

A singing nation

The challenge of re-evangelizing Sweden - Gospel training

TO SING IN A CHOIR IN SWEDEN IS NOT UNUSUAL.
ABOUT 6% OF THE POPULATION (600,000) SING IN A CHOIR REGULARLY.

That means Sweden has more active choirs than anywhere else in the world. The spring and summer bring out the desire to sing amongst students, welcoming the warm weather. During the summer there is a very popular program on TV which attracts several million viewers, about choirs traveling from city to city giving people the opportunity to join in. Some are organized and some are improvised but singing together is important and a deep part of the Swedish culture. This movement of people singing is growing among both professionals and amateur singers. The movement started in the early 19th century along with large social changes, the church revival, and with the labour movements. Together they created what today is the Swedish democracy.

Sweden is a singing nation.



Picture from the Easter children's party

Emmaus church started a children's choir.

The choir movement gives us another great opportunity to reach out to people who wouldn't normally attend a church service. So as a church we decided to start a children's choir to reach out to our neighbourhood. We have children's workers gifted both in singing and playing instruments so it was very natural for us to start such a ministry. The children will do more than just sing. The activity is actually a Sunday school programme that is very gospel-centred and teaches the children to sing about a particular theme from a bible story. It is evangelistic both for the children and for the parents. This is only for an hour every second week but singing here is so popular that parents are happy to bring their children along. The choir will not be in the main church hall but in another community building right in the middle of the area where the families live. This makes it much easier for the parents to bring their children as everything is in walking distance.

Answer on a prayer

Talking about ending up in the most strategic position for ministry.

We are enjoying a wonderful and warm autumn which is reminding us more of summer than autumn, so, no complaints on our behalf. We have now been in Sweden for one year and eight months, our re-entry and adjusting process to Sweden and the new ministry has been bumpy and we have had our ups and downs. Some great news is that we have finally got our own long term place to live in. Thank you for all your prayers for us and our living accommodation, we all got an answer of prayer! It is an apartment in a town called Enköping, where we have never lived before and which is located next to the highway that goes from Stockholm to Gothenburg (and Oslo), 50 minutes west of Stockholm. Lotta will be commuting 35 minutes up to Uppsala for her work and on Tuesday evenings we will continue to travel to Uppsala where we have our bible study group.

Family-wise it will also make it easier as it shortens travel to our families by one hour. So all in all we were looking for an apartment within a radius of 100 km from Åkersberga and in the end we got one in Enköping. The interesting thing is that even in Enköping you have to wait in line for 4-5 years for a rental apartment, so God is good.



A little about Enköping:

The Municipality has about 42.000 in population and has a railway running through the town with trains reaching from the East coast to the West coast. Within 120 km (74 miles) we have access to 38 Swedish cities and one third of the Swedish population, which makes Enköping a very strategic place to be in for church planting and training leaders, especially as we have a vision to plant churches in the Mälardals region (Enköping is right in the middle). Enköping is also next to the great lake, Mälaren, which the region is named after and you can travel by boat directly to Stockholm city, which is built on 14 islands, and out to the Stockholm archipelago with tens of thousands of islands and further out to the Baltic sea. So, you can understand that we are excited that God has opened this door for us. The big moving day will be on the 3rd of October.

Our prayer points:

- Our work with the bible study group that has now grown to 12 faithful people and more coming from time to time. Please pray for us as we embrace a new challenge as we are intentionally creating a grow ground for discipleship teaching and training.
- Our new place in Enköping. We are moving to a city where we don't know anybody and it's kind of starting all over again. May the Lord lead us right, so we can find Christian friends and those who are hungry and thirsty for His Word.
- Pray for the ongoing children's ministry in Emmaus church in Åkersberga, specially for the newly started children choir and all the new parents we can reach out to.