



Coming Down From Above: Prophecy, Resistance, and Renewal in Native American Religions (The Civilization of the American Indian Series)

Dr. Lee Irwin PH.D

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For longer than five centuries, Native Americans have struggled to adapt to colonialism, missionization, and government control policies. This first comprehensive survey of prophetic movements in Native North America tells how religious leaders blended indigenous beliefs with Christianity's prophetic traditions to respond to those challenges.

Lee Irwin gathers a scattered literature to provide a single-volume overview that depicts American Indians' creative synthesis of their own religious beliefs and practices with a variety of Christian theological ideas and moral teachings. He traces continuities in the prophetic tradition from eighteenth-century Delaware prophets to Western dream dance visionaries, showing that Native American prophecy was not merely borrowed from Christianity but emerged from an interweaving of Christian and ancient North American teachings integral to Native religions.

From the highly assimilated ideas of the Puget Sound Shakers to such resistance movements as that of the Shawnee Prophet, Irwin tells how the integration of non-Native beliefs with prophetic teachings gave rise to diverse ethnotheologies with unique features. He surveys the beliefs and practices of the nation to which each prophet belonged, then describes his or her life and teachings, the codification of those teachings, and the impact they had on both the community and the history of Native religions. Key hard-to-find primary texts are included in an appendix.

An introduction to an important strand within the rich tapestry of Native religions, *Coming Down from Above* shows the remarkable responsiveness of those beliefs to historical events. It is an unprecedented, encyclopedic sourcebook for anyone interested in the roots of Native theology.

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