

**MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT**  
**EUROPE**  
**Sweden**

**Snapshot**

**Country Name:**

(Kingdom of) Sweden  
(Konungariket) Sverige

**Country Founded in:**

First mention of the Swedes by Tacitus in AD 98. The Swedish kingdom took shape during the Viking era (800-1050). Replacing the Acts of 1809, 1866, and 1949, the present Swedish Constitution was signed on 1 January 1975.

**Population:**

9,077,628 (31 May 2006 est.)

**Government Type:**

Constitutional Monarchy

**Geography/location in the world:**

62 00 N, 15 00 E. Total area 449,964 square km. Located in northern Europe, Sweden borders the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, Kattegat, Skagerrak, Finland, and Norway. Apart from mountains in the west, most of Sweden's terrain is flat or gently rolling lowlands. The south has cold, cloudy winters and cool, partly cloudy summers. The north has a subarctic climate.

**Number of people groups:**

3 Indigenous people groups: Swedes, Finnish, and Sami.  
6 Main non-indigenous people groups: Finns, Yugoslavs, Danes, Norwegians, Greeks, and Turks.

**Picture of flag:**



**Religion Snapshot**

Major Religion and % of population:

Lutheran (87%)

All religions and % for each:

Christian (54.65% - the official Christian figure is 89%, but an estimated 2-3 million Swedes no longer claim to be Christian or believe in God (from *Operation World*)):

Lutheran (87%, many members of the Lutheran Church are nominal Christians)  
Roman Catholic (1.77%)  
Orthodox (1.11%)

Muslim (3.1%)

Jewish (0.18%)

Buddhist (0.04%)

Government interaction with religion:

The Swedish constitution provides for freedom of religion, which the Government generally respects.

**Sources consulted:**

Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition (Waynesboro: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001)

*Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations*, vol. 5: *Europe*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Detroit: Gale Group, 2001)

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/sw.html>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51583.htm>

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2880.htm>

[http://www.scb.se/default\\_2154.asp](http://www.scb.se/default_2154.asp)

# MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

## Sweden Profile

### Western Europe

#### Basic Facts

##### Country Name:

(Kingdom of) Sweden  
(Konungariket) Sverige

##### Demographics:

The Swedish population, estimated at 9,077,628, has one of the world's highest life expectancies (80.51 years) and one of the lowest birth rates (10.27/1,000 population).

16.7% of the population is between 0-14 years; 65.7% between 15-64 years; and 17.6% 65 years and over. The median age is 40.9 years (39.8 for males and 42 years for females). Although the death rate (10.31 deaths/1,000 population) is larger than the birth rate (10.27 births/1,000 population), the population growth rate is positive (0.16%), mainly due to the positive net migration rate (1.66 migrants/1,000 population). In the age category 15-64 years, there are 1.03 males for every female. With regard to the total population, there are 0.98 males for every female. The infant mortality rate is 2.76 deaths/1,000 live births. In 2001, an estimated 3,600 people lived with HIV/AIDS. In 2003, less than 100 people died of HIV/AIDS. Around 2.6 million people in Sweden belong to people groups other than Swedish.

The population density is 20 people per square km (51 people per square mi). Sweden has 21 counties (*lan*, both singular and plural) and 290 municipalities. The counties with more than 1 million people are Stockholm county (1,889,945), Skåne county (1,169,464), and Västra Götaland county (1,528,455). 771,038 people live in Stockholm, Sweden's capital.

##### Language:

Sweden's official language is Swedish (Svenska in Swedish). Swedish is an East-Scandinavian, Germanic language of the Indo-European language group.

Swedish has 4 major dialects: Northern Swedish, Eastern Swedish (also known as Finland Swedish and Estonian Swedish), Svea (proper Swedish), and Gutniska. Small minority groups speak Sami and Finnish. Sami and Finnish are both Uralic languages. Other recognized minority languages are Meänkieli, Yiddish, and Romany Chib. (For an in-depth article on the Swedish language, see <http://www.sweden.se/cgi->

[bin/MsmGo.exe?grab\\_id=0&page\\_id=780&query=urbanization&hiword=urbanization%20](bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=0&page_id=780&query=urbanization&hiword=urbanization%20))

## **Society/Culture:**

Sweden is a culturally rich country with each of the provinces having its distinct customs and local lore. The Swedes enjoy a high standard of living. This may be partly due to the social provisions – the social security system pays for all medical and dental care; education is free through university; parental leave with full pay is granted to an expecting mother 1 month before the due date and another 12 months after the baby is born. These 12 months of parental leave may be taken by either one of the parents or may be shared between them. Most Swedish families have 1 or 2 children. Many unmarried couples live together. The older generation views marriage and spousal rolls from a traditional perspective. The younger generation, on the other hand, sees marriage more as a partnership. In general, Swedes are rather reserved in their interpersonal relationships. For example, touching others when communicating is considered poor manners.

Because of the strong influence of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, many of the rites of passage in this country are religious in nature: baptism, first Communion, confirmation, marriage, and burial. Many families celebrate with graduation parties when family members graduate from the different levels of education.

Education in Sweden is mandatory for children between the ages of 7 and 17. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade on, students learn English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language. From grades 1 through 6, the curriculum is the same for all students. Starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the curriculum is adapted to the student's interests and abilities. Around 30% of students choose the college-preparatory route, whereas others choose more vocationally oriented training. There are 6 universities in Sweden.

Swedes wear modern, Western-style clothes. The casual wear is usually slacks, shorts, and T-shirts. In businesses, people wear suits. For special festivals, like Midsummer's Eve, Swedish folk costumes are worn. Only a small part of the population, however, owns a traditional Swedish costume.

Swedes enjoy sports as is evidenced by the existence of 40,000 sports clubs in Sweden. Soccer (called *fotboll*) is the most popular sport. Other favorite sports are cross-country and downhill skiing, long-distance skating, swimming, sailing, rowing, and cycling. Being outdoors is one of the ways Swedes like to spend their leisure time. The infrastructure in Sweden is highly developed as can be seen in the road and highway network, the railroads, other transportation systems, and IT. Sweden is 1 of the leading nations in the field of IT. Swedes are famous for their openness to new technology.

The most famous gastronomical Swedish word is *smorgasbord* – the Swedish open-faced sandwich meal, which includes herring, smoked eel, roast beef, tongue, jellied fish, boiled potatoes, and cheese. The typical Swedish breakfast consists of ryebread smothered with butter and cheese or sandwich meat. Lunch is usually a light meal.

Dinner, however, is a heavier meal with fish, sausage, and/or meat, potatoes, and vegetables (peas, carrots, or salad). Favorite dishes are meatballs served with lingonberry jam; fried meat, potatoes, egg; a layered potato dish with onions and cream, topped with anchovies; and salmon. Favorite beverages include milk, a low-alcohol beer, and strong coffee.

Official and *de facto* holidays in Sweden include the following: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Walpurgis Night (April 30), May Day (May 1), Day before Ascension Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost, National Day (June 6), Midsummer Eve, Midsummer Day, All Saints Eve (Friday in October/November), All Saints Day (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in November), Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day. Non-holiday observances include St. Valentine's Day (February 14), April Fool's Day (April 1), Mother's Day (last Sunday in May), Father's Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in November), Nobel Day (December 10), and St. Lucia Day (December 13).

In 1997, Sweden had 324 public libraries and about 200 museums. The largest library and the best museums are in Stockholm. The sculptor Carl Milles, the jewelry maker Sigurd Persson, the film director Ingmar Bergman, the actors Ingrid Bergman and Max von Sydow, and the creator of the Nobel Prize/inventor of dynamite Alfred Nobel are all famous Swedes. Some of the best-known writers are August Strindberg, Selma Lagerlof (*The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*), and Astrid Lindgren (*Pippi Longstocking*). Sweden's arts performers enjoy a high level of job security since they are hired on an annual basis, draw a regular salary, and receive pension, insurance, and vacation benefits. According to some sources, the Swedish press is the oldest in which censorship is legally forbidden. Sweden's 1<sup>st</sup> regular newspaper, *Post-och Inrikes*, which appeared in 1645, is still published today. The 1<sup>st</sup> daily newspaper, *Norrköpings Tidningen*, was published in 1758. Today's Swedish newspapers are liberal, independent, labor, and conservative oriented.

A high rate of alcoholism is one of Sweden's social problems. Fortunately, there are 6,000 local groups for people dealing with alcoholism. Possibly partly related to alcoholism is a high rate of absenteeism from work. Another reason for a high rate of sick leave is the generous sick leave benefits for everyone in Sweden. Discontent with the high taxes, which are necessary to provide all the social services, is another problem in Sweden. A more recent problem is that of racism, especially racism as espoused by neo-Nazism.

Much of the information in this section is taken from *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, vol. 4: *Europe* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1998).

### **Government:**

Whereas some sources refer to Sweden as a constitutional monarchy, others (like the official website of the Swedish government) view Sweden as a parliamentary democracy. The latter term is perhaps due to the monarch's limited power (official and ceremonial functions only). Sweden's present King is King Carl XVI Gustaf. His daughter Victoria is Heir Apparent Princess (born 14 July 1977). The monarchy is hereditary.

The 3 branches of the Swedish government are the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The executive branch is the Cabinet or Government, which is responsible to parliament. The Riksdag (unicameral parliament) is responsible for the legislative branch. The Supreme Court (6 superior courts; 108 lower courts) is responsible for the judicial branch.

Suffrage is universal over age 18. Immigrants, who have resided legally in Sweden for 3 years, may only vote in county and municipal elections. General elections, held every 4 years, attract around 80% of all eligible voters. Although the percentage is down compared to some years ago, the turnout is still high compared to turnouts for elections in other countries. During general elections, voters elect their representatives for the parliament as well as for the municipal and county councils.

After the elections, the Riksdag appoints a Prime Minister whose task it is to form a Government. The Government governs Sweden by implementing the Riksdag's decisions regarding new laws, law amendments, and the government of the country. The Government Offices consist of the Prime Minister's Office, the 9 ministries, and the Office for Administrative Affairs. The Swedish ministries are the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Research, and Culture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Industry Employment and Communication, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Sustainable Development. Some of these ministries have subdivisions as there are 20 ministers who run the ministries. The current Government is led by the Social Democratic party. The Prime Minister is Göran Persson. Of the 20 ministers, 10 are female. A relatively large number of the State Secretaries is female as well. Other political parties represented in the Riksdag are Green Party, Christian Democrats, Left Party, Center Party, Moderate Party, and Liberal People's Party.

The Constitution contains basic provisions defining how Sweden is to be governed. There are 4 fundamental laws, which make up the Constitution. 1) In 1974, the Instrument of Government was adopted, which stipulates the basic principles of the form of government, how the government is to work, the basic freedoms and rights of the citizens, and how elections are to be carried out. The Instrument of Government of 1974 reduced the powers of the monarchy. The monarch remained Head of State but without any political power. 2) The Act of Succession, enacted in 1810, regulates who is to inherit the throne. Since 1979, it has been possible for a woman to inherit the throne. 3) The latest Freedom of the Press Act was adopted in 1949. In Sweden, freedom of the press has been a law since 1766 (the 1<sup>st</sup> such law in the world). This Act allows for the dissemination of "information in printed form but with accountability before the law. Another feature of the Freedom of the Press Act is citizens' right to study public documents, the principle of public access to official documents." (<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2853/a/16199>) 4) In 1991, the Riksdag adopted the Fundamental Law on

Freedom of Expression. It allows for free distribution of information and prohibits censorship.

“The Swedish model” is one of the epithets used for the Swedish welfare state. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sweden built up the world’s most generous social welfare system at the cost of the world’s highest taxation system. Schools, various economic security systems, childcare, elder care, pensions, social services, and health care are all tax-financed. For the last 2 decades, due to the lack of major economic growth, the welfare state has experienced heavy pressures. However, the safety net for everyone in the country has remained intact so far.

Sweden is divided into 21 counties (*län*): Blekinge, Dalarna, Gävleborg, Gotland, Halland, Jämtland, Jönköping, Kalmar, Kronoberg, Norrbotten, Örebro, Skåne, Östergötland, Södermanland, Stockholm, Uppsala, Värmland, Västerbotten, Västernorrland, Västmanland, and Västra Götaland. The counties are divided into 290 municipalities. Each of the counties has a County Administrative Board as appointed by the Government. Older historical divisions of Sweden divide Sweden into 25 provinces and 3 areas. These historical divisions have no political consequences but they help people maintain their cultural identity and heritage.

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/575;jsessionid=aiC-RiHNLDT9> and the pages accessible through links on this page

### **Economy:**

Sweden is an industrial country. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw what many refer to as the “Swedish economic miracle,” when within a few decades “a poor agrarian country was transformed into one of the world’s most prosperous and sophisticated industrial nations.”

([http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/Print\\_CommonPage\\_2711.aspx](http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/Print_CommonPage_2711.aspx)) This transformation may be attributed to the combination of Sweden’s natural resources (forests, ore, and hydroelectric power) with many Swedish inventions and refinements of inventions. 2 Areas in which Sweden is 1 of the global leaders are Information Technology (IT) and biomedicine. Sweden’s economy is heavily oriented toward foreign trade.

In May 2006, the unemployment rate was 4.8%, divided equally among men and women. The labor force rate, defined as the population 16-64 years old, was 77.5% for the same month. 4,296,000 People were employed in May 2006 of whom 2,254,000 were men and 2,042,000 women. 2% of the labor force works in agriculture, 24% in industry, and 74% in services (2000 est.). Around 75% of Swedish females work outside the home. Women are granted equal rights with men under the labor laws. However, statistics show a discrepancy between men’s and women’s salaries in most occupations (see [http://www.scb.se/templates/tableOrChart\\_28279.asp](http://www.scb.se/templates/tableOrChart_28279.asp)).

Swedish workers report in sick more often than other European workers, probably because of generous sick-leave benefits. The number of women working outside the home has increased since the government has gradually eliminated the widow’s pension.

Women now have to earn their own retirement. A relatively large number of women hold upper-level government positions.

80% of the Swedish labor force is unionized. Employer's organizations exist as a counterpart for most unions. The unions and organizations are independent of political parties and the government. Sweden does not have a fixed minimum wage. Rather, collective bargaining results in the setting of wages.

Sweden's GDP is \$268 billion (2005 est., an increase of 2.7%) or \$29,800 per capita (2005 est.). Agriculture, once Sweden's main source of income, now constitutes a meager 1.8% of GDP. Industry accounts for 28.6% of GDP and services for 69.7%. Sweden's revenues total \$210.5 billion and expenditures \$205.9 billion (2005 est.). The public debt is 50.3% of GDP (2005 est.) – a major improvement compared to the percentages during the early 1990s, when economic growth was slow. The Riksbank, Swedish central bank, "focuses on price stability with its inflation target of 2%." (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/prints/sw.html>); the inflation rate for 2005 was 0.5%)

Sweden's export amount is \$126.6 billion (2005 est.). The export commodities are services (mainly IT), machinery, motor vehicles, paper products, pulp, wood, iron and steel products, and chemicals. The 2 largest export partners are USA and Germany. Others are Norway, UK, Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, and Belgium. Sweden spent \$104.4 billion on import. The main import commodities are machinery, petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, motor vehicles, iron, steel, foodstuffs, and clothing. The main import partners are Germany, Denmark, Norway, UK, Netherlands, Finland, France, and Belgium. Sweden's export surplus contributes to the increase in GDP. (For more information, see [http://www.scb.se/Grupp/ekonomi/\\_Dokument/econreportengq4-05.pdf](http://www.scb.se/Grupp/ekonomi/_Dokument/econreportengq4-05.pdf))

Sweden is a member of NATO and the United Nations. After a referendum held in late 1994, in which 52.3% of the voters indicated they wanted Sweden to participate in the EU, Sweden joined the EU in January 1995. The country, however, does not participate in the Euro currency system since Swedish voters expressed concern about the impact participation would have on Sweden's democracy and sovereignty. Sweden's currency is Swedish krona (SEK).

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2880.htm>

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/prints/sw.html>

[http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/Print\\_CommonPage\\_2711.aspx](http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/Print_CommonPage_2711.aspx)

### **Literacy:**

Literacy is defined as "age 15 and over can read and write."

Literacy rate is 99% for both males and females (2003 est.).

### **Land/Geography:**





62 00 N, 15 00 E. Sweden's total area is 449,964 square km, making it the 4<sup>th</sup> largest country in Europe (and the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in land area). Located in northern Europe, Sweden borders the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, Kattegat, Skagerrak, Finland (614 km), and Norway (1,619 km). Sweden's coastline is 3,218 km long with sandy beaches. Sweden also has many lakes. Apart from the Kolen mountain range in the west, most of Sweden's terrain is flat or gently rolling lowlands. Around 70% of Sweden is covered by forests and woodlands. The trees in Sweden include spruce, ash, birch, oak, beech, maple, and

pine. The southern part of the country has cold, cloudy winters and cool, partly cloudy summers. The north has a sub-arctic climate.

8% of Sweden's environment is protected. In 1910, Sweden was the first European country to establish national parks, now numbering 26. These national parks are home to Sweden's wildlife (elk, reindeer, lynx, bears, and wolves). Sweden's natural resources are hydropower, timber, iron ore, copper, feldspar, arsenic, lead, zinc, uranium, tungsten, gold, and silver.

Stockholm is the capital of Sweden and 1 of the country's major ports. Göteborg, Sweden's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city and another major port, is a center for maritime traffic on the North Sea. The Öresund Bridge connects Sweden's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city, Malmö, with Copenhagen, Denmark's capital. Sweden is divided into 21 counties, which are made up of 290 municipalities.

## History

10,000 years of history have turned Sweden from a hunting, fishing, collecting, and later farming country, into a highly industrialized country with 1 of the highest standards of living in the world. The 1<sup>st</sup> people in Sweden were hunters, fishers, and gatherers. During the Stone Age (6000-4000 BC), agriculture was introduced. The Stone Age was followed by the Bronze Age and then the Iron Age. The Roman historian Tacitus was the 1<sup>st</sup> to mention Sweden in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. He wrote that the Suiones tribe lived out in the sea and were powerful in both arms and ships (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden>). At that time, the Suiones tribe lived in Svealand (eastern Sweden). The Geats lived in the Götaland territory in the southern part of Sweden.

Unlike the Danish and Norwegian Vikings, who traveled west, the Swedish Vikings traveled east (750-1060 AD). They traveled as far east as the Baltic countries and Russia. From Russia, they went south to the Black Sea, Constantinople/Byzantium, and other parts of southern Europe. Again, unlike their Danish and Norwegian neighbors, who were rather warrior minded, the Swedish Vikings were more settler and merchant minded. During the Viking period, the small Swedish chiefdoms grew in some parts of Sweden. Eventually, the 2 most important chiefdoms, Göter and Svear, formed 2 states led by kings. When these 2 states merged later, the formation of Sweden was a fact.

During the Middle Ages, the King of Sweden was elected by the members of a council of aristocrats. The King's influence was limited, then, because he depended on the support of aristocrats. There was much turbulence due to the struggles between powerful families and Stormännen (Great Men). In response to the economic and political influence of the German Hanseatic League, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway formed the Kalmar Union (1397; this took place some decades after the Black Death had struck Sweden as well as the rest of Europe). Their common King was Danish. The struggle for power ended (temporarily) in The Bloodbath of Stockholm (1520). A year later, the Swedes had their

own King, Gustav Vasa. In 1523, King Gustav rebelled against the Kalmar Union and Sweden left the union. Gustav is considered Sweden's Father of the Nation.

King Gustav strengthened his authority by transforming Sweden into an autocratic nation-state with an effective taxation system. Contrary to the past, when a group of farms formed 1 tax unit, now every single farm formed 1 tax unit. The tax amount for each farm was precisely written down. The heavily increased taxes were cause for some rebellion. King Gustav answered most rebellion with death.

King Gustav's most important reform was the reformation of the Church. Before Gustav's days as King, the Swedes were all Roman Catholic and the Roman Catholic Church controlled the Church's property. King Gustav wanted to gain political control and control over the Church's property. He, therefore, made Sweden a Protestant nation, which made all the Swedes Protestants instead of Catholics. The King could now appoint himself, instead of the Pope, as head of the Church. King Gustav used the Church as an educational tool as well: Since all the people had to attend Church on Sunday, the state could reach almost everyone with propaganda, information, and some education. (<http://www.sverigeturism.se/smorgasbord/>) Because the abbeys were closed and lost their responsibility for health care and education, the quality of these 2 aspects decreased significantly. In addition, since Sweden was now Protestant only, many connections with the rest of Europe were cut off and Sweden experienced a cultural isolation.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century was Sweden's Golden Age as it became a Great Power. Several causes made this possible. In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the German Order State ceased to exist. Sweden won control over the Baltic territories. The trade associated with some of the ports proved to be very profitable for Sweden as the customs revenues alone at 1 point accounted for 25% of the Swedish state income. Another cause was King Gustav II Adolph's participation in the Thirty Years' War. Internal causes consisted of a well-managed economy, a growing iron and weapons industry, and a slightly increasing population. During this time, Russia was weak and other European countries had social and economic problems. At the peak of its power (middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), Sweden controlled Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and parts of northern Germany.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Russia became stronger and took over control of northern Europe. Sweden's hegemony ended in 1809 with the creation of the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. In 1814, Norway was ceded to Sweden after Denmark lost the Napoleonic Wars. Norway, however, declared its independence. The campaign against Norway, which was fought in 1814, ended with the Convention of Moss. Norway was forced into a union with Sweden. This union was only dissolved in 1905.

Sweden adopted a new constitution in 1809 in which the power was divided between the King, the parliament, and the courts. This constitution was in effect until 1974. 1818 Marked the beginning of the Bernadotte dynasty with Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, 1 of Napoleon's field marshals, becoming King of Sweden. Bernadotte was the 1, who attacked Denmark and forced it to cede Norway in 1814. 4 Years later he was chosen as King.

Sweden saw some liberal reforms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, the Elementary Education Act gained legal force in 1842 and the Diet of the Four Estates was replaced with a 2-chamber parliament in 1865. There was a limited freedom of religion and women's rights improved somewhat. Finally, in 1921, all Swedes could vote in free elections. By that time, more than 1 million Swedes had moved to the United States because of poverty in Sweden. The main popular movements during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the revivalist movement and the temperance movement. The influence these movements had on Swedish society were noticeable: the level of education increased and people gained experience in group meetings and negotiations.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sweden changed into a modern welfare state as it transformed into a fully industrialized country. 1 of the reasons Sweden could develop was its neutrality during World War I and World War II. Sweden did not experience the recovery experienced by so many other European countries devastated by the Wars. Sweden also took advantage of its natural resources. By 1960, Sweden had become 1 of the richest countries in the world. In 1995, Sweden joined the EU. Swedes, however, rejected the proposal to adopt the Euro in 2003.

In its recent history, Sweden has had 2 political murders. In 1986, Prime-Minister Olof Palme was murdered as he walked home from the cinema with his wife and child. In 2003, the outspoken foreign minister Anna Lindh was stabbed in a department store in Stockholm. She died of her wounds. Lindh was married and had 2 sons.

### **Christian History**

Before the Roman Catholic faith was introduced to the Swedes, these people mostly believed in the gods and sagas as found in Nordic mythology. The earth was represented as a flat disk situated in the branches of Yggdrasil, the world tree. The gods lived in Asgård (located at the center of the disc), the human beings in Midgård, and the giants in Jotunheim. The chief god was Odin who took fallen Vikings to Valhall. Thor was perhaps the most famous of the gods and warriors. Thor was the god of thunder and had a hammer called Mjölner. (For more information on Nordic mythology, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norse\\_mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norse_mythology))

The Swedish Vikings traveled mainly eastward and as far south as Byzantium/Constantinople. Undoubtedly, here the Vikings encountered Christians of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Some Swedish Vikings traveled westward to Normandy and Britain where they encountered Roman Catholic Christians. The Vikings returned with their newfound faith. Sweden as a whole, however, was 1 of the last European countries to be Christianized (12<sup>th</sup> century). The Christianization contributed to the consolidation of the country. Although there were initially Eastern Orthodox influences, the Roman Catholic faith prevailed, mainly due to missionaries from Germany and England.

The 1<sup>st</sup> missionary to Sweden was the German monk Ansgar (The Apostle of Sweden), "who visited Birka near Stockholm in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and helped to organize a church there. After returning and being appointed first Archbishop of

Hamburg, he consecrated Gautbert as a bishop for Sweden.” ([http://www.svenskakyrken.se/ArticlePages/200508/16/20050816074719\\_svkhs928/20050816074719\\_svkhs928.dbp.asp](http://www.svenskakyrken.se/ArticlePages/200508/16/20050816074719_svkhs928/20050816074719_svkhs928.dbp.asp)) After Ansgar, several English missionaries visited Sweden. The missionary St. Sigfrid was instrumental in the conversion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Swedish King, Olov Skötkonung. Many of the 1<sup>st</sup> bishops were of English origin. The English influence is also evident in the architecture of many old church buildings and in the manuscripts of those times, which contain liturgical rites and customs. Apparently, the religious knowledge of the new Christians was very limited due to the lack of printing and schools. The clergy and monks endeavored to raise the level of spiritual knowledge. Their efforts were met with “drunkenness, violence, polygamy, and the exposure of children.” (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14347a.htm>) The Church took care of the sick and poor and replaced heathen festivals with those of the Church.

The bishops’ influence increased throughout time. Decisions made during synods were in favor of the bishops. The Synod of Skenninge (1248) decided to transfer the election of the bishops to the cathedral chapters, to make the study of canon law and the observance of the law of celibacy obligatory, and to release the clergy from taking the oath of loyalty to the secular authorities. In 1281, the clergy no longer had to pay taxes. As a result, their possessions increased. 2 Well-known Roman Catholics during the Middle Ages are St. Birgitta, a nun, who wrote on mystical subjects and died in Rome (1373); and Archbishop James Ulfsson, who established the 1<sup>st</sup> printing press in Sweden in 1483 and founded the University of Uppsala.

The Swedish brothers Olavus and Laurentius Petri, sons of a smith and born in Örebro, were pupils of Martin Luther at Wittenberg. Olavus returned to Sweden in 1519 and became cathedral canon at Straengnaes, where he shared his new views with the archdeacon Laurentius Andreas. King Gustav Vasa soon saw the benefit of the Reformation by using it “to crush the power of the bishops and to confiscate the lands of the Church.” (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14347a.htm>) In 1524, King Gustav severed the country’s ties with the Roman Catholic Church and allowed Olavus to preach in the main church of Stockholm. At the Diet at Västerås (1527), the bishops had to give in to the King. The King became the head of the State Church, now Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden, and the King received all the surplus wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. By 1526, Olavus had translated the New Testament in Swedish. Now the people could actually read and understand this part of the Word of God. Olavus and his brother Laurentius finished the translation of the whole Bible in Swedish in 1541. Laurentius was appointed Archbishop of Uppsala in 1531. The Synod at Uppsala (1536) decided masses in Latin had seen their last days. Instead, the mass was now celebrated in Swedish. In addition, the clergy no longer had to remain celibate.

By 1539, King Gustav had firmly established the Lutheran Church in Sweden. Often, however, the methods he had used to reach his goal were far from noble and Christian: forcing people to leave their farms; the closing of monasteries and convents caused a decline in healthcare and education; killing many of the monks and nuns; killing rebels; and amassing great personal wealth. The Petri brothers fell into disgrace with the King since they advocated freedom from the crown in addition to freedom from Rome. The

King's 2 councilors were replaced by 2 Germans, until 1 of them was sent to jail. In 1572, the power was given to the King to appoint bishops. The King, however, could only appoint those who had been recommended by the church and senior laity. The church, then, was largely self-governing. (See also <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Europe.htm>)

In many ways, the Church of Sweden resembled the Church of England. Count Gyllenberg, the Swedish ambassador to London, therefore, recommended a union of the 2 churches. His proposal met with opposition because opponents believed the Church of England was too Calvinist. The Church of Sweden, on the contrary, was more Lutheran in liturgy, preaching, and practice.

An important Swede in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Swedenborg was a scientist, philosopher, and spiritual explorer. He began having visions and dreams in 1743 and received a call to become a revelator 2 years later. According to Swedenborg, "a spirit appeared and spoke with him regarding the need for a human person to serve as the means by which God would further reveal himself to men in somewhat the manner of the biblical visions of the Old Testament." (<http://newearth.org/frontier/escall.html>) The remainder of his life Swedenborg spent writing theological books. He also founded his own church.

The next spiritual movement was Pietism, which focused on the believer's personal relationship with God. The Pietist revival started in Germany in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but had its effect on Sweden mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Carl Otto Rosenius, a Swedish lay preacher, came in contact with George Scott, an English Methodist preacher. Rosenius became part of the *Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen* (National Evangelical Institute), a free church consisting of the different Pietist groups in Sweden. The Pietists had their own chapels, meetings, etc., yet kept their membership in the Church of Sweden. When a split occurred, the *Svenska Missionsförbundet* (Swedish Covenant Church) became a true free church.

Until the late 1800s, the religious laws in Sweden were strict. For example, having a religious service without the direction of the Church of Sweden was a crime. Many evangelicals (Baptists, etc.), therefore, went through a difficult time as they were jailed and sometimes killed. When the religious laws changed, the groups outside the Church of Sweden contributed to the building of the Swedish democratic welfare state. Full religious freedom for everyone was granted only in 1951.

Religious ecumenism characterizes Sweden's 20<sup>th</sup> century. 23 Different denominations are members of the *Sveriges Kristna Råd* (Christian Council of Sweden). On an international level, the ties between the Anglican and the Church of Sweden became stronger. In 2000, the Church of Sweden lost its status as the State Church. Its status changed to that of a church with rights and obligations before the law equal to those applying to any other religious group in Sweden. (For an article on the separation of church and state in Sweden, see [http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com\\_sweden.html](http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_sweden.html))

## Religions

## **Non-Christian:**

*Buddhist (15,000):* Buddhism is a religion and practical philosophy based on the teachings of Siddharta/Buddha Gautama (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC). Buddhism is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest religion in the world. A Buddha “is generally considered to be a person who discovers the true nature of reality through years of spiritual cultivation, investigation of the various religious practices of his time, and meditation. This transformational discovery is called bodhi - literally, “Awakening” (more commonly called “Enlightenment”) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>). To reach this state of enlightenment or nirvana, a person must follow the Noble Eightfold Path, which is 1 of the Four Noble Truths. Tibetan and Zen Buddhism form 2 expressions of Buddhism in Sweden.

*Hindu (7,000-10,000):* The basic belief of Hinduism is that human and animal spirits reincarnate. The caste system, finding morality, merging with Brahman or ultimate reality, and reaching Nirvana (at which stage a spirit will no longer reincarnate) are other key concepts of this major world religion.

*Jewish (10,000):* Jews have been in Sweden at least since 1680. Initially they were allowed to start synagogues in only 3 cities – Stockholm, Göteborg, and Norrköping. Today, the number of active Jewish believers is around 10,000. Their holy scripture is what Christians call the Old Testament. The Jewish faith is a monotheistic faith, which awaits the coming of the Messiah.

*Muslim (350,000; 100,000 active members):* The Muslim religion is monotheistic and affirms that there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger. Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment, Paradise, and Hell. Around 50% of the Muslims in Sweden live in the major metropolitan areas.

*Sikh (1,000):* The Sikh religion originated in the Punjab region of northern India in 1469 under Guru Nanak Dev. Sikhism rejects idolatry, ritualism, ascetism, and the caste system. It affirms the equality of both sexes and all religions. The holy scripture is called Guru Granth Sahib. (For more information, see <http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/basics/introduction.htm>)

*Zoroastrian (500):* Zoroastrianism is believed to be a Persian religion predating Judaism and Christianity. Ahura Mazda is the name of its god. He is the beginning and the end, the creator, the Eternal, the Pure and the only Truth. The religion is named after its prophet Zoroaster. The Gathas are the most sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. This religion emphasizes moral choice and human responsibility.

*Church of Scientology (3,000):* The Church of Scientology is based upon the research, teachings, and writings of its founder L. Ron Hubbard. The religion’s main idea is that the mind controls the body and that true freedom comes from wisdom. In 2000, the Swedish Government officially recognized the Church of Scientology as a religion.

*Landmark-Forum:* Landmark-Forum is based on “the fundamental principle that people have the possibility of success, fulfillment, and greatness.” (<http://www.landmarkforum>)

[methodology.com/aboutlandmarkeducation.htm](http://methodology.com/aboutlandmarkeducation.htm)) Its headquarters are in San Francisco, CA. Landmark promises to deliver to its students the secret of what it means to be human. Transformation of lives is one often-cited result of attending a Landmark seminar. (See the Landmark website <http://www.landmarkforummethodology.com/>)

*Hare Krishna:* Based on Indian theology, Hare Krishna recognizes 3 aspects of God: Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan. Bhagavan, or Krishna, is God's supreme personhood and the sum of all his qualities. Followers are encouraged to have a personal relationship with Krishna. Weekly public chanting (at noon on Saturdays) is one of the things followers do in Stockholm.

*Unification Church:* Organized in Seoul in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon, the Unification Church has a presence in over 150 countries with larger groups in Korea, Japan, and the USA. Whereas the group shares many of the conservative Christian views, it differs in some important respects as well. The Unification Church rejects the traditional concept of the Trinity. Jesus Christ is seen as a perfect human being who was born without original sin and who was spiritually resurrected after his crucifixion. The Unification Church is a family-centered Church, which practices the mass wedding ceremony as its most important ritual. (For more information, see <http://www.religioustolerance.org/unificat.htm>)

### **Christian Cults and Sects:**

*Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (9,000):* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of which the members are known as Mormons, was founded by Joseph Smith in 1820. The Church claims 11 million members worldwide. In addition to the Bible, the Latter-day Saints consider The Pearl of Great Price, The Doctrine and Covenants, and The Book of Mormon (1830) as sacred. Although in 1890, the practice of polygamy was officially rejected, polygamy is still present in the state of Utah (USA). The Mormons are known for their extensive research in genealogy. Their views on the main Christian doctrines differ from those held by evangelical Christians.

*Jehovah's Witness (23,000):* Jehovah's Witnesses believe they are the restoration of 1<sup>st</sup>-century Christianity. The Watchtower and Awake! are 2 of their magazines. The group's headquarters are in Brooklyn, New York. They trace their origin to the Bible Students (late 1870s). A schism occurred in 1917 and in 1931 the believers, who remained supportive of the Watch Tower Society, took on the name Jehovah's Witnesses under the leadership of Joseph F. Rutherford. Jehovah's Witnesses consider their translation of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. Rejecting the concepts of Trinity and hell, they instead believe in Unitarianism. Using God's name, Jehovah, is a requirement for true worship. Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their rejection of blood transfusions.

*Word of Faith:* This movement finds its roots in the Christian Church. It is also known as "The Prosperity Gospel," "The Faith Movement," and "Faith Preaching." Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003) is considered 1 of the fathers of the movement. Kenneth Copeland, Jim Kaseman, and John Brandström are some other well-known preachers. Ulf Ekman from Uppsala is the main Scandinavian leader of the foundation called "Livets Ord" (The



Word of Life). Around 35,000 people in Sweden subscribe to The Word of Life magazine. The organization has some 200 offshoots all over Sweden. (From <http://www.nccg.org/006Art-ProsperTheology.html>)

### **Catholics/Orthodox Churches:**

*Roman Catholic (82,000):* Roman Catholicism was the first Christian faith tradition that reached Sweden during the Middle Ages. Until the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church was the only church in Sweden. The members are made up of 6 groups (from largest to smallest): Poles, Croats, Spanish speakers, Arabic speakers, ethnic Swedes, and others. St. Birgitta/St. Bridget (1303-73) is Sweden's most celebrated saint and Europe's patron saint.

*Orthodox Church (100,000):* The Orthodox Church in Sweden is comprised of the following Orthodox expressions: Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, and Syrian. Eastern Orthodoxy is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Christian denomination in the world. In 1054, the Great Schism took place between Rome and Constantinople. The result was the separation of the church of the west, the Roman Catholic Church, and the church of the east, the Eastern Orthodox Church.

### **Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostals:**

*Baptist (18,000):* The Baptist Union of Sweden has around 18,000 members in 260 local churches. On September 21, 1848, a Danish Baptist pastor arrived in Vällersvik, where he baptized several people. The first Baptist church in Sweden was formed on this day. In 1857, a general conference was formed and in 1889 this conference formed the Swedish Baptist Union. A division occurred in 1872, resulting in the formation of the Free Baptist Union. In 1892, a second disagreement led to the formation of the Örebro Mission. In 1997, the 2 groups joined with the Holiness Baptists, a Pentecostal body, and are known together as InterAct or Evangeliska Frikyrkan.

*InterAct/Evangeliska Frykyrkan (29,000):* InterAct is an independent denomination with around 29,000 members in 350 churches. In 1997, the Free Baptist Union, Örebro Mission, and Holiness Union Mission joined to form InterAct. Evangelism and development work are top priorities. InterAct has around 130 missionaries, who work in 40 different countries.

*Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden (6,967,498):* The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden was founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of the Reformation in Sweden. Until 2000, the Church of Sweden was the State Church. In 2004, 79,031 people left the Church of Sweden, mainly because of economic reasons: every member pays a tax of 1.19% of his/her income. Whereas in 1972, 95.2% of the Swedish population held membership of the Church of Sweden, the percentage had dropped to 77% by 2005. The Church has around 2,225 parishes and 13 dioceses. Each of the dioceses is led by a bishop. There are around 5,000 priests nationwide. In 1960, the 1<sup>st</sup> woman was ordained

priest in the Church of Sweden. The Church has allowed religious communities and orders in its structure since 1951.

*Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (130,000 registered and unregistered):* The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (MCCS) is a Reformed Free Church that originated in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden. In 1878, Paul P. Waldenström and others left the Church of Sweden to form the Swedish Mission Society. Waldenström, who had a passion for the Bible (“Where does it stand written?”) became 1 of the leaders of the Society, which changed its name to Mission Covenant Church of Sweden in 2003. MCCS is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest church in Sweden after the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden. With more than 750 congregations nationwide, the MCCS’s mission policy is “Gospel to Everyone,” whereby it focuses on 4 priorities: Evangelism, Church Development, Peace and Reconciliation, and Society Building.

*Pentecostal (90,000):* With roots in the Holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement originated in the USA in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thomas Ball Barratt, a Norwegian Methodist pastor, spread the Pentecostal beliefs in Norway, Sweden, and England after 1906. Lewi Pethrus (d. 1974) was the major leader of Pentecostalism in Sweden during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecostal church in Sweden was founded in 1913. In 2000, there were 490 churches with 90,000 members, making the Pentecostal Church the largest protestant Free Church movement in Sweden. The movement has around 400 missionaries active in 52 countries worldwide. (Information from <http://www.pri.pingst.se/english/spmarticle.asp>)

*Seventh-day Adventist (2,800):* Organized in 1863 in Battle Creek, MI, the denomination was first introduced to Sweden in 1880. Today there are around 2,800 members in 44 congregations. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sweden, which first began in May 1880, operates a junior college, publishing house, and natural foods company. Seventh-day Adventists are well known for their promotion of good health through a vegetarian and/or Old Testament diet. The Church holds the Bible as sacred and views Jesus Christ as Son of God and the only way to salvation.

## **People Groups**

000

Albanian, Tosk (4,100)

The Tosks form 1 of the 2 Albanian subgroups, the other group being the Ghegs. The Tosks in Albania live south of the Shkumbin River, which divides the 2 major cultural and dialectal subgroups. The Albanians are thought to be descendants of the ancient Illyrian and Thracian peoples. The Albanian language is the only surviving dialect of the Thracio-Illyrian branch of the Indo-European language family. The Tosks are mainly Muslims and Orthodox Christians.

000

American, US (15,000)

The American population is a melting pot of mainly Native American, European, and African American people groups. The official language is English, a West-Germanic language of the Indo-European language family. The majority of Americans adheres to the Christian faith.

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Arab (20,000)

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Arab, Iraqi (27,000)

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Arab, Levantine/Syrian (8,700)

Arabs number over 148 million and form the majority population in 15 countries. The Arabs are “the largest, most diverse and most politically influential Muslim ethnic group in the world.” (From Richard V. Weekes, ed., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, 2d ed., *Acehnese-Lur* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 35) The Arab language is a Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic language family. The majority of Arabs are Muslim.

543

Assyrian (36,000)

Around 30,000 of 4,250,000 Assyrians live in Iraq. Using Syriac script, the Assyrian Neo-Aramaic language is a Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic language family. The primary religion of the Assyrians is Christianity.

000

Brazilian (28,000)

The Brazilians are a mixed group of people (aboriginal Indian, Portuguese, African, Italian, Spanish, German, Polish, Japanese, and Arab). In 1493, Brazil was given to Portugal by papal bull. The official language is Portuguese, a Western language of the Romance language group. The majority of Brazilians profess the Roman Catholic faith. Around 20% of the Brazilian population is Protestant.

000

British (5,400)

The Anglophones are English-speaking people from Great Britain. They consist of English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish people. These people groups share a similar culture with many individual/national elements. The majority belongs to the Christian faith.

000

Caboverdian Mestico (700)

The Caboverdian Mestico's homeland is the Cape Verde Islands – a dependency of Portugal. The official language is Portuguese, a Western language of the Romance language group. The majority of the Caboverdian Mestico is Roman Catholic.

547

Chilean (26,000)

The Chilean people are 95% white and mestizo, 3% Amerindian, and 2% other. In the 1500s, Spaniards conquered parts of this South-American country. The official language spoken in Chile is Spanish, which descended from the Vulgar Latin and has 7 major dialects. The majority of Chileans are (nominally) Roman Catholic. 11% of the population is Protestant.

548

Croat (26,000)

The Croatians, a South Slav people, are originally from the northern Balkan Peninsula in South-Central Europe. The Croats base their identity on their history, which is separate from other South Slav people, and their Roman Catholic faith. Croatian is now a separate language from the Serbian language. It uses the Latin alphabet. The war in former Yugoslavia left many refugees. Several of them were granted refugee status in Sweden.

549

Czech (8,000)

With their homeland situated in Central Europe, the Czechs (formerly known as Bohemians) are a Western Slav people. The Czech culture is influenced by German and Austrian culture. The Czech language, also known as Bohemian, is a Western Slav language, only second in importance after Polish. The language is spoken in 6 major dialects. The majority of Czechs is Roman Catholic. A minority is Protestant.

000

Dalecarlian (1,500)

Dalarna (lit. the valleys) is a historical province in central Sweden. The Dalarna culture is distinct and rich with folk elements. The Dalahorse is a well-known symbol. The Dalecarlian people speak a dialect with many features of medieval Swedish. Many of the Dalecarlian profess the Lutheran faith.

550

Dane (44,000)

The Danish in Sweden originated from Denmark, the most densely populated of the Scandinavian countries. Like other Scandinavian people groups, the Danes are descendants of the early Vikings. The Danish are generally tall with fair skin and light-

colored eyes, which make this people group look similar to the Norwegians. The majority of the Danes in Sweden profess the Lutheran faith.

000

Deaf (8,000)

There are at least 8,000 deaf primary users. The deaf as well as many hearing children of deaf parents use Swedish sign language to communicate. Swedish sign language is intelligible with Danish and Norwegian sign languages with only moderate difficulty. Sweden has 5 deaf schools.

551

Dutch (4,400)

The Dutch are a western-Germanic people. They speak Dutch and/or Frisian along with many dialects. The Dutch are known as hardworking, devout, yet tolerant and liberal people. Most of the Christians belong to the Roman Catholic and the Reformed churches. The Dutch are tall with fair skin.

552

Estonian (26,000)

The Estonians form a relatively large group in Sweden. Coming from their home country Estonia, the Estonians are a Finnic people. Socially, physically, and religiously, the Estonians are closer to the Finns and Scandinavian peoples than to Slavic people to the east of Estonia. In 1991, Estonia declared its independence from Russia. The majority of the Estonians is of the Lutheran faith. Their language is closely related to Finnish, is spoken in five major dialects (Tallinn, Tartu, Mulgi, Voru, and Setu) and is written in Roman characters.

553

Finn (354,000)

The Finns form a part of the Finno-Ugric people with origins in the Volga River basin of European Russia. The Finns are generally tall and fair. About 89% of the Finns in Finland belong to the Evangelical Lutheran church. A majority of the Finns in Sweden most likely belong to the Lutheran church as well. The Finns have their own Finnish language but mostly speak Swedish as well.

000

French (2,600)

The French in Sweden come from France, one of the most powerful nations in the world. The French are a Latin people with a mix of Germanic, Mediterranean, and other European peoples. French is one of the Gallo-Romance languages (part of the Romance group of Indo-European languages). Close to 90% of the French is Roman Catholic.

Although the majority of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, most of the people are secular. For centuries, the French have been known for their art, letters, and fashion.

000

German (36,000)

The Germans form an ancient ethnic group, dating back as far as the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The official language is German (Deutsch or Hochdeutsch). There are many local dialects in addition to the official language. The northern Germans are mostly Protestant (Lutheran) and the southern Germans mostly Roman Catholic.

554

German Swiss (900)

The Swiss are made up of the Swiss-Germans, Swiss-Italians, Romansh, and Savoyards. The Swiss-Germans form the largest group (92%). They are an Alemannic German people with a distinct Alpine culture. The Swiss-Germans are almost evenly divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The language, Schwyzerdütsch, is a group of 20-70 related dialects belonging to the Alemannic group of German languages.

000

Greek (51,000)

The Greeks are an ancient people and form a separate branch of the Indo-European peoples. Today's Greek language is derived from the Hellenistic standard Greek. The majority of the Greeks (98%) are Greek Orthodox. Greek culture is influenced by the Turkish people and culture. Greece is known for its history, culture, and literature.

555

Hungarian (4,400)

The Hungarians, or Magyars, are a Finno-Ugric people originating from western Siberia. The Hungarian language, Magyar, is the most important of the Ugric languages of the Finno-Ugric language group and has 7 major dialects. 64% of Hungarians is Roman Catholic and 23% Protestant (mainly Reformed tradition). For 40 years, Hungary was under Communist rule.

556 (14,000)

Ingrian-Finn

The Ingrians originate from northwestern Russia (between Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland, north of St. Petersburg). The Ingrians are a Finnic people and divided into 2 groups: the Izors and the Finnish Ingrians. Related to Finnish, the Ingrian language, Inkerin, is written in the Latin alphabet and spoken in 4 major dialects. The majority of

the Ingrian-Finns are Lutheran with a minority being Orthodox. In Russia, the Ingrians do not have a separate nationality status.

000

Italian (17,000)

The Italians are a Latin people with a mixture of Germanic and Mediterranean people groups. Known for their long and glorious history, the Italians are predominantly Roman Catholic (84%). However, church attendance is only about 25%. Standard Italian is the official language but different dialects are spoken all throughout the country.

000

Jew, Swedish (16,000)

The Swedish Jews first established an official community in the 1770s. Between 1850 and 1920, the number of Jews increased due to immigration from Russia and Poland. Sweden did much to save Jews from Nazi murder and brutality. Today, the largest Jewish community is in Stockholm. The majority of the Swedish Jews speaks Swedish. Around 10,000 Swedish Jews adhere to the Jewish faith. (A website with the history of the Jews in Sweden is <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Sweden.html>)

000

Kurd, Northern (12,000)

A nation without an official homeland, the Kurds are widely spread throughout central Southwest Asia. Spoken in 2 major dialects, Kurdish is an Indo-Iranian language, but grammatically and lexically distinct from Persian. The majority of the Kurds are Muslims.

557

Latvian (6,100)

The Latvians are a Baltic people. They are generally tall and fair, resembling the Scandinavian peoples. The language, Latvian, is one of 2 Baltic languages (the other language is Lithuanian). Written in the Roman alphabet, the language is spoken in 2 main dialects. The majority of the Latvians are either Lutheran or Roman Catholic.

562

Norwegian (53,000)

The Norwegians are of Germanic stock. They are generally tall, fair skinned, and have light-colored eyes. As a Scandinavian people group, they are closely related to the Danes and Swedes. Norwegians speak Bokmål Norwegian and/or Nynorsk Norwegian. Both languages have some dialects. The majority of Norwegians belongs to the Lutheran Church. Most of them, however, are nominal Lutherans.

000

Persian (50,000)

The Persians originate from the Iranian Plateau, encompassing Afghanistan and Iran. The Persian language (Farsi is the name for the standard Persian) forms a part of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. With the advent of Islam, the number of Persians adhering to Zoroastrianism rapidly declined. The number of Muslims increased. Today, most of the Persians profess the Muslim faith.

564 (41,000)

Pole

The Poles are a West Slav nation. Polish culture exhibits many borrowings due to centuries of domination by neighboring countries. Germanic influence is most obvious. Spoken in 4 dialects and written in the Roman alphabet, the Polish language, Polska, is a Lechitic language. The majority of the Poles are Roman Catholic in faith.

565

Roma Gypsy (2,500)

The Roma or Roms, popularly known as Gypsies, are a transnational European group. Communities live in almost every European state. The Roms are dispersed all over the world. They speak local languages. Their native language, Romani, has 17 dialects, many of which are mutually unintelligible. The majority of the Roma Gypsies are Christians – Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. In most countries, the Roms do not have an official status.

000

Romanian (8,800)

The Romanians are a Latin nation. Their culture and language are influenced by Germanic, Slavic, Rom, and Hungarian people groups. The language, a Romance language of the Italic subgroup, has 4 major dialects: Moldavian, Muntenian/Walachian, Transylvanian, and Banat. The majority of the Romanians are members of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Large minorities are Roman Catholic and Protestant.

000

Romma Fintika, Kalo Finnish (1,592)

The Romma Fintika are a Gypsy group. The Romma Fintika speak Kalo Finnish Romani, a Northern Romani language of the Indo-European language family. Its speakers originally came from Scotland. The majority of the Romma Fintika are Christians.

567

Russian (26,000)



The Russians are the largest national people group of Europe. The Russian culture has Oriental and Occidental influences. The low birthrate and the high mortality rate among Russians is a major concern among Russian nationalists. The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest church in Russia. The Russian language, an East Slav language, has 2 major dialects: North Russian and South Russian. The language is also the lingua franca in most of the republics of the former Soviet Union.

560

Lule Saami (6,100)

561

Northern Saami (5,100)

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Pite Saami (2,000)

570

Southern Sami (600)

These 4 people groups are separate families of the Sami people group. Their homeland, also known as Lapland, is largely within the Arctic Circle. Lapland does not have an official political status. About 1/3 of Sami are nomadic. Originally, the Sami were short and muscular. Nowadays, one can hardly distinguish them from their Scandinavian neighbors. The Sami society is divided by labor – mainly hunters, fishermen, and whalers.

The majority of the Samis are Lutheran. Only those Samis, who are refugees from the former Soviet Union, are Eastern Orthodox.

The Sami language, consisting of 3 major dialects and over 50 subdialects, is related to Finnish and other Finnic languages. The Sami language is one of the minority languages recognized by the Swedish Government.

000

Serb (52,000)

The Serbians are the largest of the South Slav people groups. The Turks greatly influenced the Serbian language and culture. The Serbian/Serbo-Croatian language, written in the Cyrillic alphabet, is a western language of the South Slav language group. It has 4 major dialects: Chakavian, Kajkavian, Stokavian, and Torlakian. The majority of Serbs adhere to the Serbian Orthodox tradition.

000

Skane (1,528,000)

The Skanes or Scanians mostly live in the southern part of Sweden and the Danish island of Bornholm. Scania is made up of 4 Swedish provinces (Malmöhus, Halland, Kristianstad, and Blekinge) and Bornholm County of Denmark. Of mixed Danish and Swedish descent, the Scanians are a Scandinavian people. Most of the Scanians adhere to the Lutheran faith. The Scanian language is in some ways closer to Danish than to Swedish. The Scanians consider themselves a separate Scandinavian nation.

568

Slovak (1,000)

Originally from Central Europe, the Slovaks are a West Slav people related to the Czechs. In 1993, Slovakia declared its independence from the Czech Republic. The Slovak language is a Czech-Slovak language of the West Slav language family and it is spoken in 3 major dialects. The majority of the Slovaks adhere to the Roman Catholic faith.

569

Slovene (5,200)

The Slovenes are a South Slav nation of the Balkan Peninsula. Historically, the Italian city Trieste, the Austrian city Klagenfurt, and the Slovene city Ljubljana formed the 3 centers of Slovene culture. Written in the Latin alphabet, the Slovene language is a western South Slav language with some strong German influences. The language is spoken in 2 major dialects. The majority of the Slovenes is Roman Catholic.

000

Somali (13,000)

The Somali form 1 of Africa's largest, homogeneous ethnic groups. The economy traditionally revolved around nomadic animal husbandry. The Somali language is an Eastern Cushitic language of the Afro-Asiatic family. The majority of Somali are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi school. In the early 1990s, Somalia collapsed and 1,000s of Somali fled the country. A relatively large group lives in Sweden.

000

Spaniard (4,400)

The Spaniards, an Iberian people, are descendants of early Iberians, Celts, and Romans. Semitic, Teutonic, and Mediterranean elements influenced the Spanish culture. Other important influences on the Spanish music, food, and culture are the Rom population and the Latin-American populations. Around 97% of the Spaniards profess Roman Catholicism. The Spanish language is descended from the Vulgar Latin and has 7 major dialects.

571

Swede (6,447,000)

The Swedes, tall and often very fair with light eyes, are a Scandinavian people and as such related to the Danes and Norwegians. They are descendants of the early Vikings. Around 94% of the Swedes belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Swedish language, spoken in 4 major dialects, is an East Scandinavian language of the North Germanic language group.

572

Swedish Traveller (25,000)

The Swedish Travellers form a separate group of Gypsies. Their language, Tavringer Romani, is based on Swedish with borrowings from Northern Romani. This group most likely entered Sweden via Denmark in 1512. The majority of the Swedish Travellers are Christians.

22249

Tattare Gypsy (25,000)  
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Gypsy, Swedish (4,400) (Alternate name for Tattare Gypsy)

The Tatars are a Turkic nation of mixed ancestry: Mongol, Finnic, and Slav. Their homeland, Tatarstan, forms part of the Russian Federation. The majority of the Tatars are Sunni Muslim. The Kreshen Tatars form an important Orthodox Christian minority. The Tatars speak a Uralian language that is a member of the Altaic language family. The language is spoken in 3 major dialects and many subdialects, and in mixed dialects.

575

Tibetan (900)

The Tibetans live scattered throughout Central Asia. In 1959, the Chinese Government took full control of Tibet. The Tibetan language is spoken in 5 major dialects. The majority of the Tibetans are Buddhist.

576

Turk (20,000)

The Turks are an Altaic people. The Turks display a mixture of European and Asian culture and ethnicity. The majority of the Turks are Sunni Muslim. The language, (Anatolian) Turkish, is part of the Oghuz branch of the Altaic languages and consists of 9 different dialects.

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should make the religious situation in Sweden a matter of prayer. These prayers should address the complacency in the

- Christian population of Sweden. Sweeping revival is a tremendous need in Sweden.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should address the needs of the non-religious population of Sweden which accounts for as high as 41.82 percent of the people or a lost population of over 3,726,000 persons. The fact that the non-religious is increasing at a rate of + 1.8 % annually (compared to a – 1 % for Christians) adds concern. Evangelicals should seek out evangelists who would target the non-religious, train them, and introduce them into this country.
  3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to evangelize and minister to the many refugee groups that are in Sweden (see People Group Section).
  4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to aid Sweden Christians in leadership training. This help will of necessity introduce sound theology into a society that has strayed away from biblical foundations.
  5. Evangelical Christians and churches should target the growing Muslim population (+ 4.7% annually). Muslims in Sweden number as many as 350,000 (Operation World gives the number at 276, 000). Training in reaching followers of Islam is a tremendous need. Evangelicals should introduce training for reaching Muslims.

**Pictures:**

See separate folder.

**Links:**

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/sw.html>

[http://www.scb.se/default\\_2154.asp](http://www.scb.se/default_2154.asp) Statistics on Sweden

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/575;jsessionid=aiC-RiHNLDT9> and the pages accessible through links on this page

[www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se) The official gateway to Sweden