

is an excellent read that can inspire both Jews and Christians, whether scholars of biblical theology or general readers.

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Downing, Crystal, L. *Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to the Semiotics of Communication*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012. 342 pp. Paper, \$24.00.

Readers expecting to find new information on the traditional biblical prophetic signs of the times will be disappointed when they read Crystal L. Downing's *Changing Signs of Truth*, but those expecting to understand the changing nature of the meanings of linguistic signs will find an interesting and informative volume. This book is written, says the author, "for anyone who wants to understand why signs of Christ have changed over the ages. It will demonstrate how the cultures Christians seek to change have powerfully influenced the signs they use" (15).

Downing, a professor of English and film studies at Messiah College, invites the reader into an area that she herself finds challenging. The first part of the book is a *tour de force* of leading scholars in the field of semiotics. In this section, she introduces Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce and Mikhail Bakhtin, Levi-Strauss and Karl Marx, among numerous others. In the latter part of the book, she applies the science of semiotics to the Scriptures and Christian (church) practice.

As is expected, the application of semiotics to Scripture and church practice is a complex topic. Downing does not lessen this complexity with her writing style, in spite of her frequent (personal) examples. She might have made the reading easier had she refrained from frequently introducing new metaphors (signs). On the other hand, these do enrich the challenge that she intends.

Chapter 4 is a short but detailed survey of semiotics and structuralism, blended with history, personal anecdotes, and a conclusion that will forever prevent her readers from enjoying Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Story*—it is helpful, albeit laborious. Chapter 5 continues the same discussion, while Chapter 6 describes the relationship between structuralism and deconstruction.

While the book is not a "page turner," it is a helpful introduction to a subject that demands serious attention and will be found most useful by linguists, cultural anthropologists, and serious communicators.

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