

# CAROLINA CONNECTION

JULY 2010



Praise God for all the students we met in Sweden and for the Gospel going forth there.

Pray for the friends we made in Sweden. Pray they would get connected to the long-term staff there and would continue to consider Christ's claims.

Praise God for the work He did in the lives of the American students on project. (More about what they learned on the back!)

Pray specifically for Elin and Emme (2 of our Swedish friends) who are reading through the Gospel of John and seem close to believing.

Pray for the rest of our summer as we work on raising monthly support. We need to raise \$500/month.

Pray that we would be refreshed by the Lord this summer.

## Sweden Summer Project 2010

I'm not sure how to summarize all that happened in 6 weeks in a foreign country with 27 of us taking on a new culture. I have personally been trying to process all that we experienced and I'm still spinning as I think back on the whole experience. I was broken at the sheer depravity of the human heart denying a Creator, and then witnessing the natural progression made as students live life looking for something else to find satisfaction in. I was angered at the apathy and meaninglessness so many willingly embraced. I was convicted of my own sin, seeing reflections of my own heart in attitudes of the culture.



We got to Uppsala on May 13, after a long day of traveling from Raleigh to Charlotte to Munich and finally to Sweden. For the next 6 weeks we met students on campus each day by initiating with them over lunch and in parks in the afternoons. Although it is somewhat abnormal there to talk about spiritual things, we jumped in and many students opened up with us about their beliefs. Once we began meeting people, we were able to form friendships and meet back up with people multiple times to go deeper into these conversations. On our second day on campus, I (Erin) met two girls named Cecilia and Sophia. I later found out these girls were studying religion and wanted to become priests one day. I assumed they probably knew the Gospel since they wanted to be priests, but as we talked more I realized many in the church there, even church leaders, don't have a clear understanding of who Christ is. Sophia and Cecilia were no exception. I got to know them a little and then the following week was able to meet back up with them. As we sat at lunch in a little pizza restaurant, I was able to tell them the wonderful news of the Gospel. Pray for them as they keep thinking about what Christ offers them versus merely religion.

Taking on a culture that boasts being the most atheistic in the world proved to be challenging in ministry. Fruit looks a lot different there than it does in America. We challenged dozens of students to consider reasons why the God of the Bible could exist for the very first time. The deconstruction and reconstruction of a worldview takes months and even years. We were excited to see 4 students become very, very close to embracing the reality of the person of Jesus by faith.

Towards the end of our time there we had a cookout and invited our Swedish friends to it. We were so excited when 22 students came! This was a significant time, not only for us to have more time with our friends, but also to allow them to meet the long-term Crusade staff that will be able to keep meeting with them. We were so grateful for our time in Sweden- thanks for being part of it!



# Students' thoughts...

Here are a few thoughts from students who were on project with us this summer:

## Scott, Sr. from UNC-Chapel Hill

[In Matthew 9:36] Jesus looked out on the crowds and he had compassion. He knew their hearts and he knew where they were. He knew ultimately what they needed. They needed God. They needed Him. This started me thinking on what the word compassion truly means. I have been going on mission trips all my life. I have seen poverty, I have seen struggle, and I have seen hopelessness. When I experienced those mission trips I had compassion for those less fortunate. But I think a lot of that compassion came from a sense of guilt that I had. Why am I so fortunate and others are not? Why must they live this way? How do we solve this problem? Why in a world where people live in such excess should people have to live in such hard conditions? I think there is value in these thoughts. It doesn't make sense and we should work to reverse the problems in this world.

My experience of compassion in Sweden was completely different. In Sweden, no one is in need physically. Poverty does not exist. The government provides for everyone's needs. My compassion for Sweden came I think from the same heart that Jesus had when He looked out on the crowds. Sweden is a place of spiritual darkness. They are harassed and helpless. Sure, my life looks a lot different because I live in light of my beliefs in Christ, but at the core we are all fallen. We all fall short. We are all sinful. The only true difference between me and those I met in Sweden is that I have a relationship with Christ. It is that relationship that is my salvation and my righteousness.

How do you tell a person that thinks they need nothing that they truly have nothing? My heart truly breaks knowing that most of the people we met have nothing to live for, and many of them admit it. When I asked people what they believed the purpose of life was they answered by saying that life doesn't have a purpose, that we are just here and when we die that is it. Pray for the people of Sweden. Pray that they would see the emptiness in their hearts and that they would desire for something more. Pray that they would come to know that the desire they have can only be filled by one thing, a relationship with Christ.

## Rachel, Jr. from Duke

I learned a lot during my summer project in Sweden—about myself, about ministry, and about Christ. I think I approached project with the mindset that I was doing all I could to trust God with my life. Everything on my list was checked off and yet I felt so powerless against overwhelming obstacles and struggles. Over those 6 weeks, He showed me that my behavior can be traced back to the heart—so that true change requires the frightening step of examining our lives through the lens of our pasts and our idols and surrendering to Him. I am beginning to see that this real trust and surrender isn't as scary as it seems. Because with it comes freedom- a space within which to truly grow, a hope for change that seems tangible rather than abstract, a chance to experience the Gospel in new ways every day. This is the lesson I learned in Sweden: in surrendering fully to Christ, we have the freedom to be restored.

Rachel and Scott



Our whole team at the Viking Mounds



Heading out to campus for the day



Our staff team- 4 staff and 5 student interns