

Salvation On Sand Mountain

Publisher Da Capo Press Reissue Edition

Salvation on Sand Mountain: Da Capo Press Reissue Edition – A Renewed Look at Appalachian Faith and Culture

The recent reissue of Dennis Covington's **Salvation on Sand Mountain** by Da Capo Press offers a timely opportunity to revisit this powerful and poignant exploration of Pentecostalism in the Alabama foothills. This compelling narrative, originally published in 1991, continues to resonate, offering invaluable insights into Appalachian culture, religious fervor, and the complexities of faith. This article delves into the book's enduring relevance, examining its literary style, key themes, and the significance of its reissue, focusing on aspects like **snake handling**, **Appalachian culture**, **Pentecostalism**, and the **literary merit** of Covington's work.

A Journey into the Heart of Appalachian Pentecostalism

Covington's **Salvation on Sand Mountain** isn't just a journalistic account; it's an immersive experience. He skillfully weaves a narrative that transcends simple observation, drawing the reader into the world of the Sand Mountain Holiness Church and its devoted followers. The book meticulously details the rituals, beliefs, and everyday lives of these communities, providing a nuanced and often surprising portrayal of their faith. The author's commitment to understanding, rather than judging, shines through in every page. This empathetic approach is what makes the book so compelling and ensures its continued relevance decades after its initial publication. The **reissue by Da Capo Press** ensures a new generation can access this important work.

The Power of Observation and Immersion

Covington doesn't simply report on the practices of snake handling; he immerses himself in the experience. He attends services, participates in rituals (within the ethical boundaries he sets for himself), and builds relationships with the community members. This approach allows him to present their beliefs not as exotic oddities, but as deeply held convictions rooted in a rich cultural and historical context. His immersion goes beyond simple observation, capturing the emotional intensity and spiritual passion central to their faith. The **snake handling** tradition, particularly, is explored with both respect and careful analysis.

Exploring Key Themes: Faith, Culture, and Community

Salvation on Sand Mountain tackles a multitude of themes, interweaving them to create a rich tapestry of human experience. The most prominent themes include the unwavering faith of the Sand Mountain community, the deeply ingrained cultural practices of Appalachia, and the intricate interplay between faith and community.

Faith and the Search for Meaning

The core of Covington's book is the unwavering faith of his subjects. He doesn't shy away from portraying the extremes of their beliefs, nor does he trivialize their convictions. Instead, he presents their faith as a source of strength, community, and meaning in the face of hardship and poverty. The book reveals the deeply personal and transformative power of their faith, highlighting how it shapes their lives and provides solace amidst difficult circumstances. This understanding of faith is a crucial element that contributes to the book's enduring appeal.

Appalachian Culture and Its Resilience

The book subtly reveals the resilience and distinctiveness of Appalachian culture. It highlights how faith is intrinsically linked to their way of life, shaping their values, traditions, and social structures. Covington's respectful portrayal of this culture adds another layer of depth to the narrative, showing how faith acts as a unifying force within this often-marginalized community. The **Appalachian culture** portrayed helps readers understand the deep roots of the beliefs he documents.

Pentecostalism and its Global Impact

The **Pentecostalism** explored in *Salvation on Sand Mountain* extends beyond the confines of Sand Mountain. Covington's work offers a window into a global religious movement, highlighting its adaptability and reach. The book shows how Pentecostalism takes root and adapts within specific cultural contexts, shaping and being shaped by the communities it embraces. This element adds a broader perspective to the narrative, transcending the specific geographical location and revealing the universal appeal of faith.

The Literary Merit and Enduring Relevance of *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Covington's prose is both descriptive and insightful. He masterfully employs literary techniques that enhance the reader's understanding and empathy. The book isn't just a factual account; it's a work of literary art. The **literary merit** of the work is undeniable, contributing significantly to its lasting impact. The Da Capo Press reissue ensures that this important piece of non-fiction remains readily accessible to a new generation of readers.

Conclusion: A Must-Read for Our Times

Salvation on Sand Mountain remains a potent and relevant read in the 21st century. Its exploration of faith, culture, and community transcends geographical boundaries and continues to resonate with readers interested in religious studies, anthropology, and American culture. The reissue by Da Capo Press is a valuable contribution, ensuring that Covington's insightful work continues to inform and inspire. It stands as a testament to the power of storytelling and the importance of understanding diverse perspectives, particularly within the context of faith and culture.

FAQ

Q1: What makes the Da Capo Press reissue significant?

A1: The reissue ensures the accessibility of this important work to a new generation of readers. It's a recognition of the book's enduring relevance and contribution to our understanding of Appalachian culture and Pentecostalism. Da Capo Press often reissues important works of non-fiction, and this choice reflects the book's continued importance.

Q2: Is the book suitable for readers unfamiliar with Pentecostalism?

A2: Absolutely. Covington's writing style is accessible and clear, even for those unfamiliar with Pentecostal beliefs. He provides sufficient context to understand the practices and beliefs discussed without requiring prior knowledge.

Q3: How does the book handle the sensitive topic of snake handling?

A3: Covington approaches the topic with respect and careful consideration. He avoids sensationalism, focusing instead on the spiritual and cultural significance of the practice within the community. He documents it accurately, but avoids exploiting it.

Q4: What are the key takeaways from reading *Salvation on Sand Mountain*?

A4: Readers will gain a deeper understanding of Appalachian culture, the power of faith in shaping communities, and the complexities of religious belief. It prompts reflection on the diversity of faith expressions and the importance of respectful engagement with different cultures.

Q5: Is the book primarily academic or journalistic in its approach?

A5: While rigorously researched and factual, the book possesses a strong narrative and literary element. It's a blend of immersive journalism and literary non-fiction, making it accessible and engaging for a broad audience.

Q6: How does the book contribute to discussions of religious tolerance?

A6: By presenting a respectful and empathetic portrayal of a sometimes-misunderstood religious community, the book fosters greater understanding and encourages tolerance for diverse belief systems. It shows the commonalities in the human experience regardless of faith.

Q7: Where can I purchase the Da Capo Press reissue edition?

A7: The reissue edition of *Salvation on Sand Mountain* is available at major online retailers like Amazon and Barnes & Noble, as well as many independent bookstores.

Q8: What are some similar books that explore similar themes?

A8: Readers interested in similar themes might explore works exploring Appalachian culture, Pentecostalism, or faith-based communities. Some suggestions include works by other writers focusing on similar Southern religious experiences, or ethnographic studies of Appalachian life.

A Renewed Look at the Appalachian Soul: Da Capo Press' Reissue of "Salvation on Sand Mountain"

Da Capo Press's republication of renowned journalist & author Dennis Johnson's "Salvation on Sand Mountain" offers a timely opportunity to reassess a important work of United States religious history and cultural study. This freshly available book isn't merely a bygone account; it's a forceful story that persists to resonate with readers today, providing insightful comments on the involved interplay between belief and culture in the U.S. South.

The book, originally issued in 1994, deeply investigates the lives of Pentecostal Christians in the remote corner of north Alabama. Johnson, through detailed journalism, portrays a vivid representation of a society deeply rooted in its faith, demonstrating how Pentecostalism has formed not only their faith lives but also their routine realities. He doesn't shy away from the paradoxes and difficulties inherent in this fervently spiritual setting.

Johnson's prose is both engaging and neutral. He adroitly interweaves together individual accounts with broader sociological settings, illuminating the impact of Pentecostalism on private choices, family dynamics, and the overall fabric of the community. He observes the joy and ecstasy associated with Pentecostal service, but also the potential for misuse, control, and the sometimes difficult relationship between Pentecostalism and the external world.

The Da Capo Press republication is particularly significant because it allows a new generation of readers to engage with Johnson's work. The topics explored in "Salvation on Sand Mountain" – the seeking for significance in life, the importance of faith in shaping private personalities, and the difficulties faced by rural communities – are as relevant today as they were when the book was initially issued. In an era of increasing

division and doubt, the book's examination of faith and culture can offer invaluable insights on constructing bridges and discovering common base.

Moreover, the new edition gives an moment to think on the development of Pentecostalism and its ongoing impact on the United States scene. The book serves as a important resource for scholars, students, and anyone interested in comprehending the interactions of religion, community, and government in the U.S. States. The Da Capo edition hopefully will introduce this essential work to a wider public.

In conclusion, Da Capo Press's reissue of "Salvation on Sand Mountain" is a significant event for those concerned in U.S. faith-based history, social studies, and the intricate relationship between faith and community. Through its engaging story and thought-provoking insights, the book continues to offer essential lessons for readers today, recalling us of the force of faith and the importance of understanding the different lives of our sister citizens.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What makes this reissue of "Salvation on Sand Mountain" special? This reissue offers a new generation access to a powerful work of religious and sociological reporting that remains highly relevant today. It provides a fresh opportunity to examine the intersection of faith and community in the American South.

2. What is the primary focus of Dennis Johnson's book? The book focuses on the lives and faith of Pentecostal Christians in a rural Alabama community, exploring the impact of Pentecostalism on their lives, culture, and society.

3. Is the book suitable for academic study? Absolutely. The book is widely used in academic settings, particularly in religious studies, sociology, and anthropology courses. Its rigorous research and insightful analysis make it a valuable resource for scholars and students.

4. What is the overall tone of the book? While exploring complex issues, Johnson maintains a largely objective and respectful tone. He avoids judgmental language and presents the community's experiences with sensitivity and empathy.

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