Worship as Meaning

How, in this Christian age of belief, can we draw sense from the ritual acts of Christians assembled in worship? Convinced that people shape their meanings from the meanings available to them, Graham Hughes inquires into liturgical constructions of meaning within the larger cultural context of late twentieth-century meaning theory. Major theories of meaning are examined in terms of their contribution or hindrance to this meaning-making: analytic philosophy, phenomenology, structuralism and deconstruction. Drawing particularly upon the work of Charles Peirce, Hughes turns to semiotic theory to analyse the construction, transmission and apprehension of meaning within an actual worship service. Finally the book analyses the ways in which various worshipping styles of western Christianity undertake this meaning-making. Taking account of late modern values and precepts, this groundbreaking book will appeal to teachers and students of theology, to clergy, and to thoughtful lay Christians.

Graham Hughes is Lecturer Emeritus in Liturgical Studies at United Theological College, Sydney and Academic Associate at the School of Theology, Charles Sturt University. He is the author of The Place of Prayer (1998), Beyond our Dreaming (1996), Leading in Prayer (1992) and Hebrews and Hermeneutics (1981).
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For Donika,
who was there at the beginning as at the end.
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