En framgångsrik främling
Filadelfiaförsamlingen i Stockholm – självbild i historieskrivning och verksamhet 1910-1980

av

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Abstract

Andreas K. G. Thörn (2014): En framgångsrik främling: Filadelfia-
församlingen i Stockholm – självbild i historieskrivning och verksamhet
Self-image in Historical Narration and Work 1910-1980). Örebro Studies
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The aim of the thesis is to examine how a group’s self-image is created,
sustained and if necessary changed during the revolutionary 20th century.
The study takes its point of departure in the idea that a self-image is essen-
tial for an organisation’s cohesion and collective identity. The study object
is the Pentecostal Philadelphia church in Stockholm, Sweden, established
in 1910. In concrete terms, the thesis examines the self-image of the
church as it is expressed in its narratives and activities from 1910 to 1980.
The self-image is analysed with the aid of the concepts ‘boundaries’ and
‘symbols’ and in relation to social and organisational change processes. In
the main the empirical material consists of official documents such as jubil-
lee publications, annual reports and the weekly newspaper Evangelii Härold.

The main contribution of the thesis is an analysis of the church’s histor-
ical narrative. In this narrative the overall theme appears to be the small
and faithful group that due to God’s influence and despite opposition
became a major and significant church – a success story. The theme also
remains the same when the circumstances change. Narrative theory em-
phasises that the narrative has to be changeable in order to be serviceable.
However, my study shows that the narration, at least at the level high-
lighted in the thesis, is inert. The self-image seems to be difficult to change
but is not necessarily static. The narrative is shown to include strategies
for dealing with internal change processes and changes in society.

Keywords: Historical narrative, group identity, Swedish Pentecostal
Movement, church history, Free Churches.

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