

Ulf Ekman Resigns From David Yonggi Cho's Church Board After Catholic Conversion

On Sunday, retired pastor Ulf Ekman, founder of Word of Life, a megachurch in Uppsala, Sweden, announced he was converting to Roman Catholicism. Charisma News broke that story stateside. You can read it [here](#).

Now Charisma News has obtained a letter that Ekman wrote to David Yonggi Cho, who himself recently made international news headlines after being convicted on embezzlement charges. Charisma News set the record straight on that story, which was widely misreported in the mainstream media.

In Ekman's letter to Cho, he resigns from Cho's church board after explaining his personal journey into Catholicism. The following is the text of the letter, which was obtained in PDF form on Ulf Ekman Ministries letterhead:

Dear Dr. Cho,

I pray everything is well with you and that the blessing of the Lord is on your life and ministry. In this letter I want to share with you a decision that my wife Birgitta and I have come to.

As you probably know, last year there was a shift in the ministry at Livets Ord/Word of Life. Our church received its new Senior Pastor, Joakim Lundqvist. He is a fine man and does a very good job and is very much loved by our church. The transition has gone very well and the church and the different ministries are doing great. We have reconstructed some of the ministry and made the structure more effective. Our son Jonathan Ekman is our CEO and is working effectively with the Board, and Christian Åkerhielm has succeeded me as our

Missions Director. The work keeps expanding and I know you will find these brothers and Livets Ord to be great partners in ministry in the future. I am confident that the work is in very good hands and the future looks good, by the grace of God.

Recently Birgitta and I have retired from our positions at Livets Ord/Word of Life. But we are still servants of the Lord, of course, and want to be active in his service in this season of our lives. As we look back on our 30 years of ministry we can distinguish three parts in it.

The first was building the Livets Ord church, reaching out with the Gospel and teaching about faith and the Holy Spirit through Livets Ord Bible Centre. We have seen many thousands of students going through our school.

The second part has been our Missions work, going to many nations preaching the Gospel, planting churches and Bible schools and developing a network of Livets Ord congregations in many places.

The third part started around the beginning of this millennium. An increased longing for and understanding of the importance of Christian unity started to grow in us. We wanted to help our network, and believers in general, to have a deepened understanding of the Body of Christ and relate stronger to God's people in the historic churches.

In this process we have constantly come into contact with the Catholic Church, especially during our three years in Israel. This has lead to friendship, a deeper understanding, a gradual removal of prejudices and a stronger desire for unity. It has been a fascinating journey with a lot of studying and praying and we have discovered in how many ways we have so much in common with the Catholics.

We share a common history, going back to the apostles. We share the central tenets of our faith and are actually

indebted to them for the development of classical dogmas. We share a strong moral commitment and with millions of Catholics we also share the Pentecostal experience. I have also had many opportunities to share with them what the Lord has given us.

I discovered how little I really knew about them, their spirituality and their beliefs. Unconsciously I carried many prejudices and bad attitudes and have been quick to judge them without really knowing what they actually believed. It has been good to discover and to repent from nonchalant and shallow opinions, based not on their own sources but on their opponents, and to discover a very rich heritage, a strong theological foundation and a deep love for Jesus Christ among them.

From that discovery my wife and I more and more started to appreciate what we saw and we perceived how the Lord was drawing us closer to this church. This is a personal process that has been going on for about ten years. Step by step we felt the drawing of the Spirit, heard the voice of the Lord and finally clearly understood that the Lord was actually leading us to unite with and be a part of the Catholic Church.

This is a personal journey that we are taking and it is not the way of Livets Ord, nationally or internationally. Livets Ord is today much more open to the greater body of Christ than ten years ago. Unity is a part of its vision but it will continue in its distinct calling that has been the same since 1983: "Equip Gods people with his Word of faith, teach them about their spiritual weapons, train them how to use them and send them forth in victorious battle for the Lord." Livets Ord will carry on as it has done up till now, fulfilling the specific vision the Lord has given.

After talks with the Bishop of Stockholm we have asked to be received into the Catholic Church later this spring. We have publicly announced this to our congregation and partners at

Livets Ord today, on March the 9th, 2014.

I can imagine that this news might surprise some of our friends. Others, who have had the chance to follow us more closely the last number of years, might not be totally surprised. I have spoken and written about this quite substantially, in a variety of ways the last ten years. You certainly do not have to agree with our decision but we ask you to prayerfully respect it. It is not something that has been conjured up at the spur of the moment but a gradual process through a lot of prayer and careful reflection.

Birgitta and I really feel a deep peace about this decision and we have seen the hand of the Lord direct our steps onto this path in so many wonderful, gentle and sometimes even supernatural ways. We have encountered the Lord and experienced his love in unique and powerful ways that has led us to love Him even more and to be passionate about his Church and his Kingdom. So much good is in store for us all in the future, as we walk with Jesus.

Because of this change I also resign from my post on the board of CGI from this date. I would like to especially thank you for your great love and support to me over the years. Also I would like to thank the whole Board for a vital and blessed fellowship over the years. It has been immensely important for me to have been entrusted with the honour of belonging to this great group of ministers. I treasure it very much and carry it with me into future engagements in the Body of Christ.

This is not a severing of ties. The Lord gave me a word a few months ago: "The task is fulfilled but the friendship remains." We treasure the friendship we have with you in the Lord and believe we will, in a different capacity continue to have a living fellowship and a deep unity in Jesus. Let us draw inspiration from one another and together work for the strengthening of the Body of Christ on the earth.

May God bless you!

In Christ, for the whole world,

Ulf Ekman