



The Johnsons in Sweden ...



July 15, 2011

Ever since my first trip to Sweden in 1984 I have been a part of helping Swedish youth and other Europeans get out of secular Europe for a while to gain a perspective other than the systematic secular indoctrination they have grown up with. Teaching evolution theory as fact and presenting pluralism in religious education has done great harm for several decades. The core of the Tranås church spent time away in some sort of international student exchange. I am in process with a new generation of Swedes to help them gain that perspective from a period of time away. It is not merely a trip that they need. They need a Christian host family, exposure to the local church, to meet Christian contemporaries.

Finding Faithful Men: *Träffa Lovisa och Sebastian*

Lovisa is from the countryside outside Karlsborg. Sebastian is from Upplands Väsby, a commuter city north of Stockholm. Though they both have the typical blonde hair and blue eyes, they have contrasting personalities and lifestyles in their Swedish homeland. Sebastian is a head-strong, talkative city boy who needs fast-paced city life to keep him going. Lovisa is a quieter, reflective all-natural girl who knows how to listen to and interpret the cues of creation.



Though different in personality, they have three very important things in common. First, they now have the shared experience of a cross-cultural high school exchange year in the U.S. where they lived with Christian host families and attended church on a regular basis. Second, they both moved from typical Swedish secular unbelief to newfound faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! And third, they have now returned to Sweden as living witnesses to the power of God to change lives! **Pray for Lovisa and Sebastian upon their return.**

I am convinced that I should continue to help Swedes and other internationals have the same exposure to the Gospel via a brief period of time in Christian host families and churches abroad. The exposure to biblical faith and worldview is enough. The international understanding and friendships that last a lifetime is icing on the cake. **Please pray for providential placement of youth with Christian families.**

On our upcoming trip to Sweden we will interview a few youth who have an interest in a school year in the U.S. Several of you have expressed a willingness to take in a student for a school year. Christian schools have shown an openness to receive these young people into the student body.



For example, Adrian Hernandez is born and raised in Sweden. However, his parents, Gilberto and Iliana, are from Cuba. They came to Sweden under political asylum. One of the things they took with them was an enjoyment of Cuba's national sport: the game of baseball. So when Gilberto heard that I had started a baseball team in Tranås he contacted me. Though the Hernandez family lived 90 minutes from Tranås they joined our club and are active since 2006.

Garv, Jimmy, Daniel, Adrian Adrian is now on the Swedish National Cadet Baseball Team. His parents are so proud, but none more so than his 92 year old Grandfather who remains on the island of Cuba. After a recent visit to Cuba, Gilberto wrote: "My father can now go to his grave in peace, for he knows that though I left Cuba I did not forget her culture. Thank you Gary, for teaching Adrian so that he could make his grandfather proud." **Please pray for Adrian and his family, that the majesty of God would surprise them in the midst of their baseball pursuits.**



MISSION
to the
WORLD
SWEDEN

Serving as an agency for Reformation in the Church in Sweden by encouraging a Reformed and covenantal church planting movement.



Gary & Linda Johnson

Daniel 17, Joel 15, Rebekah 14
Jan-Mikael 12, Benjamin 11,
Sarah 8, Nathanael Baillie 7,
Elisabeth 5, Leah 3, Jeremiah 2
David Josiah 11 months

garyjohnson63@gmail.com

tel. 334 224-2756



1616 South Hull St.
Montgomery, Alabama
36104

MTW account #13605

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We embark now (July 16-August 1) on another mission trip to Sweden

This trip is primarily to do research on how our family of 13 can remain in Sweden in spite of the national ban on homeschooling and their new endeavor to enforce a set basic curriculum in all schools. There is also follow up on a previous demographic study of the relationship of Skåne (the southernmost part of Sweden) and Denmark. We suspect that the twin cities of Malmö and Copenhagen need a strong evangelistic witness. *Pray for our research. Proverbs 16:9*

However, on our way we will first head to the European Baseball Championship for Cadets (age 13-15) which will take place in Brno, Czech Republic July 18-24. I spent much time in the Czech Republic in the days of the “Iron Curtain”. I helped four Czech athletes find placement in U.S. schools. I have asked my son Joel to tell you his first trip there:



From Joel Johnson: “As you know, I have spent most of my life growing up in Sweden. I speak the language and understand the culture quite well. My time back in the U.S. has been a cross-cultural experience for me. I am so grateful to Eastwood School and Church, and Trinity Church in Montgomery, for the way they have shown hospitality and care to me and my family.

Last year I was chosen to be on the Swedish Cadet National Baseball Team. Cadets are the best Swedish youth from age 13-15 years. Last summer we played in the European Qualifier Tournament, of which we won! I was named the overall tournament “Most Valuable Player”. Winning made us eligible to compete in this year’s European Championship, which will be held July 18-24 in Brno, Czech Republic.

Learn more at this link: <http://www.baseballeurope.com/uploads/media/Bulletin.pdf>

My brother Jan-Mikael was also chosen as one of only two 12 year old “understudies” for development for future teams. This means he will be a part of the team and travel with us.

As far as I know, he and I will be the only evangelical Christians on that team. I believe the Lord has called us to this team and is challenging me to be a witness for His glory, as I am in a position of influence with my team mates. My Dad knows the coaches well. In fact, he used to coach my national team head coach! I hope to mentor Jan-Mikael during this unique opportunity handed to us by God. *Would you consider praying for me and Jan-Mikael as we attempt to be salt and light in the Swedish National Baseball Team at the European Championships”*



While Joel and Jan-Mikael are playing in Brno with the Cadets, our 17 yr old Daniel will join his Angels Junior team from Sweden to play an invitational tournament three hours north of Brno, in Liberec. This will be an important time for Daniel as he reunites with his Swedish friends. One team mate, Marcus, lost last week one of his best friends to suicide. This is all too common an experience among Swedish youth.

Pray we can have ears to ear while in the heat of battle on the field.

The organizer of this tournament, a Czech native named Libor, is raised in the Evangelical-reformed church (Czech Brethren). He has invited Athletes in Action staff to be there for evangelism. Joining our Swedish team will be three Christian young men and their dads from Montgomery. Included is a high school baseball coach who will interview two additional young men for potential attendance at his school. His family is already prayerfully considering hosting a Swede in their home in 2012.

Pray for the safety of our 7 children who will remain in the U.S. while we travel.

