THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN POOR:
INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE
by
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PREFACE

The choice of this thesis topic was influenced by my association with the Southern Appalachian poor for nearly five years both in Chicago, Illinois, and in the southern states of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. As a traditional Roman Catholic, I was impressed with the fact that they believed and practiced a religion different from my own. I wondered why their religion appealed to them. What did it mean to them? Did psychological, sociological and cultural factors account for the differences? How were these factors related to their beliefs? Answers to these questions became vital to understanding the Southern Appalachian style of life. If there was to be any hope of communicating with them and working together to create a better society, these questions needed to be examined.

This research effort has been organized in terms of an exploratory research design. This paradigm is defined as an attempt "to refine concepts and to articulate questions and hypotheses for subsequent investigation. A variety of data collection procedures may be used, but less attention is devoted to the accurate description of quantitative relations among variables. Accordingly, representative sampling is of less importance than is the selection of a range of cases to stimulate ideas. In addition to quantitative data, researchers may use qualitative data in narrative form which may be derived from their observations of a particular phenomenon." (T. Tripodi, P. Fellin, and H. Meyer, The Assessment of Social Research; Itasca,
Chapter one contains preliminary remarks, definitions of terms, and clarifications of concepts and constructs, such as culture and religion. It specifies the group of Southern Appalachian poor with which this thesis is concerned. It also attempts to provide a theoretical perspective within which the religious institution can be viewed as a human institution. Chapter two reviews the Southern Appalachian style of life involving four major areas: family, education, politics, and economics. The material presented in this chapter primarily contains the conclusions and interpretations resulting from a research project conducted from 1963-1967 by the Appalachian Study Center located in Chicago, Illinois. Direct quotations from the many tape-recorded interviews which supported and illustrated the statements in this chapter are omitted for the sake of brevity. Chapter three focuses on the religious institution. Since my underlying purpose was to draw some relationships between the attitudes, values, and beliefs institutionalized as religion and the cultural style of life, I felt an entire chapter should be devoted specifically to the religious institution. Quotations from the tape-recorded interviews are included in this chapter. In the final chapter I suggest how religion and culture might be related in the Southern Appalachian style of life. The reflections made and the conclusions drawn may be interpreted as untested hypotheses, which further studies could confirm, reject, or correct.

The social sciences have their own methods of investigating phenomena and their own means for establishing the validity and
reliability of conclusions. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to validate the research methods that were used in the two major research projects which provided a basis for this study. It will be helpful, however, to describe them briefly and to indicate my own involvement in the Chicago Study.

One of the first major projects that researched the Southern Appalachian Region was undertaken in 1959-1960. It was sponsored by Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, and directed by Earl Brewer of Emory University and Thomas Ford of the University of Kentucky. It is referred to as the Ford Study because it was funded by the Ford Foundation. The Ford Study designated as the Southern Appalachian Region 80,000 square miles of mountainous land comprising 190 counties in the seven states of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia (see Fig. 1). In 1960 its population was 5,636,153, according to the U.S. Census. Of the 190 counties of Southern Appalachia, twenty-four were selected as the focal area for a research subproject on religion. The sampling included 1,700 individuals of whom one-third were church leaders, one-third were church members and non-leaders, and one-third were non-members. The sampling group consisted primarily of white rural Protestants who were manual laborers. The results of this study have been published in two major works: The Southern Appalachian Region, A Survey (ed. by Thomas Ford, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962) and Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia (by W. D. Weatherford and Earl D. C. Brewer, New York: Friendship Press, 1962).

The second major research project referred to as the Chicago Study was conducted over a period of four years (1963-1967). The
study was directed by Dr. Martin B. Corcoran. He was assisted by Marilyn Kolton, doctoral candidate in social psychology, and a staff of three Glenmary Sisters, who lived in the Chicago Appalachian ghetto on a permanent and stable basis during these four years. In 1964 an intensive four-month training program was initiated. It continued until September, 1968, and involved approximately sixty persons. The goal of the program was to facilitate interaction between the Southern Appalachian poor and the trainees. By exploring vocabulary, idiosyncratic behavior, reality definitions, and other aspects of life style, mutual acceptance and understanding was furthered. On the basis of real relationships action programs evolved that fit the real needs and values of the Southern Appalachian poor both in Chicago and in Southern Appalachia.

Building relationships with the Southern Appalachian folk was accomplished in a variety of ways. Living and working with some of the 30,000 migrants in the twenty-block ghetto area, sharing food, visiting the folks back home, going together to religious services, the health clinic, the welfare agency--this was the daily informal but richly rewarding way. A more structured method consisted in obtaining interviews, a process in which the trainees had to be educated.

The interview did not involve the question-answer type questionnaire common in sociological research. Besides difficulties in reading and understanding statements formulated by a social scientist, the Southern Appalachian would have difficulty comprehending the task of giving a yes-no response or choosing between degrees of things. They communicate through stories, examples, and commenting
on situations rather than by reflecting on abstract statements that are themselves a reflection upon human experience.

In the interviewing situation, the individual or the family, if more were present, were encouraged to talk freely. The role of the interviewer was primarily that of participant observer. A series of open-ended questions phrased in the idiom of the Southern Appalachian folk guided the interviewer. The interview lasted from one to two hours and was designed to receive information about five basic institutions of Southern Appalachian life: the family, economics, politics, education, and religion. These areas or spheres of life were understood as institutions in the sense defined by Louis Schneider in the Dictionary of the Social Sciences (ed. by Julius Gould and William L. Kolb, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), that is, as "distinctive value orientations and interests, centering upon large and important social concerns" which "generate or are accompanied by distinctive social interaction" (p. 339). Institutions were understood in the broad sense as patterns of normatively regulated behavior.

Approximately 1,000 interviews were obtained, half in Chicago and the other half in Southern Appalachia. The majority of individuals interviewed, both in Chicago and in the South, were from the coal-mining and farming areas of West Virginia, southeastern Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The counties most often represented were Logan and McDowell counties in West Virginia, Lee and Wise counties in Virginia, Harlan county in Kentucky, and Claiborne county in Tennessee. These counties are in the heart of the Southern Appalachian Region. They are also among the counties referred to as "hard-core Appalachia" (see Fig. 1). The inhabitants of these counties are among the poorest in all of
Southern Appalachia. One of the most interesting results of the study which compared the migrants in Chicago with the "folks back home," was that there were no significant differences between the needs or values of one group as compared with the other. Even though the migrant was removed from the cultural milieu in which his values originated and exposed to the values of American urban society, he was still bound by the institutional processes that shaped his life in the past, undoubtedly due to the closely knit family structure that survives in the city.

After the information was gathered, the material was analyzed according to categories and scales measuring objective, subjective, and projective levels of behavior. At the objective level observation was made of the habits and living patterns of each family studied. At the subjective level attitudes and opinions were recorded. At the projective level the feelings and motives in personality that lie behind these attitudes and actions were explained. The personnel in the training program participated in this phase of the study under the supervision and direction of Dr. Martin Corcoran and his assistant, Miss Kolton. The interpretation of the research data was then written as a report to the Very Reverend Joseph H. Hodges, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling, West Virginia, who partially financed the project.

My own involvement in the Chicago Study was extended over a period of three years. I participated in the four-month intensive training program. This included both the informal aspect of living in the Appalachian neighborhood and the obtaining of interviews. The latter activity was continued after I had become part of the staff of the training program. I conducted approximately fifty
interviews. Ten of these were related to the study of the basic institutions. The remaining were related to a subproject on the religious life of the Southern Appalachians. In addition, I observed and participated in their religious services, both in Chicago and in Virginia.

The limitations under which I worked in writing this thesis were more than I desired, but a factor that nevertheless increased the challenge. First of all, not having sociology for my major field made it necessary for me to acquaint myself more thoroughly with the method and approach of sociology as a discipline. Secondly, in reviewing all the research material available on the Southern Appalachian Region, I discovered that there were no comprehensive attempts to show relationships between religion and other aspects of Appalachian life, specifically in the case of the Southern Appalachian poor. This would be a task of considerable magnitude requiring, in a sense, a social, cultural, and psychiatric understanding of the way of life of the Southern Appalachian poor from their earliest child-rearing practices to the evolution of their present social structure. It is, moreover, questionable whether all the research tools to undertake such a study have been developed. A third limitation in writing this thesis arose from the fact that the only research materials from the Chicago Study that were available to me at the time of writing were some of the original tape-recorded interviews, some transcripts of the taped material, and a copy of the Bishop Hodges Report.

There are many things, therefore, about the religion of the Southern Appalachian poor that remain unexamined and unexplained. The Chicago Study pointed to some basic cultural patterns that influence religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. The Ford Study
provided data on the relationship between religious beliefs and such factors as degree of urbanization, income, occupation, education, and age among the study population in the 190 counties of Southern Appalachia. My aim in this thesis was not to probe all of the relationships between religion and the lifestyle of the Southern Appalachian poor, but only those which seem to emerge from the data gathered by the two major research projects. Research data from other sources and readings on Southern Appalachian life, as well as the experiences and reflection of approximately sixty persons who were involved in the Chicago Study, supplemented my work.

A special note of thanks is due to the staff of the Department of Research at Emory University, especially to Dr. Earl Brewer and Marie Townsend, who gave me free access both to the unpublished research material collected for the Ford Study and the doctoral dissertations which used the data and expanded the findings of the Ford Study. Without the people of Southern Appalachia, however, this thesis could not have been written. They have done more than give me something about which to write. They have developed my knowledge about the value of the religious institution as a societal need. They have helped me to know myself and my religion. They have enabled me to experience that Christian community can cross over and break through cultural barriers.
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CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS OF BASIC CONCEPTS AND CLARIFICATION OF RELIGION AS A SOCIETAL INSTITUTION

In the history of man, of nations, and particular groups of people, religion has been an integral part of the total societal life. Recently studies were undertaken to delineate the religion of the American people. This is a formidable task because of the pluralistic nature of American society. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to describe a "mainstream culture," and religion itself was seen as sharing many characteristics of this mainstream.¹

A section of the United States, labeled the Southern Appalachian Region, is often described as deviating from the contemporary "mainstream of life." Chapter two of this thesis explores some of the historical reasons that support this assertion. If the Southern Appalachian Region, which harbors some of the poorest and most isolated of American citizens, deviates from the "mainstream culture," this is due to the evolution and/or retention of unique cultural values. It can be conjectured, moreover, that religion as expressed in this culture will have unique features as well.²

In order to understand the unique features of the religion of


the Southern Appalachians, specifically of the Southern Appalachian poor, it will be necessary to investigate the values, norms, and patterns of living which created their cultural matrix. This task will touch upon psychological and sociological aspects of their life.

In this study psychological aspects will refer generally to their life experiences, their needs, and their expectations. Sociological aspects will refer to human behavior from the perspective of social interaction and interrelatedness, with a focus upon the reciprocal aspects of human behavior which take two or more persons into account. Human groups are simply the structures of such interational behavior. Value can be defined simply as a characteristic tug in a preferred direction and a norm as a shared idea in the minds of men.

Culture is a word that appears frequently in this thesis. The concept which the word evokes may be characterized as "heuristic." It is a logical construct based upon the study of behavior and behavioral products. It is not limited to behavior and its products but includes the "patterns, norms, rules, and standards implicit in behavior, social relations, and the material artifacts" of a group of people. The "patterns, norms and rules" are the "systems of meanings, ideologies, conventionalized understandings, and cognitive and unconscious structures which may be recognized


The author summarizes his analysis of the various definitions of culture. "Culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, values; is selective; is learned; is based upon symbols; is an abstraction from behavior and the products of behavior" (p. 308).
in a given society with varying degrees of consciousness and explicit verbal formulation.\(^1\)

Applying this concept of culture to the Southern Appalachian Region presents some difficulty. It is agreed that this Region, which includes five metropolitan areas, is heterogeneous and does not constitute a cultural unity. Moreover, it is not even a functional social or economic unit, a factor which negates the evolution of homogeneous features in the Region as a whole. In fact, within the Southern Appalachian Region several distinct subcultures can be distinguished on the basis of the dominant value orientations which bind the individuals together and serve as directive principles for specific value choices in regard to work, education, leisure, politics, family, and religion. The dominant value orientations tend to separate a significant number of people from a larger unit of people and at the same time provide a basis for continuity. These value clusters, both differentiating and uniting a significant group of individuals, can be understood as constituting a subculture.

The subcultures in the Southern Appalachian Region can be delineated as 1) the rural mountain subculture, 2) the mining camps, 3) the middle-class town, an island surrounded by coal-mining communities.\(^2\) The groups of Southern Appalachians who were interviewed

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\(^2\) Helen Lewis, "The Subcultures of the Southern Appalachians; Their Origins and Boundary Maintenance" (paper delivered at the Institute of Southern Culture, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, February 17, 1967). Lewis' study, as well as this thesis, ignores another important group of people in Southern Appalachia, the Negroes. They constitute about 5 per cent of the total population.
Figure 1
DEMARCATIONS OF THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN REGION

- Demarcation of the 190 counties of Southern Appalachia designated by the Ford Study
- Demarcation of "hard core" Appalachian counties by the Appalachian Regional Commission
- Counties represented in the Chicago Study
for the Chicago Study, a basic source for this thesis, belong to the rural mountain and coal-mining camp subcultures. They can also be classified according to Nathan Gerrard's categories as stationary poor or upwardly mobile poor. Families of both types probably make less than $3,000 a year. The former rarely break out of the cyclic patterns of poverty and evidence more signs of despair than the latter. Gerrard found, however, that both types of families espouse the same type of religion. It can be stated, therefore, that this thesis concerns the relationships between the religion and subcultures of the Southern Appalachian poor.

The concept of religion is open to various analyses and interpretations. One definition describes religion as a set of beliefs, practices, and attitudes in regard to God, the spiritual or supernatural, the nature of man, death, and destiny. These are matters of ultimate concern which are shared by a culture or subculture and institutionalized as religion. In its institutionalized form religion undoubtedly is a human fact and product, just as any societal institution. This does not deny that religion is more than that.

The point has been made by Peter Berger, a sociologist in the tradition of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, that viewing religion as a human projection says nothing about the fact that this projection may refer

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1Nathan Gerrard, "Holiness Churches of the Stationary Poor in Appalachia" (paper prepared for a Seminar Program on Appalachia at the West Virginia School of Journalism, Charleston, West Virginia).

2This thesis is based upon the research of only a small group of Southern Appalachian poor, but for the sake of convenience they will be referred to as "Southern Appalachian poor." Every poor family living in Southern Appalachia is not meant to be included or definitively described in this thesis. The approximately 1,000 families interviewed, however, showed a very high percentage of similarity in basic value orientations.
to something other and more than the being of its projector, that is, ultimately it may point to an all-embracing meaning in which the projector himself is grounded.¹

A more difficult area of inquiry is that of the relationship of the religious institution to other aspects of Southern Appalachian life. Some basic assumptions about the "place" of the religious institution within a total culture were necessary in order to initiate and proceed with this study. Again Peter Berger is a reliable source for a theoretical framework which "places" religion in societal life. He describes the way in which a religious institution originates and operates in societal life.² He explains the dialectical relationship between the individual and society which results in the objectivation of religion as that institution providing the ultimate integrating principles, the cognitive and normative legitimations of societal life. Through its creed, ritual, and code, the religious institution legitimates, controls, sanctions, and integrates societal life. These functions enable the ideals embodied in the religious institution to be internalized on the part of the individuals within that society. The religious institution thus plays an important role in giving to the

¹ Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967). On p. 180 Berger points out that sociological theory, by its own logic, must view religion as a human projection and by the same logic can have nothing to say about the possibility that this projection may refer to something other than the being of its projector. In other words, to say that religion is a human projection does not logically preclude the possibility that the projected meanings may have ultimate status independently of man. Indeed, if a religious view of the world is projected, the anthropological ground of these projections may itself be the reflection of a reality that includes both world and man, so that man's ejaculations of meanings into the universe ultimately point to an all-embracing meaning in which he himself is grounded.

² Ibid., chaps. i, ii, pp. 3-52.
individual his sense of identity and autonomy. It is a vital force in structuring his relationship to others and to the world.

All institutions have their legitimations, their answers to questions about the "why" of institutional arrangements.¹ Legimations are both cognitive, communicating what things are; and normative, what things ought to be. Both kinds of legitimations constitute knowledge about something. According to Berger, institutional meanings are objectified in a language which is the principal instrument of legitimation. Language is used on three levels. 1) On the rudimentary level it legitimizes by simply saying what things are, as for example, "student." 2) Language is used on the level of pragmatic theoretical propositions in the form of proverbs, moral maxims, wise sayings, and legends. 3) It is used on the level of highly elaborate systematic theoretical explanations which construct and legitimate a "symbolic universe."² Language used in the third way constructs the religious institution par excellence. It builds a sacred cosmos or is cosmization in a sacred mode.³

The way an institution manifests itself in reality is through the enactment of prescribed roles. The roles represent the


²Ibid., p. 95. A "symbolic universe" is the most comprehensive level of legitimation. All sectors of the institutional order are integrated in an all-embracing frame of reference, really a universe because all human experience can be conceived as taking place within it.

institutional order, making it subjectively real to the individuals. For example, the educational institution is made subjectively real to someone writing a thesis. Institutional roles define or transmit knowledge not only about what is done, but also how and in relationship to whom; in this way they construct the institutional reality.

The institutional life and societal life of the Southern Appalachian poor is manifested and transmitted both through language and roles. However, in their case several factors are evident. First, their language indicates a lack of theoretically sophisticated legitimations of any institutionalized aspect of their life. But they do have a "body of pre-theoretical legitimations of discrete institutional meanings in the form of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values, beliefs, myths, etc., none of which is organized theoretically or cognitively integrated."¹ They seem to fit Howard Becker's description of a "proverbial society."² The language of such a society contains an implicit view of the world, man, and societal life, and the roles enacted accordingly transmit knowledge about these things.

Secondly, in studying what the Southern Appalachian poor call "religion" it would be a mistake to look for a symbolic universe providing the ultimate integrating principles, the cognitive and normative legitimations. As shall become evident, religion, far from

¹Berger, Social Construction, p. 94.
being a "sacred canopy," is not even the primary institution nor the legitimating one for the Southern Appalachian poor. It can be said, however, that religion exists for them as a real institution in the sense that they have a language of specifically religious connotation dealing with God, Spirit, death, destiny, and salvation. Moreover, the prescribed roles are enacted. As such, religion is an objective, institutionalized reality that impinges upon consciousness and interacts with the individual and societal life.
CHAPTER II

THE WORLD OF THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN POOR

Major Developmental Influences in the Southern Appalachian Region

Students of the Southern Appalachian Region and its people usually point out with a touch of amazement that even today one can hear old Elizabethan ballads sung in their close-to-original rhyme and meter by the mountaineers. Such a phenomenon has its inherent beauty and richness but it is still existent only because the Region has been isolated from the rest of the nation for nearly two centuries. Its peculiar geographical features are partly responsible for the isolation. Thickly wooded mountains, unnavigable streams and rivers, and confining valleys facilitated the preservation of the customs and traditions of seventeenth-century England which the Scotch-Irish immigrants brought with them to the Southern Appalachian mountains. They had fled the control of the British crown and found their home on the frontier far from the control of the eastern seaboard colonies.¹

¹The Southern Appalachian Region was settled during the eighteenth century, the same period that saw the Indian "problem" solved through wars and treaties, the British problem answered by the Revolution, and the newly formed government of the United States assuming control over the affairs of the nation. The Scotch-Irish were the largest single group to settle in the Southern highlands. German immigrants also came into the area via Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century two areas of settlement, one in western Pennsylvania (near Pittsburgh) and the other in eastern Tennessee at Watauga, provided the force for completing the settlement of the Southern Appalachians and the areas beyond in Kentucky, Ohio, and Nashville. John C. Campbell, The Southern Highlander and His Homeland (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921), p. 22-49.
The physical features of the Region not only preserved the ballads of the first settlers. They also performed another less satisfying function. The mountains afforded a natural protective habitat where law evaders from the East might be safe from the law enforcers; if not also from each other.

Others came to the Southern Appalachian Region by reason of the disillusionment that had already taken place by the time they reached the mountains on their trek to points further West. The most persevering trekked on to the Blue Grass farm lands of Kentucky, while the rest settled on the poor land of the river bottoms and valleys. The latter became small land owners and engaged in subsistence farming. ¹ Combatting soil erosion and depletion, they eked out a living from the unyielding land. Families grew, and a kin organization, facilitated by dispersed settling patterns in contrast to village settlement elsewhere, controlled communication patterns.

There was a temporary spurt of prosperity with the opening and development of the coal industry at the turn of this century. ² Many educated and professional people—chemists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, managers—came to the mountains. Small landowners sold their

¹ Rupert Vance, "The Region: A New Survey," The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey, ed. by Thomas Ford (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962). On p. 5 Vance refers to a 1930 analysis of the Cumberland Plateau. "The people of that area stood out as the lowest income groups in United States agriculture. Gross incomes per farm inhabitant averaged less than $150 in most of these counties and less than $300 in all. Six counties had more than half their population on relief during the depression while in the coal plateaus 21.8 per cent of the population were on relief."

² "In the late 1920's, coal production in the Southern Appalachians was about 175 million tons per year, or a little over a third of the whole nation's output." Harold Gibbard, "Extractive Industries and Forestry," The Southern Appalachian Region, p. 104.
land and began to work in the mines. Joining others who had also put their hope in King Coal, they formed small mining towns--two rows of houses facing each other along a railroad track in a hollow. For the man the work was tiring, unhealthy, dangerous and dirty. The wife and children waited at home in fear each day that they had said goodbye that morning for the last time. A protective industrial feudalism flourished. There were company stores, the company doctor, company-owned recreation, the company home, and even the company preacher. The ownership, control, and market of the coal operations were located in Pittsburgh, New York, and other industrial centers of the East and MidWest.

With the coming of automation the coal-mining camps disintegrated. Work was either non-existent or spasmodic. The young people began to migrate, leaving behind the crippled and disabled miners, the old and retired. The mining camps were socially ignored by citizens of the neighboring towns who were anxious to take on the "ways" of the outside world. Clubs, organizations, and the "establishment churches" in the small towns and urban centers carried on their own affairs indifferent to the poverty around them.

The following is a description of a typical coal mining camp in 1965.

Stonega, Virginia, is a small mining camp of about eighty homes, stretching along a narrow coal camp road that winds back into Stone Mountain. Railroad tracks parallel the road through the

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1 Ibid. Mechanization of the coal industry was not the only cause of unemployment. Fluctuations in the demand for coal by the national economy caused mines to close down; some were never re-opened. In West Virginia where nearly two-thirds of all Southern Appalachian coal is produced, Fayette County dropped production from 12.5 to 7 million tons between 1945 and 1957. Since mining employment provides the only economic base for large sections of the Region, a great degree of economic instability is experienced by many Southern Appalachians.
middle of the town. At the far end of the hollow a coal tipple marks the entrance to the mine where once twelve hundred men were employed. Now it hires only five hundred.

Stonega exhibits the typical mining camp dividing line between the white and negro homes. The negroes live on the other side of the railroad tracks up closer to the sooty tipple. Down the road from the mine a boarded-up one room school house stands near the now obsolete frame hospital building where as many as 100 patients would receive treatment within a day's time. A few church buildings dot the roadside. Sundays find small handfuls of worshippers gathered in these peeling, sagging structures.

Stonega of today is a quiet place. The general store, movie house, and other social centers have long since been torn down by the company. There are a few families that keep farm animals or pets. People just "sit and bide their time" undisturbed except for the passing of an occasional train or coal truck.

In the end the Southern Appalachian Region, especially the "hard-core" area, did not profit by its own resources. The land, for the most part, is owned by large corporations located outside the Region. Deprived of their land resource, the people of the area are kept in a state of poverty. The Southern Appalachian was stripped of his land, not without trickery and deceit on the part of the urban, sophisticated operator. Today, with failing agricultural and coal-mining industries, they are stripped even of their labor. Their experience has been one of exploitation by those who are more powerful.

Political as well as economic factors influenced the unique development of the Southern Appalachian people. Prior to 1800 the bulk of the Southern Appalachians, even though they had fought for the United States during the Revolution, opposed the adoption

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1 Excerpt from the research materials of the Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

of the Constitution. It was seen as strengthening a central government and favoring wealthy seaboard interests. But after Jefferson's victory in 1800 which furthered agricultural interests, and the presidency of Andrew Jackson who was a protégé of John Sevier, an active frontiersman, the Southern Appalachians were increasingly won to a loyalty to the United States. Following this period, however, an apathy concerning national issues seemed to characterize the Region. One reason why the Southern Appalachians may have lost interest in national issues lies in the fact that by 1836 the Region had been divided among seven states. No significant portion of the total Region was included in one state, but all seven had bits of it. Moreover, the central government of each state was usually located in the periphery of the Southern Appalachian section or in the more prosperous section of the state. Politicians in the central cities were not concerned with the interests of the more interior sections of their states. Because of the poorly constructed subdivisions of the total Region and the lack of governmental concern the Southern Appalachian area was made politically impotent as a Region. Its self-consciousness as a Region is no doubt a contemporary development.

1 The American Heritage Picture Atlas of the United States, 1966, p. 120.


3 The basic plan for governing and subdividing territories was established by the Old Continental Congress. A governor, a council, and judges were named for each territory by the Congress, later by the President. When a territory had attained 20,000 in population, it elected a legislature and began practicing self-government. When its population grew as large as any of the thirteen original states, it could apply to Congress to become a state. Kentucky became a state in 1792, Tennessee in 1796, and Ohio followed in 1808. The American Heritage Pictorial Atlas, p. 120.
From 1836-1860 the major national political issue was slavery. The issue was of no significance to the Southern Appalachians. Consequently, they increasingly adopted an apathetic attitude in regard to the federal government. It could go its own way while they narrowed their interest to the local scene. Due to such provincialism the Civil War caught them unprepared. There was no time or means to create a unified approach to the issue. The Southern Appalachian Region became further divided by the intense loyalties that were given to both the Union and the Confederacy. States, even sections within states, were divided into two camps. Families, themselves, were split apart. Authority collapsed, and the most violent element took over control. "The mountains became a haven for the bushwacker, the roughneck soldiers and deserters from both sides."\textsuperscript{1}

The chaotic post-war condition of the Southern Appalachian Region bred the famous family feuds and quarrels which sometimes lasted for two generations.\textsuperscript{2} With the collapse of authority family vengeance became the means for settling disputes. Political control tended to become centered in the family. Today a weak political institution is no boon in an area which already lacks the development of two major institutions, a productive economy and an effective educational system.

In times past the isolation forced upon the Southern Appalachian people by the terrain and insufficient lines of communication with

\textsuperscript{1}Drake, "An Outline History," p. 39.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 42. 'The most famous of feuds was the Hatfield-McCoy feud. The Hatfields were a West Virginia family of Mingo County; the McCoys were Kentuckians of Pike County. Originating with the Civil War, the feud was officially ended in 1921.
the eastern seaboard states fostered the strength of self-sufficiency and close family ties. Left alone, they could cope with the immediate environment of poverty and deprivation relying upon the meager resources the traditional ways gave them. Today what traditionally was a blessing has turned into a blight. They feel a new threat and the impact of different values coming to the hills through television and other mass media. Things are changing in Southern Appalachia as the young move out and the old stay. Kinship structures erode as the youth migrate to northern cities, only to find that their traditions and internalized values are counterfeit values there. The Southern Appalachians can no longer remain in their past.

Four Institutions of Southern Appalachian Life:
Family, Education, Economics and Politics

Four basic institutions of Southern Appalachia, the family, education, economics, and politics will be examined here in more detail. As can be expected, they bear the imprint of the Region's geography and history. They also reveal the basic values which shape the life of the Southern Appalachian poor.

In the cursory description of the four basic areas of Southern Appalachian life which follows, attitudes, values, and life patterns (the subjective and projective levels) will receive more emphasis than statistical objective facts. The aim is to understand the Southern Appalachian poor as living people motivated by certain values in contrast to others, due to many factors which influence their lives. It is necessary to understand the motivating forces in their lives in order to suggest some relationships between them
and the religion they espouse. Unless otherwise indicated, the conclusions and interpretations presented in this chapter are the results of the Chicago Study.

Family

The child first learns how to cope with the world in the formative structure of the family. The family is the carrier of the traditions, beliefs, attitudes, and values that have shaped his life in the past and that still attempts to form a protective barrier against alien influences. The familial group is composed not only of father, mother, brother, and sister, but it also extends to many kinfolk. It is not unusual for grandparents and/or newly-married sons and daughters to move in or live close by the nuclear family of father-mother-children.

This occurs even though the home may be only a two room cabin in the South or a small apartment in Chicago. Grandmothers rear their children's children, aunts their nieces and nephews. Kinship ties extend to uncles and aunts, and loyalistic sentiments strengthen these ties.

1The procedure is appropriate to the purposes of this thesis. However, a methodological difficulty is keenly felt. Although the content rests on statistical evidence, this fact is not obvious since the tables, charts, scales, and percentages from the Chicago Study were not available for use.

2James Brown substantiates this observation in "The Appalachian Family: A Somewhat Detailed Description of a Nonexistent Phenomenon" (paper given at the annual meeting of CORA [Commission on Religion in Appalachia], Charleston, West Virginia, October 3, 1967), p. 5. He has done extensive study of the family structure of the eastern Kentucky rural type. He comments that in contrast to American society as a whole, whose key group is the conjugal family (husband, wife and immature children), the Appalachian society's key group is the wider kinship.

3Becker, Systematic Sociology, p. 140, developed a scale for rating actions, norms, or values in a continuum from the sacred to secular. In between the two points of the sacred-secular continuum in decreasing order of resistance to change are the loyal, the intimate,
In situations of stress and insecurity the Southern Appalachian poor rely upon their family and kin. This structure is used to satisfy even such needs as desire for knowledge, control, and productivity, normally expressed and fulfilled by participation in the educational, political and economic systems. In the past the extended family usually had enough resources to meet these needs, but the pressures against such solutions are much greater today.

In contrast to the average middle-class family who lives in the present by imagining, planning, anticipating, and referring gratifications for the future, the Southern Appalachian poor live in the present while looking to their past for guidelines. "Living right" is living according to the ideals and norms of the past. Their cultural past is an interior gyroscope used in testing out and responding to the immediate situation. Since the past has given no reason, motivation or capability to plan for the future, the latter being effectively non-existent, responses in the present are made in terms of that which affords excitement or immediate pleasures. Rather than planning to meet future needs, the Southern Appalachian poor, who have been making adaptive responses to their environment for centuries, can respond only to an immediate present need. Thus, family living is characterized by a dull routine interrupted occasionally by crisis situations.

the moralistic, the fitting, and the appropriate. The loyalistic sentiment or norm, such as allegiance to the clan or patriotism, engenders much self-sacrifice, even altruistic suicide and murder. The violation of this norm is considered treachery and its sanction can be as severe as death.

1"Understanding Appalachian Culture" (report of the Appalachian Study Center to the Very Reverend Joseph H. Hodges, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling, West Virginia, 1966), p. 3.
Florence Kluckhohn states that the significant time-dimension for the lower-class structure is the present, the moment-to-moment meeting of troubles and taking of pleasures. This is reinforced and influenced by child-rearing practices, especially in regard to reward and punishment. For the lower-class there are only short-term rewards; long-term rewards are unrealistic for them. Kluckhohn's observation holds true for the Southern Appalachian poor. However, the past is also a significant time-dimension. Having had to live with few alternatives at their command and in their power to choose, the Southern Appalachian poor have developed a concept of time which is basically two-dimensional, consisting of the past and the present.

Traditional roles in the family are ascribed to the husband and wife. The husband is the provider. His image is that of the virile, strong, independent protector. Occupations such as coal mining and farming reinforced this image in the past. As head of the family, the man is expected to be the dominant member and the source of authority. Outwardly his relationship to his wife is authoritarian. His children are taught to respect him mainly through verbal threats and warnings of what will happen if they don't. Consequently the children see the father as the wrathful dispenser of punishment for their misdemeanors. The wife's image, on the other hand, is that of submissive housewife. Her role is to care for the children and the needs of her husband.

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A closer look at the Southern Appalachian family uncovers some discrepancies between the image and the reality. The man's physical stature, first of all, often belies the image. He tends to be short, and slight, and quite often emaciated looking. His job is usually not as dangerous as he feels it is. Today he is unemployed or has part-time employment. Being unskilled, uneducated, and unemployed are realities that threaten the traditional self-image of the male. Rather than discard the image, the male tends to cling to it and consequently lives by a myth. The myth is perpetuated by the wife, who continues to sustain and reinforce the husband's view of himself as the heroic, independent provider for the family. She actually originates the myth by setting up her husband as the head and dominant figure while at the same time running the household and making the major decisions. The wife does not do this in an overt manner, however. Should she overtly assert too dominant a role, the husband in many cases would reassert his dominance by beating her. The wife, according to the image of submissiveness which she has of herself, does not object too loudly to the beating.

In eastern Kentucky there is less veering of the female role toward the masculine role than in the American family on the whole. For example, fewer females work outside the home, engage in recreational activities outside the home, wear masculine clothing, and enter politics. In other words, their role can be described as "domestic" rather than that of the "good companion" or "glamor girl."

1For example, the Eastern Tennessee Redevelopment Area, which includes the counties of Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Morgan, Roane, Scott, and Sevier, had an average unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in 1966. This compared unfavorably with the national average of 3.8 percent. Karen Johnson and Paul Lowry, "Overall Economic Development Program" (report prepared by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Memphis State University, for the East Tennessee Economic Development District, Knoxville, Tennessee, June, 1968), p. 95.

2"Understanding Appalachian Culture" (report of the Appalachian
Outside the home the male tends to shy away from experiences which test his image and make him sense his failure. Thus he does not engage in competitive sports. Drinking and fighting take up a substantial part of his leisure time. Drinking becomes a way of not facing up to the discrepancies between his image and the reality, and fighting is his way of disproving them.

Child-rearing patterns prepare the children for their adult roles. The pattern of breast feeding upon demand, late and prolonged weaning, and a minimal emphasis upon toilet training places no rigid control of impulses upon the child. His orientation to living becomes one of immediate gratification of needs.

Both the giving of affection and the manner of disciplining the child are spontaneous, inconsistent, and ineffective in controlling behavior. Expressions of affection between mother and child and father and child are abundant and uninhibited to a great degree in the case of the younger children.\(^1\) Discipline comes in the form of verbal threats more often than physical punishment. The mother tends to control her children by threatening them with physical punishment to be administered by the father.

Boys are treated differently from girls in the Southern Appalachian family. The girl is given family responsibility at an early age in

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1Brown, "The Appalachian Family," p. 8. The author found that the child in eastern rural Kentucky is "loved to death" for a year and a half. But after he reaches the age of one-and-a-half or two years he is almost abruptly expected to "grow up," to be a "little man." Brown suggests that this approach produces a dependency pattern which remains in adulthood. It is referred to as the Kentucky Mountain Syndrome.
caring for her younger siblings. Thus she comes to early maturity in her ability to carry out the feminine role of child-raising. The boy, on the other hand, has more freedom from family responsibility. He is not given practice in those skills that would enable him to take on an adult work role. A need for achievement is not inculcated. Instead he adopts the ideal of the rugged individualist and is taught how to be able to "get by" in life.

Teenage years for the Southern Appalachian girl means increased assumption of the mother-role in the family. Her outside activities are restricted and her relationship to boys is strictly watched. Even so, this does not prevent the frequent occurrence of early pregnancies. The teenage years for the male on the other hand mean increased experimentation with sex, drinking, "fixin' cars," and occasional odd jobs. In contrast to most American teenagers, the Southern Appalachian teenager is not expected to meet high educational or occupational ideals and does not have to cope with pressures arising from parental pressure for upward social mobility. Therefore, in a sense, these years are less tumultuous for the Southern Appalachian than for other teenagers. Both girls and boys make an easier transition to adult roles.

Marriage comes early with both parties ill-prepared to meet the responsibilities of supporting themselves and their children. The young couple moves in with one of the sets of parents and earlier roles of daughter and son are continued. The male continues his period of adolescent sexual experimentation, and the female continues

1In Chicago many parents do not let their teenage daughters out at night. During the day teenage girls who have quit school babysit,
to care for younger brothers and sisters along with her own children. Ties with parents are very seldom broken, and the relationship continues to be the dependent one of parents and children.¹

The type of child-rearing and socialization process described above contains within itself an element of continuity. The same pattern is perpetuated from generation to generation. A structure that provides for its own continuity also has the power to reproduce its own subculture by insuring the continuity of a specific value system.

**Education**

Southern Appalachian poor are mainly concerned with learning and passing on to their children practical knowledge and the ability to cope with a difficult way of life. This type of learning is concrete and takes place in the context of kin-parent-child relationships. It is also a highly personalized approach to learning.²

The child also expects a personalized approach in formal education. In the South the teacher is often a neighbor or kin. The classes are small. The one-room schoolhouse, although in the

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¹John B. Stephenson, *Shiloh, A Mountain Community* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 198, noticed the same dependency patterns in the community and families he studied. He feels that tradition-oriented families inappropriately socialize their children, especially males, and therefore the adult personality often has inadequate resources for optimal survival.

²Marion Pearsall comments in "Communicating with the Educationally Deprived," *Mountain Life and Work*, XLII (Spring, 1966), p. 11, that the question, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" does not have the same meaning for mountain children as it does for children of achievement-oriented middle class parents. Mountain children do not reply in terms of some career, such as doctor, nurse or lawyer. What they intend to be when they grow up is a man or a woman, nothing more and nothing less.
process of disappearing, still exists.\(^1\) The educational experience extends the personalized learning process and disciplining practices of the family.

In contrast, Southern Appalachian poor in Chicago experience education as an impersonal arrangement. Schools are large, classrooms shift, and each child has more than one teacher. The teacher, especially, is not seen as an ally. Children learn things that threaten the mother's position of authority because the knowledge is unfamiliar to the mother or contradictory to family values. Sometimes the mother reasserts her authority by keeping or simply letting the child stay at home. Whatever the child learns is filtered through the cultural value system of his parents. They praise the child for learning what seems to them to be practical and sensible and scoff at whatever seems useless and irrelevant. For this reason formal education does not have the assimilative effect on the Appalachian that it has had on other migrant groups.\(^2\)

As has been indicated, formal schooling is accepted in a practical sense. It is seen as a way to get the basic tools of reading, writing and arithmetic, just enough to "get by" and get a job. As education becomes less practical and more abstract in the higher

\(^1\)Forty-seven per cent of the public elementary schools in the Southern Appalachian Region in 1958 had five rooms or fewer. Twenty-eight per cent were one-room structures. Orin Graff, "The Needs of Education," The Southern Appalachian Region, p. 199.

\(^2\)The Southern Appalachian child is often viewed by northern teachers as dull. Two things contribute to this opinion. First, the teachers in the northern schools do not understand the Southern Appalachian value system. Secondly, the intelligence tests which are administered are geared for the urban, middle-class child and do not adequately test the intelligence quotient of the Southern Appalachian child.
grades it loses its importance and meaningfulness for everyday life. The Southern Appalachian child becomes an early dropout.¹

The Southern Appalachian's mental model of the world is uniquely their own. They are aware only of what is immediately surrounding them and have difficulty in perceiving the existence of a reality that is different from their own perceptions of the world. They display a disbelief of anything outside of their experience. Their mode of perception is concrete. They tend to see things separately and not in relationships.² When they express their understanding of the world in words, it is usually done in a proverbial mode or through "tellin' tales." Proverbs are used to characterize a situation. There is no inherent logic between the proverbs employed. To a mind trained in abstractions and the ability to relate pieces of knowledge to each other in order to see causal connections, proverbial explanations appear to be contradictory of one another. However, the user of proverbs is not bothered by these contradictions. He needs only one at a time to fit the immediate circumstance. Those within the same culture understand what is being said and all the implicit underlying meanings. Within that society proverbial speech is an effective means of communication.³

¹In 1960, 40 per cent of the adult population in the United States had completed less than eight years of schooling. In "hard-core Appalachia," almost 70 per cent had not achieved this level of attainment. Preliminary Analysis For Development of Central Appalachia, Research Report 8 (Washington: Appalachian Regional Commission, 1968), chap. iii, p. 8.

²Research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

³Becker, Systematic Sociology, p. 153, comments that the imparting of culture in proverbial societies is a process overwhelmingly informal in the sense that it comes about through communication among intimates rather than through being entrusted to specialized instructors functioning
Economics

The basic pattern underlying the economic system of the Southern Appalachian poor is "making do" or "getting by." Money is not a primary value in itself. Its value is in trading rather than saving. It is sufficient to take care of the day to day needs. The Southern Appalachian poor do not save for a "rainy day." Often they do not continue working once there is enough to get by on for a while.

The male prefers jobs that are physically demanding. This supports his image of himself as virile and masculine. His own self-image tends to be a more important factor in his choice of job than money or status.

The relationship of males to others in their job situation is appropriate to their style of life. They neither want to manage nor to be managed. The first would test their competence and the latter their need for the image of independency. They just want to be left alone to do their job. A good boss is one who has a laissez-faire yet friendly attitude toward them.

Job employment, especially for the poor in the Southern Appalachian Region, has traditionally been carried on through the family. When families migrate, it is still the kinship system that gets them in formal organizations such as the school. The author also points out that proverbial societies often suffer three kinds of isolation: 1) vicinal, that is, physical absence of or separation from other societies; 2) social, an isolation which has its roots in failure of effective communication, and 3) mental, based generally on proverbial value definitions (p. 164).

"Understanding Appalachian Culture" (report of the Appalachian Study Center), p. 13.

In the hard core counties of Southern Appalachia 52 per cent of the families had incomes under $3,000 in 1960. The average per capita
to the cities and situates them there. It is through his kin that a man finds out about a job. Usually it is neither the salary, nor the location of the work that determines the choice of job. If the male can work with his kin, he will do so as long as he is not competing with them.

Presently, in the hard-core counties of Appalachia the economy is in a state of transition. It has been based nearly exclusively on the mining and agricultural industries. This has and will cause serious problems since it is expected that these sectors alone will lose about 51,000 jobs by 1980. The Region's topography and soil fertility do not favor a prosperous agricultural business. From 1962-1965 agricultural employment decreased by 6.5 per cent. The coal industry has had a fluctuating market, production, and employment record. In 1947 coal production was at 600 million tons. Since then, tonnage has been irregular and the trend downward. Mining employment from 1962-1965 decreased by 6.7 per cent. It is expected that coal production will increase during the 1970's but automation rather than a labor force will be the cause of increased productivity.

Economic growth for the future lies in the service, manufacturing, transportation and communication, public administration, finance and real estate, and construction sectors. As the economy shifts an increasing number of females will be employed. This will

income is less than one half that of the United States. Preliminary Analysis, Research Report 8, chap. iii, p. 8. See Fig. 2.

1 See Fig. 3.
2 Preliminary Analysis, Research Report 8, chap. iii, p. 5.
3 Ibid., chap. iii, p. 4. 4 Ibid., chap. iii, p. 6.
PER CAPITA INCOME BY SUBREGIONS, 1960

- UNDER $800
- $800-$999
- OVER $1,000

Figure 2

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Fig. 3. Employment projections for hard core counties by major industrial sectors—1970 and 1980.

Source: Appalachian Regional Commission Research Report No. 8, chap. iii, p. 5A.
cause problems for the family structure in Southern Appalachia. Presently, employment for women outside the home tends to be resisted, especially among the poor. The woman's chief role is to care for the needs of her husband and children in relation to the home. Should there be a reversal of roles making women the main supporters of the family, the male's self-image would be threatened and the strain might cause the family relationships to disintegrate to the point of collapse.  

The attitude of simply "getting by" which is prevalent among the Southern Appalachian poor is at odds with the technological system of steady work. Whether in a northern city or industrialized southern city, the Southern Appalachian poor do not understand that if they take off work to meet some crisis in the family or simply to visit their kin, the job will no longer be available when they decide to return to it. They view work as self-regulated rather than as time-regulated or assembly-line-regulated.  

**Politics**

Political realities on the national or international scale are remote and unreal to the Southern Appalachian poor. They are indifferent to national or world politics because it has no personalized or practical meaning for them in their everyday life. Government agencies are felt to be impersonal institutions and something  

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1. It was borne out in the Chicago Study that husbands would desert their families and begin to drink heavily when their wives became employed.

2. "Understanding Appalachian Culture" (report of the Appalachian Study Center), p. 15.
They also remain uninvolved in local politics. Those things that would give them power, such as money, education, and status, are values they are taught to reject. Consequently, they are in no position to become involved in the political arena. Moreover, they tend to see authority figures as controlling. They tend to avoid situations that involve overt authoritarian relationships. Nor do they seem to want either control or power in the civic and political areas of responsibility. The experience of power and influence in the ordinary and everyday life of the Southern Appalachian poor comes about through family and kin.

A prevailing attitude among Southern Appalachians, especially among the rural population, is that local politics is controlled by certain families or cliques. The Ford Study found some basis for this attitude. Local government stemming from the courthouse in Southern Appalachia is controlled by members of families long active politically. With very rare exceptions personnel practices in the courthouses remain little different from what they were thirty years ago. "Personnel is selected on a personal or political basis. Nepotism is found everywhere, a man's wife or daughter commonly serving as his secretary." County government, moreover, tends to be inefficient

1 An exaggerated laissez-faire attitude does not help to solve the problems in Southern Appalachia. Thomas Ford, "The Passing of Provincialism," The Southern Appalachian Region, p. 32, comments that "the people of the Region are capable of initiating and organizing local action programs but whether they are yet willing to accept and sustain the fundamental premise that "furtherance of the commonweal in a democratic society requires a common effort" is the question. This applies to Southern Appalachians who are not poor as well.

2 Ibid., p. 165. 3 Ibid., p. 154.
and irresponsible. Superfluity of local offices and diffusion of authority are the main contributory factors.¹

Community-action personnel, the Vista workers, and the Appalachian Volunteers, have experienced that the Southern Appalachian poor, in contrast to other groups of poor, are especially difficult to organize.² They do not know how to participate on committees and exercise force against prevalent power structures. These activities take a certain amount of practice in distinguishing the person from the role. The Southern Appalachian poor are not accustomed to that type of objectivity. They carry out their politics on a person-to-person basis. Trading services is their style more than role defining and execution, the customary organized approach to solving problems or responding to needs.

Conclusions and Summary

As each institution in the life of the Southern Appalachian poor was examined, it became evident that the family is the primary and controlling institution. The strong loyalty and affectional bonds give individuals the feeling of strength and security. It functions also as a protective system which engrains those patterns of living upon the child that effectively keep him tied to the family. The socialization process is limited to the acquisition of the family roles of parent and child. It can be doubted whether the roles of husband and wife really function in a reciprocal relationship.

The socialization process does not provide the child with

¹Ibid., p. 155.

²The difficulty of organizing Southern Appalachians both in Chicago and Virginia was a common understanding among governmental and church personnel.
those responses which would enable him to find his role and place in a
broader society. Most social participation takes place with kin.
Strangers are suspect. The world and social behavior is explained
in terms of persons and personal behavior. Roles are not distinguished
from individual persons; consequently, business is conducted on the
basis of acceptance or rejection of the person. Being taught how
to get by rather than how to get ahead, the Southern Appalachian
poor never achieve the education, wealth and status which would enable
them to participate in political institutions. The same pattern of
getting by and living by the myth of independence prevents them from
working interdependently toward creating a future.

Functioning at the heart of the family structure is the "myth"
already briefly described. It is perpetuated in the family, especially
by the wife. She is the central figure and plays a culturally
conditioned role, having been taught how to play this role by her own
mother. Although the wife is the chief source of control, love, and
discipline and is the strong figure in the family, she sets up the
husband as if he were the source of these qualities. He is the rugged,
individualistic hero. The husband who still has a dependent relation-
ship with his own mother, needs this image of himself and easily puts
himself in a position of dependence upon the manipulator of the myth.
The wife has needs for affection, and unless she spins the myth she
will not receive the affection of her husband. She is also masochistic
enough to accept a beating if the delicate equilibrium of the myth

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1 Brown, "The Appalachian Family," p. 18, remarks that hostile
feelings can't be expressed against family and kin. They are repressed
and emerge with unusual and unwarranted intensity toward persons outside
the family.
is upset. All this is carried out on what appears to be an instinctive basis.

The dynamics of the myth which unconsciously controls the family also explain some of the migration patterns. Every weekend the highways between Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati and points south are filled with rather beaten-up old cars. Families with all their belongings are going to the city for the first time. Others are returning to their kin back home, sometimes for a weekend, a week, or longer. Life in the cities and exposure to different values have upset the balance of control within the family. The wife needs to return to her mother to be recreated in her cultural role and to reassert her control over the family. The mother-wife of the family is more rooted in the traditions and culture and dependent upon them while the man is in turn dependent upon his wife-mother.

Another effect of the myth is its capacity to create ambivalence in the culture. It militates against acquiring a realistic sense of identity. The mother controls but sees herself as submissive and dependent. The husband is dependent and sees himself as independent. The children grow up accepting the myth. Ambivalence spreads to the other institutions.

In summary, the variables that appear to affect all four spheres of institutional life in the culture of the Southern Appalachian poor are the following. First, they are tradition-oriented people, living by a past which is idealized, rather than by a projected future. Secondly, they tend to live by a myth which no longer performs its valid function as an integrating principle, but rather creates ambivalence. Thirdly, they are personalistic and person-oriented in
their manner of relating rather than impersonal and role-oriented. Fourthly, their manner of coping with their environment is governed by the norm of "getting by" rather than that of upward mobility. Fifth, when the equilibrium in their adjustment to their world is disturbed and they cannot cope with tension-producing elements of change, they engage in activities of restoring themselves on an emotional level rather than creating a new situation in which change can be incorporated.

These values and norms for acting keep the Southern Appalachian poor out of the mainstream of American life and do not prepare them for the type of societal living required in a technologically organized age. In a very real sense they are the victims of that very society. It was created around them through their own exploitation. Yet the Southern Appalachian learned how to cope in a situation of exploitation. Life for them was difficult and harsh. In order to preserve their self-image in the face of adversity they retreated, quit trying, and refused to accept obligations beyond those imposed by family and kin. Perhaps these were the only realistic attitudes to adopt. Of what benefit are the attitudes of optimism, hope, and desire for achievement in a society where the institutional means for channeling and affirming these feelings and desires are minimal?
CHAPTER III

THE RELIGION OF THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN POOR

A visitor to the "hard-core" counties of Southern Appalachia soon discovers that religion is part of the environment. At any time of the day or evening the listener can tune into a radio program of a religious nature. Highly emotional type sermons and hymn-like songs with titles like "Someone Cares" and "Beyond the Gates" are the usual content of the programs. Although the Southern Appalachian poor may never, or only occasionally, set foot in a church, they are nevertheless in easy contact with religion and imbibe its spirit.

In the following pages the religion of the Southern Appalachian poor will be described. The main source of information about their attitudes, beliefs, and practices are the tape-recorded interviews of the Chicago Study. The differentiating features of various denominations are by-passed in this study in favor of emphasizing what is shared in common. There will some gaps in the description, either because the information obtained was not complete or because certain aspects of religious belief were not strong enough to be mentioned during the interviewing sessions. The aim in this chapter is to describe their religion as they themselves understand and see it. Although they do not often refer to themselves as sectarians or fundamentalists, these categories provide a suitable structure for explaining their religion.
Sectarianism

The type of religion preferred by the Southern Appalachian poor is described by a participant as "old-timey" religion. The following statement by a 45 year old woman in Tennessee is simple but rich in imagery. It summarizes very well the main elements of their religious institution and its revivalistic, sectarian qualities.

I tell you the kind of church I like to go into, and that is the old-timey country church. They start shoutin' and prayin' before they go in. Go in with overalls on—all the old clothes we were used to wearin', not schokin' up big to go to church. Sing, pray, shout, get up and shake hands, try to get someone saved.

And I believe in the preacher ... if God Almighty has saved you and called you to preach, no matter how much education you have and you open that Bible up, God will help you to read that Bible.

You know many people don't believe in prayin' no more. They just believe in gettin' up there and signing your name on a card ... not gettin' down on your knees ....

If you want to know anything about the church ask my mother. ¹

The Southern Appalachian poor do not feel at home in the more "established" churches of the middle-class. Their way of doing things seems too stiff and formal. To the Appalachian way of thinking, the strict time schedule and role stability in the middle-class churches allow little freedom for "letting the Holy Spirit have his way." The Southern Appalachian poor meet in their own painted or unpainted, small, one-room, wood frame churches, in tents, or in a private home of a friend. The usual length of the service is from two to three hours.

Beliefs and rituals today often vary from church to church. Some tend to be unusual, such as the practice of handling

¹Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview held in Tennessee, 1967, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago, Illinois.
snakes. The Southern Appalachian poor, however, share in common some religious beliefs and practices that have their origin in the Great Revival of 1800-1802. The revivalistic movement widespread on the frontier in the early half of the nineteenth century continued almost uninterruptedly throughout the nineteenth century. It set the revivalistic tone and style of the Southern Appalachian religion and stamped upon it an organizational form commonly typified as sectarian.

When the revivalistic movement penetrated the southern mountainous regions it found a people ready to accept its message. There was no one strong religious tradition in the area. For the most part early frontiersmen who had fled the political, social, and religious unrest of the Old World were neither wealthy nor highly educated. Consequently, a simple gospel religion organized around belief

1. That such activities are contemporary is evidenced by this headline in the New York Post (October 23, 1968), "Minister in Snakebite Rite Cleared." One man died and the other, a layman of the Holiness Church of God in Jesus' Name in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, was convicted of being an accomplice in the death from snakebite. The man who was bitten refused to see the doctor in order to profess his faith in the healing power of God. The author of this thesis knows personally the daughter of the layman who was convicted. Big Stone Gap has a population of 4,000 and is the seat of a tri-county O.E.O. planning commission.


3. Ford, ibid. A more thorough discussion of sectarianism is deferred to chapter iv.

4. The Presbyterian church was the most important religious body on the frontier in the late eighteenth century. The Baptists and Methodists gained the majority in membership during the nineteenth century although both groups lost members in turn to numerous smaller sects that sprang up incessantly. Ford, ibid.
in the salvation of the individual soul and an unpaid local ministry appealed to the mountaineer. Revivalistic religion had features (such as the appeal to emotions and itinerant preachers) which suited the frontier conditions.

The nineteenth century witnessed the formation of many local autonomous groups or churches. The principle of local autonomy was firmly adhered to, a practice which prevented later attempts in the direction of mergers and affiliations from really taking root.¹ Moreover, according to the same principle, dissident elements within a group solved their problems by forming other autonomous groups. In this way the sectarian quality of the Southern Appalachian religion was maintained.²

Sectarian religion is commonly associated with lower socio-economic groups. Ernst Troeltsch was among the first to develop the notion that sectarian movements arose out of the lower strata of society in rebellion against the prevailing social class which espoused an ecclesiastical ethic and social doctrine characterized by relativizing and inclusivist tendencies.³ In the same vein Richard Neibuhr comments on the sectarian character of frontier religion.

The religion of the urban, commercial East tended to take on or to retain the typical features of all bourgeois or national religion—a policy corresponding to the order and character of

¹ Some authors see this as evidence of the Southern Appalachian’s mistrust of centralized authority.


class organized society, an intellectual conception of the content of faith, an ethic reflecting the needs and evaluations of a stable and commercial citizenry, a sober ritualistic type of religious expression. The religion of the West, on the other hand, accepted or produced anew many of the characteristics of the faith of the disinherited, for the psychology of the frontier corresponds in many respects to the psychology of the revolutionary poor. This is especially true of the emotional character of religious experience, which seems to be required in the one case as in the other. The isolation of frontier life fostered craving for companionship, suppressed the gregarious tendency, and so subjected the lonely settler to the temptations of crowd suggestion to an unusual degree. . . . The reduction of life on the border to the bare fundamentals of physical and social existence, the dearth of intellectual stimulation, and the lack of those effective inhibitions of emotional expressions which formal education cultivates, the awesome manifestations of nature, the effects of which were not checked by the sense of safety permanent dwellings and the nearness of other men convey—all these made them subject to the feverish phenomena of revivalism.1

Today many religious groups in Southern Appalachia have gone the traditional route from sect to church.2 The religion of the Southern Appalachian poor, however, remains typically sectarian.3 In the Southern Appalachian Region as a whole attitudes and beliefs correspond to the sect-type. In the Ford Study 74 per cent of the respondents from 57 churches comprising 21 denominations endorsed the statement, "I like the old-time religion."4


2 See discussion in chapter iv.

3 Ford, "Fundamentalistic Religious Beliefs," p. 43, found that certain vestiges of sectarian religion remain in church-type groups. Two components of fundamentalistic belief, Biblicism and final judgment, remained constant with the rise in educational level and socio-economic status of church members. (This suggests the possibility that Biblicism, or the appeal to a higher authority, and final judgment, that is, the question of afterlife, are strong beliefs that may have something to do with the core or any religion, whether of church or sect.)

Fundamentalism

Biblicism and moral code

Fundamentalistic beliefs and practices are usually associated with sect-type religion. In a generic sense fundamentalism refers to religious conservatism and orthodox Protestantism as opposed to modernism and Liberal Protestantism, but there are many variations on the same theme. In Southern Appalachia the core of fundamentalistic belief is Biblicism, a belief that the statements in the Bible are literally true and are to be taken as the ultimate authority. The ethical aspect of fundamentalism, referred to as "Puritan morality," is a strong condemnation of such worldly vices (or pleasures) as drinking, dancing, gambling, swearing, playing cards and using tobacco. Fundamentalistic beliefs and ethics are shared under the many different church labels, such as Free-Will Baptist, Holiness, Jesus Only, and small sect-type Methodist groups.

Typical of real fundamentalists, the Southern Appalachian poor appeal to the Bible as the authoritative source of what they believe.

Mainly in religion I think you just got to do what the Bible says. And I believe if you do just what the Bible tells you, that's all the Lord requires of you. I think there's just nobody who ought to be without a Bible.

That the Bible is divinely inspired and literally true is the first tenet

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2 The 1960 Ford Study found that in the Southern Appalachian Region as a whole, there was little change in attitudes regarding Biblicism and the "Puritan morality" aspects of fundamentalism, but that there was decreasing adherence to a fatalistic philosophy and exclusive concern for spiritual salvation. Ford,"The Passing of Provincialism," p. 24.

3 Excerpt from research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
of their faith. It is held with a strong conviction. The phrase, "And I believe exactly what it says in the Bible," often punctuates their sentences when they are describing how they feel about religion.

The Bible, the authoritative source of what is believed, is little known and understood by the Southern Appalachian poor, however. Knowledge of the Bible is fragmentary. Passages are often cited out of context to prove a certain point. They are mixed and jumbled giving the impression that the user is freely associating from memory. Sometimes there is no Bible in church unless a member brings one. The preacher, when preaching, may ostentatiously hold a Bible, point to it and say, "Here, in the Good Book it says," but he may never open it. He knows that he is more acceptable if he preaches "by the heart" rather than "by the book," or from a paper like the city preachers.

Ignorance of the contents of the Bible is not a surprising fact when it is recalled that most religionists, especially from middle age to elderly, are functionally illiterate. What is important to them is the way they feel about the Bible rather than what is actually in it.

The Southern Appalachian poor also share the ethical imperatives

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1 In the Ford Study two-thirds of the respondents endorsed the statement that "The Bible is God's word and all it says is true." This belief was considerably stronger in the rural parts of the region than in the urban or metropolitan, but this was not due to any intrinsic urban-rural differences but to the social composition of the residential groups. Ford, "Fundamentalistic Religious Beliefs," p. 45.

2 In the Ford Study a Bible knowledge test was given. Thirty per cent of the people did not know that the Ten Commandments were in the Old Testament. Forty per cent did not place the Lord's Prayer correctly in the New Testament. Thirteen per cent could not recall any of the Ten Commandments and twenty-one per cent could not recite the Lord's Prayer. More than fifty per cent of those who could start the Lord's Prayer were unable to complete it, compared to less than five per cent able to recall all of the Commandments. Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion, p. 125.
of fundamentalistic belief. What they expect to find out from the Bible is how to live right. They are less interested in its doctrinal content.

The Holy Bible that we hold in honor in our homes, that we cherish and esteem . . . tells us the when and the how, and the what to do in order to live.1

The moral code espoused by the Southern Appalachians is, however, considerably more restrictive in behavior than the Bible seems to demand. There are taboos against liquor, movies, athletic events, beauty parlors, wearing jewelry and make-up, and smoking cigarettes. Women are more often the champions of the code than men, who, especially between the ages of 16-40, disregard the code in such areas as sexual behavior, drinking, fighting, bootlegging, and thievery.

Adherence to the do's and don'ts is more often regulated by how the individual personally feels about the existential situation than by the objective norm itself. A woman smoking a cigarette while being interviewed explains to the interviewer:

Well, I think if you feel condemned about it, don't do it. Like one time I went over to my dresser and started to put on some lipstick and something told me not to put it on. And it was God speaking to me and I didn't put it on. I would have been a sinner. And if them cigarettes were harming me, then I would quit.2

The salvation-experience

Getting saved is the central religious experience. It happens only once.3 A person can get saved anywhere; at home, in a field,

1Excerpt from research material, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
2Transcribed from a tape-recorded interview, research material, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
3Once a person is saved he is a Christian and not a sinner. Should
while preparing a meal. Church services, especially revivals, focus upon this experience. The traditional revivalistic form consists essentially of songs, sermon, prayer petitions, testimonies and altar call during which the person, who has come to the front before the table-like altar, manifests his desire to be saved. The conversion and saving experience is stimulated and encouraged by highly emotional sermons and testimonies painting vivid pictures of damnation and salvation. There is singing, clapping of hands, and stamping of feet. The congregation gradually forges a pronounced beat and rhythm to which individuals capitulate even to the point of losing self-consciousness.

Getting saved is a happening attributed to the action of God or the Holy Spirit. It involves a rather violent emotional experience. There is a struggle beforehand during which the individual agonizes over his state of sin and fervently repents. When the action of God takes place the person feels himself in direct communion with God. It is a direct, immediate, intimately personal experience which leaves no doubt concerning removal from the dominion of Satan and possession by God. The recipient feels that he is a passive instrument of God's will and consequent upon this he experiences a kind of ecstatic rapture and joy. Such feelings cannot be contained, but are expressed in involuntary behavior such as speaking in tongues, shouting, convulsive dancing, rolling on the floor, jerking and jumping. These

he "backslide," that is, take up the ways of a sinner again, he can re-experience his first salvation-experience.

In the Ford Study "holy places," i.e. places where significant religious experiences take place, were identified primarily with homes and churches. Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion, p. 132.
phenomena are understood as the visible signs of being "in the power"
of the Holy Spirit.

The salvation experience was described by one who was saved.

An interviewer, asking the question "How did you get your religion?"
received the following reply in a voice charged with emotion:

I was just in a church-house. The preacher got up and started
preaching and someone was back there "a-talkin'" to me and
they had been "a-prayin'" for me and there was a revival
going on at the time. And something would tell me, you'd better
go up there and get right and then something would say, you'd
better not go. But I listened to the Devil, the evil spirits,
and I thought that they would laugh and make fun of me if I
did go up there. Well, on that night I didn't go, and I went
home. I could tell that they were prayin' for me just as good.
I couldn't sleep. I just knew the good people were down on their
knees a-prayin' for me. The next night I went on to the church
and the preacher got to prayin' for me and I set there and cried
through the whole service. Then when the preacher called Altar
Call I went up there and fell down on my knees and I asked God
to forgive me and began shoutin' all over that church. I went
from bench to bench. I don't know how I got over all those
benches. I really felt happy over it too.

Earlier the respondent had explained:

You don't have to be in a church-house to be saved. You can get
saved most anywhere. The main thing is to fall on your knees
and stay there. You cry and pray until God Almighty saves
you and then you can say that you are really saved. Then you
know if something hits you like electricity going all over your
body then you know that God has saved you. If you get up from
off your knees then you know that you are shoutin' all over the
church-house, then you know that you are saved. Now, that is the
way that I believe in it.¹

It is more difficult for respondents to explain the meaning
of salvation. It is explained on a feeling and/or action level rather
than a cognitive or thought level.

Born again! Old things passed away, the things that you used
to love, you don't love anymore. The liquor drinker stops

¹Words that received extreme emphasis are underlined. Transcribed
excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian
Study Center, Chicago.
his drinking, the booze drinker, he just stops because his love for booze, it just vanishes away. Christ takes the place of it, the love of God takes the place of it.

... and she's going to go by the Lord, whatever he wants her to do and the things he intended for her to do.¹

Someone who is converted and saved is expected to make rather abrupt changes in his moral life. Amazingly enough in many cases such a change is effected. Often, however, the person "backslides." That means that he takes up the ways of the sinner again. To "get right" again he must beg for God's forgiveness with tears of repentance.

Church attendance

Church-going for the Southern Appalachian poor is irregular. Their attitude is that a person can be a good Christian without going to church.

Most people think if you don't go to church you aren't living right. A person's suppose to live right and accept brotherhood whether you go to church or not.²

Women are more regular church-goers than men. Mothers usually take the smaller children with them to church. Teenage boys are likely to drop out and not return until they are old men.

It is not necessary to be a church member in order to attend church. Membership is a type of commitment and formal affiliation with a religious group which is distinguished not only from church attendance but also from salvation and baptism. The Southern Appalachian poor are usually not members of a church. They are not known to be joiners of anything organized. This applies also to

¹Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

²Excerpt from research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
church membership. The greater percentage of their time is spent in religious activities of an informal, individualistic nature, such as listening to the radio, watching television, and engaging in private prayer.¹

**Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Footwashing**

A person can be saved even if he is never baptized. Baptism is looked upon as a further step in the Christian life but it is not necessary for salvation. When a person is baptized it is done by immersion in preference to the sprinkling or pouring of water.²

Beginning in early spring a traveler might come upon twenty-five to fifty banged-up cars parked by a stream or river in the wooded hillsides of Southern Appalachia. A crowd of people are gathered round singing and shouting. A man is standing up to his waist in water with his arms raised high, praising Jesus and warning the crowd to repent. The preacher places one arm around the waist of the person to be baptized and, with the other hand on his shoulder, pushes him below the water. Baptism by immersion is felt to be a closer imitation of Jesus' baptism, and consequently those who baptize in this manner adhere to the Bible more strictly than those who baptize by pouring or sprinkling.

¹Weatherford and Brewer, *Life and Religion*, p. 128. The total respondent group rated private prayer as the most frequently engaged in activity and also the most significant. Attending church services ranked second in significance and fourth in frequency. Listening to religious radio and television programs ranked third in significance and second in frequency.

²Brewer, "Religion and the Churches," *The Southern Appalachian Region*, p. 212. Two-thirds of all respondents in the Ford Study preferred immersion. This preference was highest among rural dwellers (70.3 per cent) and sect respondents (83.5 per cent).
The Lord's Supper is not an important ritual. Sect-type churches on the whole tend to neglect it. Thoughts and feelings about it are vague and unclear. The ritual is viewed mostly as something that is done to imitate what the Bible says Jesus did.

Another kind of ritual, still popular in the hill country but rejected by the "city" churches, is that of footwashing. A Southern Appalachian woman who likes to go to footwashings describes the ritual in this way.

They all get together and they have this big pan of water. This is for Christian people only. No sinners. And they get so happy they shout with their shoes off and with their feet in a pan of water. Everybody washes each other's feet. Like, I am sitting here in front of you. I wash your feet first and I have this great big towel and I dry your feet. Then you wash my feet. . . . When you get happy you don't care about any shoes, you don't care about anything or anybody. When you get happy you don't think nothing about it.

Roles

The religious mentality of the Southern Appalachian poor ascribes three kinds of roles to people enacting the religious drama of the good life. They are the sinner, the Christian, and the hypocrite. The roles of sinner and Christian are mutually exclusive. Individuals are one or the other.

The sinner is one who has not adopted the restrictive behavioral code in regard to the worldly vices, such as dancing, drinking, gambling,

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1Ibid. Forty-four per cent of the respondents in the Ford Study reported no participation in the Lord's Supper during the previous year. In non-metropolitan areas the percentage was higher (47.2). Nine out of ten non-church-members had not been to the Lord's table in twelve months compared to 27.8 per cent of the church members.

2Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
and smoking. He has not given up the ways of the world and been converted to the Lord. Consequently, he has not yet experienced being saved.

The Christian is expected to live "strictly." Being and acting like a Christian is being and doing things differently than a sinner.

Today holy people think it is wrong to go to a movie. That's the place where stricter people stay out of.

The Christian is one who has been converted and saved.

I tell you a person has to be converted. And they have to be saved, they're being without grace. And they have to ask God to forgive them their sins and to take the cross like Jesus did, and they mocked him.¹

The polarities of sinner and Christian produce the third type of person for whom the Southern Appalachian poor have little tolerance. This is the hypocrite. Church-goers are often viewed as hypocrites because they call themselves Christians but do not act like them.

I feel like if you're going to go [to church], you should try to live a Christian life and not pretend you are something you are not.

I rent a garage and service station and I knew this fellow, why he wasn't any more religious than I was. He went to church every Sunday. Now, out of this congregation at church he drew some business so he was only doing it for a profit, not to save his soul. Because, well, he liked strong drinking and he had all the luxuries of life.²

Not wishing to be hypocritical, the Southern Appalachian often justifies his own moral failure with the words, "It's better to be an honest sinner than a poor Christian."

¹ Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
² Ibid.
The roles ascribed to men and women in relation to the church and its activities are traditionalist. The Bible is used to reinforce this view. Both men and women express the same opinion concerning their roles.

Women are supposed to keep silence in church according to the Bible. It's a man's place to run the church. The deacon and the preacher are supposed to run the church. If a woman is supposed to know anything, she is supposed to ask her husband. He's supposed to answer questions about the church.¹

It is admitted, however, that women try to run the church. In the home it is the woman who keeps religion a daily active concern.

In the small, informally organized churches of the Southern Appalachian poor the primary instituted role is that of preacher. Anyone who feels called and can obtain a following can be a preacher. Even when there is no specially appointed preacher, someone usually takes on this role in a gathering.² The preacher generally has another occupation in order to make a livelihood since many sectarians "do not believe in payin' the preacher."

The Southern Appalachian poor prefer a preacher that is "one of their kind;" that is, that he be indigenous to the area and uneducated. It is not important that he be trained for the ministry, only that he be called.³ Being called seems to confer a special

¹Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

²Sometimes a church will have a deacon who handles the simple business affairs of the church. The roles increase as the organization becomes more complex.

³The Ford Study showed that 16 per cent of the respondents rated training as most important for the minister, 63 per cent rated the fact of divine call as most important, and 19 per cent rated both as equally important. Research materials, Southern Appalachian Studies, Emory University, Atlanta. Cf. Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion, p. 118.
assistance from God and is more of a guarantee of divine communication than training or education.

God said he would fill your mouth when you get up there, if he has called you to preach. And he is going to give the words that you are going to say. You are not going to have to stand there and wait for the words to come into your mouth.¹

The preacher is expected to live what he preaches. If he violates the norms for living right he is considered a hypocrite.

What I like least about them [preachers] is pretending what they pretend they are and they're not.²

The image of hypocrite seems to be especially associated with the image of preacher. There are many tales told about his particular failings. Some basis in fact supports the image. For example, it is not at all uncommon for a preacher to "run off" with someone else's wife.

The more a preacher "preaches from the heart" the more he is considered as operating under the power of God. A good preacher is one who "really comes out and puts his whole heart into it." Success in communicating with God depends on the quality of the preaching.

But I don't care how far back you are sitting in the church house, something from that man is going to hit you. You can't stand it. If you go into that church house and it is cold and different in that church, and you don't feel nothing then there is something wrong with the preacher and you too.³

The subject most often mentioned in the preacher's sermon is the Bible.⁴ It is appealed to as the source of God's word, the source

¹Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴A quantitative analysis of the theological content in the sermons of ministers and the talks of lay leaders involving 59 churches in the Southern Appalachian Region showed that the subject most frequently mentioned was the Bible (45.6 per cent) and second in frequency was the Christian life (19.1 per cent). Cf. Barbara Pittard, "Content
of the preacher's word, and generally praised as the source of everything talked about and believed concerning matters of the Christian life. Second in frequency is the subject of the Christian life, viewed as the obligation to practice a morality different from the world's and to witness to one's belief.

An analysis of nine sermons preached in sect-type churches indicates that a basic scheme is followed. The main objective is to evoke a desire for salvation. Accordingly, words used to describe the experience, such as crying, tears, joy, shoutin', and praise, are emotional in connotation. Salvation, it is emphasized, involves a real change in living. Those who are saved know it with an unshakable certitude. Only the power of God and the blood of Jesus can save the lost. The sinner's task is to pray, let God have his way, be saved, and then let himself "be used by God" to win other lost ones to the Lord. The preacher warns that the sinner cannot do this without repudiating worldly ways and living in fear of the divine judgment which is close at hand. He points out that it is not money, education, or worldly position that is the

Analysis: An Application to the Lay Talks From the Southern Appalachian Studies" (paper presented to Earl Brewer for Religion and Society, 421, March 10, 1960.)

The author of this thesis scanned many more sermons and found them much the same in schematic form. Nor has the author in attending their religious services found much deviation from the basic form. Something to be noted is that the stylistic elements of the preaching suggest that the content is not of primary importance. The rhythmical cadences and tonality, the "uhs" that punctuate the phrases make the content nearly incomprehensible. A first thought is that the "outsider" is not acculturated to the style and therefore does not grasp the words being said, while those who are accustomed to it must be able to understand the content. However, further thought raises the question whether even the indigenous grasp the words, because communicating content does not seem to be the aim of the preaching, nor being informed the aim of the listener.
measure of success, but the possession of the power of the Spirit and the pursuit of holiness. The power of the Spirit and holiness are promised to those who attend church and worship the Lord on Sundays. Throughout his preaching the preacher testifies to his own position as instrument of God's will by referring to his call and to the power of the Spirit operative and manifesting itself in the congregation.

The following excerpts from sermons illustrate some of the themes re-occurring in the preaching of the Southern Appalachian preachers.¹

He said in his Word "Heaven and earth will pass away but my Word shall not pass away," brother . . . it's going to be the Word when he comes back . . . and it's goin' be a witness for you and for me on the day of judgment, as sure as I'm standing in your presence tonight, that we're going to be judged by the Word. We got to stick to the Word and tell people the truth; the Gospel is the power of God. . . . It's time we're getting in a hurry here about the Lord's business because he's soon coming . . . in the days of Noe so it should be also in the coming of the Son of man. Looks like we're living now a picture of that from day to day.

One minister stated one time, in my presence, like this. "There's not enough water in the world to wash away sin (Amen) and there's not enough fire to be kindled to burn it away, and there's not enough prayers to be prayed, all the prayers of the prophets couldn't pray it away, but the blood of Jesus Christ just moves it."

I see sometimes when people get the blessing, they get saved, and they just begin to cry and tears just roll down their face, and they just shed many tears of joy, and they rise up, and they begin to shout and praise the Lord for saving them, and for their born again experience, and they begin to thank the Lord for that change, that definite change they felt. They just sort of choke up and begin to sob, you know, and the tears start a-flowing.

. . . but it's goin' to take with all that's within us, by the help of God, to stand by the Bible and by the Gospel. No other Gospel, tonight, could be preached out to the dyin' world, only the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹The following excerpts are from the research materials of the Southern Appalachian Studies, Emory University, Atlanta.
... let's recognize our success does not depend upon our talents, nor upon our learning, but it depends upon the connection with that power.

And many, today, are taking most any kind of belief, and believin' that we can do a great work, but I declare before God that there is but one hope for us, and that's to take the Word of God, to believe. You remember on one other occasion that Jesus said, Deny thyself, and take up thy cross and follow me. I wish to God, tonight, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, that I could stand there and denyin' self and goin' out and bringin' in those that are dyin'. And surely I believe from the Spirit of God and the teachin' of God, that our great goal tonight is to bring others in that knows not Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as a friend. And I stand here this evenin' and I declare unto you we're goin' down in the hour when we ought to be more on our knees and pleadin' unto the Holy Spirit of God to lead us and to guide us. The world doesn't recognize in most places that it is the Spirit of God that bringeth forth many tonight, that do not realize that it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through his believin' children, that has power to draw in the unsaved. But I declare to you that there is but one hope for America tonight, and that's the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (uh) and no other hope (uh) only by listenin' (uh) to the Lord Jesus Christ (uh). It is wonderful (uh) when you have done (uh) what Jesus Christ has commanded you to do (uh) and then you look out and you see the hand of God (uh) as it begins to draw in (uh) the people (uh). Children, let me repeat it again tonight, (uh) that there is no hope for our lost boys and girls (uh) only by obeyin' (uh) the word of the Lord Jesus Christ (uh) and just any kind (uh) of religion tonight does not have the power of God (uh). And, O thanks be to God (uh) that there is power (uh) only in God (uh) and thank the Lord (uh) for those who have been borned (uh) and washed in the blood (uh) of Jesus Christ (uh). The power has been given unto him (uh). The scriptures teaches you and I (uh) that to everyone that believeth (uh) will receive the spirit (uh). Of the children (uh) who do not (uh) follow the ways of God (uh), there is no hope (uh). To reach the power of God (uh) many have said (uh) that the good deeds (uh) will do (uh). Many have said (uh) that just any kind of belief (uh). But listen, friends, just go back to the Bible (uh) and that we must consider one fact (uh) and that I must be a believer (uh) in the Lord (uh) Jesus Christ (uh). Not only from the lips (uh) but I must believe (uh) from the heart (uh) and confession is made from the lips (uh). And surely we are not livin' in the time (uh) that we believe (uh) that God has forsaken our church (uh), has forsaken our community (uh). I want to say that the only way way that God can forsake (uh) and that is not let you and I have his way (uh), in our lives (uh).
Theological Themes

The religion of the Southern Appalachian poor embraces other images and attitudes that can be grouped under a series of theological themes, such as the identity of Jesus, image of God, death and sin, millennialism, and the afterlife.

Identity of Jesus

Jesus is the central figure in their religion. Their favorite picture of him, if one were to judge by the frequency of its enthronement in the home, is that of Jesus in the Garden of Olives. The man suffering and dying is the exemplar of their own lives. There is little mention of his rising. Their Gospel songs go into great detail about the blood shed, the pierced side, the thorns, the tomb, but stop short of the resurrection.

When they speak of the suffering Jesus the Southern Appalachian poor communicate their image of him as a human being. Because the image lacks the aspect of the resurrection, Jesus appears as a passive, submissive type person who was the object of God's wrath and judgment even though personally innocent. For the same reason even his humanity seems unreal. They have no image of Jesus as a growing, maturing, self-transcending human. Their image of Jesus changes, however, when they speak of the afterlife. Then he appears with the divine qualities of Judge and King.  

In their relationship to Jesus in the present the Southern Appalachian poor see themselves as poor, helpless, and lost creatures

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1 Jesus as Judge and King is more a God than a human. Even though Easter is a feast that is commemorated, they seem to lack an awareness or consciousness of Jesus as a risen human being.
turning to a friend and confidant who will love and console them. This childlike dependency is one of the most prominent themes in their Gospel songs. Such titles as *Just a Little Talk With Jesus*, *Jesus Hold My Hand*, *One At Last*, or *Safe in the Arms of Jesus* witness to the sentiment of trust that they can feel toward Jesus. It is questionable, however, whether such trust develops in them a sense of their own dignity and worth. They seem to see themselves as being totally on the receiving end of another’s bounty and generosity.

The devil

Encounters with the sacred are not absent in their lives. Dreams, especially, are looked upon as religious, God-inspired warnings or prophecies. Sometimes the devil is seen in hallucinations or dreams. He has all the qualities of a real and concrete personage.

I was sick and I saw the Devil as plain as that door. He came to my bedside. He had a chain in his hand and a black thing on his head. He had a pitch-fork and he said, "I have come after you." I told him, "No, you haven't. You might have come but you ain't gettin' me." You could just see the fire in his eyes. Then I started prayin' to God. And I was sick and I didn't know whether I was going to die so I turned to God.¹

Image of God

In the same way they speak of God as a real, concrete personage rather than as a metaphysical abstraction. They are touched by him and speak to him in prayer. In visions and dreams God has the qualities of a human personage, such as a face, eyes, beard, and voice. He intervenes immediately in their lives and is directly involved in events

¹Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
of happiness and misfortune, sickness and healings. The Southern Appalachian poor feel that suffering and misfortune are directly sent by God as punishment for their sins. Although God is the source of all the gifts of creation he is also the Mighty Judge who has ultimate power and does not hesitate to apply his wrath to the offender and wrongdoer.  

The notion of the Trinity seems to be almost non-existent and extremely vague. It can be characterized as bipartite rather than tripartite. God is the Almighty Judge and sometimes the Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit is most often spoken of as a power. This Power is divine and equated with God, but it does not seem to be a distinct personality. Jesus is sometimes the Lord and Master, and in this case, he becomes fused with God and is addressed as God. Most often he is the Suffering Savior.

Sin

The concept of sin conforms to the way the Southern Appalachian poor understand themselves and their world. They do not regard sin as an undefined, generalized state of separation from God or the unredeemed human condition. Sins are definite, individual, concrete actions that are judged as wrong and offensive. There are no degrees or gradation of sin. Sins are sins, all equally subject to the wrath of God.

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1 In the Ford Study the belief that God sends misfortune upon people as a punishment for sin was strongest in the rural and small metropolitan areas and among those in a lower socio-economic status. The belief drops with a rise in schooling and socio-economic status. Research materials, Southern Appalachian Studies, Emory University, Atlanta. Cf. Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion, p. 93.
Death

Both tragedy and death are absorbing realities for the Southern Appalachian poor. These experiences are more often talked about than experiences of birth. A birth in the family, for example, is often not even celebrated and very few rituals surround the event. Rituals surrounding death, on the other hand, are the most universally attended.\(^1\) The whole neighborhood, along with family and kin, become totally involved for several days or a week. All other activities stop. It is a time of anguish and sadness. Preachers tend to use it as a time to stir up fear in the hearts of the people by warning of the judgment of God and the necessity to prepare for that day by a good life.

Central to any religion are its legitimations of the human experience of death.\(^2\) Like many other people, the Southern Appalachian poor look upon death as a moment of reward or punishment, depending upon what kind of life the person led while on earth. This is the attitude about death most often expressed when it is not applied to a particular person, especially a loved one. When the death of a loved one is experienced, those remaining on earth tend to attribute heroic qualities to him and idealize his life.

\(^1\) Brewer, "Religion and the Churches," *The Southern Appalachian Region*, p. 212.

\(^2\) Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, pp. 43-44. The author points out that "death radically challenges all socially objectivated definitions of reality--of the world, of others, of self." Insofar as the experience and knowledge of death cannot be avoided, a society needs an explanation of death which maintains the reality of the social world in the face of death. Religion explains death in terms of an all-encompassing sacred reality which thus gives it a place within a universe that makes sense.
He never talked about anyone. He was good to everyone and
didn't do anything wrong.\(^1\)

What kind of life the person led is judged more on the basis of his
actions than his beliefs.

The pain and sadness experienced at death arises from the
breaking of the close family ties which that event causes. Memories
of the dead are preserved by taking pictures of them as they are
laid out prior to burial. Even young and newborn infants are photo-
graphed as they lie in their simple caskets. The bodies of those
who die in northern cities are often returned in order to be buried
in the family burial grounds.\(^2\)

The afterlife

One of the greatest joys of heaven is to be rejoined to loved
ones who have gone to their reward beforehand. Heaven is the place
where the family is reunited.\(^3\) There, peace, happiness, and singing
abound. Descriptions of heaven resemble those of a church service
and often a church picnic. Images of homecoming, one of the happiest
days in Southern Appalachian life, are associated with both church
services and picnics. Heaven is like a super-homecoming, the family
and everybody are together and happy with Jesus and God. It is a
reward to justify the toil and hardships of the present earthly life.

In contrast, hell is literally the place of fire and brimstone.
Nothing but misery and pain, heartaches and unhappiness is the lot

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\(^1\) Excerpt from research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

\(^2\) In rural Southern Appalachia one can see from the roadside small
mounds of dirt with tombstones in an area fenced off and sometimes
carefully tended. These mark the spot of a family burial site.

\(^3\) In the summer of 1969 the number one song on "Hit Parade" in
of those in hell. One is separated forever from one's family and loved ones.

The Southern Appalachian poor's concept of the afterlife and this life are interdependent. Since the next life is projected as the real and happy life, their attitude toward this world is that it must be endured and passed through without endangering the salvation of their soul. The world is seen as a hostile, unchristian place where the devil roams waiting to ensnare the uncautious soul. The world is identified as "out there" where people carry on carousing, getting drunk, expressing hostility, and having unlawful pleasures. The only way to counteract the dangers of such a world is to take care to save one's own soul and try to win others over.

For such efforts Christians will be hated by the world.

I tell you, children (uh)
Like it says in this here scripture (uh)
That the world (uh)
Is goin' t' hate you (uh)
Children (uh)
That I'm proud they hate me (uh)!
That's what it says and it's the truth (uh).2

Adherents of extreme sect-type faith view reality as totally

Appalachia was "The Family Circle Unbroken." It is the story of a family whose unity was shattered by death, but who will be together again, singing, in the by and by.

1Cf. Liston Pope, Millhands and Preachers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 87. "For them the world is a great battlefield on which the Lord and the devil struggle for each individual soul. The 'blood of Jesus' and the reading of the Bible turn the tide of victory toward the Lord. As one mill preacher summarized it, 'you have to carry a bucket of blood into the pulpit to satisfy these people.'"

2Research materials, Southern Appalachian Studies, Emory University, Atlanta. In this particular transcript of a preacher's sermon, the "uhs" were preserved in order to indicate stylistic form. The underlining indicates emphasis.
religious. The world and the people inhabiting it are not seen in secular terms. Consequently, the irreligious, worldly people are those who espouse values contradictory to those of the sect faith. The real enemy of the sect faith are those who belong to other churches and espouse such values as education, money, and social status.

**Millenialism**

Adherents of the sect faith are inclined to be millenialistic in their outlook. The imminent end of the world is expected.\(^1\)

The time is coming when the people in this neighborhood and all the way around the country is going to be sorrowful because they don't take out time to accept the Lord. Because some of these days, I don't know how near it is in the future, that the Lord is going to leave His throne. He's going to start back to earth again to get back to his people. . . .\(^2\)

Most often the end will come by means of a cosmic catastrophe. Contemporary world news is heard, read, and interpreted in this light.

**The Functions of Religion**

Religion, as a social institution in its own right and as part of the larger social system of the Southern Appalachian poor, fulfills certain needs. The observable consequences of fulfilling the needs of persons within a group or subgroup are called functions or dysfunctions. If the consequences are constructive contributions to adjustment, adaptation, or integration of the group they are called functions. If

\(^1\)According to the Ford Study 30 per cent of the rural respondents professed belief in an imminent premillenial cataclysm. Millenialism was strongest in the lower-economic status group, particularly in the small metropolitan areas. It was higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Cf. Ford, "Fundamentalistic Religious Beliefs," p. 46.

\(^2\)Excerpt from preacher's sermon, research materials, Southern Appalachian Studies, Emory University, Atlanta.
the consequences decrease adaptation, stimulate maladjustment, or have disintegrative and destructive results, they are called dysfunctions. Some functions and dysfunctions are manifest, that is, they are intended, deliberately sought, and recognized by participants, while others are latent, that is, unintended, unanticipated, concealed, or not recognized.¹ In this section of chapter three, the functions and dysfunctions of religion for the Southern Appalachian poor will be presented, as they themselves express them.

Religion as an agent of socialization

In the Southern Appalachian social system the family is the chief agent of socialization with the mother playing the dominant role. She holds as most important the "upbringing" of her children. Religion aids her in this task.

Religion is important in the upbringing of children, it sure is. Bringing them up in the right way, not teaching them wrong, teach them about the Lord. And I think if you bring them up, rightly, it's enough to go straight.²

Even when church attendance for the adults is irregular, as it often is, the children are sent to church.

Like I said, I insisted on my children going to church. . . . As they got bigger they wouldn't go. So God is in them from way back. Even me. I went to Sunday School when I was little and I got that desire and I would never forget it. You couldn't change me ever and make me anything else. It's drummed into you when you are little.³


²Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

³Ibid.
Religion as a social stabilizer

Religion, as we have seen, provides beliefs, a moralistic code, attitudes, and values which help to sustain a style of living the Southern Appalachian poor identify as Christian. When they migrate, church attendance stops completely for some. At times they feel the lack of the reinforcing influence of religion which not only sustained them in their Christian mores but in other cultural behavior patterns as well. A recent migrant to Chicago explains to an interviewer:

I like to go to church and everything. But it seems like since we got up here [Chicago] I ain't done nothing. I haven't seen so many churches. Up here they're hard to get to and every­thing. And I just don't understand, I think God, he's doing something to us. And if we went down there [back home] we'd be a whole lot better off.¹

Religion functions as a stabilizer of institutional behavioral patterns of their own subgroups. It encourages attitudes of self-righteousness in regard to their own religion vis-a-vis "city folk" who go to the down-town churches. It condemns "worldly ways" of others and thus tends to reinforce the status quo of the subgroup. If through mechanisms of social control, such as an otherworldly ethic and condemnation of others, religion succeeds in uniting a group, it also makes those outside the group suspect. Such an attitude is reflected in the statement, "No, you can't trust a non-believer because of the devil's influence." As a result, religion's stabilizing function for the Southern Appalachian poor includes dysfunctional influences upon society and the individual.

¹Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
Social and leisure functions of religion

Church-going provides some of the Southern Appalachian poor with an experience of fellowship. They exchange warm and affectionate feelings at church services. Family bonds are strengthened since Sunday services and revivals often bring kin together in a common activity. The feeling of isolation experienced in the remote hollows is relieved to some degree. A Chicago Appalachian mother reminiscing about her life in the South relates to an interviewer:

We went to the Baptist Church back home. Everybody was there in the family. Nobody was by himself. Wasn't far, we usually walked. Every Sunday morning we walked to church and then we'd go church at night. That seemed to be the thing we all looked forward to, you know, all week long.¹

Church-going is sometimes the only social event that they experience. In the small hollow communities the church carries on nearly all the recreational and social activities for the groups.

We hardly ever go to movies. We go to church more than we do anything else. That gives the kids a place to go. ... ²

For some going to church is itself an activity of leisure or recreation.

Then they go to church more to just get out of work and the house.³

Aesthetic and economic functions

Religion does not contribute much to the aesthetic needs of the Southern Appalachian poor. The pictures that are hung on the walls of their homes are taken from the widely distributed calendars containing pictures of religious personages and events. Churches are simply

¹ Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
designed and furnished. The use of instruments to accompany the singing is usually limited to a piano played by an amateur. Baptisms in the creek probably offer more dramatic pageantry than the routine Sunday services. The church activity that is enjoyed most by the participants is singing. The church provides an opportunity for individuals or groups to display their talent.

I probably know as much about religion as a nine or ten year old would. I never did follow too closely. Although I went to church and I loved to sing. I had three sisters who sang on the radio. We drove miles and miles for singing arrangements.

I enjoy getting out and singing in the churches.¹

Southern Appalachian poor do not see a relationship between spiritual values and the economic order. Religion doesn't have much to do with money. In fact, it should be free. An unpaid ministry is preferred and as Christians they are taught to denounce the luxuries of life. However, by ignoring or condemning the economic values of a larger part of society and, in effect, abdicating its role in economic affairs, religion "unwittingly condones what is evil according to its own definitions."²

Religion as therapy for unhappy persons

Southern Appalachian poor often experience alienation, frustration, and difficulties in coping with their situation. They turn to religion for help and consolation. Such solace and comfort, however, comes from the feeling that one is "right with God" rather than from personal counseling on the part of the preacher or friends.

¹Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

I mean you have to have something to kind of relieve your burdens.\(^1\)

Religion gives a sense of security, a feeling that one is saved and loved by God.

And now anybody who believes in holiness, if you believe from the bottom of your soul, you'll be saved.\(^2\)

There is an opportunity to release emotions and give vent to one's feelings in religious services.

You take down there in Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. All Christians, they all come up there and stand there and sing out of that song book. They're singing and shouting and they have a good time you know.\(^3\)

Some dysfunctional effects of religion

The otherworldly ethical norms are dysfunctional by instilling a sense of guilt which many others would judge to be disproportionate to its cause.

I chew. I guess I'd be a better Christian, have more charity, if I didn't use it.\(^4\)

There are inconsistencies and ambivalent attitudes about religion.

I think everybody should go to church. Of course, I don't go myself, but everybody should go.

The majority of the people are against God until they need him. They ain't got nowhere else to turn to. Then they call on God.\(^5\)

The religious rituals, by providing for an emotional catharsis, can be a "refuge from the stark realities of life and an outlet for discontent"\(^6\) that is unrealistic and ineffective. The common religious

\(^1\) Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

\(^2\) Ibid.  \(^3\) Ibid.  \(^4\) Ibid.  \(^5\) Ibid.  

\(^6\) Moberg, op. cit., p. 181.
attitude expressed in the phrase, "I feel the Lord will work something out for us" could reflect a passive resignation which neither stimulates learning nor enables individuals to make important decisions. Moreover, a religion which directs hope exclusively toward a future world hinders involvement in social progress for the present life.

The following account of the conversion of a Southern Appalachian woman illustrates some of the functions and dysfunctions of religion. Prior to her conversion, Mrs. _____ felt that "life was no good, it was no use going on." The children were not what they should have been. One of the teenage boys had taken to "drinking and disobeying." The mother felt guilty about herself and her family and felt that she was not giving proper example. She sensed that "things would be different" if she would "repent and go to church." She thought back to her childhood and the "good Christian home" she had experienced then. She associated "joy," "happiness," and "peace" with these memories. When she finally was converted she "felt the Lord was with her." She explained that "if you love God and learn about him he'll help you out . . . bring your whole family in. When the fear of the Lord gets on you you're going to be happy." This Southern Appalachian mother felt that living the Christian life is the only way to be really happy.

Summary

The "old-timey" religion of the Southern Appalachian poor is traditionally sectarian. Adherents congregate in small groups clinging to the principle of local autonomy. They avoid forming larger complex organizations.

Fundamentalistic beliefs give them a faith which can be called legalistic and moralistic rather than intellectualistic or humanistic.
It is a strong feeling about what "ought not" be done according to the Bible. It is not a faith that stresses assent to dogmatic truths or believes in man's inherent goodness and capacity to build a better society.

Religion centers around the experience of "getting saved." Individuals derive from it a sense of security and the conviction of legitimacy. But these feelings are difficult to maintain in their efforts to abide by their otherworldly ethic in the midst of this life's stresses and strains.

In the context of warnings about the evils of this world and the day of judgment to come, religion gives to the Southern Appalachian mother a behavioral code by which she can raise her children to live right. In the church group individuals find acceptance, intimacy, and friendship. This in turn sustains them in their efforts to lead a good life. Having little confidence in the ability of this world to provide happiness, they look to the next one as their reward for a life of hardship and suffering.
CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE AMONG THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN POOR

In the previous chapters the life style of the Southern Appalachian poor was described. Chapter two emphasized the attitudes and values institutionalized in their economic, educational, political, and family life. The five variables affecting their institutions were summarized as 1) orientation to tradition, 2) living by a myth, 3) orientation to people rather than institutional roles and organization, 4) getting by or coping with difficulties rather than trying to change their situation or plan for the future, 5) recreating rather than creating. Chapter three dealt with the religious institution which was characterized as sectarian in structure and fundamentalistic in belief. The Southern Appalachian poor do not express their concepts of God, Jesus Christ, the Trinity, death, sin, salvation, and judgment by means of abstract analytical thought processes. Nevertheless, they do have feelings about and images of these constructs. Finally, some of the functions and dysfunctions of their religion were examined.

In the present chapter some relationships between the religious life style and general life style of the Southern Appalachian poor will be suggested and explored. The relationships are submitted as testable hypotheses.
Research Hypothesis #1: Sect Organizational Patterns Are Consistent With the Life Style of the Southern Appalachian Poor

The first observation made about the religious life style of the Southern Appalachian poor was its sectarian quality. The organizational form that constitutes the sect, with its emphasis upon limited formal roles, face-to-face relationships, and intensely emotional salvation-experience, is consistent with the psychological, sociological, and cultural make-up of the Southern Appalachian poor. The aim of this section is to show that this consistency is a function more of psychological and sociological factors than of religion per se. Why Southern Appalachian poor prefer the sect-type organization becomes more evident in a comparison of the sect-type with the church-type.

Earl Brewer, building upon the work of Weber and Troeltsch, Howard Becker, Milton Yinger, Liston Pope, and Russell R. Dynes among others, defines both the extreme sect-type and church-type.

The extreme sect-type is, internally, polarized about a small, primary group with face-to-face relationships with relatively undifferentiated leadership of a charismatic character which roots its authority in direct religious experiences and contact with Christ as Head of the Church; and, externally, withdraws into small groups, sets up conflict patterns with secular institutions, and attempts to substitute its own internal religious fellowship for wider socialization.

The extreme church-type is, internally, polarized about a large, widespread membership with emphasis upon objective institutionalization of the means of grace and salvation, ministered through a hierarchical priesthood, whose bureaucratically differentiated

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1 See p. 37.

2 Sect and church are ideal types in the sense that they "represent patterns of organization and action which we may rationally assume would be attained if each given class of churches were to develop without interference from accidental or extraneous conditions. No ideal type will be found in pure or logically perfect form." Moberg, The Church As a Social Institution, p. 73.
legal-traditionalistic leadership is validated by historical succession from the Founder of Christianity; and is, externally ideally co-terminous with society, accommodates itself to secular institutions, compromises and attempts to dominate and control them.  

By definition, the sect and church organizations are considered polar types. A religion in its beginning stages usually has sect characteristics. As it evolves it assumes church characteristics and moves toward the church-type pole. Anywhere along the continuum between the two poles a particular religious institution may combine characteristics of both sect and church.

Although some scholars no longer consider the sect-church typology adequate, it nevertheless does afford a rough schema for analyzing a religious institution. The typology includes a number of units of measurement, such as associational patterns, roles, a central religious experience, goals, criteria for success, and relationship to others and the world. Psychological and sociological variables enter into the analysis and help to explain what constitutes sect and church from the viewpoint of structure and function.

A church is a complex organization. It is built upon highly differentiated roles. According to Cohen and Hodges, the adequate performance of highly differentiated roles "rests upon the possession of relevant skills and personal qualities; knowledge about the goals of the organization and the aspects of the larger social scene

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2 Pope, Millhands and Preachers, p. 122, developed a scale to indicate the various facets of transition from sect to church. Cf. D. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, pp. 73-99.

3 Ford, "Fundamentalistic Religious Beliefs," p. 43.
that are relevant to the attainment of these goals; fluency in discussion and argumentation; special combinations of discipline, restraint, initiative, and sensitivity that are necessary to perform successfully in committee operations; certain technical skills; parliamentary, clerical, bookkeeping, fiscal.¹ These skills and personal qualities are needed for the functioning of a church although not everyone needs all these skills.

In the sect-type group, on the contrary, there are few formal roles. There are the intimate, accepting relationships of friends, and sometimes, as in the case of the Southern Appalachian poor, of family and kin. Since roles are not highly differentiated, the relevant personal skills are not required. Thus, participation in the group is not limited by educational and other developmental factors which may be lacking in individuals of a subculture.

The Southern Appalachian poor in particular do not feel at home in a formalized and organized church. They prefer sect groups and these may be hypothesized as simple extensions of the family and kin groups. They have little knowledge of the role performance required by complex organization. Lacking the proper education or training, they are not given the opportunity or practice which would enable them to acquire the necessary skills. Moreover, since their role playing is practically limited to acquiring the skills needed in performing family roles, they are not psychologically prepared for the demands inherent in complex organizational life. Neither their education nor upbringing has developed in them an objectivity and impersonalism

that distinguishes role and person. "Playing the game" instead of responding to a situation according to one's feelings strikes the Southern Appalachian poor as hypocritical and dishonest. Additionally, the competitive nature of organizational life is not compatible with their laissez-faire attitudes.

Highly skilled professional leaders are not needed in the sect-type groups in Southern Appalachia. Preachers who obtain a following usually do so because of personal qualities and the degree of emotion-alism exhibited in their preaching. It is not at all unusual for charismatic powers to be attributed to them, as evidenced in the statement, "I know there's a man down home who couldn't read or write his name, and after he got in the church and got saved and everything he reads the Bible and just preaches."\(^1\) Leadership in the church-type group, on the other hand, is usually bureaucratic and based on legal-rational authority. It is validated by an appeal to historical succession, and followers of such authority accept an impersonal rule.\(^2\)

Associational patterns differ in the sect- and church-type. The lower socio-economic groups are more often associated with the sect-type and the middle and upper classes with the church-type.\(^3\) From earlier discussions concerning the type of relationships differentiating the two religious group types, and the variances

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\(^1\) Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

\(^2\) Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution*, p. 95.

\(^3\) B. Wilson, *Sects and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 327, sees a trend that challenges the commonly held opinion that sectarians are drawn only or primarily from the lower classes. He states that they are recruited from many levels of society.
in education and wealth characterizing the socio-economic status between groups, it can reasonably be proposed that association with sect-type or church-type groups is a function of sociological and psychological factors more than religious beliefs.  

Considering that the sect-type elicits a great deal of emotional involvement and often substitutes for other types of sociation, a logical conclusion is that sectarians participate more often than church members in the religious activities of their group. "Large participation by the full membership" is cited as a characteristic of sect-type groups. Among the Southern Appalachian poor there are some who do fit this categorization. However, many of them, although they profess sectarian beliefs (Biblicism, fundamentalism, Puritan morality), do not have a high rate of participation in religious activities outside the home. Brian E. Goode in analyzing data from the Ford Study discovered that the lower socio-economic group had a lower rate of participation than the upper or middle classes. He found that the upper classes, on the whole, participate more than the lower classes in all types of formal organization. For them the church is one among the many associations to which they devote time, energy, and attention. Church participation actually reinforces their secular status. The lower classes, on the other hand, tend to devote more time and energy to their kin and less to any outside group, including the religious groups.


2 Wilson, Sects and Society, p. 354.


A lower rate of participation, however, does not necessarily mean that the lower classes in Southern Appalachia are less religious. B. E. Goode cites from Glock the five ways an individual can be religious and adds a sixth. These are: 1) the experiential (feeling) dimension: concern, trust, faith, fear; 2) the ritualistic (cultic) level: church participation and activity; 3) the ideological and belief sphere; 4) the intellectualistic or "knowledge" dimension; 5) practice and good works; and 6) religious importance: the degree to which religion is part of one's life, or is salient. These data were presented in chapter three it can be concluded that Southern Appalachian poor are religious in the first, fifth, and sixth dimensions. A middle-age woman witnesses to the importance of religion in the remark, "I'm Holiness from the top of my head to the bottom of my toes." Even though participation is lower for the lower classes than for the middle or upper classes, religion has a greater degree of felt importance and emotional involvement for them. In other words, the degree of participation does not depend on the degree of religiousness but rather correlates with the degree of participation in all types of formal organizations.

In comparing membership procedures in the sect- and church-types the preference of Southern Appalachian poor for sect-type groups becomes more clear. For the sect, membership and status within

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2 Transcribed excerpt from a tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

3 Goode, ibid., pp. 81-82.
the group are achieved, not ascribed. Neither is handed down or taken as a matter of course. It is up to the individual to repent and accept salvation. Achievements in ethics and religion are the result of personal decisions. Recruitment of new members takes place through personal conversions of adults. In contrast, persons are born into a relationship with church-type groups. Usually infant baptism and confirmation are stages of full membership. Institutional procedures originate and sustain membership, and make available to members the means of grace and salvation.

The achievement of membership and status in a sect-type group is consistent with the Southern Appalachian's belief in individualism. However, the absence of set institutional procedures leaves the situation open for the use of moral persuasion and manipulation. Others can opt for a laissez-faire attitude. Both manipulation and a laissez-faire attitude are methods for controlling relationships consistent with their psycho-dynamics.

Both sect- and church-types have goals and criteria for success. For the sect it is individual salvation and the constant reactualization of this experience. The criteria of success is the degree of emotionalism connected with the experience. For example, the preacher is successful if he moves his audience. For some Southern Appalachian sectarians, being in the power of the Spirit, of which speaking in tongues is the sign, is the highest attainment of success. For the church-type, the goal is not only individual salvation, but also the extension of the institution "to the ends of the earth."

The goals have a relationship to the stance that the church or sect takes in face of the world. Since the goal of the church
is inclusivistic, it adapts itself to secular society and seeks to dominate it. The sect, on the other hand, is exclusivistic to the point of substituting religious status and prestige for social status. It establishes taboos which limit interaction with outsiders, thus maintaining a separation from the world. It is generally opposed to the core values of secular society and wishes to save souls by withdrawing people from the world.1

The Southern Appalachian poor do not think or feel in terms of the cosmos. They are not interested in the sense of cosmic affiliation that membership in a world-wide church bestows. Their immediate world of the hollow or coal camp, and survival in it, are their predominant concerns. Those who were interviewed for the Chicago Study displayed attitudes of avoidance, rather than aggression or acceptance in regard to the values of the surrounding secular institutions.

The above comparisons between church- and sect-types globally point out some of the characteristics that the religion of the Southern Appalachian poor shares with sect-type religions. Other qualities specific to their culture will be discussed in the following pages.

Research Hypothesis #2: The Southern Appalachian Poor Look to Their Cultural Past as the Source of Religious Beliefs and Moral Guidelines Rather Than to the Bible

"Give Me That Old-Time Religion" is a favorite and much sung hymn in Southern Appalachia. For Southern Appalachians the "old-timey

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1 Benton Johnson, "Do Holiness Sects Socialize in Dominant Values," Social Forces, XXIX (May, 1961), 309-316, disagrees and argues that Holiness sect groups actually socialize their adherents in dominant societal values. For example, by stressing the values of thrift and
religion" has the "spirit." The feeling that religion "ought to be what it always was" is another expression of the Southern Appalachian's tendency to look to the past for the ideals of the good life. "Things today should be like they use to be" is an oft heard plea. The past gives them the norms for feeling right and living right.

Their religion also looks to the past inasmuch as its goal is to repeat and sustain a meaningful past salvation-experience. To this end the preacher repeats substantially the same sermon from Sunday to Sunday or revival to revival. To an untrained eye and ear the services seem to be spontaneous and free expressions. However, they are clearly structured. The people seem to know when to pray, when to sing, when to respond to the preacher, when to get emotional or not to. The pattern is the same from week to week. The service, therefore, is structured to repeat or sustain a past experience.

The authoritative source for their religious beliefs and practices is said to be the Bible, which, in turn, is legitimized as the ultimate authority because it is accepted literally as God's true word. Statements emphasize its adequacy for a complete rule of life. "You just have to go by the Bible and all it says and you'll be doing right." There is an attitude of reverence and awe toward the book ("no home should be without one") and there is a feeling that there is a biblical view on all important subjects relevant to life.

The normal expectation is that the content of the Bible be well-known. It has been seen, on the contrary, that there is a high economy in preaching an otherworldly ethic which forbids expensive luxuries, these sect groups enable their members to save and get ahead.
degree of illiteracy in this matter. The Bible is misquoted and used less for the sake of understanding than for the sake of an argument. There does not seem to be a desire to know more nor does there seem to be a need to know more since they can "get by on" what they already know.  

Another indication that the Bible is not the authoritative source of their beliefs is the fact that the preferred preacher is the one who speaks from the heart rather than the book. They apparently feel that whatever the preacher says is from the Bible. This is even more true if he is uneducated for then he has the special guarantee of divine assistance in speaking God's word. The preacher is particularly adept in using a Biblical quotation as a springboard for plunging into the central theme of faith and salvation. He is ill-prepared by education to preach the total biblical content. Thus, he uses the Bible to sanction an attitude toward the world as an evil and hostile place. He also uses it to legitimate the attitude that many Christians are hypocrites. The preacher is a captive of his culture and therefore value-led rather than functioning from knowledge sources. Although he feels that he is "going by the Bible," in actuality he is "going by" himself and his tradition.

The Bible is appealed to most of all for knowledge about living. The do's and don'ts of their Puritan ethic, however, are norms sanctioned less by the Bible than by traditional and cultural expectations. They are useful especially to the mother who needs some guidelines in the upbringing of her children.

1 Adult Bible school classes are conducted by lay leaders who rarely know more about the Bible than those who have gathered for the class.
Indeed, it seems to be the mother who plays the key role in the religious life of the Southern Appalachian poor. As the woman quoted earlier testified, "If you want to know anything about religion ask my mother." As an index of the importance of the mother's role many of the Gospel songs refer to "Mother" or to "Mother and family." Very few of them mention "father." In colloquial terms, the mother is spoken of as a "good Christian," whereas the father is often a "deathbed Christian." Although the role of preacher may be enacted as the institutionalized delivery system of religion, the mother is more truly the symbol of religion.

In chapter one it was seen that the ideals, myths, and values of the past are traditions which are preserved by the family and transmitted especially through the mother. She is the source of the myth whose dynamics are controlling many decisions in Southern Appalachian life. Those who control the enactment of any myth have great power over its participants because they control the "staging" and thus the communication of authority. For example, if economics and consumer needs are central to the American myth, then those who control its laws are those who control American life. The culture of the Southern Appalachian poor the person with most power, resources, and strengths is the mother, although the father is projected as the source of power. How power and authority are distributed and used depends on her to a great degree. If the mother plays the key role in passing on the traditions, and if religious beliefs are a part of this tradition, then she also controls to a great extent

1 See p. 37.

what religion is and means to the Southern Appalachian poor.

The question can be raised, therefore, whether the Bible is the objective, transcendant source for the beliefs and practices of the religion of the Southern Appalachian poor. Is it not rather the cultural ideals, values, and myths of the past that legitimate, control, and sanction Southern Appalachian life in the present? What is taken from the Bible is filtered through a cultural tradition that emphasizes normative legitimations. In matters of religion the mother, more than the preacher, is the status person in whom authority lies. The authority of the Bible and the preacher is used to reinforce the cultural ideals and myths.

Research Hypothesis #3: The Religious Rituals of the Southern Appalachian Poor Recreate, Sustain, and Rationalize the Culturally Determined Power-Experience

What is the culturally determined power-experience of the Southern Appalachian poor? The Southern Appalachian is affected by power and control especially on two levels, the economic and the familial. On the economic level they experience the dichotomy of the "haves" and the "have-nots." In the face of the "haves," the "have-nots" feel socially inferior, helpless and powerless. Most of their life experiences with the land, the coal mines, and the outsider have had the effect of decreasing their own self-importance and worth. Thus in the face of the omnipotent other the Southern Appalachian cannot but feel small and inferior. They have never experienced a powerful other who has enabled them to develop their own resources and strengths so that they might become an equal.

1See p. 7.
The child-rearing practices have established dependency patterns which seldom permit the husband and wife to grow out of a parent-child relationship to their own parents. Although the wife, like her mother before her, controls her husband and children according to the traditional guidelines, she, herself, remains under control of her mother. She is both controller and controlled. The husband, less dependent on tradition, is dependent both on his wife and mother. The effect of such dependency is not too salutary for them. As community-action personnel in Southern Appalachia have observed, it results in a chronic ability to initiate or carry through a plan of action. The Southern Appalachian poor, themselves, are not able to name their experience of control and power.

In speaking of their relationship to God they reflect the same experience of control and power that characterizes their life. God is omnipotent and powerful and does everything for the poor, sinful creature. "I mean everything we get, we get from the Lord. We ain't nothing within ourselves."¹ The creature's role is to submit to God's will, not to question his ways.

The experience of "getting saved" is central to the religion of the Southern Appalachian poor. According to Jack Weller, a well-known student of the Southern Appalachian Region, the plan of salvation for these sectarians is simplistic.² It can be summarized in three points. First, all men are sinners (Rom. 3:23). Second,

¹ Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

Third, confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus (Rom. 10:9). The unsaved soul is bought in a transaction that involves the death of Jesus and the spilling of blood. Salvation is an experience that takes place between God and the individual. It is the answer to all of the world's problems. Since the underlying problem of the world is seen as man's individual sin, the problems of the world would be solved if all men were saved from their sins.

Just as the plan of salvation is simple so too are the rituals which center around the experience of salvation. Nevertheless, they do what Emile Durkheim long ago stated that religious rites are meant to do. They are "a manner of acting which takes rise in the midst of the assembled group and are destined to excite, maintain, and recreate certain mental states in the group."¹ Rituals "remind" and "make present" to those who participate in them the "fundamental reality definitions and their appropriate legitimations."²

The preacher's role in the salvation centered rituals is significant. His words and actions suggest that he manipulates his environment and the emotions of the group while justifying what he is doing as God's will. He presents himself as the passive instrument of God's will, thereby projecting a controlling type of God. He creates an atmosphere in which the people present can let go of their feelings and inhibitions.³ This is encouraged and legitimized in the


³The author of this thesis attended a church service during which
church setting as the mysterious sign of God's action (yet the same feelings, they are told, must be controlled in daily life). His sermon contains many mother images. For example, such phrases as "take by the hand," "fully satisfied," "feed and nourish," and such words as protect, comfort, seek, and need, are frequently used. Other phrases evoke dependency, such as "never leave," "never forsake," "let the Lord take over," "take and use," "have his own way." Is the preacher sustaining and recreating the parent-child relationship between God and the individual? If so, he is reinforcing the culturally conditioned experiences of dependency.

There are other indices that the rituals reinforce dependency patterns. A strong master-servant theme runs through their prayers and petitions. "Master" is a frequent form of address, especially in prayers by the women. Moreover, the experience of salvation itself is one of submitting and "giving in" to someone more powerful than oneself. Thus, the highest evidence of being saved is to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. The involuntary behavior and speaking in tongues are signs that the power of God is stronger than the power of the devil or one's own sinfulness. Such beliefs make the moment of salvation a dramatic one. Attention is focused on the individual who is in a suppliant, expectant position usually in front of the room where the services are held. Others assist the individual with their prayers, sometimes touching him. It is a situation of struggle and conflict.

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a woman was seized by some kind of feeling or power. She spent much of the two and a half hours running about the room, moving in a convulsive and uncontrolled way. After the service, various people present shook her hand and greeted her warmly. Their tone of voice showed approval and acceptance of all that had happened.
There's two different Spirits, it's a good Spirit and a bad Spirit... You get down on your knees and get to praying, the Devil gets behind you, but he can't stand it, the praying.\footnote{Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago. In contrast to their middle-class, church-going neighbors, the sect adherents among the Southern Appalachian poor do not seem to have theological legitimation for growth in the Christian life. There seem to be no stages between sinner or saved. An individual is one or the other.}

The hypothesis that the revivalistic rituals rationalize the power-experience of the Southern Appalachian poor might explain why women go to church more than men. The salvation-experience is consistent with the image the woman has of herself as the submissive wife. She has a need to feel dependent and passive. She cannot satisfy this need in relationship to her husband because he is not strong enough to be really dominant. Religion which projects a strong and controlling God can help to satisfy this need. The man, on the other hand, imagines himself as aggressive and independent. Most of the things that religion offers him are contrary to this image. First of all the ethic would demand that he give up his aggressive activities, such as drinking and fighting, which affirm his identity as independent and masculine. At church he hears preaching which employs many mother images. "Getting saved" also means that he would accept overtly a dependent relationship. All this he resists. As men grow older the image becomes less important and they begin to go to church.

Even though there are dependency and control patterns operative in their religion, the Southern Appalachian poor present it as a highly individualistic affair. Sectarian religion in the south, as a whole, is characterized as individualistic. Their religion is individualistic in the sense that the focus is upon the individual's relationship with...
God. It is claimed that "getting saved" is something between the individual and God. It is a personal experience that can only be known by the individual who is saved and something the individual has to be willing to do himself. It is individualistic in the sense that it demands a self-control over the impulses more than a constructive expressing of feelings and desires in relationship to others. However, it is not individualistic in the sense that it gives personal autonomy. Individuals are dependent upon the emotional contagion created in the group during revivals and services. They are controlled by cultural expectations communicated especially through the mother and are subjected to the power of persuasion on the part of the preacher and others who are zealous sectarians. Individualism is as much a myth in their religion as it is in other aspects of their life style.

The religious rituals legitimate the myths by which the Southern Appalachian poor live. They do this by recreating and sustaining the culturally determined power-experience. According to Emile Durkheim the purpose of the ritual is to "put the myth in action."¹ In the present case the myth that is operative is not so much the Christian myth of the dying-rising Christ,² but the cultural myths of the Southern Appalachian poor.

¹Durkheim, Elementary Forms, p. 101.

²The historical event of the death and resurrection of Christ is referred to here as "myth" in the sense that it is for Christians a symbol and explanation of the meaning of reality, of life and death. It is presented here in contrast with the "symbol and explanation of reality" which the Southern Appalachian poor adhere to in their myth of individualism, perpetuated in family relationships and reinforced by religion.
Research Hypothesis #4: Theological Reality Definitions Reinforce Acosmic, Ahistorical, and Ascetic Tendencies

The theological themes and reality definitions of their religion are consistent with the quality of the power-experience of the Southern Appalachian poor. Their long experience of being unable to control their own destiny in regard to this world has produced the fatalistic attitude that is so often encountered among them. Accompanied by apathy, low self-esteem, and withdrawal of affect from the external world, the fatalistic attitude can even lead to suicide. In the religious mode this attitude of fatalism is reflected in the conception of God as controlling every detail of one's destiny here on earth. The nation was witness to this attitude in the recent mine disasters at Hominy Falls, West Virginia (May 10-17, 1968). In a television interview a miner, rescued after being given up for dead, was asked whether he would return to the mines. "I'll have to go over that with God," he said. "Whatever his plans are for me, that's what I'll do." The wife of another rescued man said she never doubted that her husband would come out alive. "God told me he'd be all right," she said.

In relating to the cosmos, the world is seen as a place where many forces are at work to undermine the powerful intentions of God. The city, especially, is seen as a place of sin and shady dealings. The Southern Appalachian mistrusts and is suspicious of the unfamiliar and the unknown. He may trust his church group, family, and kin but strangers have always been suspect in the Southern Appalachian

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1 Gerrard, "Holiness Churches," p. 5, states that West Virginia has a higher rate of suicide than the national average.
culture. The world in general is fraught with dangers and it is better to withdraw into the safety of religion where God's favor and blessing are assured than to get mixed up with the world. Frequently religion reinforces attitudes of mistrust and hostility toward the world. Millenianistic beliefs stressing the destruction of the world are consistent with this frame of mind.

The Southern Appalachian poor accept their own world or society as given. They do not realize that their ancestors created this society and that they can create a new one. They view society as a fixed, objective reality existing independently of man's activity. They feel that they do not have the power to change it. Thus, they feel that they have no control over the anomic powers that threaten them. Such a view of society and its institutions helps imprison them in dependency and passivity. Religion helps them to cope with the consequent feelings of frustration and despair by promising a better life in the future, but gives them no means for channeling these feelings into creative activity in regard to society and its institutions. Moreover, their religious ethic taboos many pleasure-giving and aggressive activities. Bernard Kaplan, who studied a Free-Will Baptist group in North Carolina, observed that their phrase "devil in man" usually referred to three things—sex drives, angry and aggressive feelings, and pleasures. Such phrases as "get out there" and "never

1 Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 8, explains that seeing society as a fixed, independent, and objective reality is a pre-reflective common sense position. It is a stage toward understanding that society is a human product and therefore can be created anew.

seen nothing out of him" when used in connection with sinful deeds, suggest that the Southern Appalachian poor feel that suppressing and repressing their feelings generally is more Christian than expressing them.

The attitude of fatalism in the face of their life structures specifies the Southern Appalachian's experience of death. It affirms the reality which they have experienced most of their life, that they are, indeed, ultimately controlled and unable to escape the most dreadful of all punishments. Death strikes at the most meaningful of all values, the family bonds. There is some comfort from religion which tells them that there will be a grand family reunion in heaven in the "by and by."

It is possible, and even probable, that their image of God relates to their life experiences and sustains ahistorical attitudes. Their image of God as an all powerful, controlling figure may be rooted in their experience of helplessness in solving their societal problems, especially those of poverty and lack of education. They also image God as a righteous and judging type of person. This may reflect their own attitudes which separate people into two camps, the sinners and the saved. Just as they have the ethical criteria by which to judge performance in the Christian life, so God must also judge their lives with even more vengeance and wrath. There is, however, some confusion expressed in their image of God. Although they say that God is a righteous Judge, they also add that "he is suppose to be a loving God." It is interesting to note that the title given to God, and sometimes to Jesus in their prayers, is Master. Perhaps this is an appropriate title for an idealized father of the kind the Southern
Appalachian women never had. According to a Freudian line of thought, the God of the Southern Appalachian woman would be the projection of the ideal father who has all the strengths, provides security, and is the source of authority.

Jesus is the suffering figure. The risen Christ is not spoken of as a present reality or as someone with whom they are identified in the present. He is the absent Lord who will return on the day of Judgment. In real life the husband is the suffering figure. He is not able to identify with the risen Christ because he seldom experiences transcending his own powerlessness and weakness. Mothers teach that the Christian way is the way of suffering.

I think he [her son] is going to live a good Christian life, and I think that is the best kind of life to live. They spit in the Lord's face and they done the Lord every way.¹

A field worker in Chicago noted that the affection missing in more intimate relationships of husband and wife tends to be transferred to a religious level. The woman especially looks to Jesus for the love and acceptance desired but lacking in human relationships. Inasmuch as their religion is a substitute for these human needs it can tend unwittingly to separate people from one another rather than helping them to relate.

Research Hypothesis #5: Religion Helps the Southern Appalachian Poor In Their Need To Compensate, To Control, and To Cope Psycho-Socially

As each of the previous hypotheses were presented, some of the functions and dysfunctions of the religion of the Southern Appalachian

¹Transcribed excerpt from tape-recorded interview, research materials, Appalachian Study Center, Chicago.
poor became apparent. In this section three needs and religion's relationship to them will be discussed.

When the needs of individuals cannot be fulfilled by the society in which they live, they tend to seek some other substitute to fulfill their needs. The Southern Appalachian poor tend to seek compensations in their religious institution. We have seen that this is typical of the sect-type religions. Nathan Gerrard found that the substitution of the religious institution for the larger society was a distinguishing feature between the stationary poor and upwardly mobile poor.¹ Although the former may possess certain characteristics of the latter, such as tidy homes, neat dressing habits, and courteous children, yet they do not advance in socio-economic status. He found that the stationary poor do not practice anticipatory socialization. Instead they tend to accept the values proposed by religion. Accordingly, status, success, and prestige are found in the pursuit of holiness and the attainment of eternal life rather than worldly gain. They remain within their own world view rather than adopt the values of the world around them. Thus, religion compensates by trans­valuating human life conditions and becomes a substitute for other institutions.

Religion's ability to reinforce the controls operative in the life of Southern Appalachian poor can be summarily stated. On the psychological level religion provides a control over personal life and conscience by providing normative judgments about what is right and wrong. The emphasis is upon what should not be done. Consequently,

religion tends to control by repression and suppression rather than expression. The taboos also serve as instruments for "sizing up" others, thereby building relationships on judgments rather than acceptance.

On the social level, religion structures relationships toward God and the afterlife, rather than toward this world and other people. It thus reinforces the asocial, mistrustful attitudes derived from life experiences.

On the cultural level, religion contributes to the socialization process. The Southern Appalachian mother feels that religion helps her to raise her children correctly and teach them to live right. It offers a destiny which is out of this world—heaven or hell. With these guidelines children find their places in the rather limited society the Southern Appalachian poor can provide for their own. However, a situation of conflict is set up. The child-rearing patterns of permissiveness and immediate gratification have not prepared adolescents or adults for the commitment of religious salvation. Raised to follow their impulses, the Southern Appalachian poor use religion as a means to attain a certain measure of control over their impulses.

Not having many external objects in the environment upon which to focus, the need to control turns inward upon the self or toward others. It is heightened in the family situation. J. B. Stephenson found that in the mountain community where he lived for two years, women often tried to get their husbands to go to church.¹ If they agreed to conform they usually became more stable and stayed at home instead

¹Stephenson, Shiloh, pp. 163-167,
of carousing about with the "boys." Stephenson's conclusion was that religion is valued by the women as a socialization mechanism that absorbs the man into the control patterns of the culture.

Coping devices in human behavior are related to three basic motivations. A person wants to grow, mature, find alternative solutions to his problems and assume responsibility, he wants to maintain an equilibrium, or he chooses to decline in social functioning. The Southern Appalachian poor cope psycho-socially by maintaining an equilibrium. They have great strength in their ability to cope. They endure a lot of hardship, suffer hunger, poor health, tragedies of sickness and early deaths. Someone not trained to this kind of life might not even succeed in coping. As long as they can cope with life situations out of their own resources of family and kin religion is not all that necessary to them. In fact, religion, in contrast to what they call religion, might indeed be the family and "a happy home life." Nearly every answer to the question, "What do you think makes for a good life?" was something like "a happy home life where you get along with your husband and your kids are healthy." If, however, home life is not so happy and they cannot cope with the situation, they begin to feel that something is wrong with their relationship to God and they begin to look to religion for some help. An example is the case of the woman who felt her conversion coming when she saw the need to give better example to her children who were getting out of control.² Religion, therefore, is used to maintain an equilibrium in their life as they attempt to cope with difficult situations that arise in

²See p. 67.
the familial group or from outside pressures which threaten their way of life.

Berton Kaplan studied the adaptive retreat and coping mechanisms of a Free-Will Baptist group in a North Carolina mountain community.¹ He used Menninger's theory of adaptation in his analysis. According to Menninger there are five regressive stages a person or group can go through in the attempt to cope with tensions created by disorganizing threats. Each progressively regressive stage attempts to recapture the equilibrium that has been upset. The first order dyscontrol is nervousness. The second order dyscontrol is neurotic symptoms. The escape of destructive impulses constitutes the third order dyscontrol; abandonment of reality the fourth. Beyond the psychosis to the abandonment of the will to live is the fifth order dyscontrol.

Kaplan's thesis was that the Free-Will Baptist group, as they were increasingly threatened by the changes made in the civic community, displayed sentiments of the second order of disorganization. Some of the signs of this stage are detachment from the environment, aggressive escapes, lowering of productivity and achievement, a diminished reality testing, symptoms of anxiety and discomfort. Two behavioral mechanisms, Kaplan felt, illustrate aspects of this second stage of coping. The first is social masochism and the second, ritually expressed tension.

Social masochism is acted out by demonstrations of helplessness, subjection, and unworthiness as well as aggressive fantasizing. It is a sort of public self-whipping. It reinforces negative self images

and evokes a genuine group cohesiveness which is characterized as a brotherhood through suffering.

The behavior mechanism of ritually expressed tensions is a phenomenon frequently attributed to sect-type religions in the Southern Appalachian Region. Speaking incoherently, running, jumping, and shaking are not only acceptable forms of behavior but a sign that the individual is "happy in the Lord" and "having power." The preacher encourages the people to express themselves in these uninhibited ways. A stranger might feel embarrassed and feel that hysteria has been reached. Normally, however, the congregation can be brought to calmness and quiet in a few seconds. Kaplan noted that before the people left the church they were again warned to control the demonic forces within them.

It follows that in their ordinary life these people are in a repressed state. They come to church to be de-repressed. This is not a situation of growth but the draining off of tensions. The real life situations and responses to it are no different after they have gone to church than before. However, there is a somewhat inverted positive value to this behavior. The mechanism of expressing tensions in a ritualistic setting may serve as a safety valve preventing more serious regression or disintegration in the group. (What other institutional resources do they have for coping with their tensions?)
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The interrelationship of religious and other cultural variables in the life style of Southern Appalachian poor was explored. First of all, it was seen that an extreme personalistic attitude toward people, things, and events, a result of the socialization process which establishes close familial bonds, inclines the Southern Appalachian poor toward informal religious activities, such as listening to the radio and watching television programs that are religious in content. It also inclines them toward the sect-type religious organization in preference to the church-type. The former, in contrast to the latter, has undifferentiated role categorizations and appears as an extended kin-group.

Secondly, the tendency to look to the past to provide meaning for the present is reflected in their religious institution. A view of the Bible that exalts it as the true word of God but remains ignorant of it, and a moral code that stresses negative cultural norms are attitudes which tend to perpetuate the tradition which gave rise to them. The mother who is the authoritative source in transmitting cultural values and norms also plays the predominant role in passing on religious beliefs, attitudes, and values to her children.

Thirdly, it was proposed that the culturally determined power-experience was reinforced and legitimated in the experience of salvation. By projecting a controlling and judging God and/or Saviour
to whom the individual must submit in order to obtain salvation, the woman is sustained in the image of herself as passive and dependent. For the man the figure of Christ provides primarily an image of suffering and pain. Although his own situation may be closer to this image than any other, he nevertheless rejects it in preference to an image of himself as strong and independent. Religion does little to provide the man with an experience of himself as an autonomous and free individual even though it is presented as a spontaneous and individualistic kind of religion. Thus the myths by which the Southern Appalachian poor live are not corrected but rather sustained by their religion.

Their religious rituals also reflect two other variables which were described as the tendency to recreate meaningful past experiences and to cope with difficult situations by establishing an emotional equilibrium. The rituals are enacted to recreate the salvation-experience. The release and expression of frustrations and anxieties are permitted and encouraged. By these means the Southern Appalachian poor can restore an equilibrium in their life. This is another way of coping with their situation, a behavioral pattern which is basic to their way of life.

Theological constructs are related perhaps to two other variables, their mental model and concept of time. In chapter two the mental model of the Southern Appalachian poor was described as a disparate, unrelated grasp of individual objects in the immediate environment. In accordance with this way of knowing things, religious personages

\[1\text{See p. 25.}\]
such as God, or the devil, are anthropomorphic and concrete individuals. Sins are specific, concrete actions. For the same reason a systematic theology and a religion which confers a sense of cosmic affiliation are neither compatible nor felt to be necessary.

In accordance with the two-dimensional (past-present) time concept of the Southern Appalachian poor, religion fosters an ahistorical attitude. Lacking a sense of the future, they view this world as a given and not a to-be-created reality. The fact that there is no real future in this world raises the question concerning the reality of the future world they project as heaven or hell. Heaven seems to be the possession of those idealized values of the past, a sort of gaining of a lost Paradise.

Applying Paul Tillich's definition of religion to the Southern Appalachian poor brings to light some of the dysfunctional effects of their religion. Tillich defines religion as a faith that is expressed, shared in community, and acted upon. The Southern Appalachian poor express a moral type of faith which is a strong feeling about what "ought not" be done. It focuses on the feeling and doing aspects of life rather than the thinking aspects. It is a faith which images man as "no good" until saved, rather than a humanistic kind of faith which posits an internal principle of good in man. Theirs is a faith that seems to experience God as a transcendant controller and man as the manipulated creature in a world for which he is not a responsible co-creator.

Such a faith-orientation shared by many isolates individuals

rather than uniting them. If, moreover, "sharing" amounts to a release of repressions this would heighten euphoria but do little to create community. It leads not to action, but to social inactivity and repeated sterile performance. Inasmuch as their faith is ahistorical, separating man from the world, others, and himself, and inasmuch as the rituals restore an equilibrium rather than enabling individuals to grow, both their beliefs and rituals that are an expression of them, constitute a religious institution enclosing its adherents in a selected myth.

The research presented in this thesis was exploratory. It led to the formulation of five hypotheses which further research could confirm, correct, or reject. With a broader sampling, more systematic field observation, and the development of more refined tools to obtain quantitative measurements, conclusions could be drawn with more precision. In addition, the number of variables included in this thesis should be extended in order to provide a more total view of the Southern Appalachian poor. New tools of analysis need to be developed so that interrelationships between psychological, sociological, cultural, and religious variables can be explained.

Besides the need to develop research tools and methodology, there is a need to compare the study population with other groups of the economically poor. Basic patterns of behavior attributed to the Southern Appalachian poor are also found among these groups. The question is raised as to what can be attributed specifically to the poverty subculture as it appears in Southern Appalachia. In addition, the differences among the various subcultural groups in Southern Appalachia, and how these groups compare with other socio-economic groups, should be examined more thoroughly.
To those who are interested in the people of Southern Appalachia the forces of change and innovation presently affecting the Region are seen as vital factors which will contribute to the shape of their future. How will their institutions, including their religious institution, evolve? How are religious values and attitudes changed, maintained, or rejected by a subcultural group in a state of transition? How is it possible to espouse secular values and retain a religious and/or Christian identity? In contemporary American culture is there an alternative to the process described by Peter Berger as the "secularization of consciousness?"\(^1\)

If more precise and thorough answers to these questions were obtained it would be possible to project stages of transition and the various psychological factors required for healthful participation in the process of change. Such knowledge would be helpful to those who are involved in educating for change, and facilitate the efforts of those who wish to identify with the Southern Appalachian poor in their task of creating a future for themselves. These questions are also of interest to theologians who wish to take into account in their theologizing both human experiences and societal processes, basic anthropological concerns which reflect and reveal the God-man relationship.

\(^1\)Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 4. Secularization of consciousness applies to processes inside the human mind. The phrase is used here in the sense that answers to questions about the significance of daily life experiences are purely rational, scientific, pragmatic, and utilitarian.
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