



Tradition, Performance, and Religion in Native America: Ancestral Ways, Modern Selves

Dennis Kelley

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In contemporary Indian Country, many of the people who identify as "American Indian" fall into the "urban Indian" category: away from traditional lands and communities, in cities and towns wherein the opportunities to live one's identity as Native can be restricted, and even more so for American Indian religious practice and activity.

Tradition, Performance, and Religion in Native America: Ancestral Ways, Modern Selves explores a possible theoretical model for discussing the religious nature of urbanized Indians. It uses aspects of contemporary pantribal practices such as the inter-tribal pow wow, substance abuse recovery programs such as the Wellbriety Movement, and political involvement to provide insights into contemporary Native religious identity.

Simply put, this book addresses the question what does it mean to be an Indigenous American in the 21st century, and how does one express that indigeneity religiously? It proposes that practices and ideologies appropriate to the pan-Indian context provide much of the foundation for maintaining a sense of aboriginal spiritual identity within modernity. Individuals and families who identify themselves as Native American can participate in activities associated with a broad network of other Native people, in effect performing their Indian identity and enacting the values that are connected to that identity.

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