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From Mormon to Evangelical: A Look at Disaffiliation and Conversion

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FROM MORMON TO EVANGELICAL: A LOOK AT DISAFFILIATION AND CONVERSION

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE

BY
LAURA M. MARWICK
APRIL 1994
This thesis by Laura M. Marwick is accepted in its present form by the Department of Sociology of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Science.

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PREFACE

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, it is essential to note some important points before continuing. This study is aimed to discover the reasons for disaffiliation and subsequent conversion and the processes involved in this type of religious switching. It is, therefore, not a judgement on the views or actions that have taken place, but merely an academic study looking at the reasons and processes involved. It is important to look at the content of this study with an open mind, remembering that it is an academic study and not a religious one.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Orientation to the Problem

Religion is a major institution in society and for many, affiliation with a religious denomination shapes and forms the way they view the world and the way they interact with other formal and informal institutions within society. In addition to particular behaviors within religious groups, there are also particular behaviors and processes an individual goes through when deciding to leave or switch their religious affiliation. In a sense, this is reverse socialization. According to Albrecht and Bahr (1983),

(d)isaffiliation from a religious organization usually follows one of two basic patterns: (1) one disaffiliates because one chooses to affiliate with another organization, or (2) the disaffiliate ceases formal religious involvement altogether and becomes a nonmember. (p. 366).

Although there is some variation, all disaffiliates fit into these two basic patterns.

Looking specifically at disaffiliates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) both paths can be seen. Although the LDS Church gains and retains more members than they lose, "there are obviously some people
whose mobility is out-rather than in-ward" (p. 367). Often, the individual who wishes to follow the second path has no need to formally disaffiliate and in essence becomes an inactive member. However, if the individual formally disaffiliates, having their membership revoked, it is frequently done as a first step to re-affiliate with another group, to partake in the popular American trend of religious switching. Looking more closely at the first path, there are, various reasons for choosing to disaffiliate from the LDS Church and subsequently joining another religious group. There are also a variety of new affiliations that these disaffiliated Mormons make. One alternative religious group that they can form a new affiliation with is Evangelical Christianity, often referred to as the "Born Again Movement". This pattern of switching from one sect to another is the most dramatic form of switching as both the LDS Church and Evangelical Christianity are exclusive in nature.1

By focusing on this unique and exclusive form of switching, from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity, the various reasons for disaffiliation and subsequent conversion

1The NSFH and GSS data shows that Mormons have lower disaffiliation rates than the general population. Those who do disaffiliate are more likely to switch to the None category or simply become inactive Mormons than to re-affiliate with another religious group. The data on switching patterns from Mormonism into another religious category has not been published nationally.
can be understood. Factors such as age, gender, convert or lifetime member, location, and religious status of family members can be studied and possible theories tested. In addition, it should be of great interest and help to church leaders and missionaries of both the LDS Church as well as competing religious groups to understand the reasons and processes of LDS disaffiliation and subsequent conversion to a new religious group. This is especially pertinent since many individuals affiliated with Evangelical Christianity maintain that the numbers of Latter Day Saints becoming affiliated with Evangelical Christianity is increasing rapidly.\(^2\)

It would be impossible in a single study to fully comprehend all of the reasons involved, but by studying this one unique switching pattern, great insight could be gained into many of the reasons for disaffiliation and subsequent conversion and the processes thereof. For this study, I will take advantage of my Evangelical Christian background by studying those whose documented testimonies I have access to and by further studying those I have come into contact with, who have disaffiliated from the LDS Church and have current affiliation with evangelical Christianity.\(^3\) Many of these people now devote their lives to "evangelizing the

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\(^2\)This statement is taken from the inferences of several of the Evangelical Christians contacted for purposes of this study.

\(^3\)Personal bias will be addressed in the methods section.
lost Mormons" and attempting to convince them that the LDS Church’s teaching on being the "one true church" is a falsehood. They become, in a sense, reverse missionaries.

**Background to the Problem**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) began in 1830 under the leadership of the Prophet, Revelator, and Seer, Joseph Smith Jr. Smith claimed that the Father and the Son appeared to him and the Son told him not to join any Christian denomination, "for they were all wrong; . . . that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt" (Joseph Smith 2:19). In a second vision, an angel, Moroni, appeared and said that he, Joseph Smith Jr., had been chosen by God to restore true Christianity to the earth. The angel told Smith of gold plates that had been hidden for centuries and that he was God's chosen instrument to translate these plates into the fullness of the gospel - the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon asserts that the Bible is corrupt, missing plain and precious truths and, therefore, not complete (1 Nephi 13: 26-29). The Book of Mormon and other books, which Joseph Smith introduced later, are regarded as scripture in addition to the Bible. (Basic doctrines of the LDS Church are summarized in their 13 Articles of Faith which are listed in Appendix A.) Smith claimed that he was a prophet ordained by God to lead the people back to true
faith in Christ through the restoration of the One True Church - the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

In essence Smith taught that the Mormon Church was the only true Christian Church on the earth and that all other churches were an abomination before God. He claimed that the Bible was not the complete Word of God, but that the Book of Mormon contained the fullness of the Gospel. The Book of Mormon was presented as an ancient document, preserved by God to be correctly translated by his chosen Prophet, Joseph Smith Jr.

According to the LDS Church's Educational system (1989), Mormonism began in the midst of an American revival and during the eighteenth century, "most colonists did not claim membership in any particular denomination" (p. 10), but late in the century, many "new religious societies grew in strength" (p.11). American historian Gordon S. Wood noted that "It appeared at precisely the right moment in American history; much earlier or later and the Church might not have taken hold" (p. 12).

Finke and Stark (1993) contend, however, that a significant trend in the religion of America has been its constant growth, and not simply a sporadic growth that took place only at specific times in history. They reject the hypothesis that there was a "decline in acceptance of traditional religious doctrines" and assert that "to the degree that denominations rejected traditional doctrines and
ceased to make serious demands on their followers, they ceased to prosper". They further contend that the growth of religion in America "was accomplished by aggressive churches committed to vivid otherworldliness" (p. 1). The LDS Church, therefore, succeeded due to aggressive leadership rather than right timing in the social conditions of America. However, under the initial leadership of Joseph Smith Jr., and later under the second Prophet and President of the church, Brigham Young, the church did prosper and today has grown to over eight and a half million members worldwide.

The foundation of Mormonism rests on the Book of Mormon being an ancient document and on Joseph Smith Jr. being a true Prophet of God. McKay (1953) explains that Orson Pratt, an early Mormon apostle taught that, the message of Mormonism is such that if true, no one could possibly reject it and be saved and if false, no one could possibly accept it and be saved (p.85). Therefore, the Mormon who chooses to disaffiliate from the LDS Church is possibly leaving the only true Christian Church in existence today. Why then would one risk losing their membership in the only true church to join a group that they have been taught doesn't have the truth?

Although the LDS Church teaches that it is the only true church now existing, Evangelical Christians argue that the Christian Church has not ceased to exist on earth.
According to modern members, Evangelical Christianity, often referred to as "the born again movement," has been in existence under different names since the time of Jesus. Followers of Jesus were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26) and were known by their radical devotion to their leader. When the body of literature now known as the Bible came into existence, these Christians declared that the Word of God was complete. Although they do not deny the possibility of any new revelation, they insist that any further revelation from God would be consistent with what He had already spoken in the Bible. An Evangelical Church's statement of faith agrees with the Apostles and Nicene Creeds from which the whole of the Christian tradition finds its roots. The Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Western Protestant traditions all adhere to these creeds. (See Appendix B for the complete text of the Apostles and Nicene Creeds). Evangelical Christians assert that they are part of the one true worldwide Church of Jesus Christ that has been in existence on the earth since the time of Christ. There is, therefore, no need for a restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ.

**Review of Pertinent Literature**

The research on disaffiliation is sparse. More research has been conducted on the conversion process than on the process of disaffiliation, and therefore, what is
pertinent to this study has been reviewed. Since one of the paths after disaffiliation tends to be subsequent conversion into another religious group, the literature on switching behavior has also been reviewed. There is also sparse research on the subject of deconverting, but since many of the Mormon disaffiliates were originally converts to Mormonism, review of this literature will be beneficial. The review of literature has been organized by the following topics: first, disaffiliation which consists of apostasy, switching and deconverting, and second, conversion. It should be noted, however, that disaffiliation and conversion are not separate and distinct processes, and therefore, much of the literature overlaps between sections.

**Disaffiliation**

As earlier mentioned, there are two basic patterns of disaffiliation. The first is to disaffiliate because affiliation is sought in another religious organization and the second is to disaffiliate with all formal religion in general (Bahr, 1983, p. 366). Individuals, when deciding to disaffiliate from a group must take into consideration the reaction of the group since this reaction could affect their jobs, family attachments and social networks. Sandomirsky and Wilson (1990) assert that "affiliation does not consist of a single thread but many interwoven strands. Each must be broken if the individual is to disaffiliate (p. 1212).
There are three main paths that disaffiliated Mormons take: join another religious group; disaffiliate from all religion; or temporarily disengage from Mormonism. Because for many, religion is intertwined with the social structure, some Mormon people chose the first path and simply become inactive rather than formally disaffiliating. Albrecht, Cornwall, and Cunningham (1988), speaking of disengaged Mormons state that they

simply become inactive and cease their public participation in the church, though many of these retain an organizational identification with Mormonism and would, if queried, define themselves as a member of that church" (p. 63).

They further state that most members who disengage do so during their teens and young adulthood, but that most eventually return to the faith (pp. 66-67). Many converts who disaffiliate do so within the first five years after conversion and often relay that they had never fully identified with Mormonism (pp. 67 & 73). Although at some time, many Mormons will disengage from Mormonism, most do not officially sever the ties they have with the LDS Church. Albrecht and Bahr (1983) suggest the following two reasons for this: first, because of the stigma attached to apostates; and second, because of the LDS Church's claims to being the one true church thereby denying the legitimacy of any other church.

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Apostasy

To affiliate with another religion then, according to the first reason, is to publicly announce their apostasy from the Mormon Church. There is a stigma attached to apostates, especially within Utah where the majority of the population is Mormon. This declaration of apostasy can have detrimental effects on the individuals within the family, occupational and social structure in which they live. Simple inactivity saves them the detrimental stigma of being an apostate. Brinkerhoff and Mackie (1993)

propose that apostasy be conceptualized as the multidimensional process of disengagement from the two major elements of religion. One of these elements - religiosity - refers to the embracement of a set of beliefs. The other - communality - refers to the feeling of belonging. (p. 236)

Apostasy, therefore, encompasses both the rejection of previously held beliefs as well as the rejection of identification with a particular community (p. 236).

Brinkerhoff and Burke (1980) assert that "religious disaffiliation is a gradual, cumulative social process in which negative labelling many act as a 'catalyst' accelerating the journey to apostasy while giving it form and direction" (p. 52). They suggest that voicing questions or failing to comply with the expected group norms of behavior may cause this negative labelling (p. 52). This
tendency is illustrated by Spencer W. Kimball who preceded the current Mormon Prophet and Church President, Ezra Taft Benson. He (Kimball 1982) stated:

Apostasy often begins with criticism of current leaders. Apostasy usually begins with question and doubt and criticism. It is a retrograding and devolutionary process... They who garnish the sepulchers of the dead prophets begin now by stoning the living ones. They return to the pronouncements of the dead leaders and interpret them to be incompatible with present programs... the critics of Joseph Smith could see only the Savior and his apostles, and as the apostates of Brigham's day could see only the martyred Joseph, now there are those who quote only the dead leaders. (p. 462-463)

Brinkerhoff and Burke (1980) also contend that once an individual has decided to defect, the individual may purposefully behave in ways outside of the expected group norms in order to establish his or her new apostate identity (p. 50). Davis (1972) adds that the individual may join others who have been similarly labeled, allowing his new identity to be nurtured and maintained (p. 456).

Brinkerhoff and Mackie (1993) summarize four factors which influence apostasy: family socialization, university influence, beliefs, and doubts. They contend that the religious instruction of parents during socialization is
extremely important in combatting apostasy (pp. 236-237). Roozen (1980) adds that the decreasing influential power of parents over their teenage children contributes to the children's religious disaffiliation (431). Roof (1978) concluded that "(r)eligious defection is occurring primarily among the young' (p.42). Brinkerhoff and Mackie (1993) further suggest that universities provide fertile ground for defection. They suggest that the university provides options that the young person did not have previously. With an opportunity to reject religious institutions in favor of secular alternatives learned through higher education, the young person chooses apostasy over familial religious ties (p. 237). Roof (1978) concludes that the rates of defection increase as the level of education becomes higher (p. 42). Brinkerhoff and Mackie (1993) further assert that loss or change of religious belief directly affects religious apostasy. This is played out in the rejection of the church's teachings as well as breaking ties to the religious community (p. 237). They also contend that doubts are a major factor leading to apostasy (p. 237). Roozen (1980) asserts that doubts stem from either cognitive conflicts or interpersonal discord (p. 439). Brinkerhoff and Burke (1980) also note that individuals can continue to participate for a long time while entertaining doubts (p. 43).

Sandomirsky and Wilson (1990) suggest that affiliation
is intertwined with factors such as gender, age, race, and family (p. 1212). Roof (1978) states that "Males are twice more likely to defect than females" (p. 43). "A consistent finding in studies of religion", de Vaus and McAllistar (1987) assert, "is that on a wide range of measures, females tend to be more religious than males" (p. 472). One theory for this is that women's child rearing role, lower rates of work force participation, and attitudes toward work and family values are important factors to religious participation (p. 473). Why then are women switching from one religion to another with similar values? Are women's reasons for switching affiliations connected to these factors? And, are women's reasons for switching different than men's reasons? Sandomirsky and Wilson (1990) found that rates of religious mobility were similar for both men and women. However, they assert that the processes of mobility are different. They found that men's mobility is impacted most by family variables whereas women's mobility was influenced mainly by religious factors (p. 1226).

Stuart Wright (1987) presents three tactical modes of exit: the covert departure; the overt departure; and the declarative departure. Those who choose the first mode, the covert departure, do so in secret to avoid attention to their leaving. Wright suggests that their decision to

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4My personal encounters with disaffiliates suggest that women are switching for different reasons than conservative attitudes toward work and family values.
defect quietly is to avoid the possibility of the group's leaders or other members exerting influence over their decision and complicating their plans (p. 67). He asserts that because "detachment and disengagement are always difficult, covert withdrawal avoids unwelcome emotional turmoil and conflict" (p. 67). Those who choose covert defection "are more than likely responding to strong attachments and beliefs from which they are still not completely free" (p. 69). By doing so quietly, they often do not want to be reminded of the possible repercussions to leaving the faith. "Once the decision is made, the individual endeavors to keep it a secret, thereby cognitively safeguarding the plan from any attempted refutation" (p. 68).

Those who choose the overt mode of departure do so "quietly, though not secretly" (p. 69). The defector usually openly discusses his or her plans and reasons for them with the group leaders, who in return try to persuade the individual to reconsider. Wright asserts that if "a compromise or agreement cannot be reached, the individual is able to use the impasse as a further step in the legitimation sequence catapulting one toward the act of disaffiliation" (p. 70). Wright points out that

While covert defectors tend more to struggle with vague, unfocused discontents or deep emotional attachments, overt and declarative defectors are more
likely to have problems with specific policies, thus
dictating a more confrontive approach to conflict
resolution through negotiation or open vocalization of
grievances. (p. 70)
Those who choose the declarative mode of departure feel it
necessary to publicly announce their intentions of defection
and the reasons for their decision. The decision is usually
the result of several months of coming to terms with
questions and doubts that has culminated in a non-negotiable
declarative act. Wright adds that the individual "will most
likely give a brief explanation of the rationale for leave-
taking, state it emphatically and with a tone of finality,
and then depart" (p. 72).

Switching

Switching religious affiliation is a common occurrence
in American society. Newport (1979) stated that "eighty-
five percent of all Americans report Christian affiliation,
but with a dizzying array of well over 200 major,
identifiable churches, denominations and sects" (p. 528).
He concludes from this that it is reasonable to expect a
high degree of mobility amongst these 200 religious groups
(p. 528). His research found that 25 to 32 percent reported
current religious affiliation in a group different from that
in which they were raised (p. 538). Roof and McKinney
(1987) contend that the trend of religious switching has
increased and report that "at least 40 percent of American Protestants have at one time or another switched religious affiliation (p.165). Roof and Hadaway (1979) suggest that "religious 'preference' is for many Americans an indication not simply of religious faith, but of self-identification and social belonging in a complex, highly differentiated society" (p. 363).

Stark and Glock (1969) reported a trend in the fifties and early sixties of moving from the conservative to the liberal in an "upward" fashion. They suggested that Americans were discarding the conservative theological based view of the world for a more realistic view of society accommodated by the liberal denominations. In addition, these liberal denominations offered higher status during a time of expansion and mobility. Stark and Glock expected this "upward" trend of conservative to liberal to continue (pp. 183-203). Roof and Hadaway (1979) contend, however, that in the late sixties, the mainline churches were declining. They note that at the same time, the conservative churches were experiencing renewed growth. In addition, many Americans were rejecting formal religion altogether choosing to be numbered among the 'no religious preference' category (p. 365).

Roof and McKinney (1889) note that for a religious denomination to remain stable, they must attract as many new members as they lose. Growth comes when they gain and
retain more than they lose. They note that eighty percent of Mormons retain their Mormon affiliation. They also contend that "(s)tability appears to be more a reflection of communal belonging" (pp. 165-166). They note that Mormons have "strong ethnic or quasi-ethnic loyalties" (p. 166). Thus, Roof and Hadaway (1979) conclude that switching trends go beyond what Stark and Glock earlier asserted. They suggest that switching into the "none" category and switching from liberal to conservative denominations more correctly captures modern switching trends. The Mormonism to Evangelical Christian pattern is, however, outside of these larger switching trends. Here, it is not a case of altering existing worldviews or discarding them altogether, but of radically changing one’s theological and cultural worldview. Mormonism does not number among the Protestant denominations, but is a separate and distinct religious group from which many do not disaffiliate even when they become inactive.

Albrecht and Bahr (1888) proposed that a second reason for why many Mormons do not officially sever ties to the LDS Church is due to the essence of Mormon doctrine stating that it is the one true church and that all other churches are corrupt and lacking in truth. The authors state that:

Acceptance of Mormon theology typically includes a commitment to the inadequacies of the modern denominations of Christendom. Rejection of Mormon
theology or lifestyle does not necessarily change attitudes toward the legitimacy of these other denominations. (p. 377)

What, then, causes a Mormon to join a church that believes so differently from Mormonism?

Hadaway (1980) argues that, because America has no established church, people can choose between the various Protestant denominations since they are all theologically and stylistically similar (p. 451). Mormonism, however, differs greatly in doctrine and practice from Protestantism and, therefore, this theory may not explain Mormon disaffiliation. Albrecht and Bahr (1983) further state that switching religious affiliation is more for convenience than for intrinsic faith reasons (p. 367). Hadaway (1980) contends, however, that switchers should be viewed as "religious 'seekers' who, because of a strong intrinsic commitment, are seeking a church that corresponds with their beliefs. Stayers, on the other hand, are viewed as having 'inherited' the church of their parents. (p. 452)" Hadaway further relates that previous research indicates that there is little difference between switchers and stayers except that switchers tend to be more religious than stayers (p. 451). He also notes that the direction of the switch is important. For those who switch into an evangelical denomination, a "conversion experience is expected of the newcomer, so not many would want to switch into an
evangelical body unless they were willing to have, or had already had, such as experience" (p. 453).

Roof (1989) asserts that "intra-Protestant denominational switching is higher than across Catholic or Jewish boundaries" (p. 531). He suggests that much of the Protestant switching movement could be by multiple switchers. There is no way of knowing how many Mormons who diasaffiliate will disaffiliate from their new affiliations in the future. However, since Mormonism is also a distinct category from Protestantism, it would be reasonable to assume that there is less switching and, therefore, less multiple switching.

Babchuk and Whitt (1990) have suggested that many factors contribute to religious switching. They assert that it is common for people to switch religions after moving into a new neighborhood, moving up the social ladder, or to gain religious harmony with their spouse either at the time of marriage or after the birth of the first child (p. 246). Albrecht, Cornwall, and Cunningham (1988) contend that the decision to join another church was generally influenced by two factors: first, family issues such as child raising; and second, efforts of family and friends to assimilate them into another church (p. 79).

Sherkat (1991) has focused on five theories of religious switching: status, family, social network, denominational, and generational theories. First of all,
the status theory states that individuals who gain more education than their peers will switch at a higher rate. This is not very relevant to Mormon disaffiliation as Mormons tend to be highly educated. The theories on family structure are more relevant. The three hypotheses in this area are: a. those who marry outside their faith are more likely to switch, b. those who marry within their faith and raise their children in the faith will have a lower rate of switching; and c. those who come from families of mixed faiths will be more apt to switch religious preferences. Sandomirsky and Wilson (1990) also assert that "children of religiously mixed marriages will have higher apostasy rates than children of religiously homogenous marriages" (p. 1215).

Social integration is an important part of religious groups. Sherkat (1991) hypothesizes that those who often socialize with family will have lower switching rates, but those who move residence often will be more apt to switch. The denominational hypothesis states that the ethnic quality of religions and the strictness of their orientation will result in lower switching rates. Both of these apply to Mormonism as it is both a subculture and a religion with strict rules and guidelines. Lastly, the generational hypothesis suggests that religious training and adherence will result in lower switching rates (pp.172-175).

In an article entitled, "Why Protestants become
Catholics", Russell O. Berg (1959) conducted a study to determine reasons for this religious switching pattern in the 1950s. Among the predominant reasons were the divisions in Protestantism, the appeal of the beautiful cathedrals and liturgy in Catholicism, clearly defined tradition to pass on to children, the error of misrepresenting Catholicism, and the emphasis on Mary as a mother figure. Although the converts saw Protestantism as little more than "warring sects", Berg argues that "differences are a result of religious freedom. The only place where one can find unanimity is in an authoritarian structure with power to excommunicate dissenters - and we Protestants prefer freedom" (p.48). Still the convert perceived the differences as too great and preferred the uniformity of the Catholic Church. Many also indicated that they preferred the beauty and liturgy in the Catholic Church over the "bleakness" of the Protestant Churches.

Tradition was also an important factor in the converts' decision to switch. The Catholic Church has clearly defined beliefs and practices which can be taught to children. On the contrary, the Protestant churches differ greatly in style between and across denominations, and clear definitions of differences are difficult to express. These differences tend to be stylistic rather than doctrinal, but still clear and distinct traditions are not easily defined. For some when they discovered that a fact they had held
about Catholicism was misrepresented, they concluded that all non-Catholics spoke from ignorance. Reasons for not switching were then removed and conversion was the result. About one third of the converts in the study expressed the Catholic Church's emphasis on a mother figure as a main reason for switching. One woman who had lost her own mother as a child said, "I wanted the mother of our Lord to have her place in the circle of the venerated" (p. 46). Another convert states that he "felt guilty because 'I had sinned greatly by my disrespect toward the Mother of God'" (p. 46). Berg asserts that this reason for switching is more emotional than religious (p. 49).

There are some noteworthy parallels between converts to Catholicism and converts to Mormonism. First, both take the stance that they are the "One True Church" and have an authoritarian structure with the power to excommunicate. Converting and disaffiliating from either is much more significant that merely switching denominations. Rather, they represent the adopting or rejecting of a total world view and lifestyle that is unique to the "one and only, true church". Secondly, both place emphasis on a mother figure, although the emphasis is much greater in Catholicism. Within Catholicism, attention is given to Saints and in Mormonism, Joseph Smith and subsequent prophets are emphasized. The main emphasis in both churches, however, is diverted from being solely on Jesus Christ. Thirdly, both
churches emphasize the divisions among the Protestants as evidence for disunity and legitimacy in claims of having the truth.

In a sequel article, "Why Catholics become Protestants," Berg (1960) looks at reasons for this opposite switching pattern occurring during the 1950s. Among the main reasons given for their switching were spiritual dissatisfaction, perceived lack of freedom to think for themselves or to question, and perceived contradictions between Catholicism and Biblical teaching or perceived contradictions within Catholicism itself.\(^5\) Spiritual dissatisfaction raged from "mere to a spiritual 'void' and 'emptiness' or 'something lacking' in their lives (p. 71). One convert stated, "When I went to the Catholic Church I went vacant and came out empty" (p. 71). Berg reports that in describing their conversion experience many spoke of "joy, peace, happiness" (p. 78). One asserted, "I have found the peace of mind, soul and heart that so many are seeking (pp. 78-79). One third of the study "indicated that they did not feel free to think, or that if they asked questions of their superiors, they did not receive satisfactory answers" (p. 71) One convert who had asked

\(^5\)Berg's research was conducted in the 1950s and, therefore, does not describe contemporary Catholicism. Post Vatican II Catholicism has placed more emphasis on Bible reading than it had previously and efforts to democratize parish and diocese life has created more space for independent thinking and questioning (Greeley, 1990).
too many questions that the leaders could not answer was
told, "That's not for you to question" (p. 71).

Berg notes that the most frequent reason, which was
identified by seventy five percent of his respondents, was
that "some circumstance put a Bible into their hands and
inspired them to read it" (p. 24). One convert expressed
that "As time went on I found I had fewer and fewer of my
church's beliefs that I could truthfully say the Bible
taught" (p. 77). Others reported that they were influenced
by other people who encouraged them to read the Bible or
through attending protestant services where the Bible was
read (p. 76). Almost half of the respondents "noted
discrepancies between Catholicism and Biblical teachings,
contradictions or inconsistencies within Catholicism itself
... (as) reasons for their leaving the 'One True Church of
Christ'" (p. 46).

Again there are parallels to my current study of
conversion. Since Evangelical Christianity is within
Protestantism, there are similar reasons that Mormons are
becoming Evangelical Christians as for Catholics becoming
Protestants in the 1950s. According to Albrecht, Cornwall,
and Cunningham (1988) some disaffiliates disclosed that they
were uncomfortable with the emphasis on the Book of Mormon
and the lack of emphasis on the Bible. They subsequently
joined a church where the Bible was emphasized (pp. 76-77).
Some Mormons who disaffiliate feel a spiritual lack within
Mormonism which causes them to seek elsewhere for fulfillment. Many Mormons believe they are taught to follow the teachings and counsel of their leaders as right and true and not to question. This leads some who disaffiliate to perceive a restriction on their freedom to think and question. And finally many who disaffiliate perceive discrepancies within Mormonism and between Mormon teachings and the teachings of the Bible.

Thumma (1991) suggests that "accommodation of discrepant identities does not always result in an either/or decision that destroys one of the identities. Rather, identity negotiation can be construed as a process in which much of these identities remains intact" (p. 334). For the disillusioned Mormon, however, negotiating Mormon beliefs with the new found Biblical beliefs is difficult to reconcile. Because of the exclusive nature of both Mormonism and Evangelical Christianity, the Mormon must choose between them since a compromise proves difficult to negotiate.

Deconversion

Deconverting implies that there are strongly held ties to the religious organization that must first be broken before disaffiliation can be gained. It will be beneficial to look at the organizational structure of the LDS Church and the methods employed to obtain commitment and loyalty.
from its members. Subsequently, the breaking of these ties to gain autonomy from the organizational structure through a process of deconversion will be analyzed.

The LDS Church is a religious organization, and there are many theories pertaining to the structure and workings of organizations. In fact, the attention to organizational behavior has exploded in the past few decades and is now considered a discipline separate from, although still connected in many respects, to sociology. The amount of sociological literature on organizations is too broad to adequately summarize in this paper. I will, therefore only briefly review the major concepts of this literature which pertains directly to the focus of my study on disaffiliation from an organization.

In "Commitment and Social Organizations: A Study of Commitment Mechanisms in Utopian Communities," Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1968) outlines the process through which individuals become attached to the carrying out of organizationally defined behaviors. She defines three problems in social systems and outlines the system efforts in dealing with these problems. The problems and solutions as Kanter views them are:

1. Social control - the system effort is to encourage participants to form positive evaluative orientations through mortification - submission of private status to public control, and surrender - attachment of decision
making prerogative to a greater power, total involvement with a larger system of authority. This can be seen at work in the LDS Church. The Church structure contains an authority hierarchy referred to as the First Presidency. The Living Prophet and his two counsellors act as God’s voice in revelation and instruction. Authority is passed down through a leadership structure consisting of quorums of the seventies, stake presidents and bishops. The average church member receives instruction and counsel regularly through his or her bishop, periodically from the General Authorities through devotionals, books and church magazines, and often directly from the First Presidency through conference talks. They are cautioned to accept this counsel as though it were from God and not to question it.

2. Group Cohesiveness - the system effort is to encourage participants to form positive cathetic orientations. Affective ties bind members to the community through renunciation - relinquishing of any relationships potentially disruptive to group cohesion and communion - the process of becoming part of a whole, the mingling of self with group, and relinquishing separateness in order to identify with all the members of the collective whole. There are several different meetings for church members to attend and many social gatherings are organized. They are encouraged to spend their time with other members and to share and strengthen their testimonies of the church.
3. Retention of Participants - the system effort is to encourage participants to form positive cognitive orientations through sacrifice - membership becomes costly and is not easily given up - an investment - tying the person's present and potential resources to the organization, and future gain expected to be received from the present behavior. To be in good standing in the church, members are required to attend their meetings, accepting callings in the church, and pay ten percent tithing. The church in return subsidizes members education at Brigham Young University and Rick's College and financially as well as physically and emotionally helps members in need. With the time and money invested and the support system around them, members are more reluctant to leave the church.

According to Vickers (1973), another of the predominant concepts in the study of organizations which is connected to Kanter's hypothesis is that there is a fine line between loyalty and alienation (p. 92). Vickers asserts that:

Men have always depended on some group to which they were conscious of belonging and have looked out across its boundaries at other men to whom they were not so bound. This divide between those who call themselves 'us' and others who they regard as 'them' is a social reality of great importance. (p. 92)

Society is not threatened by loyalty, but by its absence. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) suggest that members become
committed to the organization because of the benefits they foresee receiving as a result of affiliation (p. 21). When the felt claims of membership become inadequate to support the interdependence from which the membership arose, and the rewards appear to be less than the cost, loyalty disappears and people are no longer willing to conform.

The goal of the organization, then, is to extract continued loyalty of its members, but at the same time keep the individual content to keep his or her focus on the organizational goal and not the individuals' independent goals. The strategy is, therefore, to develop an organizational goal that can be internalized by the individuals. Once the individual's goal becomes the same as that of the organization, it becomes easier to maintain commitment and control. People want and need to identify with the purpose of the organization. Pascarella and Frohman (1989) assert that:

When clearly stated and understood, purpose provides something even more important than direction. It releases in people the power of determination to reach that end. When individuals make a commitment to a corporate purpose and understand how they can contribute to it, they can call upon power beyond anything they may have employed before as they focus their energies, talents, and learning ability. (p. 27)

The effectiveness of this strategy is dependent upon the
attitude of the individual as well as the flexibility of the organization.

The process of socialization is a long and slow one, and it is natural that it would also be a long process to reverse. In understanding the socialization that individuals who belong to exclusive religious groups such as Mormonism are placed in, and the commitment they have invested in the Church, it is easier to understand that it is not simply a matter of religious switching, but a complex matter of deconverting from one religious group and beginning the process of conversion all over again, but most commonly with more caution and skepticism. Janet Jacobs (1989) states that in "choosing to leave the religious movement, devotees attempt to resolve their conflicts through a separation process that involves both a social and psychological exit from the group" (p. 38). She presents a model of deconversion in three stages: first, severing ties to the religious group; second, severing ties to the charismatic leader; and third, total separation from the movement and the redefinition of social reality.

In stage one, severing ties to the religious group, the Mormon begins to reject the authority structure. Rejecting the authority that controls their social relations is easier than rejecting the ultimate leaders and possibly God at this point. Jacobs contends that rejecting this mediating authority between the member and the charismatic leader "is
most frequently manifested in violating social rules and regulations" (p. 126). In this switch from complete obedience to disobedience, the Mormon is expressing dissatisfaction with an authority structure that was once accepted.

In stage two, severing the ties to the charismatic leader, the Mormon is making a total break from the Church. The first stage of disobedience and rejection of the local authority, such as the Bishop, is much easier than admitting that you don't believe in the Prophet. Often, the Mormon feels a strong sense of love and devotion to the Prophet and has a difficult time rejecting him even after rejecting the doctrine and authority of the Church. Regaining confidence in the First Presidency once it has been lost is extremely difficult, and therefore, this stage for the Mormon is crucial to his or her deconversion. Jacobs asserts that, "(f)inal separation is rarely accomplished without another source of spiritual identification" (p. 130).

Albrecht, Cornwall, and Cunningham (1980) point out that many Mormons "simply become inactive and cease their public participation in the church, though many of these retain an organizational identification with Mormonism and would, if queried, define themselves as a member of that church (p. 63). Albrecht and Bahr (1983) further contend that,

To join another denomination is to publicly reveal
one's apostasy from Mormonism, while to withdraw from Mormonism and avoid other denominational entanglements leaves one in an ambiguous, and hence less deviant, status. A second possible explanation is related to the theological position of the Mormon Church with respect to the authority and teachings of other Christian denominations... Rejection of Mormon theology or lifestyle does not necessarily change attitudes toward the legitimacy of these other denominations (p. 377).

Therefore, many Mormons stop at Jacob's stage one and simply continue their disillusionment as a inactive Mormon. For those who do complete stage two, however, conversion into another religious group is common.

In stage three, total separation from the movement and the redefinition of social reality, the Mormon begins to develop his or her new identity as an ex-Mormon and begins to define the world from outside the bounds of the Church. This can be a difficult and lonely time, and one in which the individual feels spiritually empty and vulnerable.

Jacobs contends that

(0)ther religious movements provide alternative spiritual affiliations that tend to be less authoritarian and demanding of their followers. Thus, the move toward independence and autonomy is a gradual process as the disillusioned devotee needs to satisfy
religious and spiritual goals without the sacrifice of self that characterized the former commitment. (p.131)

Although Evangelical Christianity is also exclusive in nature, it can offer a spiritual identity to the individual that is based on the authority of the Bible rather than on specific church membership, although the newly converted evangelical will still probably be dependant upon a larger community (in this case, the "born again" movement) for social confirmation of their worldview. Therefore, Evangelical Christianity can satisfy the ex-Mormon’s spiritual needs without threatening their new found autonomy from the organizational structure of the LDS Church.

When the individual acquires total separation from one movement and subsequently affiliates with another, a new identity emerges. This new identity combines both the ex-role and the new role as a member of the subsequent affiliation. This involves a complex process. Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, (1988) in her book Becoming an Ex, suggests four major stages that emerge in the process of becoming an Ex and establishing an identity as an ex. The first stage, she calls first doubts. This is when the individual first begins to question the role he or she had been taking for granted. Second is the stage of seeking and weighing role alternatives. Here variables such as anticipatory socialization and shifting reference groups come into play. Third is turning points and their functions in the role exit
process. The fourth stage focuses on what happens afterwards when the individual establishes an ex-role identity. (p. 34) Subsequently, the process of exiting a role has implications for the process of forming a new role both as an ex and as a member of a new group. The new identity will consist, in part, of all three roles.

Wright (1987) equates the final stage of disaffiliation with the "defector's acquisition of a new identity, lifestyle, and worldview" (p. 73). He suggests that the individual will feel alone and insecure if he or she does not have a support group to turn to for reaffirmation of the decision to defect (p. 76). He further suggests that the main path for social integration for the disaffiliate is through affiliation with a conservative religious group (p. 77).

Conversion

Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest that the process of conversion can be defined as "when a person gives up one such perspective or ordered view of the world for another" (p. 862). They suggest that there are two types of conversion: verbal converts and total converts. Verbal converts giving only lip service to their new found religious affiliation while total converts become fully committed (p. 864).

In the process of joining or converting to a new
religious group, there are patterns and processes similar to those when disaffiliating from a group. Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest that total conversion, consisting of both behavioral and verbal commitment, has seven "necessary and constellationally-sufficient conditions" (874). Snow and Philips (1980) summarize the model this way:

A person must (1) experience enduring and acutely-felt 'tensions', (2) within a 'religious problem solving perspective', (3) which results in self-designation as a 'religious seeker'. Additionally, the prospective convert must (4) encounter the movement or cult at a 'turning point' in life, (5) form an 'affective bond' with one or more believers, (6) 'neutralize' or sever 'extracult attachments', and (7) be exposed to 'intensive interaction' with other converts in order to become an active and dependable adherent. (p. 430)

Lofland and Stark (1985) maintain that these seven conditions include both predisposing conditions which are the first three points and, situational contingencies which are the final four points. They suggest that if the predisposing conditions are met, but the situation conditions are not, then conversion will not be completed, but if both are met then conversion will be total (p. 864).

In looking at each condition more closely we see that first of all, tension must be felt between the ideal and the actual situation. Tension alone is not a sufficient
condition for conversion, however, as there are several methods of resolving tension. Second, the problem solving perspective must include religion as an option for resolving the felt tension. There are several alternative problem solving approaches readily available, and therefore, which course of action an individual will choose is indeterminable. Third, the individual must actively choose religion as an option and define him or herself as a religious seeker. They must take action to find resolution to their tension within a religious perspective. Fourth, the individual reaches a turning point in his or her life. Lofland states that these "were situations in which old obligations and lines of action were diminished, and new involvements became desirable and possible" (p. 371).

If the three predisposing conditions were met and the individual then is confronted with a religious alternative at the turning point in his or her life, conversion becomes a real possibility. Fifth, the person must form one or more affective bonds with members of the group to begin to feel a sense of belonging. Sixth, extra cult controls must fail to interrupt the process of conversion. People who have recently relocated, do not live near their families, or do not have close contacts nearby are not affected by this condition. For others, those close to them often do not feel the relationship is close enough for them to interfere with the individual's plans for religious conversion.
Lofland suggests that "affectively, they were so 'unintegrated' " in society that they could complete the process of conversion relatively uninterrupted (p. 873). Lastly, intensive interaction with the new religious group, in addition to the previous six conditions, leads to the total conversion of the individual. (pp. 864-873)

Hexham and Poewe (1986) contend that it is typical for converts "to claim that their conversion made sense of the Bible and their life because both took on new meaning" (12). McGuire (1987) adds that "conversion transforms the way the individual perceives the rest of society and his or her personal place in it, altering one's view of the world" (pp. 63-64). She suggests three kinds of conversions that differ in degree of transformation of personal meaning systems. First, radical transformation is when the meaning system is dramatically transformed from one world view to another. Second, consolidation is where the new meaning system includes a consolidation of the previous identity. Third, reaffirmation is when the meaning system is reaffirmed. This is common among adolescents who internalize the meaning of the religion they were raised in (p. 64). I expect that those who convert to Evangelical Christianity from Mormonism will fall among all three kinds of conversions, although the converts themselves will probably explain their own experience as radical.

Since conversion tends to be a lengthy process that
often overlaps with the equally lengthy process of disaffiliation, the topics of literature reviewed and the questions emerging out of this literature cannot be viewed on their own. Instead, the stages of disaffiliation, including apostasy, switching, and deconversion, along with the stages of conversion must be viewed as segments of the entire process. We cannot fully separate apostasy from switching, switching from deconversion, or deconversion from conversion. Therefore, the questions emerging out of literature, although addressed separately, are not distinct stages within the process of changing from a Mormon to an Evangelical Christian.

Research Questions

Emerging out of the literature reviewed, I have come up with the following research questions:

1. Are Mormons disaffiliating in a process similar to the one suggested by Ebaugh? In her book Becoming an Ex, she suggests four major stages that emerge in the process of becoming an Ex and establishing an identity as an ex: first doubts; seeking and weighing role alternatives; turning points; establishing an ex-role. I expect that the process will be similar, but that there will be some exceptions common to Mormon disaffiliation. Due to the philosophy that the Mormon Church is the One True Church, I suspect that most Mormons will not begin seeking alternatives until
they have already reached their turning points. I also suspect that the development of the Ex-role will occur most often amidst the process of conversion to Evangelical Christianity and not separate from it.

2. Can Jacobs' model of deconversion be seen in Mormon disaffiliation? Jacobs presents a model of deconversion in three stages: first, severing ties to the religious group; second, severing ties to the charismatic leader; and third total separation from the movement and the redefinition of social reality. I expect to see Jacobs model confirmed by my research.

3. Are Mormons exiting within the three modes suggested by Wright? Stuart Wright presents three tactical modes of exit: first, the covert departure; second, the overt departure; and third, the declarative departure. I expect that due to the commitment required of converts to Evangelical Christianity, the Declarative mode will be the most common among Mormon disaffiliates. However, because of strong familial and social ties within Mormon communities, some will be covert and overt. Still others will begin as covert or overt, but as the convert gains a stronger identity as an Evangelical Christian, a declarative stand will be taken.

4. Do Sherkat's theories of religious switching hold true for the pattern of Mormon to Evangelical Christian? Sherkat (1991) has focused on five theories of religious
switching: status, family, social network, denominational, and generational theories. I believe that my study will both confirm and refute part of his theories. I expect the status hypothesis to be of little consequence, but the family hypothesis to be clearly supported. The other three will be both relevant in part, as Mormonism has a strong social and cultural environment as well as a strong educational system.

5. Are Mormons becoming Evangelicals for similar reasons that Berg concluded Catholics were becoming Protestants in the 1950s? Berg (1960) looks at reasons for this opposite switching pattern. Among the main reasons given for their switching were spiritual dissatisfaction, perceived lack of freedom to think for themselves or to question, and perceived contradictions between Catholicism and Biblical teaching or perceived contradictions within Catholicism itself. I expect the reasons to be similar.

6. Are Mormons converting to Evangelical Christianity in a similar process to the Lofland-Stark conversion model? Snow and Philips (1980) summarize the model this way:

A person must (1) experience enduring and acutely-felt 'tensions', (2) within a 'religious problem solving perspective', (3) which results in self-designation as a 'religious seeker'. Additionally, the prospective convert must (4) encounter the movement or cult at a 'turning point' in life, (5) form an 'affective bond'
with one or more believers, (6) 'neutralize' or sever 'extracult attachments', and (7) be exposed to 'intensive interaction' with other converts in order to become an active and dependable adherent. (p. 430)

I expect that the conversion process will be present, however, the initial stages will blend into the disaffiliation process. I do not expect that the final point will be as intensive for those converting to Evangelical Christianity since it does not represent one particular denomination. It is, however, a necessary stage in the process of total conversion, and will be supported by my research.

7. Are the processes of religious switching different for women than for men as Sandomirsky and Wilson assert? Sandomirsky and Wilson suggest that affiliation is intertwined with factors such as gender, age, race, and family (p. 1212). They also found that rates of religious mobility were similar for men and women. However, they assert that the processes of mobility are different. They found that men's mobility is impacted most by family variables whereas women's mobility was influenced mainly by religious factors (p. 1226). Due to the nature of the sect to sect switch, I expect that gender differences will be minimized and that both sexes will be switching for similar intrinsic religious reasons. I expect that the issues for both men and women will revolve around religious concerns
rather than family concerns. I also expect to find more similarity in the processes of both disaffiliation and conversion than Sandomirsky and Wilson claim. However, I expect that men will tend to be more aggressive in their actions surrounding disaffiliation because of the subordinated role of women in Mormonism. Because of this, I expect women to voice more concern over issues of both freedom and religious mobility than men.

8. How adequate is a synthesized model in explaining the process of disaffiliation and conversion? Combining some of the processes suggested by the research, I propose the following synthesized model:

A person must experience (1) acute tensions felt within a religious perspective (Lofland and Stark) (2) resulting in first doubts (Ebaugh) (3) which cause them to seek and weight role alternatives (Ebaugh/ Lofland and Stark) (4) coming to a turning point where they (Ebaugh/ Lofland and Stark) (5) sever ties to the religious group and the religious leader (Jacobs) (6) and form affective bonds with the new group resulting in (Lofland and Stark) (7) total separation from the movement, severing extracult attachments (Jacobs/ Lofland and Stark) (8) resulting in the formation of an ex role identity, (Ebaugh) (9) the redefinition of society (Jacobs) (10) and intensive interaction with the new affiliation (Lofland and Stark).
9. Are there different 'types' of switchers from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity?

By researching Mormon disaffiliation and subsequent conversion to Evangelical Christianity, I will be able to determine whether different patterns of switching occur.
CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

My research design was divided into three parts. First I collected several published and unpublished documented testimonies of individuals fitting this same description of disaffiliation and conversion for the purpose of content analysis. Second, I surveyed 76 individuals who had disaffiliated with the LDS Church and were now affiliated with an Evangelical Christian denomination. And third, I conducted indepth interviews with 20 individuals, who were selected out of the seventy-six surveyed, to gain further insight into their disaffiliation and conversion process. (see Appendix C for the Questionnaire and Interview Guide).

Content Analysis

Using content analysis, I have examined and identified the processes of disaffiliation and conversion found in written testimonies of ex-Mormons turned Evangelical Christians. The sample of documented testimonies was found by convenience: through contacts with former Mormons who referred me to the testimonies; through contact with Christian ministries to Mormons; and through local Christian bookstores. The testimonies are in the form of letters, booklets, books, chapters within books, and one audio tape.
The sample consists of 22 testimonies of which 13 are men and nine are women. Included in these are five couples who all exited Mormonism. The sample ranges in ages from young to middle aged adults and includes both converts and those born into the Mormon Church. The individuals are from several states, however, the majority are from the west. The testimonies provided me with valuable information on both the reasons for disaffiliation and subsequent conversion and the process involved. There were, however, many gaps in the information provided and so I used this to my advantage by addressing the gaps in my questionnaire and interview design.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by 76 individuals from the United States and Canada who fit this special category of disaffiliation and conversion. These individuals have been found through personal contact as well as a snowball referral process. As I came into contact with these individuals, they expressed willingness to participate in this study and referred others who were also willing to participate. Thus from my initial contact with a few individuals who fit this special category of disaffiliation and conversion, my sample grew to include 76 individuals, 41 of whom are women and 35 are men.
Interviews

From these 76 individuals, I selected a purposive sample of 20 for in-depth interviews to probe beneath the surface for the deeper meanings behind their decisions. Of these 20, 12 are women and eight are men. The interviewees were chosen on the basis of characteristics which provided variety to the sample. These characteristics included age, location, whether or not they were converted to the LDS Church, whether other family members are LDS or not, and gender.

The Study Population Defined

Including all three research methods, my sample consists of 98 individuals, 50 of which are women and 48 are men. I have complete or partial testimonies of 42 individuals, including both married and single. The sampling strategy was designed to maximize observable variance in the causes, correlates, and consequences of this particular form of switching. It is important to note that although this purposive sampling strategy allows for the initial formulation of theory, it does not allow for generalization. However, while trade-offs are inherent in my methodological design, the demands of theory development weigh in favor of the purposive sampling to be utilized in this study.

By using a questionnaire, content analysis and in-depth
interviews, I have utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Although the sample is purposively selected, the data gathered and analyzed from the questionnaire provides valuable information on the nature of switching. Qualitative methods allow explanation beyond the observable and enable us to uncover and understand what lies beneath the surface. I used the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin 1990) which aims to develop a theory with the data gathered. Interviewing based on the grounded theory not only allows for better understanding of phenomena but seeks to build a theory based on this deeper understanding.

Although I am familiar with both sects and already had some inclinations of what I would discover, I remained open to the possibility that the interview results may or may not support the theories. The in-depth interviews were conducted in private, comfortable settings and I used broad categories of questions with probes to seek the deeper meanings of the respondents' replies. Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest that data fits within eleven analytic units arranged from the micro to macro in terms of duration and human population. These units begin with meanings, extending into practices, episodes, encounters, roles, relationships, groups, organizations, settlements, social world, and lifestyles (pp. 71-92). The broad categorical questions and probes in the in-depth interviews allow for
analysis on a variety of these levels with the ultimate purpose being to describe the process of disaffiliation and subsequent conversion from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity. (The questionnaire and interview guide are in Appendix C.)

In analyzing the documented testimonies and interviews, I looked for patterns and themes relating to the processes of disaffiliation - apostasy, switching, deconversion - and conversion that emerged. Furthermore, these same themes and patterns were evident within the qualitative sections of the questionnaires. Therefore, applying these emerging themes and patterns, I was able to address each of the seven research questions to determine whether or not the data fit the existing theories. To distinguish between the voices of the respondents from the questionnaire, the in-depth interview, and the documented testimonies, as well as to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants, the following system will be used: general responses from the questionnaires will be referred to as "respondents"; responses from the interviews will be addressed by a first name (which has been changed to ensure confidentiality); and the responses from the documented testimonies will be referred to by the full name of the respondent since they are currently circulating as documented or published testimonies.
Limitations to the Design

Although value-free sociology is the ideal, it is also unrealistic as our own biases inevitably enter into our research. My background in Evangelical Christianity can potentially cause bias in the research process and conclusions about my research findings. However, it can also enhance my understanding of the underlying meanings behind the terminology familiar only to Evangelical Christians. Bias can also enhance research as a researcher can sometimes only discover underlying meanings when respondents believe they can trust the researcher and will be understood correctly. My access to many of these respondents was gained only because I am familiar with and understand Evangelical Christianity. Additionally, many respondents trusted me because they know I also understand the LDS religion as I have lived in Utah and attended BYU for three years.

I left the interviews unstructured with only broad questions and supporting probes. The broad questions on disaffiliation and conversion allowed the respondent to begin his or her story their own way and the probes enabled me to capture the important parts of their disaffiliation and conversion processes. By conducting the interviews in this manner, I allowed the respondents to speak for themselves and did not force my own possibilities for responses on them.
Another potential limitation is the nature of rehearsed testimonies as opposed to actual happenings. In her study of Moonies, Eileen Barker (1984) remarked that some of the interviewees in her sample gave a "polished" version of their testimony intended to convince others to convert (p.18). Although the documented testimonies contained this rehearsed element in them, my purpose was not to convince anyone that their reasons for disaffiliating and converting are correct, but instead, to analyze the processes involved. Therefore this has not caused a major problem as I drew the processes out of the documented testimonies rather than simply stating their content.

Additionally, some of those interviewed in this study had a polished quality in parts of their conversion story. Therefore, I began the interviews with background information to put them at ease before beginning their disaffiliation and conversion stories. Also, most had not rehearsed a long version of their story and the polished quality soon disappeared. Furthermore, because I was not a Mormon that they hoped to deconvert, but was an Evangelical Christian that they did not need to convert, the individuals could be more relaxed and spontaneous with their stories. Their stories, however, contained the language of an Evangelical. Although they did not need to convert me, they used "witnessing' language common between Evangelicals that is meant to affirm their decisions. Again, I concentrated
on the processes that emerged from their testimonies rather than solely on the content of their reasons for leaving Mormonism and becoming an Evangelical Christian. Therefore, where I could have potentially been biased, I have purposely analyzed the underlying processes and not merely related the Evangelical "witnessing".

Therefore, although some of my background could have potentially caused bias, I used this bias to the advantage of the research. I have used my Evangelical Christian background and my knowledge of Mormonism to determine the meanings of testimonies and relate the processes of disaffiliation and conversion in terms that those outside of the two religious sects can understand. My background has enabled me to gain access to the sample, now I will allow the people to speak for themselves.
Chapter III

Presentation of the Data

Since the research methods consisted of quantitative and qualitative designs, I have separated the findings into two sections. First, I will address the findings from the quantitative data giving information on characteristics of the questionnaire sample as well as characteristics of those chosen for in-depth interviews. Second, I will discuss the findings from the content analysis and the in-depth interviews. In this section, I will discuss each of the research questions separately using data from the qualitative parts of the questionnaire along with the documented testimonies and in-depth interview results. Finally, I will discuss other issues that emerged out of my research and the limitations to the study.

Quantitative Findings

The purpose of the questionnaire was to survey a large enough sample for which some generalizations could be made. Additionally, it served to identify individuals of varying characteristics for the purpose of the in-depth interviews. To begin, I will discuss the broad characteristics of the questionnaire sample and then continue to note the characteristics by which the individuals were chosen for
interviews. Based on the literature reviewed and the documented testimonies, characteristics potentially related to disaffiliation and conversion were used in choosing the interviewees. Issues of religiosity, family, education, location, and age were used in determining who would be chosen as part of the interviewee sample.

Questionnaire Sample

As earlier mentioned, the sample consisted of 76 individuals, of which 41 are women and 35 are men. Table 1 shows that of the 76, 15 had never been married, eight were single following divorce or widowhood, 47 were married for the first time, and six were in a second or subsequent marriage. It is important to note, however, that these statistics represent present situations and not necessarily the situation at time of disaffiliation. A generalization, therefore, cannot be made concerning the impact of marital status on religious disaffiliation. Also, among those surveyed were eight couples where husband and wife had both exited Mormonism.

Of the 76 respondents in the sample, 21 had a least a high school education, 26 had some college or trade school, 24 completed college, and five had completed advanced degrees. Twenty-seven reported that all of their family was still LDS, 32 stated that some of their family was, and 17 reported that none of their family was LDS any longer or
never had been. Many reported that they had raised children in the LDS Church and that their children are still LDS while other reported that some or all of their children had also subsequently left. Furthermore, five reported that their disaffiliation had resulted in divorce although admitted that their disaffiliation was not the only reason for the marriage breakup. Ten also reported that their spouse is still LDS.

Table 1

| Education and Family Characteristics of the Sample |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                | M | F | Total |
| Completed High School          | 6 | 15 | 21 |
| Some College or Trade School   | 12 | 14 | 26 |
| Completed College              | 12 | 12 | 24 |
| Completed Graduate Degree      | 5 | - | 5 |
| Single, never married          | 11 | 4 | 15 |
| Married, first time            | 20 | 27 | 47 |
| Single following Divorce       | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Remarried                      | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| LDS Convert                    | 7 | 12 | 19 |
| Raised in Utah                 | 18 | 23 | 41 |
| Family LDS                     | 25 | 34 | 59 |

(Total n = 76)
Nineteen were converts to Mormonism and 57 were raised in the LDS Church. Because the majority of my respondents were found through personal contact here in Utah, it makes sense that most would be from Mormon backgrounds. Further emphasizing this is the fact that 41 were born and raised in Utah, 22 were raised in the Western United States, seven in the eastern USA, two in Canada, and four in another parts of the world. Thus, although the majority of the respondents were raised in LDS homes in Utah, there is some variance to the sample, allowing for some comparison.

The ages of respondents ranged from 18 to 74 with a mean age of 42. The average age at time of Mormon disaffiliation was 29 with a standard deviation of 11.5, and the average age at conversion to Evangelical Christianity was 32 with a standard deviation of 13.5, suggesting that there was a gap between disaffiliation and conversion for some respondents. Noting the range and standard deviation, it appears that there is wide variation among the respondents, and therefore, generalizations cannot be made.

Looking at Table 2, we see that the ages of most of the respondents now are between 18 and 60, with 17 males and 21 females between 31 and 45 and 11 males and 11 females between 46 and 60. However, most respondents, 21 males and 20 females, disaffiliated between the ages of 18 and 30. Additionally, 20 males and 22 females indicated that they converted to Evangelical Christianity between the ages of 18
and thirty. This suggests that the young adult and college years, when children have moved away from the home, are the most common ages for disaffiliation from Mormonism. Moreover, this is also the most common age range when most marry and begin raising families. Thus, suggesting that a significant reason for conversion during this age range is to add the religion dimension to the family.

Table 2

Age Distribution of the Sample

| Mean age of respondent now | Range 18 - 74 |
| Mean age of respondent at disaffiliation | 29 |
| Standard Deviation | 11.5 |
| Mean age of respondent at conversion | 32 |
| Standard Deviation | 13.5 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Grouping</th>
<th>Age Now</th>
<th>Age at Disaffiliation</th>
<th>Age at Conversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 76
n = 67*

* Nine respondents disaffiliated before age 18, three converted to Evangelical Christianity before age 18, and four did not state their age of conversion.

In the area of religiosity, Table 3 shows that 25 reported having held a temple recommend and 13 admitted to having been married in the temple. Additionally 45 stated
that they had officially had their names removed from the LDS Church rolls, while 30 reported that they had not done so. Some added a note to this question stating that they were currently in the process of having their name removed from the rolls. They average time between disaffiliation and removing their name from the rolls was just under two and a half years with a range of 0 to 32 years and a standard deviation of 22 years. In comparison the average time from their conversion to Christianity and having their name removed was just over two and a half years, also with a range of 0 to 32 years and a standard deviation of 14.5 years. This suggests that subsequent conversion may not always affect formal disaffiliation.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church and Religiosity Characteristics of the Sample (n = 76)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raised LDS</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Church School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Participation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held Temple Recommend</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple Marriage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Removed from Roles</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held Callings</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held Leadership Callings</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 21 respondents did not specify type of calling held and 11 reported that they held a non leadership calling.
The average time lapse between disaffiliation from Mormonism and conversion to Evangelical Christianity was two and a half years with a range of no time gap to 32 years, and a standard deviation of 20.5 years. This suggests that for some, both processes were combined, but for others, disaffiliation and conversion were two separate processes. Many respondents made a note next to this question stating that their initial disaffiliation was to inactivity and the process was finalized at the time of conversion to Evangelical Christianity.

Questions regarding the individual attendance at an LDS Church sponsored school and their completing an LDS mission and the affect of these on their disaffiliation were also asked. Table 4 shows those who attended a Church sponsored school. Row 1 shows that of the 15 who attended BYU, seven state that it affected their decision to disaffiliate and eight state that it did not. Row 2 shows that neither of the two who attended Ricks College related that it affected their decision to leave the LDS Church. Due to the small number of cases in these categories, the findings are inconclusive. Table 5 shows that of the 13 who went on a mission, seven report that it affected their decision to disaffiliate, while five report that it did not affect their decision and one reports that their mission partly affected their decision. Again the numbers are too small to be conclusive.
Table 4

Effect of Attending a Church Sponsored School on Disaffiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Affected Disaffiliation</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended BYU</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Ricks College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Seventeen of 76 sample respondents attended a church sponsored school.

Table 5

Effect of Mission Participation on Decision to Disaffiliate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission Participation Affected Disaffiliation</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Partly</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Thirteen of 76 sample respondents went on an LDS mission. Participation

Whether or not the respondents had knowledge of the scriptures was also asked. Whether they had read all, part or none of the LDS four standard works is reported. Table 6 shows the outcome of this reporting. Rows one and two shows
that it did not make a difference on their decision whether they read all or none of the four books of scripture. Again, there does not appear to be sufficient evidence to determine this as a major cause in the respondents decisions to disaffiliate.

Table 6

Distribution of Scriptures read by Disaffiliates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scriptures Read By Disaffiliates</th>
<th>Bible</th>
<th>Book of Mormon</th>
<th>D&amp;C</th>
<th>P of GP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to statistical questions, the questionnaires provided the respondents with room to qualitatively describe their disaffiliation and conversion experience as well as their feelings now regarding both the LDS Church and Evangelical Christianity. The responses, though brief, supported the processes and feelings related by those who participated in the in-depth interview. In relating the reasons for choosing to disaffiliate from the Mormon Church, both Ebaugh and Jacobs models’ were supported. The reasons given for switching closely paralleled those discovered by Berg in his study of the Catholic to Protestant switching pattern. The other
theories were supported in part by the findings, although some distinct differences require mention.\textsuperscript{6}

**Interview Sample**

**Table 7**

**Education and Family Characteristics of the Interviewees**

\(n = 20\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College or Trade School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed College</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Graduate Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, first time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single following Divorce</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarried</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDS Convert</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised in Utah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family LDS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The individuals who participated in the in-depth

\textsuperscript{6}For clearer organization, the findings from the qualitative parts of the questionnaire, as they pertain to the research questions, will be discussed with the in-depth interview and content analysis findings.
interviews were selected for various reasons. These included availability, gender, age, marital status, and the content of the qualitative questions on their conversion and disaffiliation. Additionally, the interviewees were chosen on a variety of characteristics in order to provide comparisons. Of the 20, 12 were women and eight were men. Table 7 shows the education and family characteristics of the interview sample. Six were raised in Utah, one in Canada, two in England, one in Holland, and ten in other parts of the United States. Nine were converts to the LDS Church and 13 stated that all or part of their family is still LDS. Five were single, three were divorced, ten were married, and two were remarried following a divorce. Four men and four women completed college and one male completed an advanced degree.

Table 8 shows the religiosity of the interview sample. Fourteen held temple recommends and seven indicated that they were married in the temple. Additionally, 11 stated that they had their names officially removed from the LDS Church roles. Eleven were raised Mormon, six went on an LDS mission and seven attended a Church sponsored school. Eighteen indicated that they held callings in the LDS Church and 13 of those reported that these callings were in leadership positions. This indicates that many were actively involved in the LDS Church and that their reasons for disaffiliation were not for lack of integration. The
differences between the men and women are minimal indicating that gender is not a major determinant of disaffiliation.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raised LDS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Church School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Participation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held Temple Recommend</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple Marriage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Removed from Roles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held Callings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held Leadership Callings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Findings

Looking first at the process of disaffiliation and comparing the findings of this study to the process suggested by Ebaugh, there are several things to note. Because the study is looking at people who left one sect and subsequently joined another, there is frequently not a clear process of disaffiliation which is complete before the new conversion process begins. Therefore, it is important to realize that the stages of disaffiliation often overlap with

63
the stages of conversion.

1. Are Mormons disaffiliating in a process similar to the one suggested by Ebaugh?

The first stage suggested by Ebaugh (1988) is first doubts which is when the individual first begins to question the role they had taken for granted. Ebaugh asserts that there are several factors which can cause the individual to begin doubting and to reevaluate the costs and benefits of staying or leaving. She summarizes these as organizational changes, burnout, changes in relationships, and events. (pp. 44, 84) Ebaugh suggests that sharing doubts with others who give back positive or negative reactions to the doubts and the doubter are also important in this first stage as these significant others can slow or hurry the process. She asserts that although "the decision to exit is a very personal one, it is inevitably made in a social context and is highly influenced by the reaction of other people" (p. 75). Newman and Pargament (1990) further suggest that dispositional and situational factors influence the individuals problem solving techniques. They assert that the more intrinsic religiously-oriented individuals find harmony with their religious beliefs and the doubts facing them, whereas extrinsic religiously-oriented individuals have more difficulty maintaining harmony (p.
Many Mormons are, therefore, able to resolve the problems presented by these first doubts and continue to remain faithful members of the LDS Church.

Some Mormons, however, are unable to resolve the perceived problems and all of the respondents in the current study expressed a time of first doubts and related the issues that caused them to question the LDS Church. In each of the personal testimonies, the individuals also expressed a time of first doubting. Many stated that it was realizing that they couldn't become perfect and live up to the standards required of them. They viewed themselves as failures and felt far away from God. One woman related,

I immersed myself in the LDS Church trying to attain closeness to God and inner peace. I became disillusioned and felt I must not be 'chosen' by God for these special gifts.

Dan, who was a born again Christian when he converted to Mormonism thinking he was "getting Christianity plus" admitted,

I began to feel an uncomfortable distance from my relationship with God as I became more dependent upon my works (ordinances), priesthood, and church membership to justify me before God.

Although they felt this distance from God, this in itself was not sufficient cause to disaffiliate. The first doubts usually began when the individual was faced with information
which contradicted what they had been taught in the LDS Church. According to Ebaugh's categorization of first doubts, most Mormons in the study began doubting at the event of discovery of information although some of this information is connected to past organizational changes in the LDS Church.

For many, the doubts began when they studied LDS Church doctrine and history. Sometimes out of genuine interest to grow stronger in their faith and sometimes to refute the claims of non-Mormon friends. Many related that it was during times of Bible reading that they began to find contradictions and inconsistencies with Mormon doctrine. But some went to their bishops or friends with these questions. One man stated,

I began asking various priesthood holders the questions I was trying to answer. They gave me almost no help. I then began reading all of the LDS Scriptures and some other LDS books by General Authorities. Contradictions were found in all of these which left me confused. I was taught that LDS prophets and scripture clarified the 'unclear' message of the Bible, but I found the opposite was true!

For others, discovery of contradictory information caused them to begin searching in order to prove the information.

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7Of course many Mormons who encounter contradictory information are able to resolve the conflict to their satisfaction, and therefore, remain members of the LDS Church.
wrong. Jerald Tanner wanted to prove David Whitmer wrong after reading *An Address to all Believers*, but this only caused confirmation and a hunger for more indepth study of doctrinal contradictions. Again, Dick Baer came across a book entitled, *Mormon Spies, Hughes & the CIA* by Gerald and Sandra Tanner. From there he went on to read *Mormonism, Shadow or Reality?*, also by the Tanners and discovered doctrinal problems. Baer (1979) asserted that, "I wanted to find the answer and set the Tanners straight" and he sought help from church historians whose help dealt with the issues but did not answer the questions (pp. 1-3).

Others questioned their own ability to become gods and wondered how a god who was so great could ever have been a man. Thelma Geer remembers wondering as a child how the Mormon 'god' in his physical body could be in the bridal chambers begetting myriads of 'spirit babies' and yet be aware of the prayers of a little Mormon lass far away on earth" (Scott, 1990, p. 57).

Einar Anderson (1973) also struggled with his own inadequacies to become a god and longed "for a god that was greater than any man" (p. 13). Again Jim Spencer (1984) could not accept a god that was once a man, but put this conflict on a shelf for many years (pp. 52-53). Kevin Bond questioned the burning of the bosom as a confirmation of the church and when he had the same burning in a protestant...
church meeting determined that there must be another standard of truth. After this he began to study the Mormon scriptures and found all but the Bible lacking (Scott, 1990, p. 66).

Sometimes this information was brought to them in the form of questions by Evangelical Christian friends or co-workers. Cindy Bauer’s Evangelical Christian co-worker asked her this question one night, "Does the Book of Mormon teach the fullness of the gospel?". After answering affirmatively, he asked her to look up the 'Fullness of the Gospel' in Bruce R. McConkie’s, Mormon Doctrine. Looking it up, she discovered that it said, "The Book of Mormon does not contain the fullness of the gospel". (Scott, 1990, p. 40) Following this Cindy saw conflicts in other areas, one being that the name of the LDS Church had been changed three times and at one time did not have Jesus Christ in the title. Another problem that confused her was when she discovered the contents of the temple ceremony. She called a friend to confirm that what she had read was true and he informed her of the "bittersweet 'inside joke' that Mormons ask someone who has just gone through the temple for the first time: 'Do you still have your testimony?’" (p. 41).

Others experienced these first doubts when they went through the temple or during their mission. Tom related, I think, ironically enough, the spiritual experience you are to have as a male Mormon is a
mission, and that's when I started doubting some things.

Another young man stated that he was blackballed from social activities because I left early from an LDS mission . . . they wouldn't answer my questions about the temple. I knew something was seriously wrong.

Many related that the temple experience was "bizarre".

After her temple experience Diana asserted that she felt "I'm probably the one to blame. It's probably my fault, if I was good enough, I'd understand". Dan stated that, when we were in there, it was empty . . . I tried to find something in it worthwhile, and the only thing I found of value was my effort. 8

After her first time in the temple, Nancy wondered, "what does this have to do with Jesus Christ? Nothing. It did not have anything to do with Christ".

After the initial doubting, many became seekers. They began a search for truth that, like Kevin Bond, led them to rely more on the Bible and the person of Christ than on the Mormon Church and its exclusive scriptures. Most did not want to find the LDS Church lacking, but were compelled to seek answers to their questions. Many, like Jim however,

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8It is important to note that, although some of the respondents in this study indicate their experience in the temple as problematic, most Mormons who have had the temple experience remain active members of the LDS Church and view the temple experience as positive.
put their questions on a shelf for several years before seeking answers. For some, the alternatives were the LDS Church or nothing. One young man related that, after several years of studying off and on, and denying what I was finding and fighting it all the way ... I couldn't deny the evidence I was finding and I stopped going to church. I still considered myself a Mormon. . If the one true church is false, all religions are false.

Troy related that the issues that caused him to begin seeking alternatives,
came from two things. It was finding out that Joseph Smith's prophetic status had been dismantled and that the Book of Mormon was not historical, neither was the Book of Abraham. Those are the two solid pillars upon which I reject the whole system. Those books are either historical or they are not.

Troy believes his convictions were confirmed when the book, *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* was recently published. Anthony Hutchinson (1993) asserts,

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints should confess in faith that the Book of Mormon is the word of God but also abandon claims that it is a historical record of the ancient peoples of America. (p. 1)

Troy agrees with Hutchinson that the Book of Mormon is a
work of the nineteenth century, but dismisses it as scripture. Troy contends that it must be all that it claims to be or nothing. Just as Troy found satisfactory answers to his questions, so the other seekers began to find answers to theirs. Once answers began to appear, however, they were faced with weighing the costs of leaving the Church and seeking alternatives.

As Ebaugh suggested, significant others aided this process along, or in some cases delayed it. Some described how a member of their family or a close friend became an Evangelical Christian and then started to share with them. Cathy admitted that her sister became a born again Christian and started witnessing to her. Miranda related that an Evangelical Christian friend questioned her about Mormonism one day. She expressed,

for the first time in my life I had been challenged. That was the first time ever. Here I am eighteen years old and I can't answer a word to defend what I believe and base my entire life on.

It then took her ten months of searching before she even considered leaving the LDS Church. When Jim Spencer (1984) came to the conclusion that he should leave the LDS Church, his wife exclaimed:

I told you if you ever left the Church, we were through! I married a Mormon elder. My little girl's father is a Mormon elder. If you are not a Mormon
elder, you are not my husband - or Erin's father!

(p.120)

Jim was forced to choose between his marriage and his conscience. When Randy Steele made the decision to leave the Church, his wife was outraged and the result was a separation. Although for many, the decision was delayed because of potential loss of their family, in each case the process was aided by the presence of Evangelical friends and contacts. Jim Spencer's wife Margaretta and Kevin Bond's wife Michelle soon followed their husbands decisions to leave the LDS Church. Jac and LeAnn Redford's Evangelical Christian hairdresser encouraged them to study the Bible and meet other Christians. John Farkas' wife and her Christian friends were praying for him, as was Shelia Garrigus' husband and friends. Sandra and Conrad Sundholm look back on the prayers and witness of Sandra's Evangelical Christian sister as significant in their exit.

For each of the doubting Mormons, their doubts and seeking for answers became intertwined with the alternative option of turning to Evangelical Christianity. Although significant others aided or hindered the embracing of this alternative role, each person indicated a turning point in their life which enabled them to seek alternatives outside of the Mormon Church. It was only then that they were able to make the final decision to exit Mormonism and enter a new role within Evangelical Christianity. For each, this
turning point centered around "accepting Jesus as their personal savior".⁹ (See Appendix D for lists of language usage specific to Mormons and Evangelical Christians).

Cindy Bauer relates that shortly after accepting Jesus as her personal savior, a Mormon church leader approached her and said,

Cindy, I know that the Mormon church is true, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet. But I do not know the Savior like you do" (Scott, 1990, p. 43).

For Cindy, this was the turning point and she realized that, the Holy Spirit let me see that I couldn’t take the Jesus I was following into the Mormon church. It just wouldn’t work. The Jesus I was talking about was not the same as ‘the Savior’ the elder spoke of. (p. 43).

When Albert Place shared Mormonism with his army buddy who was an Evangelical Christian, his friend simply asked, "What about Jesus Christ and His salvation?" This confused Albert since he understood that Christ had only made it possible

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⁹For the Evangelical Christian, the "born again" experience is equated to "accepting Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior". It is usually done in a prayer confessing one’s sin and accepting Jesus’ death on the cross as payment for the forgiveness of sin and in exchange receiving a happy and peaceful life now and the assurance of going to heaven after you die. The Evangelical Christian experiences this as involving more than intellectual acceptance of doctrine. For Evangelicals, it is the willingness to turn every aspect of their life over to the direction and guidance of Jesus Christ. They experience it as the heart attitude to give their sinfulness, including their pride, over to God.
for him to work out his own salvation (ed. Adair, 1964, p. 10). This question bothered him until he was impacted at a Bible conference. He stated,

the speaker taught from the books of Romans and Galatians. For the first time in my life, I realized that salvation comes through faith in Christ’s perfect work, not in my own works regardless of how good they are. Further Bible study led me to fully trust Christ as my Savior and Lord. (p. 10).¹⁰ Likewise, the turning point in Jim Spencer’s (1984) life came when he finally "turned his life over to Jesus". He did what "the radio evangelist tell you - ‘give your heart to Jesus’ " (p. 110). Shelia Garrigus saw that her entire spiritual focus was on God the Father, to the exclusion in worship and prayer of Jesus Christ. She began to wonder about her relationship with Jesus. Jim’s (her husband) only comment to her during this time of great turmoil was a gentle one: ‘You know about him, but you do not know him’. (Scott, 1990, p. 53) Shortly after this comment from her husband, she prayed to Jesus, "if you are indeed standing, knocking at the door of my heart, then right now, I’m opening that door. You are welcome to come in" (p. 53) .

¹⁰Of course many Mormons do not have a religious world view which produces conflict with Scripture reading and conversations with Evangelical Christians. Since this would not be problematic for them, they do not become exiters.
After doubting, Diana became inactive and bitter, but one Easter Sunday, on a whim dressed the children and attended a Baptist church. That morning, she relates, "I accepted the Lord". Cathy went forward during an alter call at a Christian concert. She thought,

It won’t change my life at all . . . I slowly started to get my thoughts together on what was true and what wasn’t. I felt like a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders . . . all the time, I couldn’t believe I was actually going to leave the Church. Another young man went to a Christmas eve service at a Presbyterian Church where he was "converted to Christ".

The creating of the ex role was, for each, intertwined in the creation of a new role as a born again Christian. For some the process was a lengthy one as they were reluctant to let go of their identity as a Mormon. As their new identity of an Evangelical Christian emerged, they found it impossible to maintain both roles and finalized their exit from the LDS Church. After accepting Jesus at a Christian concert, Cathy began to alternate between the LDS Church and an Evangelical Christian one. Eventually she had to make a choice, "people kept saying that I couldn’t sit on the fence, that I had to make a decision". At first Jim Spencer (1984) tried to continue in the LDS Church to avoid a divorce, but when confronted by his wife who insisted he be true to the Church, he asserted, "I don’t have any
choice. I have decided to follow Jesus and I can’t go back" (p. 122). After critically evaluating and leaving Mormonism, Jerald and Sandra Tanner continued for two years to believe

the Book of Mormon to be a second witness for Christ. It was not until they turned the same critical attention to the Book of Mormon that they had given to other Mormon teachings that they realized that it too, was false (Scott, 1990, p. 78).

Thus, through a process that began with doubts of all varieties, each individual came to a decision to disaffiliate from the LDS Church and become an Ex.

2. Can Jacobs’ model of deconversion be seen in Mormon disaffiliation?

For many, Jacobs (1989) stage one, severing ties to the religious organization, was easy because they had already become inactive. For these people the transition out of Mormonism was quicker and smoother, although many still experienced strong ties to their families and the Mormon culture. Tom stated,

I went through a stage where I just decided that I didn’t want to be active anymore, but I didn’t want to leave the Church either. I remember stating one time to somebody that 'I would never leave the Mormon
Church, but I don’t want to be active in it either’. For others, severing ties was more painful. Miranda asserted, 

I am the type of person who if I know something is true, I go for it whole heartedly. So, I couldn’t stay in it, but my fear was so strong because of what I was going to deal with that it took me a year and a half to even tell my parents.

Kevin Bond related:

My father took it hardest of all—he treated it like a divorce in the family. Our lines of communication have always remained open, but at first they were very narrow and diplomatic. (p.97)

After visiting family members, Sandra Tanner admitted that she would often come home in tears . . . it was a heartbreaking time as far as my family was concerned. Every encounter put pressure on me to conform, to come back to the fold. (pp. 97-98)

Victor remarked that "there are too many ties. Even if they know it is false, they can’t bring themselves to leave it".

Jacobs’ stage two, severing ties to the charismatic leader, was difficult for most. They had been raised to think of their Prophet as God’s spokesman. If they rejected him, they could possibly be rejecting God. Miranda remembers,
I was just very conditioned to believe that the Mormon Church was true, that Joseph Smith was a true prophet.

Likewise Teresa asserts,

I was totally convinced that the Mormon Church was true, and that nothing else could possibly be true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

One young man stated,

Once I could no longer have faith in Joseph Smith, I went through a process of rooting out all the improper feelings and allegiances to Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church and began to make my heart single to God. It was a hard road, because I loved the Church so much.

When Sandra Sundholm was confronted with the fact that Joseph F. Smith's book *Doctrines of Salvation* quoted Joseph Smith Jr. teaching that 'the blood of Jesus does not cover all sins' she was devastated and stated,

If Joseph Smith said this, then I have believed in a man that is not of God. If that is what the church teaches, then I want nothing to do with it.

Many had, in spite of the results of their personal study, the nagging question in the back of their minds, "What if it is true?". Eventually, however, their new found convictions prevailed over the beliefs they had once taken for
Stage three in Jacobs’ deconversion model is total separation from the movement and redefinition of social reality. This is both the forming of the ex role identity as well as for some the initial formation of the new role of an Evangelical Christian. Some redefined social reality from the position of an ex-Mormon or, more commonly, an inactive Mormon. Others defined themselves in terms of their new association with Evangelical Christianity, although most continued to view themselves as an ex-Mormon as well. Dan suggested that once a person reaches stage three there are two options. He relates his own feelings, I was faced with either trying to go ahead and uphold the convictions I had . . . possibly losing my family as a result of it, or just settling back, keeping my mouth shut, being a hypocrite, but enjoying what I could from the organization, the society and being uncomfortable with it . . . I have known many people since then that have done just that. For me though, I just could not. For many, this was a difficult choice because in Utah, Mormonism is not just one of many religions, it is a culture, a way of life. To separate completely from

\[11\]

This was the resolve of the perceived problems for those in this study. Obviously, many Mormons find alternate methods of resolve and continued to be active members of the LDS Church.
Mormonism is to separate from local society. Dan states, We don't live in a neighborhood, we live in a ward . . . We have been living for thirteen years now, pretty much ignored by most of these folks. Of all the people that were at my excommunication trial, the seventeen men that were there professing their undying and eternal love for me and their continued support, I have only heard from one of them since then. That was only on the briefest of occasions. It seems like they want nothing to do with you unless you come to them on their terms. It's been cold, in other words.

Cathy asserts that "I was afraid I'd lose all my friends, which I did". It appears to be easier to become inactive and retain a place within the social network, than to risk losing it.

3. Are Mormons exiting within the three modes suggested by Wright?

As expected, all three modes of exit suggested by Wright (1987) can be seen in the sample. For those outside of Utah, or away from Mormon family, the declarative mode was often chosen. Many respondents admitted that they openly attended Bible studies and other churches. For the inactives, this was an easy stand to make because most ties with the Church were already broken. Others, like Miranda,
were afraid of the reactions of family members. It took her
a year and a half to tell them she had left. Troy admits
that he doesn’t let his parents know what he thinks or
believes because it is easier that way. For Troy, his exit
began as declarative but due to the tensions it caused, it
ended up covert.

Since almost half of the respondents answered that they
had not had their name removed from the roles of the LDS
Church, I suspect several of them chose either the covert or
overt modes. For some, it was easier to be declarative when
family wasn’t around but changed to covert to avoid family
confrontations. Many led what may be termed as ‘double
lives’, associating with Evangelical Christians as an Ex-
Mormon until they went home and became Mormons. That is,
they were often inactive, but still Mormons in the eyes of
their families and wards.

4. Do Sherkat’s theories of religious switching hold true
for the pattern of Mormon to Evangelical Christian?

This study provides examples of both correspondences to
and exceptions from Sherkat’s (1991) theories of religious
switching. The status theory, as expected has no bearing on
the Mormon to Evangelical Christian switching pattern.
Specifically, although the cases include several different
levels of education, none of the individuals indicated this
as a problem. With regards to education affecting decisions to leave Mormonism, Cindy Bauer states that there, "are too many Mormon doctors and lawyers and state officials who are Mormons" (Scott, 1990, p. 110).

With regards to Sherkat's three hypotheses on family structure, there are cases in this study of Mormons exiting in all three situations. First, Sherkat proposes that those who marry outside their faith are more likely to switch. This is confirmed with the cases of Shelia Garrigus, Thelma Geer, Dave Wilkins, and Einar Anderson. However, when looked at in reverse, the theory would suggest that the spouses would convert to Mormonism. Cathy's husband converted to Mormonism shortly before their marriage, but soon disaffiliated independent of Cathy. He never affiliated with Evangelical Christianity, however. Second, Sherkat suggests that those who marry within their faith and raise their children in the faith will have a lower rate of switching. Jac and Leann Redford, Kevin and Michelle Bond, Jim and Margaretta Spencer, and Dan and Nancy all married as Mormons and raised their children within the Mormon faith, but their cases indicate exceptions to Sherkat's hypothesis. Third, Sherkat asserts that those who come from families of mixed faiths will be more apt to switch religious preferences. Latayne Scott and a few of the questionnaire respondents support this hypothesis, but Sandra and Jerald Tanner, Cindy Bauer, Kevin and Michelle Bond, Einar
Anderson, Nancy, Miranda, Troy, and Tom, among others illustrate exceptions to this theory.

Although many respondents from the questionnaire fit into all three categories, because the sample was not random and the sample size of this study is too small, we cannot generalize the findings. Next, Sherkat states that those who socialize with family will have lower switching rates. Again correspondence and exceptions to this theory are illustrated by the case studies. Cindy Bauer, Latayne Scott, the Spencers, Miranda, Troy, and Cathy were surrounded by Mormon friends and family, however, Leann and Jac Redford, Deborah, and Teresa had moved away from their families and Albert Place was in the army.

Sherkat's denomination hypothesis states that the ethnic quality of religions and the strictness of their orientation will result in lower switching rates. For LDS Church members, Mormonism is more than just a religion, it engulfs a whole way of life. Their strict moral and health codes separate them and their sense of community, and attachment to early Mormonism gives them a culture all their own. This is especially true for lifelong Mormons and those living in the Mormon dominated areas of Utah and Idaho. The cases, however, include those from within and outside of Mormon territory as well as converts and those who grew up with the rich cultural heritage of Mormonism. Therefore, exceptions to Sherkat's hypothesis are again identified.
Lastly, Sherkat states the generational hypothesis suggesting that religious training and adherence will result in lower switching rates. Cindy Bauer taught seminary, Jim Spencer attended Ricks College and taught Gospel Doctrine, Latayne Scott, Dave Wilkins, Teresa, Dan, and Marie all attended BYU, but all left the LDS Church, therefore, illustrating exceptions to Sherkat's hypothesis.

5. Are Mormons becoming Evangelical for similar reasons that Berg concluded Catholics were becoming Protestants in the 1950's?

As earlier stated, some relayed that they felt a distance from God which relates to Berg's (1960) finding on spiritual dissatisfaction. For example, Deborah stated that when she read, "the scripture about 'my yoke is easy and my burden is light' I used to think that something is wrong here, because let me tell you, Mormonism is a burden". One young man asserted, "They required that I live up to standards that I knew I couldn't keep, to be perfect, when all I saw was imperfect people claiming to be perfect". Berg also notes that in relating their conversion experiences, many used words like, "joy, peace, and happiness". Similar words and phrases were found in the present study. One woman exclaimed, "the peace of Jesus Christ is undeniable". Another asserts, "I feel free and
have a deep sense of peace inside". Many expressed being "thankful" and equated Christianity with it being their "life". A young man relates, "Having Jesus only as my authority is the source of this happiness, life, and freedom".\textsuperscript{12}

In comparison, when asked for their feelings now regarding the LDS Church, Many professed sorrow, compassion, and love for the people, but at the same time anger against the organizational system. One woman stated, "I feel sad for the lost sheep of the LDS Church". Cathy asserts, I look back and wonder how I could have lived like that. I really feel sorry for the LDS people because they can’t be themselves and they don’t really have joy.

Diana admits, "for months I was angry, now I’m just numb".

Next Berg found that perceived lack of freedom to think for themselves or to question was a major factor in Catholics switching to Protestant. Similarly, this emerged as a factor in Mormons switching to Evangelical Christianity.\textsuperscript{13} A young man related, we were told not to question authority, or seek out answers to our questions if we had any. If a

\textsuperscript{12}Individuals converting to Mormonism may very well use similar language to make sense of their religious switching.

\textsuperscript{13}Perceived lack of freedom can be an issue in any religious group. Naturally, disaffiliating individuals will focus on the limitations of the group they are unhappy with.
Church were the true Church of God, there would be nothing to hide and no question unanswered even if it is a question we don't like the answer to.

Cathy also related that she was discouraged at the way we had been told to believe blindly - to rely on our testimonies and 'that burning in the bosom' no matter what we might hear, read, or see. 14

She stated that this was, for her, a major issue.

Berg's third reason was the perceived contradictions between Catholicism and the Bible. Again, there are parallels in the present study. Many of the respondents said, "I read the Bible", or "I attended a Bible Study". One woman relayed that she "discovered that the foundation of the Mormon Church was not the Bible, but the teachings of Joseph Smith". One man stated that he "learned through study and prayer that the doctrines of the Mormon Church are out of order with those taught in the Bible". Another man asserted, "while I did not find consistency in the LDS books, I did find it in the Bible".

6. Are Ex-Mormons converting to Evangelical Christianity in a similar process to the Lofland-Stark conversion model?

14It is important to note, that although this was the experience of Cathy and a few other disaffiliated Mormons, it is not official LDS teaching and is not the experience of all Mormons.
Since the process of exiting Mormonism was so closely linked to their conversion of Evangelical Christianity, the steps in the Lofland and Stark (1965) model of conversion are not exclusive only to the conversion process but are seen as part of the exit as well. The Lofland Stark model, therefore, better fits the reality of switching than of the ex Mormons subsequent conversion to Evangelical Christianity.

The first three steps can be seen as part of the exit process with step four, the turning point, as the transition between exiting Mormonism and entering Evangelical Christianity. Steps five to seven are securing the individuals new role and identity as an Evangelical Christian.\textsuperscript{15} We have previously discussed the individuals experience of tensions caused by doubts about Mormonism created by perceived historical and doctrinal problems as well as perceived conflicting Biblical doctrines. This resulted in the subjects study and search for truth bringing them to the turning point of a personal experience with Jesus Christ.

Continuing on to step five of the Lofland Stark model, we see the forming of affective bonds with one or more believers of Evangelical Christianity. Many respondents mentioned that a friend or family member invited them to

\textsuperscript{15}See pages 34 - 37 of the Literature Review for a detailed discussion of Lofland and Stark's seven step conversion model.
church or a Christian event, such as the concert Cathy attended. Many of these bonds were formed before or during one of the earlier stages but contact with evangelical Christians intensified after the individuals turning point. For most, this happened when they stopped attending the LDS Church and began regularly attending Christian Churches and Bible studies. LeAnn Redford (1989) relates that after visiting a couple of 'Christian in name only' churches, our friend and hairdresser Sandie Cormaci invited us to this Church (Evangelical Free). . . we came for our first visit and recognized immediately that this was God's place for us (p. 7).

Dave and LaNell Wilkins decided to join the Church of Christ and "be baptized, and about twenty members of the congregation came to the church building that evening to witness a show of support and love and fellowship that the young couple never forgot" (Scott, 1990, p. 34).

Because those who leave the LDS Church are regarded as apostates, and the individuals made their decisions to exit knowing this, step six of the Lofland Stark model, neutralizing or severing extracult attachments was the natural next step. For some, contact with LDS family members or home teachers continued, but this did not affect their new identity as Evangelical Christians. For Albert Place, continued contact with family members had the opposite effect,
In witnessing to Mormons, I . . . return to the subject of Christ again and again. The Lord taught me this while winning my father, mother, brother and sister to Christ within a year after my conversion" (ed. Adair, 1964, p. 11).

Likewise Sandra and Conrad Sundholm had one son on a mission and another ready to leave, but all of their children have now become Evangelical Christians. For others, this step was more difficult and so, like Troy, they have not openly admitted to their friends and family that they are no longer LDS.

The last step in the Lofland and Stark model states that new converts need to be exposed to "intensive interaction with other converts in order to become an active and dependable adherent (p. 430). Because their point of turning involved "accepting Jesus as their personal Savior" and their conversion to Evangelical Christianity was not to any particular denomination, this final step culminated in differing ways. Evangelical Christianity is centered on the new believer’s "born again experience" and manifested in their "personal walk with God" not in the adherence to membership in one church. Many respondents answered simply "Christian" to the question on current church affiliation. During his searching, John Parkas relates that,

I visited many different churches and found the messages of Jesus that they proclaimed to be
exactly the same. This was quite different from what I had been taught as a Mormon. (Utah Missions, 1993, p. 3)

One young man stated,

Evangelical Christianity is, in my opinion, the only Church, whether it be Evangelical Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, or non denominational.

Latayne Scott (1990) expressed it this way,

I believe that anyone who seriously studies the examples of conversions in the Book of Acts will conclude that baptism is part of the believer’s conversion, and is inextricably bound together with commitment to Jesus Christ. (p. 126-127)

Shelia Garrigus asserts that,

when asked, I say that I am a Christian. Jim and I have spoken and taught in churches of almost every denomination. I have no problem with denominations. I see what other believers have in common and that is so much more important than our differences. What it comes down to is that we are all sinners saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and that is what matters . . . . as long as we focus on the cross and Jesus, we are one. (p. 125)

And Randy Steele states, "I don’t believe that only one denomination is right. There are others I know, who worship
the Lord as Savior" (p. 124). Regardless of the church they attend, the converts are being surrounded by those who believe, like them, that true Christianity is wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ and not an organizational structure.

The interaction with others, therefore, was centered around the "born again experience" and their activity and dependability as an Evangelical Christian was gauged by their involvement in whatever local church they affiliated with. Since denominations differ stylistically, the social involvement also differed. However, their interaction with their local church provided them with the experiences and language that enabled them to comfortably identify themselves with the broader Evangelical community as a "born again" Christian.

7. Are the processes of religious switching different for women than for men as Sandomirsky and Wilson assert?

With respect to the issues raised by Sandomirsky and Wilson (1990), one of the interesting findings of this thesis with respect to gender differences was the more readily available documented testimonies of men who had left the LDS Church compared to the few testimonies of women available. Six of the nine womens' testimonies were found in one book and the other three were testimonies written
jointly with their husbands. My experience of contact with former Mormons has been a more equal distribution of men and women, but men's testimonies are easier to find than women's. However, more women returned questionnaires than men in this study. Nevertheless since the sample was obtained by the snowball method, it is difficult to attach significance to this finding. Most Evangelical ministries to Mormons are also headed by men who have left the Mormon Church.

As far as the process of disaffiliation and conversion, there is relatively little difference between the experience of the men and women in the study. All came to a personal decision after studying and weighing the alternatives. In some cases the woman followed the husband or a male friend as in the cases of Margaretta Spencer, Sandra Sundholm, Latayne Scott, Michelle Bond, Cindy Bauer, Nancy, and Miranda. However, it was Thelma Geer, Leann Redford, and Deborah who led their husbands in "accepting Christ" and becoming Evangelical Christians. Still others, such as Diana and Victor exited Mormonism individually and independent of other Christians. As expected, there was more similarity in the process of disaffiliation than Sandomirsky and Wilson assert. Iannaccone (1990) asserts that a sect must maintain a balance between "accommodation and resistance". He asserts that the Mormon Church responded to the socially changing gender roles with the
appropriate amount of balance (pp. 1246-1247). Both men and women in the study included both doctrinal and historical problems as well as spiritual distance from God as part of their doubts about Mormonism. Similarly, issues of freedom were cited by both men and women. Therefore, the current study does not support the theory that men are switching more because of doctrinal issues and women are switching because of lack of religious freedom and mobility.

8. How adequate is the synthesized model in explaining the process of disaffiliation and conversion? The proposed model is:

A person must experience (1) acute tensions felt within a religious perspective (Loftland and Stark) (2) resulting in first doubts (Ebaugh) (3) which cause them to seek and weight role alternatives (Ebaugh/Loftland and Stark) (4) coming to a turning point where they (Ebaugh/Loftland and Stark) (5) sever ties to the religious group and the religious leader (Jacobs) (6) and form affective bonds with the new group resulting in (Loftland and Stark) (7) total separation from the movement, severing extracult attachments (Jacobs/Loftland and Stark) (8) resulting in the formation of an ex role identity, (Ebaugh) (9) the redefinition of society (Jacobs) (10) and intensive interaction with the new affiliation (Loftland and Stark).
As with each of the separate models, the disaffiliation and conversion experience could be captured only in part by the synthesized model. There was such diversity and complexity among the sample that inevitably some of this is lost when all of the unique cases are condensed into a single model. The synthesized model did, however, accurately encompass a broad description of the disaffiliation and conversion experience of the subjects. Because I had only partial information on the questionnaire sample and the documented testimonies, I have attempted only to compare the synthesized model with the interview case studies.

Looking at Table 9, we see that the synthesized model accurately described all cases for all points except for five, seven, and ten. Only 65% had severed ties to the religious group and religious leader. For some, it was a simple matter of not removing their name from the roles of the LDS Church. For others, however, severing ties could potentially involve severing family and community relationships and, therefore, formal ties were maintained. For example, Caroline admitted that she has not formally had her name removed from the LDS Church roles due to child custody reasons. Her ex-husband is still an active Mormon and she fears losing her daughter.

Looking at stage seven, we see that only ten percent achieved total separation from the movement and severed
extracult ties. This is mainly a function of family and community. Living within the culture of Utah hinders total separation from Mormonism even if desired. The Evangelical Christian community in Utah is also too small to encompass total life experience. Family and work ties also make total separation difficult to obtain. Tom related that he was afraid, at first, to have his name removed from the roles. He owns his own business and was afraid that formal disaffiliation in such a predominantly Mormon community would hurt business. Noel indicated that he has not yet

Table 9

Adequacy of Synthesized Model
of Disaffiliation and Conversion
(n=20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>% of Respondents who Fit Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Acute tensions felt</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 First doubts</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Seek and weight role alternatives</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Turning point in life</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sever ties to religious leader and group</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Form affective bonds with new group</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Total separation from the movement</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Ex-role identity</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Redefinition of society</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Intensive interaction with new affiliation</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

95
formally disaffiliated. His wife is active LDS and to keep peace, they just don’t discuss religion.

Stage ten achieved 80% positive response. Most of the respondents indicated that the central factor in their lives was their new found relationship to Jesus and their involvement in an Evangelical Christian Church. A few of the respondents, however, although considering themselves part of the larger "born again movement", did not indicate strong involvement in a local church community. This lack of involvement allowed them to wander in and out of Mormonism as well as in and out of several different Evangelical denominations.

Troy and Elaine each illustrate individuals with less than intensive interaction in their new affiliations. Troy admitted that he has not been in regular church attendance recently. He related that "being non-Mormon in Utah is tough. I don’t have a car and there are no buses on Sundays so I often don’t have a way to get to church". Elaine also admitted that she was not a regular church attender. She found it difficult to get involved in Evangelical Christianity while her husband was an inactive Mormon. Furthermore, her teenage daughter was not interested in going to just one church. Although she still considers herself an Evangelical Christian, she and her daughter often visit different churches and religious meetings rather than committing to one denomination. It should be noted that for
both Troy and Elaine, the barriers to intensive involvement were structural factors not unique to the Mormon - Evangelical Christian transition. We may conclude that while it appears that the synthesized model was generally accurate, each individual account of disaffiliation and conversion is different and this uniqueness is somewhat lost by condensing stories into homogeneous stages.

9. Are there different 'types' of switchers from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity?

Since much is lost by condensing individual cases into homogeneous stages, a brief look at some differences among the switchers will be useful. Some of the respondents were active Mormons when they disaffiliated and some were not. Many had a strong Mormon identity, but some would have claimed less validity here. Additionally, although all of the respondents expressed a time of first doubts, these doubts were drastically different in experience. Therefore, I have extracted the different types of switchers from the research and have categorized them according to the source of their doubts. Although this does not capture the full uniqueness of the sample stories, it does provide an essence of the variety present in their disaffiliation stories.

In analyzing types of switchers, the sample survey of 76 individuals was used. Because I had only partial
information from the documented testimonies, I have excluded them in this analysis. Of the 76 respondents, many indicated more than one source for their doubt or, sometimes, did not clearly indicate the major source of their doubt. Therefore, I categorized them according to the source of doubt that was most predominant in their story.

Looking at Table 10, we see that there is a difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Mormon Identity (n=46)</th>
<th>Low Mormon Identity (n=30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactivity Period Prior To</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Conversion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Doubt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Alienation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Contradictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between Bible and Mormon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachings</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion creating distance</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from God</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to Meet Standards</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Perfection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encountered Life Crisis</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the pattern of switching between those with high Mormon identity and those with low Mormon identity. Those with low Mormon identity are twice as likely to engage in a period of inactivity than those with high Mormon identity (70% vs 35%). Additionally, the sources of doubt differed for those with high and low Mormon identity. We see that 11% of those with high Mormon identity indicated social alienation as a source as opposed to 7% with low Mormon identity. Perhaps this is because those with low Mormon identity were more likely to experience a period of inactivity, and had already removed themselves from the Mormon community. Social alienation, therefore, would not affect them to the same degree as those with high Mormon identity and the associated higher level of activity. For example, when one young man returned home early from an LDS mission, he experienced social alienation and as a result, he and his family left Mormonism.

Perceived contradictions between the Bible and Mormon teachings as a source of doubt was also higher for those with high Mormon identity (65% vs 50%). Although this source of doubt was high for both groups, it is, perhaps, more relevant to those whose identity and activity level is higher because their lives are more centered around the LDS Church.

The remaining sources of doubt were almost all twice as significant for those with low Mormon identity than those
with high Mormon identity. Many expressed their time of first doubts around issues of distance from God (20% vs 13%), inability to meet standards of the LDS Church (10% vs 4%), and encountering a life crisis (13% vs 7%). All of these sources could possibly have added to the time of inactivity before converting to Evangelical Christianity. For example, one woman encountered a life crisis when she was excommunicated on what she claimed was a false charge of adultery. She was re-instated 18 years later after the initial finding was deemed inaccurate, but by that time did not want to affiliate with the LDS Church. Another woman's life crisis occurred when she was going through a divorce. When her husband had a "born again experience", she relates that he became a "changed man" and she followed him in the decision to convert to Evangelical Christianity. One young man related that after "accepting Jesus as his personal Savior" he found a closeness to God that he had been missing. Although inactive, he stated, "I didn't know I'd be leaving the LDS Church", however, he soon became involved in an Evangelical Christian Church. A young woman stated that she became "scared by all the rules" and felt she could not meet the standards. She became inactive before joining Evangelical Christianity.
**Other Issues**

It is important to note that a significant issue emerged that was not part of the initial research questions. The issue relates to the fear that many Mormons have concerning disaffiliation from the LDS Church and how this fear affects their actions. Because this issue was not of consideration during the forming of the study design, generalizations would be inappropriate before further research is conducted. It does, however, deserve discussion at the present time.¹⁶

The fear can be classified into two categories. First, fear of leaving the organization and second, fear of family pressures. Iannaccone (1988) asserts that the nature of exclusive religious groups requires that adherents closely follow sect norms. He suggests that apostasy results when the individual cannot or will not adhere to those norms (p. S257). Richardson, van der Lans, and Derks (1986) assert that individuals wishing to leave groups that have strong organizational and familial ties have much difficulty in doing so because of the intensive bonds. They contend that the "group can bring subtle (and perhaps not so subtle) pressures on such a person to discourage thoughts of leaving, thus prolonging the process of disaffiliation" (p. 

¹⁶It is important to note that many disaffiliates have relatively little trouble disengaging themselves from Mormonism and readjusting into their new social role. However, some do experience this fear and tension and it is for those few that this discussion is directed.
104). Ebaugh (1988) suggests that role residue often remains long after the individual disaffiliates and assumes a new role (p. 173). She states that when an individual exits his or her role, it is a time "of extreme anxiety and creates a sense of normlessness, it is quite common for people to seek therapeutic help at this stage of the process" (p. 209).

The predominant idea that Mormonism is the only true church is taught to Mormons from infancy and works to bind them together. Their distinct temple ceremonies, rituals for baptisms for the dead, and the wearing of temple garments serves to bond them into a homogeneous circle. Choosing to disaffiliate can be emotionally and economically devastating and is often perceived to be a display of hurt or rejection. When Deborah met with the Bishop to request disaffiliation, "They kept asking, 'Who hurt you? Who offended you who is in the church here?'" Deborah also expressed that

I had a nagging fear in the back of my mind, because they told you that if you leave the church you would get cast into outer darkness forever with the devil. Even though it wasn’t a logical fear, it was an emotional fear.

Victor stated, "I knew . . . every little thing that I did that I knew was a screw up was just one more mark that I wasn’t making it. When you know that is the standard every
day is a failure, so it’s too painful to live".

In relating his own difficulties in leaving Mormonism, Troy admitted that he was rebaptized into the LDS Church because of the pressure his family put on him. He states, It is tough coming out of Mormon Church. Dr. Martin knows better than anybody. In his book he describes the absolute bondage. There is nothing worse except when an orthodox Jewish child becomes a Christian and the parents hold a funeral.

Teresa asserts,

when you grow up in the church and you stand up when you are three years old in testimony meeting and you say, 'I love my mommy and daddy and I know the church is true'. It’s like love of your family and the Mormon Church being true are the same emotion . . . It’s like, I can’t leave the church because I love my family.

Teresa admits that she had made the decision to leave twice before but because of the pressure she stayed in the Church. Finally she came to a point of ultimate decision and relates that her family was "devastated . . . It wasn’t how could I leave the Mormon Church, but how could I do that to them, don’t I love them?". Miranda relates that her friends, "mocked" her and "were really rude", but the hardest for her was her mothers reaction:

Mom had gone through psychotherapy because she was so depressed (about Miranda’s disaffiliation).
She said it was the first time in her entire life that she considered suicide.

As stated earlier, it took Miranda a year and a half to tell her parents she had left the Mormon Church.

Kyle relates that "my mother got so upset, she called the cops and had me kicked out of the house. I slept outside on the grass for a while". He later tried to kill himself. A young woman asserted,

I experienced near suicidal depression . . . I was pretty much desperate six years after my disaffiliation with my church, and having heard that Mormonism was all there was I figured nothing mattered - that there was nothing.

Another woman relates, "I wanted my life to end; I prayed to be dead by the age of thirty five". After being rebaptized into the LDS Church, Troy also tried to kill himself. He asserts,

My parents were happy that I rejoined the Mormon Church. It was one big gigantic psychological sigh of relief, because it was tension . . . Right now they don’t know where I’m at . . . It’s not easy to leave the Mormon Church when you are so enmeshed in it like I am.

Susan Rothbaum (1988) contends that how the individuals handle the leavetaking transition depends on many factors, including
their temperament, reasons for joining, group experiences, manner of departure, and available outside support. (p. 207)

She also asserts that "'leavetakers' fears are fed by the mutability and intensity of the emotions that accompany the transition period". The fear is real, the pressures are intense, and the individual often wonders "whether they will be able to endure a lifetime of what appears to be inner chaos" (pp. 213-214).
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Limitations to the Study

Due to the purposive sampling method, broad generalization is limited. Although I am looking at disaffiliation, I have not looked at all reasons for disaffiliation nor do I look at all types of religious disaffiliation, and therefore, I am not able to generalize as to why disaffiliation from Mormonism occurs in general. In addition, I focused mostly on the United States, and cannot, therefore, generalize about reasons for disaffiliation worldwide. The study, however, still contributes valuable information in the area of religious exits and entrances. I am able to make more conclusive statements about the nature of switching from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity in the American setting.\(^{17}\)

Additionally, I can make some important contributions to the understanding of the processes involved in disaffiliating from Mormonism and subsequently converting to Evangelical Christianity. However, these processes were not isolated, but often overlapped. Although each stage of the switching process could not be analyzed independently,

\(^{17}\)Limitations due to personal bias have been previously addressed in the methods section.
valuable information was still extracted from the entire process of disaffiliation and conversion. There are also limitations imposed on the research by beginning with existing theories rather than allowing an independent theory to emerge. The existing theories are beneficial, however, and by applying the findings of this research to those theories, further understanding of the theories was made possible.

**Summary and Conclusions**

As expected, this study both supported and refuted theories of disaffiliation and conversion presented by Ebaugh, Jacobs, Berg, Stuart, Stark and Lofland, and Sherkat. Not only does this study provide valuable insight into the deeper meaning behind disaffiliation and conversion, it also enhances the understanding of the importance of religious affiliation in people's lives, and sheds some light on gender differences in this form of switching.

As anticipated, the Mormons in this study supported Ebaugh's theory of Becoming an Ex. They began with first doubts over organizational changes and experiences which were intensified with events. Their seeking and weighing role alternatives were combined with the turning points in their lives when they were faced with making a choice between Mormonism and Evangelical Christianity. Ebaugh's
stage four, the Ex-role, encompassed Jacobs three stages of deconversion. Former members first severed ties to the religious group, many by simply becoming inactive Mormons, which served as a temporary role alternative to being an active Mormon. Next, they severed ties to charismatic leaders, which was a painful step for many. And finally they gained total separation from the movement and developed their ex-role identity in conjunction with their redefinition of social reality.

All three of Wright’s modes of exit - covert, overt, and declarative - can been seen in this study. However, many shifted between modes depending on the intensity of the family and cultural pressure around them. The difficulty and potential loss that many Mormons fear will come with their disaffiliation is often greater than they are willing to accept.

As expected, the study both supported and refuted Sherkat’s theories. Additionally, the study paralleled Berg’s study of "Why Catholics Become Protestant". Since there are many parallels between Catholicism and Mormonism on the one hand, while Evangelical Christianity is within the broad spectrum of Protestantism on the other hand, the close correspondence between Berg’s analysis and the findings of this study were expected.

I found the Lofland-Stark model of conversion to be accurate and closely linked to Ebaugh’s theory of
disaffiliation. Because Evangelical Christianity encompasses several different denominations, the nature of intensive interaction centered around the individuals identity as a "born again" Christian rather than adherence to any particular group. Sandomirsky's assertion that the processes of conversion are different for men and women was not supported by this research.

As with each of the separate models, the disaffiliation and conversion experience could be captured only in part by the synthesized model. There was such diversity and complexity among the sample that inevitably some of this is lost when all of the unique cases are condensed into a single model. The synthesized model did, however, accurately encompass a broad description of the disaffiliation and conversion experience of the subjects.

Additionally, it is important to note that by fitting the data into existing theories, much of the uniqueness and diversity is lost. For example, there were differences among the types of switchers and among the sources of their first doubts. Some of the respondents had high Mormon identity and some had low Mormon identity. Some switched after a time of inactivity and others went directly from active Mormon into active Evangelical Christianity. Although the main source of doubt noted was perceived contradictions between the Bible and Mormon teachings, other sources of doubt included religion created distance from
God, social alienation, inability to meet standards of perfection, and experiencing a life crisis. Because so much of the individual's uniqueness is lost due to the nature of testing existing theories, further research into the different profiles of switchers and on how their identity is formed and changed through the process of disaffiliation and conversion would prove valuable.

Although something is always lost when individuals stories are condensed into homogeneous stages, clearer understanding of the processes involved can be gained by the existence of such stages. The synthesized model gave us a clearer picture of the whole process of disaffiliation from Mormonism and subsequent conversion to Evangelical Christianity. Rather than trying to understand each part separately, the synthesized model gave us a broad understanding of the whole. Although the uniqueness of each individuals story is lost by the model, a clearer understanding of their story in the broader context of life is gained.

Furthermore, the synthesized model, although limited, was more effective than any of the separate models because it allowed us to see the process as a whole. Rather than seeing the process in several disconnected stages, it provided a broader perspective. Not only can we see the steps the individual took in the process of disaffiliation, as Ebaugh's model focused on, and the steps of deconversion
as Jacob's model suggested, but we can see how the individual moved from there into their new found conversion as the Lofland and Stark model presented.

One of the most significant findings of this study was the way in which fear and pressure impacted the lives and decisions of some of the disaffiliating Mormons. Further study into the underlying effects of this fear is of utmost importance to the study of religious disaffiliation and conversion. Another related and equally important finding was the negative response received from some individuals who were contacted as potential participants. Some were afraid to participate for fear that their families would find out about their disaffiliation. Others were suspicious of the purpose of the study and accused me of being a "spy for the LDS Church". Several people sent back blank surveys with a note explaining that they wanted no part of a BYU study and stated that they were suspicious of my motives. Some asserted that they believed the LDS Church wanted to use this information to hurt them and one potential respondent threatened to sue me. From these negative responses, I conclude that the fear and pressure exerted on them as Mormons has not dissipated with their disaffection. Further research into the rational behind these fears and how these individuals ultimately deal, or do not deal, with this fear and paranoia is needed.

Thus we find that although the Mormon to Evangelical
switching pattern can in part, be fit into existing theories, there are also unique aspects to this switching pattern. Several factors are involved in disaffiliating from the LDS Church that are not necessarily present when disaffiliating or switching from mainline Protestantism or Catholicism. Mormonism is not simply a religious affiliation. In addition to an established social identity, it encompasses all aspects of life and has a distinct worldview. Mormonism can be considered a distinct ethnic group as well as a distinct religion. Disaffiliation, therefore, involves a complex process of deconversion before a new affiliation can be fully adopted. To switch from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity is to completely disengage from one exclusive worldview and completely engage in another equally exclusive worldview. The most striking factor in process of adopting the new identity is the "born again" experience of "accepting Jesus as their personal savior". It is this experience that is central to the Evangelical Christian's identity. Although this experience may be present in some other switching patterns, it is essential to the Evangelical Christian's conversion process.

Converting to a new religion is no longer, as it was historically, a larger community decision made by kings and emperors, but is a deeply personal issue. However, Mormonism, especially in Utah, still retains the community identity that is no longer prevalent in the larger American
society. Leaving Mormonism in Utah, where Mormonism envelops the culture is similar to leaving Catholicism in post reformation Spain or Italy. Although switching religious affiliation has become a common occurrence in America today, it does not normally incur the cultural change that a disaffiliating Mormon encounters. Mormonism, should, therefore, be viewed as a distinct ethnic culture as well as a distinct religious sect.

Although some have theorized that religion is declining in influence in today's society, others adhere to the theory that religion for many, still is and will continue to be a dominant feature in society (Finke & Stark, 1993). As a dominant structure within society, religion will continue to significantly impact the lives of many directly and indirectly through family relations and social networks. To gain a deeper understanding of the importance of religion within society is to gain a deeper understanding of society as a whole.
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Appendix A

The LDS 13 Articles of Faith

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophesy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophesy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

8. We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [the American continent]; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.
12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul -- We believe in all things, we hope in all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

(Joseph Smith, Articles of Faith)
Appendix B

Apostles Creed

We believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Nicene Creed

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; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy universal Christian 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.
THE FOLLOWING IS A SURVEY DESIGNED TO GAIN INSIGHT ON DISAFFILIATION FROM THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS (LDS) OR (MORMONS) AND CONVERSION TO EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY (THE BORN AGAIN MOVEMENT). THIS SURVEY IS BEING CONDUCTED AS PART OF A THESIS STUDY ON THIS TOPIC FOR A MASTERS DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY AT BROUGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, PROVO, UTAH. NAMES WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL UNLESS WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION IS RECEIVED FROM THE RESPONDENT. PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS HONESTLY AND COMPLETELY. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. THANK YOU.

1. A. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
   B. WHAT IS YOUR AGE NOW?

2. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS?

3. WHAT IS YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER? HOME WORK

4. WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

5. WHERE WERE YOU RAISED FOR THE MAJORITY OF YOU CHILDHOOD? (INCLUDE UP TO AGE 18)

6. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU ATTAINED?

7. WHO DID YOU LIVE WITH WHILE GROWING UP?

8. WERE YOU RAISED IN THE LDS CHURCH? IF YES, WHO DID YOU LIVE WITH THAT WERE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE LDS CHURCH?

9. WERE YOU A CONVERT TO THE LDS CHURCH?

10. IF YES, AT WHAT AGE DID YOU CONVERT TO THE LDS CHURCH?

11. AT WHAT AGE DID YOU DISAFFILIATE FROM THE LDS CHURCH?

12. WHAT WAS THE DATE OF YOUR DISAFFILIATION FROM THE LDS CHURCH?

13. PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN IN ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS WHY YOU CHOSE TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE LDS CHURCH.
14. PLEASE LIST MEMBERS OF YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY AND STATE IF THEY ARE NOW OR WERE LDS? (PARENTS, SIBLINGS, SPOUSE, CHILDREN, COUSINS, ETC.)

15. HAVE YOU HAD YOUR NAME OFFICIALLY REMOVED FROM THE ROLES OF THE LDS CHURCH?

16. WHEN DID YOU HAVE YOUR NAME REMOVED?

17. WHAT WAS THE DATE OF YOUR CONVERSION TO EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY?

18. PLEASE BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR CONVERSION EXPERIENCE IN ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS.

19. WHAT CHURCH AFFILIATION DO YOU HAVE NOW?

20. WHAT IS YOUR MARITAL STATUS?

21. IF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN MARRIED, WERE YOU MARRIED IN THE TEMPLE?

22. WERE YOU MARRIED TO THE SAME PERSON WHEN YOU DISAFFILIATED?

23. ARE YOU STILL MARRIED TO THE SAME PERSON?

24. IF NO, DID DIVORCE RESULT FROM YOUR DISAFFILIATION?

25. IF YES, WAS YOUR SPOUSE LDS? IS HE/SHE STILL LDS?

26. DO YOU HAVE ANY CHILDREN?

27. DID YOU RAISE ANY OF THESE CHILDREN AS LDS?

28. IF YES, ARE ANY OF YOUR CHILDREN STILL LDS?

29. DID YOU HOLD A TEMPLE RECOMMEND? IF YES, FOR HOW LONG?

30. WERE YOU HOLDING THE TEMPLE RECOMMEND AT THE TIME OF DISAFFILIATION?

31. DID YOU GO ON A LDS MISSION?

32. DID YOUR MISSION HAVE AN AFFECT ON YOUR DECISION TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE LDS CHURCH?
33. DID YOU ATTEND BYU OR ANOTHER LDS CHURCH SPONSORED
SCHOOL? IF YES, SPECIFY WHICH ONE.

34. DID YOUR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AFFECT YOUR DECISION TO LEAVE
THE LDS CHURCH? PLEASE STATE SCHOOL ATTENDED.

35. DID YOU HOLD ANY CALLINGS IN THE LDS CHURCH?

36. FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS OF LDS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE
SPECIFY CALLING HELD AND LENGTH HELD.

37. PLEASE SPECIFY WHICH OF THE LDS SCRIPTURES YOU READ.
CIRCLE ONE.

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<th>COMPLETELY READ</th>
<th>PARTLY READ</th>
<th>DID NOT</th>
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<tr>
<td>BIBLE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOK OF MORMON</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEARL OF GREAT PRICE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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38. BRIEFLY, IN ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS, DESCRIBE YOUR
FEELINGS NOW REGARDING THE LDS CHURCH?

39. BRIEFLY, IN ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS, DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS
NOW REGARDING EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY?
INTERVIEW GUIDE

WERE YOU RAISED IN THE LDS CHURCH OR WERE YOU A CONVERT?

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE GROWING UP IN THE LDS CHURCH.
OR
TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CONVERSION EXPERIENCE.

DID YOU HAVE A TESTIMONY OF THE LDS CHURCH? PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT IT.

DID YOU ATTEND BYU OR ANOTHER LDS CHURCH SPONSORED SCHOOL? TELL ME ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE.

DID YOU GO ON A LDS MISSION?

WERE YOU MARRIED IN THE TEMPLE? DID YOU HOLD A TEMPLE RECOMMEND?

DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN? WERE THEY RAISED LDS? ARE THEY NOW LDS? ARE ANY OF THEM EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS?

WHAT CAUSED YOU TO LEAVE THE LDS CHURCH?

WHAT LED FROM YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS OF LEAVING TO YOUR ACTUAL LEAVING?

ELABORATE ON YOUR FEELINGS DURING THIS TIME?

DID YOUR MISSION HAVE ANY AFFECT ON YOUR DECISION TO LEAVE?
(YOUR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?, YOUR TEMPLE EXPERIENCE?)

DID YOU HAVE ANY FEARS ABOUT LEAVING THE LDS CHURCH?

WERE YOU EXCOMMUNICATED? WHY?

DID YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS AFTER MAKING THE DECISION TO LEAVE?

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS OF OTHERS TO YOUR DECISION TO LEAVE?
(FRIENDS, FAMILY, CHURCH)

DID YOU READ ANY LITERATURE ABOUT THE LDS CHURCH?
WHAT?

WERE THERE OTHER PEOPLE WHO AFFECTED YOUR DECISION TO DISAFFILIATE?
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO BECOME AFFILIATED WITH EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY?

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CONVERSION EXPERIENCE?

ELABORATE ON YOUR FEELINGS DURING THIS TIME?

HOW WAS THIS THE SAME OR DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CONVERSION TO THE LDS CHURCH?

WHAT WAS THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO YOUR DECISION?

DID YOU READ ANY LITERATURE ABOUT EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY?

WERE THERE OTHER PEOPLE WHO AFFECTED YOUR DECISION TO BECOME AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN?

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS NOW REGARDING THE LDS CHURCH?

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS NOW REGARDING EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY?
Appendix D

The Language of Mormonism

Apostasy The entire world is guilty of the abandonment of the true principles of the gospel.

Apostates People who have 'fallen away' from the LDS Church.

Authority - Priesthood The LDS Church has the only authority on earth to baptize and ordain the priesthood. The priesthood consists of Aaronic and Melchizedek.

Baptism Initiatory ordinance necessary for entrance into God's kingdom. Must be performed by a member of the LDS priesthood

Bishop The leader of an LDS ward.

Born again You are born of the spirit when you are baptized in water and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Disfellowshiped When an LDS member is found guilty of a lesser transgression that does not warrant excommunication, they are disfellowshiped until full repentance and conformity to the standards is re-established. Membership is maintained but the offender is denied full participation in Church functions and blessings. Disfellowshipping also occurs when a member asks to have their name removed from the Church roll but is not deserving of excommunication.

Eternal life Exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom.

Excommunicated having one's names removed from the rolls involuntarily because of some serious transgression of the standards.

Garments The garment of the Holy Priesthood is worn by temple Mormons as a reminder to live worthy of the covenants they have made. It is also considered a spiritual shield of protection from evil.

General Authority The central core of church leadership including offices of the First Presidency, Apostles, Quorum of the Seventy, Presiding Bishopric and Patriarch.

Godhead The Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are three separate personages. The Father and Christ have bodies of flesh and bone, the Holy Ghost does not.
Gospel The plan of salvation which embraces all laws, principles, doctrines, ordinances, and authorities necessary to save and exalt man.

Heaven Divided into three kingdoms; celestial, terrestrial, and telestial. All will go to one of three kingdoms except for sons of perdition who go to outer darkness.

Hell Where the wicked will go for a time (except the sons of perdition) before passing into the Telestial kingdom.

Holy Ghost Separate from the Father and Jesus Christ. He is a personage of Spirit and can only be in one place at one time. His influence, however, is not limited by space and can witness to people in more than one place at one time.

Holy Spirit Can refer to the Spirit body of Christ, the spirit of Christ or the Holy Ghost. Depends on the scriptural reference which is intended.

Jesus Christ He is separate and distinct from God the Father. They are one in purpose but two in essence.

Pre-existence Everyone pre-existed - we all exist eternally. We were spirits in heaven before coming into our earthly bodies.

Prophet One who receives revelation from God. The leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is referred to as "the Prophet" and is called of God to lead the Church here on earth. He receives revelation for the LDS Church as a whole and guides and directs the Church. Often used in reference to Joseph Smith, but also used to represent the current Church Prophet.

Temple The LDS Church's most sacred building. Worthy members make covenants, baptize for the dead, receive instruction and are married for 'time and all eternity'.

Temple recommend Given after yearly interviews with the bishop and stake president after answering certain questions affirmatively showing their worthiness to attend the temple.

Testimony A statement of conviction in which a member of the LDS Church declares that he or she knows the Church is true.

The Church or The True Church The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is the only true restored Church on the earth.

The Father The exalted and perfected personage with a tangible body of flesh and bones. Father of Jesus Christ.
The Prophet Referring to Joseph Smith or the current Church president and prophet.

Time and all eternity Not just this life but for all eternity. Refers to Family sealings and eternal marriages performed in the temple.

Salvation Because of Christ's atonement (in the garden), all mankind will be resurrected.

Savior Christ is the Savior in the sense that all mankind is saved from physical death because he overcame death.

Scriptures The four standard works; the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great price.

Son of God Jesus is the spirit offspring of God the Father.

Sons of God We are all literal spirit Children of God.

Ward The local LDS congregation which is presided over by a bishop. Several wards make up a stake which refers to a geographic area.

Word of Wisdom Doctrine and Covenants section 89 forbids the intake of hot drinks, tobacco, alcohol, and harmful drugs.

The Language of Evangelical Christians

Accepted Jesus Or asked Jesus into my heart Refers to the point of conversion. Surrendering your mind, will, and emotions to Christ and committing to allow Christ to live His life through you.

Authority Christ is the only authority. The Bible is accepted as the only authoritative scripture.

Baptism Emphasis is on believer rather than the authority to baptize. Baptism is an outward sign of belief and done in response to the believers acceptance of Christ into their life. Any believer can baptize another.

Born Again We are spiritually dead until we are born again at conversion.

Eternal life Is given to all Born again Christians. Means life with Jesus eternally.
Godhead  There is only one God manifested in three co-equal persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Also referred to as the Trinity.

Gospel  Message of Christ’s death and resurrection as atonement for our sins.

Heaven  Where all who accept Christ will go to spend eternity with Jesus.

Hell  Where all who reject Christ will go for eternity.

Holy Ghost  The third person in the trinity. Same as the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ  Second person in the Trinity. The Son of God.

Pre-existence  Only Christ pre-existed, not man.

Prophet  The prophets of the old testament who spoke for God. Jesus is the only one to hold the office of Prophet now. Some Christians are given the gift of prophesy to speak for God to a local congregation.

Salvation  Based on individual belief and acceptance of Christ. Guarantees eternal life with Christ.

Savior  Jesus Christ is the Savior. Acceptance of His death and resurrection is basis for salvation.

Scriptures  The 66 books of the Bible are the only authoritative Scripture recognized.

Son of God  Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity.

Sons of God  We become sons of God when we accept Christ and are adopted into Christ’s family.

Temple  The old testament temple is where God dwelt. Now He dwells in the believer whose body is considered the temple.

Testimony  One’s conversion story. Related differently but usually focuses on point of accepting Christ.

The Church  Universal church of God is fellowship of all believers. Often referred to as the Body of Christ. Each local congregation is considered part of universal church regardless of denomination. Membership depends on personal acceptance of Christ.

The Father  First person in the Trinity. Father of Jesus Christ.
From Mormon To Evangelical:  
A Look At Disaffiliation and Conversion

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ABSTRACT

Religion is a major institution in society and for many, affiliation with a religious group shapes the way they view the world and the way they interact with other formal and informal institutions within society. In addition, particular behaviors are present during the processes an individual goes through when deciding to leave or switch their religious affiliation.

There are a variety of new affiliations that these disaffiliated individuals can make. One alternative religious group that disaffected members of the LDS Church (Mormons) can form a new affiliation with is Evangelical Christianity, often referred to as the "Born Again Movement". This pattern of switching from one sect to another is the most dramatic form of switching as both the LDS Church and Evangelical Christianity are exclusive in nature.

By focusing on this unique and exclusive form of switching, from Mormonism to Evangelical Christianity, the various reasons for disaffiliation and subsequent conversion, and the processes involved in switching can be understood.

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