



Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to the Semiotics of Communication

Crystal L. Downing

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What signals are you sending when you share the gospel?

The importance of signs for communicating truth has been recognized throughout the ages. Crystal L. Downing traces this awareness from biblical texts, through figures from church history like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, to more recent writers Samuel Taylor Coleridge and C. S. Lewis.

In the nineteenth century, this legacy of interest in the activity of signs brought about a new field of academic study. In this book, Downing puts the discipline of semiotics within reach for beginners through analysis of the movement's key theorists, Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, Mikhail Bakhtin and others. She then draws out the implications for effective communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ within our shifting cultural landscape. Her fundamental thesis is that "Failure to understand how signs work--as effects of the cultures we seek to affect--inevitably undermines not just our political and moral agendas but, worse, the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Writing with humor, clarity and flare, Downing lucidly explains the sophisticated thinking of leaders in semiotics for nonexperts. Of value to all those interested in communication in any context, this work will be of special interest to students majoring in communications or English or to students in evangelism and preaching courses at the undergraduate and graduate level.

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