

Appalachian Culture

Sharing the Gospel Story and Ministering in the Appalachian Region

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Guide

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Appalachians

The culture Part 1: Overview



The Appalachian Region

Appalachia lies along the Appalachian mountains, which extend from Mississippi to New York, and includes three sub regions.



The Appalachian Region

- ❑ The region was originally inhabited by Native Americans
- ❑ The name *Appalachia* comes from the Appalachee tribe of Northern Florida
- ❑ The geographical region known as Appalachia is named after the mountain chain which serves as a barrier from the outside world
- ❑ The isolation that the mountains bring has preserved many traditions



Pronouncing the Word

Late 17th century. Formed from *Apalachee*, the name of a Native American people of what is now the southeastern United States.

Ap·pa·la·chi·an [àpp láychee n, àpp lách n]
adjective

Ap·pal·a·chi·ans [àpp láychee nz, àpp lách nz]

Ap·pa·la·chi·a [àpp láychee , àpp lách] noun

The Appalachian Region



- 198,931 square miles
- 13 States
- 406 Counties
- 22,216,361 people
- 42 % rural

Early History

- ❑ **During the colonial era, Appalachia was claimed by Europeans in search of independence**
- ❑ **Much of the Civil War was fought in Appalachia**



Geography and Economy



- ❑ **Geography makes farming and industry difficult**
- ❑ **Local economy cannot support the population for most of Appalachia**

Geography and Economy

- ❑ Despite the natural beauty of the region, tourism fails to generate enough profit to offset negative economic trends
- ❑ The region's traditional economy is based on agriculture, extractive industries (coal mining), and blue-collar manufacturing jobs

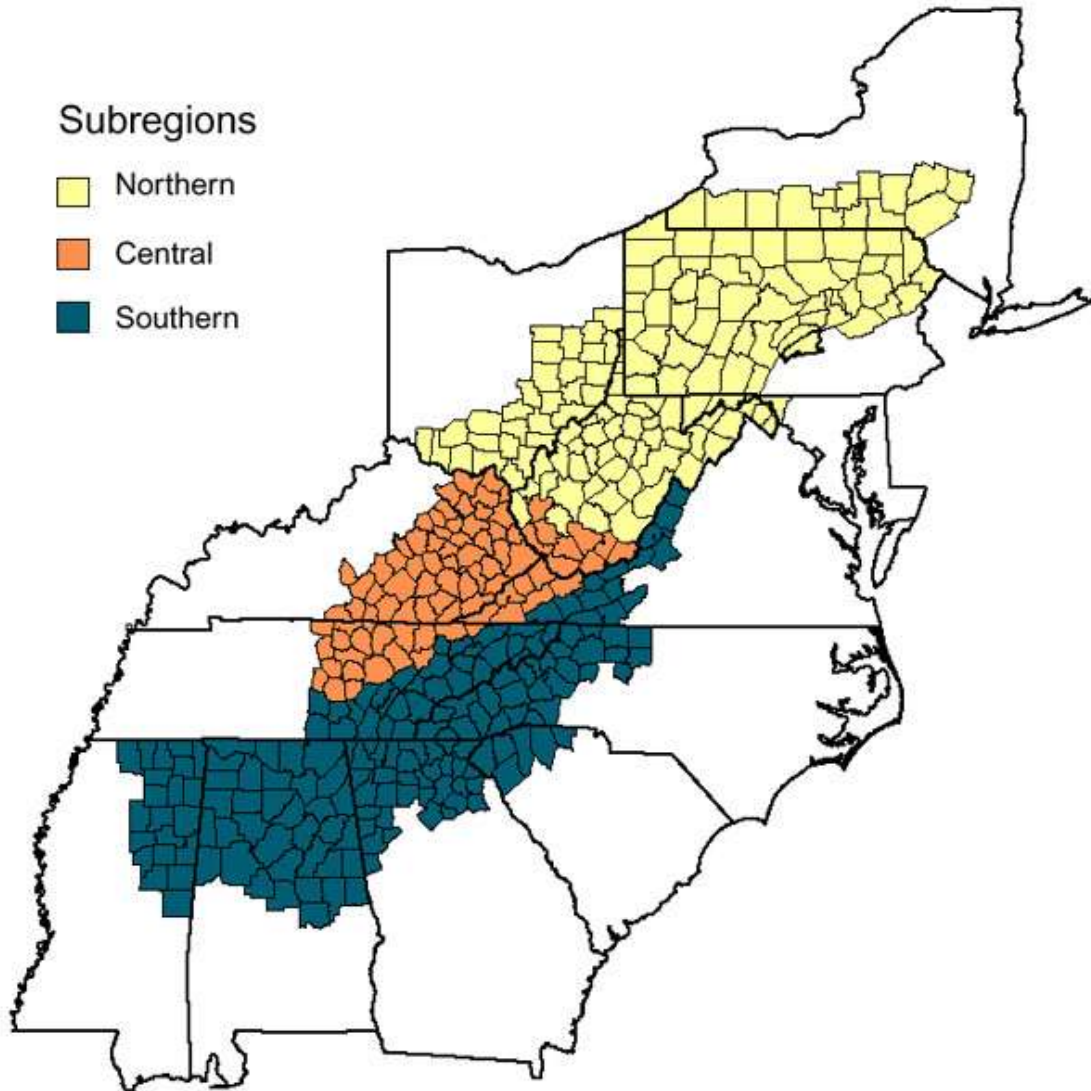


ARC Designated Appalachian Subregions

source: Appalachian Regional Commission

Subregions

- Northern
- Central
- Southern



Northern Section

- ❑ Extends from New York into West Virginia and Ohio
- ❑ Economic base in steel, coal, and railroad transportation
- ❑ Reduction in employment has occurred in this region



Central Region

- ❑ Includes sixty contiguous counties in Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee
 - ❑ History of the most grinding poverty in America
 - ❑ Where War on Poverty started and failed
 - ❑ 3rd. World conditions
 - ❑ Entitlement mentality
-



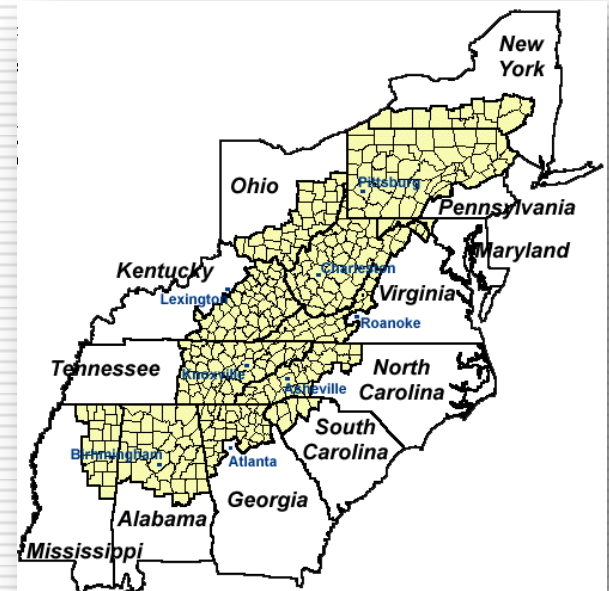
Southern Region



- ❑ **Extends from Virginia through the Carolinas and into Alabama**
- ❑ **Includes many unique regional folklore traditions (Foxfire Series)**

Significant influences to the Appalachian Culture

- ❑ **Northern**
 - Labor Unions
 - Decline of the major industries (steel, chemical)
 - Education
- ❑ **Central**
 - Migration
 - Labor Unions
 - Unemployment/Poverty
 - Decline of the coal and timber industry
- ❑ **Southern**
 - Tennessee Valley Authority
 - Anti labor union
 - Education
 - Textile industry



Appalachian out-migration

- ☐ **7 -8 million people migrated from Appalachia between 1940-1990**
- ☐ **Most have moved toward industrial centers, auto assembly factories in Michigan and Ohio, textile mills in the South or high tech jobs anywhere USA**
- ☐ **Military influence – joined and remained**
- ☐ **“Brain drain”**
- ☐ **Since 1980 Appalachian migration has decreased**

Appalachian Culture travels

- ☐ **Appalachian people have experienced a series of disasters and exploitations**
- ☐ **The move to the city comes with the discovery that they have exchanged rural poverty and unemployment for urban poverty and unemployment**
- ☐ **Move to the city has resulted in Appalachian-urban neighborhoods**

Traditional Appalachian Identity

- ☐ **Regional folklore shared with younger generations**
- ☐ **Arts and crafts highlight the region's beauty**
- ☐ **No other large geographic region in the United States has so many family members who live their lives in proximity to their birthplaces**

Traditional Appalachian Identity

- ❑ Extended kinship networks
- ❑ Children learn from parents and clan
- ❑ Family surname can identify persons and link them to a kinship network



Values of Traditional Appalachian Families

- ☐ When an Appalachian moves from rural to city, they do not leave their values “back home”
- ☐ Their values do not mesh well with urban living
- ☐ Traditional values include a present orientation with fatalistic views of the future, action vs. dialogue, and fierce protection of self and kin

Industrialization and the Great Depression

- In the 19th and early 20th centuries, industrialization largely bypassed the region**
 - People there relied primarily on subsistence farming and hunting.**
- Industrialization did lead to the growth of cities such as Pittsburgh and Birmingham**
- In the 1930's, during the Great Depression, the federal government began to notice the economic deficiencies of the region**

1960's: War on Poverty

- ❑ Attitude toward poverty was simplistic: *if a region is destitute, give it goods, services and infrastructure*
- ❑ JFK initiated War on Poverty in 1963
- ❑ LBJ implemented the program



War on Poverty



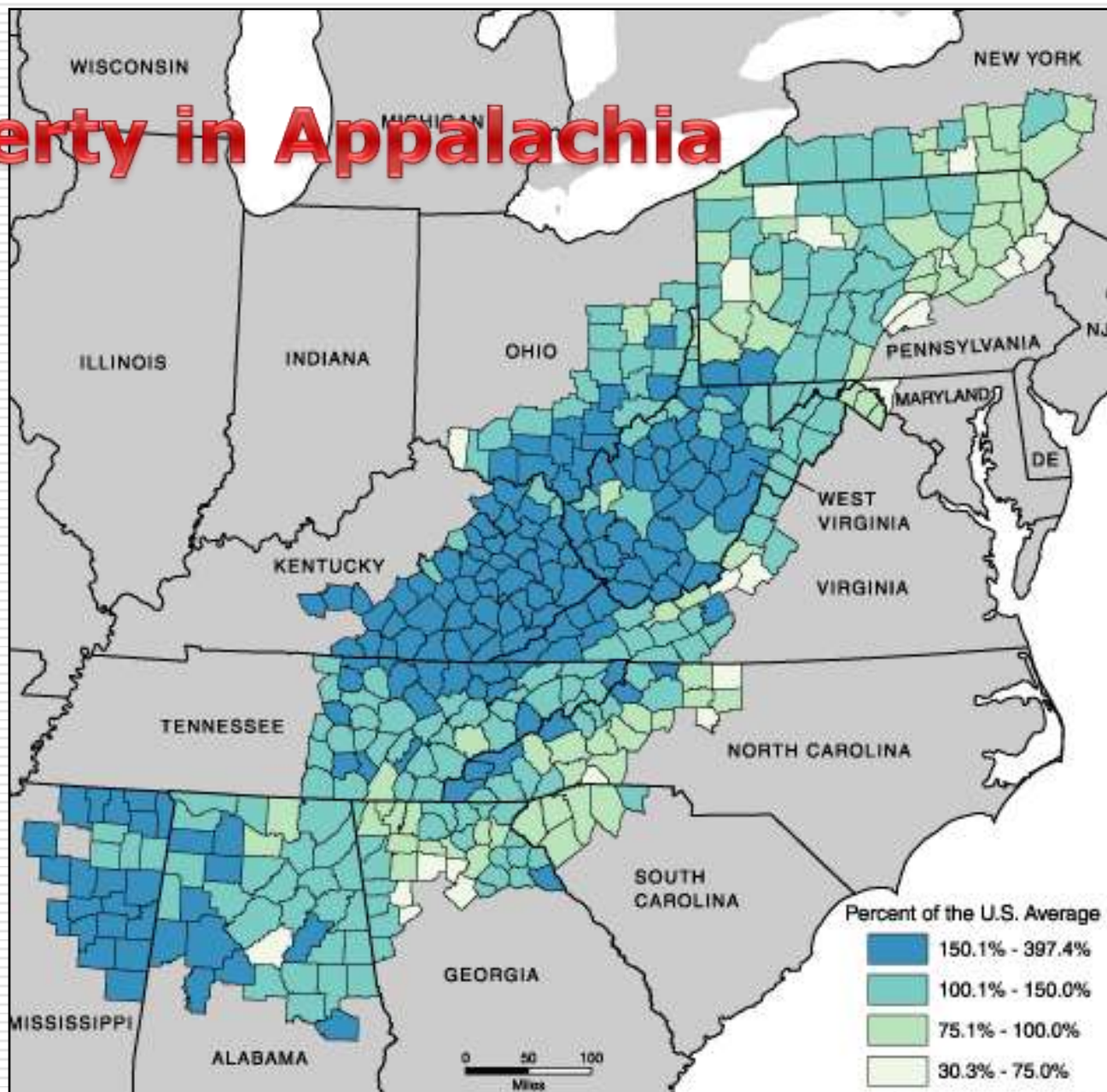
- ❑ **The Community Action Program sent volunteers into the region**
- ❑ **The Federal Government poured money into the region**
- ❑ **Social programs such as welfare relief, public works projects and subsidies to industries were implemented**



Poverty Wins the War

- ☐ Rather than investing in education, businesses, and other income-generating concerns, federal aid was used to finance more consumption and more children
- ☐ Welfare and state aid become dominant source of income
- ☐ Despite efforts the region lacked entrepreneurship and education

Poverty in Appalachia



Map Created: June 2002.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, STF3A, 1990.

U.S. average = 13.1%
Appalachian average = 15.4%

Getting Passed By

- ☐ **During the industrial revolution, the advancements passed the Appalachian region by**
- ☐ **Now, with the information age, the lack of education has prevented the development of technology-related industries and jobs in the region**

The “10 Minute Window”

When you travel the Interstate system through Appalachia you see one world, progressive Appalachia – travel 10 minutes on either side of the Interstate and you often see the other Appalachia.



Education

- ❑ Many schools often lack basic supplies
- ❑ Because much of the population is poor, Appalachian states have lower tax revenues
- ❑ This results in less funding for schools and substandard education



Percentage of Population 25 Years and Older without High School Diploma by Census Tract

source: 1990 US Census

Kentucky
Harlan County
Letcher County
Owsley County

Ohio
Adams County

Tennessee
Hancock County

Virginia
Wise County
City of Norton

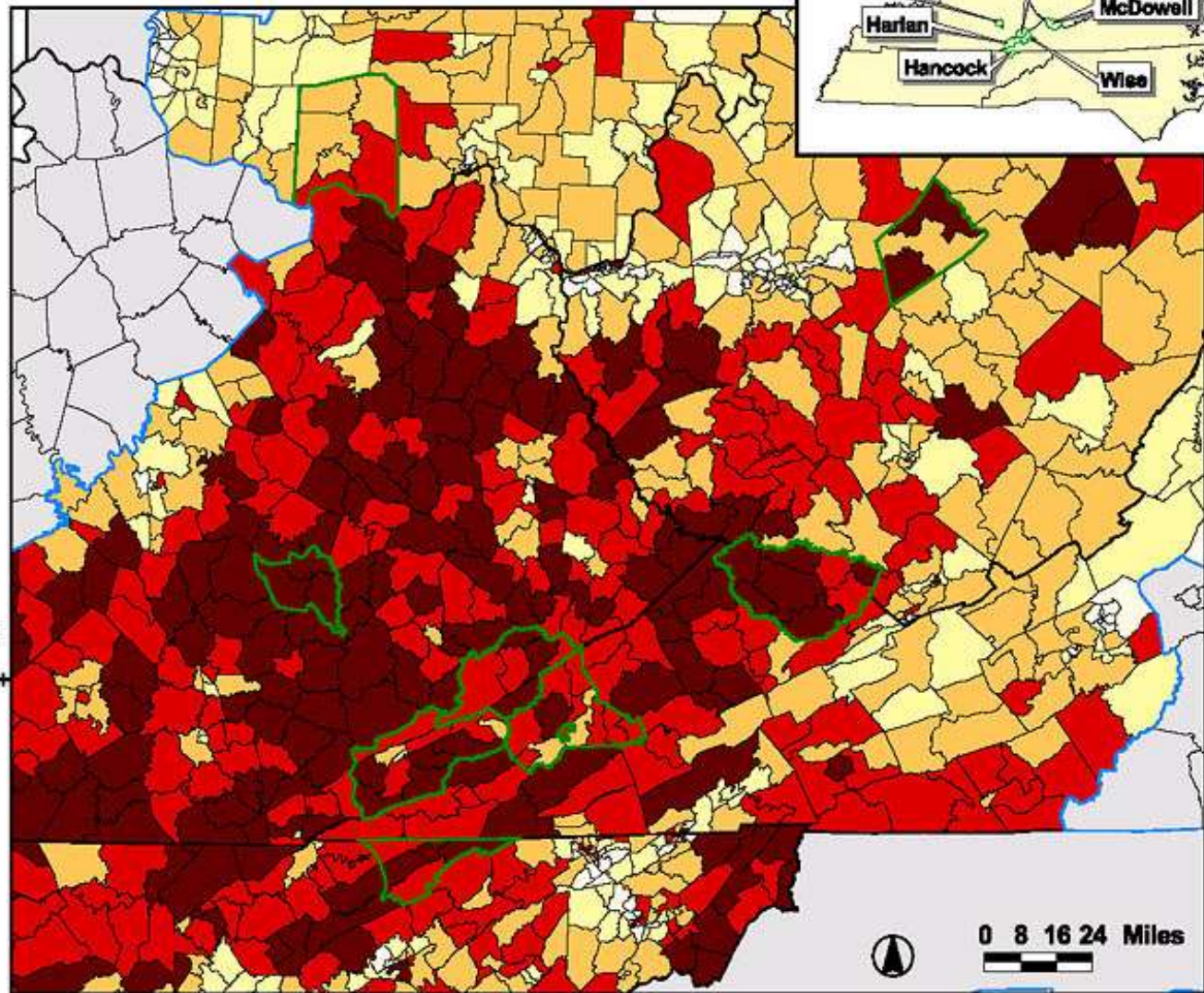
West Virginia
Clay County
McDowell County

ARC Region
8 County Region

Percent Population 25+

75.0% - 100.0%
65.0% - 75.0%
55.0% - 65.0%
45.0% - 55.0%
0.0% - 45.0%

UK Appalachian Center



Religion

- ❑ **Key feature: autonomous, regionalized sub-denominations of Christian religions**
- ❑ **Regional churches tend not to be involved with centralized religions**
- ❑ **They often follow a literal interpretation of the Bible**
- ❑ **The King James Version is still the translation of choice for the majority**



Religion

- ❑ Denominations or “brands” of religion are for the most part irrelevant
- ❑ Most churches place a great importance on religious experience, especially in relation to conversion
- ❑ Life is extremely hard - the sense of independence carries over into their religious experience
 - Works
 - Emotional
 - “Spirit led”



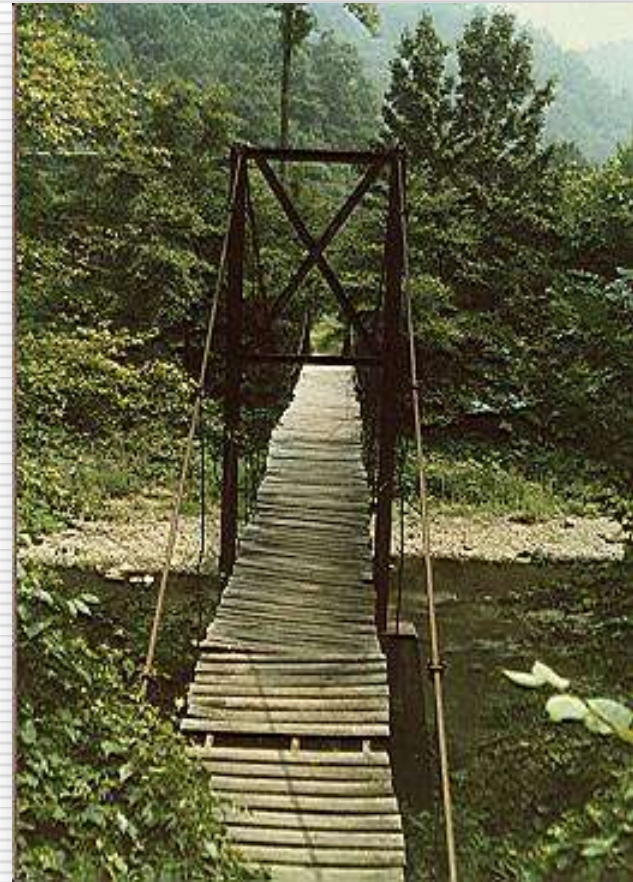
Music



- ❑ Strong folk tradition
- ❑ Churches are very influential: no explicit lyrics
- ❑ Country/Bluegrass influence
- ❑ Prevalence of white country gospel music
- ❑ Square dancing is a common form of entertainment

The Big Picture

- ❑ It is important to understand the background of the people and places you will be working with and visiting.
- ❑ The Appalachian experience can be mutually beneficial as we work together to improve living conditions and to reach the lost with the gospel.



Appalachian Culture

Part 1 – Overview

Part 2 – Characteristics

**Part 3 – How the culture impacts
Kingdom Work**



Appalachians

The culture Part 2: Characteristics





"You're Not In Kansas Anymore, Dorothy"

What is the Appalachian Culture?

Culture - in anthropology...

- ❑ the patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share.
 - ❑ Culture distinguishes one human group from others.
 - ❑ A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems.
-

Appalachia is not a “melting pot” so much as it is a “stew.”

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Orientals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indians |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Germans | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native American | <input type="checkbox"/> African Americans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italians | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Europeans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish | <input type="checkbox"/> Arabs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarians | |

Appalachian People

"They came in with a horse, a cow, a sack of corn, an iron pot and a wife and several children, an ax and a long rifle." (Norman Simpkins)

"And a King James Bible." (Unknown)



The Diversity

- ❑ North and South
- ❑ Wealth and Extreme Poverty
- ❑ Major Universities and Illiteracy
- ❑ Major Cities and Dying towns
- ❑ Low unemployment and high unemployment



Characteristics Of The Appalachian People

- ❑ The inhabitants of this area are traditionally very independent
 - ❑ Many have survived in the mountains for generations by subsistence farming
 - ❑ Family is very important to them
 - ❑ Love the home place
 - ❑ Most are culturally religious
-



Characteristics Of The Appalachian People

- ❑ Live on the land
- ❑ Barter economy
- ❑ “Toot” work pattern (work hard, rest a spell)
- ❑ Easy going
- ❑ Person oriented – see other people as whole individuals
- ❑ Proud people
- ❑ Polite People



Characteristics Of The Appalachian People



- ☐ Suspicious of “foreigners” (strangers)
- ☐ Staring is impolite
- ☐ Equality of women
- ☐ Independent (love to “fight it out”)
- ☐ More relational than goal oriented
- ☐ Love good humor
- ☐ “I can talk about where I’m from, but you can’t.”

Comparison of Rural American with Appalachia

Rural America

- ☐ Emphasis on community, church, clubs, etc.
- ☐ Oriented to progress
- ☐ Home tasks shared by husband and wife

Appalachia

- ☐ Individualism, self-centered concerns
- ☐ Oriented to existence
- ☐ Separateness of husband and wife in home tasks

Comparison of Rural American with Appalachia

Rural America

- ☐ Shared family activities
- ☐ Acceptance of the world
- ☐ Cooperation with doctors, hospitals, and outsiders

Appalachia

- ☐ Few shared family activities
- ☐ Suspicion and fear of outside world
- ☐ Fear of doctors, hospitals, those in authority, the well-educated

Comparison of Rural American with Appalachia

Rural America

- ☐ Use of government and law to achieve goals
- ☐ Denominational churches do well

Appalachia

- ☐ Antagonism toward government and law
- ☐ Suspicious of denominations and organized religion

When you think of Appalachia, what image comes to mind?

Media Madness or Willful Misrepresentation?



Little Abner



The Beverly Hillbillies



The Hillbilly Image

Snuffy Smith



There were positive images



The Walton's

October Sky



Setting: Coalwood, WV

Excellent training video for groups coming to the coalfields of KY, OH, PA, TN, VA, or WV.



When you think of Appalachia, what image comes to mind?

Negative Images

- ☐ **Welfare type people**
- ☐ **Hillbillies, people not real intelligent**
- ☐ **Poverty, barefoot children, shanty houses**
- ☐ **Oppressed, bypassed**
- ☐ **House trailers**
- ☐ **Inter-marriage**
- ☐ **People who think different**
- ☐ **Trash and junk in the creeks**

When you think of Appalachia, what image comes to mind?

Positive Images

- ☐ **Honest, hard working people**
- ☐ **Strong family values, close-knit families**
- ☐ **Bible-believing people**
- ☐ **Friendly**
- ☐ **Big-hearted, generous**
- ☐ **Musical**

Four traits of Appalachian Americans

- 1. Individualism**
- 2. Traditionalism – familialism**
- 3. Fundamentalism in religion**
- 4. Fatalism – accepting life here as is and looking for a better hereafter.**

**John Campbell,
Loyal Jones and
other modern Scholars**

Five Key Groups Of People Living In Appalachia

1. Native Appalachian's (*Williams*)

- ☐ Town and city dwellers - Urban
- ☐ Valley Farmers - Rural
- ☐ Branch Water Mountaineers

2. Returning Appalachian's

- ☐ Those who return after a few years
- ☐ Those who return "after being gone too long"
- ☐ Those who return to the "home place" after retirement

3. Ethnic People Groups

Returning Appalachian's

Schooling or learning can drive a mountaineer from their culture and run the risk of making such a student unfit to return to the life he or she came from.



**(John Campbell,
A History of Appalachia
Berea College)**

Appalachia Today

- ❑ **Modernized areas** - In Appalachia, a flavor of the culture, but not much different from the rest of America (Knoxville, TN; Greenville, SC; Pittsburgh, PA)
 - ❑ **Emerging areas** - Hazard, KY; Clarksburg, WV
 - ❑ **Unaltered areas** - Coalfields
 - ❑ **Relocated pockets** - Cleveland, OH
-

Appalachia Today

“Television and the internet have not leveled the mountains in many of the rural and remote communities.”



Migration to the Cities “Hillbilly Ghettos”

- Causes of out migration:**
 - High birth rates**
 - Unsustainable farming practices**
 - Destruction of land**
 - Concentration of land ownership**
 - Fluctuations in the coal market**
 - Anti-unionism and poor working conditions**

Migration to the Cities

“Hillbilly Ghettos ”

- **Removal for National Forests, National Parks, lakes**
 - **Economic pull of employment elsewhere**
 - **The migration begins in the late 1800s and early 1900s.**
 - **Between 1900 and 1930 many Appalachians become migrant farm laborers.**
-

Migration to the Cities

“Hillbilly Ghettos”

- ❑ Appalachian's tended to move to the inner-city**
- ❑ Akron OH gets nicknamed “The Capital of West Virginia” – today Charlotte, NC**
- ❑ Post WWI anti-immigration laws cause industrial labor recruiters to look to Appalachia as a source of workers**
- ❑ A pattern of moving north/south when jobs were available and back to the mountains when layoffs occurred was established early**

Migration to the Cities

“Hillbilly Ghettos ”

- ❑ Between 1940 and 1960 7 -8 million left the region and 3 million moved to the region.**
 - ❑ They were part of the mass migration of southern sharecroppers (Black and White), Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans seeking a better life.**
 - ❑ Many fully assimilated into their new environment.**
 - ❑ Others became “bi-cultural,” returning home for visits, but blending in with their northern or mid-western neighbors.**
-

Migration to the Cities

“Hillbilly Ghettos”

- ❑ Others became identified as a social problem
- ❑ This group became known among social workers, educators, police, and other professionals as SAMs (Southern Appalachian Migrants), WASPs (White Appalachian Southern Protestants), or SANs (Southern Appalachian Newcomers).
- ❑ On the streets and schoolyards, it would be *briar, brairhopper, cracker, hillbilly, redneck, ridge runner, snake eater*

Assimilation of Appalachian People

- ☐ **Recognize the uniqueness of Appalachian Culture**
- ☐ **Knowing about the culture is not the same as being from the culture**
- ☐ **Learn the culture, build relationships, and understand why they feel the way they feel**
- ☐ **True assimilation may take many generations and is not desired by everyone**

Appalachian Preachers



- ☐ Call is a deeply emotional commitment to preach Jesus Christ
- ☐ Education is seen as conflicting with the call
- ☐ Value practical wisdom
- ☐ While warm and personal, they are often insecure
- ☐ Some do not read well
- ☐ Many are bivocational
- ☐ Produced many great preachers

Appalachians

The culture

**Part 3: How the
culture impacts
Kingdom Work**



Jesus And Culture



**“Ye men of Galilee
...” (Acts 1:8)**

**“Behold, are not all
these which speak
Galileans?” (Acts
2:7)**

Worldview

In Appalachia you will find – often within the same small community:

- ☐ **Pre-modernity (Post WW II)**
- ☐ **Modernity**
- ☐ **Post-modernity or postmodernism**



Old School vs. New School

Old School

- ☐ Calvinistic
- ☐ Election
- ☐ Anti-missionary
- ☐ Low or no pastor's pay
- ☐ Informal organization
- ☐ Anti denomination

New School

- ☐ Arminianism
- ☐ Free-will
- ☐ Missionary
- ☐ Pay the preacher
- ☐ Organization and structure
- ☐ Denominations maybe

Baptists in Appalachia are heavily influenced by the “old school.”

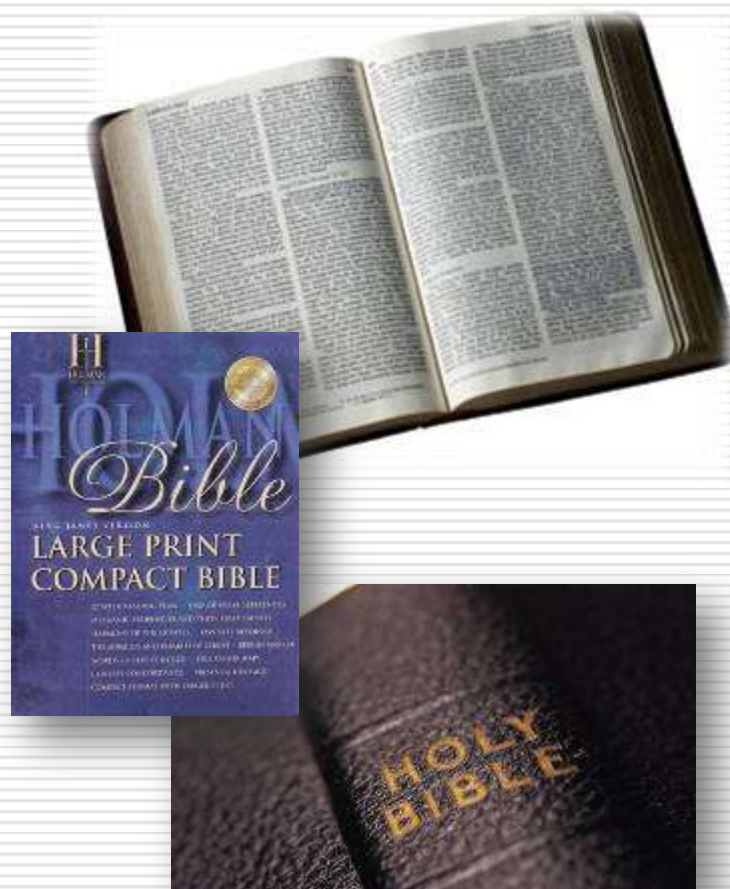
Religion

- ❑ **Strong Wesleyan-Armenian and Pentecostal influence**
- ❑ **Central Appalachia has been the heart of Pentecostalism**
- ❑ **Northern Appalachia – strong Roman Catholic influence**
- ❑ **Southern Appalachia – strong evangelical influence**



Bible Translations

- ☐ Do not make an assumption
- ☐ Ask the pastor what Bible translation they prefer you use.
- ☐ Do not argue about KJV
- ☐ “Good News for Modern Man” was written for Appalachia and rejected by most



Mountain Religion

- ☐ Mountain religion is a search for meaning
- ☐ Oral tradition is important
- ☐ Incubator for Pentecostalism and holiness movements
- ☐ Religiously conservative
- ☐ Extra-Biblical truth accepted by many
- ☐ To reject Appalachian religion is to reject the people
- ☐ Culture provides a lens through which Scriptures are interpreted

Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

- Denominations are not important**
 - Loyalty is to Christ**
 - Keep core beliefs from church to church**
 - Often fail to see the big picture**
 - Distrust big organizations and big churches**
 - The “company” view of church helps feed this type of thinking**
-

Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

- Baptist means different things to different people
 - Not all believe in eternal security
 - SBC seen as a sect in some parts
 - In parts of Appalachia, many churches are Southern Baptist for *convenience* not out of *conviction*.
- Baptist" in Appalachia may not mean the same thing that it means in the "Bible Belt" states.

Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

- ❑ Be careful about talking negative about other faith groups
- ❑ Like the smaller family type chapel
- ❑ Music (their type) is an important part of the worship experience



Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

- ☐ **Lay leadership is critical**
 - ☐ **Want a “preacher” to love them and get to know them**
 - **Relationships are important**
 - **Good preaching is important but not critical**
 - **CEO style pastor is “out”**
 - **Shepherding is “in”**
 - ☐ **Relationships are more important than the church’s goals, doctrine, growth**
-

Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

- ❑ **Congregation is “one committee”**
 - **Communication**
 - **Discussion can be heated – not mad but passionate about what they believe, even if it is wrong**
 - **Can subtly sabotage your plans, vote in conference**



Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

☐ Process time

- Will tell you what they think you want to hear**
- Your priority may not be “my priority”**
- Affects the vote in conference**
- Allow time for processing**

☐ Slow to make change

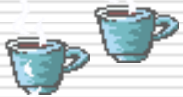
- Change only if convinced it is necessary**

☐ Stewardship – give toward a project rather than a budget

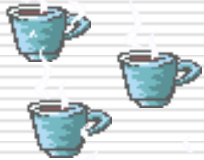
Four Cups Of Coffee Rule



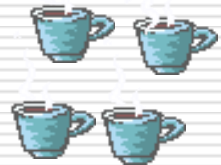
I will share a cup of coffee with you out of obligation.



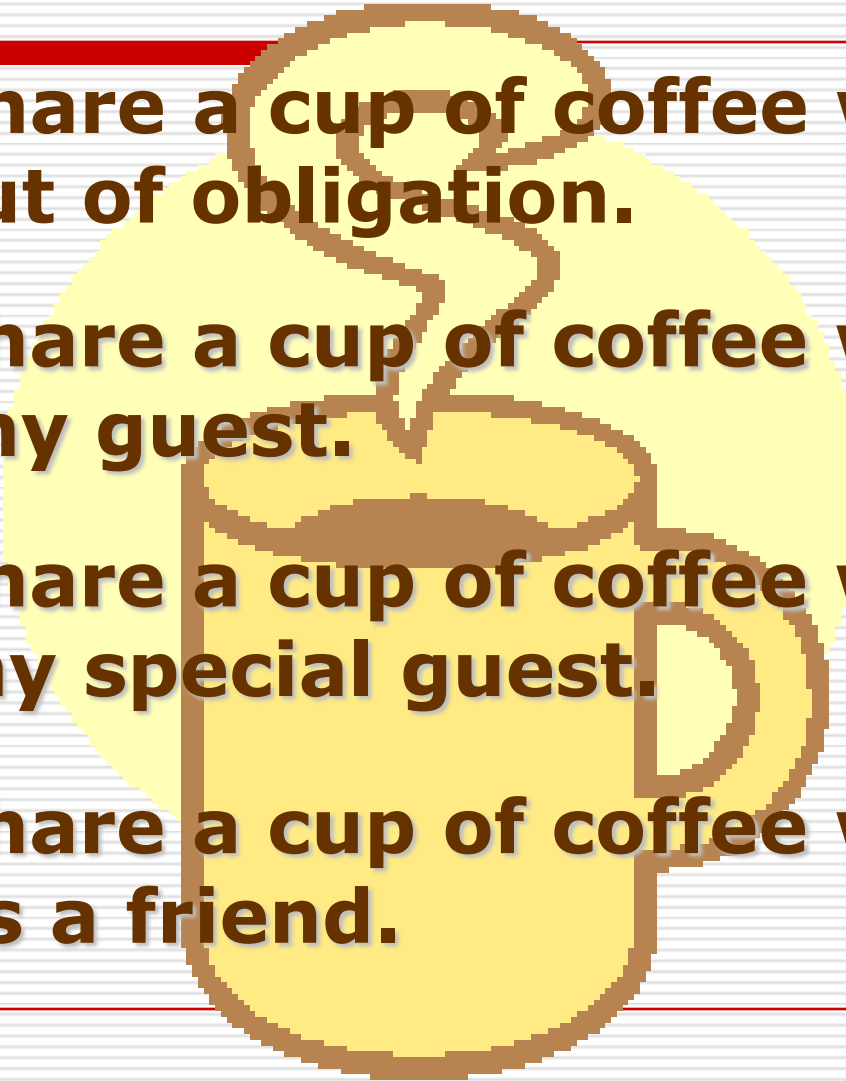
I will share a cup of coffee with you my guest.



I will share a cup of coffee with you my special guest.



I will share a cup of coffee with you as a friend.



Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

- Trust and Respect –must be earned.**
 - Don't be fooled by the surface friendliness**
 - Keeping Appointments**
 - Your priority may not be their priority**
 - Something more important to them may come up**
 - Conflict**
 - Often will talk to a mutual friend**
 - Offending one member can impact the whole church (family)**
-

Appalachian Culture Issues that Affect How We Do Church

☐ Humor

- Humor is often used to cover up pain, disappointment, fear ...

☐ Inter-family Relationships

☐ Literacy – education (view of)

☐ Role of women in the church

- More of a central Appalachia issue
- Female pastors
- Deaconess

Working with the Appalachian Church

- ☐ **Be patient**
- ☐ **Emphasize the Family**
 - **“Will the Circle Be Unbroken”**
- ☐ **Work with the existing leadership**
 - **Remember – “Your perception of a lack of leadership may not be theirs.”**
- ☐ **Do not impose your ideas of church on them**

Working with the Appalachian Church

- **Help them discover “core values”**
 - **Biblical**
 - **Baptist**
- **Make change slowly**
 - **Work through the existing leadership**
 - **Trust their judgment**
- **Allow for process time**



Working with the Appalachian Church

- ☐ **Teach them how to deal with conflict**
- ☐ **Earn their trust and respect**
- ☐ **Allow for “toot” time**
- ☐ **Learn their language/culture**
- ☐ **Accept the fact that you may never know “why”**

Working with the Appalachian Church

- ☐ Promote lay leadership
- ☐ Teach the Word of God
- ☐ Do not ignore the poverty
- ☐ Be cautious how you approach and deal with the literacy issue



Do and Don'ts

- ❑ **Do invest time to build relationships and trust**
- ❑ **Do keep the lines of communication open at all times**
- ❑ **Do involve them in the activity/ ministry/work**
- ❑ **Do define the expectations**
- ❑ **Do understand who is responsible for what**
- ❑ **Do be flexible**



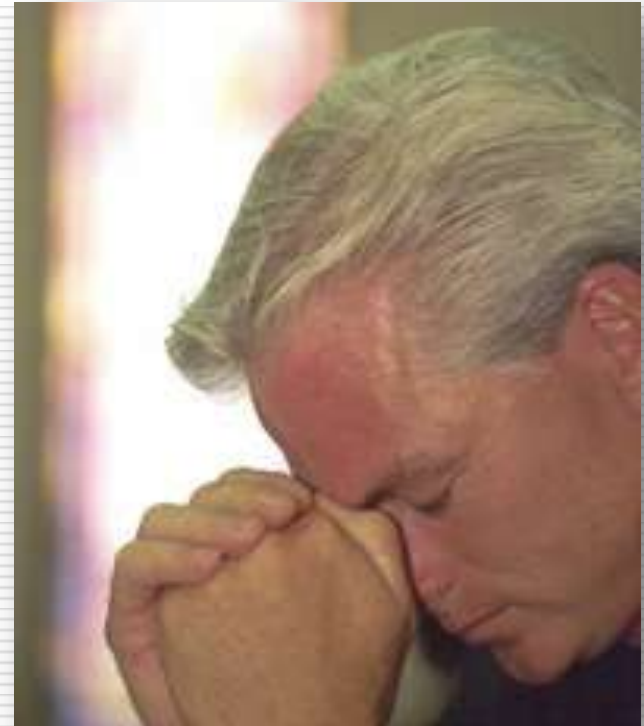
Do and Don'ts



- ☐ **Don't patronize me**
- ☐ **Don't ignore me**
- ☐ **Don't make promises you cannot keep**
- ☐ **Don't tell me how much better it is elsewhere**

Do and Don'ts

- ❑ **Don't superimpose your ideas on me**
- ❑ **Don't MAKE FUN of me. Appalachians resent being called "hillbillies."**
- ❑ **Remember: When you visit with me, "I don't talk funny, you do!"**



Appalachian Culture

Why Study Appalachian Culture and Values

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." (1 Corinthians 3:6 KJV)

Part 4

Bill Barker, Director

Appalachian Regional Ministry



The Appalachian

Image Was Developed By

- 1. Media – to sell books, magazines, and newspapers**
- 2. Government – to sell programs**
- 3. Missionaries – to raise support and funds**

Various Views

- 1. Popular National Image**
- 2. Official Government Image**
- 3. Industry's Longstanding Image**
- 4. Self Image of Appalachians**



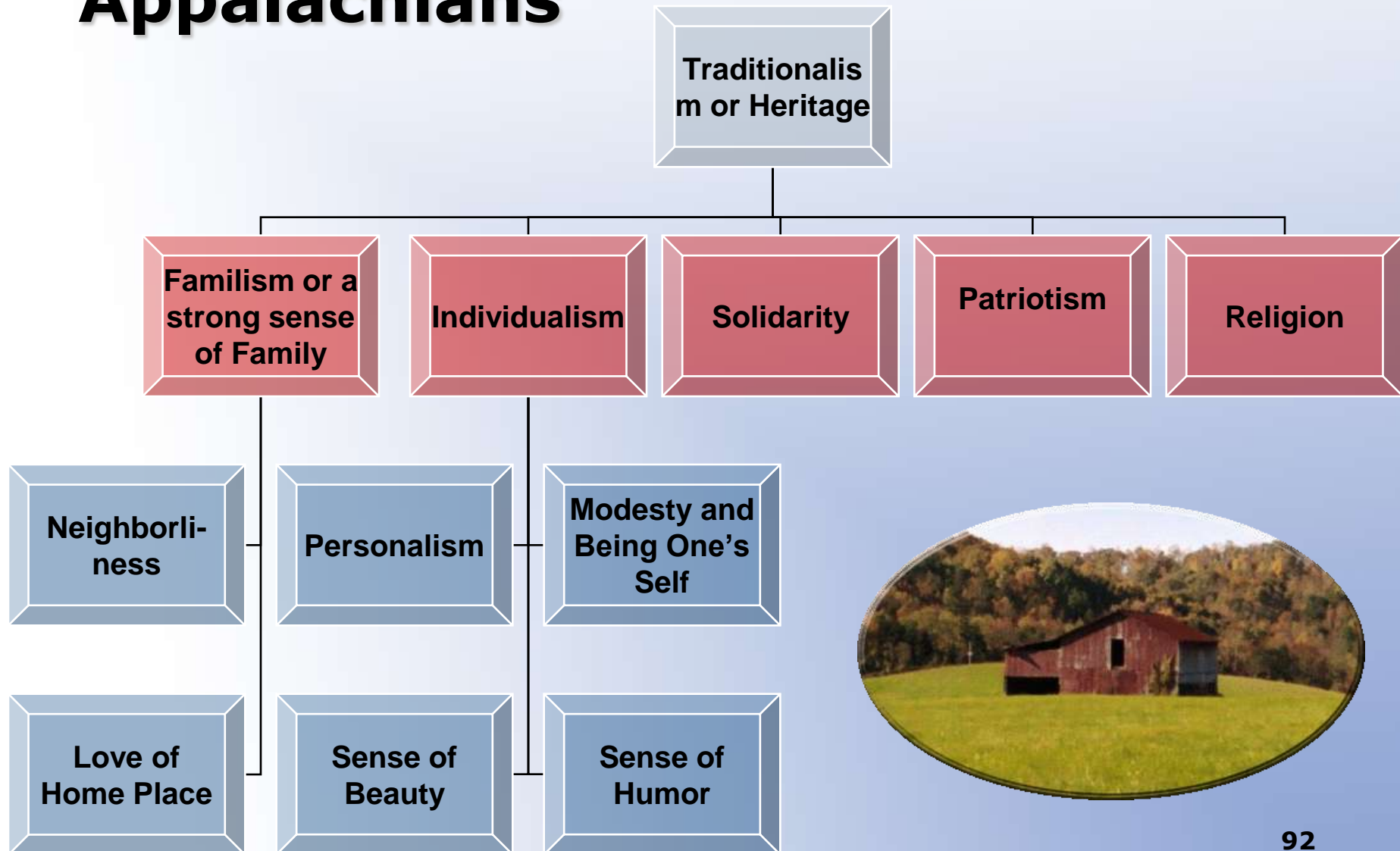
A Bicultural People

Appalachians have developed the ability to function biculturally. Exposure to the values of the greater society in addition to those of their own heritage has provided them the opportunity to utilize whichever values give most meaning to the immediate situation.

Appalachian Value Pattern

Those who are sensitive to and utilized Appalachian Values are more successful than those who are less sensitive or fail to recognize the values in attempting to minister or work in the region. (WVU Study)

Twelve Values Common to Appalachians



Appalachian Values

1. Traditionalism or Heritage – a Strong Love of Tradition.

- **Love of things as they are. Change comes slowly. There is a need for process time.**

2. Strong sense of family or Familism

- **Family centered; loyalty runs deep; responsibility may extend beyond immediate family; "blood is thicker than water." Relationships are very important. High value placed on good neighbors.**

Appalachian Values

3. Neighborliness and Hospitality - help each other out, but suspicious of strangers; spontaneous to invite people for a meal, to spend the night, etc.

- ☐ People are friendly, but not open to strangers.
- ☐ Trust is important. Tend not to ask your advice until they trust you.
- ☐ Relationships are important and deep relationships are developed slowly.

Appalachian Values

- 4. Love of Place - never forget "back home" and go there as often as possible; revitalizing, especially if a migrant; sometimes stay in places where there is no hope of maintaining decent lives**



Appalachian Values

5. Individualism, Self-Reliance, Pride - most obvious characteristics; look after oneself; solitude; freedom; do things for oneself; not wanting to be beholding to others; make do

- ☐ **Strong Work Ethic**
- ☐ **Courage**
- ☐ **We consider our way to be the best**
- ☐ **If we have to do it your way, then after you leave we will undo it**

Appalachian Values

- 6. Personalism - relates well to others; go to great lengths to keep from offending others; getting along is more important than letting one's feelings be known; think in terms of persons rather than degrees or professional reputations**



Appalachian Values

- 7. Modesty and Being Oneself - believe one should not put on airs; be oneself, not a phony; don't pretend to be something you're not or be boastful; don't get above your raising**
- 8. Sense of Beauty - displayed through music, folksongs, poems, arts, crafts, etc., colorful language metaphors**

Appalachian Values

- 9. Sense of Humor - seem dour (unfriendly), but laugh at ourselves; do not appreciate being laughed at; humor sustains people in hard times. Humor is often used to cover up personal pain, disappoint, or distrust. Humor can be filled with sarcasm.**
- 10. Strong sense of solidarity - Stick, together, even if you disagree, express yourself but stand together, especially against the outsider, government, or big organizations.**

Appalachian Values

- 11. Strong sense of Patriotism - goes back to Civil War times; flag, land, relationships are important; shows up in community celebration and festivals**



Appalachian Values

- 12. Strong Religious Beliefs - values and meaning to life spring from religious sources; fatalistic (outside factors control one's life, fate, believe things happen for a reason and will work out for the best); sustains people in hard times**



Factors That Affect Church Work or Ministry in Appalachia

Ministry in Appalachia

- 1. Geographical/Terrain of the state – travel is measured in time not miles. Creates a type of isolation in the remote, rural areas**
- 2. Literacy – most of the rural area has a high school dropout rate and a lower than average number of college graduates.**



Ministry in Appalachia

3. Economic issues –

- ☐ Poverty – a critical issues across most of Appalachia
- ☐ Low income – below the national average
- ☐ High income levels in other areas



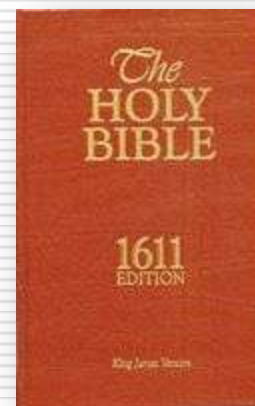
Ministry in Appalachia

- 4. Love of the family atmosphere – churches tend to be smaller than in other areas**
- 5. Strong love for autonomy, for independence.**
- 6. Distrust of denominations – denomination tends to believe that one size fits all. Exercise outside influence which is resisted and resented.**



Ministry in Appalachia

- 7. Strong Wesleyan – Arminian – Holiness – Pentecostal influence on one hand and the strong Arminian Baptist (do not believe in eternal security) influence on the other hand.**
- 8. Strong belief in the KJV Bible**
- 9. Love of free worship - music**
- 10. Lack of indigenous pastors**



Ministry in Appalachia

11. Population shifts and declining towns

- **Migration over the past 50 years has led to a serious decline in many areas.**
- **US Census projects flatten growth through 2025 in many areas**

12. Priority – your priority may not be my priority. I will say yes to you and either not show up or fail to participate.

Ministry in Appalachia

- 13. Titles/Professionalism in the church are frowned upon**
- 14. Aging Population/High level of disability**
- 15. Region is a stew or mosaic not a melting pot.**
- 16. Event driven/project –**
- 17. Stewardship is project/need driven**

Ministry in Appalachia

- 18. Matriarchal society – above average female pastors across the state in most denominations. Long history of female pastors and leadership in churches.**
- 19. Religious associations historically were formed for the purpose of fellowship. Hierarchy and control – real or perceived is resisted.**
- 20. Entitlement mentality – you owe me.**

Do and Don'ts

- ☐ **Do invest time to build relationships and trust**
 - ☐ **Do keep the lines of communication open at all times**
 - ☐ **Do involve them in the activity/ ministry/work**
 - ☐ **Do define the expectations – put them in writing if possible**
 - ☐ **Do understand who is responsible for what**
-

Do and Don'ts

- ☐ **Do be flexible**
 - ☐ **Do be honest about what you want to do**
 - ☐ **Don't patronize me**
 - ☐ **Don't ignore me**
 - ☐ **Don't make promises you cannot keep**
 - ☐ **Don't come with a preconceived agenda or plan of action**
-



Do and Don'ts

- ☐ **Don't superimpose your ideas on me**
- ☐ **Don't use money or gifts to manipulate me**
- ☐ **Don't talk about how much better it is at home**
- ☐ **Don't MAKE FUN of me. Appalachians resent being called "hillbillies."**



Front Porch Syndrome

You live in a company house
You go to a company school
You work for this company,
According to company rules.

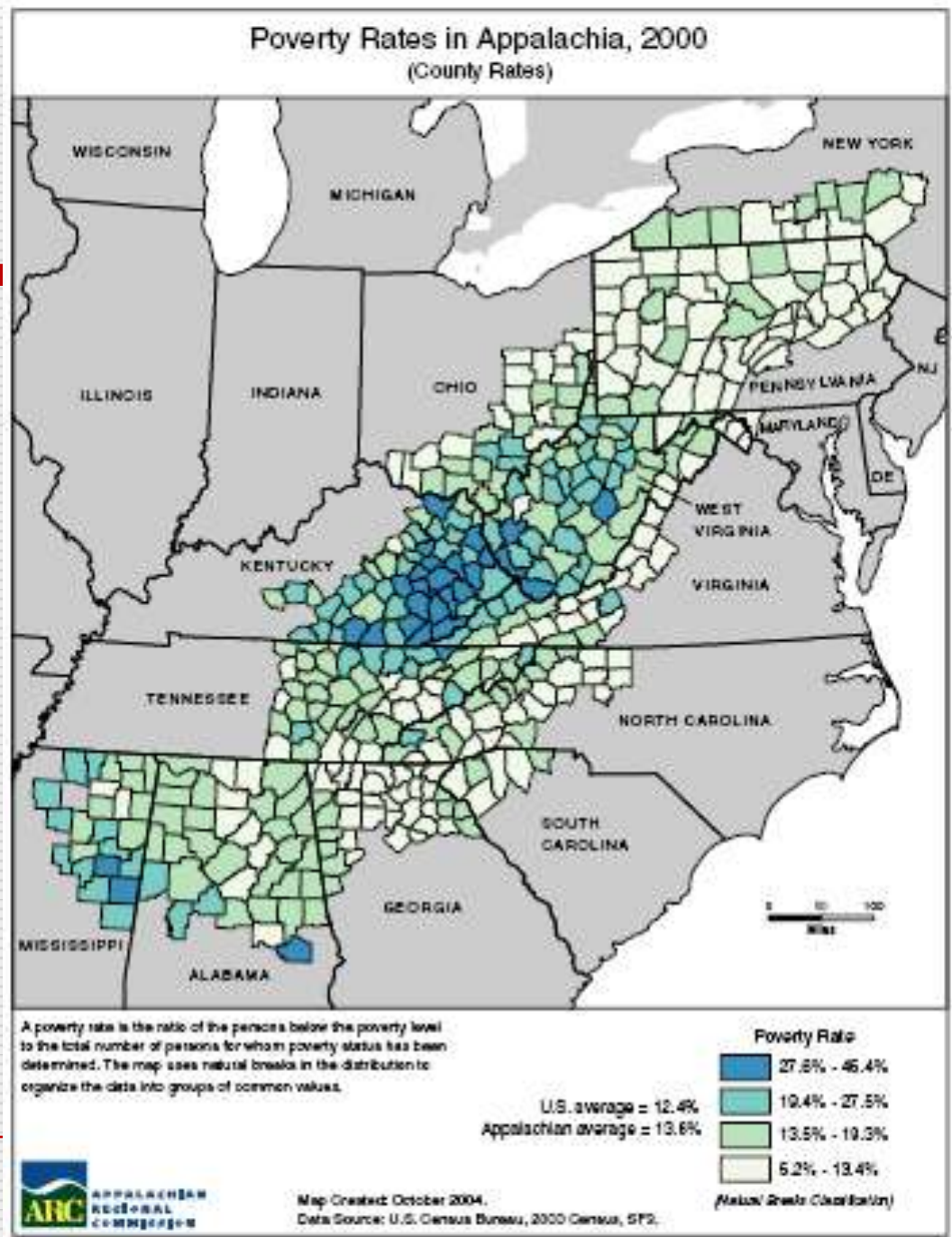
You all drink company water
And all use company lights,
That company preacher teaches us
What the company thinks is right.



Carl Sandburg

"The Company Town"

The Poverty



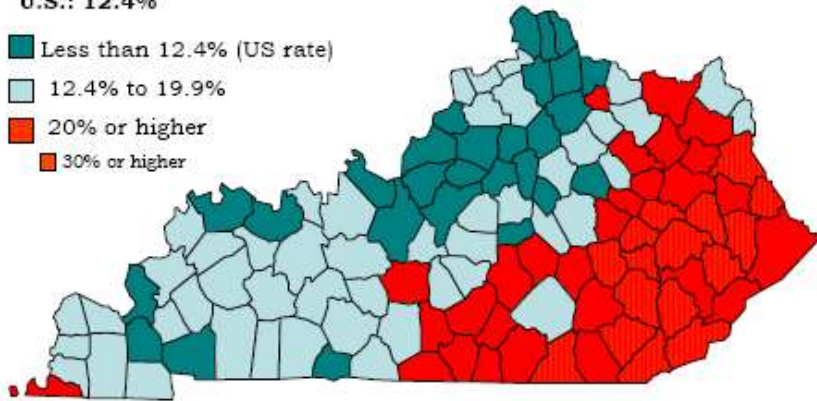
The Poverty



Percent of Population in Poverty, 1999

Kentucky: 15.8%
U.S.: 12.4%

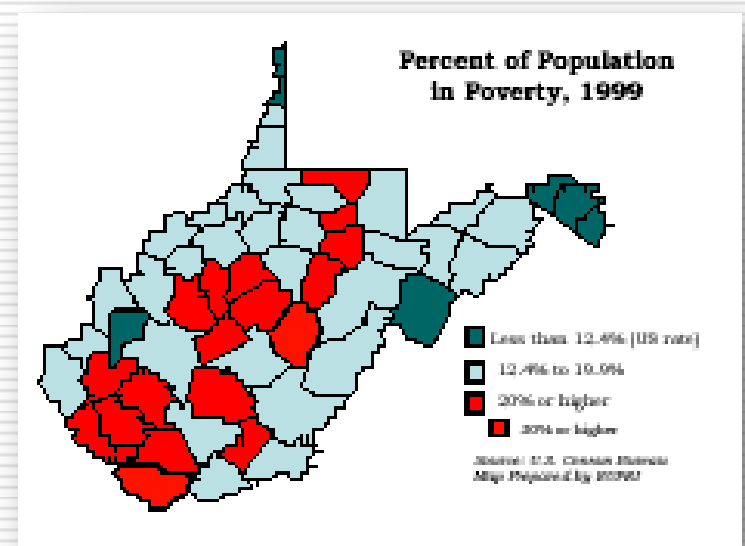
- Less than 12.4% (US rate)
- 12.4% to 19.9%
- 20% or higher
- 30% or higher



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Map prepared by RUPRI

37 of the top 100 Poorest Counties in the USA are in Central Appalachia



Levels of Literacy in States

- ❑ **Kentucky = Level 1= 19% & Level 1-2= 54%**
- ❑ **Tennessee= Level 1= 21% & Level 1-2= 53%**
- ❑ **Ohio = Level 1= 18% & Level 1-2= 45%**
- ❑ **West Virginia= Level 1= 20% & Level 1-2= 56%**



Just the Facts - Literacy

47% of all adults in America are level 1 or level 2 in literacy.

Level 1 – functionally illiterate

Level 2 – reads but limited, 8th grade or lower.

Level 3 - first functional level

Level 4 – high school graduate

Literacy is a big issue in helping people climb out of poverty. (Also impacts their Biblical view, worldview, etc.)

Final Thoughts

People in Appalachia need the hope we find in Jesus. Tell them the “most wonderful news” – there is hope!

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15 KJV).



Meeting Needs – Reaching People

“It is as we touch lives and meet needs that we earn the opportunity to share the gospel.”

(David Aker, Regional Mountain Missionary for the Kentucky Baptist Convention)



Ministering in Appalachia

Part 5

Bill Barker, Director
Appalachian Regional Ministry



Ministering in the Mountains

Too many non-indigenous volunteers or pastors leave the mountains wounded, misunderstood, sometimes feeling abused, having never felt accepted by those they came to serve.



Get to Know Where You Are Going

- ☐ **The Demographics**
 - ☐ **The past religious history**
 - ☐ **What is the predominate religious influence**
 - **Faith group/denomination**
 - ☐ **What is the Biblical understanding or literacy level of the area**
 - ☐ **What is the poverty level**
-

8 Marks for any Discussion of Mountaineer Religion

- 1. Puritanical behavior patterns or legalism/holiness (external rules)**
 - 2. Fundamentalists views of the Bible and doctrine**
 - 3. King James Bible**
 - 4. Little distinction between clergy and laity**
-

8 Marks for any Discussion of Mountaineer Religion

- 5. Sectarian concepts of the church and its mission (Isolation)**
- 6. Revivalism - emotion**
- 7. Informality in worship – testify when you want**
- 8. Local church autonomy/opposition to centralized authority of state or church.**

10 Factors That Affect Ministering in the Mountains

- 1. Appalachian Culture – a distinctive subculture in American that needs to be recognized as such**
- 2. Educational Level – varies across the state**
 - **“Good teacher, ain’t much of a preacher!”**
 - **Factors that impact literacy**
 - ☐ **Economics**
 - ☐ **Family Unit**
 - ☐ **Geographical/Isolation**

10 Factors That Affect Ministering in the Mountains

3. Distrust of outsiders – “furriners”

- **Historically Central Appalachia has been treated as a Third World County (controlled by outside interest)**
- **Absentee corporate ownership**
- **Outside attitude**
 - **Reflected in media**
 - **Reflected by government**
 - **Reflected by religion**

10 Factors That Affect Ministering in the Mountains

4. Out-migration

- 1950 – 2000 steady decline in population
- Resulted in a “brain drain”
- Impact on churches
- Impact on families
- Impact on the economy



10 Factors That Affect Ministering in the Mountains

5. Automation

- Industry – higher production, few employees
- Shift out of the state

6. Union and Politics

- “Leave your union, political and religious views at home.”

7. Economics

- It is hard to get poor people in church.
- The higher the poverty, the higher the unchurched.
- Great divide – between the haves and the have-nots.

10 Factors That Affect Ministering in the Mountains

8. Change

- Television
- Internet
- Social change
- Economic change
- Communities disintegrating
- Churches – aging, closing, dysfunctional

9. Religious culture

“Good people, but lost without Jesus.”

10 Factors That Affect Ministering in the Mountains

10. Respect the Family

- Respect and utilize holidays for ministry
- Respect the elderly
- Reach the children and the youth



10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

- 1. Get to know the people you are working with and in the community**
 - Visit in their homes, eat their food, drink their coffee
 - Visit, visit, visit and visit some more
 - Build relationships

10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

2. Identify with the people

- In dress
- Hunting
- Fishing
- NASCAR
- Housing
- School
- Community events



Remember!

**People don't care
how much you
know until they
know how much
you care!**



10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

- **Effective ministry in the mountains takes time.**
 - **4 to 5 years of consistent ministry to the same area is not unusual before you see effective ministry.**
 - **Long-term partnership work best.**



Four Cans of "Pop" Rule



I will share a can of pop with you out of obligation.



I will share a can of pop with you my guest.



I will share a can of pop with you my special guest.



I will share a can of pop with you as a friend.

10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

3. Respect your peers – preachers, other volunteers, and other faith groups

- **Historically many rural preacher's have lacked formal training, but they are not ignorant of the Bible.**
- **"To be college trained was not to be Holy Spirit taught."**
- **Say nothing negative about other faith groups.**

10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

- 4. As a norm most Appalachians enjoy free worship with lay participation.**
 - Strong independent mindset
- 5. Most Appalachians enjoy preaching with some animation (life) in it.**
- 6. Appalachian like storytelling.**
 - Illustrations are important
 - Sharing the gospel in story fashion is powerful
 - Telling your story of coming to faith in Christ is a powerful witnessing method

10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

7. Leave back home back home.

- Do not say, "This is the way we do it back home ..."
- Do not use the phrase – "Those people" or "them people."

8. Give them Hope that is Built Upon Christ

- Jesus did not preach a gospel with minimum requirements. Jesus came Ministering the Kingdom of God and inviting ordinary people to be apart of it.

10 Things To Remember When Ministering in the Mountains

9. Involve those you are working with in the planning stages of what you are doing or are planning to do.

10. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate ...



Appalachian Culture



The Appalachian mountaineers have been discovered and forgotten many times. They first attracted national attention during the civil War. Their primitive agriculture disrupted by foragers and incessant guerrilla warfare, thousands of them straggled out of the mountains in search of food and shelter. Their plight was brought to the attention of President Lincoln, who promised that after the war a way would be found to aid the poor mountain people whom the world had bypassed and forgotten for so long. The war ended, President Lincoln was assassinated, and Appalachia was forgotten.

Appalachian people are considered a separate culture, made up of many unique backgrounds - Native Americans, Irish, English and Scotch, and then a third immigration of Germans and Poles - all blended together across the region. The mountains also figure into the uniqueness of Appalachia. The mountains kept Appalachia isolated from the rest of the country and from other people's involvement in their lives that they developed a distinctive culture.

Appalachians are very independent, they are very contented with the places that they live, they are very close to nature, they have a deep sense of a belief in God, and they have a deep sense of being friendly and kind to one another and helping one another, and taking care of everyone else in their needs. Appalachians also have a strong sense of what is right and what ought to be and a deep mistrust of anyone who is new, anyone who is a stranger. They resist change.

Appalachia has a very long history of exploitation. The struggle continues as each new chapter is written. The area is extremely rich in natural resources, one of which might be considered its people. However, though fabulous wealth has been generated in Appalachia, the mountaineer's share in it has been held to a minimum.

This beautiful region of steep wooded hills, narrow valleys, and winding streams is a land of contradictions and tragedy. Appalachia has become synonymous with destitution and illiteracy, containing some of the poorest counties in the nation.

Appalachian culture is a real and functioning culture that is revealed through its arts and crafts, traditional music, traditional foods, its customs, its traditions, and its somewhat common language. Traditional foods such as greens, potatoes, and beans with cornbread and biscuits are the norm.

The Appalachian culture that we witness today is one that has been preserved mostly by the families and the churches. The constant attempts by the "outlanders" to change this culture are testimony to the determination and strength that persists in this culture. This culture is based on subsistence agriculture and hunting, not on industrial class structured ways of existence. The two key factors of the culture of Appalachia are the independence displayed and the constant mutual aid provided to others in the region. There is a sense of equality that exists between the people; this is of course in sharp contrast to the inequality and elitism that exists in other areas of modern society.

Culturally, there are four distinctive people groups in Appalachia. To fully understand Appalachia, it is important to recognize this diversity. One of the people groups consists of descendants of the original pioneers who settled in the region during the westward movement. These people tend to be landowners, politicians, and business people. The characteristic traits of this group are self-reliance, independence, hard working, stable, and strong family ties.

A second group is composed of the hard working coal miner, logger, or factory worker. They average worker has little education, few skills, a large family, no wealth, and few choices of vocation. While, for example, coal mining continues to be the largest financial contributor to the economy of West Virginia, poverty in the coalfields remains a daily and depressing reality.

The third group is the profession group. These are individuals and their families who have moved to Appalachia due to the profession (i.e. bankers, lawyers, teachers, ministers, etc.). Members of this group are usually not readily accepted by the Appalachians.

The fourth group is the returning Appalachians. This group consists of those who grew up in the mountains, moved away for employment, and are now returning to Appalachia. Many of them find it difficult adjusting to the lifestyle they left as a teenager.





Appalachians expect others to respect their freedom. Independence and self-sufficiency are very important characteristics of the people in the region. The friendly greetings and helping hands offered to strangers by the majority of Appalachians will impress the short-term visitor. One should not be misled by their friendliness. Mountain people as a whole are resistant to change, slow to accept outsiders, and are very reluctant to accept authority.

This region called Appalachia stretches from Pennsylvania to Mississippi and encompasses many cultures, all of which have some common values. The cultures are self-sufficient and independent. They have survived influxes of "outlanders" seeking coal, timber, natural beauty for recreation, and cheap labor. Many barriers exist within this culture when it comes to business support.

Entrepreneurship often suffers because of geography, the learning styles of entrepreneurs from this region, the workforce quality, the perceived negative attitude toward success, the regional insularity, and the general information available about capital.

Some notable elements of our Appalachian culture still survive. Many cultural traditions still survive like group games, homemade objects, storytelling, home and herbal remedies, clogging and flat foot dancing (a form of dance where the rhythm of the music is beaten out with the feet), tool making, basket making, quilting, and traditional music played on handmade instruments such as banjo, fiddle, and dulcimer. Many elements have been lost due to urban influences, changing times, or the mere facts of embarrassment or shame.

Many modern day Appalachians try to distance themselves from the "hillbillyness" that is associated by "outlanders" to the inhabitants of this region. Many young people try to forget the traditional ways and notions and adopt the new ways of thinking.

The language spoken in Appalachia is unique also. It is thought to be a blend of Scottish flavored Elizabethan English directly related to the migration patterns of early settlers from these regions. American film and television have done much damage to the image of the Appalachian culture. Displayed by such films as "Deliverance", and such television shows as "The Beverly Hillbillies" and by the comic strip, "Li'l Abner", Appalachian people were viewed as hopeless but proud, desperate but industrious, noble first generation frontier people, yet somehow ignorant and degenerate. This was in strong contrast to the way this region was originally described in the 1890s in terms of romantic wonder.

The word Appalachia is an old Indian word and it has a real definition - "endless mountain range." The Indians thought the Appalachian Mountains went on forever and ever and ever.

Today, Appalachian people are more diverse than ever, both rural and urban. Nevertheless, they share a common pride, common values, and a common heritage. The people in this region have suffered from industries such as oil, coal, mining, timber, and others. Having extracted the resources from this region and enjoyed many years of prosperity, a lot of these industries have left, leaving the landscape scarred yet beautiful, exploited yet underdeveloped. Even after all this, you will still find a people that are proud of strong family values, self-reliance, and pride.

The federal government today defines Appalachia as parts of West Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. It incorporates 397 counties in 13 states, covers a total of 195,000 square miles, and has a current population of over 20 million.

While religion is important in Appalachia, the reality is that better than 70% of the region is unchurched. Some counties are as high as 90% unchurched. Culture and religion are interwoven, and while mountain people believe the Bible, respect the church, and welcome anyone who comes in the name of the Lord, the organized aspects of religion have not been important factors to the people of Appalachia.



I hope you enjoy getting to know this new culture. An excellent resource to read in preparation for during ministry in Appalachia is Yesterday's People: Life in Contemporary Appalachia by Jack E. Weller and published by The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY. You can order the book through most bookstores.

A second resource is Appalachian Values by Loyal Jones and published by The Jesse Stuart Foundation.



Notes