ABSTRACT

EVALUATING THE COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE CHANGES

IN THE WORLDVIEW OF A GROUP

OF EASTERN KENTUCKY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

RESULTING FROM A COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

by

Alan David Profitt

The stated purpose of this research was twofold: to test the hypothesis that a culturally defined worldview specific to Eastern Kentucky exists and that such a worldview exists as a function of a mutually causal dialectic between beliefs and existence, and secondly to determine if there was any change in that worldview as a result of a sixteen week course in religious studies at Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Floyd County, Kentucky.

The enquiry was designed to test the supposition that there is a culturally defined causal dialectic between worldview and existence that this culturally defined worldview is endemic to: our beliefs, attitudes, and values direct our day-to-day lives. Special consideration is given here to first order philosophic and religious beliefs. These first order beliefs are measured against the stereotypical and primarily pejorative view of Central Appalachian culture, especially that found in Eastern Kentucky. The religious orientation of the people of Eastern Kentucky is seen to be a formative dynamic in many of the first order beliefs noted in this paper.

This research used an explanatory, mixed-methods, nonprobabilistic, pre/post paired, two-tailed t-test model to address two primary research questions. The study was

carried out in a sixteen-week semester at BSCTC in the fall of 2013 and employed an explanatory, mixed-methods design yielding data from three primary sources; 1) a worldview assessment instrument (The Worldview Assessment Instrument—Six Common Dimensions) created by Mark Koltko-Rivera; 2) a semester paper entitled *My Worldview and my Life-plan*; and 3) focus group, student interviews.

The findings of this study supported an extant, religion-oriented, culturally defined worldview endemic to the people of Eastern Kentucky. The findings indicated little or no change to that endemic worldview as a result of the intervention project. The data further indicated a propensity for participants to be satisfied and content with the extant, Eastern Kentucky worldview they had developed as members of the immediate culture. No causal connection could be found linking the pervasive poverty and economic instability of the area and an existent, Eastern Kentucky worldview.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

EVALUATING THE COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE CHANGES

IN THE WORLDVIEW OF A GROUP

OF EASTERN KENTUCKY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

RESULTING FROM A COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

presented by

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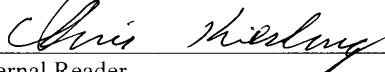
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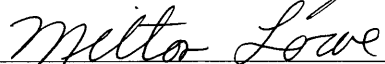
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A Dissertation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIXES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

> We are what we think.
> All that we are arises with our thoughts
> With our thoughts we make the world.
> —Buddha (Dhammapada)

This research was rooted in three basic premises. The first premise is that beliefs

and the attitudes arising from these beliefs form predicates that are both necessary and

essential for individual and communal human existence. The second premise guiding this

research is that these beliefs and attitudes can be distilled to a set of deductive, religious,

and/or philosophical first-order beliefs. The third presupposition underlying this research

is that these first-order predicates are locked in a mutually formative embrace with both

culture and tradition. This dance among first-order beliefs, culture, and tradition is

referred to in the literature as a worldview.

These three premises suggest that human lives are lived out in a mutually

influential dialectic between beliefs and the existential and sociological expression of

those beliefs in attitudes, actions, and relationships. Richard W. Hanson emphasizes this

dialectic between beliefs and behavior:

> It has long been belt by observers of human behavior that there is a
> tendency for [human beings] to develop, as [they] grow older, an
> organized coherent view of the world. This view of the world, or
> *Weltanschauung*, develops out of man's complex interaction with his
> social and physical environment and probably serves to lend a certain
> amount of stability and predictability to his life experiences. (1)

Andrew P. Johnson advocates for a direct correlation between beliefs, ideas, and the way

we live ("Personality" 833). Wilhelm Dilthey says, "Reflection on life [i.e. our thoughts,

beliefs, and ideas] shapes our life experience" (22). Jesus of Nazareth said, "[F]or from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries..." (Mark 7.21; NASB). René Descartes' famous adage, *cogito ergo sum* rests on the philosophical supposition that human lives are an expression of thoughts. Dilthey remarks, "World views develop under different conditions, climate, races, nationalities determined by history and through political organization, the time-bound confines of epochs and eras" (27). Again Dilthey says, "Reflection on life shapes our life experience" (22). Dilthey states even more emphatically, "The ultimate root of any worldview is life itself" (21). The tie between worldview and the lived out praxis of life is clearly seen and attested to by scholars and philosophers throughout the ages.

The position taken by Johnson, Descartes, Dilthey, and Jesus leads to the consideration of a possible, causal dialectic operating between ways of thinking and quality of life. Beliefs, especially those critical to the elementary philosophical and religious dimensions of the lives of human beings, when taken as a whole, comprise a worldview that is both fluid and interactive. This sort of thinking follows that of G. W. F. Hegel who acknowledges that "the essence of personhood and life are the philosophic (and religious) ideas, beliefs, and attitudes comprising the will, which is, in essence, the person" (67). Both Hegel and his reluctant protégé Marx saw clearly the relationship between thoughts and acts.

Beliefs do much to shape human existence. As evidence of this phenomenon, for centuries Krampus the Christmas Demon, a character in Germanic folklore, has frightened the children of central Europe. Krampus purportedly issues forth each year around Christmas to gather up little children who have been naughty. He then places

them in a sack and carries them off to drown them, eat them, or carry them to hell

("Horror"). Although this demonic figure is purely fictitious, he still strikes fear in the

children of central European countries. Those children *believe* Krampus exists and their

lives reflect that belief. The legends surrounding Krampus the Christmas demon are

colorful examples of how lives and life styles are shaped by legends and folkways that

reflect the commonly held beliefs of various cultures.

While Eastern Kentucky has no such tradition as Krampus the Christmas demon,

a particular collection of culturally defined beliefs in this section of Central Appalachia

do exist (Russ 1). These culturally defined beliefs provide the interpretative spiritual,

psychological, cognitive, and emotive responses the people of that region make to the

world around them. These beliefs contribute to a regional identity, defining the people

who inhabit the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and forming a regionally specific view of

what is ultimate, what is real, what is good, what is right, what is true, what is to be

valued, what is to be pursued, and what is to be feared and avoided (Cooper, Knotts, and

Livingston 28).

Worldview as a Concept

The most basic beliefs in any belief system are those philosophical and religious

beliefs that deal with the important questions surrounding human essence and human

existence: questions concerning human identity, origins, and ultimate end, questions

concerning why events happen as they do and why life has to be so difficult (Soccio 2;

Huston Smith 10; Johnson; "Personality" 833). Religious beliefs in particular offer

significant explanations and answers for these basic, core existential questions shared by

individuals and groups within societies and cultures (L. Jones, Appalachian Values 47;

Leonard xix). Over time, these religious beliefs along with cultural, societal, familial, and

personal philosophical beliefs coalesce to form a comprehensive belief system, creating

in the life of the individual a personal worldview and, for indigenous people groups, a

cultural worldview. Mark E. Koltko-Rivera defines worldview in this way:

> A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in
> terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of
> beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what
> exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects
> or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and
> relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can
> be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In
> addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines
> what goals should be pursued. Worldviews include assumptions that may
> be unproven, and even un-provable, but these assumptions are
> superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological
> foundations for other beliefs within a belief system. (2)

The limiting statements and assumptions to which Koltko-Rivera refers are the

metaphysical substrates underlying first-order principles that form the building blocks of

a systematic worldview. Koltko-Rivera clearly defines the first principles involved in the

formation of a comprehensive worldview:

> Worldviews are sets of beliefs and assumptions that describe reality. A
> given worldview encompasses assumptions about a heterogeneous variety
> of topics, including human nature, the meaning and nature of life, and the
> composition of the universe itself, to name but a few issues. (2004 2)

A worldview is "the interpretative lens" through which existence and reality are viewed:

"A set of mental constructs that make one's world meaningful" (Miller and West 3).

Andrew P. Johnson relates worldview to beliefs and belief systems:

> Our belief systems include what we think about the nature of reality. As
> we encounter new data we use this network to interpret, analyze, and
> organize this data. Our belief systems also act as filters to eliminate data
> that does not correlate with our constructs. In this sense, our beliefs can
> limit our perceptions and keep us trapped in our current ways of thinking.
> ("Belief Systems" 8)

In all these instances, there seems to be unanimity in the idea that some basic set of first-order beliefs and ideas undergirds and forms the superstructure for individual and communal human existence in the world.

The History of the Concept

Both David K. Naugle and Koltko-Rivera trace the history of the term *worldview* from its inception as expressed in the thinking of Immanuel Kant. Both these scholars attribute the formal exposition of the term worldview (the German *Weltanschauung*) to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, published in 1790 (Naugle xix). Naugle traces the evolution of that term to its fullest exposition located in the thinking of Wilhelm Dilthey as presented in volume eight of Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schrift* (Collected Writings Naugle 84). Naugle says, "This material… justifies labeling Dilthey the 'father of worldview theory'" (84). This linear movement from Kant to Dilthey and beyond solidifies the importance of the term worldview in postmodern, philosophical parlance.

Naugle states the importance of Dilthey's claim that the concept of worldview provides a solution to the perennial philosophic problem, the common reference in philosophy to the idea that nothing definitive can ever be concluded about the human condition and the nature of humanity (Dilthey 18). In addressing this problem, Dilthey concludes "the ultimate root of any world view is life itself" (21). In other words, Dilthey believes that philosophers and theologians must look in a different direction in attempting to solve the metaphysical and ontological problems of humanity. In Dilthey's view, the proper direction to follow in probing the deep questions of life, death, eternity, and human existence is not historical philosophy. According to Dilthey an objective manifestation in human existence (21-22) must be sought. For Dilthey, this objective manifestation forms the superstructure that defines the individual lives of human beings.

> [T]his life, which Dilthey almost seems to divinize, is not the personal life of individuals, but life in its objective manifestation, life which everywhere possesses identical traits and common features.' The particulars of daily experience—a bench, a tree, a house, a garden—are 'meaningful only in this objectification. The experience of this objectified life is the beginning point of a worldview (Naugle 86).

This sort of objectification provides an overarching understanding and categorization of the particular events and ideas that make up our daily existence. A worldview, in this sense, is a cognitive manual for living providing guidance by serving as an anchor and a lens through which our place in the world is both seen and understood.

Prior to Dilthey's analysis of worldview, Soren Kierkegaard had employed what he called *Livanskuelse* (lifeview) to explicate an existential understanding of the individual nature of a guiding principle of life and living. In his short treatise, *From the Papers of One Still Living*, Kierkegaard discusses what Naugle describes as "a deep and satisfying view of life that would enable [Kierkegaard] to become a total human self" (75). In making this determination, Kierkegaard laid the groundwork for Dilthey's corrective to the perennial problem of philosophy.

This brief introduction to the concept and the evolution of the concept of worldview is certainly not meant to be exhaustive. Instead, it is noted here in an effort to introduce the reader to the concept and to the worth attributed to the concept by some of the great minds of the past few centuries. It is meant also to raise in the mind of the reader the possible effects changes in worldview might have in the daily lives of real people.

Worldview, Beliefs, and Eastern Kentuckians

Dilthey maintains that worldviews are fluid and that they reflect a *Zeitgeist* (Spirit of the Age) as that *Zeitgeist* is reflected in religion, literature, art, and music (44). In

positing this understanding of worldview, Dilthey's thinking draws from an Hegelian well. Just as G.W.F. Hegel postulated a metaphysical and epistemological dialectic of ideas marking subsequent ages (60), so Dilthey theorizes a similar sort of fluid movement of ideas he calls a "historical consciousness" (44). Both Hegel and Dilthey advocate for a historically and contextually defined worldview consisting of what Dilthey summarizes as "our familiar triad, cognition of reality, appraisal of life, and the setting of goals" (44).

The thinking of both Hegel and Dilthey would indicate worldviews are shaped and defined by the spirit of a given culture in a given period in history. Such an understanding can then be introduced into this present study and applied to the dominant Central Appalachian culture evidenced in Eastern Kentucky. As with any indigenous people group, a worldview specific to Eastern Kentucky is comprised of a broad set of culturally defined, philosophical, psychological, cognitive, emotive, and spiritual orientations to reality and truth.

This current study considered the effect of education on the attitudes and beliefs underlying the culturally defined worldview of community college students in a five-county area of Eastern Kentucky. These attitudes and beliefs, and many others, have historically existed alongside a set of individual and societal problems endemic to the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. These problems have manifested themselves in a culture defined by poverty, blunted self-efficacy, and demoralization (Sarnoff 124; Jacobson 1; Clark and Kissane 733). This rather debilitating life style forms the practical impetus for this dissertation.

While the effects of education on the worldview of Eastern Kentuckians is not well represented in the literature, the effects of regional enculturation on the thought

patterns of people and groups have been the focus of many anthropological and sociological studies (e.g., McNeil; Billings and Blee; Englehardt; Harkins; Shapiro). Unfortunately, as previously noted, these studies have often portrayed the region in the most egregious forms of caricaturization in cartoons and comic strips (Cooper, Knotts, and Livingston 26). The Appalachian Community Fund (ACF) notes, "Appalachian culture and people are consistently misrepresented in media with programming such as The Beverly Hillbillies, Lil Abner & Daisy Mae, Appalachian Emergency Room and Deliverance" (About Us, ACF). These characterizations of Central Appalachian residents are both denigrating and deleterious.

The problem this research study addressed was the well-documented, historical reality of an ongoing struggle in the lives the indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky as they participate in a larger, Central Appalachian subculture marked by pervasive poverty, hopelessness, mistrust of outsiders (including the government), and a sense of demoralization and blunted self-efficacy. The research looked for evidence that this impoverished existence is manifested in the ideas and beliefs these residents hold about life and themselves.

Purpose

This study set out to explain the impact on worldview occurring as a result of an educational experience where worldview was the primary academic consideration. The purpose of this study was to determine the cognitive and affective changes in the worldview of a group of Eastern Kentucky community college students occurring as a result of a college-level course in religious studies.

The research intervention project that serves as the crux of this study set out to investigate the relationship between the beliefs and attitudes constituting an overall worldview, and material existence in the world. More specifically, this research intended to examine the concept of worldview established in the literature as a comprehensive way of viewing life and to explain changes to worldview that resulting from an educational encounter with religious and philosophical ideas, treating a mutually influential relationship between thinking and being.

Research Questions

Two primary research questions and several ancillary questions provided the structure of this study. These included questions surrounding a possible, dialectical relationship between worldview and quality of life, both in general and specific to this study, in Eastern Kentucky. This study raised these questions in an attempt to explain the relationship between worldview and lifestyle in Eastern Kentucky residents.

Research Question #1

What were the initial beliefs defining student worldview reflected in the pre-intervention administration of the Koltko-Rivera's, WAI?

Research Question #2

What cognitive and affective changes in student worldview occurred as a result of the research intervention project?

Definition of Terms

In this paper, the term *demoralization*, coined by Jerome Frank, carries the meaning attributed to it by Juliet C. Jacobsen, Guy Maytal, and Theodore A. Stern wherein demoralization is identified by loss of morale and the will to flourish and

"represents a persistent failure to cope with internally or externally induced stress" (Jacobson, Maytal, Stern 139). Frank believes demoralization leaves one feeling impotent, isolated, and in despair."

Frank's idea of demoralization is tied to the correlative idea of self-efficacy. The term self-efficacy is used by Albert Bandura as a measure of self – actualization:

> [P]eople's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacious beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. (71)

Both demoralization and diminished self-efficacy go hand-in-hand with the inability of an individual to relate positively to his or her environment and successfully accomplish normal life goals. Both terms define personal perceptions reflecting a negative worldview. Demoralization and self-efficacy are therefore inversely related. The implication created by the operational definitions of demoralization and self-efficacy is that the higher the level of demoralization the greater the reduction in self-efficacy.

Ministry Project

This study investigated the possible existence and nature of a culturally defined worldview peculiar to Eastern Kentucky and examined possible changes to this worldview coming about as the result of a one-semester course in religious studies at Big Sandy Community and Technical College (BSCTC), one of sixteen sister two-year institutions comprising the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

The investigative intervention project examined changes to the initial worldview of study participants resulting from REL 101, a one-semester, college-level course in religious studies. This course is defined in the KCTCS course catalog:

> Introduction to Religious Studies introduces students to the study of religion, emphasizing the varieties, differences, and similarities of religious experience and expression. Examines the interaction between religious experience and expression and social and cultural contexts through study of selected examples. Lecture: 3 credits (45 contact hours). Components: Lecture Attributes: Cultural Studies, AH Arts and Humanities, AH Humanities, SB Social Behavior Science, SB Religion. (338)

I enlarged the course description to include the following addendum: The reading and instructional emphasis in REL 101 will focus on the basic philosophical and religious beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and values that comprise an individual, yet culturally shared, worldview. A worldview, simply defined, is "a particular philosophy or view of life; a concept of the world held by an individual or a group" (Oxford English Dictionary). Simply put, a worldview is a particular way of understanding the world; a metaphysical, ontological, axiological, epistemological, and ethical view of life. Course competencies, goals, and objectives as well as a description, outline, and structure of REL 101 is found in the syllabus in Appendix A.

In addition to the KCTCS goals listed in the syllabus, this course emphasized four, course-specific goals:

1. Students taking REL 101 became familiar with the history of the word *worldview* as it has developed over the past two centuries.

2. Students taking REL 101 will become familiar with the philosophical and religious worldviews of various cultural groups around the world through an interaction with Ninian Smart's *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs.*

3. Students taking REL 101 came to a better understanding of their own worldview and the core, culturally shaped religious and philosophical beliefs that stand in a mutually influential dialectic with that worldview.

4. Students taking REL 101 investigated and identified a Central Appalachian/ Eastern Kentucky worldview and how that worldview compares with a postmodern worldview embodied in the greater United States.

Using this revised course description and the addition of these course-specific goals, this study chronicles and provides explanations for the changes that occurred as a result of the intervention project and what implications these changes might have in the lives of the student participants in the study. Generalizations were formed based on an interpretation of the data and an application of that data to the larger, indigenous population of Eastern Kentucky.

Students taking REL 101 took the WAI at the beginning and the end of the semester. Changes in student worldview that come about as a result of the class will be noted and discussed in this study. Students not desiring to take part in this doctoral research intervention project will be allowed to take the course and complete the normal and regular assignments listed in the syllabus for credit without taking the WAI.

I held some initial hypotheses at the outset of this research. I held the hypothesis that an actual, identifiable, regionally specific worldview exists in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. I also hypothesized that this worldview reflects a pervasive demoralization resulting in decreased self-efficacy. Third, I held the hypothesis that certain cognitive and affective changes to initial student worldview would emerge from an analysis of the pre/post administration of the WAI. A fourth hypothesis anticipated

that changes in worldview coming about as a result of the intervention project would indicate constructive changes in beliefs, values, and attitudes commensurate with a more hopeful and energized life prospect for participants.

Context

This study took place on the Prestonsburg campus of BSCTC in Floyd County, Kentucky. BSCTC serves a five-county area comprised of Magoffin, Martin, Floyd, Johnson, and Pike Counties. These five counties sit squarely in the Appalachian Mountain region of Eastern Kentucky, which, along with Western West Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, and Northeastern Tennessee, encompass Central Appalachia as designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Historical Context

Kentucky is divided into seven physiographic regions that were very attractive to settlers moving west through the Cumberland Gap (see Figure 1.1). Even now, with the environmental degradation resulting from auger and strip mining and denudation of the timber of the old hardwood forests, the mountains of Eastern Kentucky offer a beautiful and bucolic setting that is both historically rich and culturally captivating.

In 1769, John Finley led some of the earliest white settlers into Kentucky. Other pioneer groups led by Daniel Boone in 1775 and Dr. Thomas Walker in 1758 soon followed, making the trek from Virginia into the region that would become Eastern Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap (McCauley 372; Chinn 26). Richard B. Drake states that this region that would become Eastern Kentucky has become "the symbolic heart of central Appalachia" (vii). These early settlers were primarily of Scotch-Irish descent (Drake 35-38). Drake posits an interesting hypothesis that the dire circumstances

now affecting Eastern Kentucky can actually be traced to this Scots-Irish heritage in that those who came to America were, in many cases, indentured servants from the back country of Scotland and Ireland as well as "criminals who agreed to deportation and indenture in lieu of prison time in England" (37). Drake further posits that this sort of peasant mentality never really went away, and much of the way Eastern Kentuckians see themselves today has its roots in that heritage.

Drake's hypothesis carries a good deal of weight when measured by the evidence of a pre-Elizabethan English spoken by the back-country Scotch-Irish that still characterizes the current-day dialect of the Eastern Kentucky Coalfields. Tony Early comments on the archaic nature of the language of Eastern Kentuckians:

> In less generous regions of the American culture, the sound of Appalachian dialect has come to signify ignorance, backwardness, intransigence, and, in the most extreme examples, toothlessness, rank stupidity, and an alarming propensity for planting flowers in painted tractor tires. (Evans 208)

Early is almost certainly correct in his explanation of a particular dialect endemic to Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia. Regrettably, this outmoded manner of speech is not often understood by those outside this subculture.

Richard B. Drake agrees with Early:

> The Scotch-Irish [Appalachian settlers]spoke a dialect in the eighteenth century that was then a version of a dialect "already old by the time of Elizabeth" ... the love of the "r" as in fire (far), hair (har), and bear (bar) ... the use of "h" for specific emphasis as "hit" (it), "hain't" (ain't), and "hyander" (yonder). (36-37)

These are all commonly used pronunciations I heard every day growing up in Eastern Kentucky.

Eastern Kentucky is often referred to as the Eastern Kentucky Coal Fields:

"The Eastern Kentucky Coal Field is part of a larger physiographic region called the Cumberland Plateau which extends from Pennsylvania to Alabama. The eastern edge of the Eastern Kentucky Coal Field (and the Cumberland Plateau) is called the Pottsville or Cumberland Escarpment." (The East Kentucky Coal Fields) (see Figure 1.1).
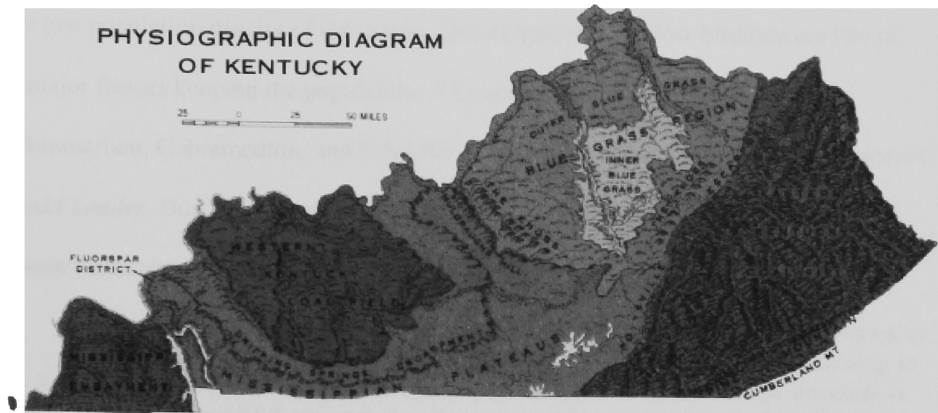
Source: Kentucky Geological Survey
Figure 1.1. Map of Kentucky.

Eastern Kentucky is an overwhelmingly rural region. The five counties studied in this research are considered to be in the heart of the Eastern Kentucky mountain region and have an overall population density of 64.9 people per square mile. This very rural and sparsely settled region compares to a greater population density of 146 people per square mile for non-Appalachian Kentucky (US Bureau of Economic Analysis). The largest urban center within a fifty-mile radius of the five-county research area is Pikeville with 6,900 residents, according to the Pikeville city webpage, an increase of 2000 persons from the 2,000 national census (Pikeville, KY). According to Mapquest distance data and Kentucky city population data from the United States Census Bureau, the two closest urban centers are Ashland and Winchester, Kentucky. Ashland, with a population of over

21,000 in Northern Kentucky, is seventy-three miles northeast of the five-county area,

and Winchester, with a population in excess of 18,000, is seventy-nine miles to the

northwest of the study area.

This data reflects the rural nature of Eastern Kentucky and partially explains the

very low population density of the region. Out-migration and a low birthrate are two of

the major factors keeping the population of Eastern Kentucky relatively low

(Gebremariam, Gebremedhin, and Schaeffer 102). In a newspaper article in the *Lexington*

Herald Leader, Dori Hjalmarson and Linda Johnson sum up the population situation in

Eastern Kentucky in this way:

> Even as population trickled out of many rural and Appalachian counties in
> Kentucky, the numbers of people 65 and older kept growing, according to
> 2010 U.S. Census data released Thursday. The aging of baby boomers is
> not a trend that's new or unique to rural Kentucky, but the fact that the
> overall population has shrunk in many rural counties makes the trend more
> pronounced.
>
> In 12 of the 36 counties whose overall population declined since the
> last census in 2000, the 65-and-older population increased by double
> digits. In Menifee County, for example, the overall population declined by
> 3.8 percent to 6,306, but the number of people 65 and older grew by 30.2
> percent, to 1,005.
>
> That differs from urban counties such as Fayette, which saw growth
> in all age categories. Fayette County still saw the most growth in 65-and-
> older, at 18.9 percent, but the 5-and-younger group was right behind, at
> 18.6 percent growth. "What you're seeing is the population loss in East
> Kentucky was basically the population under age 45," said Ron Crouch,
> statistics and research director for the Kentucky Education and Workforce
> Development Cabinet. Migration of the working population in search of
> jobs is a factor, but a lower birthrate in Eastern Kentucky is an equal force,
> Crouch said, as well as the birth boom between the Great Depression and
> World War II.What you'll find is ... it's really that 75-plus group that is
> growing. (n.p.).
>
> In-migration is a significant indicator of economic vibrancy. The fact that
> the population of Eastern Kentucky continues to shrink is indicative of a
> static or diminishing economy.

The data in Table 1.1 goes further in revealing the population problem faced by those who would like to see economic growth in Eastern Kentucky. The five counties studied in this research show a marked decline in the school-age population and growth of the number of people over the age of 65.

Table 1.1 Population Shifts in the Five-County Study Area

County School	School-Age Population Gain or Loss %	Over 65 Population Gain or Loss %
Magoffin	-9.0	+24.3
Martin	-22.0	+22.3
Johnson	-8.0	+11.7
Floyd	-13.8	+3.5
Pike	-13.1	+5.6
Area average	-13.2	+13.5

Source: Hjalmarson and Johnson n.p.

These data would evoke no alarm if shifts in population were the only variable at work here. In this case, however, the rapid drain on the younger population is one more contributive factor to the demoralization apparent in the area. Generally speaking, older people remember the past while younger people look to the future. The glaring issue at hand here is the future of this region given the dismal population movement in recent decades.

Educational Context

Eastern Kentucky has always lagged behind most of the rest of the nation in terms of resident educational levels. As the statistics from Table 1.2 indicate, Central Appalachia lags well behind even other areas of Appalachia in the percentage of the

population who graduate from college or university (Haaga 4). The figures for the five-

county area considered in this study are even more disturbing. College graduates in

Magoffin, Martin, Johnson, Floyd, and Pike Counties make up less than 14 percent of the

population and, in some cases, as little as5 percent (7).

Table 1.2. Percentage of Adult Population Who Are College Graduates, 1990 and 2000

Area	1990	2000
U.S. Total	20.3	24.4
Appalachia	14.3	17.7
North	14.4	17.7
Central	8.8	10.7
South	15.4	19.2

Source: Haaga 4.

As can be seen in Table 1.3, the Appalachian counties of Eastern Kentucky are at

the bottom of the pile in terms of high school and GED education. According to John

Haaga, "These intrastate differences are discouraging because they persist after nearly

five decades of concerted educational focus as part of the overall work of the

Appalachian Regional Commission" (Haaga 10):

Table 1.3. **Percentage of Pop Ages 25 and Over with Less Than a HS/GED Diploma by State for Appalachian and Non-Appalachian Counties, 2000**

State	Appalachia Counties	Non-Appalachia Counties
Alabama	24.6	25.1
Georgia	23.3	20.7
Kentucky	37.5	21.3
Maryland	21.4	15.9
Mississippi	31.9	25.8
New York	16.9	21.2
North Carolina	24.2	21.3
Ohio	21.8	16.3
Pennsylvania	17.3	18.9
South Carolina	24.7	23.3
Tennessee	26.6	22.2
Virginia	30.2	17.3
West Virginia	24.8	NA

Notes: All counties in West Virginia are included in Appalachia.
Source: Haaga 10.

Socioeconomic Context

The socioeconomic context of Eastern Kentucky follows the bleak picture painted by its educational and population woes. One of the major social considerations of industrial entrepreneurs is a young, educated populace. Where educational levels are low and the employee selection base is thin, industrialization fails to thrive. As a result, almost all the employment opportunities are in low-paying, service sector jobs. Thus, both population and education play large roles in turning around the economic despair that characterizes the region. This current study does not seek to address directly the population drain. This study does seek to explain the dismal educational and economic situation in Eastern

Kentucky by looking at the obvious and pervasive devaluation of education among the populace.

Religious/Philosophical Context

The religious context of Eastern Kentucky is rather difficult to discern. I could locate no good set of general statistics that were not contradicted by different sets of statistics originating in other, often competitive, sources. Denominational statistics put out by the Southern Baptist Convention form the most complete survey of church demographics, but to say the Southern Baptist Church reflects a comprehensive view of the religious life of Eastern Kentucky would be to miss the mark by a great margin. This study, taken as a whole, provides a credible account of the religious/philosophical context of Eastern Kentucky.

The religious, historical landscape of the Eastern Kentucky mountains is quite diverse. Although other religious perspectives are well represented in Eastern Kentucky, this diversity has its roots in a history marked primarily by differing Baptist groups. Of these groups, the Primitive and Old Regular Baptists are the oldest and most pronounced. Although these two groups have significant dissimilarities, "the literature has rarely differentiated between Primitive and Old Regular Baptists, usually blending them together and ignoring altogether the many other Calvinist based groups in the mountains closely related to them through shared history and doctrinal traditions" (McCauley 17). The Christian, Calvinist influence is, by sheer numbers, the strongest religious influence in Eastern Kentucky.

With the exception Southern Baptists and Old Regular Baptists who tend not to venture beyond denominational lines, this dynamic of religious diversity in Eastern

Kentucky rarely stands in the way of some degree of cooperation among churches of different denominations. As such, this religious disparity is not a major barrier to change in the region.

Methodology

This explanatory, mixed-methods research project took place on the Prestonsburg campus of BSCTC in Floyd County, Kentucky. The research sought to identify and explain changes in the worldview of community college students in Floyd, Pike, Magoffin, Johnson, and Martin Counties in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky as a result of a one-semester course in religious studies. The research employed a modified time series, explanatory, mixed-methods design using a fixed population and both qualitative and quantitative measures. A two-tailed t-test using data from the two administrations of the WAI provided the quantitative data. The qualitative data came from two sources: post intervention, focus group interviews and post intervention student papers.

The WAI is a paper and pencil, fifty-four item, seven-point Likert-type, multi scale instrument assessing several dimensions of worldview pertinent to this study. Completion of the instrument requires approximately thirty minutes (see Appendix B). The WAI uses a dimensional as opposed to a categorical approach in measuring worldview perspectives.

The qualitative data in this study came from individual student interviews with all student participants. I used Paul Wong's Six Essential Questions of Human Existence as a discussion starter for the focus group interviews (361). Information collected from the student/participant interviews included richer demographic data. Wong's interview

questions along with student responses can be found in Appendix C. Valuable

sociological and psychological data were obtained using these personal interviews.

Participants

The participants in this study were those students who voluntarily enrolled in an

introductory class in religious studies open to freshmen and sophomore students residing

exclusively in the five-county service area of BSCTC. No delimitations were placed on

the students who chose to take the course although the course was mentioned to the

students in Comparative World Religions and Introduction to Philosophy classes during

the spring 2013 semester. REL 101 filled a cultural studies graduation requirement at

BSCTC. Students participating in this research did so voluntarily and signed a Minimal

Risk Consent Form as prescribed by both the Kentucky Community and Technical

College System and Asbury Theological Seminary (see Appendix D).

Instrumentation

Three measurements of worldview were utilized in the intervention. The WAI, a

dimensional as opposed to a categorical approach in measuring worldview, provided

quantitative data for analysis. The quantitative instruments used in the course were

semester papers and individual, focus-group interviews that I carried out at the end of the

semester.

Variables

This study employed an explanatory, mixed-methods research design to

investigate and explain changes in student attitudes coming about as a result of sixteen

weeks of study in philosophy and religious studies. This change in attitudes constituted

the dependent variable for the research project.

The independent variable in this study was the course *per se*; Introduction to Religious Studies, REL 101. The intervening variables included age, gender, county of residence, religious affiliation, income level, degree of class attendance and participation, course design (course structure as defined in syllabus), mode of instruction (whether face-to-face or online), presentation of instruction (how closely the instructor followed the syllabus), validity of sample as representative of the entire student body of the college, and declared degree program/choice of career. Other intervening variables included family status (e.g. wife, husband, child, etc.), group affiliation, religious affiliation, level of religious commitment, and the semester in which the research occurred.

Students completed a demographics survey form during the first week of class providing the data from which many of the intervening variables were quantified and collated (Appendix E).

Data Collection

Data coming from both administrations of the WAI was collected immediately after students completed the instrument. In order to guard student anonymity and protect student integrity, students were assigned code numbers before taking the WAI. These code numbers were then used on all student work throughout the intervention project. Data from student interviews was parsed and codified after all interviews were completed.

Data Analysis

Data from the WAI was submitted to statistical analysis using a two-tailed, related sample *t*-test. Data was statistically computed and expressed both by question and by

dimensional analyses. *T*-test data were run using a *p* factor of .05 for each dimensional scale. Data from both administrations of the WAI were submitted to the same statistical treatment. Collation and categorization of student interview responses was carried out using Wong's Six Questions for Essential Human Existence. Analysis of student papers was accomplished using key word usage as established coordinates. Student interviews and papers enhanced and expanded the data gleaned from the WAI.

Generalizability

This research elucidated the basic beliefs characterizing the worldview of freshman and sophomore college students who are indigenous to Eastern Kentucky. In clarifying and defining this belief system, this study hoped to explain the continuing plight of Eastern Kentuckians who struggle with the psychosocially demoralizing conditions that have characterized the area for so long.

The results of this research will immediately affect the course offerings at BSCTC. Courses in religious studies that speak to the questions raised and insights gleaned from this study will be reflected in the design of new courses and restructuring of existing courses that will better meet the needs of students of religion/philosophy at the college.

The outcomes from this study can be extrapolated to inform the course offerings and course content in philosophy and religious studies courses at surrounding community colleges in the Eastern Kentucky area. Eastern Kentucky colleges in the KCTC system include Ashland Community College in Ashland, Kentucky; Southeast Community College in Cumberland, Kentucky; and, Somerset Community College in Somerset, Kentucky.

The results of this research project will add to the compendium of academic and scholarly understanding of Central Appalachia and Eastern Kentucky and will have significance in providing a solid reference base for subsequent studies that consider the dialectic between beliefs and behavior.

The methodology and results of this research will be valuable in developing social ministry through secular means: mental health services, general health services, and especially transfer and technical education at the community college level. All these services are essential in bringing help to those residents of Eastern Kentucky living in poverty, demoralization, and a diminished self-efficacy.

The findings of this study can inform the way area pastors carry out a ministry to souls in their respective churches. I hoped to provide useful information to regional pastors and churches in helping them direct their ministry and their mission to the people they hope to reach and serve. In addition, the results of this study can also aid churches in creating and developing their own individualized programs of discipleship.

Theological Foundation

The values of the indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky are shaped to a great extent by religion (Leonard 53). A West Virginia University extension service online pamphlet notes nine primary values shared by residents of Central Appalachia. These include family, neighborliness, and love of home place, individualism, personal friendliness, and modesty, integrity, sense of humor, traditionalism, and religion. These values are reflected in an even more basic belief in the importance of human agency reflected in responsibility to family, neighbors, home, self, humility, and tradition.

This current research investigated beliefs and attitudes that form a common worldview. Of particular concern to this study were the religious beliefs and attitudes that serve as predicates for human existence in the world. This underlying assumption finds an advocate in James K. Smith:

> I think that we are primarily desiring animals rather than merely thinking things, I also think that what constitutes our ultimate identities—what makes us who we are, the kind of people we are—is what we love. More specifically, our identity is shaped by what we ultimately love or what we love as ultimate—what, at the end of the day, give us a sense of meaning, purpose, understanding, and orientation to our being-in-the-world. What we desire or love ultimately is a (largely implicit) vision of what we hope for, what we think the good life looks like. This vision of the good life shapes all kinds of actions and decisions and habits that we undertake, often without our thinking about it …This element, I suggest, is fundamentally religious. (26, 27)

This research dealt with the importance of the transcendent, religious beliefs underlying a human response to the world.

The presence of beliefs requires the existence of someone who believes—a believer. If there is a believer, that believer must necessarily believe. The importance of that postulate can be found in three encounters between Jesus and other people. The first is found in Matthew 9:27-30:

> As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith, let it be done to you." And their eyes were opened. (NASB)

The second encounter is recorded in Mark 9:14-28:

> When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit

that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keep this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer." (NASB)

The third encounter is found in the Gospel of John and it concerns a conversation Jesus

has with Thomas:

A week later his disciples were again in the house and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (20:26-29)

After using the word *believe* over fifty times in his gospel, John ends his gospel with a

statement of the importance of belief in Christian orthodoxy: "Now Jesus did many other

signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are

written so that you may come to *believe* (emphasis mine) that Jesus is the Messiah, the

Son of God, and that *through believing* you may have life in his name (emphasis mine

20:31). From the pens of the Gospel writers and from the sayings of Jesus, Son of God,

belief, beliefs, and believing are signal Christian dynamics. As the writer of Hebrews says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must *believe* (emphasis mine) that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Belief and believing are the bedrocks of Christian faith and practice.

In all these instances, the responses people made to the world and to the circumstances defining their lives reflected belief and believing. They either explicitly or implicitly experienced a change of beliefs or acted on their beliefs. In either case, each life was lived out of an existential series of decisions that necessitated belief(s).

Life reflects beliefs. This sort of mutually causative dialectic lies at the heart of this research and at the heart of the musings of the author of Proverbs who says, "As [a man] thinks within himself, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). In his analysis of this aphorism, James Allen has this to say:

> "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he, not only embraces the whole of a man's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of his life. A person is literally *what he or she thinks* [italics Allen's], his or her character being the complete sum of all his thoughts. (3)

The authors of Proverbs and the Philosophical Idealism of George Berkeley have much in common at this point. Actions are built on beliefs and beliefs affect actions. Changes to a given core religious and philosophical belief-system (worldview) directly imply changes in existence.

Allen notes:

"As the plant springs from, and could not be without, the seed, so every individual act springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them. This applies equally to those acts called spontaneous and unpremeditated as to those that are deliberately executed. (3)

Seen in this way, a change in the basic, core religious and philosophical worldview of indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky should result in some change in a well-defined, Central Appalachian lifestyle demarcated by inefficacy and demoralization.

Overview

Chapter 2 of this dissertation establishes a foundational review of the literature underwriting a focused study of an Appalachia, Central Appalachia, and Eastern Kentucky worldview. This study provides an historical, geographic, economic, and cultural context for these concentric regions. Chapter 3 presents the experimental design and methodology used in carrying out the research employed in this study. Chapter 4 reports the findings realized in the intervention project. Chapter 5 provides an analytical exposition and an interpretative elucidation of the results of the research project.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature forming the superstructure of this study almost universally paints a dire picture of Eastern Kentucky. The literature also notes that Eastern Kentucky, along with the larger region of Central Appalachia as a whole, is considered as a distinct region of the United States (Drake vii). This distinction refers not only to the geophysical topography of the land and state borders but also to the people who inhabit the land as well.

Pervasive poverty, lack of opportunity, economic distress, and substandard living have been well documented in print (Billings and Blee), in the electronic media ("About Central Appalachia") … and in television documentaries (*The Appalachians*). Dwight D. Billings and Kathleen Blee say, "Central Appalachia…has become a symbol of intractable poverty and failure of public policy" (prologue). The facts speak for themselves. The Appalachian Community Fund provides a telling summary of Central Appalachia in 2013

Fifty percent of the counties in Central Appalachia have only one hospital and about 1 in 5 do not have a hospital at all. On average, 20 percent of the people in the region live below the poverty line (the current national poverty rate for a family of four is $20,650 a year, i.e. $1,720 a month). 80 percent of all Central Appalachian counties are rural, and over half of the region's population lives in these rural counties. Kentucky ranks 50th in the Nation for the number of adults who cannot read. Remote parts of

Southwest Virginia are now sites of many prisons, Red Onion and

Wallens' Ridge   both super maximum security prisons; inmates are

shipped here from across the nation and from as far away as Hawaii and

urban cities in the Northeast. In Hancock County, Tennessee the average

income for a family of 4 is $14,000 a year, which is 47 percent of the

national figure. 1/3 of all of West Virginia's children are born into

poverty. In Logan County, West Virginia 40 percent of residents do not

have safe drinking water (About Central Appalachia)

This same body of literature also suggests that these factors have fostered and sustained a

lack of self-efficacy as well as a lack of hope in the residents of the region, resulting in a

substandard life-style throughout the area (Billings and Blee 3-10). The researchers and

writers suggest that persons experiencing these sorts of incapacitating circumstances were

prone to a lack of initiative, demoralization, and nonfulfillment of human potential

(Drake 126-127). In essence, these circumstances have resulted in a cultural heritage

marked by poor decisions, insufficient, long-range planning, and draining outside

interests (Moore).

Problem and Purpose Restated

In the preface to their book, Billings and Blee make a startling claim:

> No region of the United States remains more deeply mired in poverty than
> Appalachia. Central Appalachia in particular, as a region of chronic and
> persistent low income, is virtually synonymous both with rural poverty
> and with difficulty of implementing effective policies of social betterment.
> (3)

This research investigated the existential, economic, and cultural problems noted by

Billings and Blee, Michael Harrington, and so many others. In particular, this study

examined the relationship between attitudes and beliefs and everyday lives of Eastern

Kentuckians. The intervention project addressed the question of why a seemingly

intractable set of psycho/social/cultural problems seems to defy all efforts toward

remediation. In short, the focus in this research was to identify a culture-specific

worldview that might be instrumental in facilitating an ongoing culture of poverty,

demoralization, and diminished self-efficacy.

This enquiry identified, evaluated, and explained the cognitive and affective

changes in the worldview of a group of Eastern Kentucky community college students

resulting from a one-semester, college-level course (REL 101) as measured by student

responses noted on the WAI and in student papers and post intervention interviews.

PreIntervention Hypotheses

I began this research with several initial assumptions and hypotheses. I assumed

the existence of an identifiable belief system in the lives of human beings that can be

subsumed under and defined by the word worldview, that the word worldview actually

has existential cash value. Secondly, I assumed that worldview is open to change and will

undergo change through education. A third supposition was that worldview is culturally

specific. The fourth assumption was that an existential dialectic exists between

worldview and lifestyle characterized by a fluid, cyclical dialectic between beliefs and

existence such that beliefs shape existence, and, in return, existence shapes beliefs

(Galbraith 234-40). A fifth assumption of this research project was that religious beliefs

in particular play a major role in defining the comprehensive worldview of the residents

of Eastern Kentucky (L. Jones, *Appalachian Values* 14). The particularly harsh set of

social and economic conditions endemic to Eastern Kentucky seem to go hand-in-hand

with a commonly held religious belief that all events and entities are in large part determined and even predetermined by some admixture of God and fate (Phillips 11-15). This belief that life moves according to divine will and is, therefore, out of the hands of individuals manifests itself in a stoic determination to thrive in a psychosocial, cultural context characterized by poverty, lack of education, poor mental and physical health, limited occupational opportunities, the constant threat of danger posed by mining or the loss of mining, a deep-seated feeling of inferiority, low self-esteem, and an overall substandard quality of living.

Finally, this study began with the assumptions that the regional, social conditions within Eastern Kentucky are a result of and result in the religious and philosophical beliefs its residents hold and that these beliefs have contributed to an attitude of hopelessness, despondency, and diminished self-efficacy for persons and families living in the region. These factors lead to a spirit of personal and societal despair Jerome Frank calls demoralization (Frank, 271).

Appalachia

To me, this region is the top of the whole world — the land of the Sky People, it was said. The skyline is in all directions and close at hand. It is a land of cold, rushing rivers, small creeks, deep gorges, dark timber, and waterfalls. Great billowing clouds sail upon the mountains and in early morning a blue-gray mist hands just about the treetops. (Traveller Bird Tsisghwanai Williams) (19)

Geography and Demographics

Appalachia has been defined differently by different people depending on their agenda and their purpose. The origin of the descriptive term, Appalachia, can be traced to Spanish invaders who named the region Apalachee after the Apalachee Native Americans in Northwest Florida and Southeast Georgia (Williams 19).

Appalachia as a well-defined area does not exist. This view of Appalachia is most certainly not the case. Instead, it seems more correct to speak of multiple Appalachias. This fact is pointed out by the creation of three sub-regions slicing Appalachia into Northern Appalachia, Central Appalachia, and Southern Appalachia. Bill Leonard writes, "Appalachia itself is not one region, but many; it is not one culture but is composed of a multiplicity of cultural and social experiences, ideals, and subgroups" (xvi). This sort of Appalachian multiplicity complicates anything that might be said of Appalachia as a homogeneous unit comprised of 420 contiguous counties.

Kelvin M. Pollard speaks to the diversity of Appalachia, writing, "Although it remains a distinct part of America, the Appalachian regions is far from being homogeneous" (1). Graham D. Rowles, Department of Geology and Geography at West Virginia University, defines Appalachia succinctly:

> Appalachia is a region of contrasts. It presents images conveying a blend of pathos and romanticism. Many of these images are reinforced by the media, by outside commentators, and even by the academic community. To some writers, Appalachia is a place frozen in time, a historical legacy of the nation's frontier past. Others see a regressive culture within a progressive industrial nation — a "culture of poverty." And there are those maintained who, adopting a neocolonialist model, discern an "internal periphery" in a less developed status by the surrounding industrial economy. (300)

In this synopsis, Rowles acknowledges the fallacy in defining Appalachia as a holistic, uni-cultural region in the United States.

While everyone agrees that an Appalachian region exists, the definition of that region rests with the person writing the definition and the basis on which it is grounded (Raitz and Ulack 212). Bill Leonard suggests that "Defining a specific Appalachian region and ... culture is no easy task" (xvi). Joseph Manzo flatly suggests, "It cannot be

done" (48). This current study is concerned with a distinct, Central Appalachian region particularized in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

Appalachia received national notoriety as an indigenous region in response to Harry M. Caudill's book, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands.* That book, along with visits to the area first by President John F. Kennedy and later by President Lyndon B. Johnson and Senator Robert Kennedy, paved the way for the establishment of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) ratified by a vote of congress in 1965. The ARC, part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" (Ziliak 1), is one of several agencies created by the federal government and commissioned with the job of dealing with the poverty, misery, and alienation of the people of Appalachia (Drake 174-75). These include the Community Action Project, Volunteers in Service to America, and the Office for Economic Opportunity.

The ARC provides the most widely accepted and comprehensive geographical, sociological, and economic definition of Appalachia. Depending on geographic contiguity and economic retardation as the primary defining guidelines, the ARC originally set the bounds of the Appalachian region at 320 counties in ten contiguous states. The ARC later expanded this area to 420 counties in thirteen contiguous states, extending from New York to Mississippi (see Figure 2.1). The broad economic, cultural, and sociological diversity across this large geographic area has thwarted efforts to identify Appalachia as one homogeneous whole.

Using a rather unique set of criteria, Douglas M. Stratford and Anne E. Walker set the boundaries of what they call a *true* Appalachia at 250 counties in West Virginia, Southwestern Virginia Western Tennessee, and Eastern Kentucky (146). John Alexander

Williams suggests a "six state regional core" (13) made up of parts of West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia. The late Cratis Williams— the recognized dean of Appalachian studies—identifies "three quite distinctive groups among Appalachian mountaineers" (quoted in Drake 183). These three distinct groups include "the town-oriented elite and city folk" (183), farmers, and what Williams dubbed "Branchwater Mountaineers" (183) who embody the stereotype of a people living in dire poverty, misery, and demoralization.

The geographic boundaries used by the ARC in defining Appalachia are indeed fluid. It has enlarged the limits of the region more than once in order to gain additional, federal monetary support. Presently, the states of Virginia, Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky have petitioned the federal government to supplement its list of counties from to the Appalachian registry (Manzo 48).

Christopher Cooper, Gibbs Knotts, and Katy Elders conclude that the area defined as Appalachia by the ARC is much too broad. They propose using a "placename" strategy in identifying true, Appalachian counties (460).[1] In another study, Cooper, Knotts, and Don Livingston identify the social process of regional identity in the defining process and note that "people who strongly identify with a particular region may even share similar worldviews and potentially even similar policy opinions" (28). The findings of their research note several, significant, sociological factors that are important in defining an Appalachian region. These are (1) poverty, (2) elevation/altitude above sea level, and (3) population density. Less significant measures in their study were (1)

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[1] Cooper, Knotts, and Livingston provide a complete exposition on these extended measurements.

ethnicity, (2) residence, and (3) education level. These findings are important more so for what they deny than what they affirm in arriving at a definition of Appalachia.[2]
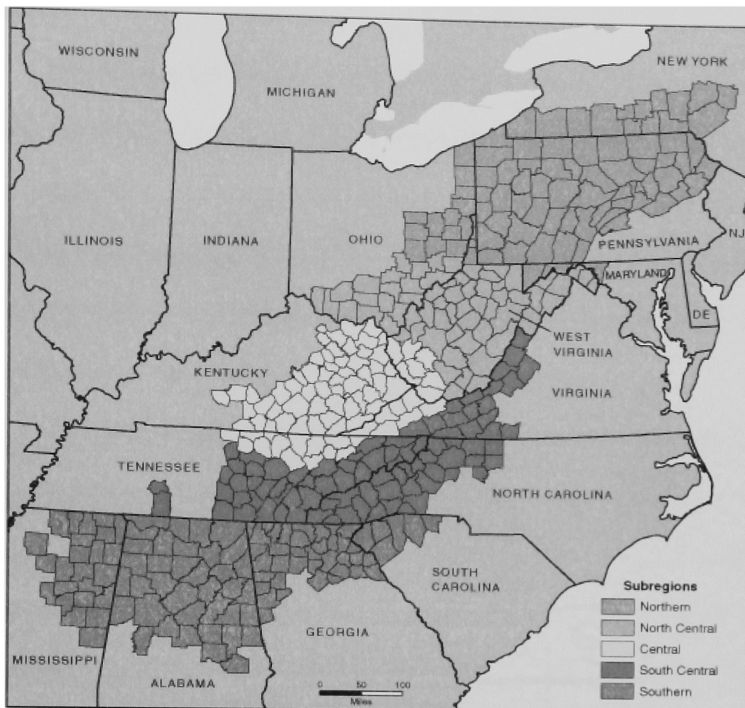
Map by: Appalachian Regional Commission. November 2009

Figure 2.1. The five sub-regions of Appalachia.

Other researchers have attempted to use additional criteria in defining Appalachia. The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for instance focuses on historical context and people groups coming from that context to define Appalachia. The Appalachian culture page of the North American Mission Board lists a very interesting and informative historical bit of information in defining Appalachia by

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[2] For a complete exposition on these extended measurements, see "Appalachian Identity and Policy Opinions"; Cooper, Knotts, and Livingston in its entirety.

referring to a statement made by President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War. Lincoln "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" ("Appalachian Regional Ministry").

Employing these additional criteria effectively reduces the size of what is considered to be a truly unique Appalachian region. Cooper, Knotts, and Elders restrict a true Appalachia to a core region, including Eastern Kentucky, Eastern Tennessee, Southern West Virginia, Western North Carolina, and Southwestern Virginia (460). This area is synonymous with the sub-region defined as Central Appalachia by the ARC (see Figure 2.2).

Following Harrington, Susan Sarnoff provides a most damning critique of Appalachian regional identity. Focusing on the Central Appalachian sub-region designated by ARC, Sarnoff likens Central Appalachia to a "third world country" (124). Regional descriptions restricting the boundaries of Appalachia to what is termed Central Appalachian is the region most quickly called to mind when one thinks of an Appalachia identity.

Because of the difficulty in identifying a particular Appalachian region, this study was predicated on the idea that the thirteen-state region defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission is not homogeneous. The ARC acknowledges this idea by dividing the thirteen-state region into five sub-regions. Even then, however, the caricatures and stereotypes associated with Appalachia suggest a more distinct and restricted area.

Daniel T. Lichter and Lori Ann Campbell note that the counties in Eastern

Kentucky showing a net out-migration have done so consistently over the past two

decades (4).
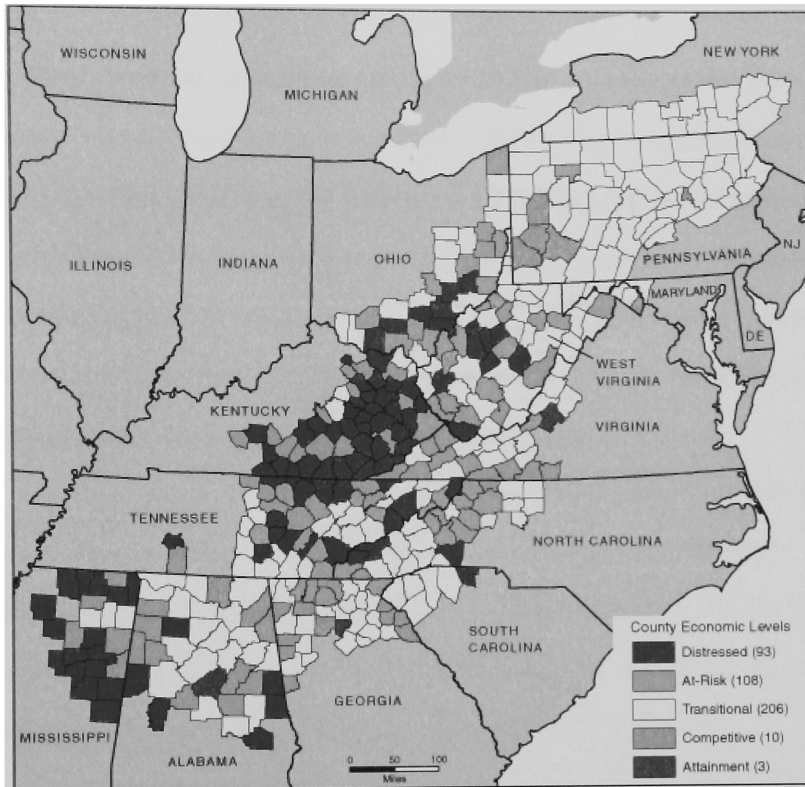
Created by the Appalachian Regional Commission. March 2013
Data Sources:
Unemployment data: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. LAUS, 2009–2011
Income data: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS. 2010
Poverty data: U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2007–2011

Effective October 1, 2013
through September 30, 2014

Figure 2.2. County poverty map for all 420 Appalachian counties.

Writing in the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, Robert L. Ludke, Phillip J.

Obermiller, and Eric W. Rademacher found that between 1950 and 1970 the central

region of Appalachia saw a net loss of 430,000 people or 19.6 percent of the regional residents (49). They declare, "Much of this decline in the rate of population growth was due to out-migration (49)." Ludke, Obermiller, and Rademacher note that this out-migration trend continued in the decade between 1990 and 2000 but was reversed in 2000-10.

Using census data adjusted for selected variables, Ludke, Obermiller, and Rademacher note an overall 6.8 percent increase in Appalachian population. These researchers attribute this difference to a change in data collection methodology as the long form census instrument was discontinued in favor of the American Community Survey, which bases its estimates on a sample of approximately one in every fifty five households each year (53). An obvious reliability problem rests with data collection of dependable census figures, complicating research in this area.

Another significant factor in the economy, job loss, and outward migration in Eastern Kentucky is the downward trending of the coal industry. The dominant occupation in Eastern Kentucky is coal mining, yet mining jobs have declined by 4,068 between December 2011 and December 2012. Bill Estep of has specifically referred to coal jobs in Eastern Kentucky in the *Lexington Herald Leader* newspaper:

> The Number of Coal jobs in Kentucky have dropped to the lowest level recorded since the state started keeping count in 1950, according to the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet. An average of 13,109 people worked at coal mines and related facilities in the first quarter of 2013, a drop of 990 people since the end of 2012, the cabinet said in a report completed this month.

The devastating downturn in coal usage and production is a significant factor in the high unemployment rate in the five-county area under study (see Figure 2.3).

The figures continue to paint a bleak picture of life in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. The economy, jobs, poverty, and the fact that Eastern Kentucky residents are not taking or not able to take advantage of regional, educational opportunities are all significant variables contributing to the sub-standard lifestyle of mountain residents. Per capita income is less than $15,000 per year and the people's educational level in the area is lower than the national average.

Created by the Appalachian Regional Commission, March 2013
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: LAUS, 2011
Data Classification Scheme: Natural Breaks
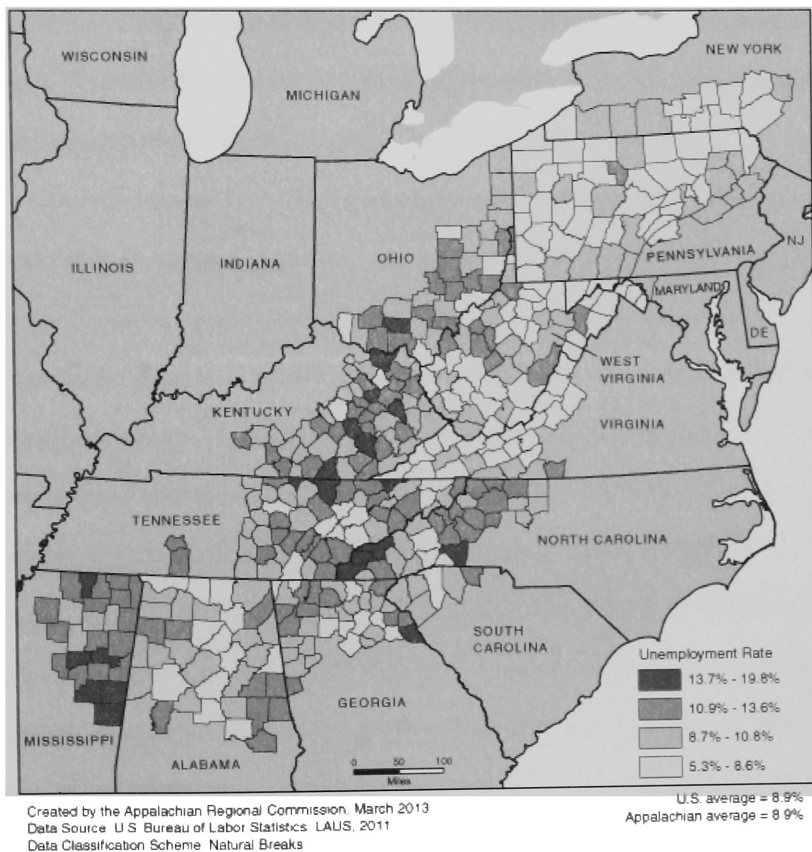
Figure 2.3. Relative unemployment across Appalachia.

Census statistics from 2011 reveal that, in spite of the fact that Eastern Kentucky University, University of Pikeville, Alice Lloyd College, University of the Cumberlands, and Morehead State University all offer bachelor's degree programs locally, only 12.2 percent of people in Eastern Kentucky have earned a bachelor degree compared with a much higher national average. In addition, the degree of diabetes, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, and many other debilitating diseases is significantly higher than much of America.

The economic debility of Eastern Kentucky is directly related to out-migration in the region. A significant issue for further research is to plumb the determinants of this relationship and to note whether it is causal or coincidental.

Table 2.1 uses the five-tiered designation system set up by ARC to define the economic viability of individual counties in Appalachia. Using a distressed designation and county economic status classification system arranged around five parameters, the ARC designates counties according to economic viability for the years 1990-2002 (see Table 2.1). The parameters used by the ARC in making county designations are poverty rate, per-capita market income, and total job growth in a ten-year period prior to the designation, population growth, and employment/population ratio. Using these parameters, the ARC has devised five basic designations defining the economic viability of each county in the region. Distressed counties are most at risk followed in order by at risk, transitional, competitive, and attainment, which are in the economically strongest position. Table 2.1 illustrates the growth rate in each of the five categories used in the ARC designation:

> Each Appalachian county is classified into one of five economic status designations, based on its position in the national ranking. Distressed

counties are the most economically depressed counties. They rank in the worst 10 percent of the nation's counties. At-Risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed. They rank between the worst 10 percent and 25 percent of the nation's counties. Transitional counties are those transitioning between strong and weak economies. They make up the largest economic status designation. Transitional counties rank between the worst 25 percent and the best 25 percent of the nation's counties. Competitive counties are those that are able to compete in the national economy but are not in the highest 10 percent of the nation's counties. Counties ranking between the best 10 percent and 25 percent of the nation's counties are classified competitive. Attainment counties are the economically strongest counties. Counties ranking in the best 10 percent of the nation's counties are classified attainment. (ARC Distressed Designation and County Economic Status Classification System Report)

Table 2.1. Annualized Population Growth Rate and Net Migration Rate, Appalachia, by Distress Level, 1990-1999 and 2000-2002

Distress Level	1990-1999		2000-2002	
	Growth Rate %	Net Migration Rate %	Growth Rate %	Net Migration Rate %
Attainment	1.15	0.71	1.44	0.96
Competitive	1.70	1.05	1.77	1.25
Transitional	0.61	0.40	0.39	0.30
Distressed	0.33	0.16	-0.07	-0.12

Economic Overview

Economic indicators are the most common criteria defining Appalachia:

> For as long as Appalachia has been thought of as a distinct part of the United States, it has been commonly perceived as a place with social and economic problems as great as the extraordinary natural wealth and diversity of the complex and weathered mountain system which give the region its name. ("Introduction" i)

Central Appalachia, made up of Eastern Kentucky, Eastern Tennessee, Western North Carolina, Western West Virginia, and Southwestern Virginia, is broadly seen to reflect a "culture of poverty" (Harrington 22).

In the four-category classification system the ARC uses to classify counties, the number of counties classified as distressed has fallen from 161 in 1970 to 82 in 2004 (fiscal year 2005). Acknowledging a reduction of poverty and an increase in positive economic indicators in much of Appalachia, the ARC declares, "Much has changed in Appalachia since the mid-1970s. In many socioeconomic dimensions, the region bears a significantly closer resemblance to the rest of the United States" (Pollard).

At the same time, certain areas of Appalachia have not shown this sort of economic improvement. While the lot of many in Appalachia is improving, the level of poverty and joblessness in a significant portion of Appalachia has either remained the same or increased. Figure 2.4 illustrates the wide disparities in the economic picture across the entire Appalachian Region. The lowest personal income per capita in the Appalachian Region is in Central Appalachian counties ($24,578), while the highest personal income per capita figures are in Northern Appalachian counties ($31,931). Likewise, the highest level of employment (11.6 percent using 2009 figures) in the entire Appalachian region is found in Eastern Kentucky (US Bureau of Labor Statistics n.p.).

This growing polarity between large areas of Appalachia has led the ARC to re-draw the regional map of Appalachia. After doing a statistical analysis employing multiple variables, the ARC suggested increasing the regional subdivisions from three to five. In order to give greater focus to those areas that are most economically disadvantaged, ARC now speaks in terms of North Central and South Central sub-regions (see Figure 2.2 p 39).

ARC-Designated Distressed Counties. Fiscal Year 2013
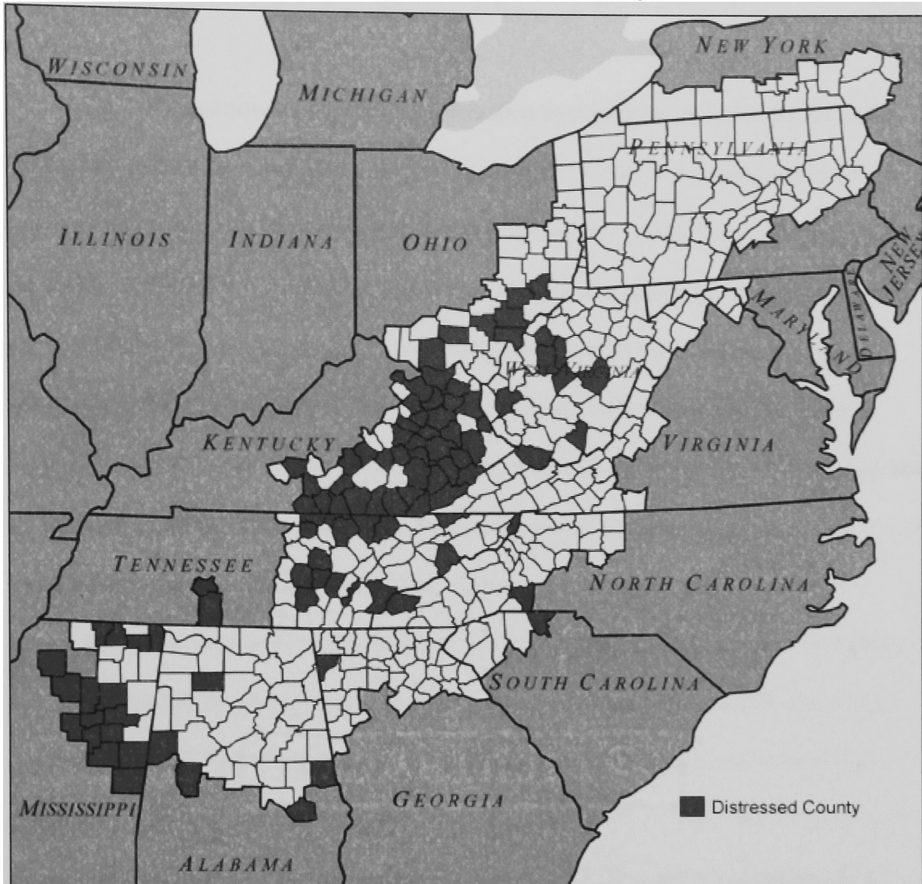
Prepared by the Appalachian Regional Commission

Data Sources
Unemployment data U S Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS, 2008–2010
Income data U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS, 2009
Poverty data U S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census American Community Survey, 2006–2010

Source: Gebremariam, Gebremedhin, and Schaffer: (2011)

Figure 2.4. ARC Map of Appalachian counties with economic designations.

The current situation in Appalachia strains against generalization. One of the

realities emerging from the ARC data reports is that no current, universal, economic

picture for Appalachian economics exists. Indeed, no universal Appalachian economy exists.

The ARC acknowledges a broad fluctuation in economic and growth categories among the 420 counties in Appalachia. Using the ARC's five-tiered designation of counties, those counties with the greatest degree of poverty and the least amount of hope are designated as *distressed.* Of the eighty-one distressed counties in Appalachia thirty-six (just under 45 percent) are located in Central Appalachia. Of those thirty-six least developed and poorest counties, 78 percent are in Eastern Kentucky and three of the counties most in distress are in the area covered in this study. These statistics indicate that these are some of the poorest and most disadvantaged counties in the entire nation.

Models for Understanding Central Appalachia

Much has been written attempting to understand the etiology of these problems. Different theorists in different decades have proposed different ideas about why things are as they are in Central Appalachia. Two important models used to understand and describe Appalachia came to the fore in the early 1960's. These were "the subculture of poverty" model put forth by Michael Harrington and J.K. Galbraith and "the internal colonialism" model which first found expression in Harry Caudill's novel, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* (see David S. Walls and Dwight D. Billings for a discussion of various models that have attempted to define the problem in Central Appalachia).

In his seminal work on Central Appalachia, Harrington clearly declares that Central Appalachia is "a culture of poverty" (164). Although Harrington's culture of poverty theory has fallen out of vogue with Appalachian scholars, the same problems he described in 1962 still exist today.

Even though James P. Ziliak agrees with Harrington's assessment of Central Appalachia, remarking that it is "a region set apart from the rest of America" (1), Ziliak notes that in much of Appalachia (i.e., North and South Appalachia) the poverty gap between Appalachia and the rest of America has been closed to a degree. Still, Ziliak states that the poverty and economic and income disparity between Central Appalachia and the rest of the United States is marked:

> While levels of poverty fell dramatically in the Central region, the rate is still roughly double the rate of the rest of the nation. Real per capita incomes in the Central region are now $4,000 below those outside Appalachia ... and the gap in high school completion rates narrowed only slightly. Thus the shared region-wide convergence envisioned by the President's Appalachian Commission appears to have bypassed the Central region. And perhaps because of the searing portraits of grinding poverty in the books by [Harry] Caudill and [Michael] Harrington, to this day, Appalachia, or at least the Central region, is often viewed as "the other America." (7)

These problems seem to be both long-term and pervasive, and while they have historically proven to be crippling and demoralizing, they must be seen in the light of a more basic, existential response to life that is at once characteristic of the region and faithful to a particular, regional, cultural ethos.

Harrington's culture of poverty theory has not gone unchallenged. Dwight D. Billings, Loyal Jones, and others have posted vigorous challenges to Harrington's views, focusing on the strengths and ingenuity of the Central Appalachians (David D. Walls and Dwight B. Billings 133). Still, Harrington's culture of poverty remains one of the major lens through which Central Appalachia is viewed.

Other serious models have been suggested; however, discussion of Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia has largely been pejorative and dismissive. Molly Moore has advocates for an "internal colonialism model." Although this model, like

Harrington's before it, has fallen out of vogue in recent years, the facts on which it is

built are telling. The Appalachia Community Fund joins in this caustic analysis of the

situation in Eastern Kentucky:

> The first shipment of coal out of Central Appalachia was in 1892 from
> Dickenson County, in Southwest Virginia; today one coal company owns
> approximately 40 percent of the land and between 60 percent–80 percent
> of all of the mineral rights in the county. Extraction abuses by the coal
> industry, especially through mountain top removal, has destroyed more
> than 1,000,000 acres of forests, 500 mountains, and buried over 1,000
> miles of streams in the Appalachian region. In Eastern Kentucky, where
> 60 percent of counties are consistently poor, the A.T. Massey Company
> operated coal mines through 18 subsidiaries, and reported an operating
> profit in 2000 of $147 million with revenues of $1.1 billion. ("About
> Appalachia: Did You Know?")

As dire as these assessments are, they do not include the denuding of the forests by

outside logging interests.

The online PBS web site Frontline adds to this caustic invective:

> The mountains of eastern Kentucky were rich with natural resources: salt,
> coal and timber. Prior to 1870, only the salt mines of Floyd and Clay
> counties had been tapped with any real significance. Soon after the Civil
> War, agents from eastern corporations streamed into the mountains to
> secure extraction rights for the virgin hardwood forests and later for the
> vast beds of bituminous coal beneath them. Often a mountaineer could be
> easily persuaded by these speculators to sell the rights to mine his land or
> cut his timber for a few cents an acre—a paltry sum compared to the
> wealth the company could extract from it, but enough money to provide a
> small-scale farmer with many luxuries. Extracting this irreplaceable
> wealth took its toll on the health of the land and its people while lining the
> pockets of the absentee industrialists. Many loggers lost their lives or were
> seriously maimed in accidents while felling the massive hardwoods or on
> the treacherous runs escorting the trunks down-river to market. ("A Short
> History")

Billings and Blee add their voices to this compounding description of Eastern Kentucky

and Central Appalachia:

> Between the late 1880's and 1920, vast tracts of mountain timberland were
> felled in a frenzy of profit taking. Burt and Brabb Lumber Company, a

>Michigan firm that bought out the lumber interests of local timer titan
>Thomas Jefferson Asher, contracted for 602,817 board feet of
>Appalachian pine and poplar in a single float contract in 1890. (268)

The rape of Eastern Kentucky by outside interests is well documented. This ill treatment of the land by those outside the region is exacerbated by the willingness of Eastern Kentuckians to be a party to that ill treatment. Individual septic drainage straight pipes that pour raw sewage into the streams, roadside litter, illegal dumping of refuse, appliances, and old cars all add credence to reports of the debility of the area and are both the cause and the result of the problem of Central Appalachia and those sad phenomenon discredit Eastern Kentuckians.

This is the problem that served as the impetus for this research. The purpose of the research was to determine the cognitive and affective changes in the worldview of a group of Eastern Kentucky community college students occurring as a result of a college-level course in religious studies in order to explain the dire human predicament of the region in terms of the power of beliefs, attitudes, and values, to provide a philosophical investigation into the kind of thinking that allows this sort of problem not only to continue, but to define the people of Eastern Kentuckian. More particularly, the research set out to see how much of the problem can be tied to a specific, Eastern Kentucky worldview and how such a proposed worldview would respond to a one-semester college- level course focusing on the philosophical and religious beliefs, attitudes, and values of a select group of Eastern Kentuckians in a five county area in the heart of Eastern Kentucky.

The basic premises that guided this research claimed these well-publicized, dire, dismal, and discouraging day-to-day circumstances of human existence in Eastern

Kentucky can be explained as a function of what Eastern Kentuckians believe. The question this research asked was can the demoralization caused by pervasive poverty, isolation, decreased self-efficacy, economic morass, and lack of adequate opportunities be the result of the way Eastern Kentuckians see the world, their worldview, and if that worldview can also be in part responsible for those conditions.

Central Appalachia has so many inviting and affirming qualities, not the least of which is a colorful, culture-specific history filled with stories and personalities that are quite unique in the Pan-American story. Culture-specific, historical accounts such as the Hatfield-McCoy feud, "The Harlan County Wars" of the 1920s and 30s, persons like "Bad Tom" Smith, Jenny Wiley, Daniel Boone, and the very distinctive brand of Christianity lived out among Old Regular Baptists, Primitive Baptists, and other expressions of Christian belief endemic to the mountains of Central Appalachia (see Deborah McCauley's fine book for an excellent perspective on mountain religion) bring a certain sense of pride and belonging to those who were born and raised in the region (see McCauley).

Unfortunately, this colorful existence does not come without some serious difficulties. Daniel Lichter, et al note. "The social and economic history of Appalachia is characterized by illiteracy and joblessness, persistent poverty, and cultural isolation" (1). For much of the indigenous population of Eastern Kentucky, a cognitive and affective response to life marked by poverty, lack of education, limited opportunities, hopelessness, despair, issues with self-efficacy, demoralization, and difficulty meshing with the mainstream of the postmodern world has become definitively and subjectively accepted as inevitable. This worldview has effectively formed a glass ceiling for the

people of this Central Appalachian sub-culture. This current study intended to address this ethnological problem.

Central Appalachia

Economic figures are only one part of the Central Appalachian story. The bleak economic figures are an indication of the dire sociocultural situation that has historically plagued the Appalachian Region, in general, but, more specifically, the demoralizing situation in Central Appalachia and even more particularly, in Eastern Kentucky. David S. Walls and Dwight B. Billings characterize this uninviting set of circumstances by noting "what is variously described as the backwardness, poverty, underdevelopment, and resistance to change of the Appalachian region and its people" (131). They explain this historically bleak, regional, economic circumstance using four models, including the argument of genetic deficiency, the subculture of poverty model, the regional development model, and the internal colonialism model (Walls and Billings 131-44).

Of these models, the subculture of poverty model dealing with homogeneous, internal, cultural deficiencies in conjunction with an economically defined lower class has found the largest number of proponents. Nevertheless, despite being the most popular of these models, "Billings has shown the subculture of poverty model to be of little value in explaining the lack of economic development in the mountain section of North Carolina and the contrasting industrialization of the piedmont" (Walls and Billings 132). In its place, Walls and Billings prefer using the regional development model, pointing out "the most influential stream derives from neo-classical economics as amended by place theory" (134). This inability of researchers to agree on the cause or causes of the poverty, hopelessness, and demoralization at work in Eastern Kentucky is indicative of where the

problem lies at present. Again, little work has been done in terms of looking at what role attitudes, beliefs, and values (i.e., worldview) might play in creating and sustaining this substandard lifestyle.

Although geography and economic retardation both play significant roles in defining Appalachia, social and cultural parameters are also important indicators defining Appalachia as a distinctive region of the United States. Nowhere is this means of definition truer than in the case of Central Appalachia and Eastern Kentucky where tradition and heritage play such a crucial role.

The ARC divides Appalachia into five geographic sub-regions: Northern Appalachia, North Central Appalachia, Central Appalachia, South Central Appalachia, and Southern Appalachia (see Fig. 2.2, p.40). All five of the Eastern Kentucky counties that are the focus of this study are located within the Central Appalachian region. According to 2011 ARC figures, four of the five counties are defined as distressed.

Eastern Kentucky

The population of Eastern Kentucky is almost exclusively rural and predominantly unindustrialized. Like the rest of Central Appalachia, Eastern Kentucky is limited economically and culturally by poverty, ignorance, poor physical and mental health, and a low standard of living. State trends reveal large disparities between Eastern Kentucky and the nation. According to an ARC report, per capita market income was 25 percent lower in Appalachia than in the nation as a whole in 2009. The lowest per capita market income is found in Central Appalachia. In Central Appalachia, per capita personal income was only 68 percent of the national average in 2009, and per capita market

income (personal income less transfer payments) was just $15,964, nearly half the national average.

According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey Report, the mean family income in the US, for that period was $84,422. During the same time frame, the mean family income in the thirteen-state Appalachian Region was $68,414 while the mean family income in *Central* Appalachia, including Eastern Kentucky, was $53,301 (US Dept. of Commerce).

Income figures for the five-county area covered in this study are even more disturbing. According to the same American Community Survey 2007-2011, the percent of the residents of the five-county area in this study living in poverty is 24.8 percent, indicating that a full quarter of the people in Eastern Kentucky, are living in poverty (Pollard and Jacobson 36)! The poverty rates for each county in this study were at least 150 percent below the poverty line for the nation (see Appalachian Regional Commission. *Distressed Designation and County Economic Status Classification System* n.p.).

Table 2.2. Poverty Rates in the Five Counties under Study

County	Poverty Rate %
Magoffin	35.6
Martin	42.2
Floyd	28.9
Johnson	24.4
Pike	24.7

Source: Community Action of Kentucky.

Three of the five counties (Magoffin, Martin, and Floyd) are designated

distressed by the ARC, and the other counties (Pike and Johnson) are listed at-risk

according to ARC guidelines. The poverty rates in the five counties in this study are

shown in Table 2.2. While facts and figures can quantify poverty, they cannot qualify

poverty. In an excellent and pointed series of statement, Lichter and Campbell go far in

qualifying existence in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and in Central Appalachia as a

whole:

> President Lyndon B. Johnson began the "War on Poverty" in an
> Appalachian county in West Virginia in 1964, at a time when poverty
> rates in some parts of Appalachia exceeded rates for the nation by two or
> three times. But simple statistical comparisons based on the official
> poverty rates cannot adequately portray the long history of economic
> deprivation in Appalachia. Poverty in rural Appalachia cannot be
> measured simply by comparing family income to some arbitrary income
> cutoff. The low income of the people and communities in Appalachia
> manifests itself in many ways: in dilapidated and crowded housing; a lack
> of plumbing and clean running water; limited access to public utilities,
> social services, and medical care; geographic isolation born of poor
> transportation systems; and inadequately staffed and poorly funded
> schools. Not surprisingly, poverty in the region has often run in families—
> passed along successive generations connected by the common threads of
> low education, few job skills, and the lack of good jobs. (5)

The effects of poverty on individuals, families, and communities are insidious and

overwhelming. Poverty seems to breed more poverty. Living in impoverished

circumstances for multiple generations results in demoralization and diminished self-

efficacy. One of the major sources of hope in these circumstances is out-migration,

moving away to find jobs and income.

The incipient demoralization that accompanies continued poverty spreads beyond

the immediate individual, family, or community. Continual, pervasive poverty has a

ripple effect within an entire region. Using the endogenous variables using private

nonfarm employment and accounting for gross in and out migration and household

income figures Gebremeskel H. Gebremariam, Tesfa A. Gebremedhin, and Peter V.

Schaeffer determined that out-migration of young people leaving Eastern Kentucky to

seek work primarily in Northern states is a function of multiple, regional covariates that

reflect an area-wide phenomenon. They found that, out-migration "is not only dependent

on what is happening in a given county, but by what is happening to the dependent

variables in the neighboring counties as well" (118). These statistics merely intensify the

already dismal picture of Eastern Kentucky.

These ominous phenomena are felt throughout Central Appalachia most acutely in

Eastern Kentucky. Alison Davis affirms the position of Gebremeskel, Gebremariam, and

Gebremedhin:

> While some of Kentucky's neighboring states have improved their status
> in per capita income, Kentucky has remained stagnant. Kentucky, with a
> per capita income of $31,111, is currently ranked 46th in the nation with
> only South Carolina, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Mississippi faring
> worse. (n.p.)

ARC figures reveal Eastern Kentucky is one of the most distressed sub-regions in

Appalachia. All twenty-eight counties in Eastern Kentucky are classified by the ARC as

being in Appalachia. The ARC classifies fifty-four Kentucky counties as being in Central

Appalachia. Of these fifty-four Kentucky counties, thirty-one are can be considered to be

traditional [italics mine], Eastern Kentucky counties. The five-county area that forms the

basis for this study is located in the heart of this thirty=one county area, and in the heart

of the Eastern Kentucky Mountains. These are five of the poorest counties in Appalachia

and in America (Szathmary, n.p.).

In addition to being listed as economically distressed by the ARC, two of the five counties that are included in this current study, (Magoffin and Martin) are listed in the fifty poorest counties in the United States ("List of Lowest Income Counties in the United States."). Sixteen of the poorest counties in the United States are located in the Eastern Kentucky region ("List of Lowest Income Counties in the United States."). As can be seen in table 2.2 (p 53), all five of the counties covered in this study showed 2011 poverty rates above 20 percent with two showing poverty rates of over 39 percent.

These statistics and figures drive home a point that is already very apparent in the literature. Life in Eastern Kentucky is in many ways "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Pojman and Vaughn 518). In this sort of life circumstance, the questions raised in this study include: what sort of worldview exists, what beliefs prevent movement beyond the painful realities, and can a change in worldview bring about a change in the debilitating circumstance of life in the region.

Eastern Kentucky and Demoralization

The dismal economic factors that have emerged in this paper create a milieu in Eastern Kentucky that lends itself to discouragement, despair, and demoralization. David M. Clarke and David W. Kissane discuss this sort of milieu, saying it leads to a "Giving Up- Given-Up'" syndrome. Referring to the work of George Engel (553), Eric Cassell (639), and Jerome Frank (271), Clarke and Kissane describe persons caught in a predicament from which they can see no release:

> [Life is] associated [with] feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, meaninglessness, subjective incompetence and diminished self-esteem. It occurs in the context of a severe threat that causes marked anxiety, in which the person does not know the solution. This brings feelings of helplessness, which if not assisted can lead to hopelessness and the feeling of being "unable to cope." Alternatively, there may be a perception of loss

of direction, role or sense of purpose, leading to feelings of pointlessness. These lower a person's self-esteem and, when coupled with social isolation or a feeling of "uniqueness" (that no-one else shares the experience), lead to a sense of alienation, existential distress and severe demoralization. The demoralized person clings to a small number of habitual activities, avoids novelty and challenge, and fears making long term plans. The state of demoralization, in short, is one of hopelessness, helplessness, and isolation in which the person is preoccupied with merely trying to survive. (740)

Often, this hopeless demoralization expresses itself in what those living outside Eastern Kentucky would call illogical behavior. In fact, well-to-do residents of Eastern Kentucky are themselves frequently guilty of not being able to see beyond the stereotypical image of the poor in Eastern Kentucky as lazy, entitled, and scurrilous.

As an example, many years ago, my wife and I planted and pastored a church (Brushy Fork Baptist Church) in one of the most rural sections of Magoffin County. Most of those who attended the church were desperately poor. One family used tree stumps for chairs in the front room of their dilapidated trailer home. Another slept on a pile of rags thrown in the corner of a one-room shack with no plumbing and no electricity. A third had no front door.

In the course of my pastoral duties, I visited many of these homes. One, in particular, was the home of a man, his wife, and their eleven children. These were known as welfare people in the local vernacular. A large hole through which one could see the ground and the hogs and ducks that lived under the house formed the center of their living room floor. In that living room, these people had a big screen, color television. The farm had no other amenities, but they had this big screen, color television.

Some people in our church thought that having this television was an abomination, that these people were accepting government aid while having a big screen

television. Those people used this supposed largesse to prove their point that government funds were being poorly utilized in providing people federal assistance when they could afford a big screen television. What they could not—or better would not—see is that the degree of abject poverty in this family was accompanied by such a sense of hopelessness and demoralization that their only relief was the television that sat in their living room next to the hole in the floor. As an alternative and fleeting escape from poverty, this television was the only means of escape this family had from the desperate circumstances in which they lived. The other major avenues of escape for Eastern Kentuckians—illegal and prescription drugs and/or alcohol—exist to provide more destructive means of escape from poverty, hopelessness, and demoralization.

These are illustrations of the sociocultural dynamics that are so common in the lives of the people of Eastern Kentucky. Clarke and Kissane write, "This [set of psycho-social circumstances] is affected by a person's beliefs, values and commitments as well as their sense of general optimism or pessimism, and self-efficacy" (734). Justin Maxson, president of the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, a nonprofit organization in Berea, Kentucky, given the task of forming economic strategies for Eastern Kentucky was quoted by Amelia Holliday as saying, "Appalachia overall has improved, Central Appalachia has improved much less, and then, obviously if you look in Eastern Kentucky we're a big red dot on that map of economic distress" (A1). Maxson goes on to explain. "So, now, absolute living standards have improved [in Appalachia], but the gap between East Kentucky and the rest of the country just hasn't closed that much" (A1.). For some, the standard of living has improved, while for the vast majority the standard of living has worsened and continues to worsen.

Maxson is correct in his thinking. Eastern Kentucky and the surrounding coal fields of Western West Virginia and Southwestern Virginia seem to be stuck in some sort of time-warp, a sort of *Groundhog Day* movie where the painful circumstances of life seem to be immutable. In fact, the recent turning away from a carbon-based energy source (coal) to other, less polluting means of providing energy has exacerbated the sense that things are not just going to stay the same; they are going to get worse.

The lifestyle marked by poverty, hopelessness, and demoralization alienates the indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky from much of the rest of the United States. This sub-region of Central Appalachia runs counter to all national economic trends in that the overall economy of the country seems to do little to affect the economy of Eastern Kentucky (see Sarnoff 2003). Gebremariam, Gebremedhin, and Schaeffer note, "[E]ven during the period of fast growth during the last decade of the twentieth century, Appalachian counties suffered from high unemployment rates, a shrinking economic base, low human capital formation, and outmigration" (102). This conspicuous fact points to the uniqueness of the problems in Central Appalachia and in Eastern Kentucky.

Eastern Kentucky has become a glaring counterpoint to the affluence and progressive thinking that has characterized much of the rest of the United States. Eastern Kentucky and the rest of Central Appalachia suffer from what John Kenneth Galbraith and Michael Harrington call "insular poverty … where an entire section of the country becomes economically obsolete" (Galbraith 236). Galbraith speaks to the idea of insular poverty:

> Most modern poverty is insular in character and the islands are the rural and urban slums. From the former, mainly in the South, the southern Appalachians, and Puerto Rico, there has been until recent times a steady flow of migrants, some white but more black, to the latter. Grim as life is

in the urban ghetto, it still offers more hope, income, and interest than in the rural slum. (237)

Galbraith is alluding to a Marxist idea of alienation, a word Marx used to describe the inability of factory workers in Europe to afford the products they created in factories and the alienation of those factory workers from decisions and rules that governed their lives (Soccio 396-98).

I have experienced that alienation as a lifelong resident of Eastern Kentucky. The elementary school I attended had oiled wood floors and desks so old they had ink wells in them. The upper grades (seventh and eighth grades) were held in small buildings adjacent to the school. These buildings were heated with coal fired pot-bellied stoves. The teacher would pay students a dime if we came to school early enough to build a fire in the stove so the room would be warm when the other students and the teacher arrived. Students were always ready to make sure a fire was built. The high school I attended had many rooms with no chalk board. One of the buildings had no heat and students would have to wear coats to keep warm.

When I went away to Centre College, I was left standing on the sidewalk with one suitcase. In my first class in literature and philosophy, the subject of existentialism came up. I had never even heard the word, and in that moment I realized how alienated I was from the rest of the world. That sort of alienation is the legacy of Eastern Kentucky.

Both Central Appalachia and Eastern Kentucky as a specific sub-region within Central Appalachia have been the focus of much study, many television documentaries, and much focal-group interest over the last fifty years. Images of mountain people as ignorant, incestuous, toothless, straggle-bearded, illiterate rubes have become the primary way the people of Eastern Kentucky have been presented to the rest of America (e.g., the

Hatfields and the McCoys). Dwight Billings describes the situation by writing, "Popular, pejorative images of the residents of Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia such as The Beverly Hillbillies, Lil' Abner, Snuffy Smith" abound (263).

As a result of these caricatures, interest in Eastern Kentucky coming from those outside Central Appalachia range from ridicule to mere curiosity to guilt assuagement to a sincere desire to help and bring some relief to the residents of the region. As an example of the latter, for the past half century (forty-eight years in 2012), the University of Dayton Summer Appalachia Program has sent young, college students into Eastern Kentucky to "… allow a person to learn about the varied ways in which people of our world live. Each summer UD students are gifted with the opportunity to live and work with a culture in our United States that is very different from the one they have grown up in." ("Campus Ministry"). Although much good is undoubtedly done by these annual mission trips, many residents of Eastern Kentucky see this outside intervention as a program that allows *the haves* to mingle with *the have nots* in a way that must be described as some form of condescension.

Another example of a sincere effort to do good work in Eastern Kentucky is the Christian Appalachian Project (CAP) founded in 1964 by Father Ralph W. Beiting and headquartered within the parameters of this study in Johnson County, Kentucky. The Christian Appalachian Project defines itself as "an interdenominational, non-profit, Christian organization 'committed to serving people in need in Appalachia by providing physical, spiritual, and emotional support through a wide variety of programs and services'" ("About CAP"). CAP is active in all thirteen states designated by ARC as Appalachian but is especially active in Central Appalachia, including the mountains of

Eastern Kentucky. ARC, CAP, the Dayton Group, and other organizations are committed to eradicating the effects of insular poverty that plague Eastern Kentucky.

Theological Framework

Introduction

While the ARC and the federal government have focused on defining Appalachia, Central Appalachia, and Eastern Kentucky using an economic model, other researchers have elected to use alternative defining criteria such as geography or cultural homogeneity. Robert Bickel and Cheryl Brown use voting patterns in providing a definition for Appalachia (99).

Using an exogenous methodology and identifying Appalachia as a culturally homogenous region, Douglas M. Stratford and Walker use "an algorithm based on three criteria: topography, contiguity, and prevalence of slavery in the 1860 census" as the central determinants in arriving at an accurate understanding of an Appalachian region (143).These researchers believe that cultural and psychosocial factors are necessary components in defining an Appalachian region. In their critical study of the region, none of these authors seem to consider worldview as one of the signal components of life in Appalachia. Instead, most researchers choose to look at a common culture, topography, or voting patterns, etc. Some researchers have looked at religion in Appalachia but have not studied the worldview that is intractably associated with religion. A common culture entails commonly shared beliefs. A common heritage entails a commonly shared system of values. A common voting pattern entails a common ideology.

I believe that before a proper consideration of the demoralizing sub-culture of poverty and hopelessness that infects life, including animal life that suffer as a result of ignorance and cruelty in Appalachia, the beliefs, ideologies, values, attitudes, and patterns of thinking out of which those symptoms arise must be adequately addressed and understood. This study surmises that these symptoms are both the cause and result of a worldview marked by poverty, hopelessness, and demoralization.

Religious and Philosophical Beliefs and Daily Living

Beliefs determine human lives. *Why* any group of human beings believe what they believe is beyond the scope of this study, but the fact that beliefs govern human lives is one of the major hypotheses on which this study was established. Prior research has found that, on an individual and a social/cultural scale, the beliefs human beings share guide the decisions they make and the actions they take (D. Palak and R. Walls 417; L. Cuban 4, M. Fullan 29; T.R. Guskey 382). Both on an individual as well as on a social/cultural scale. It is also true in the religious dimension of individual lives.

Beliefs and believing are the epistemic hinges between day-to-day human experience and worldview. Research has shown that daily existence is lived out within the overall context provided by a particular worldview and that worldview is adjusted as a result of daily experiences and relationships. As examples of this, Andrew Wilson and Peter Darke coined the term "just world coping" to describe the effect of positive worldview on marketing outcomes (615).

Reference has already been made to the absolute importance of belief and believing in Christianity. The Apostle Peter, admonishing believers about the coming "Day of the Lord," warns, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what

sort of people ought you to be...?" (2 Pet. 3:11). James, brother of Jesus says, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but has no works?" (Jas. 2:14). The Apostle Paul adamantly maintains that a change of heart should be in all cases accompanied by a change in lifestyle. Paul says, "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Col 3:12). Jesus says in John 11:26, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" This same Jesus drives home the importance of belief/believing in Matthew 5:13-16:

> You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but no the lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

I believe it is safe to say that religious belief and believing are the primary predicates for the Christian life.

Beliefs and Worldview

Beliefs not only shape our day-to-day lives, religious and philosophical beliefs, when taken together, form the lens through which persons see the world—a personal worldview. Thoughts, ideas, and understanding of truth are expressed in beliefs. Beliefs are the predicate for what is considered important and vital for the lives of individuals: our values.

Our lives and everything we do is predicated on the act of believing. The renowned Christian apologist, C. S. Lewis emphases the importance of belief and believing in human existence.

> Experience by itself proves nothing. If a man doubts whether he is
> dreaming or waking, no experiment can solve his doubt, since every
> experiment may itself be part of the dream. Experience proves this, or that,
> or nothing, according to the preconceptions [i.e. beliefs] we bring to it"
> (24-25).

Colin Brown agrees with Lewis:

> "Whether we fully agree with Lewis or not, there can be no doubt that
> what we see is always filtered through the twin lenses of our experience
> and our understanding. This applies to the things of everyday life…We
> apply the same kind of procedure to the deeper, more complex questions
> of life. We judge that this action is right and that action is wrong in the
> light of our scheme of moral values. We decide for or against such notions
> as free will and life after death not because of a single item of evidence or
> a simple experiment that we can perform. Any new item has to be assessed
> in relation to the fabric of beliefs and values that each of us has been
> weaving from birth. If we are inclined to use fancy, quasi-technical
> language to describe all this, we might talk about how people's
> perceptions are affected by their *Weltan-shuanng*. But this is only a more
> obscure way of saying in German what the words 'world view' say in
> English. (9)

Brown is correct and he rightly sees that whatever appellation is ascribed to worldview matters little. The important consideration is the realization that worldview—the fabric woven together by the threads of individual and group beliefs and values—guides the totality of the human response to the world. David Naugle in his critically important opus says, "A worldview is an inescapable function of the human heart and is central to the identity of human being as imago Dei" (xix). It is, as Naugle says, "the various ways in which human beings have sought to depict reality" (xvi). This is indeed one of the foundational predicates on which this research depends.

Famed world religions scholar Ninian Smart says worldview "depict[s] the history and nature of the symbols and beliefs that have helped form the structure of human consciousness and society" (2). Dr. Armand Nicholi, on the faculty of Harvard University agrees:

> All of us, whether we realize it or not, have a worldview; we have a
> philosophy of life, our attempt to make sense out of our existence. It
> contains our answers to the fundamental questions concerning the
> meaning of our lives, questions that we struggle with at some level all of
> our lives, and that we often think about only when we wake up at three
> o'clock in the morning. The rest of the time when we are alone we have
> the radio or the television on anything to avoid being alone with ourselves.
> Pascal maintained the sole reason for our unhappiness is that we are
> unable to sit alone in our room. He claimed we do not like to confront the
> reality of our lives; the human condition is so basically unhappy that we
> do everything to keep distracted from thinking about it. ("The Question of
> God" n.p.)

Here Nicholi addresses one of the ironies of life in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

He says that persons develop a worldview in spite of the debility of their circumstances

and look to that worldview to provide the explanations of why things are as they are and

to offer hope that they may, one day, turn out differently. Viktor Frankl calls this

determination to find some reason to live in the midst of suffering "the will to meaning"

(8). Frankl suggests that this will to meaning is the most powerful source of our

humanity. Individuals, in the worst circumstances, are imbued with a will to find meaning

and hope. Frankl's contention stated here is the root of an Eastern Kentucky worldview.

David Naugle uses a quote from Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* to drive

home this point:

> If the human mind is nonetheless to be able even to think the given infinite
> without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is
> supersensible, whose idea of the *noumenon* cannot be intuited but can yet
> be regarded as the substrate underlying what is mere appearance, namely,
> our intuition of the world [*Weltanschauung*]. For only by means of this
> power and its idea do we, in a pure intellectual estimation of magnitude,
> comprehend the infinite world of sense entirely under a concept, even
> though in a mathematical estimation of magnitude by means of numerical
> concepts we can never think it in its entirety. (58-59)

Naugle here shares the view of Paul Tillich who claims religion is the substrate of

culture. John P. Dourley says of Tillich's view:

Tillich describes his theology as an 'answering theology'" (6). The implication is that "nothing is revealed to man of which he is not seeking, however dimly. The major themes or symbols in the Christian experience is related to a corresponding basis for its reception in man's experience of himself driven by the forces of life to question its meaning (132).

Both Naugle and Tillich strongly corroborate Frankl's point that worldview is an essential predicate of human *Be-ing* in the world. I believe Naugle, Tillich, and Frankl would all agree that an innate, super-noumenal, human longing for the Transcendent Sacred is a central element in *Be-ing-ness*. An essential part of our humanity is to seek some knowledge of and relatedness to Sacred Reality: to God.

I suggest here that a fluid dialectic exists among the symbols, beliefs, and acts that chronicle the daily lives of individuals who exist within the parameters of a particular culture and the personal and collective beliefs undergirding that culture. In other words, the ethos of a society is a function of what the residents of that society believe to be real, true, and important, and that these beliefs, when taken together, collectively form a culturally specific worldview.

According to Christian dogma, the primary relationship humans have with God is predicated on belief; on believing God exists (Heb. 11:6). Naugle notes the change that comes about in human lives through belief/believing. "Given that culture is the history-shaping outcome of humanity's native philosophical and religious impulse, in order to alter human experience for the better, a radical transformation must take place at the cultural level and in the set of basic ideas that make it up" (42). For Christians, this religious impulse is the desire to be rightly related to God. The radical transformation that must take place in the lives of human beings in order to effect the fulfillment of this impulse is faith (strong belief) in Jesus as Son of God and Savior of the World.

Belief and the Church

The early creeds were an expression of the early Christian worldview,
foundational beliefs that established Christian orthodoxy. The history of the Christian
Church chronicles the development of the superstructure built on this basic foundation.
Two statements have specific significance for this current study in that they both have
come to bear acutely on the relationship between humanity, culture, and worldview. The
first statement is couched in David Naugle's summary statement concerning an orthodox,
Roman Catholic understanding of metaphysics and ontology:

> Like all major religions, Christianity is concerned about the question of
> origins. The opening chapters of the book of Genesis and their description
> of God's relationship to the world serve as the primary source of the
> church's perspective on this basic issue. According to Cunningham, the
> doctrine of creation, which can be summarized succinctly in four points, is
> the foundation of Catholic worldview. First the world is not self-sufficient
> or self-explanatory, but was created by a free and generous God who is the
> ultimate reference point for all reality. Second, the Catholic view of
> creation eschews both pantheistic and animistic interpretations, but instead
> affirms a qualitative distinction between the infinite God and his finite
> creation. Third, God's world is a very good one, a viewpoint that stands in
> sharp contrast to those who condemn the material world as an actual evil
> or as an illusion masking the reality of the divine. Fourth, the world as the
> proper sphere of human activity is given to man and woman as a gift, and
> as such, it is to be received with gratitude and pursued as a stewardship.
> (34-35)

In making this statement, Naugle acknowledges a sense of wholeness to the created
order. The proper sphere of humanity becomes apparent only when the proper sphere of
God is recognized by human beings.

Pope John Paul II articulated these four pillars of Christian *worldview* as they
apply specifically to humans in culture. Naugle paraphrased this Pope:

> According to the pope then, philosophical formation is a central and
> specifically for humans in culture *inescapable* [italics mine] human
> enterprise. Culture, therefore, is the engine which guides events and

> determines destiny. "Of all the factors that shape history," explains
> Richard John Neuhaus, "this Pope is convinced that culture is the most
> important. How people try to make sense of the world, how they define
> the good life, how they inculcate the moral visions by which they would
> live—this is the stuff of culture." Culture, therefore, is the root cause of
> the human condition. Given that culture is the history-shaping outcome of
> humanity's native philosophical and religious impulse, *in order to alter*
> *human experience for the better, a radical transformation must take place*
> *at the cultural level and the set of basic ideas that make it up* [emphasis
> mine]. (41-42)

In calling culture the root cause of the human condition, Pope John Paul II is speaking to

the entirety of this study. This research intended to examine the human condition of

indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky in terms of their culturally defined and shaped

worldview. The statement of Pope John Paul intimates that a radical change can be

brought to the lives of the residents of Eastern Kentucky but that radical change must first

be applied to attitudes, values, thoughts, and beliefs. This study investigated the effect of

education on the thinking of mountain people.

The second important statement to be raised at this point comes through the

thoughts of Alexandre Ganoczy. He seems to echo Pope John Paul when he declares, "A

worldview is always culturally and usually religiously conditioned ..." (qtd. in Bienert

748). This addition of a religious qualifier in the cultural conditioning of a worldview is

expressed not only in education of a general nature, but by the fact that this study is

primarily concerned with religious education, religious ideas, and a worldview that

reflects a religious and philosophical base.

Perhaps the greatest indication that education makes a difference in the worldview

of human beings is exhibited in the Enlightenment where grand and progressive changes

in medicine, industry, and a number of other basic human commodities accompanied new

insights from Newton, Voltaire, Locke, Spinoza, Hume, Smith, and others. The insights

raised by the religious, scientific, technological, and philosophical minds of the day were the soil out of which real and lasting change grew.

Christianity is a religion that operates on a relationship of faith, mercy, and grace. In the Christian experience, faith is at once an appeal for and a response to the mercy of a Triune God. Our faith is founded on and finds its fulfillment in an unflinching belief in the existence of a Triune God that does not normally make any claim to be empirically verifiable except on rare occasions and in special circumstances (miracles and in-workings of grace). This Triune God is, is not appropriated by mathematical or philosophic logic. In that sense, this Triune God is a logical impossibility. Although Christianity is a historical religion where historical facts are important, our faith goes beyond the historical facts to faith that often times flies in the face of logic and a mathematical formulation of truth. This faith can be elucidated through teaching and preaching but is not appropriated pedagogically. This faith only comes through the very unscientific idea of the grace of a God who cannot be seen or otherwise experienced empirically.

This God is apprehended by faith alone; faith that has no need of empirical confirmation outside of the pattern of history in which this God reveals Self. This Triune God must be received experientially employing both faith and belief. This experience is, in itself, not physically demonstrable although there may be and often are demonstrations resulting from and accompanying this experience. In most cases, this God does not manifest God's self visibly nor does God by-in-large manifest God's self audibly, nor does this God normally appeal to any of the senses available to human beings: taste,

touch, or smell. Yet, this is the God the existence of whom all Christians affirm. This is the God who must be experienced volitionally and not merely by reason alone.

Faith is a type of knowledge that leads to belief (Plantinga 256) but, itself, is a result of believing. The biblical writer affirms this combination of faith and believing

> "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Rom. 10:13-17)

From this statement, the Apostle Paul clearly ties faith and believing together. He says in effect, *we hear, we believe, so faith comes by hearing*. In this *a b b a* chiastic structure, the two words are used interchangeably. This interplay between faith and believing is a bit more complex in that one must "believe that" in order to have faith and then have faith to "believe in."

Moved by prevenient grace, human beings are opened to belief through a divine self-revelation through the report of nature, other people, the Bible, and an inner witness, and this believing is lifted to the level of faith and that faith results in consummated belief. This faith may sit firmly on reasons and reason, but it is not held captive by reasons or reason. This faith appeals to a higher order, a higher measure of truth, not only a descriptive but also a prescriptive truth. This faith comes through a self-revelation of God through grace: first, prevenient grace followed in turn by a forensic, justifying grace, regenerating grace, and sanctifying grace only in that order. And this grace is apprehended not through mathematical equation or scientific fact but by faith that is reflected in historical revelation.

The biblical writer proclaims, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one

may boast. (Eph. 2:8-9). Persons experience God through faith and this faith itself has an

etiology. The author of Hebrews provides a powerful explanation of faith:

> "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen…By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible…And without faith it is impossible to please God." (*NASB* Heb. 11:1-6)

The necessary affirmation of Christianity is an appropriation of God through faith which

itself is predicated on belief and believing. Christians hear, believe, and express faith in

the Triune God. This religious triumvirate is the claim of orthodox Christians

everywhere.

Whether they are the words of Jesus (as has been the contention of the Church

across the ages) or of John the gospel author (as has been suggested as an alternative

hermeneutic), there are few who would deny the importance of quite possibly the most

quoted and memorized verse in the Bible: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His

only begotten Son, that whoever *believes* [italics mine] in Him shall not perish, but have

eternal life. (John 3:16). John goes on to say at the end of his work that the entire Gospel

was written so that persons who hear or read it might *believe* [italics mine] its message

and be saved writing:

> Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this [gospel]. But these have been written so that you may *believe* [italics mine] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31)

Faith expressed in belief and believing is paramount and preeminent in orthodox

Christianity.

The story of the development of Christianity as a *bone fides* religion is one of

beliefs that were either selected as orthodox or rejected as heresies. The general councils

at Nicaea (AD 325), Constantinople (AD 381), Chalcedon (AD 451), Constantinople II

(AD 551), Constantinople III (AD 650-651), Nicaea II (AD 787), Constantinople IV (AD

869-870) all dealt with beliefs; what true Christians were to believe and what the true

Church of Jesus Christ was to preach and teach. Every Christian individual holds beliefs

that guide his or her response to God and to the world. Beliefs, belief, and believing are

the practical foundation of Christianity.

Evidently, since beliefs play such a vital role in the message, the mission, and the

ministry of Christianity, understanding the core philosophical and religious beliefs of an

indigenous people group would seem to be of utmost importance to those who would

proclaim and carry forth that message, mission, and ministry.

Worldview and Christian Belief

Although the idea or concept of worldview are and have always been co-existant

with culture and cultures, societies, and groups or tribes of people who see themselves in

relation to a transcendent reality, the term *worldview* is rather recent. The term *worldview*

comes from the German *Weltanschauung*, coined by Immanuel Kant in his Critique of

Judgment (Naugle 59). Kant invented the term *Weltanschauung* to describe the basic,

human intuition of the world. The concept of *Weltanschauung* was quickly adopted by

philosophers and psychologists and used in the work of almost every Continental thinker

in the nineteenth and early-mid twentieth centuries.

Clearly Kant believes humans have a faculty that allows individuals to transcend

the intuited world. This faculty enables individuals to comprehend the infinite, to be able

to think of that which is beyond thought. Kant's concept of *Weltanschauung* emerges out

of this human faculty. Human beings have the capacity to order the world correctly

through a properly defined worldview, to form and fill the categories of necessary, human existence through a superhuman power. As Descartes infers, when one comes to that point, there is but one word that defines that superhuman power: God.

Karl Mannheim and Gyorgy Lukacs define *Weltanschauung* as a dialectical relationship between an individual and his or her social context (Demeter 40-41). Parsing this definition provides a view similar to that of Kant. Tamas Demeter says Mannheim and Lukacs use the term *Weltanschauung* "to refer to some conceptually unstructured totality of feelings, which they take to be a condition of possibility of intellectual production" (39). The idea that *Weltanschauung* refers to some conceptually unstructured totality of feelings recalls the thinking of the early Greek philosopher, Anaximander, who said all things come about as a result of the work of a mysterious Indefinite Infinite (W.T. Jones, 11-12).

Descartes would note that when one reaches the point of speaking of an Indefinite Infinite, only one word/thought will suffice—God, and this God is then the source of possibility of intellectual thought. In other words, God exists, and this God makes thought possible. To carry this further, thoughts are integral to beliefs, beliefs are the predicate for attitudes and values, and attitudes and values are integral to a way of viewing the cosmos that, in turn, forms the predicate for the way individuals live daily.

Koltko-Rivera is in line with this argument when he describes worldview as "the interpretative lens one uses to understand reality and one's existence within it" (4). Whether or not Koltko-Rivera would admit acknowledgment, the ability to think, to categorize, and to synthesize that is essential in this interpretative lens is not self but one who transcends and predates self: God.

In his television documentary (which is accompanied by a written script and study guide), *The Question of God*, Harvard Professor A. M. Nicoli speaks directly to this importance of *worldview*:

> [Our *Worldview* governs] how we perceive ourselves, how we relate to others, how we adjust to adversity, and what we understand to be our purpose. Our worldview helps determine our values, our ethics, and our capacity for happiness. It helps us understand where we come from, our heritage; who we are, our identity; why we exist on this planet, our purpose; what drives us, our motivation; and where we are going, our destiny. (7)

Koltko-Rivera follows Nicoli by saying, "A worldview (or 'world view') is a set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behavior" (3). In other words, worldview answers both metaphysical and ontological questions.

Christianity is grounded in its own set of metaphysical and ontological predicates that must, as a function of being what they are, reflect a metaphysical understanding of reality as being created by God and must also reflect anthropology and ontology as being part of the created order. Humanity emanates from God and through that emanation finds its truest nature in that metaphysical and ontological relationship. In this sense, worldview is a powerful and inevitable Christian concept.

Shannon M. Wolf, Assistant Professor of Counseling at Dallas Baptist University explicitly defines worldview:

> [*Worldview*] is a set of overarching assumptions one holds about the sense of self, how the world works, one's place in the world, what is important, what is to be valued, and what is to be devalued. These presuppositions explain the relationship between things and include elements of philosophy and theology. (329-30)

These dynamics; sense of self, basic assumptions, and one's idea of what is important and what is to be valued or devalued are all indicative of a set of primary, predicate beliefs that guide human lives.

In laying down the predicate for what would come to be known broadly as philosophical existentialism, Martin Heidegger denies the existence of a commonly held, culturally defined *Weltanschauung*. He postulates that a *Weltanschauung* is existential, that is, person specific, being shaped by the *personal* [italics mine] experiences, emotions, and a necessarily unique existence of *beings-in-the-world.* Heidegger's thesis seems to overlook the fact that families, localities, regions, ethnicities, and people groups *do* seem to share a common way of seeing themselves and the world around them.

Anthropologists report that indigenous peoples commonly refer to themselves as "the people" as over and against all other creatures, including other people groups that they do not considered to be people at all. This phenomenon was noted by a National Geographic team who spent time with the Meakambut tribe in Papua New Guinea. Other anthropologists have noted the same sort of dynamic in the Dream Time stories of Australian Aboriginal people groups.

Integrating existential ideology with factual observance, *Weltanschauung* is tied to the daily *lived-out-ed-ness* of the ideas and beliefs that undergird the culture and lifestyle of an indigenous people. Alexandre Ganoczy points directly to the importance of this sort of existential component to worldview coming from the philosophical position of Heidegger, Husserl, and Sartre (749).

At every definitive juncture, the definitions provided for *Weltanschauung* point to a power that enables thought, categorization, perspective, and free-will. Taoists would

call this phenomenon *The Tao* (*Dao De Jing* 14), Plotinus referred to it as The One, The Authentic Existent, *or* Being (Plotinus 588), Plato called it Higher Form (*The Portable Plato* 544-45), and Aristotle mentioned a First Mover, Arete, *or* a *eudiamonic telos* (Soccio 170-174). Christians, however, recognize this power as the one true and living, eternal, creative God.

Worldview and Basic Human Existence

Worldview encompasses both philosophical and religious thought. Ninian Smart says of the religious element in worldview, "The study of religion and worldviews is a study of the realities of human life" (32). Therein lies the heart of this study: Philosophy, religion, beliefs, values, attitudes all comprise the amalgam and substrate of human existence and must be considered as the root of all human behavior whether it be on Park Avenue or in the trailer at the head of the holler in Eastern Kentucky.

One of the basic, anthropological propensities of human beings is to pull together a set of generalizable beliefs that allow them to order and make sense of their world. These beliefs orient persons metaphysically, epistemologically, ontologically, axiologically, ethically, and theologically to the most profound questions of life. Taken together, these essential, human beliefs have been termed a worldview. This current study proposed to identified and explained changes to a definitive, regional worldview endemic to a five-county area in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

The archeological evidence and anthropological study of indigenous populations make it clear that human beings seek some sense of understanding of birth, life, death, the cosmos, and Being. Humans seek answers that provide meaning to our existence. Persons

want to know who they are, where the came from, what they are to do, and what they can trust as being true.

Human beings seek true beliefs. Clinical psychologist Paul Wong identifies six essential, human questions relating to the basic, existential issues of life and living. These are "who am I, how can I be happy, how shall I then live, how can I tell right from wrong, how can I develop a deep and meaningful relationship, what is the point of striving when life is so short" (Wong 615). These basic, human questions and others like them are answered by a set of held beliefs that define individual human lives forming a comprehensive worldview.

The Need for a Worldview

The circumstances at work in the world in this current day and the challenges to humanity that accompany those circumstances demand that persons have and understand the importance of an existentially responsible way of comprehending the world: in essence, a responsible worldview. Christianity itself demands that fully functioning *human* beings live existentially responsible lives that flow outward from a personal, supernatural experience of grace and mercy that extends from the cross of Jesus. Peter, in his first epistle, cautions Christians toward this end:

> Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, and fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but, like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior . (1 Pet. 1:13-14)

The Apostle Paul exhorts believers to be actively aware of the change in life perspective that accompanies the mercy of God:

> Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is

> performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Eph. 2:11-13)

Natural disasters assault the world. Millions of people around the world die of hunger, abuse, and neglect every day. Parts of the world are under the siege state of war. The net fallout from the Arab Spring, for example, is that the entire Middle East is caught in a conflagration of conflict. Persons everywhere, young and old, are subjected to slavery, addictions, and inescapable, surd evil. Animal abuse, abuse of the environment, ignorance of the sanctity of all life, poverty, hopelessness, and demoralization are not restricted to Eastern Kentucky but are worldwide problems that cry out for a worldwide response, for a worldview that is characterized by an acknowledgement of those qualities that bear the stamp of Jesus: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal 5:22). These sorts of inner virtues are difficult to manifest when people are impoverished, under-educated and suffering from pervasive demoralization and reduced self-efficacy such as is the case in Eastern Kentucky.

Certainly, in this age that stands as a testimony to all other ages in challenging us to become fully human, Eastern Kentuckians must be able to come to see themselves as responsible agents of a larger and more diverse world, must be able to hold in proper balance a commitment to place and a commitment to creation. Eastern Kentuckians must incorporate into their worldview the ability to comprehend not only their own problems but the problems of other humans around the world. Eastern Kentuckians must also come to an awareness of the solution as well and must be able to see that the solution involves them.

Residents of Eastern Kentucky must be able to realize that they are residents of a larger, global context and that the problems Eastern Kentuckians face extend beyond those that affect the residents of Eastern Kentucky in the immediacy of our Central Appalachian subcultural circumstances. In order to envision and adopt a more positive, responsive, and productive worldview, Eastern Kentuckians must come to a cognitive process that is drawn beyond itself and even beyond its own cultural woes to include a larger, human responsibility to the world. Eastern Kentuckians must be able to transcend personal difficulties to see the greater need of human beings all over the world. A responsible, Eastern Kentucky worldview must be able to understand all humanity and all creatures to be valuable in the eyes of the Christian God and the resident of Eastern Kentucky must be able to come to do it in the difficulty of their own *sitz em leben*.

This intervention project employed an explanatory, mixed-methods research design in an effort to explain the role beliefs and attitudes comprising a comprehensive, Eastern Kentucky worldview might play in allowing these dire circumstances to continue to exist. If indeed beliefs, values, and commitments do underlie a diminished response to life marked by "helplessness, hopelessness, meaninglessness, subjective incompetence and low self-esteem" (Sahoo 18), then the issues in question must include, the kind of beliefs, values, and commitments (worldview) currently held, how such a worldview underlies the sub-standard response to life so prevalent in Eastern Kentucky, and how that worldview might undergo a positive and constructive change through education.

The research that forms the core of this study sought to explain the effect of education on the attitudes and beliefs making up the worldview of a group of college students attending Big Sandy Community and Technical College. These students

represent the indigenous population living in the five-county area served by BSCTC. This service area is made up of Magoffin, Floyd, Martin, Johnson, and Pike counties in the heart of Eastern Kentucky. The ultimate goal of the study was to explain the effects on the study participants' worldview that came about as a result of one semester of religious and philosophical education. Questions were then raised as to the possible ways that these changes might break the cycle of poverty, alienation, and demoralization that has historically affected the indigenous residents of the area under study.

God and a Religion-Shaped Worldview in Central Appalachia

This current investigation sought to identify and quantify a definitive, localized worldview endemic to a five-county area in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. Demeter attests to the geographical and sociological particularization of a culturally defined worldview (40-41). He notes the universality of worldview as a necessary part of human existence that can be spoken of in terms of multiple worldviews and that geography and social circumstances provide particularization for people and people groups (40-41).

One of the major ideological components of any worldview is the presence or absence of a prescribed and defined religious perspective (H. Smith 10). Previous and contemporary researchers have often seen religion in Central Appalachian in terms of a quasi-Marxist model. Karl Marx purported that religion is the only solace of the poor and those who have been coopted and alienated by an economically based social stratification (Soccio 386-90). Viewed in this light, Howard Dorgan has suggests that religion in Appalachia is "a consequence of poverty rather than an end unto itself" (1282). Dorgan, however, does not leave things there. By describing the plight of the Appalachian people

from the point of a constricting, defining, predetermined, socioeconomic dialectic, Dorgan goes on to provide a more basic and comprehensive perspective.

Dorgan says in his article in the Encyclopedia of Appalachia, "From the earliest days of Appalachian settlement to the continuing urbanization and industrialization of the twenty-first century, religion has been one of the most powerful and definitive forces in the region's culture" (1281). As such, the role of religion in a Central Appalachian worldview cannot be overstated. Dorgan lists six common features characterizing religion in Central Appalachia:

- a strong sense of spiritual independence that pervades the behavior of both individual worshipers and their churches,

- a distrust of religious hierarchies, especially when governing structures are outside the region,

- a lean toward congregational polity with the individual church often having the final say on all matters of faith and practice,

- a God-called and God-trained clergy that operates under the premise that he or she whom God elects, God equips,

- a demand for a personal experience of redemption constantly reinforced by worship that is explosively emotional and joyous, thus giving evidence of that redemption, and

- a modified Calvinism that accepts God as the controlling force of life (1283).

Dorgan posits a Central Appalachian worldview that is rooted in religion. Still, as Leonard notes, "[T]he complex religious landscape of [Appalachia] is difficult to chart" (xvi). Religion provides a much-needed superstructure, allowing for a good degree of

uniformity in defining Central Appalachia in terms of the core beliefs Dorgan notes:

shared beliefs that underlie a shared worldview.

Loyal Jones emphasizes Dorgan's contention:

> Mountain religion is a search for meaning. Mountain people, like all people, ask the big questions: Who are we? How did we come to be? If we were created, what is the nature of our Creator, and what power does the Creator hold over our lives here and beyond? Why is there evil in the world and within ourselves? What is our nature and our purpose, and how can we change our nature, fulfill our purpose, and face eternity (Leonard, 91). Jones goes on to add, "Most of the answers, for us in the Southern Uplands (i.e., Central Appalachia), come from the King James Bible. (qtd Leonard, 91)

In making this profound and far-reaching statement (qtd in Leonard), Jones has located

the Eastern Kentucky, Central Appalachian worldview squarely in a religious base and

has quantified that worldview in his statement. I will parse Jones' declaration and,

thereby, attempt to describe a thoroughly Eastern Kentucky, Christian-based, worldview.

First, Jones can use specifically Christian, religious language in such a universal

way when speaking of the Southern Uplands because the language of the Southern

Uplands, or what ARC refers to as Central Appalachia, is predominantly Protestant

Evangelical Christian.

Religious preference is one of the most significant (and often overlooked)

demographics of Central Appalachia, including Eastern Kentucky. I contend that the

beliefs charactering a pan-Central Appalachian worldview are critically important to a

proper understanding of the metaphysical and ontological thinking of Eastern

Kentuckians.

Demographics are deceiving in considering the effect and breadth of Christianity

in Eastern Kentucky. Mainline Protestant denominations such as the Southern Baptist

Convention and the United Methodist Church may keep adequate records, but those records are themselves misleading in that their roles are often filled with the names of the dearly departed whom the living have not had the heart to remove from their records. Another major factor in making an adequate determination of the extent of Protestant Christianity is that many of what Deborah Vansau McCauley calls "mountain churches" (1) do not keep written membership records, or if they do those records are spotty and incomplete.

Efforts to find objective, demographic analyses of religion in Eastern Kentucky are disappointing. McCauley says, "The 'invisibility' of Appalachian mountain religion has created a large, gaping hole in the writing of American religious history" (465). While trustworthy demographic data marking religious affiliation in Eastern Kentucky is lacking, an abundance of anecdotal and referential material exists that describes the area's emphasis on religion, in general, and Christianity, in particular. Indeed, McCauley is specific in her notation:

> Gathered under the heading of Appalachian mountain religion, these
> worship communities and the ongoing and very strong influences of
> mountain religious culture beyond the doors of the mountain church house
> are arguably the most important and most prominent stabilizing force in
> the sociocultural life of the region. (9)

Evidence of this prominent, stabilizing force in the sociocultural and personal life of the region is found in the pathetic, heart-wrenching last words of dying miners trapped underground after a roof fall. These accounts, found in Appendix F, are indicative of the power and the first-order thinking of mountain people.

In the hours leading up to a certain death the thoughts and desires of those who are dying are turned to what they deem most important. From these letters, and many

others written over the years by miners caught in the bad air that comes about as a result of a roof fall, those final hours and minutes of life their minds thoughts are dominated by God and family. These seem, along with a love of the land, the three most salient values held by Eastern Kentuckians. The importance of God, family, and land is manifested in ways as varied as a reticence to relocate outside the mountains and an unwillingness to accept modern translations of the Bible, both of which are inviolable parts of mountain life.

The final words of these dying miners reflect an overwhelming belief in God, in God's provision of mercy, and in God's ability to have a positive effect on the lives of the living and the dead. For miners and their families, God is the Lord of life, death, and the hereafter.

In the same trend of thought, these testimonials reveal the idea that God has a plan for their lives, and that plan is not only best but must be identified, acknowledged, and upheld. An excellent, personal overview of this religious belief is provided by Loyal Jones who recounts a belief statement from Audrey Wiley, Estil, Kentucky:

> The purpose of life is to fulfill the plan of God. To start with, He created the heavens and the earth, and He created Adam and Eve to replenish the earth. That is the sole purpose, for God to get glory out of man. He put us on earth to get glory out of us. He's getting it in some ways. He's got some people on this earth who's going to be obedient to Him as long as the earth stands. We need more love. People don't love one another. They don't need each other anymore. You can teach a man to love, but first he has to seek after it. He must seek the Lord first, and all the other things will be added. It comes from God. I know that there are people in this world that you can't love without a greater power to make you love them. It's hard to love a person who hates you and says all manner of evil against you. It's hard, but you're looking on them with the carnal mind when you feel that way, but when you become a Christian, you're no longer speaking with a carnal mind. You see things different. God said he has created a new creature, created in you a new heart. So there is your

answer. God has to be in the arrangements of everything for it to turn out right. Without Him we can't do anything. (14)

Mrs. Wiley's statements bring an Eastern Kentucky worldview, which has God at the center of all things, into greater perspective. God is creator and sustainer of life. God is giver of all good gifts and protector. Life has both meaning and purpose, and both have God as their etiology and their *telos*. Obedience to God's will is the highest order of living for Mrs. Wiley, and that will is couched in love. Love of God is implied, and love of others is explicitly expressed in Mrs. Wiley's statement, which is a testimonial to Proverbs 16:4: "The Lord works out everything to its proper end—even the wicked for a day of disaster." The all-encompassing presence of God is vitally involved in the world, bringing about his purposes in human lives. In Mrs. Wiley's ideation, all circumstances are under divine control, beyond human devising. For Mrs. Wiley, God does all things well (Mark 7:37). Whether we can see it or not, "we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God…" (Rom, 8:28). This fundamental belief is essential to a wider, Eastern Kentucky worldview.

The childhood prayer, "God is great. God is good. Let us thank him for our food," is nowhere more true than in the life-molding beliefs of the residents of Eastern Kentucky. Living in Eastern Kentucky now for almost sixty of my sixty-four years has engrained that essential belief into my own worldview. As I was writing this paper, I received an e-mail from our third eldest child who has been awarded a post here in the United States rather than having to return to the war theatre in Afghanistan for a second tour of duty. My first response was elation. My second response was to give thanks to God for answering prayer. That inclination is indicative of a mountain response to the exigencies of life.

For mountain Christians, Bible preaching and the traditional truths, conditioned by convention, reflected in that preaching provides the basis on which life is lived and in which a mountain, God-centered, belief-structured worldview is set. For mountain people, Christian/biblical beliefs transcend dismal socioeconomic circumstances, but those transcending beliefs, while providing some relief from suffering, thrust mountain Christians back into the darkness of the underground mines, back into the self-defeating realities of federal assistance, back into the struggle with never having enough, and back into the hopeless demoralization of a life lived outside the realm of the luxuries shared by the rest of America.

Those beliefs are part of the overall situation of daily life, and yet they only find their truest meaning in the situational exigencies of individual persons. These Christian beliefs establish the attitudinal values, define global meaning, and bring mountain people a generalized hope that enables a transcendent, spiritual context and that then empowers believers to live in an assumptive world.

Still, the overwhelming effects of poverty, inadequate education, cultural influences, and a sense of being second-class citizens compared to the rest of America exacerbate the sense of hopelessness felt by many Eastern Kentuckians. The anomaly is that in an area so pervaded by the belief that God is in all things, the five Eastern Kentucky counties in this study do not indicate an abnormally high rate of suicide when compared both to Kentucky at large and the United States as a whole (Table 2.3). This subversion of God's will to provide life seems out of place in a setting that subscribes to the idea that God is in control of all things.

Two worldviews seem to be evident in Eastern Kentucky: a traditional, mountain-religious, Christian worldview that yields an ability to suffer through hardships by holding belief in a theistic God, and another more skeptical sort of pseudo-Christian worldview that is just not that concerned with God and the mountain-religious tradition. In this sense, Eastern Kentucky is no different than the rest of America and the world. This dualistic way of viewing life by mountain people is an area that presents itself for future research possibilities.

Table 2.3. Comparative Suicide Rate

Location	Suicide Rate per 100,000
The 5-county area covered in this study	14.68
Kentucky at large	15.06
United States	11.60

Source: "Kentucky Suicide."

Sources of Eastern Kentucky Religious Beliefs

The Bible. A Christian-specific worldview with a well-defined theology and anthropology is set in two primary sources. The first is, of course, the Bible itself. The Bible provides the core foundation for spiritual/religious beliefs. Historically, the Bible, although referenced daily in the lives of mountain people, has not necessarily been universally read in Eastern Kentucky. Traditional, mountain churches (i.e., Old Regular Baptists, Primitive Baptists, various Holiness/Pentecostal movements) do not encourage members to bring Bibles to church services. Religious services in these mountain

churches are religions of the heart and not the head. McCauley calls traditional mountain churches "heart-centered" churches (168).

L. Jones identifies several mountain church traditions, including "Primitive [Baptists], Old Regular [Baptists], Union [Baptists], United [Baptists], Free-Will Baptists, Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian [Baptists], General Six-Principle [Baptists], Seventh-Day [Baptists], and Duck River [Baptists]" Leonard 95). Other mountain churches include "the Fire Baptized Holiness Church, the Pentecostal Church of God, the Church of God of Prophecy, the Apostolic Church of God, the Church of God in Jesus' Name Only, the Church of God Militant, and the Pillar and Ground of Truth Church" (95).

My father-in-law was a mountain preacher and moderator in the United Baptist Church tradition of the Mt. Zion Association. United Baptist churches are bound into localized groups or associations and have no well-defined, binding, written, unifying doctrinal or creedal statement of faith. Mountain preachers are the primary and, in many instances, the solitary readers of the Bible in mountain churches. An educated preacher is looked at suspiciously in mountain churches. A preacher is believed to be "called to preach" and therefore needs no other qualifications than that call of God upon his or her life.

The call and the immediate power of the Holy Spirit of God communicate with the preacher, telling him or her what to preach, and not necessarily the Bible, which is often used as a hammer or a proof text to drive home a point the Holy Spirit has made known to the preacher. Preachers are measured by the manifestation of various signs that they are being filled with or used by the Holy Spirit. Often this evidence of the

authenticity of the preacher is measured in the cadence, tonality, and emotional nature of his or her preaching.

In this environment, the Holy Bible is read through the lens of traditional beliefs and a rudimentary knowledge as it was historically preached in the localized area. Preaching is, therefore, a manifestation of mountain culture and traditional truth claims. If, as some suggest, Eastern Kentucky is marked by a sub-culture of poverty (Harrington 22), then preaching and worship are more of a dialectical acquiescence to that culture than they are a proclamation of the way out of such a culture.

Mountain Christians cling to a belief/unbelief model of sin (as over and against the pride/humility model evident in Catholicism). Borrowing from mountain church vernacular, this sin model requires that Christians believe *in* and believe *on* Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of the world. The core scriptural reference for this way of looking at sin and its solution is found in Acts 16:31: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved, you and your household." For mountain people, the defining mark of Christianity is that Christians must believe.

John the Evangelist uses the word *believe* or one of its cognates ninety-nine times in his Gospel alone. In fact, the very intent of John's Gospel is couched in John 20:30-31:

> Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

This same John contends that of all human options, it is the active process of believing that counts most where happiness, fulfillment, and future blessing are concerned. Indeed, beliefs shape our worldview and by shaping our worldview, they shape our lives. The online website Hellenic Communication Service affirm this concept of belief/beliefs:

> One of the common word concepts of the bible is faith or belief. It has been fundamental to man's relationship with God from the beginning. This one word that is translated as faith or belief occurs about 550 times and possibly constitutes the most frequent instruction/command found in the New Testament. ("Praxis")

Obviously, beliefs and the process of believing are prime dimensions in shaping human existence.

In the New American Standard version of the New Testament , the English words faith, belief, and believe are all cognates of the Greek word *pisteuo,* which is used 243 times in the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews links belief/believing with faith (used as a noun): "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." K. W. Clements makes a direct connection between the idea behind belief/believing and faith by saying that faith (noun) "is a confident, obedient trust in the reality, power, and love of God known through his acts and an awaiting of their future consummation" (207). These pervasive uses of the word *believe* and its cognates are evidences of the importance of believing/belief in Christianity.

This spiritual/religious superstructure is appropriated by faith described in the Bible as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Christians believe the Bible, along with reason, revelation, and tradition, to be faithful, valid references for understanding God (theology), humanity (anthropology), and how to live (ethics). Christians believe they can seek and find God in and through the pages of Holy Writ.

The creeds. The second source for a Christian-specific worldview is found in the orthodox creeds of Christendom. Mountain religion is not consciously creedal. Even

among mainline denominations where the creeds of the Church play a larger role in

worship, in most small, rural churches, those creeds are never spoken or referenced. Even

so, mountain religion is shaped by the creeds in disguise.

The earliest, broadly accepted creedal statement of the Church was a response to

Marcion's antipathy toward Judaism. The consensus response of the Church was what is

now known as the Apostles Creed:

> [The creed] was put together, probably in Rome, around the year AD 150
> [as a] symbol of the faith—a question/response liturgy used at baptism and
> consisting of three questions, (1) Do you believe in God the Father
> almighty?, (2) Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was
> born of the Holy Ghost and of Mary the virgin...?, and (3) Do you believe
> in the Holy Ghost, the holy church, and the resurrection of the
> flesh.(Gonzalez 63).

The Apostle's Creed, created in the second century AD, and restated in the United

Methodist Book of Worship states the creed in liturgical language:

> I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in
> Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy
> Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
> crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose
> again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand
> of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick
> and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the
> communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
> and the life everlasting. AMEN. (881).

This initial creedal statement was expanded, ratified, and codified at Nicea in AD 325

(later ratified later at the Second Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in AD 389 with an

even more expansive, more Trinitarian statement of faith and belief. The Nicene Creed

stands as the most comprehensive of Christian creedal statements in the first four

centuries of the Christian Church:

> We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
> maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father,
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
Amen. (UM Book of Worship 881)

These creeds have guided the Church throughout 20 centuries. As formal, liturgical

elements of worship, however, they have only minimal, or no, place in mountain

churches.

Parsing these creeds is not a difficult task. Using bold headings, both statements

of faith emphasize belief

1. *In God* the Creator of heaven and earth

2. *In Jesus* as God's only begotten son, being of the same substance

(ηομοουσιος) as the Father, who was born, lived, acted, spoke, was tried, convicted,

crucified, and resurrected, and who will return in the future,

3. That the Father and the Son are present in the Holy Spirit who is the power of God to change human lives;

4. That one group of called out ones (*ekklēsia*) exists; and,

5. That persons can be made right with God through God's grace and mercy.

These simple and timeless truths contained in the creeds, along with a traditional belief in the preordination of all things by God, resulting in an atmosphere of fatalism shaped by a Scots-Irish, Calvinist heritage comprise the foundational beliefs of mountain Christians regardless of denominational affiliation.

Of the presence of fatalism in mountain religion, McCauley says of Primitive and Old Regular Baptist beliefs, "[T]his portrayal is extreme within the religious life of the region. Implicit in this portrayal is extreme passivity, commonly characterized as 'fatalism,' which drags with it the weight of stagnation and a regressive traditionalism, rather than active self-determination" (18). These existential and experienced beliefs are powerful and significant forces in shaping an Eastern Kentucky worldview.

Trinitarian belief. In defining warranted Christian beliefs, the late Ninian Smart, past president of the American Academy of Religion, Academic Research Professor at the University of California-Santa Barbara, and Gifford Lecturer, notes, "Christianity … has the belief that God creates the world out of nothing, is incarnated in Jesus Christ, and is active inspirationally through the Holy Spirit" (8). In this statement, Smart quantifies Christianity as a Trinitarian religion. While the King James Bible is venerated in mountain religious beliefs, the idea of a triune God is not always so clearly seen or fully appreciated.

In an extremely insightful article locating the concept of trinity at the heart of a Christian worldview, Dourley highlights Trinitarian theory in the thinking of Paul Tillich and Carl Jung. Dourley notes that both Tillich and Jung "share certain similarities in their thought on the genesis and function of Trinitarian symbolism in man's religious and psychic life" (131) and, therefore, Christian worldview. At the outset of his article, Dourley says, "Both Tillich and Jung share many religious convictions—in particular the view that the religious factor is embedded in the fabric of life itself and cannot be seen as an arbitrary super-addition to life from outside" (131). For both these thinkers, religion is entrenched in human existence.

Dourley clearly understands humanity to be *homo religious,* and, if as Descartes supposed human beings are also *homo cogitare*, then for Dourley human beings are, at their root, beings whose thoughts, desires, and directives are focused on a superordinal, Sacred Reality. Tillich's explanation of the concept of a Trinitarian Sacred Reality is such that human beings, created in the *imago Dei,* are themselves three-part beings and that "man's collective religious experience as it proceeds to a monotheism and man's personal experience of his life as participating in divine life point to and ask for the fully developed Christian symbol of the [T]rinitarian God" (133). Tillich sees humanity as "a broken, disrupted, fragmented triadic being that cries out of for the healing that can only be provided by un-fragmented, un-disrupted God" (134), thus the need for the Trinity. This understanding is vital to this study:

> In summation then, Tillich argues that man's experience of God is itself of a Living God and so is latently trinitarian. He takes as a model of life a dialectical Process in which polarities interact in such a way that only when they relate harmoniously is life fostered. When they relate in contention life is damaged and occasionally destroyed. In existence all human life is subject to disruption through the conflict of the polarities

> which make it up. But, in its depth, it retains an essential relation to divine life which also is triadic and polarized but beyond a destructive tension. By being led into this stratum of its reality, created life partakes in a healing and integrating way in the balance and power of trinitarian life. In so doing it becomes ever more an image of the living God. Christ out of the fullness of his relation to this life leads other men into it Fragmentarily in time and fully in eternity. (138)

The metaphysical construction of religion and religions is such that three levels exist, the level of contingent reality, the level of non-contingent reality, and the gap between the two. Tillich's dramatic assessment is predicated on this gap being filled by a communication marked by divine mandate and human belief.

If both Tillich and Jung (who sees a similar triadic nature to humanity) are correct, then the problem in Eastern Kentucky is, in fact, as much spiritual as economic, academic, or ideological. The indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky are broken, disrupted, and fragmented. Even those who are Christians, by not having an adequate appreciation for the Trinity, are unable to reach a eudaimonic existence through the actualization of their potentiality. This idea opens a very provocative and evocative trend of thought and must become the focus of additional studies in Appalachian humanity.

An orthodox, Christian belief system (i.e., worldview) is predicated on the belief that the Trinitarian God exists (Heb. 11:6; John 14:1) and the Trinitarian God's existence is expressed in God's creation (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 8). In positing a foundational belief in a triune God, orthodox Christianity suggests a relationship characterized by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Apostles' Creed, as the foundational tenet of Christianity, establishes a powerful, Trinitarian relationship at the core of the Christian belief. Since Christianity maintains a solid belief in salvation by the will of the Father, the work of the Son, and the

power of the Holy Spirit, no true Christianity can exist without the Trinity. In assessing

Khalid Anatolios' analysis of fourth-century theology, Stephen Black says of the Trinity,

"This reflection became so important in the fourth century precisely because the doctrine

was a kind of meta-doctrine for the entirety of Christian confession and living" (712).

Christianity, in its infancy, spoke most clearly to the poor, the downtrodden, the outcast,

the alienated, and the coopted and this meta-doctrine defined its message. A very similar

group of people inhabit Eastern Kentucky today.

While an orthodox Trinitarian belief is assumed by most mountain Christians, it is

not always appreciated or highlighted. A Pentecostal, Jesus-only movement exists in

some rural, mountain churches that are located in the most secluded parts of Eastern

Kentucky. The Encyclopedaea Britannica defines this movement by saying,

> [The Jesus-Only movement] is a movement of believers within
> Pentecostalism who hold that true baptism can only be in the name of
> Jesus rather than in the name of the Trinity. It began at a Pentecostal camp
> meeting in California in 1913 when one of the participants, John G.
> Scheppe, experienced the power of the name of Jesus. Many accepted his
> revelation, and they found support for their belief in Jesus Only baptism in
> John 3:5 and Acts 2:38. This led to the denial of the traditional doctrine of
> the Trinity and to the assertion that Jesus is the one Person in the
> Godhead. (Jesus-Only n. p.)

Owing to a biblical hyper-literalism, this movement is often connected with serpent

handling and the drinking of poison as signs of salvation in the life of the believer. While

this sect represents only a small percentage of mountain Christians, it does reflect the

blend of traditional culture and a dependence on supernaturalism that defines religion in

the mountains. All things are ordered by God, and in the case of those who would be

Jesus-only believers, this powerful idea is nowhere more truly unveiled than in the

mystery of the middle ground between heaven and earth. This murkily defined sub-

classification of a mountain worldview hopes to exist in the gap between the levels of conditioned and unconditioned reality—the realm of avatars and shamans.

A Christological focus. In a truly Trinitarian context, Christianity believes Jesus of Nazareth to be not only the Christ (*Χριστός*) but also the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16) of the same substance (*ηομοιουσιος*) with God the Father. Jesus made that startling claim for himself in Mark 14:61-62, John 10:36, and John 17:1.The belief that Jesus is God and man, anointed of God the Father and immanent in the world is at the center of Christianity and stands as a primary, Christian maxim. This maxim is the heart of the Christian message, and Jesus makes known the fact of his divine immanence crystal clear at the outset of his earthly ministry.

Christianity holds fast to the belief that Jesus is Son of God and as Son of God, his acts and words carry full weight both in instructing the lives and enriching the faith of Christian believers. Jesus describes his mission and ministry as Son of God to the world and to humankind in Luke 4:16-20: "to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (v.18).

Christians believe these tenets to be true in every sense of the word truth. In Eastern Kentucky, their truth must be lived out in a culture of poverty and demoralization that plagues Eastern Kentucky. The help of God and the dire situation of life seem to produce a conundrum in this area of Central Appalachia where Christianity plays such a central role.

An Identifiable, Eastern Kentucky Worldview

The evident worldview in Central Appalachia including Eastern Kentucky is born into and perhaps, in some ways, born of a multifarious, ethnographic situation marked by dire economic and societal ills. Eastern Kentucky as part of a greater Central Appalachia is also marked by an assemblage of very positive geographic, sociological, historical, spiritual, and familial dynamics. Mari- Lynn Evans recalls her childhood in Central Appalachia:

> Appalachia, in fact, represents the best of us as a society. In my own experience as a native Appalachian [West Virginia], there is great love of family, strong community ties, a sense that the Golden Rule is how you are supposed to live your life. And it is a quieter, more peaceful place than most areas of the country. Certainly, Appalachia contains many sophisticated urban centers, and in those communities life is not much different from that in cities across America. But there is an under-lying difference that comes from our past, our heritage … to grow up there is to know its uniqueness and what makes it precious. (xii)

Here, Evans et al. gives credence to the idea of *place* as an important dynamic in an overall Central Appalachian and, therefore, Eastern Kentucky worldview.

In their research on place attachment in rural America, Holly Barcus and Stanley D. Brunn decide that an unwillingness of people to move away from home is a complex phenomenon that "does not necessarily signify strong place attachments" (26). Barcus and Brunn reject the idea that hesitance to move is dependent on an attachment to place. They propose the idea that "one's perceived social and familial standing or importance within the community and the quality of individual relationships seems to be a much more accurate gauge of place satisfaction" (44). In the quote above, Evans provides a different view. She refers to the importance of place in the minds of mountain people. The importance of place as ancestral home is growing passé in America. Although I am

certain that people everywhere do value their ancestral homes, the truth is, in this age of

technology and performance-measured humanity, most people do not have an ancestral

homes. American society has become so hypermobile and conditioned by technology that

it has all but muted out ties to place and heritage for many Americans.

Eastern Kentucky has managed to retain a strong bond with the importance of

place. J. B. F. Wright, himself a product of a Central Appalachian upbringing in Eastern

Tennessee, wrote the song, "Precious Memories":

> Precious mem'ries, unseen angels
> Sent from somewhere to my soul
> How they linger, ever near me
> And the sacred past unfold.
> CHORUS:
> Precious mem'ries, how they linger
> How they ever flood my soul
> In the stillness of the midnight
> Precious, sacred scenes unfold.
> Precious father, loving mother
> Fly across the lonely years
> And old home scenes of my childhood
> In fond memory appear.
> In the stillness of the midnight
> Echoes from the past I hear
> Old-time singing, gladness bringing
> From that lovely land somewhere.
> I remember mother praying
> Father, too, on bended knee
> Sun is sinking, shadows falling
> But their prayers still follow me.
> As I travel on life's pathway
> Know not what the years may hold
> As I ponder, hope grows fonder
> Precious mem'ries flood my soul.
> CHORUS:
> Precious memories how they linger,
> How they ever flood my soul.
> In the stillness of the midnight.
> Precious sacred scenes unfold. (282)

Over fifty years have passed since my childhood, but I can still remember hearing that song sung at funerals in the Little Dove Baptist Church on the Perry-Knott county line near Vicco, Kentucky, near the old, Eastern Kentucky, mountain home-place of my family, my ancestors, and my roots.

I remember walking home after church, looking back through the dark night at the light shining through the open door and the open windows of the First Baptist Church of Salyersville, Kentucky, where I had moved with my family with those old songs still ringing in my heart. They are there still, indelibly engraved in my being as a quintessentially Eastern Kentuckian. Speaking in the same completive-resultative tense as the Apostle John in 1 John 1, I can still hear those songs now just as clearly as I heard them then. I can still smell the river and the summer night air just as clearly now as I did then. I can still see the saints of God filing out of the church with hugs, handshakes, and words of friendship, love, and parting just as clearly now as I did then.

Although I did not realize then, I can still remember an inchoate understanding that I was part of something very special and that the whole world ended at the edge of the mountains. Although I did not fully recognize it, I was part of an Appalachian culture, but already, at that young age, being surrounded by parents, grandparents, relatives, and a whole community of people who were somehow not like images of people outside the mountains, I knew my life and our lives in the mountains was different from what I saw on television and read about in books. I know now I was experiencing being one part of a culture with a rich heritage, and even then I knew that two kinds of people existed in the world: those who lived in the mountains and everybody else.

While Barcus and Brumm claim that place attachment is not a significant factor in the mobility or lack of mobility of Eastern Kentucky people, they admit that even for residents of Eastern Kentucky who have moved away and may retire in some area other than the mountains, "they intend to be buried in the home county" (43). I do not think either Barcus or Brumm were from the mountains. If they had, they would have known the powerful draw those mountains, the people, the land, and the heritage would have on their lives.

Walls and Billings recount numerous studies within what they term "the humanistic tradition" (136), revealing a more positive dimension to a Central Appalachian worldview. Using personal interviews and allowing the words of the Central Appalachians to speak for themselves, they say, "Their descriptions of individuals and families manage to capture the strengths as well as the shortcomings of mountaineers and the diversity of personality types within some common subcultural themes" (133). This is an insight that has gone unnoticed by Barcus and Brumm.

Eastern Kentucky is a region boasting a great many positive qualities. At the same time, it is an area fraught with significant problems. This research sought to investigate and explain this single question in terms of the ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and values that undergird the culture and the lives of the people in Eastern Kentucky. This investigation of worldview is directed toward the ultimate end of explaining and understanding why, with all the merits of this region, it remains backward and impoverished.

Eastern Kentucky has a rich and colorful heritage, unmatched natural beauty, and pleasant and varied seasonal climate. The mountains of Eastern Kentucky, through alienation and poverty, have come to be a forgotten part of America defined by big

business and outside interests that have treated the area and its indigenous populace shamefully. In addition, these indigenous residents have suffered the unintentional ill effects of a national social policy that denigrates and robs them of their full humanity.

Eastern Kentuckians have accepted the nation's image of a *hillbilly nation*. The two largest social events in Eastern Kentucky—Pikeville's Hillbilly Days and Hazard's Black Gold Festival—are indications that we, as indigenous residents of the area have come to believe themselves to be exactly who the rest of the nation has told them they are. Many of the inhabitants of Eastern Kentucky revel in the celebrity provided by the image of Appalachia created by the "Turtleman" television show or the television mini-series, the Hatfields and the McCoys. The residents of Eastern Kentucky lay claim to those images of themselves, blind to the fact that by focusing on these caricatures and tales from the past, they are putting at risk any good hope of standing on equal footing with the rest of America in the future. For generations, Eastern Kentuckians have permitted the destruction of the mountains, have littered the roadsides with trash, and have treated animals as if they have no ability to feel pain or estrangement. In all of this self-defeatism there seems to be a denial of full humanity. This self-defeatism is also a part of the legacy of mountain people hardened by the exigencies of a hard-scrabble life in a difficult place.

Two Contrasting Worldviews

Sigmund Freud employs an Enlightenment-based, modernistic, materialistic, humanistic, and proto-scientific view of the relationship between worldview and daily existence:

> By *Weltanschauung*, then, I mean an intellectual construction which gives a unified solution of all the problems of our existence in virtue of a

comprehensive hypothesis, a construction, therefore, in which no question is left open and in which everything in which we are interested finds a place. It is easy to see that the possession of such a *Weltanschauung* is one of the ideal wishes of mankind. When one believes in such a thing, one feels secure in life, one knows what one ought to strive after, and how one ought to organize one's emotions and interests to the best purpose. If that is what is meant by a *Weltanschauung*, then the question is an easy one for psychoanalysis to answer.... ("Question of God")

Asserting that human cognition is sufficient to solve the problems of humanity unaided by any sort of transcendent or noumenal influence is shortsighted at best. Freud seems to be debunking divine intervention in the world and claiming that science and a materialistic worldview defines the premier field of human endeavor and that religion and philosophy are merely conjecture and, therefore, have no business interfering with the other two. For almost all Eastern Kentuckians, this viewpoint is untenable.

C. S. Lewis, possibly the greatest Christian apologist of the twentieth century, promotes a dramatically different worldview:

The broad interest and enduring influence of the works of Freud and Lewis result less from their unique literary style than from the universal appeal of the questions they addressed; questions that remain extraordinarily relevant to our personal lives and to our contemporary social and moral crises. ("Question of God")

From diametrically opposed views, Freud and Lewis address the idea of ultimate meaning and purpose to human existence. Freud takes the side of scientism[3] while Lewis appeals to a supernatural ideology, finding the meaning and purpose for humanity in a relationship with a creator. "[Lewis] declares the primary purpose of humanity is to establish a relationship with that Creator" (Question of God).

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[3] A word coined by Huston Smith to describe a decidedly scientific post Enlightenment search for truth as over and against a pre Enlightenment search for truth that included a more equitable blend of science and an appeal to the supernatural.

Freud and Lewis also differ in their concept of the etiology of morality and of the existence of miracles:

> Freud maintains that the human moral code arises from human experience. Lewis would disagree. Lewis holds that while there are differences in cultures, there is a basic moral law that transcends culture and time. This law is not invented, like traffic laws, but is discovered, like mathematical truth. So Freud and Lewis had an entirely different understanding of the source of moral truth. Lewis and Freud also talked about the existence of intelligence beyond the universe; Freud said "No," Lewis said "Yes." Their viewpoints led them to discuss the problem of miracles in an age of science. Freud claimed miracles contradict everything we have learned through empirical observation; they do not really occur. However, Lewis would ask, "How do we know they don't occur? If there is any evidence, the philosophy that you bring to that evidence determines how you interpret it". According to Lewis, we need to understand whether our philosophy excludes miracles and colors our interpretation of the evidence. (Question of God)

Nicholi draws attention to certain tenets addressed by Lewis and Freud. These tenets are critical to this study and to the questions raised and answers sought in this research. The implications arising from Nicholi's comparison of the worldviews of Freud and Lewis speak directly to the issues important in this research, including the Eastern Kentucky view of the meaning and purpose of life in a difficult environment, ultimate responsibility for moral guidance, and the question of human agency in making right choices.

Jesus, and Central Appalachia

Although Christianity and the church are active and well in Eastern Kentucky and in Central Appalachia, one of the major engines propelling this research was an investigation of how Christian belief and ecclesiastical expression of that belief might stand in juxtaposition to an identifiable regional worldview. The exposition of a systematic, Christian worldview encompassing the life and teaching of Jesus as that worldview is expressed throughout Holy Scripture is beyond the pale of this research.

What needs to be done here however is to draw from the gospel accounts of Jesus' life and teaching certain principles that apply directly to the existential experience of living life in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

Jesus and the poor. Jesus' self-revelation included a specific reference to the poor. In Luke 4:18, Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18). Jesus also blessed the poor in Luke 6. In Luke 14:13, Jesus used a parable to explain to his disciples that special accommodations be given to the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Jesus' worldview included concern for the poor.

Jesus and the outcast. As previously noted in this dissertation, the people of Eastern Kentucky have been referred to as ignorant, illiterate, and, in some cases, barely human. Viewing the toothless, overall-clad, bearded, sexually deviant, hillbilly characters in the 1972 hit movie *Deliverance* and believing them to reflect a true picture of people in Central Appalachia is an unfortunate and improper mixture of metaphors.

While Eastern Kentuckians might, for the most part, lack knowledge of quantum mechanics or space navigation, they are not ignorant. Indeed, they are no more ignorant than residents of New York City are ignorant of how to properly hoe corn on a hillside. Everyone is then ignorant of some particularized bit of technical knowledge at the very least. Ignorance is then a word that does apply to everyone. Since no non-ignorant people, we can make only one logical statement. All people are ignorant. Using the word ignorant in defining or describing Eastern Kentuckians then is absurd according to the rules of formal logic. A word that has no comparative definition is a philosophical

reductio ad absurdum. Ignorant would fit into that category since its use is ubiquitous and without exception.

Pollard may be closer to the truth, however, when he labels Eastern Kentuckians as illiterate. The first definition of illiteracy listed in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* is "uneducated, not knowing how to read or write." If the term illiterate is used to mean uneducated then the same logical conundrum exists as that conundrum faced concerning use of the word ignorant. The word educated seems to be a word with relative meaning and, from the standpoint of formal logic, a word with relative meaning is an invalid measure of reality. If we take *Merriam-Webster's* second definition however we find that Eastern Kentuckians and Kentuckians as a whole do have a problem with illiteracy. A governmental research report from the Task Force on Adult Education carried out in August, 2000, found that

> 40 percent of Kentucky's working age population (1 million) is at the two lowest literacy levels I and II—not being able to read at all or at very limited to moderate levels. Two-thirds of Kentucky's counties have 40 percent or more of their working age population at levels I and II literacy; in 10 counties 50 percent or more of the working age population is at levels I and II literacy. (Kentucky Legislative Research Commission)

By looking at these figures, almost half of Eastern Kentucky's working age population is either illiterate or barely literate but certainly not ignorant.

Finally, while basic humanity was not held in question, the Jews of Jesus' day, and especially the Jewish religious elite, considered Samaritans and Gentiles as secondary human beings in much the same manner as those outside Appalachia consider the mountain people of Central Appalachia, especially Western West Virginian and Eastern Kentucky to be second-class human beings. Speaking of the attitude of first century Jews and Jewish leaders concerning Samaritans, Joachim Jeremias notes,

"[F]rom the beginning of the first-century AD [Samaritans] were regarded as being on a level with the Gentiles, considered from the cradle as impure to a very great degree and as causing impurity" (356-57). Compare this disparaging viewpoint to the caustic invective leveled against the people of Appalachia by H. L. Mencken:

> In this place, the reading of books was a source of danger. "Why read a book? If what was in it was true, then everything in it was already in the Bible. If it is false, then reading it would imperil the soul." To Mencken, Appalachia … was full of boobs and zealots. (Drake 217)

This view of Eastern Kentuckians can readily be found in the literature, on television, and in the minds of those living outside the region. Those living outside the region consider residents of Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia just as Menken describes them. This stereotypical caricature is one of the most significant hindrances to progress and a movement away from poverty, demoralization, and misery in Eastern Kentucky.

Time and again, throughout the gospels, Jesus came in contact with those who were considered by many to be lesser human beings. His meeting with the woman of Samaria recorded in the fourth chapter of John's Gospel is indicative of Jesus' willingness to reach out to those who were considered to be outcasts and people of little consequence. Again, Jesus' encounter with Zaccheus the tax collector in Luke 19:1-10 and his willingness to eat with sinners and Gentiles—people who were considered unclean and unworthy by orthodox Jews—revealed the actual worth of all persons including those of Eastern Kentucky. Jesus' worldview encompassed a belief in the worth of all humanity.

Jesus and the hopeless. Christianity is an expression of the spiritual/religious dimension of individuals' lives. This dimension is firmly rooted in separate beliefs that, when taken together, form a unified belief system or worldview rooted in the Bible, in the

Christian tradition, in reason, and in experience. Clarke and Kissane state the matter

clearly:

> Little things, even just being alive, [have] meaning beyond themselves,
> sustained by their "global meaning" and values. [Viktor] Frankl called
> these "attitudinal", referring to values and beliefs about issues that
> transcend everyday actions and thoughts. The concept of "assumptive
> world" [i.e. worldview] described by Frank and others is similar, referring
> to beliefs and understandings about how things work in the world. Such
> understanding is crucial to our ability to predict the future and sustain a
> sense of control and security. It is related to the idea of "generalized
> hope." These ideas (assumptive world, attitudinal values, global meaning,
> and generalized hope) all refer to beliefs that transcend the immediate.
> Religion is an example of this. These beliefs provide stability when our
> control over things is threatened. (735-736)

These authors have zeroed in on the central factor in our ability to live well. The large

questions of existence are filtered through the lens of worldview. Actual, *things-in the-*

world do exist and there are the systems of thought that categorize and order these *things-*

in-the-world so that they point toward ideas that are larger than the particulars those ideas

define.

Clarke and Kissane identify religious ideas that are central to a proper

understanding of the world. The particulars of life cannot be seen rightly if one is too

busy looking at the trees to see the forest. Focusing only on particulars obviates finding

greater solutions to the problems that plague humanity. Human beings feel alone and

estranged, confused and strangely out of place like those who are travelling in a foreign

land at night stumbling over every root and branch. There exists a sense of hopelessness

and a questioning of the reason for continuing to *be*.

Like those who were outcasts, Jesus also reached out to those who had no hope.

In my favorite Bible passage (Mark 9:14-29), Jesus was approached by a distraught father

who had tried and failed to help his son for much, if not all, of his son's entire life. I can

use my sanctified imagination to envision the father going from physician to physician, miracle worker to miracle worker and his beloved son was still afflicted and possessed by a demon.

Jesus raised the dead daughter of a grieving father in Matthew 9:18-26 and answered the cry of the blind who cannot help themselves and are hopeless in Matt 9:27-29. Jesus makes mobile those who had no hope of walking or even rising from a bed (Mark 2:1-12). He goes to a home where death has taken place and the family no longer had any hope of ever seeing the loved one again and he called Lazarus out of the tomb, bringing hope even the face of death.

Again and again, Jesus heard the cry of the hopeless who could not seem to help themselves. He did not turn away from them when images of hopelessness and helplessness appeared. Jesus waded into the crowd. He walked three days journey. He brought hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless. Jesus' worldview —his *Weltanschauung*—included concern for those who are hemmed in by their condition in life, and he brings hope that things would improve.

Research Design

This study examined changes in the worldview of a group of students at a small, rural community college in Eastern Kentucky as a result of a one-semester, college-level course in religious studies. The research sought to explain the psychosocial dynamics of persistent poverty, lack of self-efficacy, and a self-perpetuating sense of demoralization associated with an Eastern Kentucky, Central Appalachian lifestyle as those dynamics are a function of the beliefs, values, and attitudes underlying that lifestyle.

This investigation employed an explanatory, mixed-methods research design offering both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. The five dimensions for mixed-methods research noted by the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Behavioral and Social-Sciences Research provided a sound basis for this research:

- Focusing on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences;
- Employing rigorous quantitative research assessing magnitude and frequency of constructs and rigorous qualitative research exploring the meaning and understanding of constructs utilizing multiple methods (e.g. intervention trials, written responses, and in-depth interviews);
- Utilizing multiple methods (e.g., intervention trials and in-depth interviews);
- Intentionally integrating or combining these methods to draw on the strengths of each
- Framing the investigation within philosophical and theoretical positions. (n.p)

John W. Creswell also advocates for a mixed-methods research design:

> If you have access to both quantitative and qualitative data, you can use both forms of data to understand your research questions with qualitative research, recognized and appreciated by more and more educators, and with quantitative research long established as an approach, mixed methods research has become popular as the newest development in research methods and in approaches to "mix" quantitative and qualitative research. (551)

In his 2011 dissertation at Asbury Theological Seminary, Brian V. Bradford used an explanatory, mixed-methods research method successfully and productively. Bradford used this design methodology to examine the leadership characteristics of relational leaders in flagship Wesleyan churches across the United States. The explanatory, mixed-methods design is well represented in the literature and has come to be a very accepted means of doing research in the humanities.

Quantitative data for this current study was obtained from pre-and-post-administrations of the WAI measuring six core dimensions of worldview. Qualitative data came from semester papers, entitled, "My Worldview and My Life Plan," and student interviews carried out at the end of the semester. The quantitative data were augmented and compared to qualitative data.

Summary

The literature acknowledges the existence of a heterogeneous Appalachian region stretching from New York to Alabama along the Appalachian Mountain range. In addition, the literature defines three distinct sub-regions within Appalachia: Northern Appalachia, Central Appalachia, and Southern Appalachia. Some researchers have defined Appalachia by using five categories: Northern Appalachia, North Central Appalachia, Central Appalachia, South Central Appalachia, and Southern Appalachia. This finer delineation seems to have occurred because so few common denominators exist defining Appalachia as one, unified, homogeneous whole. Although Pollard finds statistical data that seems to cordon Appalachia off from the rest of the nation in these areas, within the overall region itself, these categories vary significantly. Economic hardship along with physio-geographic factors remain the single, unifying criteria, allowing researchers to speak of Appalachia as if it were one, contiguous, homogeneous region.

Attempts have been made to find other, region-wide criteria or categories applicable to all sub-regions, but none have proven to encompass the entire region adequately. While these attempts include coal production, physiographic features, and language, none of them consider worldview as a primary factor in a homogeneous

definition. Although references to Appalachian values, attitudes, and beliefs occur in the literature, little study has been done regarding a Pan-Appalachian worldview, and almost nothing has been written about the relationship between religion and worldview.

Much of the research focusing on Appalachia seems to have centered on the area of Central Appalachia, which has proven to be the sub-region most affected by lack of education, economic opportunity, and hope. This sub-region, geographically defined by Western West Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, Northwestern North Carolina, and Eastern Tennessee, seems to be the exemplar for what Appalachia has come to represent in the minds of most Americans.

Central Appalachia is a predominantly rural, cultural environment characterized by K. Pollard's graphic description: illiteracy, joblessness, persistent poverty, and cultural isolation. This current study intended to add to that defining list a common worldview characterized by hopelessness, suspicion, and demoralization. Religion—almost exclusively Christian religion—is prevalent in Central Appalachia and in Eastern Kentucky. Church and religious belief are qualified by a belief in the Bible and biblical preaching, in Jesus as the Son of God, and in an unwritten creed that guides a common view of what is right and good.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

This chapter first provides the rationale for this research by reiterating the goal of the research as reflected in the two major questions underlying the research. Next, student participants in the research are then discussed and defined. Then, Chapter 3 presents the

research design employed in this intervention project, commencing with emails sent to

participants before the intervention project began. The chapter details the methodology

used to carry out the research including the collection and treatment of the raw

quantitative data gathered from the administration of the WAI as well as the qualitative

data resulting from participant interviews and semester papers.

      The problem underlying this entire study and the impetus behind the intervention

project lay in explaining the persistent and well-publicized difficulties associated with

living in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. Poverty, lack of opportunity,

demoralization, and a sense of alienation from much of the rest of the nation are problems

that have currently and historically kept Eastern Kentucky on the fringe of American

society and has hindered Eastern Kentuckians from reaching an acceptable level of self-

efficacy and self-actualization.

      Whereas this root problem has been addressed economically, sociologically, and

historically, it has not been the focus of a concerted attempt to see its etiology in a dance

between daily life and an identifiable worldview particular to Eastern Kentuckians.

Koltko-Rivera speaks directly to this sort of mutually influential relationship between

daily life and worldview:

> It is a commonplace observation that "everybody sees the world in his or
> her own way" … Anais Nin is said to have observed, "We don't see
> things as they are, we see them as we are" … Put more prosaically, the
> nature of this insight is that human cognition and behavior are powerfully
> influenced by sets of beliefs and assumptions about life and reality. (1)

Viktor Frankl provided validation of this thinking his account of the years he spent as a

prisoner in the Nazi death camps:

> We who lived in the concentration camps can remember the men who
> walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of

> bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way. (65-66)

Here Frankl conveys, in words filled with pathos and power, the immeasurable profundity of the effect beliefs, attitudes, determinations, and ideas—in short, worldview—have on the daily lives of real human beings. In an even more poignant statement, Frankl acknowledges the effect beliefs have on the constraints of daily living:

> The prisoner who had lost his faith in the future—his future—was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay. Usually this happened quite suddenly, in the form of a crisis, the symptoms of which were familiar to the experienced camp inmate. We all feared this moment—not for ourselves, which would have been pointless, but for our friends. Usually it began with the prisoners refusing one morning to get dressed and wash or to go out on the parade grounds. No entreaties, no blows, no threats had any effect. He just lay there, hardly moving. If this crisis was brought about by an illness, he refused to be taken to the sickbay or to do anything to help himself. He simply gave up. There he remained, lying in his own excreta, and nothing bothered him anymore. (74)

As noted by Seymour B. Sarason of Yale University, "Our world view is more than a silent partner in our thinking and actions; it is, so to speak, the owner of the enterprise but in ways that allow us to believe in the myth that we are masters of our fate and captains of our souls" (478).

Although the degree of suffering and sub-standard living in Eastern Kentucky is in no way as difficult as the Nazi death camps spoken of by Frankl, suffering and sub-standard living in Central Appalachia as a whole and in Eastern Kentucky in particular are real, pervasive, and historic. The principle of sufficient reason claims that nothing happens without a reason (Soccio 570). If this philosophical tenet is true—and Christians are bound to believe this by an even more foundational belief in a God of providence and

omniscience—then we must inquire as to the reason or reasons that underlie this regional, phenomenological truth. If we are concerned with suffering in the world—and as Christians, we must have that concern—we are bound to search for solutions to this particular instance of regional suffering. One real possibility is that the suffering caused by persistent poverty, demeaning demoralization, and in many cases this form of indentured servitude, is rooted in a peculiar way of viewing the cosmos including the basic philosophical and religious beliefs that form the well out of which our lives spring. This research pursued the possibility that the cognitive and affective dimensions of the people of Eastern Kentucky (and Central Appalachia) are formed by the beliefs, attitudes, and concerns of the indigenous people of that area; and further, that these beliefs, attitudes, and concerns are identifiable, and to some degree, mutable.

With those things in mind, the purpose of this study was to determine the cognitive and affective changes in the worldview of a group of Eastern Kentucky community college students occurring as a result of a college-level course in religious studies.

Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

Both questions central to this research project reflect the basic premise that worldview and real life behavior are mutually influential in that each has a formative effect on the other so that, over time, life patterns emerge that are set in the cognitive and affective constructs—the ideas, beliefs, values, and attitudes—that comprise an identifiable worldview and that, in turn, those ideas/beliefs/values/ attitudes making up an identifiable worldview are reflected in actual life patterns. This dialectical relationship between beliefs and daily living was presumed in this research.

Since this presumption existed as a first-order hypothesis, the first-order questions raised in this study needed to address the validity of that hypothesis. As such, the initial research question concerned confirmation of the actual existence of a worldview. The second research question dealt with the process of cognitive and affective change and adaptation of that worldview to the perceived world.

Research Question #1

What were the initial beliefs defining student worldview reflected in the pre-intervention administration of the WAI?

This entire research project maintained the working hypothesis that every person has a worldview even though he or she might not realize what it is or how he or she came by it. In a very real sense, an existent worldview is the manual that guides human lives. That manual is undergoing constant revision by both introspective recalculations based on the information that comes to us through real life experiences.

The concept of worldview necessarily assumes a metaphysical dimension, a real world or a real existence of some sort. Therefore, of utmost importance to this first research question were those responses given by participants to the metaphysical/ontological dimension of the WAI.

In addition, since the very act of participating in the survey assumes some degree of human free will in the decision-making process, dimensional questions on the WAI especially important to research question 1 were those measuring the dimensions of agency and mutability. Whether one has the propensity to decide and change one's mind was an important, underlying criteria for question 1.

Other questions on the WAI that were important in answering question 1 came from the dimensions of locus of responsibility, relation to authority, and relation to group. Participants had to be able to see themselves within the larger cultural milieu of the counties and communities in which they live and, in almost all cases, in which they grew up. For a dimensional breakdown showing each of the six dimensions noted by the WAI and the questions associated primarily with each of the six dimensions, (see Table 3.9 p. 142).

Research Question #2

What cognitive and affective changes in student worldview occurred as a result of the research intervention project?

This question reflected the purpose of this research. The dependent variable in this research was change in worldview that came about as a function of participation in a one-semester course in religious studies at BSCTC. Questions on the WAI that were most important in answering research question 2 came from the dimensions that had to do with free agency and mutability and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the dimension of relation to authority and relation to group as measured by the WAI. This question was also addressed directly by the semester paper that each student/participant were asked to write. The title of the paper, "My Worldview and My Life Plan," was an exposition of the cognitive and affective change in worldview for each student. Finally, the post-intervention, focus-group interviews provided a wealth of information expanding and explicating the hard data associated with this question.

Population and Participants

Twenty-seven students started the semester and twenty-three of those students completed the intervention project, taking both the pre-and post-intervention WAI and writing the paper and submitting to a focus group interview process. Those twenty-three students comprised the participant population for this research. The participants included ten sophomore and thirteen freshman degree-seeking students enrolled during the fall semester, 2013 in REL 101, Introduction to Religious Studies, at Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Floyd County, Kentucky. Twelve of the participants were females and eleven were males.

The twenty-three participants in this study compared favorably with the demographic information for gender and age when compared to the entire student population of the college (see tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). Table 3.1 reveals the gender and class demographics for the intervention and college populations.

Table 3.1. Gender and Class Demographics, for Students/Participants

Participants	%	Student Body*	%
Males	47.8	Males	50.5
Females	52.2	Females	49.5
Freshmen	62.0	Freshmen	63.2
Sophomores	52.2	Sophomores	46.8

*figures taken from fall enrollment 2013 KCTCS survey data

Table 3.2 notes the age range demographics for the entire college population. These demographics helped locate the validity of the sample group within the greater context of the larger populace.

Table 3.2. Age Range Demographics for the Entire College

Age Range	%
<18	14.3
18-24	45.3
25+	40.3
Unknown	0.1

Table 3.3 shows the age range and gender dynamics for the student/participant population for this intervention project.

All twenty-three student/participants resided in the five-county area served by BSCTC in the Appalachian Mountains of Southeastern Kentucky (see table 3.4). These five counties are Magoffin, Martin, Floyd, Pike, and Johnson. Three of the five counties in the BSCTC service area lie on the borders of both Virginia and West Virginia.

Table 3.3. Demographics of REL 101

Age Range	Males* n	Males* %	Females* n	Females* %
17-20	4	17.4	6	26.1
21-24	5	21.7	3	13.0
25-30	1	4.3	2	8.7
30-over	1	4.3	1	4.3

*of those who started and finished the course

Table 3.4 communicates the degree plan declarations of the participants. Each student attending BSCTC must declare a degree plan. Degree plans were taken from the office of Administration and Records.

Table 3.4. Degree Plan of Student/Participants

Degree Plan	# of Students	% of Class
Associate of Arts	7	30.4
Associate of Science	5	21.7
Undecided	6	26.0
Bus Admin	1	4.4
Nursing (Allied Health)	4	17.4

Table 3.5 records the county of residence for students participating in the intervention project. Data was tabulated from this table and individual data sets were compared on a county-by-county basis for an additional dimension to the study.

Table 3.5. County of Residence*

County	# of Students	% of Class
Magoffin	5	19.2
Martin	1	7.4
Johnson	7	33.3
Floyd	10	37.1
Total	23	100.0

*For those starting and finishing the course.

Table 3.6 records the region in which the participants spent their formative years between the ages of 1 and 18. Data from this table was analyzed to determine if there was any significant intervening variable connected to childhood home.

Table 3.6. Years of Residence Ages 0-12 in the Five County Area

County	# of Students
Magoffin	4
Johnson	5
Pike	1
Floyd	7
Martin	2
Other	4

Academic eligibility and residence within the service area of BSCTC were the only delimitations for participation in REL 101. Student/participants voluntarily enrolled in the course.

Design of the Study

The purpose of this explanatory, mixed-methods intervention project was to identify an existing worldview in a non-probabilistic sample of community college students in Floyd County, Kentucky, and to identify and explain any changes that occurred to that worldview as a result of a one-semester course in basic beliefs offered at Big Sandy Community and Technical College in the Appalachian Mountain region of Eastern Kentucky. I intended to use the quantitative and qualitative data captured in the research in making reasoned hypotheses about what these research results might mean for the indigenous residents of Eastern Kentucky, especially in the realm of breaking the historical pattern marked by poverty, alienation, hopelessness, and demoralization. I also

hoped to provide insight to the churches of Eastern Kentucky facilitating a more productive ministry by bringing to light the way Eastern Kentuckians see the world and their place in it.

This research used a related items, pre/post paired, 2-tailed *t*-test model for measuring worldview change coming about as a function of the intervention project for this study. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used in this mixed-methods approach.

The quantitative data produced in this research came primarily from pre- and post-intervention administrations of the WAI. This instrument was developed as a means of identifying and measuring dimensions of worldview. The dimensional model employed in the WAI seeks to provide a quantitative measure of differences in level or degree in individuals and/or groups (Koltko-Rivera 103). The WAI employs an extensive, seven-point Likert-type response scale enhancing the particularity of participant responses. Koltko-Rivera notes that the reliability (internal consistency) of the WAI is "generally good" (182). He says

> The internal consistence reliability of the WAI scales is generally good ... [T]hree of six scales show a value for Cronbach's alpha at the .80 level or higher, which suggests that these scales are suitable for use in group research under the strictest standards. (182)

The WAI provided the primary, quantitative data for this study while two qualitative measures served to expand and elucidate the analysis of the quantitative data. The qualitative data provided by these two measures expanded the discussion of the quantitative changes coming about as a result of the intervention project. The qualitative data also facilitated the discussion of what this research might mean for residents living

in a culture defined by poverty, lack of opportunity, and a sense of helplessness, and demoralization.

The null hypothesis in this study presumed no change in worldview between the pre- and post-intervention testing of the population/sample group. The null hypothesis was born out in five of the six dimensions measured on the WAI scale.

Phases

I employed four phases in carrying out this investigation:

1. Phase 1 was the initial administration of the quantitative, WAI at the beginning of the intervention project.

2. Phase 2 was the intervention process including fourteen weeks of classroom interaction utilizing Ninian Smart's textbook entitled *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. Mode of instruction during this fourteen-week period included lecture, use of PowerPoints, and in-class, participant interaction. PowerPoints used in this study can be found in Appendix G.

3. The third phase of the study included the second administration of the WAI during the last week of the semester.

4. The final phase of this intervention project included focus-group interviews during the finals week of the semester. All phases were accomplished during the full, sixteen-week, fall 2013 semester at BSCTC.

Instrumentation

Three complementary means were used to collect data for this research. The primary data came from the two (pre- and post-intervention) administrations of the WAI. The data collected from the WAI was elucidated and complemented by focus group

interviews using Paul T.P. Wong's six ultimate questions for human existence and, by a student-written response entitled, "My Worldview and My Life Plan," turned in on the last day of the semester in which the research was carried out.

WAI. *The Worldview Assessment Instrument—6 Core Dimensions* is a standardized, interval/ratio, Likert-type, multi-scale instrument made up of fifty-four questions recording values and attitudes in a rank order format. Quantitative data for this research was collected from two administrations of the WAI which measures six selected aspects or dimensions of worldview using six scales, employing a dimensional approach rather than a categorical approach in obtaining data from participants.

KR lists the six aspects or dimensions assessed by the WAI:

> 1) beliefs about the *mutability* of human nature, 2) beliefs about human *agency*, 3) beliefs about the *locus of responsibility* for one's status in life, 4) beliefs about one's proper *relation to authority* figures, 5) beliefs about one's proper *relation to group* of reference, and 6) beliefs about *metaphysics*, in particular, the materialist versus spiritualist nature of reality. (2000 24)

A more precise description of these 6 dimensions of human existence, is noted below.

1. Mutability, the possibility of changing human nature (25). The mutability dimension involves existential beliefs about whether adult human nature is changeable or permanent:

> At the Changeable pole, beliefs reflect the position that human nature, character, and habits can be altered by external forces. At the Permanent pole, beliefs reflect the position that human nature, character, and habits are, as it were, 'written in stone,' and are not subject to any but the most superficial and temporary change through external forces. (61)

The pre-research assumption here was that this dynamic would show the greatest amount of change among all dimensions measured.

2. Human agency, the degree to which behavior is chosen or determined (free

will or deterministic):

> Do people exercise true choice in forming their behavior" (27). "At
> the Voluntarist pole, beliefs reflect the position that free will is a
> real human capacity, and that at least some behavior is actually
> chosen through free will. At the Determinist pole, beliefs reflect
> the position that all behavior is determined (environmentally,
> genetically, socially, or intra-psychically), and that the experience
> of free will is illusory" (62).

Any change in this dimension indicated either a greater or lesser sense of self-efficacy.

3. Relationship to authority (25). The Relation to authority reflects *prescriptive*

and *proscriptive* beliefs concerning the 'proper' or 'best' way that authority functions.

> At the Linear pole, beliefs reflect the position that it is best to have
> a clear and stable hierarchy of authority, where one shows
> deference and obedience to those who occupy superior positions in
> the hierarchy, and where one expects obedience from those who
> occupy subordinate positions. At the Lateral pole, beliefs reflect
> the position that it is best to share authority and decision-making
> power broadly, in a structure where people are considered
> essentially as equals, despite role differences. This dimension
> reflects a distinction between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' cultural
> approaches (65-66).

Change on this dimension would indicate a movement away from acceptance of tradition

and a familial governance of values.

4. Relationship to group (25): a measure of giving priority to one's own agenda

or to one's reference group.

> Relation to group reflects prescriptive and proscriptive beliefs
> about the relative importance of the agendas of the individual and
> the reference group (e.g. family, work group, worship community,
> school group, sports or activity group, etc.), when there is a
> conflict between the two. At the Individualistic pole, beliefs reflect
> the position that the individual's agenda prevails over that of the
> reference group. At the Collectivist pole, beliefs reflect the

position that the reference group's agenda prevails over that of the individual

This measurement combined with Relationship to Authority was an indication of the influence of culture and family in personal value formation.

5.   Locus of responsibility (25): responsibility for the position one occupies in life.

> The locus of responsibility dimension…reflects existential beliefs about whether one's status and opportunities for success in life are one's personal responsibility or the outcome of external social forces such as racism or injustice. At the Internal pole, beliefs reflect the position that one's opportunities, successes, and failures in life are the result of one's own efforts and personal characteristics. (64)

Data from this dimensional measurement indicated the degree to which participants in this study had hope for their future.

6.   Metaphysics: beliefs concerning the reality or unreality of a spiritual dimension to life (25).

> … Reflects existential beliefs about the nature of reality. At the Spiritualist pole, beliefs reflect the position that 'spirit is a prime element of reality;' that is, reality has an actual unseen, spiritual aspect to it, in that there are spiritual beings or powers to which the individual or group can relate. At the Materialist pole, beliefs reflect the position that 'physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of matter;' that is, reality is best described in purely material terms, and no spiritual beings or powers exist" (70).

This current research sought to make projections about how these various dimensions related to everyday living for residents of the mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

Although other worldview measurements exist, I felt that the dimensions measured by the WAI were better designed to fit this initial research by laying down a predicate on which further research could be built. In addition, this scale was preferable in that it provided a higher level reliability than other scales dealing with worldview.

Post-class focus groups. Data from post-class, focus group interviews provided supportive, qualitative data for this project. To accommodate students final exam schedules, they were asked to report their final exam schedules. Students were then assigned to one of three post-semester focus groups on the basis of their availability given their final exam schedules. Interviews were carried out in an available classroom. Interview responses were classified and arranged topically using Wong's philosophic and religious, existential headings. Focus group interviews took place during the week of final exams before grades were turned in to the admissions and records office. Although participation in the post-intervention interviews was a mandatory course requirement, it was not computed in student grade for the semester. Interviews did not count toward student semester grade but were required for each student before each student's grade was turned in to Admissions and Records. Interview recordings were filed and secured in the office of the Provost and will be safeguarded there for a period of one year. Student interviews enhanced and expanded data gleaned from the WAI6CD.

Semester papers. All students were required to turn in a semester paper by the last day of the semester. The title of the paper was "My Worldview and My Life Plan." Papers were read and data was collected and organized. Data from student papers can be found in Appendix H.

Variables

This study was concerned with the attributes of beliefs, values, and attitudes making up the overall worldview of a sample group of college students at BSCTC. The dependent variable was the change in student worldview as measured by the WAI. The

independent variable was the intervention project as delivered during the semester. All student/participants enrolled in the class voluntarily.

The factors comprising the intervening treatment variables included

1. Course materials, including textbooks and handouts, and PowerPoints;

2. Method and means of instruction;

3. Age, gender, and other demographic influences;

4. Means of choosing participants;

5. Degree of diffusion (i.e., students influencing other students in the course).

Other intervening variables included strength of religious affiliation, religion of choice, if religion of choice was Christianity—denominational affiliation if any, political affiliation, age, gender, years spent in Eastern Kentucky.

Class attendance in this research course was excellent by community college standards. On average, only four students were absent from any single meeting of the class: again, excellent by community college standards for attendance. All students received the same instruction. I taught the course using lecture with power points and small group interaction as a pedagogical design.

One obvious, external threat to validity was the variable of class representation. It can only be assumed that the beliefs, attitudes, and values shared by the participants in the class accurately represented the beliefs, attitudes, and values shared by the general college population and the greater indigenous population of Eastern Kentucky. Another external threat was that, by virtue of enrolling in the course, students already showed proclivity and bias toward new ideas and philosophical/theological openness, indicating the possibility of an increased mutability score on the WAI.

Some of the intervening variables were identified and addressed by having students complete a demographic survey during the second class period of the semester. These intervening variables were considered in the data analysis for the research intervention project and received attention in Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation. Significant classroom exigencies that might have had an effect on the results on this research as well as a demographic comparison of the makeup of the research sample are also discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Reliability

The WAI has proven to be reliable and, therefore, presumed to be consistent. Koltko-Rivera reports, "The internal consistency reliability of the WAI scales is generally good" (182) with three of the six dimensional scales showing a Cronbach's alpha value at .80 or higher. In comparison, the Behavior Awareness Scale and the Belief System Analysis Scale, both of which have been used extensively to measure worldview in specific populations have Cronbach's alpha values of .62 and .80 respectively (Myers, Montgomery, Fine, and Reese 54).

Koltko-Rivera also affirms the internal consistency of the WAI6CD by noting, "The item-score-level factor structure is strong ... [T]he strongest loading is at least at the .30 level and in most cases is much higher" (183). Koltko goes on to further establish the internal consistency of the WAI:

> [T]he present research indicates that the WAI items form coherent and essentially orthogonal scales, that these scales are generally internally consistent, and that these scales, in turn, form essentially orthogonal higher-order factors that are easily interpreted in terms of worldview. (184-85)

Among the six dimensional scales, KR reports that one shows as Cronbach's alpha above .90, indicating an excellent level of experimental reliability. Two other dimensional scales demonstrate good experimental reliability with Cronbach's alpha values between values between .80 and .89. Two others reveal an acceptable level of experimental reliability with Chronbach's alpha values in the .70-.79 range. One scale exhibits an unacceptable Cronbach's alpha value of .65. Koltko-Rivera decides that, "Overall, the scales of the WAI are internally consistent to a sufficient degree to support their use in research" (182).

Koltko-Rivera also allows the scales of the WAI indicate an appropriate degree of orthogonality by noting … "the present research indicates that the WAI items form coherent and essentially orthogonal scales, that these scales are generally internally consistent, and that these scales, in turn, form essentially orthogonal higher-order factors that are easily interpreted in terms of Worldview" (184, 185). This favorable othogonality and high internal consistency were both factors in choosing the WAI as the measurement scale for this research.

Koltko-Rivera attributes a good degree of validity to the WAI. He does note one internal problem that may threaten construct validity. This possible threat is found in the consistency of key word usage in aligning participant responses in the correct dimensional scales. Koltko-Rivera sees a possible reduction in internal validity stemming from this phenomenon. Nevertheless, by pointing out that most other worldview scales[4]

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[4] Those of Hui, 1998; Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; and Ibrahim & Kahn, 1984

do not rise to the level of internal consistency and orthogonality of the WAI, he does not

feel that this diminishes the validity of the WAI.

In addition, Koltko-Rivera states, "[T]he Mutability scale demonstrates

unsatisfactory internal consistency in terms of Cronbach's alpha (.65), but exhibits

acceptable standards for corrected item-total correlations (minimum r it ,33, median r it

= .45)" (182). KR's final analysis of the WAI6CD includes this proviso:

> Despite the disappointing level of internal consistency shown by this
> scale, it should be noted that some other world view instruments in the
> literature show even lower levels of internal consistency. This is the case
> with one subscale of the Intercultural Values Inventory ($\alpha = .54$; Carter &
> Helms, 1987), one of the subscales of the Individualism-Collectivism
> Scale ($\alpha = .41$; Hui, 1988), and all subscales of the Multi-Dimensional
> Belief in a Just World Scale (α ranging from .32 to .43; Lipkus, 1991).
> Thus, although improvement is to be sought here, the reliability of the
> Mutability subscale is still inside the range shown by some instruments
> that some researchers have found acceptable for use in psychological
> research, if used and interpreted with caution. (191)

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of three stages: 1) preparation, 2) actuation, and 3)

collection. Each stage provided its own challenges. A brief synopsis of the stages taken in

data collection follows.

Stage One—Preparation

Research preparation was carried out in six steps. First, in May 2013, I requested

and received minimal risk research permission from the Human Studies Review Board of

the chancellor's office at KCTCS. The Human Services Review Board contact person

was Linda Morefield of the Office of Research and Policy Analysis of the Kentucky

Community and Technical College System. Although some graduate institutions require

online researcher training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, Asbury Theological Seminary does not require that training.

The second step in the preparation stage was to make all necessary arrangements with the scheduling committee at BSCTC to place a research class on the schedule for fall 2013. I selected as a research class REL 101, Introduction to Religious Studies. Among all philosophy and religious studies classes, I was qualified to teach. This class seemed to provide the best opportunity to talk about both religious and secular worldviews.

The third step in the preparation stage was to contact my faculty mentor in order to facilitate an essential, open, fluid line of communication leading up to the proposal hearing and the intervention project. This communication allowed my faculty mentor and me to set deadlines for proposal approval, ensuring my ability to carry out the planned research in the fall semester of 2013. I want to stress that this dateline planning with the director of the Doctor of Ministry Program was an extremely important yet easily overlooked step in the preparation process.

The next step in the data collection progression was the creation of a syllabus and selection of a textbook for the intervention course. I considered three factors in choosing a textbook: reading level, student cost, and contribution to the course. Having successfully employed other of Smart's textbooks in former courses, I decided to use *Worldviews: Cross-Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. This textbook met all textbook criteria listed above. I created a course syllabus using the template provided by the college. Special, researcher-generated course competencies concerning the research nature of the course were written into the syllabus.

In order to allow wary or concerned students to opt out of the course before the beginning of the semester, on 19 August 2013, I sent a pre-class e-mail explaining the research focus of the course to all students who had enrolled in REL 101.

The final preparatory step was to gather demographic information on the students who enrolled in REL 101 for the semester in which the research was carried out. Students completed a demographics sheet at the second meeting of the class in the first week of the semester. The results of this general, demographic survey are listed in the various tables in this chapter.

Stage Two—Actuation

At the first class meeting, students were asked to list the final four digits of their social security numbers on a roster. These numbers comprised the coding system for the research. Students were instructed not to use their names on any work handed in during the semester but to use the coding information comprised of the numbers they had listed on the roster. In addition, at the first class period of the semester, I introduced students taking this research intervention project to the course structure as laid out in the syllabus. I described how the course would be used in gathering research data concerning changes in worldview. I gave attention to class requirements and to the research elements of the course, those being both pre- and post-intervention administrations of the Koltko-Rivera WAI, the semester paper entitled, "My Worldview and My Life Plan," and the student interviews during the final week of the course. Students were also informed that, in appreciation for their participation in this study, each student taking part in the research and completing the course would receive a fifteen-dollar gift certificate from McDonald's restaurant. This protocol concluded the first class period.

At the second class period in the first week of the semester, I distributed to all students a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E). Students completed the questionnaire utilizing their student code for the class. I presumed that this raw data would facilitate extrapolation of findings to the greater college population and the general population of Eastern Kentucky. I also administered the pre-intervention WAI to all students at that time. All students in class on that day signed minimal risk research consent forms prior to taking the WAI (see Appendix D). These consent forms covered not only the administration of the WAI but the entirety of the research intervention project.

All students taking the course used the same course materials provided to them at the second class meeting of the semester. These materials were accompanied by oral instructions and an explanation of the course and the research initiative. All students received the same materials, the same syllabus, and the same oral instructions. Information packets were not distributed at the first class meeting in order to accommodate BSCTC rules governing student drop/add time constraints. No new students entered the class after the first class period. Students who were not present on the first day of class but were present on the second day of class were given the course packet and the syllabus along with the rest of the class. Those students missed the class introduction lecture that occurred at the first class meeting of the semester. I entertained any questions at the end of the second class period.

The protocol for administering the WAI allowed students to get settled into the classroom the day the instrument was administered. I then called the class to order and stated that students would be completing the WAI and that completing this instrument

would comprise the entire class for that day. I advised students that the instrument consisted of fifty-four questions and were advised that no right or wrong answers to the questions existed on the WAI. Students also received instruction in Likert-type question/responses.

I cautioned students to give some thought to each question since they would be considering their answers to these same questions again during the last week of class and that their responses would help them in their semester papers. Students were instructed that they would have one-half hour to complete the instrument allowing about thirty seconds per response, and that all students must stay in their seats until class was dismissed. This action was taken in order to prevent a hurried, Christmas tree effect in completing the instrument.

I instructed students to make sure to note their four- digit identification number on the WAI. Students dropped off their completed WAI forms as they left the classroom. I collected the papers, placed them in a file folder, and took them to my office. Results of the second administration during the final week of classes was carried out using the same protocol.

Stage Three—Collection

Data collected from this research came from three sources: the pre-post-administrations of the WAI, semester papers, and participant interviews.

Source one—data from the WAI. Collection of quantitative data for this research came from two administrations of the Koltko-Rivera Worldview Assessment Instrument.

Results from the WAI came from scoring the instrument using a scoring key provided by the author of the test. The scoring key was accompanied by a detailed protocol for scoring the instrument. Questions were grouped according to the six dimensions measured by the scale. Those questions and the respective dimensions they reflected can be found in Table 3.7. Scores were charted on an Excel spreadsheet and were then used in the statistical analyses of those data.

Table 3.7. Dimensions of WAI: Scoring Key

Dimension	Question Numbers
Agency	5, 9, 13, 22, 30, 34, 38, 51
Mutability	11, 19, 32, 44
Locus of responsibility	1, 4, 8, 17, 21, 25, 27, 29, 33, 42, 46, 48, 50, 53
Relation to group	2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 26, 31, 35, 39, 43, 52, 54
Relation to authority	7, 15, 23, 36, 40, 47
Ontology	3, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 37, 41, 45, 49

Source two—semester papers. Student/Participants taking part in this study were asked to turn in to the researcher/instructor a four to five page semester paper entitled "My Worldview and My Life Plan." Papers were coded with the four-digit identification codes assigned at the beginning of the semester. No names were used on the papers. Papers were due on the final day of the semester. I felt that compelling students to consider not only their worldview but how that worldview might affect the rest of their lives would be both beneficial to the students and would also yield greater

insight into desirable changes in a cultural lifestyle marked by poverty, hopelessness, and demoralization.

Students brought semester papers to my office. Students slid papers under my door if I was out. I collected the papers and placed them in a secure file in a file drawer in the office.

Source three—focus group interviews. Participation in one of three student focusgroups was a requirement for this research intervention project. Data from these focal-group interviews were collected having participants complete a discussion form during the first fifteen minutes of the interview. An attempt was made to limit all focal-group interviews to one hour and fifteen minutes (the normal time a class meets) in an attempt to provide an extra measure of uniformity in the interview process. The interview made use of Paul Wong's six ultimate questions of human existence.

Interviews took place in the classroom used for the intervention class during the semester. Interviews were held during final exam week in the fall semester 2013. Focus Group A was comprised of nine participants. Focus Group B was comprised of five participants. Focus Group C was comprised of eight participants. Only twenty-two students participated in the focus group interviews. One student could not be interviewed due to inclement weather. Participation in either group was determined by the final exam schedules of the students participating in the study.

Focal group interviews employed scripted but flexible open-ended questions, allowing for follow-up questions when deemed necessary on key topics (Creswell 229). No interview dealt with all six of Wong's questions due to good student interaction in the interviews.

Data Analysis

This research made use of an explanatory, mixed-methods design. I used statistical methods to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data did not lend itself readily to statistical analysis.

WAI

The WAI does not yield a single, summated score defining worldview. Because of this, the six dimensions generated six sets of interval data (i.e. agency, mutability, locus of responsibility, relationship to group, ontology, and relation to authority) each of which were analyzed using six separate t-test analyses—one for each WAI dimension. The beliefs reflected by each of the dimensions measured by the WAI are listed in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8. Dimensions/Belief Clusters Measured by the WAI in Participants

Dimension	Beliefs Measured
Agency	Moral agency: beliefs related to whether or not people exercise freedom of choice in selecting their behaviors.
Mutability	Beliefs about the possibility for change in a person's character, behavioral patterns or personality.
Locus of responsibility	Beliefs about perceived blame or responsibility for a person's life circumstances on a continuum from external to internal.
Relation to group	Person's beliefs about the priority to be given to group or individual goals.
Relation to authority	Beliefs concerning the correct or appropriate way for people to relate to those in authority along a polarity of linear and lateral relations.
Ontology	Beliefs about the fundamental nature of reality on a dichotomous scale with spiritualism on the one end and materialism on the other.

* For an excellent treatment of these dimensions see Center 149-51. Following Center, I computed individual scale scores as separate variables for analysis.

Each dimension in the WAI was regarded as a separate dependent variable using parametric statistical techniques with a summed scores analysis (Creswell 185). Table 3.9 lists the items next to each of the dimension of the WAI with which they cluster.

An interval scale was used in analyzing the quantitative data from the WAI. The intervals between responses on the WAI can be considered to be equal, allowing use of a continuous scoring scale treating data according to an interval statistical analysis. Interval limits on the scoring key of the WAI are shown in Table 3.9.

The sample group for the WAI consisted of all students who both started and finished the course, taking part in both administrations of the WAI. According to the central limit theorem, the size of the sample group in this research was not sufficiently large (around thirty) to assume a normal distribution of data across the research. An alpha correction was not necessary because the *t*-tests were run individually.

Table 3.9. Dimensions of the WAI6CD

Scale	Higher Score	Lower Score
Ontology	Over 40, Spiritualist	Under 40, Materialist
Mutability	Over 16, Changeable	Under 16, Unchangeable
Responsibility	Over 56, External	Under 56, Internal
Agency	Over 32, Voluntarist	Under 32, Determinist
Group	Over 48, Collectivist	Under 48, Individualist
Authority	Over 24, Linear	Under 24, Lateral

Thus, a *p*-value of .05 or less was considered adequate to demonstrate confidence that any differences in means are due to statistically significant effect. Statistical analysis of WAI pre- and post-intervention scores with related confidence intervals are shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10. T-test Results for Each Dimension on the WAI

Dimension	Confidence Intervals
Ontology	$t(22) = -.15$, p=.881
Mutability	$t(22) = .82$, p=.416
Responsibility	$t(22) = -2.2$, p<.05
Agency	$t(22) = -.96$, p=.350
Group	$t(22) = -.45$, p=.659
Authority	$t(22) = .17$, p=.861

These results indicate that the only dimension of the WAI that showed evidence of change outside the null hypothesis was the dimension labelled responsibility. This outcome was one of the significant, statistical findings produced by the research.

Using the results recorded in Tables 3.8 and 3.9 it is possible to frame a profile of the sample group in this research. The profile is shown in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11. Student/Participant WAI Profile

Scale	Mean Score	Classification
Ontology	38.19	Materialist
Responsibility	59.65	External
Agency	35.65	Voluntarist
Group	50.38	Collectivist
Authority	27.95	Linear
Mutability	18.21	Changeable

Using this data, a representative, summary profile of the sample group could be expressed as young people—primarily below the age of thirty—who tended to explain events not as reflections of supernatural intervention but from a more practical standpoint. These subjects understood reality primarily as a natural phenomenon governed by natural laws. The group held a rather open worldview that valued the good of the group over their own particular interests. In addition, this group believed that their lives are, in large part, directed by forces outside themselves and that their existence is in a state of flux. Truth is relative and situational for this group.

This group believed in human free will and that each person charts his or her own course; each person is the eventual captain of his or her own soul. Other powers may and often do intervene, but in the final analysis, each individual is the primary decider in his or her life. This group saw the world arranged in such a way that a clear line of authority exists. Life is not chaotic where everyone is equal and no one is in charge. It is better to

know one's place and to fill that position, finding happiness along the way. Because such a pecking order exists, injustice also exists and often results in prejudice, holding people back from fulfilling their full potential. Students saw their individual lives are their own. They also believe that the human will is free to make its own decisions. Finally, students believed they exist in a very pragmatic world in which forces exist to which they must succumb.

One very significant question arising from this research was the relationality of the sample group to the larger college population. This research attempted to provide results that could be extrapolated to the general college population and the larger, regional population of Eastern Kentucky. Since the sample size did not meet the minimum number necessary for fulfillment of the central limit theorem, the issue of relevance was not adequately satisfied. Thus, an important issue in this research was meeting the common standards for the coherence theory of truth.

Certain criteria including that the nature of the course, prior acquaintance with the instructor, interest in religion and/or philosophy, unwillingness to be frightened away from difficult courses, and other factors threatened the validity of this research and indicated that the students who enrolled in this intervention project were not a completely random sample of the general college population, even less so of the general population of Eastern Kentucky. In an effort to account for these inherent biases, the researcher employed hypothesis testing and a confidence interval approach, and subjected the intervention population to an effective size analysis (Creswell 195).

Semester Papers

The concern that lay at the root of this research was the persistent poverty and demoralization that has plagued the people living in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky for generations and continues to this day. The hypothesis emanating from that concern was that this *pan*-generalizational continuation of a sub-standard lifestyle is related to and perhaps dependent on the way mountain people see the world in general and the way they see their world in particular. This study was designed to test that hypothesis. The analysis of student papers provided a personal, human commentary on the quantitative data resulting from the WAI.

Student participant papers were scanned for key words and terms that relate to the problem this research intended to illuminate, the solution this research intended to propose, the goal for life and living in Eastern Kentucky, and the way forward for residents of Eastern Kentucky out of the problem, through the solution, to the goal of a life filled with opportunity, hope, sufficiency, and self-efficacy. These key words/terms were then tied to categories used by William M. Bauer and Bruce Growick's assessment of Appalachian worldview (see Appendix I). Individual statements taken from student/participant papers were recorded under the related key words/term headings. After noting statements from student participant papers, the statements were scrutinized and generalizations were made. I read student participant papers during the week following the end of the semester and scored them for this research using a modified, quasi-experimental researcher-created scoring key. The scoring key can be found in Appendix J. Quantitative data was then compared to the qualitative data taken from student/participant papers, and generalizations were made.

Focus Group Interviews

I interviewed twenty-two of the twenty-three student/participants during finals week of the fall semester at BSCTC. Students chose from three possible interview times and days presented to them by the researcher. The three days made it possible for all students to be interviewed at a time when they were not taking final exams. One student participant were scheduled to be interviewed at a day when the college was closed due to a snow storm. Logistics and the lack of other, available time slots precluded and makeup interviews for the one student not interviewed.

Ethical Procedures

Permission to carry out research using human subjects was sought and received from the Human Studies Review Board of the Kentucky Community and Technical College. A copy of the release form can be found in Appendix I. In addition, each student participating in this research signed completed an informed minimal risk consent form. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix D.

In accordance with ethical guidelines of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, all materials associated with student involvement in the course, including the two WAI scales, student consent forms, coding information, student semester papers, and all other student-generated materials used in this research were stored in a secure file in the provost's office at BSCTC. The materials related to this course and stored in the provost's office will remain there for a period of one year before being destroyed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

The problem that served as the primary impetus for this research was the long

history of debility, demoralization, poverty, insecurity, hopelessness, blunted self-

efficacy, mistrust of persons from outside the mountains, and a general sub-standard

quality of life found in Central Appalachia, and, more particularly, in the mountain region

of Eastern Kentucky. These phenomena have appeared consistently in the literature and

in film. The book *The Dollmaker*, written in 1954 by Harriet Simpson Arnow and later

made into a movie, is the classic depiction of an archetypical Appalachian family caught

in the throes of poverty and hopelessness indicative of the region.

The 2009 ABC television documentary called *Hidden America: Children of the

Mountains*, written and narrated by Kentuckian Diane Sawyer, is also indicative of the

derogatory image of Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia held by many. The film

focuses on incest, ignorance, and incapacity in a family in Johnson County, Kentucky,

which is one of the counties covered by this study. The YouTube description for *Hidden

America* is indicative of its analysis of Eastern Kentucky:

> ABC News spent two years following children growing up in poverty in
> the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Isolated pockets in central Appalachia
> have three times the national poverty rate, an epidemic of prescription
> drug abuse, the shortest life span in the nation, toothlessness, cancer and
> chronic depression.

In researching this documentary for this paper, I ran across a YouTube video entitled

Your Inbred Family complete with pictures of gap-toothed, misshapen people from

Eastern Kentucky and narrated in the most negative, uncomplimentary, and error-laden

manner possible. These are the stereotypical images many people hold about the mountain people who live in Eastern Kentucky. This research was carried out with the initial supposition that, while these stereotypical images were exaggerations of the problems incurred by Eastern Kentuckians, they nevertheless had at least some validity in that people caught in such a debilitating subculture could not possibly exist without feelings of despair and demoralization. This research did not bear out any of those suppositions.

This research examined the attitudes, beliefs, and values comprising and arising from the worldview of the indigenous residents of the region. The underlying assumption was that basic philosophic and religious beliefs are reflected in attitudes. Over time, these attitudes are transformed into beliefs and these beliefs are cemented into culturally-specific values that govern the everyday lives of individuals which, in turn, corroborate, negate, or otherwise inform those initial, predicate, core beliefs in a mutual dialectic: a dance between thinking and being, between ideas and behaviors. The foundational arguments in favor of lives rooted in and emanating from beliefs, ideas, values, and thoughts had already been established by Rene Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* and Jesus of Nazareth's contention that out of the reasoning, thinking, emoting nature of humanity comes life in all its complexity.

The research intervention project that serves as the crux of this study set out to investigate the relationship between thoughts, as expressed in an overall worldview, and existence in the world. More specifically, this research intended to examine the concept of worldview established in the literature as a comprehensive way of viewing life and to

explain changes to worldview that resulting from an educational encounter, treating a mutually influential relationship between thinking and being.

This study set out to explain the impact on worldview that occurs as a result of an educational experience where worldview was the primary academic consideration. The purpose of this study was to determine the cognitive and affective changes in the worldview of a group of Eastern Kentucky community college students occurring as a result of a college-level course in religious studies.

Participants

The participants for this study were the freshman and sophomore students who voluntarily enrolled in a course in religious studies (REL 101 Intro to Religious Studies) at Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Prestonsburg, Floyd County, Kentucky, during the fall semester 2013.

Twenty-seven students signed up for the course. Of that twenty-seven, twenty-three went on to complete both applications of the WAI, thereby completing the course. Those twenty-three students comprised the participants in this study. Of the four students who failed to complete both the pre and post intervention applications of the WAI, one dropped the course due to a change in major, two were dropped by the college for nonpayment, and one failed to complete both applications of the quantitative instrument used in this research.

Research Question #1

The initial question in this research concerned the possible existence of a commonly shared, readily identified worldview held by the student participants making.

Quantitative Findings for Research Question 1

Some evidence existed to support the initial hypothesis that the student participants in this research did share a common set of beliefs about the world: a common worldview. This evidence is found by comparing the sample standard deviations on each of the six dimensional scales of the WAI with those of the research group Koltko-Rivera used in his doctoral study.

Employing a shot gun analysis, I intuited that if the student participants in this research shared a common set of beliefs, attitudes, and values, the standard deviations on each of the dimensional scores would exhibit a tight pattern centered on a common mean. Those scores decreased as they move away from the center.

The two sample populations were quite different. The sample group for this study was very defined and homogeneous while Koltko-Rivera's group was very diverse and heterogeneous. The two groups are highlighted in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1. KR's Research Sample Group (N=306)

Source and Description of Participants	n	Sample %
Montana State University, Dept of Psychology	83	28.5
NYU School of Education, Dept of Psychology	75	25.8
Philadelphia, PA, Postal Workers	42	14.4
SMU Dept of Psychology undergraduate students	39	13.4
Sunset Terrace Family Health Center, Brooklyn, NY	30	10.3
NYU School of Ed, Dept of Drama Therapy (master's degree students)	11	3.8
NYU Stern School of Business: Adult Staff	7	2.4
Buffalo, NY, bookstore	4	1.4

Source: Koltko-Rivera 165

Koltko-Rivera tested 306 subjects purposely selected to reflect an extremely diverse geographic, occupational, age, and gender sample population. As can be seen in Table 4.2 the standard deviations reflected in Koltko-Rievera's study were significantly higher than those in this current study. This difference held true in every case for every dimension. This data appeared significant and seem to indicate that the group of twenty-three students making up this study shared a common wealth of beliefs, attitudes, and values as reflected in their responses to the pre- intervention administration of the WAI.

The results from this sample comparison reveal a significantly lower standard deviation among the research group for this study while Koltko-Rivera's group showed a much broader pattern. These results suggest a more uniform way of viewing the world in the sample group for this research. These statistics support the hypothesis that a specific, shared Eastern Kentucky worldview can be identified in the indigenous population.

Table 4.2. Standard Deviation. Comparisons for Each Dimensional Scale (Koltko-Rivera group N=200, this research group=23)

Dimensions	KR Group	My Sample Group
Ontology	12.70	4.97
Responsibility	12.44	8.67
Agency	6.74	4.77
Group	10.72	7.07
Authority	6.33	3.86
Mutability	4.23	3.39
Avg. Standard Deviation	8.86	6.54

Qualitative Results for Research Question #1

Focus group interview responses and student participant papers yielded the

qualitative results for this research. Qualitative results concerning research question 1

supported the hypothesis that a shared Eastern Kentucky worldview in the student

participants is revealed in this study.

Interview responses. Some patterns emerged in student interview responses that

would seem to be consistent with the literature describing the beliefs, attitudes, and

values shared by Eastern Kentuckians (see Appendix I). These responses reflect

observations made by William M. Bauer and Bruce Growick in their analysis of

Appalachian culture and published in the *Journal of Rehabilitation* in 2003 (see

Appendix H).

The observations noted by Bauer and Growick are corroborated by many of the

answers student participants provided at the focus group interviews at the end of the

intervention project. Some of the more consistent themes repeated in those interviews are

summarized under several headings corresponding to Bauer and Growick's comments.

Bauer and Growick also note a commonly shared Appalachian appreciation for religion.

Students in this study evidenced that same idea with responses such as, "[I should]

become a Christian, maintain Christian values, and help others," and, "Personally, I

would say my choices are based on my inner conscience which is based on a biblical

viewpoint." Students also noted they find acceptance in "religion and self."

Bauer and Growick note what they term "a leveling tendency" in Appalachian

culture. This leveling tendency is often couched in the idea of ontological equality mixed

with humility. Bauer and Growick define this phenomenon with the phrase, "I'm as good

as anyone else, but no better" (19). Students in this study indicated this same attitude with responses such as, "As far as special, no; everyone is equal but unique. Everyone is in their own way." These statements evidence a common dimension of an Eastern Kentucky worldview that connects to Drake's theory of original settlement by poor Scotch-Irish commoners.

Bauer and Growick see region and family as important shapers of worldviews, noting "Many families encourage their sons and daughters to follow in their footsteps..." Students in this study agreed, saying, "Home is where your mom is," "I belong with my family," and "your family accepts who you are. Make your home where you feel the love and attention you need to feel normal and wanted" (see Appendix I).

This family orientation is not without a corresponding sense of what has been termed rugged individuality in mountain people. Bauer and Growick mark the importance of individuality and of allowing one's beliefs to be shaped and re-shaped by environment, other people, and self-understanding. Student responses collected in this study agree with comments such as, "When everything is stripped away, I am a collection of choices, and Everything is unique, no one shares the same experiences as me" (see Appendix I).

Students in this study believed life is purposeful and hopeful. This phenomenon is in direct contradiction of the commonly held idea of an Appalachian worldview that reveals a lack of hope and purpose. Students made comments such as, "I am made the person I am by my experiences", "I am human, aware, and resilient", "I am working to accomplish my goals", and "I have not yet reached my true potential." Evidence of this positive view of life was one of the more surprising findings of this study.

Bauer and Growick's finding that personal involvement is important for mountain people in determining ethics and values is reflected in the comment, "I think I'm defined by my character and the actions and intents involved with that." One questions raised by this finding is how it exists alongside of the decided view of authority as being established by authority figures as was found in this current study.

While not related to Bauer and Growick's study, one rather amusing comment from one participant was, "[T]he more breathtaking fact of living in such a small town is that there is [sic] more dollar general stores than opportunities." These common themes can be interpreted and summarized by saying the qualitative responses of the student participants in this research project support the idea that a homogeneous worldview was shared by the participants in this study.

Student papers. Many of the same themes found in the responses to interview questions are also found in the student participant semester papers: family, religion, hope, goals, the value of hard work pays off, life is purposeful. Other themes include life is what you make it, there is a God and an afterlife, and a general feeling of optimism about the present and the future. Responses appearing in ten or more student papers can be summarized into the following areas:

- Happiness and fulfillment come to us through selfless commitment to others.
- Happiness is best realized in the presence of family and loved ones.
- Family and loved ones are central to happiness and fulfillment.
- Persistence is a valuable virtue.
- Knowledge and education are valuable parts of existence.

- Doing what is right is important. Consequences matter as do gut feelings, Christian values, and traditional beliefs.

- Change and personal growth are not only possible but are also inevitable and good.

- Goals are important and most people have goals in this life even if only to achieve the next life.

- Home is where you are comfortable and loved...most often with family.

- People should strive to achieve goals in life and leave a legacy behind us for the next generation(s).

These factors are among those associated with Appalachian life noted by Bauer and Growick, Evans, Santelli, and George-Warren, Loyal Jones and others who have seen the positive side of mountain life. Although having been born and raised in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and understanding that there is a positive side to living in the mountains, I did not expect to find this optimistic element to be so pronounced in the results of this study.

Since very few negative responses in the qualitative results of this study occurred, the data in this research did not support the idea that Eastern Kentuckians are marked by demoralization, despair, and dejection. This unexpected result emphasizes the need for further and more innovative and involved research to provide a fuller view of the worldview of Eastern Kentuckians. These findings were very interesting in light of the pre-intervention hypothesis that the substandard lifestyle in Eastern Kentucky would be associated to a great degree with demoralization and negative ideas about life and the cosmos. While interview responses and semester papers did not yield the data I expected,

both the quantitative and qualitative data did indicate the presence of a group of core philosophical and religious beliefs commensurate with life in Eastern Kentucky.

The predominance of prior research regarding an Eastern Kentucky worldview indicates that worldview is overall negative in nature, being rooted in a culture of poverty, despair, ignorance, and hopelessness. Most prior studies had ignored the matter of worldview and chose to focus on the dire economic circumstances that must, to those living outside of the region — result in despair, demoralization, and an overall sense of hopelessness. ARCin particular, being created by congress in 1965 to deal with those dire economic conditions, has failed to consider the attitudes, beliefs, and hope that make up a definite Eastern Kentucky worldview, thus ignoring a vital and revelatory element in defining mountain culture and explaining mountain life.

In contrast to these negative images, Evans, Santelli, and George-Warren and Loyal Jones focus on the many existential positives the area offers. Emphasis on immediate and extended family involvement, a sense of place, a certain aura of safety provided by religion, and the affirming influence of a unique and colorful heritage are all positive aspects of living in Eastern Kentucky.

L. Jones is able to see both sides of the Eastern Kentucky equation. Jones begins his book by noting the irony in Eastern Kentucky history:

> We mountain people are the product of our history and the beliefs and outlook of our fore-parents. We are a traditional people, and in our rural setting we valued the things of the past. More than most people, we avoided mainstream life and thus became self-reliant. We sought freedom from entanglements and cherished solitude. All of this was both our strength and our undoing. (13)

Jones, however chooses to focus on the positive nature of mountain life and the attitudes, beliefs, and values that make up a mountain worldview. This positive side of

Appalachian culture and worldview is evidenced in an intense love of the mountains,

religion, and family.

> Until recent times, neighbors joined to help build houses and barns for
> those who needed them. No greater compliment could be paid a mountain
> family than that they were 'clever folks,' meaning that they were quick to
> invite you to visit and generous with food … Sense of place is one of the
> unifying values of mountain people, and it makes it hard for us to leave
> the mountains, and when we do, we long to return. (69, 99)

L. Jones also notes the Appalachian penchant for the importance of family when he says,

"Appalachian people are family-centered. Mountain people usually feel an obligation to

family members and are more truly themselves when within the family circle" (75).

Anecdotal evidence exists to establish the reality of these statements.

In an extremely insightful piece, writing about the place of importance held by

religion in Central Appalachia, Samuel L Hill notes

> One of the most arresting descriptions of one segment of Appalachian
> Christianity that I have run across appears in the Peacock and Tyson study
> of the Primitive Baptists, Pilgrims of Paradox…Their interviews pried
> loose the conviction that "hope is the chief theological virtue." In addition
> to carrying a ring of biblical authenticity, that dictum significantly
> demarcates the traditional religion found among Central Appalachian
> people, a large portion of them, from the popular religion of the South.
> Within the latter, evangelical heritage hope is, revealingly, displaced by
> fruition and accomplishment … Here let us mark the contrast by
> describing the process by which so many Appalachian Christians place so
> much stock in hope…To suggest that "hope is the chief theological virtue"
> is to make quite a statement. (Leonard 299-300)

To suggest that hope is the primary descriptive adjective describing true, mountain

religion is to suggest that hope is a driving force in the ongoing lives of the people of

Eastern Kentucky where religion and life are inextricably intertwined. Hope is not a word

many researchers use in describing Central Appalachia, and it runs counter to the

common depiction of mountain people as desperate and depraved. Even so, that

description of a population defined by hope is within the parameters set by the results of this current study.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate the participants in this research do have hope, see purpose in their existence, and are open to new ideas and new approaches to life. Neither did this data hold that Eastern Kentuckians see themselves as prisoners of a divinely established, predetermined existence where human freedom is either nonexistent or nebulous. None of these dynamics were reflected in the preintervention hypotheses of this researcher.

Research Question #2

The second research question considered in this study was concerned with possible cognitive and affective changes in student worldview coming about as a result of the research intervention project. Since a pre/post comparison of qualitative data could not be accomplished due to the lack of pre-intervention papers and pre-intervention interviews, the only evidence that was crucial to this question came from the quantitative data emerging from the two administrations of the WAI. That quantitative evidence revealed little if any change in the worldview of the participants in this study. Only one dimension of six showed any perceptible change and, as already noted, that change was a response to a single film shown in the class.

Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of this research were interesting. Research question #1 asked if a definitive, Eastern Kentucky worldview could be identified. The data indicated that such a worldview could be identified. Moreover, the data indicated that this definitive, Eastern Kentucky worldview revealed the most unexpected implication of the study: This

worldview is both positive and resilient. Eastern Kentuckians are unapologetic in holding a worldview that is not guided by the same cultural dynamics as much of mainstream America and is resistant to the pressure exerted by the pejorative assessment of Central Appalachia held by most of the rest of the nation.

Research question #2 asked if a one-semester, college level course in religious studies would bring about any change in student participant worldviews. The data coming from the pre- and post-administrations of the WAI indicated little or no change was found in student participant worldviews.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

This study was predicated on the idea that beliefs are important shapers of human lives. What people believe determines what they do. Beliefs govern actions, and actions carry consequences and the word consequences is merely a circumlocution for real-life circumstances; our existential *sitz em leben*. This study was also predicated on the idea that a mutually influential dialectic exists between beliefs and praxis. Beliefs shape the daily lives of individuals and, in turn, the praxis of daily living corroborate beliefs.

Existence of a Culturally Defined, Regional Worldview

A culturally defined worldview specific to Eastern Kentuckians was highly suggested by the tight cluster of standard deviations reflected on the six dimensions of worldview measured by the WAI and by the responses given in the interviews and in the student participant semester papers. This extant, culturally defined, Eastern Kentucky worldview represented in the six dimensions measured by the WAI include only slight leanings toward ontological materialism, an externally defined sense of personal responsibility, a willingness to help others (voluntarist scale), a collective attitude toward decision making, a linear view of authority, and, most surprisingly, a tendency toward change rather than sameness (mutability scale).

No Support for a Diminished, Eastern Kentucky Worldview Characterized by Despair and Demoralization

This research began by hypothesizing that the sub-standard lifestyle marked by pervasive poverty, a depressed economy, a movement away from coal, the major

industrial employer of the area, to other forms of energy production, and a lack of economic and material upward mobility would be reflected in an actual, identifiable, regionally specific Eastern Kentucky worldview marked by demoralization, despair, and blunted self-efficacy. The perspective presented in the literature of an Eastern Kentucky worldview marked by despair, demoralization and blunted self-efficacy was not supported in this study. The major findings of this research did not confirm that original hypotheses. This study found that no such spirit of demoralization, discouragement, and decreased self-efficacy was noted in the student participants who took part in this study.

Eastern Kentuckians' Surprisingly Positive Worldview, Appropriate to the Values of the Area

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings support the idea that Eastern Kentuckians hold a worldview that in some ways runs counter to the conventional worldview reflected in a primary desire for upward mobility, a rootedness not in place and heritage but in fame and fortune, and the replacement of family with friendships forged by common interests and a common desire to succeed in a harsh and unforgiving culture.

No Significant Change in Worldview

An analysis of the quantitative data revealed no significant change in student/participant worldview as a result of the independent variable in this study. This surprising finding invites more research into the effects of education on personal worldview.

Implications of the Findings

This research yielded some significant implications. First, since the student participants in this study reflected a cross section of the college population in terms of gender, age, and geophysical location. If the sample group in this study was a representative group, then it can be concluded that the greater population of young people across the 5-county service area of BSCTC and across Eastern Kentucky as a whole do share a significantly similar worldview. This similarity of worldview is reflected in the scores on the mutability scale of the WAI. BSCTC, as well as BSCTC's sister colleges in the Appalachian region, has a relatively large enrollment-to-population ratio when compared to many of the other colleges in the KCTC System.

One very plausible explanation of this statistical phenomenon is to assume a greater willingness and desire on the part of BSCTC students to change their situation in life. Many other factors that must be considered before this assumption can be verified, but this finding certainly opens the door to this sort of interpretation.

Table 5.1. Enrollment/Population Comparison

College	Enrollment	Area Population %
BSCTC	5,157	33.800
Bluegrass (Lexington)	13,265	0.023
Jefferson (Louisville)	14,346	0.015

Second, using quantitative and qualitative results from this study, the worldview of the student participants in this study was not demoralized, diminished, and despairing. Rather, the worldview held by these participants was quite positive and hopeful. This

surprising result correlates favorably with the worldview profile provided by Bauer and

Growick. Table 5.2 reveals the synonymy of the findings of this study and the work of

Bauer and Growick.

Table 5.2. Comparison of Student Profiles

Found in This Study	Found in Bauer and Growick
Belief in hope for the future	Yes
Belief in a purposeful existence	Yes
Belief in knowledge and education	Yes (used to obtain a better lifestyle)
Belief that goals are important	Yes
Belief in a mutable worldview	Yes
Belief that change is good	Yes
Belief in Christian ethics, values, and a Christian upbringing	Yes
Belief in the importance of family	Yes
Belief in the importance of religion	Yes
Belief in authority	Yes
Belief in persistence and hard work	Yes
Belief in the reality of human freedom	Yes
Belief in and love for a traditional, mountain way of life	Yes

Adding to the profile noted earlier in this dissertation, this synonymy points to a

hopeful, goal-oriented population that is malleable, family dependent, and culturally and

traditionally rooted existence. This optimistic characterization is indeed an illustration of

the standard picture of the vaunted, American persona.

Third, something other than knowledge alone seems to be the primary facilitating

factor in a change in beliefs. This study emphasized a cognitive change in knowledge and

expected that that cognitive change would necessarily bring about a change in

beliefs/worldview. This pre-research hypothesis was not borne out in the results. Other more affective dynamics were not measured by this research. Therefore, the door is open to the question of what brings about an ontological change in beliefs/worldview.

Fourth, it seems to be the case that an increase in cognition merely recognizes, clarifies, and codifies the more basic ontological dynamic characterizing a deeper understanding of humanity as being, at its root, *homo religicus* . Certainly, John Wesley's level of cognition was set at Oxford, yet an ontological change brought about through a religious experience at Aldersgate had to occur in order to institute real change in Wesley's life. Again, more research needs to be done in this area.

The fifth implication of this research is the erroneous expectation that the worldview altering effects of education must be fully and immediately observable. Some of those changes no doubt are immediate as shown by statements from student responses to a class session on political worldviews (see Appendix G). Students wrote:

> First off before I start saying anything else in this response paper about the Democrat Party and the Republican Party I am going to tell you I am a Democrat. Yes, I am a Democrat, but after reading this article I really don't know if I am part of the Democrat Party or part of the Republican Party … To be honest I am now totally confused on if I am actually part of the Democrat Party or the Republican Party. I figure the way to determine which party I am now a part of is on how much I agree with one of the parties.

> I do believe in God and that there is one God, but I don't go to church. The reason I don't go to church is because seeing what people do when they are away from church and how some of them judge everyone that walks through the doors, made me think that wasn't the place for me. I don't think it's right for people to force their religion on others.

> From the time I was old enough to walk and talk, actually even before that, my parents has taught me about religion. There are a lot of religions that are very popular, the most popular in the Appalachian Mountains being that of Christianity, whatever denomination it may be. My family is combined of several denominations including Old Regular Baptist,

Freewill Baptist, Church of Christ, and Church of God. Although my family comes from several different denominations, we all love and value God. The belief and values of God and Christianity have shaped my worldview more than anything else.

From my own experiences I have learned that people around here tend to get caught up in those religious circles and what other people around them do rather than paying attention to their own lives and how they live by God's word… So that is why today I hold the belief that religion should be more about God and the bible rather than what church you attend and its denomination.

My foundation for my worldview is my religion. It has contributed to so many wonderful events that have shaped my worldview.

These student participant, post-study statements are indicative of some degree of immediate change in political views brought about by the intervention project. A point of great interest would be, which sorts of views are open to immediate change and which must be assessed from a long range perspective.

Sixth, one statistically significant result coming from the pre- post-administrations of the WAI were in the area of responsibility. As reflected in the scores on the responsibility dimension, students left the class with a greater belief that forces and exigencies outside themselves exerted significant control over their lives.

I believe this movement that was the only significant statistical finding in this study was due to a three-part, PBS documentary shown at the final three periods of the intervention project. This series, entitled *The Appalachians* chronicled the history of Central Appalachia from the period of the Appalachee and Cherokee Native American tribes through the earliest settlers forward to the current day. One of the major foci of this documentary was the abuse of the region's natural and human resources at the hands of entrepreneurs from outside the region—coal barons, timber barons, and land barons who came into Eastern Kentucky solely for personal, financial gain. They were not mountaineers. These were flatlanders who used a superior education to manipulate the

legal system to increase their fortunes. They came, they saw, and they conquered, and the indigenous residents were the losers in every instance building and naming towns after themselves as they went about the business of raping the land and the people.

This Eastern Kentucky story was the final installment of the intervention project and it seems to have left its mark on the student participants who left the class believing that our lives are moved more by factors external to ourselves rather than our own internal mechanisms. This statistically significant shift was an indication that education does make some difference in the beliefs of Eastern Kentuckians. As such, this movement from internal to external would be the only clear support for an affirmative answer to the second research question in this study. At the same time, it would supply the dominant explanation for the fourth finding of the current study.

While these particular changes in worldview were immediate they cannot at this point be gauged from the perspective of an extended time frame. It could well be that expecting immediate change missing the point in expecting all change to be immediate. Certainly the worldviews of these student participants came about over at least eighteen years of growing up in the mountains. Expecting them to change in three months might have been a bit farfetched. It may be that a cognitive process was set in motion that will contribute to change on a grander scale over time. That sort of change would need to be measured by a longitudinal study.

Limitations of the Study

One of the serious limitations to the study was a question as to the degree the sample group represented the general population of Eastern Kentucky. The sample size

was not large enough to satisfy the central limit theorem (around thirty individuals) and this inadequate sample size decreased the validity of the results.

Another limitation was the degree of veracity involved in the post-intervention interviews, which were made mandatory. Interview responses could have been skewed by the process of diffusion. Responses might also have been forced or skewed because of the ways the interviews were carried out (i.e., group interviews rather than individual interviews).

Delimitations included the region from which student participants were selected, means of selection, choice of course to use in obtaining research data, course design and syllabus construction, choice of required textbooks, selection of topics and ideas to be discussed in the research course, pre-class professorial preparation, means of instruction (face-to-face, online, or hybrid), degree of student participation in the course, choice of statistical analysis programs, and creation and development or selection of a survey instrument. Course design, choice of textbook and creation of a well-defined syllabus proved to be three of the most significant delimiting factors.

Unexpected Observations

I observed two primary, unexpected phenomena coming out of this research. Both had to do only secondarily with the student participants and primarily with me.

Pedagogy

The first unexpected phenomenon had to do with the effectiveness of pedagogy and the questions asked in this research. One of the obvious insights that emerged from this study was that students seem to learn better from interacting with other students rather than hearing me lecture. Most notably, in two instances, learning in this course

went beyond intellectual engagement of acquisition of information alone. The first instance was an exercise in political worldview where students were divided in groups and allowed to interact with germane, current-day hot topics on the political docket. Small groups were formed and student participants were asked to discuss with each other the competing arguments surrounding abortion, gun control, national defense, government help to the poor, and other sociopolitical issues. These small groups were very engaged with the topic at hand and this exercise resulted in more attitudinal change than any other single activity. This conversational learning activity facilitated active construction of knowledge by engaging experience, personal narrative, emotion, critical reflection, and dialogue as opposed to passive acquisition of information.

Asking the Wrong Questions

The second and most profound unexpected result coming from this research was a change not in student worldview but in a new, more optimistic, understanding of an Eastern Kentucky worldview. I entered this research with the same attitude shared by every other researcher who has studied Central Appalachia and Eastern Kentucky, attempting to explain why Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia are so different from the rest of the nation. This approach reveals an integral bias on the part of those who study these geographic regions. The truth is, I may have approached our studies from the wrong direction and I may have been asking the wrong questions concerning a Central Appalachian sub-culture of which Eastern Kentucky is a part.

The approach of most, if not all research into the social, cultural, political, religious, philosophical, and economic condition of Eastern Kentucky has come from the standpoint of viewing Eastern Kentucky as a place that needs to be brought up to the

level of the rest of America, that Eastern Kentuckians are somehow wrong in their approach to life. The predominant view has fixated on a "fix the problem" agenda; that Eastern Kentucky is an anomaly and an ugly and unfortunate acquaintance who shows up from time to time to borrow money in order to keep going.

If this research bears out anything it is that Eastern Kentuckians do not see themselves as the rest of America sees them. It could be that Eastern Kentuckians may well be out of step with the rest of the nation because Eastern Kentuckians really do not *care* about being like the rest of the nation:

> Even in the 1950's and 1960's when droves of Eastern Kentuckians left the hills to go to Detroit, Dayton, Columbus and the cucumber fields of Indiana to find work, they always came back on the weekend, and they always knew where they would be buried and it was not in Detroit, or Dayton, or Columbus, or the cucumber fields of Indiana. It was in the mountains. It was "home" (The Appalachians).

The lifestyle that is so evident in Eastern Kentucky may be one of choice. An indigenous satisfaction with the status quo, however that status quo might seem to those outside Eastern Kentucky, would certainly bear out the evidence of "levelling" found by Bauer and Growick such that Eastern Kentuckians would be saying, we are not better than you but we are not less than you either. This research at least suggests that this may be the answer to the Eastern Kentucky problem.

The data yielded by this investigation describes a large area made up of parts of five states and commonwealths in the Eastern center of the United States. The indigenous population of this area is undeniably different from mainstream America in a number of ways many of which are noted in this paper. This research points to a particular worldview held by this indigenous people. This research raises the issue of equality

within differentiation; that just because groups differ in worldview, it is not necessarily the case that the smaller group must adopt the identity of the larger.

This study raises the question of why some people groups are validated and romanticized while those who share a particular worldview in the mountains of Central Appalachia are, along with other ethnic populations are considered primitive and in need of adopting a Pan-American worldview. Certainly, the results of this study raise that important issue.

Recommendations

I hope this study lends itself to the broad expanse of literature concerned with Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachian life. I would also hope that this study might be seen in light of what it failed to do as much as what it might have done. It is those failures that spur further research. The idea that the pre-intervention hypotheses were not borne out also calls for more work to be done in the area of the beliefs, attitudes, and values that underlie the lives of Eastern Kentuckians. Some of the most obvious recommendations for further research follow.

Alter Experimental Design

I recommend for future research the inclusion of multiple, culturally divergent populations and sample groups in order to increase generalizability to regions other than Central Appalachia and Eastern Kentucky. Making generalizations from one relatively small, homeostatic sample group did not provide the clear and definitive results this study had intended. I believe the findings from this research would have been much more definitive had there been several sample groups to use producing several sets of results.

Perhaps the period allotted for the research was too short. Some overall change in the pre and post intervention responses did occur. Perhaps that change would have been more significant if the experiment had covered a longer period of time, but the time allotted for this present research did not permit that long range perspective.

Measuring Change in Affect

Although this study claimed to measure change in affect, it failed to do so adequately. The group interaction leading to affective changes in political worldview indicated that further experimentation needs to employ less of a lecture-oriented class format and increase student involvement, especially on controversial moral and procedural issues. This insight is in line with the tendency of students taking the WAI to emphasize a collective rather than an individualistic decision-making process.

Broadening the Social Perspective

I recommend that future study in this area broaden the focus of the research to include not merely an Appalachian worldview but worldview in general as it is expressed in different cultural contexts in a variety of geographic and cultural locations.

This study did not do enough to solidify worldview as an important concept useful for experimental research. The results yielded by this study would have been greatly enhanced by having several, comparative sets of data from cultural and geographic contexts that were both similar to and different from Central Appalachia. One possibility would be to partner with other researchers who would simultaneously carry out the same research in disadvantaged areas other than Eastern Kentucky, such as a Native American community or an inner-city community. The more varied data resulting

from this broader design would have provided greater insights and more well-defined results.

Using a Larger Sample Group

Another design revision would be to involve a larger sample group that would facilitate a more rigorous, statistical analysis of the data in the study. I found the sample group for this study too small to make adequate and accurate generalizations to other populations.

Adding a Co-variate Survey

An additional improvement on this design would have been a covariate survey given to all student/participants at the time of the first administration of the WAI. I have designed a sample, covariate survey. This survey can be found in Appendix J. As can be seen, a survey such as this one would have done much to define the important etiological dynamics in the participant group for this study. The lack of such an instrument was a serious design flaw.

Rethinking the Use of a Worldview Instrument

Richard Hanson poses an important question about psychological instruments that attempt to measure worldview. Hanson says, "[O]ne might ask whether we should deal with a small number of broad dimensions or a much larger number of more specific belief variables" (2). Hanson's comment is well taken and reveals the initial quandary faced by the developer of any psychometric instrument.

Following Hanson's query, in a great sense, the development of a psychometric instrument to assess worldview is one of the primary determinants of the eventual results

suggested by that instrument. Answers to questions on a worldview assessment instruments necessarily reflect the bias of the creator of the instrument.

Although item-score factor analysis reports good validity and reliability for all scales of the WAI, some doubt remains as to the likelihood of the instrument to address the particular insights sought in this research. Nevertheless, as a psychometric instrument, the WAI can claim as much validity and reliability as most other scales developed to measure different functions of human existence. I would like to see more done in terms of the development of instrument scales to measure worldview in the future. I believe much need remains for improvement and specificity in this area.

Having a Theological Perspective

I think more work needs to be done in the area of worldview assessment from a particularly theological or church/ministry-based perspective. L. Jones, Evans, Santelli, and George-Warren, Leonard and especially McCauley have made significant attempts to approach a study of Appalachia from a Christian perspective, but here too, much more work is needed. The great weight of the literature reflects a particular denominational slant noting how Southern Baptists, or Freewill Baptists, or United Methodists, or other denominations can function more efficiently among Eastern Kentuckians. I would hope to see work done in the path set by McCauley in looking at a mountain spirituality that underlies denominational particularity.

Having a Philosophical Theology

I would hope also to see work done from the standpoint of philosophical theology. I believe one of the more fascinating research possibilities in the area of Appalachian religious beliefs lies in the reflection of philosophical associations that have theological

implications. To what degree for instance does the Appalachian worldview exhibit a Stoic rather than a Calvinist perspective? Further study would need to address this idea.

Can elements of rationalism be found in Appalachian beliefs that are not found in the religious beliefs of other areas? Is mountain theology more rational or idealistic in its metaphysical, ontological, and axiological assessment of the cosmos and the relationship between the sacred and the profane? How is Neo-Plationism reflected in Appalachian beliefs and what does that philosophic perspective have in common with the Neo-Platonic beliefs of previous periods in history. These are all very interesting and evocative questions that need to be addressed more fully in future research. Other psychometric instruments would need to be created in order to answer these questions.

Postscript

In one sense, this dissertation is the end of a long journey that began almost sixty years ago when I first experienced God's call upon my life. The journey has been steady and has followed a course that I could not have seen or hoped to see. It has led through failure and success, through trial and error, and through a constant reminder that God is with me.

This dissertation and the work that has gone into it has been an affirmation that I am at this present time where God would have me to be doing ministry with the people with whom God has brought me in contact. In a large sense, the first fifty years of my life were only a preparatory predicate for what I am doing here at Big Sandy Community and Technical College.

I believe that this dissertation and the Doctor of Ministry degree may well be the final step in God's unfolding will in my life. I began my life in Sunday school. I have

moved through every facet of the Lord's Church: Sunday school learner, Sunday school

teacher, music director, deacon (Southern Baptist Church), youth pastor, associate pastor,

pastor, Executive Board Member of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Editorial Board

Member of the Western Recorder, United Methodist pastor, and now a professor of

philosophy and religious studies. Along this journey, I have loved the same woman and

we have reared four very exceptional children who have gone on to great things in the

world. What a journey it has been: and now this dissertation and this Doctor of Ministry

Degree seem to indicate the journey is not yet finished. This research-directed path is

preparing me to continue to be useful to God as I move into the final season of my life.

As I look back, I can see God's hand at every step along the path; every

crossroad, every roadblock, every open door and every closed door. I look back and

wonder. I can sing the words of the spiritual:

> When I think of the goodness of Jesus
> And all He's done for me.
> If it had not been for His mercy
> God knows where I would be.
> He brought me through great trials
> In spite of the enemies.
> My soul looks back and wonders how I got over.
> He promised He told me
> In trouble He told me
> Cast your cares He'll take 'em
> He'll never forsake 'em
> Hold on stand strong
> He won't leave you alone
> Throw your hands say up high
> Lift your head up to the sky.
> I wonder how I got over (Wynans)

Many times, "I wonder how I got over," but I did and I have and here I am at the last stop

on the way. With the grace and leading of God, I will teach, and I will think, and I will

write, and I will never cease to wonder how I got over, but thanks be to God Almighty, I did.

A Final Note

Growing up in Eastern Kentucky meant being cut off from what was happening in the rest of the nation and the world. When I was growing up here, Eastern Kentuckians had very limited access to television. Radio dealt primarily with local issues. Our newspaper experience was limited to the weekly edition of the *Salyersville Independent.* Few people had access to newspapers from Lexington, or Louisville, or Huntington—the three metropolitan areas lying closest to Magoffin County.

I came of age in the 1960s' which is arguably one of the most chaotic and evocative decades in the twentieth century. The response to the war in Vietnam and the move toward racial equality let to rioting in the streets, church bombings, and assassinations as well as the breakdown of segregation throughout the South. There was an intense questioning of traditional values by the youth of this nation.

The decade was marked by important elections, by love-ins and anti-war marches and so much more. Where we lived, in the hills of Eastern Kentucky, few of those things seemed to relate to us. The war in Viet Nam was the most glaring exception because so many young men graduating from high school knew that was probably in their future. I cannot remember any of those things being discussed in school, at home, or with friends—even Viet Nam. The only exception was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy which was announced to our class by our eighth grade teacher, Mr. Herald Whitaker.

Our lives were more focused on the local basketball team (our school system could not have a football or baseball team because the uniforms were too expensive for the school district), about working on cars, and who was the toughest boy in school. Following high school came college for a very few privileged young people in my community, Viet Nam for others, and moving a trailer in the yard of parents or grandparents and drawing a government check for almost everyone.

Our high school had several buildings, one of which had no heat in the winter and most had no air conditioning in the summer. The only chalkboards in one of our buildings had been badly cracked and broken from being kicked and hit by rocks and chairs over the years. Our school textbooks were second hand, having come from the generosity of the Fayette County School District after the students in Lexington got new textbooks. We knew vaguely that most of the rest of America did not live this way, but the rest of America was so far away that we thought little about it. This was our world.

This setting was the insulated cultural environment I grew up in. We knew three certainties of life existed: (1) that most people would end up being poor, (2) that there would be few opportunities for success, and (3) the importance of home in the mountains where we grew up including family, church, and welfare. This was our Eastern Kentucky, but as strange as it may seem, when I was in basic combat training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, I remember looking out at the flat earth on which the fort was constructed and having a great longing for the hills of Eastern Kentucky and the life I had left behind. I was not home. Home was back in the mountains.

APPENDIX A

COURSE SYLLABUS: REL 101

Big Sandy Community and Technical College

Course Syllabus

PS Number: 41073   **Semester:** FALL   **Year:**2013

FacultyName: Alan David Profitt   **Title:** Associate Professor

Course Prefix and Number: REL 101   **Course Credit Hrs** 3

Course Prerequisites: none

Course Title: Introduction to Religious Studies

Catalog Course Description:

Introduces students to the study of religion, emphasizing the varieties, differences, and similarities of religious experience and expression. Examines the interaction between religious experience and expression and social and cultural contexts through study of selected examples.

Components: Lecture Attributes: Cultural Studies AH (Arts and Humanities) SB (Social BehaviorvScience) SB (Religion)

Instructor Contact Information:

Campus Location: Prestonsburg   **Building & Rm:** Mag 210

Office Hours: Posted on door   **Office PhoneNumber:** 606-889-4812

Alternate Number: 606-889-4811

Best Times to Call: M-F, 8:30 AM-5 PM

KCTCSEmail: David.profitt@kctcs.edu

Special Instructions: Keep it real

Supervisor Contact Information:

Name: Dr. Patsy Jackson

Campus Location: Prestonsburg **Building & Room:** Campbell 120H

Office Phone Number: 606-889-4711

KCTCS Email: Patsy.jackson@kctcs.edu

Text and Supplies:

Smart, Ninian. _Worldviews: Cross-cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs_, 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River N.J.: Prentice Hall. 2000.

KCTCS General Education Competencies

Students should prepare for twenty-first century challenges by gaining:

A. **Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural worlds through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts.**

B. **Intellectual and practical skills, including**

- **inquiry and analysis**
- **critical and creative thinking**
- **written and oral communication**
- **quantitative literacy**
- **information literacy**
- **teamwork and problem solving**

C. **Personal and social responsibility, including**
- **civic knowledge and engagement (local and global)**
- **intercultural knowledge and competence**
- **ethical reasoning and action**
- **foundations and skills for lifelong learning**

D. **Integrative and applied learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized skills.**

Course Specific Competencies (Student Outcomes): System-wide Course Competencies

REL 101   Introduction to Religion   3 Credits

<u>System-wide Competencies:</u>

Upon completion of this course, the student can:

1.   Demonstrate an understanding of vocabulary, concepts, and theories of religious studies.

2.   Express an understanding of what religion is and why it is a part of human experience.

3.   Express knowledge of the complexity, depth of thought, and variety of religious practices.

4.   Engage in serious discussion and debate about religion and human beliefs.

5.   Identify ways to classify and compare religions and religious processes and activities.

<u>Additional Competencies (Instructor):</u>

Upon completion of this course, the student can:
1.   Understand the history of the concept of worldview (*Weltanschauung*).
2.   Identify and understand the *Weltahschauung* endemic to Eastern Kentucky
3.   Identify, understand, and be able to explicate his/her own *Weltanschauung*
4.   Use his/her personal Weltanschauung to define a personal life-plan

Lab Competencies (Student Outcomes): (Enter N/A if this does not apply.): n/a

Course Outline:

The following questions will form a general outline of our discussions this semester.

- Class introduction
- Administration of the WAI6CD
- What is religion?
- What characterizes a religious worldview?
- What characterizes a humanistic or scientific worldview?
- Are these our only alternatives?
- What problem(s) does religion hope to address?
- What solution(s) does religion offer?
- What path(s) does religion offer?
- What unique hope does religion provide?
- What forms does hope take?
- Are there other worldviews that do what religion hopes to do?
- What form(s) do the other worldviews take?

Course Structure:

REL 101 will be a lecture/discussion, interactive, classroom experience focusing on the religious, existential, and anthropological implications of a *Weltanschauung* we use to guide our lives.

This course in religious studies will focus on the ultimate question of human existence—and the fundamental question presupposed by the concept of religion *per se*—does God really exist? Secondly, this course will hope to inform us about the various worldviews available to us depending on our answer to this one, foundational question.

Students will be expected to: attend class regularly; contribute to class dialogue; interact with classroom material; keep up with the readings for the course as well as any outside readings that may be assigned; take part in any group work assigned by the instructor; turn in assignments in a timely fashion; and take part in a pre/post worldview measuring instrument.

Students will be interviewed individually at the end of the class concerning how the course may or may not have informed their own personal worldview.

Technology/Media Component: YouTube Videos, Other Internet options

Service-Learning: n/a

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Students taking REL 101 will be expected to:

1. Take part weekly in the regular classroom exercises, readings, and discussions as well as group work that contributes to the class.
2. Take the WAI6CD during the first and final weeks of class.
3. Write a 4-5 page Worldview Statement. This statement will be due on the last day of class. It will include a life-plan that is rooted in a particular *Weltanschauung*.
4. Take part in post-class, focus group interviews

Grading for the course follows:

Because classroom and group contribution is so integral to the class,

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION ARE PRIMARY INDICATORS

OF STUDENT GRADE in REL 101.

Weekly attendance, interaction, reading and class participation .... 90% of grade
Worldview paper .... 10% of grade
Total for semester 100%

Grading Policy:

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
Below 60 = E

Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend all classes all the time. It is imperative that students attend class in REL 101. Absences in excess of 2 will reflect negatively on student grade in the course.

Absences will reduce student semester grade by 5% per absence. If a student misses 3 classes, the highest semester grade he/she can hope to earn is an 85%. In this way, students are able to miss one or two class periods and still earn an A in the course. Depending on the grade of the Worldview paper this works out like this:

1, 2 Absences = A
3, 4 Absences = B
5, 6 Absences = C
7, 8 Absences = D
Over 8 absences = E

Missed Exam Policy: n/a

Late Assignment Policy: n/a

Withdrawal Policy: **No withdrawals allowed after mid-term.**

APPENDIX B

WAI6CD

Unfortunately, the WAI6CD could not be reproduced without prior permission from the author of the instrument. Prior permission must be given to each individual researcher who is carrying out the research in question. The contact information of the author can be found on the author's Web site at *www.markkoltko-rivera.com.*

APPENDIX C

WONG'S SIX ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR HUMAN EXISSTENCE

1. What is the Nature of Ultimate Reality?

This first worldview question relates to the very nature of reality in its entirety. The main focus of the issues it raises involve whether or not there is such a thing as the supernatural. If there is, what is it like. It deals with such questions as:

- Is there a God or not? If there is, what is that he like? If there is no God, what is the origin of material reality?
- Are there multiple gods? If so, what are they like?
- Is there a personal element to ultimate reality? If not, what is the nature of impersonal reality?

2. What is the nature of material reality?

There have been those who have questioned whether or not the material world we live in really exists, and have posited that it is an illusion in one form or another. However, since it is the physical world that we live our lives in, most people assume that it actually does exist. That being said, not everyone agrees as to the nature of the material world. In fact, every worldview has a different perspective about it. Different worldview possibilities include:

- It is created or uncreated?
- It is orderly or chaotic?
- It is subjective or objective?
- It is personal or impersonal?
- It is eternal or temporal?

3. What is a human being?

The nature of worldview is such that it might seem strange to many people to even ask a question like this. We all have an underlying presupposition about what a human being is and we simply assume that everyone else understands it in the same way we do. That is simply not the case. Different worldviews hold entirely different understandings about it.

And the reason it is important is because different understandings result in different ways of valuing and treating other people.

Some of the different possible answers posited by various worldviews concerning the nature of a human being include:

- A highly evolved biological machine.
- A god or potential god.C A form of energy which shifts forms through successive existences.
- A person made in the image of God.

4. What happens to a person at death?

Every worldview has its doctrine related to the afterlife. While the practical implications of this may not, at first glance, seem to be that profound, those implications actually run very deep. For instance, if a person believes there is no after life, why is there any reason to refuse oneself anything in this life. Of if a person believes that they will get 72 virgins if they die as a martyr, why not go for it. Here are some of the answers that various worldviews give concerning life after death.

- People cease to exist.
- Individuals are transformed to a higher state.
- People reincarnate into another life on earth.
- People depart to a shadowy existence on "the other side."
- Individuals enter into the spiritual realm (heaven, hell, or other place) based on how life was lived on earth.
- People enter directly into heaven.

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?

It is interesting to think that different people might actually have a different way of conceiving of human rationality. After all, we all have to use it even to discuss the topic of knowledge. In spite of that, the different worldviews actually do have different ways of understanding it—from considering it to be an illusion to thinking of it as an objective reality and places in between. These are some of the ways that various worldviews deal with the issue of knowledge.

- Consciousness and rationality developed through a long process of evolution.

- There is no "reason" that human beings are able to have knowledge. That is just the nature of our existence.
- Knowledge is an illusion.
- Humans are made in the image of God who, himself, has knowledge.

6. How do we know what is right and wrong?

As we look around the world at the differences in various cultures, one of the things that jumps out quickly is that there are certain moral principles that are almost universal. Questions related to honesty and integrity, sexual issues, how we should treat other people and so on are integral parts of virtually every society. Even when individuals or societies don't seem to follow the principles, they will still tell you that they exist. The search to identify what is right and wrong and to give reasons for why morality should be dealt with certain ways is an integral part of every worldview. Here are some of the ways that various worldviews deal with this issue.

- Right and wrong are strictly products of human choice.
- Right and wrong are determined by what feels good.
- A sense of right and wrong was an evolutionary development as a survival mechanism for the species.
- Right and wrong are learned by experience as we learn what pleases the gods.
- We are made in the image of God whose character is good and who has revealed what is right.

7. What is the meaning of human history?

Some may wonder why the issue of time is included in the questions about worldview. Actually, the focus is more on the issue of meaning than it is on time. It is just that the meaning is set in the context of time. The search for meaning may be the most profound issue that human beings deal with in life. It is so profound that some people even choose to end their lives because the cannot manage to find a reason to continue on. Different worldviews have different ways of addressing this question. Some of the various worldviews deal with this by asserting:

- There is no innate meaning to human history. Meaning is what humans make it to be.
- Time is an illusion.

- Meaning involves realizing the purpose of the gods.
- Meaning results from discovering and fulfilling the purpose of God.

Using the Questions

It is important to understand the nature of these questions so that they can be useful in helping you more effectively interact with people who believe differently than you. First, you need to understand that typically you will not just sit down with someone and ask them the seven questions. If you do have the opportunity to do that, there is certainly nothing wrong with that. But the questions are not ends in themselves. They are only tools of understanding. Getting the answers does not provide a witness.

But if you do know the Truth of Jesus Christ and why you believe it, it lets you know the kinds of issues you need to address with them in order to share a witness. Knowing the necessary starting point gives you the ability to form the kinds of relationships which will allow God to use you effectively in building his Kingdom.

APPENDIX D

MINIMAL RISK CONSENT FORM

Worldview Assessment

You are invited to participate in a worldview assessment experiment. You will learn what a worldview is and will participate in classroom activities and assignments focusing on worldview as an essential part of human existence. There are no risks or discomforts expected as a result of your participation, nor are there any direct benefits to you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

Your decision either to participate in this research or not to participate in it will in no way affect your grade in this course.

You are asked to participate in this research throughout the fall semester, 2013. Each person completing the research assignment will receive a $10 gift certificate from McDonalds Restaurant.

Your performance in this study will be completely confidential and anonymous. Your responses will be coded to be anonymous, and any publications or presentations of the results of the research will include only information about group performance.

You are encouraged to ask any question that you might have about this study whether before, during, or after your participation. However, answers that could influence the outcome of this study will be deferred to the end of the experiment. Questions can be addressed to Professor David Profitt, DMin ABD.

I understand the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in the experiment described above. I have been offered a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:_____   **DOB**: _____

County of Residence:_____

The following questions are important to this research. Please answer each question as

accurately as you can:

Are you a religious person? _____

Has religion been a large part of your life to this point? _____

Were you reared in a "Christian" home? _____

Do you consider yourself to be a Christian? _____

Do you attend a church regularly (at least twice a month)? _____

What Christian denomination are you affiliated with if any? _____

Were you born in Eastern Kentucky? _____

Where (location/county/state) did you spend ages 1-12? _____

With 1 being "not at all" and 7 being "of great importance," how important is family in

your life? _____

APPENDIX F

MINER'S DYING WORDS

On Monday morning, May 19, 1902, at 7:30 A.M., just after the area's miners had gone to work, an explosion ripped through the Fraterville Mine at Coal Creek, Tennessee, killing 184 men. Most of the miners died instantly, but some survived into the afternoon hours, when they ran out of oxygen. Several of the latter wrote notes to their families or the families of those who died with them. Their thoughts were on loved ones and the hereafter.

From Powell Harmon:

Dear Wife and Children:

My time has come to die. I trust in Jesus. Teach the children to trust in Jesus. May God bless you all is my prayer. Bless Jesus it is now 10 minutes till 10 and we are almost smothered. Don't know how long we will live, but it is our time to go. I hope to meet you all in heaven. May God bless you all wife and children for Jesus sake. Good bye until we meet to part no more.

We are shut up in the head of the entry with a little air and the bad air is closing in on us fast. It is about 12 o'clock. Dear Ellen, I have to leave you in a bad condition. But, dear wife set your trust in the Lord to help you raise my children. Ellen, take care of my little darling Lily. Ellen, little Elbert said that he had trusted in the Lord. Chas. Wood says he is safe if he never lives to see the outside again he would meet his mother in heaven. If we never live to get out, we are not hurt but only perished for [lack of] air. There is but few of us here and I don't know where the other men is. Elbert said for you all to meet him in heaven. All the children meet with us both. My boys, never work in the

coal mines. Henry and Condy be good boys and stay with your mother and trust for Jesus sake.

From John Hendren:

Dear darling mother, brother, and sisters. I have gone to heaven and I want you to meet me in heaven. Tell all your friends to meet me there and tell the Church I've gone to heaven. Oh, dear friends don't grieve over me because I am in sight of heaven. Oh dear stay at fathers or your fathers and pay all I owe if possible. Bury me at Pleasant Hill if it suits you all. This about 1 and ½ o'clock. So good bye dear loving father, mother, brother, and friends. I have not suffered much yet. Your boy, brother.

For Henry Beach

Alice do the best you can. I'm going to rest. Good bye Alice. Elen darling good bye for us both. Elbert said the Lord had saved him. Do the best you can with the children. We're all praying for air to support us but it is getting so bad without any air. Horace, Elbert said for you to wear his shoes and clothing. It is now ½ past 1. Powell Harmon's watch is in Andy Wood's hand. Ellen I want you to live right and come to heaven. Raise the children the best you can. Oh how I wish to be with you. Good bye all of you. Good bye. Bury me and Elbert in the same grave by little Eddy. Good bye Ellen. Good bye Lily. Good bye Jimmy. Good bye Horace. We are together. Is 25 minutes after 2. There is a few of alive yet. JAKE AND ALBERT. Oh for one more breath. Ellen remember me as long as you live. Good Bye Darling.

From Scott Chapman:

I have found the Lord. Do change your way of living. God be with you. Good Bye.

From James A. Brooks:

My Dear Wife and Baby,

I want you to go back home and take the baby so Good Bye. I am going to heaven. I want you to meet me there so Good Bye.

From Geo. Hutson:

To Geo. Hutson's wife. If I don't see you no more bury me in the clothes that I have. I want you to meet me in heaven. Good Bye. Do as you wish.

Source, Jones 1-3

APPENDIX G

POWER POINTS

REL 101

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES

WHAT THIS COURSE IS ALL ABOUT

ଔ THIS IS AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN RELIGION AND MUCH OF WHAT WE TALK ABOUT IS TRACABLE TO RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

ଔ THIS IS ALSO A COURSE THAT HAS MUCH TO DO WITH PHILOSOPHY. PHILOSOPHY IS CONCERNED WITH THE CORE QUESTIONS OF LIFE IN TERMS OF METAPHYSICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, ONTOLOGY, ETHICS, AESTHETICS, AXIOLOGY, LOGIC AND SO ON.

Cont.

ଔ THIS IS A COURSE THAT HOPES TO SHARPEN THE FOCUS YOU HAVE ON YOUR OWN EXISTENCE AND OF EXISTENCE ITSELF.

ଔ THIS IS A COURSE THAT ATTEMPTS TO IDENTIFY THE BASIC, CORE BELIEFS THAT MAKE UP YOUR WORLDVIEW. SO THAT YOU WILL HAVE A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF _WHAT_ YOU BELIEVE AND _WHERE_ THOSE BELIEFS CAME FROM.

DEFINITION OF
WORLDVIEW

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ଜ	"A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals *can* be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals *should* be pursued [the indicative and the imperative - my note]. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even improvable, but these assumptions are super ordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system" (Mark Koltko-Rivera).

DEFINITION

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ଜ A WAY OF DESCRIBING THE UNIVERSE AND
WHAT IS IN IT; OF WHAT EXISTS AND WHAT
DOES NOT.

ଜ WAYS OF DETERMINING RIGHT AND WRONG,
SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T, THE INDICATIVE
AND THE IMPERATIVE.

ଜ WHAT IS THE GOAL OR WHAT ARE THE GOALS
OF HUMANITY?

ප්ස

ଜ WHAT CAN BE KNOWN AND HOW CAN WE
KNOW IT? (Experience, Perception, Reason,
Revelation)

Worldview

ᴄ⋊ In short, a worldview is "a set of assumptions about reality," an "organizing principle for perception and behavior."

ᴄ⋊ Worldviews seem to be tied to culture so that value differences and cognitive differences seem to have a powerful effect on worldview.

BELIEFS

ᴄ⋊ OUR WORLDVIEW IS COMPRISED OF OUR BELIEFS

ᴄ⋊ OUR BELIEFS COME FROM MANY ROOTS:
  > EXPERIENCE
  > RELATIONSHIPS
  > TRADITION
  > CULTURE
  > RELIGION

BELIEFS

ᴄ⋊ THESE BELIEFS SHAPE OUR VALUES, OUR MORALS, AND OUR LIVES.

ᴄ⋊ Sanctity of Life (*all* life or just *human* life?)

ᴄ⋊ Human equality (how are people equal?)

ᴄ⋊ Who we support

ᴄ⋊ What we fear (what do we fear?)

ᴄ⋊ What is important in the world (from 1 – 5)

ᴄ⋊ Etc.

TYPES OF BELIEFS

❧ THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF CORE BELIEFS THAT GUIDE OUR LIVES·

❧ Philosophical Beliefs

❧ Religious Beliefs

PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS

❧ WE HOPE TO HAVE TRUE BELIEFS

❧ PHILOSOPHY CLAIMS IT CAN LEAD US TO TRUE BELIEFS

❧ PHILOSOPHY SEEKS TRUTH THROUGH REASON AND LOGICAL ARGUMENTATION

RELIGION & BELIEF

❧ RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY ARE VERY SIMILAR, BUT ARE NOT THE SAME.

❧ THROUGH RELIGION, WE HOPE TO ENTER THE TRUTH...TO HAVE SOME SORT OF ONTOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TRUTH OR "THE" TRUTH.

❧ RELIGION SEEKS TRUTH THROUGH SOME INTERACTION WITH SACRED REALITY OR WITH THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE, UNKNOWABLE TRUTH THAT GUIDES THE WORLD.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

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◌঳ WHAT IS RELIGION?

◌঳ WHAT SEPARATES THE SACRED FROM THE PROFANE (ELIADE)?

◌঳ HOW HAS RELIGION BEEN DEFINED?

DEFINITIONS

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◌঳ Religion is the belief in an unseen order, and that our supreme goal is harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto." William James, Philosopher

◌঳ Religion's central function is to give humanity access to the powers which seem to control our destiny and its single purpose is to induce those powers to be friendly to us." Henry Moyer, Philosopher

Definitions Cont.

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◌঳ "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soul – less conditions. It is the opium of the people." Karl Marx, Philosopher

◌঳ "Religion is the individual and social experience of the sacred that is manifested in mythologies, rituals, ethos, and integrating a collective or organization." Don Swenson, Theologian

Definitions Cont.

ଔ "Religion originates in an attempt to represent and
order beliefs, feelings, imaginings and actions that
arise in response to direct experience of the sacred
and the spiritual as this attempt expands in
formulation and elaboration it becomes a process
that creates meaning for itself on a sustaining basis,
in terms of both its originating experiences, and its
own continuing responses." Theologian Paul
Connelley

Definitions Cont.

ଔ "That you should love the Lord your God with all
your heart, with all your soul, and with all your
mind, and that you should love your neighbor as
yourself." Jesus of Nazareth

ଔ "The experience of the Wholly Other." Theologian
Rudolf Otto

Definitions Cont.

ଔ "Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate
concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns
as preliminary and which itself contains the answer
to the question of the meaning of life." Theologian
Paul Tillich

ଔ "Religion is only the sentiment inspired by the group
in its members, but projected outside the
consciousness that experiences them, and
objectified." Sociologist Emile Durkheim

Definitions Cont.

- ❧ "The essence of religion consists in the feeling of absolute dependence." Theologian Fredrick Schleiermacher

- ❧ "Religion constitutes our varied human response to transcendent Reality." Theologian John Hick

- ❧ "All religion springs, in the last analysis, not so much from fear of natural death as of final destruction." Psychologist Otto Rank

Definitions Cont.

- ❧ "Religion is an expression of underlying psychological neuroses and distress: An attempt to control the Oedipal complex, a means of giving structure to social groups, wish fulfillment, infantile delusions, and an attempt to control the outside world." Psychologist Sigmund Freud

- ❧ "Religion is the price we pay for being intelligent, but not, as yet, intelligent enough." Aldous Huxley

Definitions Cont.

- ❧ "The very fact that there are so many and so different from one another is enough to prove that the word 'religion' cannot stand for any single principle or essence but is rather a collective name." Philosopher William James

DIMENSIONS OF RELIGION

✑ RELIGION HAS 6 BASIC DIMENSIONS:

1. DOCTRINAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
2. MYTHIC AND NARRATIVE
3. ETHICAL OR LEGAL
4. RITUAL OR PRACTICAL
5. EXPERIENTIAL OR EMOTIONAL
6. SOCIAL OR INSTITUTIONAL

THREE LEVELS

✑ RELIGION EXIST ON THREE LEVELS

A. CONDITIONAL REALITY
B. UNCONDITIONAL REALITY
C. THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO

RELIGIONS

✑ RELIGION TAKES MANY FORMS

✑ THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD CAN BE PLACED IN ONE OF THREE MAJOR GROUPS

1 RELIGIONS OF THE EAST

- HINDUISM
- BUDDHISM (both Mahayana and Theravada)
- TAOISM
- SHINTO
- JAINISM
- SIKHISM

RELIGION & BELIEFS

ભ 2. RELIGIONS OF THE WEST
- Zoroastrianism
- Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Secular, etc)
- Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant)
- Islam (Sunni, Shia, and Sufi)

3. INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS (Primal Religions)
- Maori and Aboriginal Groups
- Tribal Groups in Africa and South America
- Native American Religions
- etc.

RELIGION & WORLDVIEW

ભEACH OF THESE RELIGIONS HAVE A PARTICULAR WORLDVIEW...A PARTICULAR SET OF BASIC, CORE BELIEFS...A PARTICULAR WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THINGS.

CONT.

ભ WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THESE WORLDVIEWS RIGHT NOW.

WESTERN RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW

ଔ WHAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS
WORLDVIEW PROVIDED BY THE RELIGIONS OF
THE WEST: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND
ISLAM

A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

MOVING TO A SPECIFICALLY CHRISTIAN
WORLDVIEW

THE EVOLUTION OF A CN WORLDVIEW

ଔ FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY
ଔ JESUS' WORLDVIEW
ଔ EARLY MIDDLE AGES
ଔ MIDDLE AGES
ଔ REFORMATION
ଔ VARIOUS POST – REFORMATION TRADITIONS

CHRISTIAN W/V

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND APPALACHIAN HERITAGE

REL 101
A COURSE IN
WORLDVIEW

WEEK THREE

9/4 ASSIGNMENT

FOR NEXT WEEK (SEPT 9 – 11):

RE – READ pp 19 – 24 (top of page). Smart uses the
Catholic Church to typify the 6 dimensions of
religion(s). Re – read these pages. Write and bring to
class on Monday, Sept 9 a 2 – 3 page response paper
chronicling how the 6 dimensions of religion work or
have worked in your life to help shape your worldview.

9/4 DEFINITIONS

- ⌘ "One's total outlook on life, society, and its institutions." (Wolman)
- ⌘ "In the broadest sense, a world view is the interpretive lens one uses to approach and understand reality and one's existence within it."
- ⌘ "A worldview acts as a 'filter' through which phenomena are perceived and comprehended." (Miller & West)

9/4 DEFINITIONS

- ⌘ A worldview is "a set of interrelated assumptions about the nature of the world. A particular worldview determines a good deal about the kinds of concepts we have and so, worldviews determine our conceptual systems." (Overton)

9/4
DEFINITION OF W/V

- ⌘ "A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done In addition to defining what goals *can* be sought in life a worldview defines what goals *should* be pursued [the indicative and the imperative – my note]. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even improvable, but these assumptions are super ordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system" (Mark Koltko-Rivera).

In class Mon 9/9

ଔ Looked at worldview from the standpoint of the Six Common Denominators of Religion(s) by Ninian Smart.

1. Doctrinal/Philosophical
2. Experiential/Emotional
3. Ritual/Practical
4. Social/Institutional
5. Ethical/Legal
6. Mythical/Narrative

9/9 In class cont.

ଔ Discussion was good focusing on three issues defining worldview here in the mountains:

1. Conservatism
2. Fear
3. Refuse to Doubt. Adamant certainty.

9/11 In Class

ଔ Rehearsed Koltko Rivera's definition of W/V on slide #5

ଔ Continue discussion of Eastern Kentucky Worldview in light of the 6 Common Denominators of Religion(s)

ଔ General discussion ensued about religion and W/V

ଔ General view of Christianity in Eastern Kentucky

ଔ Response to student question: "How do we know what we believe is right?"

9/11 In class

℘

(General knowledge of class: Christianity)

1. Heresies:
- ➤ Modalism
- ➤ Docetism
- ➤ Patripassianism
- ➤ Gnosticism
- ➤ Ebionism
- ➤ etc

In Class 9/11

℘

- ❧ Discussed the Eucharist as it reflects basic Christian beliefs
- ➤ Transubstantiation
- ➤ Consubstantiation
- ➤ Memorial View

COLOR CODED WORDS

- ❧ METAPHYSICS
- ❧ ETHICS
- ❧ AXIOLOGY
- ❧ RELIGION
- ❧ EPISTEMOLOGY
- ❧ ONTOLOGY

WORLDVIEWS

- ❧ HAVING A WORLDVIEW IS NOT AN OPTION.
  - a. Our world is viewed by assumptions that arise from some sort of external stimuli
  - b. In that way, we create our world
  - c. "We do not discover the world; rather we create the experienced world." (Berger & Luckmann)
  - d. "We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are." (Anais Nin)
  - e. "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts we make the world." (The Buddha, Dhammapada)

- ❧ OUR WORLDVIEW GUIDES AND GOVERNS EVERYTHING WE THINK, SAY, OR DO. IT IS OUR MORAL COMPASS

- ❧ EVERYONE HAS A WORLDVIEW

DIMENSIONS OF W/V
PP 19 – 24 SMART

- ❧ WHAT ARE THE DIMENSIONS OF A WORLDVIEW?
1. DOCTRINAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL – The ideas that underlie your worldview
2. MYTHIC AND NARRATIVE – The story behind your beliefs giving you a reason to believe what you believe.
3. ETHICAL OR LEGAL – How does your worldview understand what is right or wrong?
4. RITUAL OR PRACTICAL – Does your worldview require anything of you on a regular, repetitive basis?
5. EXPERIENTIAL OR EMOTIONAL – What emotions or experiences are important in your worldview?
6. SOCIAL OR INSTITUTIONAL – The relationships and organizations that are important in your worldview.

9/9 Group Discussions
of Smart pp 19 - 24

❧TIME OUT!

9/9 TIME OUT!

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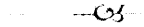
GROUPS OF 3

DISCUSS AND COME UP WITH AN ANSWER TO
THE FOLLOWING:

➢ WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO EXIST? DO
THOUGHTS EXIST? DO THEY EXIST IN THE
SAME WAY YOU EXIST? IN WHAT WAY(S) DO
OUR THOUGHTS EXIST? OR DO THEY NOT
EXIST?

9/9 TIME OUT!

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GROUPS OF 3

➢ WHAT IS AT THE ROOT OF ALL THE PROBLEMS
OF HUMANITY?

9/9 TIME OUT!

-------ↄ৳-- -

**WHAT ARE THE STRUCTURES THAT FORM THE
SKELETON OF OUR WORLDVIEW?**

1. WHAT ARE THE LARGE SYSTEMS OR FACTORS THAT
SHAPE OUR BELIEF SYSTEM? (I am an American. I am an
African American. I am religious (or non religious). I am a
sports fan…etc)

9/9 TIME OUT!

2. WHAT ARE THE GENERAL BELIEFS OR MAIN
TEACHINGS GUIDING THOSE SHAPERS?

A. THE DOCTRINAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS
➤ What commonly held metaphysical, ontological, religious,
  psychological, etc beliefs guide my own worldview.

A. THE EXPERIENTIAL OR EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS
➤ What common experiences have shaped my worldview?
➤ How might my worldview might have been different if I
  had not had these experiences?

9/9 TIME OUT!

A. THE RITUALS OR PRACTICES WE SHARE
➤ Are there any daily, monthly, yearly, occasional practices that
  are important in the way I see the world, myself, and life in
  general?

B. THE MYTHIC, NARRATIVE STORIES BEHIND
   OUR BELIEFS.
➤ What are the general stories that are greatly important to me?
  (my family's history... the history of Eastern Kentucky...The
  American "Story"...the story of my church...etc.
➤ How have those stories shaped your world view?
➤ Who do you think you'd be if you didn't have those stories in
  your life?

9/9 TIME OUT!

A. THE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT PROMOTE
   OUR BELIEFS
➤ What social institutions have guided what you
  believe to be true? (school, church, government,
  family, peers.
➤ What have they each contributed to the development
  of your belief system?

9/9 TIME OUT!

∽୨

B. THE LEGALITIES OR ETHICAL STRICTURES THAT LIMIT OR MAKE POSSIBLE WHAT WE BELIEVE

➢ What guides your belief concerning right and wrong?

➢ Do you think it should be against the law to discriminate against certain groups? Where did this belief come from?

9/9 TIME OUT!

∽୨

3. ARE THERE DIFFERENT STRANDS OF MEANING ASSOCIATED WITH THE LARGE SHAPERS OF OUR WORLDVIEW? (American strands include African American, Italian American, Resident Alien, Green Card holder, Southern American, Northern American, Jew, Christian, Atheist,etc other strands…)

OUR BASIC BELIEFS

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∽ **A worldview consists of one's basic beliefs about:**

a. **Ontology.** What kinds of things exist? Rocks? Organisms? Persons? Neutrinos? Souls? Gods? Properties? Propositions? Numbers?

b. **Explanation.** How do the things that exist work? What are their causes and effects?

c. **Values.** What has value? What is good and bad? Do moral values exist? If so, what makes something morally good or morally bad? What should we do?

d. **Epistemology.** How do we know which things exist, how they work, and what has value? Do we know anything at all?

LIBRARY WRITING DAY

ଛ WE HAVE JUST COMPLETED A PRETTY THOROUGH DISCUSSION OF OUR WORLDVIEW.

ଛ AT THIS POINT IN THE CLASS, CRAFT YOUR WORLDVIEW USING THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS:

>

WRITING OUT MY WORLDVIEW

A. COSMOGENY (THE STUDY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE.)
B. ONTOLOGY (THE STUDY OF BEING AND EXISTENCE)
C. AXIOLOGY (THE STUDY OF VALUES)
D. EPISTEMOLOGY (THE STUDY OF KNOWLEDGE)
E. ETHICS (ISSUES OF RIGHT AND WRONG)
F. RELIGION (ISSUES RELATING TO SACRED REALITY

REVIEW

ଛ THERE ARE THREE ONTOLOGICAL POSSIBILITIES:

a. Nothing exists
b. Only natural (material) things exist
c. Only super natural things exist
d. Both natural and super natural things exist

TRUTH

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

TRUTH AND BELIEF

❧ WHAT IS THE "TRUTH" ABOUT WHAT EXISTS?
❧ > THERE ARE THREE ONTOLOGICAL
   POSSIBILITIES:

a. Nothing exists
b. Only natural (material) things exist
c. Only super natural things exist
d. Both natural and super natural things exist

TRUTH AND BELIEF

❧ WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE TRUTH & WHAT
   DO WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE TRUTH

❧ HOW CAN WE APPROPRIATE THE TRUE TRUTH?
   Reason
   Faith
   Intuition
   Revelation
   A priori
   Experience
   All the above

WHAT *IS* TRUTH?

ଔ WHAT ARE THE WAYS WE CAN ANSWER THIS
QUESTION?

> SKEPTICISM (THERE IS NO TRUTH)
> RELATIVISM
> CONTEXTUALISM
> ABSOLUTISM
> THE TRUTH IS UNKNOWABLE

These slides represent 4 weeks of instruction. For the complete set of PowerPoint slides

used in this course, contact the author of this dissertation.

APPENDIX H

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS

LIVING IN APPALACHIA

FOUND IN BAUER AND GROWICK

1. A 'leveling tendency" in which the statement is often heard, "I'm as good as anyone else but no better."

2. The family as a working, impenetrable unit

3. Learning is valued if it can bring a person a better paying job.

4. Many families encourage their sons and daughters to follow in their footsteps, even if that means going on public assistance.

5. Life flows slowly and incrementally

6. Children in Appalachia are encouraged to follow the footsteps of their parents.

7. Appalachians also still value a stern, religious upbringing.

8. Life is family-based and church-based.

9. The people of Appalachia choose to remain where they are born because of their profound dedication to family and community.

10. Appalachians are used to doing things the way things have always been done.

APPENDIX I

WONG'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH STUDENT

RESPONSES

Question #1: Who am I? What defines me? Who am I when everything is stripped away from me and I am reduced to a naked, lonely soul? Is there anything unique and special about me?

- I am me

- My choices define me

- When everything is stripped away, I am a collection of choices

- Everything is unique, no one shares the same experiences as me

- I feel like I'm blue

- I am human, aware, and resilient

- I am unique because everyone is born with a unique pattern in our brains

- I have my own values and opinions

- I am made the person I am by my experiences

- I am who I want to be

- My surroundings that affect my choices define me

- You are a soul and are given a body

- When I have nothing else, I will be me

- A mom, a daughter, and a sister nothing can take that from me

- I think I am defined by my character and the actions and intents involved with that

- I am a sentient being: knowledge, logic, and emotion

- I am a being that searches for knowledge

- There are unique qualities about every individual. We are all unique in our own way.

- I am unique because I am a fighter. I never give up even though I want to.

- I am spirit wrapped in a soul enclosed in flesh

- I am a hard worker and try to earn what I have.

- Personality…experiences

- Experiences and free will

- My past experiences.

- My moral values

- What I believe

- I am the same person today that I have always been.

- As far as special, no; everyone is equal but unique. Everyone is in their own way. I have faith that the Lord will always provide for my needs

Question #2: How can I be happy? Why am I bored? Why am I so dissatisfied with life? What is the good life? Is this all there is to life?

- Put others before yourself. Self-pleasing things are boring. Dissatisfied with selfishness

- One is a small part of a larger system

- If you are not productive then you lose purpose.

- A good life is lived when all thins you do are the things you want to do without feeling bad or guilty about them.

- I can be happy by focusing on what truly makes me happy.

- I should not worry about the little things.

- The good life is being truly happy.

- I can be happy by doing things I enjoy and not worrying about what people think.

- I'm never bored or dissatisfied.

- I am working towards my goals.

- The good life is being happy.

- No, I believe in life after this life.

- I can be happy by surrounding myself with good people and good decisions.

- People are dissatisfied with their life because they are negative and get easily discouraged

- I believe having a good life is wanting what you have as opposed to wanting what you don't have.

- I would say happiness lies in love, whether it's love of someone, something, or some place.

- Following the foreseeable paths and obtaining knowledge.

- Repetition is the key to boredom; however one can never truly be bored.

- I have not obtained my true potential.

- There is always some form of reincarnation.

- I can be happy by doing the thing I enjoy, disregarding the negative things in life, and learning to cope or adjust.

- I'm bored because life for me is repetitive and anyone would get tired of the same thing over and over again.

- Can't really afford to make life more amusing.

- I am dissatisfied with life because no matter how hard I try I always seem to get held back.

- I always have "bad luck" even though I try to prepare for the unexpected thigs.

- The good in life for me is to be able to enjoy things and people.

- Enjoy spending time with friends and family.

- There is a lot in life you just have to keep wanting and keep fighting.

- I am neither happy or sad…but I do enjoy living life.

- Do what I think is bringing me pleasure.

- I am happy because of family, friends, and being surrounded by people you care about.

- I am not bored. I am not dissatisfied with life

- Becoming ourselves

- Achieving my own goals.

- The simple things in life

- Your life is what you make of it. If you choose for it to be lonely and dissatisfying then it will be.

Question #3: What should I do with my life? How shall I then live? What is my calling? To what should I devote the rest of my life?

- Do your duty.

- The consumption of knowledge

- I have a strong urge to write and tell stories. I have a way with words that fulfills me.

- I should spend my life happy.

- I should focus on those who can't help themselves.

- I believe my calling is to devote time and later money to animal rescue groups.

- I should be successful in my life.

- My calling is nursing.

- I should devote myself to helping others.

- Go to school for my son…however will be best for my son…my calling is to go to college to be a nurse…my son, and to helping those who helped me

- Zeizek, "Big Other." To fully accept the sacrifice of Christ is to take on a responsibility of being accountable for our actions

- Live fully and experientially great

- Helping others and myself by obtaining knowledge

- To bring new, innovative life into the world

- Pursuit of knowledge and applying it

- I should be a positive role model to others.

- I should represent good characteristics such as determination and will power.

- I believe my calling is to show people that they should never give up, no matter what strikes you down or holds you back you should just keep on going.

- Fight for your rights, dreams, and beliefs.

- Every individual can make an impact on others.

- When people know what others have struggled through it inspires them to do the same.

- Give back…pass it on.

- Work, live, and have fun

- Become a Christian…by Christian values…to help others.

- Help others

- Achieving my own goals.

- The simple things in life.

- I plan to get an education, become a special ed instructor

- To have a family and provide for them the way things should be, that is what my life will be devoted to.

Question #4: How do I make the right choices? How do I know that I am making the right decision regarding career and relationships? How can I tell right from wrong?

- Relationships should be productive

- A right brings life, a wrong takes life away

- You can only determine what is right/wrong for you.

- Morals are situational

- To make the right choice you should spend a lot of time thinking and praying.

- I would talk to those I respect

- I make the right choices by weighing all the pros and cons.

- Because I know the choices I make are going to make me happy in the long run and I enjoy doing that.

- How it affects others, and yourself (good/bad)

- I make the right choices based on what is best for me and Bentley.

- I think you never know the right choice until after you see the outcome of your choice.

- Personally I would say my choices are based on my inner conscience which is based on a Biblical viewpoint

- Logical thought…just looking at the outcomes and following the one that causes the least damage to myself and others.

- Based on my own personal beliefs, however this does not make everything right in the eyes of society.

- Making the right choices to me can be very difficult, but I try to think of the outcome before I make my choice.

- I don't really know if I am making the right choices regarding my career, but I do know that it has always been my dream and it is better than not trying.

- Wrong will have a negative influence and right a positive one.

- Wrong will lead to errors or mistakes.

- What is best for the collective

- Right is either a set law or a gut feeling

- Follow your instinct

- Don't regret anything at the time you feel it is right

- Values, rules

- The consequences

- Use past experiences

- What I personally believe in

- Use your best judgment and knowledge

- Go with the first thought or "gut" feeling.

- Pray for assurance, peace, and comfort.

- Live the best way you know how.

Question #5: Where do I belong? Why do I feel so alone in this world? How can I develop a deep and meaningful relationship? Where can I fine acceptance? Where is my home?

- You belong where you are needed

- You feel alone because it is difficult for one to touch another

- Home is where you are most comfortable

- Everyone is alone together

- I belong wherever I feel comfortable.

- By being truthful

- Home is where your mom is

- I belong close to my son and mother

- I would say every human feels a need of a greater purpose and fill that void with whatever maybe available. Sometimes that is filled with self, others, love, negativity, etc.

- I feel so alone in this world because I know that I am the only one who truly cares about myself.

- People may cry but it isn't going to stop their life.

- When I die I'll just be gone and within time I'll be forgotten.

- To find acceptance is me accepting who I love have become and to find others that accept me as well.

- Wherever I am

- I am home where I am cared for and where people love me.

- Where I am at.

- I don't feel alone

- Trust, love, and acceptance

- Religion, yourself

- Earth with my parents

- After death, hopefully heaven

- I belong with my family

- Home is who I am and my family

- Finding who I am and where I belong will gradually be known throughout my life.

- FAMILY, your family accepts who you are. Make your home where you feel the love and attention you need to feel normal and wanted.

Question #6: What is the point of striving when life is so short? Why should I struggle to survive when life is transient and fragile? What is the point of building something only to see it swallowed up by death?

- Leave a mark for others to know that someone cared to do something

- Because now is all that is certain. Do everything you can because there isn't a promise of tomorrow or a guarantee of an afterlife.

- Life isn't short, it's the longest thing you'll do.

- To preoccupy yourself while living this life.

- Because after my life is over, a piece of me will still live through Bentley.

- I believe it is this view that should push us to strive to do something so great; something that lasts after your death.

- Christianity is my choice and I want to help the less fortunate if I was to die and there be nothing else, at least I felt purpose here.

- We strive to find a sense of happiness.

- Completing goals makes us feel happy and completing goals will help us move up in life.

- I struggle to survive to provide for my children.

- Building things up is the same as striving in a sense and the things you build up are the evidence of your striving.

- To make a difference one man can make a difference.

- For the fun in life and to have for my children.

- To help others reach joy and happiness

- Leave it to someone else

- Make an impact

- Finding love is important, to find out what's important in life.

- Joy in life.

- To have a meaningful life.

- What you get out of life is what you put into it

- For we only are here for a short period of time so it is life after we are here on earth that I strive for.

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