inquire whether or not they intended to implement Catholic doctrines in Word of Life. It has been verified that this was the message from all three Pastors.

It has now been verified, by several independent sources and by people from the inner circle of Word of Life, that while Ulf Ekman lived in Israel, he says that God gave him the mission to come to Rome the way Paul did. There he would stand as an Apostle and a representative for the entire Swedish Christianity in an ecumenical fellowship under the Catholic Church. The first time we heard it we ignored it, but now that we have heard it from so many different sources we have no choice but to accept it. This explains why Ulf Ekman has contacted certain Swedish Pastors trying to get invited to preach in their churches, something not all has accepted.



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When representatives for the Catholic Church speak about ecumenicism and unity they mean that there should only be one church, namely the Catholic one. They also denounce the division that they think the Reformation and Protestantism has caused. The goal of ecumenicism is that all the other churches should approach and affiliate with the Catholic Church - never the other way around. Instead they talk about how the other churches must humble themselves, repent and ask for forgiveness for their pride.

In addition to this we have learnt, from Pastors and from other sources, that the official position of Word of Life is that one should not ask saints to pray for one's needs. At the same time they say that they do not consider it theologically wrong to do so. We find this statement completely astonishing. The only right position to take in this matter would be for the Pastors and the board to protect its people from speaking with saints, as well as from all other kind of spiritualism. Our positions in this matter are miles away from one another. This view is shared by all members of the board as a strategic plan on how to communicate this to the members, and by at least the following Pastors: Joakim Lundqvist, Janne Blom, Christian Åkerhielm, Remi Høidahl, Anders Gerdmar, Svante Rumar, as well as other people in Word of Life. They describe it as there just being "a thin cloth" between the world we live in and the saints. This means that if you only speak right through this cloth you can come in contact with the saints. We do not object that you can get contact with the spiritual world if you speak straight out into the cloth. On that point we are in agreement. Our Protestant view, which Word of Life shared with us in the 80s and 90s, is that the creature with which you make contact is an unclean spirit. Adding to this we have also heard that since Robert Ekh preached his message on Mary during the spring of 2006, he has asked Mary for help and prayers in different situations.

When Word of Life, and all Catholic organizations in general, want to present their religion, they distinguish between reverence of Mary, prayer through Mary, and worshipping Mary. That is a way of avoiding discussions with people and to get them to gradually accept a relationship with Mary and other saints. The problem is that the Bible does not sanction this type of acts, nor does it distinguish between those three. The Bible is crystal clear on this; that there should be no other God beside the Holy Trinity, and it offers no loophole in favor for revering Madonnas or any other statue. The Bible even warns us from making ourselves images in the form of anything in heaven above. Several Scriptures tell us this, and the Bible is very clear on who the mediator between man and God is:

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

1 Timothy 2:5 (NIV)

The Catholic Church's relationship to Mary is mostly found in the Tradition, which the Catholic Church considers to be as authoritative as the Bible. Jesus did not instruct us to relate to Mary that way. But he did have the possibility to, if that was his idea. In fact he gave us a completely different message.



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Mathew 12:46-50 (and Luke 8:19-21; NIV)

*"While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

As we have studied the Catholic doctrines over the past months we have just become more and more appalled and clear-sighted on the fact that this is a religion with which we cannot have fellowship. We fully share Reinhard Bonnke's idea about cooperating with every Christian church and congregation, but not the Catholic Church.

The supreme leader of the Catholic Church between the years 1978 and 2005, Pope John Paul II, lived by the following motto: "Totus Tuus, Mary", a Latin phrase that means "Totally yours, Mary". It represents the Pope's devotion and dedication to Mary. "Totus Tuus, Mary" comes from a prayer in the book "True Devotion to Mary" by Saint Louis de Montfort. In English the full prayer goes: "I belong entirely to you, and all that I have is yours. I take you for my all. O Mary, give me your heart". Personally, we thought that the motto of a Christian leader should be "Totally yours, Jesus". His motto alone makes us feel that something is very wrong. Below is a quote from his prayer in Fatima, Portugal, dated May 12th 1991.

*"Yet again I have come here to bend my knees before our dear heavenly Mother in Fatima, to say thanks for her care for people and countries and for all the wonders and blessings that the Almighty has given us through her prayers.*

*Hail you, holy Mother, you have birthed the king who rules in eternity. You granted us the great grace of visiting us in person in St Peter's Church the memorable day March 24 1984, when we submitted humanity and all the countries of the world into your protection.*

*Today, together with countless of brothers and sisters, I have once again come to cry out to you: Greetings, holy Mother. Greetings, you solid hope, that never fails! I belong to you completely, oh Mother! We thank you, heavenly Mother, that through your Motherly tenderness, you have brought your people into freedom. We greet you Mary, you who are completely dependent on God and on your Son, we greet you as the most perfect image of freedom and liberation for humanity and cosmos."*

The way we see it, this is not a source in which we want to find water. Our soul feels no connection to the above prayer. We feel that we want to be distant from this, not drawn towards it. You who read this, listen to these two songs by Andrae Crouch. Read



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them and sing them in your heart. They originate from a different source. They have a different focus. It is from that source we want to drink.

### **Jesus is the answer**

*Jesus is the answer,  
for the world today,  
Above Him there's no other,  
Jesus is the way.*

*If you have some questions  
In the corners of your mind,  
Traces of discouragement,  
The peace you cannot find,  
Reflections of your past,  
Seem to face you everyday,  
But this one thing I do know,  
That Jesus is the way.*

*I know you've got mountains,  
That you think you cannot climb,  
I know your skies are dark,  
You think the sun won't shine,  
But in case you don't know,  
That the word of God is true,  
Everything he's promised,  
He will do it for you.*

*Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Light*

### **Jesus came into my life**

*It's hard to explain  
What has happened to me  
I was like a bird that was bound  
But now I'm set free.*

*No words can describe  
How I feel, all I know  
Is that it's real  
It's really really real*

*My life, Jesus came into my life  
My life, Jesus came and made  
It all right, yes, he made it right*

*Let me tell you what happened to me  
I repented of my sins to him  
I opened up my heart and he came right on in  
So glad, so glad, so glad he came*

*No matter what you're going through  
Here's what you gotta do  
Open up your heart and let Jesus into your life  
If you invited him today  
He'll wipe those tears away  
Open up your heart and let Jesus into your life*

It is obvious to us that these two texts; the Pope's prayer and Andrae Crouch's songs, originate from two different wells - with different waters. The heart and the Spirit in these two texts are so essentially different. Does your heart correspond with Andrae Crouch's songs about Jesus or with John Paul II's prayer to Mary? You who read this, where is your heart and your prayer?

When we drink water at home we could not imagine drinking water that is 90% fresh and clean. We need to know what the remaining 10% is, and if it is dirty or poisonous we would not drink it. It would even be out of the question to drink 99% clean water, or even 99,9%. Word of Life still has parts that are clean and fresh but the Catholic elements that continuously increase and lately has exploded in range makes us unwilling to drink water from this well.

The strategy of World of Life is to combine parts of the faith doctrines of the 80s and 90s; to continue to invite charismatic Pentecostal preachers; to sing songs from this source; but to also adopt Catholic elements. By doing so they will have peace and quiet



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as they gradually implement more and more Catholic elements into Swedish Christianity without ever facing direct questions about what they are doing.

The resemblance with the Swedish Christian Democrats' strategy is striking. The party's leadership has a whole different strategy, agenda and view on Christian values than that of the majority of its voters. It is as if they are living in two different worlds. We feel that the same thing is going on within Word of Life. The Pastors, the board, the leadership, those who have studied at Word of Life Theological Seminar (LOTS) and some others have a whole different agenda and doctrine than that of many members of Word of Life. Their ambition to convince Swedish Christianity and the members of Word of Life makes them want to speak to each and every one individually and try to lead them as far into this direction as possible, since people's arguments against this and their level of knowledge in this area differ.

We would like to refer to our open letter dated December 6th 2013 on the matter of how their hidden agenda is to try to get the members to accept the Catholic symbols, liturgy, prayers, view on Mary etc. As we have now understood how devoted they are to phase this in, not only to Word of Life but also to Swedish Christianity in general, as we have seen how Ulf and Birgitta Ekman now drops all operative assignments but still remain in the board, and as we know that Joakim Lundqvist during the past eight years has supported this strategy, we must regretfully and grievously say that we neither can nor wish to remain members of Word of Life and its current direction.

To us it has always been about a relationship with Jesus - through life and into eternity. Catholicism, however, is a religion that is about Jesus, Mary, rituals, traditions, church fathers and so many other things. There is a vast difference between these two. A relationship creates love, fellowship and faith. A religion focuses on the outer things, such as liturgies, images, vestments and icons. The way we see it, a relationship makes it very easy to talk to God. In a religion it has to be done by following certain given patterns. When the Spirit gets to play a less central role something else takes its place.

We now choose to leave the church due to the seriousness and the magnitude in which the delusion takes place. When we wrote our first letter we believed that what we saw in Word of Life was a fairly new change. We have now realized that Word of Life has worked with this for a long time, strategically and focused.

For these reasons we hereby end our membership in the church Word of Life. Our wish and our prayer is that Word of Life will return to a source that is 100% clean and fresh, the way it was in the 80s and 90s.

May God bless you richly.

*[Only the Swedish original letter is signed, since that version was delivered to Word of Life]*

Kjell-Roger Holmström

Carina Holmström

cc: Friends and acquaintances