

## I. Sensuous Signs and Closed Systems: A Communicology of Fundamentalist Codes in Contemporary Culture (Thomas D. Craig)

Fundamentalism may be described as the essence of closed systems, that is, a mythic consciousness of reified oppositions monolithically applied to group thinking and practice. While the closed system of fundamentalism is legendary in contemporary culture, the broad appeal of its sensuous signs of coherence often remains a mystery perceived to be applicable only to bizarre groups of non-thinking people in cult-like settings.

In this presentation, I examine the foundational narrative of the Protestant Fundamentalist missionary organization, L'Abri Fellowship International, and demonstrate the inextricable connection between the lived context of evangelistic mission and the sensuous coherence of divine family and Word of God. By examining the inevitable gaps between the multiple inscriptions of this triumphal story of pilgrimage, existential crisis, and emerging organizational power, along with the curiously conflicted stream of pragmatic biblical interpretation that it portrays, I begin to unravel the implicit semiotic codes that hold this system together as a viable collective unity and functional totality. Through a textured convergence of semiotic, phenomenological, and communicological orientations, I will demonstrate that, though unique in its particular details of separatist Christian missionary endeavour, this jubilant story of faith and triumph offers a poignant perspective for contemporary analysis of the enigma of closed system rationality that sanctions the emphatic closure of all other competing signs.