

# [PDF] Salvation On Sand Mountain: Snake Handling And Redemption In Southern Appalachia

Dennis Covington - pdf download free book

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**Books Details:**

Title: Salvation on Sand Mountain: S  
Author: Dennis Covington  
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**Description:**

*Salvation on Sand Mountain* is a story of snake handling and strychnine drinking, of faith healing and speaking in tongues. It is also the story of one man's search for his roots--and, in the end, of his

spiritual renewal. Writer Dennis Covington came to this ecstatic form of Christianity as a reporter covering a sensational murder case; Glen Summerford, pastor of the Church of Jesus with Signs Following, had been accused of attempting to kill his wife with rattlesnakes. There, in a courtroom filled with journalists and gawking spectators, Covington felt the pull of a spirituality that was to dominate his life for the next several years. Attending Summerford's church out of curiosity, he soon forged close friendships with some of the worshippers, began attending snake-handling services throughout the South, and eventually took up snakes himself.

With subject matter this lurid, *Salvation on Sand Mountain* could have been a Southern-fried curiosity and little more. Covington goes far deeper. Tracing the snake handlers' roots in regional history, in the deep spiritual alienation of mountain people from the secular modern world they have so recently joined, Covington is more than just sympathetic to the snake handlers; in a profound way, he considers himself one of them. His reasoning is sometimes flawed--when he attempts to find snake handlers in his own family's past, for instance, the result is belabored and unconvincing--but there's no doubt that Covington's heart is in the right place. He's also not without his own brand of sly gallows humor, as in this conversation with the elderly Gracie McAllister: "She'd swore she'd never handle rattlesnakes in July again. She'd been bit the previous two Julys. 'I decided I'd just handle fire and drink strychnine that night,' she said. *Good idea*, I thought. It always pays to be on the safe side."

Covington eventually breaks with the snake handlers, but comes away from the experience a changed man. "Knowing where you come from is one thing, but it's suicide to stay there," he writes. An American Book Award winner and finalist for the National Book Award, *Salvation on Sand Mountain* is a nuanced, compassionate portrait of an unforgettable spiritual journey. --*Mary Park* -- This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**From Publishers Weekly** After Covington, a writing instructor at the University of Alabama, novelist (Lizard) and freelance journalist, covered the trial of a preacher convicted of attempting to murder his wife with rattlesnakes, he was invited to attend a snake-handling service in Scottsville, Ala. He found the service exhilarating and unsettling; he felt a kinship with the people, for he was only two generations removed from the hill country of Appalachia. Of Scottish-Irish descent, the handlers are religious mystics who believe in demons, drink strychnine and drape rattlesnakes around their bodies. Covington attended other services with Brother Carl Porter; he eventually handled a huge rattlesnake, and recalls that at the time, he felt absolutely no fear. This is a captivating glimpse of an exotic religious sect.

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