

Ulf Ekman Converts to Roman Catholicism

During his Sunday morning service, **Ulf Ekman** announced that he and his wife, Birgitta, are converting to Roman Catholicism.

Ekman is the founder of Word of Life, a **megachurch** in Uppsala, Sweden. News reports and blogs coming out of the nation reveal the congregation was “partially stunned” after hearing what was packaged as a “special announcement.” The theme was “Follow the Lamb Wherever He Goes.”

“For Birgitta and me, this has been a slow process where we have gone from discovering new things, to appreciating what we have discovered, to approach and even learn from our fellow Christians,” Ekman says on his ministry website.

“We have seen a great love for Jesus and a sound theology, founded on the **Bible** and classic dogma. We have experienced the richness of sacramental life. We have seen the logic in having a solid structure for priesthood, that keeps the faith of the **church** and passes it on from one generation to the next. We have met an ethical and moral strength and consistency that dare to face up to the general opinion, and a kindness towards the poor and the weak. And, last but not least, we have come in contact with representatives for millions of **charismatic Catholics** and we have seen their living faith.”

According to the Aletheia blog and think tank, Ekman’s conversion is a news story that affects a relatively large part of Swedish Christianity. Word of Life has about 3,000 members and a staff of 12 pastors. The church’s school has about 1,000 students. Ekman also launched Scandinavia’s largest Bible school, constructed Scandinavia’s largest free church building, rolled out a media program with TV on all

continents, recorded teaching that has been spread around the world, published books in 60 languages, and promoted a strong engagement for Israel.

“We have, as many know, followed Ekman’s steps towards Roman Catholicism since 2007, at times under a lot of ridicule from both members and leadership of the congregation, but also from others within the Christian Community in Sweden,” writes Andreas Glandberger, who operates the think tank. “Based on Ulf Ekman’s various articles, sermons, statements and even type of organizations he decided to support financially, a painstaking puzzle has been laid in which the last piece of the puzzle now is in place.”

Glandberger went on to say that “shock, anger, sadness, despair and confusion” were among the reactions to the news. Others, he writes, were relieved that Ekman’s long love affair with the Catholic Church finally was consummated openly, which is also a help in theological discussions.

“All this has been both attractive and challenging,” Ekman says. “It really challenged our Protestant prejudices, and we realized that we, in many cases, did not have any basis for our criticism of them. We needed to know the Catholic faith better. This led us to realize that it was actually Jesus Christ who led us to unite with the Catholic Church.”

Ekman calls his conversion a “personal journey” and says it was not his agenda to lead Word of Life toward Roman Catholicism or to collectively unite the church with the Catholic Church. “That would be unreasonable,” he says.

Ekman retired as the church’s senior pastor in March 2013. He founded and served at Word of Life for 30 years with a mandate from the **Holy Spirit** to “equip My people with the word of faith.”

You can watch the video of the sermon [here](#).