

On the Relationship between Anthropology and Theology

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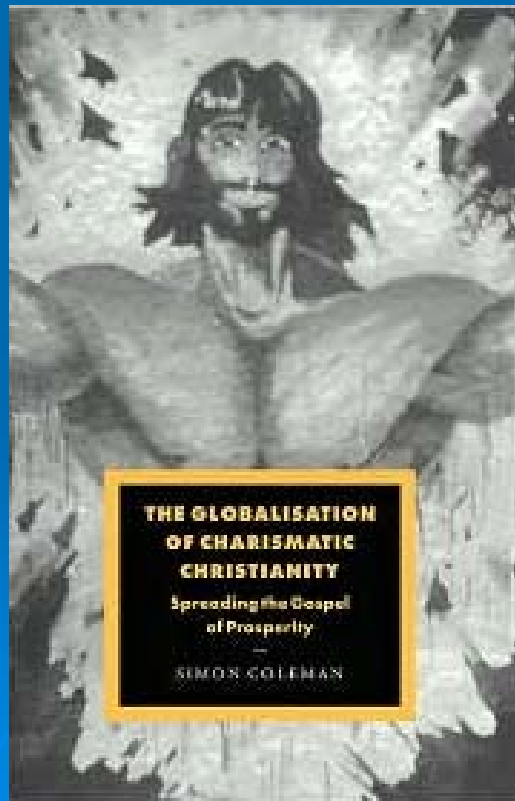
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Copenhagen October 23, 2009

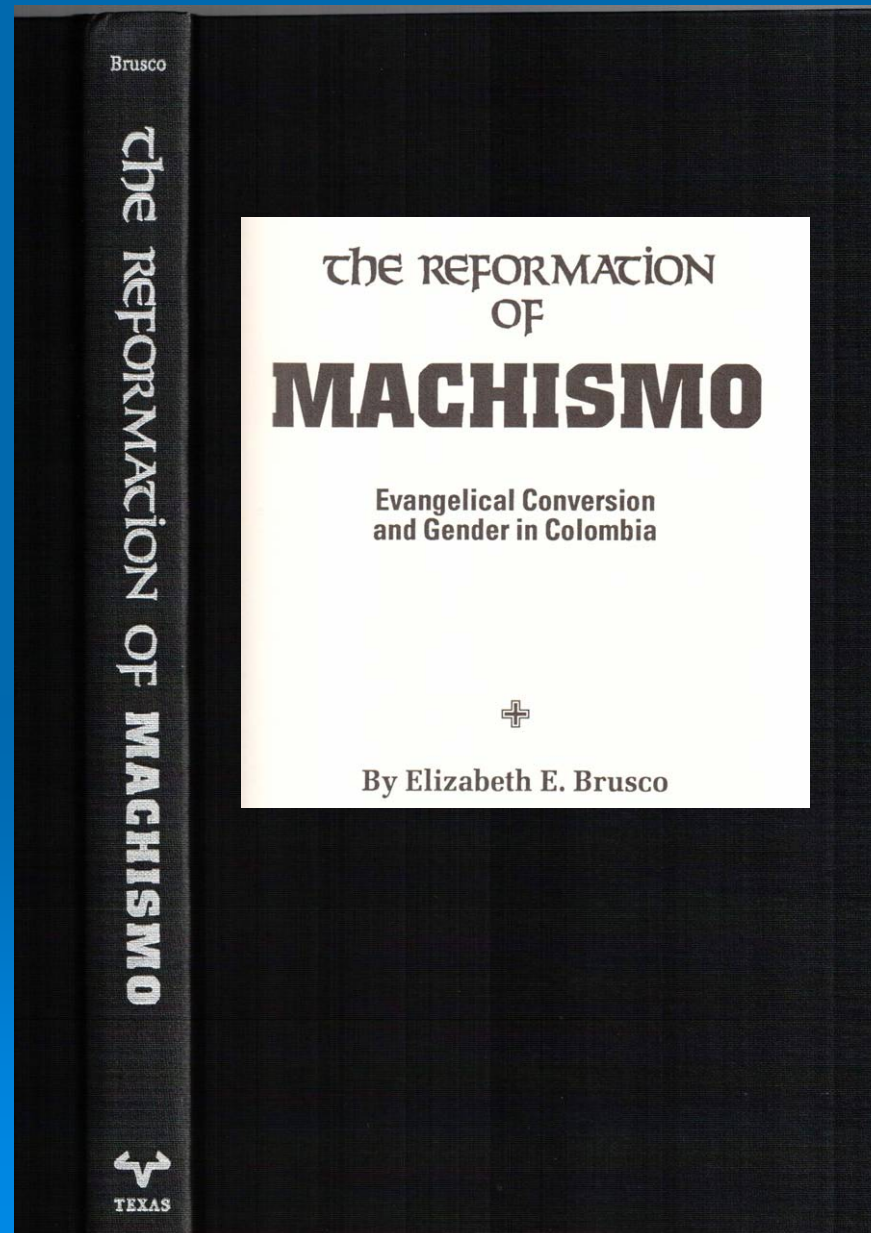
Anthropologists studying Christian Churches

Simon Coleman (Sussex, GB), studied the *Word of Life* ('Livets Ord') movement in Uppsala from an anthropological perspective. His studies resulted in a pioneer work that is much quoted today: *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity* (2000)

Coleman was one of the first anthropologists in Europe to cross the borderline between anthropology and theology



The Reformation of Machismo

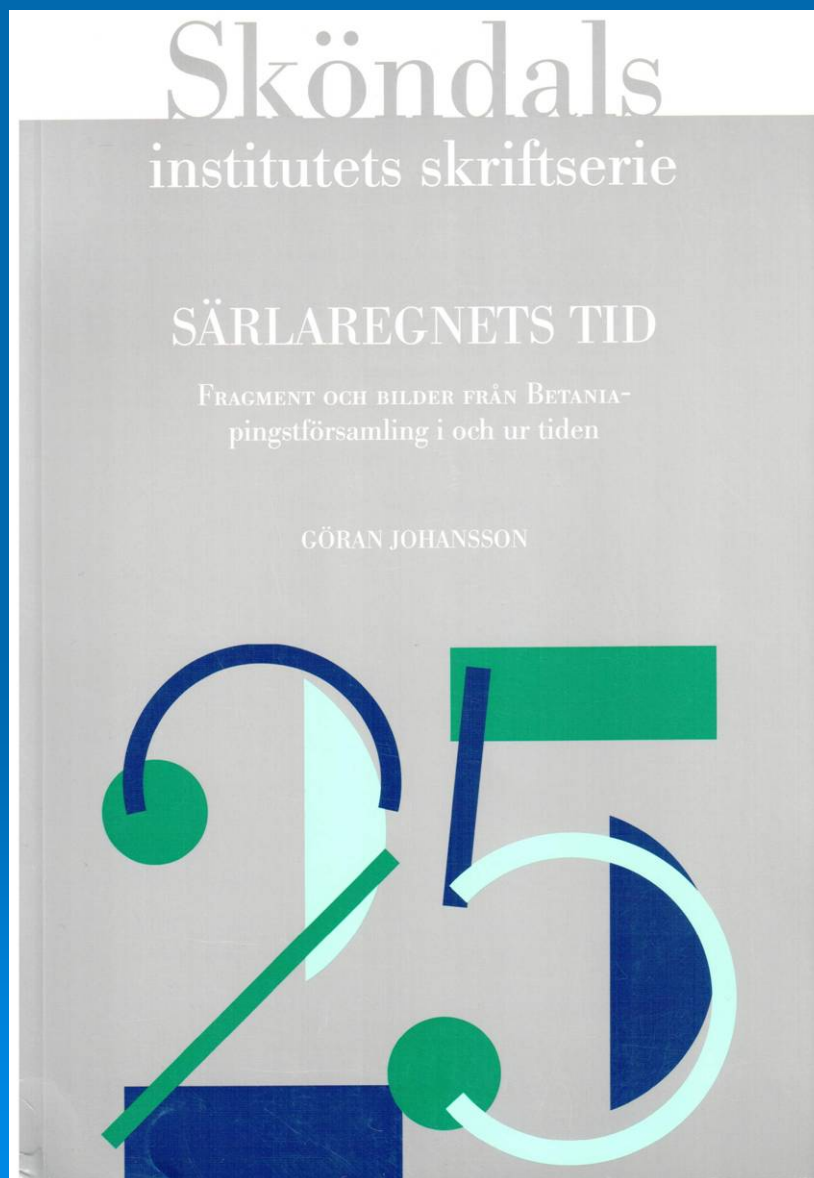


Elisabeth Brusco's much acclaimed study of how women in Colombia convert their men from "machismo" to Pentecostal "breadwinners of the home"

Särlaregnets tid

Original title:

Göran Johansson:
Särlaregnets tid,
Fragment och
bilder från Betania
– pingstförsamling
i och ur tiden, 2005

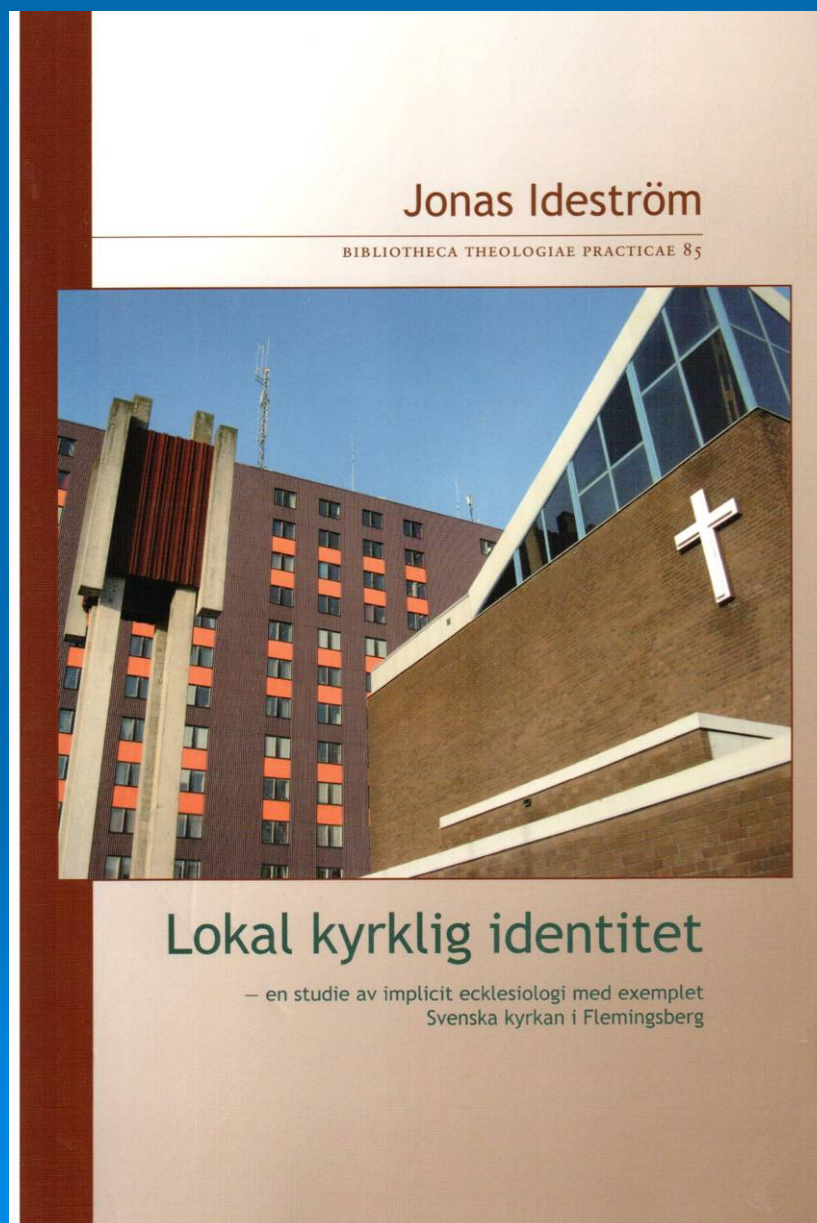


English:

Göran Johansson:
The Time of the
Latter Rain:
Fragments and
Images from
Betania – a
Pentecostal
Congregation in
and out of time,
2005

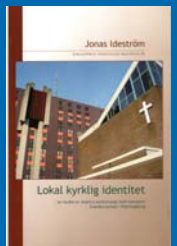
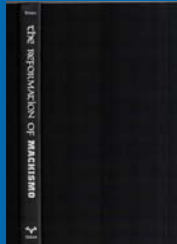
Lokal kyrklig identitet

Original Title:
Jonas Ideström:
*Lokal kyrklig
identitet – en
studie av implicit
ecklesiologi med
exemplet Svenska
Kyrkan i
Flemingsberg.*
2009



English:
Jonas Ideström:
*Local Church
Identity – a Study
of implicit
ecclesiology
through the
example of the
Swedish Lutheran
Church in
Flemingsberg.*
2009

What can we learn from each other?



- All three studies could have gained much from a cooperation with “the other”:
- **Brusco** (*from theologians*) to consider theology and denomination; sort out confusion *evangélicos*/Evangelicals.
- **Johansson** (*from theologians*): a comparative religious perspective; a broader context, distinguishing between common and unique features.
- **Ideström**: (*from anthropologists*): spatial layout, staff/visitors, discourse analysis - which would have improved his analysis of the ecclesiology.

Summing up...

- There is a potential in closer cooperation between theologians and anthropologists.
- In today's ever-changing universe, ***theology*** can gain from anthropological theories on globalization and its effect on ordinary, local people; human networks and individual agency
- ***Anthropology*** needs the theological skills of denominational classification, refined terminology for religious phenomena and a better historical background

Conclusion

- A prime example of an area of mutual benefit would be e.g. the work on a distinction between Fundamentalists and Pentecostals. Robbins claims that “several analysts point to cultural differences between the two movements that suggest reasons for their incompatibility.”
- Another such area of possible cooperation is the field formerly represented by the term ‘syncretism.’ This becomes obvious when we consider that religious connotations as well as cultural fusion are at play at the same time.
- All in all, theology and anthropology would do well in listening more to each other — and thus learning a little bit more from each other.