

The Jesus Road: Kiowas, Christianity, and Indian Hymns: Kiowas, Christianity and Indian Hymns

Luke Eric Lassiter

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In this highly original and moving volume, an anthropologist, a historian, and a Native singer come together to reveal the personal and cultural power of Christian faith among the Kiowas of southwestern Oklahoma and to show how Christian members of the Kiowa community have creatively embraced hymns and made them their own.

Kiowas practice a unique expression of Christianity, a blending that began with the arrival of missionaries on the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in the 1870s. In these pages, historian Clyde Ellis offers a compelling look at the way in which many Kiowas became Christian over the past century and have woven that faith into their identity. The personal and cultural significance of traditional songs and their close connection to the power of hymns is then illuminated by anthropologist Luke Eric Lassiter. Like traditional Kiowa songs, Christian hymns help restore and minister to the community; they also can be highly individualistic since many are composed and shared by church members themselves at different times in their lives. In the final section of the book Kiowa singer Ralph Kotay tells of the personal meaning and value of the hymns and of the Christian faith in general.

This remarkable, sensitive book makes an important contribution to our understanding of the complexity of Native lives today and offers a subtle yet penetrating look at the legacy of Christianity among Native peoples.



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