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Motivations for Disaffiliation from the Two-by-Two Sect

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MOTIVATIONS FOR DISAFFILIATION FROM THE TWO-BY-TWO SECT

GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER

A graduate research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts
in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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2013

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER

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Disaffiliates from encapsulating sects may have many motivations for their disaffiliation. Multiple typologies exist which shed light on an individual's motivations for disaffiliation from religious groups in general, and on motivations for disaffiliation from particular sects, though no exploration has been made of disaffiliates of the highly tense, fundamentalist Christian Two-by-Two sect. This article describes results from a survey of former members of the sect which points to motivations regarding the implausibility of doctrine as being the strongest motivations for these disaffiliates.

KEYWORDS: Two-by-Two's (Christian sect), disaffiliation, motivation, encapsulation, social surveys

Julene Laurel Jones

April 23, 2013

MOTIVATIONS FOR DISAFFILIATION FROM THE TWO-BY-TWO SECT

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DEDICATION

For my Granny, Joy E. Hoffman, who trusted us all to never pass judgment; for my
Far, Bill Hansen, who told me the tale of the man who carried the oar;
for my mothers, Mary Beth Hannah-Hansen and Mary Jo Freeman, who constantly inspire me,
but mostly for my husband, Tim Jones, who is always thinking. All my love to you, sweetest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following graduate research paper benefited from the insights and direction of several people. First, it is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the support of my committee chair, Dr. Dwight B. Billings. Dr. Billings epitomizes the perfect combination of unfailing encouragement and academic scholarship that has been invaluable to me. Further, I consider it an honor to have worked with my committee advisors, Dr. Jim Hougland and Dr. Shannon Bell who each provided instructive yet cheerful comments throughout the research and writing process.

Finally, I wish to thank each of my survey respondents. The sincerity and frankness of your comments was very moving, and your insights about your experiences were indispensable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements1

List of Tables.....3

Introduction.....4

Description of Two-by-Two Sect6

Background / Literature Review9

Research.....14

Discussion.....17

Limitations.....34

Conclusion.....35

Appendices

 Appendix A. Qualtrics survey.....37

 Appendix B. Operationalization of variables in survey questions.....54

 Appendix C. Responses to Qualtrics Survey question 25.....55

References.....67

Vita.....71

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Selected responses: motivations for disaffiliation from supplied list (Question 26)..... 21

Table 2. Three strongest motivations for disaffiliation, selected from responses to Question 28.....23

Table 3. Duration of Disaffiliation Process, all responses to Question 32.....29

Table 4. Survey questions by variable.....54

INTRODUCTION

Sociology of religion scholars have long described a typology of religious classification first developed by Ernst Troeltsch that places Christian sects and churches on opposite ends of a continuum, with churches having the most influence and interaction with society and sects having little meaningful interaction with their surroundings (Troeltsch 1931). According to Troeltsch, the ideal type of a sect has relatively few members, has little organizational structure, and little distinction between clergy and laity. A sect advocates for a return to “true” religion by claiming to be the original, most pure form of a religious belief or practice. It holds ideologically exclusive legalistic beliefs and sets itself strictly apart from all things “worldly.” A church, by contrast, is large, official, well-integrated with society, has a trained clergy of professionals, and has members who maintain the status quo. Spiritually, churches emphasize redemption and grace. A related concept that emphasizes the distinction between these two ideal types is that of tension, in which a religious group’s values are at odds with their surrounding community. Therefore, stated in terms of tension, churches have a very low degree of tension with their surroundings and sects are highly-tense with theirs. In churches, thus, one can easily befriend non-churchgoers, whereas sect members in “social cocoons” cannot (Griel and Rudy 1984:202).

The continuum of Troeltsch has also been described as a cycle, in which sects gradually become more like churches (Finke and Stark, 1992). According to this cyclical theory, a highly tense sect will gradually decrease its degree of tension, leading to increasing interaction with its environment, and will become more like a church. As this transition occurs, the sect members who valued the previous level of tension will leave the now less-tense group and form a new sect with the original or higher degree of tension.

Since sects are such encapsulating entities, that is, they are social groups that maintain tension with their environment and expect members to have dense social networks among sect

members, disaffiliating from them entails a change in self-identity or role. This has been shown to be a gradual process through which each disaffiliate realizes that they have multiple motivations for their disaffiliation (Wright 1984; Bromley 1991). Several typologies have been developed for disaffiliation from sects, including one described by Bahr which emphasizes the social aspects of disaffiliation (1989). This typology begins with the “negative social labeling” or “tagging” of a group member by their peers. Because of the emphasis on unity of belief in sects, these group members will perceive the dissenter as a threat. The dissenting member will then react to the tagging by either realigning their behavior or belief with the larger group or will re-identify themselves as a non-group member.

Brinkerhoff and Burke describe another typology that emphasizes a more personal, introspective path towards disaffiliation: (1) an individual experiences a crisis of faith which causes them (2) to seek resolution. When that resolution is found (3), the individual (4) adopts a new identity and (5) finally critiques their previous identity (1980). A simpler description of this more individually motivated path was described as (1) doubt; (2) seeking and weighing alternative roles; (3) a turning point followed by (4) the establishment of an “ex-role” identity (Ebaugh 1988). Members of these highly encapsulated sects often find it difficult to disaffiliate from them because of their deep-rooted investments in the sect, whether material, social, personal, or spiritual. A defection means “unlearning lifelong roles and the community’s idiomatic ways of speaking, thinking, and acting and learning new, unfamiliar ones” (Davidman and Griel 2007:207).

According to other researchers (Becker 1964; Brinkerhoff and Burke 1980; Roozen 1980; Peter 1982; Wright 1984; Bahr 1989; Sandomirsky 1990; Bromley 1991; Davidman and Griel 2007), former members from divergent sects have cited the following motivations for their disaffiliation: discord among church members, “individual maturation” which is also described

as rebellion against the religious practices learned as a child (Bahr 1989:182), disagreement with particular or multiple religious doctrines, limitations by the sect for marriage with non-members, or the perceived inconsequence of sect activities.

To examine the usefulness of the theories described above, I will use as a case study a sect that has received little sociological attention. This sect, known to some as the Two-by-Twos, is one which claims to maintain the beliefs and ascetic practices of the earliest Christians and has maintained them for at least a century¹. This sect has very distinctive religious beliefs, shuns public attention, claims authenticity, and promotes fundamentalism and legalistic beliefs for members. It is highly encapsulating, maintains high tension with its surrounding environment, and has little meaningful contact with its surroundings, providing an excellent case study of disaffiliation typologies. Further, by surveying former members about their motivations for disaffiliation, I am allowing former members to reflect upon their experiences as members, and critique their previous and current identities.

DESCRIPTION OF TWO-BY-TWO SECT

The objective of this research is to elucidate and explore the reasons and motivations that members of a particular fundamentalist sect, the Two-by-Twos, report for leaving it. Very little scholarly research has been made about the sect, though a few self-published volumes have been created (see Chapman 1993; Daniel 1993 and Daniel 1996). Therefore, even fewer accounts of the lives of sect members exist, and so I will offer here a brief introduction to their

¹ The sect does not use a name for itself other than “the Truth” or “the Way,” though members have used the names “Christian Conventions” in the United States, “Assemblies of Christians” in Canada, “United Christian Conventions” in Australia and “The Testimony of Jesus” in the United Kingdom for purposes of registration with the military. Non-members have called it “Two-by-Twos”, “Workers and Friends”, or “Cooneyites.”

ideology so that the context of their exit motivations can be better understood². Distinct from mainstream Christian religions, members of this sect believe that Jesus was the perfect example for salvation, thus minimizing his role as a savior, while emphasizing a salvation based on works, rather than on grace. Members, known as those who *profess*, believe that their practices explicitly follow those of the 1st century AD church. Thus, their ministers, called *workers*, are homeless and celibate, cite passages in Matthew 10 and in Luke 10 in which the disciples are instructed to leave their homes and live their lives spreading the Gospel, in pairs, with few possessions. The sect dictates that the workers (male and female) are to visit all of the members in their predetermined geographical area, their *field*, and live with them for short periods. It is the workers' role to promote the highly legalistic abstentions and practices of the group in *Gospel meetings* that are held weekly, if not more frequently. Ministers are assigned to their fields by a head minister in the state called an *overseer*. Members of this sect meet for worship twice per week at minimum: once on Sunday mornings in a members' home for a fellowship meeting, and once mid-week (usually Wednesday afternoons or evenings) for a study on a predetermined small portion of the Bible. The format of worship services are quiet, non-charismatic, and deliberately few in number of participants. The schedule of Sunday morning meetings includes group hymn singing, each individual members' sharing of prayers and testimony, and concludes with communion. Midweek meetings use the same schedule, with the omission of communion. Musical accompaniment of the hymns is prohibited in worship services for members, though it is used on occasion in Gospel meetings. Gospel meetings are held, ostensibly, to attract or convert new members, and in part to maintain cohesion in the sect community, as all members in the field are expected to attend. Gospel meetings are held by workers, usually in public locations such as municipal buildings or libraries, though they may also

² This description is formed from the author's own disaffiliation from the sect. The author was "born and raised" in the sect, and was a sect member for 11 years.

be held in members' homes. The sect also holds other periodic meetings both monthly and annually for workers and for members, following the same formats.

There are other distinctive beliefs and practices of this sect that I will mention here briefly. Sunday is seen as the only holiday, and is a time for worship and visiting fellow-members. The only sacrament held by the group is the weekly closed communion, the *Emblems*, of which only baptized members can partake. Emile Durkheim describes sacred objects: "during the ceremony, [they are] the centre of all regards" (McIntosh 1997:242) and this is the case of the emblems in Two-by-Two meetings: they are placed either in the center of the meeting room, or just beside the elder leading the meeting. Baptism is performed only on teenage or adult members in which they are immersed in a lake, pond, or stream, as a confirmation of their beliefs and a pledge to remain faithful to the sect for the rest of their lives. The appearance of members is to be modest at all times, defined in part by selected stipulations of the Old Testament and influenced by the customs of Victorian era Great Britain: women must have long hair worn up off the neck, use no "adornments" such as jewelry or makeup, and wear skirts or dresses. Men must wear pants (i.e., not shorts) and must be clean-shaven. Finally, any form of publicity is shunned by members, (including making any official publications about the sect), as it is felt that "worldly" attention may bring vanity or other characteristics that would limit the humility sought by all members. Members are taught to attribute close examination of the sect as adversity, or persecution by outsiders. Unofficial estimates of membership range between 150,000 and 600,000 members worldwide, though no publicly available records are kept.

Due to the high degree of encapsulation experienced by members of this sect, it is clear that the decision to disaffiliate is complex and not taken lightly. Members are highly invested in the group socially and personally. Former members are traditionally shunned to some degree

by members, including their families, and are frequently derided as being “bitter” or “having a hard heart.” Some former members have cited the suppression and misrepresentation of the history of the sect as a motivation to leave, claiming that the group did not, in fact, begin in 1 A.D., but was started in Ireland by a preacher named William Irvine, circa 1896. The author’s own disaffiliation experience and those of others documented in two compilations of exit letters (Chapman 1993; Daniel 1996) suggest that other motivations to disaffiliate may include a belief that the sect’s doctrine is false, a desire to live a less controlled life, or a life in which their behavior is not constantly monitored or influenced by fellow-members. Further, members may leave due to mistreatment by a member or a worker, their desire to not stand out as different from the world, or to experience what the group terms *worldly pleasures*.

BACKGROUND / LITERATURE REVIEW

A sect, according to sociologist Benton Johnson, is “a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists” (Stark and Bainbridge 1985:23). This definition has two implications. First, sects are distinctive from their contemporary religious organizations. By breaking away from an established church, they distinguish themselves from the more mainstream religious practices of that group by creating what they believe is a new, more authentic faith. In so doing, Stark and Bainbridge write, “they present themselves to the world as something old” (1985:25). Sociologically, the Two-by-Twos are a sect, though they would not define themselves as such, due to their claim that they form the archetype of all Christian churches. Instead, they claim that all other Christian religions separated from them and resolutely maintain their authenticity as the oldest Christian religion, hence “present[ing] themselves to the world as something old,” despite all evidence to the contrary.

The second implication that Johnson's definition makes is centered upon sects' rejection of what they define as Other. Sects maintain a high degree of tension with their surroundings, disagreeing with other religious groups

over proper beliefs, norms, and behavior. ... Rejected by and rejecting the larger society, sects ... draw together in relatively closed and cohesive groups. In the case of extreme tension, sects... will be socially encapsulated and the members will have relatively little intimate contact with nonmembers (Stark and Bainbridge 1985:49).

Greil and Rudy describe these closed and cohesive groups as "social cocoons" that attempt to encapsulate their members physically, socially and ideologically to "shield them from outside influence" (1984:202). Stark and Bainbridge (1985) and Bromley (1991, 1998) all write that this extreme tension with their environment creates and perpetuates a cohesive subculture of group members who particularistically and antagonistically believe they are more righteous than "worldly" society. Their behavior, opinions, and social relations bear this out in Stark and Bainbridge's quantitative research which used agreement with such indicators as "Grace is said at all meals in the respondent's home" (1985:57), "It is completely true that Jesus walked on water" (1985:55) and "Three or more of the respondent's five closest friends are members of his or her congregation" (1985:61). On the continuum of low to high-tension organizations, Bromley adds that low-tension organizations are better "able to control the exit process [than] high-tension [organizations]" (1998: 146). He correlates the high degree of tension between the organization and its environment with the degree to which those exiting "label the organization as dangerous and pathological" (1998:153). Further, several researchers have shown that sect members are encapsulated in and by their sect (Griel and Rudy 1984; Snow and Machalek 1984; Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Jacobs 1987; Bromley 1991). Specific sects have also been analyzed by sociologists in terms of their encapsulating properties, including ultra-Orthodox (Haredi)

Jewish communities (Davidman and Griel 2007), Mormons (Albrecht 1983), and Hutterite communities (Peter et al. 1982). Stark and Bainbridge write,

“social separation from outsiders and closer relations with other insiders are implied by each other. Together, they constitute encapsulation of the sect, isolation of each high tension subculture as a distinct, closed social world” (1985:60).

Thus, the Two-by-Twos are a sect that maintains a high degree of tension with its environment. Its members are encapsulated in the sect, maintaining that they are “in the world, but not of the world”; that is, they are united in their separation from a world that they fear may contaminate their beliefs and their authenticity.

The separation and encapsulation that sects instill in their members is perpetuated by what Peter Berger calls plausibility, reporting that “the plausibility ... of views of reality depends upon the social support these receive” (1969:43). Therefore, if a particular reality is maintained through social support, an individual is likely to find this reality credible and thus to him, plausible. Berger argues that through legitimation and implicit social relations, these social definitions of reality maintain their plausibility. The “constituent elements” of plausibility are the individuals themselves, their “conversational network,” “therapeutic practices and rituals, and the legitimations that go with them” (1969:45). Berger applies this ideal type to a Catholic individual, which, though clearly not a sect, applies to this case study. He wrote, in part: “The maintenance of ... faith in the consciousness of the individual requires that he maintain his relationship to the plausibility of [his religious group]” (1969:45). Therefore, to have religious faith is to have confidence that it is plausible. In a community that supports an individual’s relationship to their faith’s plausibility structure, the faith becomes “implicit,” “obvious,” and “natural” (1969:46). Lofland and Stark describe this as an “affective bond” being formed (1965:862). Without the community’s perpetuation of the Two-by-Two plausibility structure, the Two-by-Twos would be considered implausible. Berger continues by noting that this is

particularly true if “those who are of the greatest emotional significance to the individual... belong to this supportive community – it does not matter much if, say, the individual’s dentist is a non-[sect-member], but his wife and his closest personal friends had better be” (1965:45, rephrased). If this is true, the converse of this must also be true to some degree. That is, the legitimation of a plausibility structure must be shaken if the conversational network or the therapeutic practices become disrupted. Similar to Erving Goffman’s front stage and back stage roles, Berger argues that an individual will become increasingly detached when the plausibility structure is disrupted. The individual will unnaturally play “highly discrepant roles at different times,” some superficial and some “real” (1965:54). Thus, a former member of the Two-by-Twos can be described as one who has realized that the community’s socially constructed reality is implausible: what was once “implicit,” “obvious,” and “natural” has become unnatural and superficial. To again amend Berger’s application to Catholics:

It is relatively easy, sociologically speaking, to be a [sect member] in a social situation where one can readily limit one’s significant others to fellow [sect members]... where all major institutional forces are geared to support and confirm a [sect member’s] world. The story is quite different in a situation where one is compelled to rub shoulders day by day with every conceivable variety of “those others,” is bombarded with communications that deny or ignore one’s [sect-related] ideas, and where one has a terrible time even finding some quiet corners to withdraw into (1965:55).

The above sociological approach implies that the process of extricating oneself from a highly tense and encapsulated group, once one does “rub shoulders” with the world, is due to some particular change(s) in the community’s plausibility structure, whether perceived or actual. That is, the Two-by-Twos must begin to seem increasingly implausible to a member for him or her to exit; to make the paradigm shift from plausibility to implausibility. To discover this implausibility, the motivations for exiting this sect must be examined.

Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills describe motives similarly to Berger's roles, as above, as having to do "with the balance of self-image with the appraisals of others" (1964:114). Thus motives are, at least in part, socially constructed. According to Gerth and Mills, the social structure that surrounds an individual shapes their "impulses, emotions, and perceptions" (1964:114). Motives are also pullulative: "A man may begin an act for one motive; in the course of this act he may adopt an auxiliary motive which he will use to explain his act to others who question it" (1964:116). Gerth and Mills continue:

"the more closely integrated our vocabulary of motives with our person and our psychic structure, the greater the chance that it contains our real motives. Such integration is most often present when we use the same motives in public, in private and when alone" (1964:129).

Therefore, though authentic, "secure" (1964:127) motives may be impossible to obtain, any attempts to describe them publicly, or privately may approximate "real" motivations (1964:116).

Becoming an apostate has been further researched in terms of a change in identity (Bromley 1991; Somers 1994; Davidman and Griel 2007). The research of Lynn Davidman and Arthur Griel on former ultra-Orthodox Jews reveals that while the conversion process is often structured by a type of script, whether written or through emulation of members, the disaffiliation process does not have this type of script. Bromley describes this as a lack of "ritual observances to ease the transition process" (1991:182). The former ultra-Orthodox members who were interviewed described themselves as "lost" and even "speechless" (Davidman and Griel 2007:204, 213). Given the limited research about Two-by-Twos, much less former members of the sect, there is a lack of appropriate or adequate language to describe the transition in identity required to make their disaffiliation.

Research on disaffiliation with high-tension sects has also revealed that there may not be a singular event that causes their exit (Wright 1984; Bromley 1991; Davidman and Griel

2007). Bromley explains that disaffiliation begins with doubts that may be “managed [through] repression or avoidance, rationalization, [or] redefinition” (1991:179). Davidman and Griel describe the disaffiliation as being caused by “being able to see the holes in the worldview that others in their community did not see” (2007:207). Wright argues that multiple factors may initiate disengagement, followed by secondary factors that make the “option to defect more attractive” (1984:176). Both Davidman and Griel’s as well as Wright’s arguments are similar to Berger’s description of the effects of a disruption in plausibility structure, as described above. Both Wright (1984) and Bromley (1991) emphasize the gradual nature of disaffiliation. Wright further discusses the potential for former members to feel affection or nostalgia for certain aspects of the group they have left, while maintaining resolute disagreement with the group’s ideology or theology.

RESEARCH

Very little has been published in print about the Two-by-Twos, other than two collections of what the group calls “exit letters” though several informal websites and message boards exist. A portion of these exit letters have been compiled into two books, *Reflections* by Daurette Chapman (1993) and *Reflected Truth* by Joan Daniel (1996). After reviewing these compilations, a qualitative survey (Appendix A) was created using the Qualtrics online survey software. This survey was pre-tested in the spring of 2010 by twenty former members of the sect. The pretest did not indicate any significant problems with survey questions or survey logic. After subsequent review by the author’s committee, the survey was approved by the University of Kentucky’s Institutional Research Board. In December 2012 the final version of the survey was posted for a two-month time period. Respondents to this survey of former Two-by-Two

members were recruited from the private Facebook group “ex members of the: 2x2's; Cooneyites; Way; Secret Sect; Truth; Friends, etc.” and from three specific online forums, (1) Truth Meetings Board; (2) Worker, Friend, and Ex-Board; and (3) The Liberty Connection.

Through conducting a survey of former Two-by-Two members recruited from these three specific online forums, the author examines the following hypotheses:

- (1) Each person who has disaffiliated from this sect will have multiple motivations for his or her disaffiliation.
- (2) Disaffiliation will be a lengthy process for former members.
- (3) Those who have disaffiliated from this sect will still have social ties to current Two-by-Two members.
- (4) The primary motivation for disaffiliation will be associated with the implausibility of sect doctrine.

To form conclusions about these hypotheses, the following variables were developed and examined in this survey:

Variable 1: The respondent's degree of prior encapsulation in the sect. I defined the degree of encapsulation in the sect as involving both active daily performances of the sect's doctrine as well as frequent attendance at the sect's service and gatherings. Active performance of doctrine would include dressing as the sect dictates, associating with members of the sect exclusively for all major contact, prioritizing sect activities and gatherings above any “worldly” ones, and being reluctant to discuss with other members any aberrant behavior or thought one may have. A high degree of encapsulation for a female member, thus, would include wearing a long skirt, not cutting her hair, not wearing makeup or jewelry, and attending meetings three to four times a week. A low degree of encapsulation for a male member may include having unkempt facial hair, wearing shorts, and attending meetings less than twice a week.

Variable 2: Motivation(s) for disaffiliation. The respondents' motivation(s) for disaffiliation from the Two-by-Two sect were elicited through the use of one open question which allowed respondents to include their own narrative as well as three closed questions which supplied a list of motivations that summarized from the previously-mentioned compilations of exit letters. The supplied list included motives concerning sect doctrine ("I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church", "I did not agree with their views on homosexuality", etc.), motives that were related to how the respondents may have been treated by other members ("The Workers mistreated me or my family.") and finally, motives related to the limitations the sect places on the member's daily lives ("I felt too restricted", "I wanted my children to be raised differently than I was"). The three questions that used this list of motivations first asked the respondent to select the motivations they had experienced; the order in which they had experienced them, and of those selected, which three were the strongest motivations. I inserted a page break between the open-ended question and the three closed questions to prevent the supplied motivations from influencing the open-ended responses.

Variable 3: The respondents' current faith and faith practices were operationalized by several questions about the importance of several religious and/or spiritual practices in their lives presently, as well as their affiliation and attendance of church services.

Variable 4: The respondent's current social ties with and/or encapsulation in the Two-by-Two sect was approximated by the questions that ask if they have relatives and friends that are members of the sect, what changes they have made to their appearance and in their behaviors since disaffiliating, the comfort they feel around Two-by-Twos, if they have been contacted by Two-by-Twos since leaving for the purpose of asking them to return, and if they maintain contact with current members of the Two-by-Two sect.

Appendix B delineates the specific survey questions corresponding to each of these variables.

DISCUSSION

A Qualtrics survey (Appendix A) was developed to qualitatively assess the motivations of former Two-by-Twos for their disaffiliation. Pretested in the spring of 2010, this survey was edited by the author's committee and approved by the University of Kentucky's Institutional Research Board. After being posted for two months to these three targeted websites, 85 complete responses were received. 79 respondents had professed at one time, five respondents had never professed, but who had some exposure to sect members, and one respondent who currently professes. Qualtrics should have prevented this respondent from responding to all subsequent questions, though for unknown reasons, this was not the case. The respondent population self-identified as 52% male (n=42), 48% female (n=39), and as 99% Caucasian, 1% Hispanic, and 2% Native American (82 respondents, allowing for multiple selection). 89% of the respondents were between the ages of 26 and 75, with the most common selection for age range being 56 to 65 years old. Of the 83 responses regarding educational attainment, 89% reported completing some college courses or having earned a higher education degree (including 2-year, 4-year, Master's, PhD, or other professional degree). Of the 80 respondents to the question about marital status, 75% reported being married or in an equivalent relationship; 25% were not (n=60, 20, respectively).

Prior encapsulation in the Two-by-Two sect (Variable 1)

When defined in terms of both attendance at sect meetings and active performance of sect doctrine, respondents to this survey reported an extremely high degree of encapsulation. 90% of the respondents had professed for 4 years or longer, 80% for over 7 years and 44% for more than 20 years; the median age at which respondents had professed was 12. 89% of those that had professed had been baptized by the sect, the majority between the ages of 11 and 22 (median age = 16). Of the 79 respondents who were former members, 66% (n=52) reported having attended three or more meetings per week. Given the weekly schedule of the sect's meetings, this would likely have been attendance at a Sunday worship service, a mid-week Bible study, and one additional meeting, which would likely have been a Gospel meeting. 34% reported attending one to two meetings per week. None reported attending fewer than one meeting per week. Forty-four of the 82 respondents, or 54%, considered going into the work and of these, 8 (18%) had become workers. Five of the respondents who had become workers had been in the work for six years or more, three for 11 years or longer. In terms of sect doctrine, respondents did report significant changes in their behaviors before their disaffiliation.

Not only were the majority of former members in the sample encapsulated in the sect, but their families were as well: a large majority of respondents stated that their grandparents had professed (77% of the 64 respondents to the question) and an even larger majority (89% of 82 respondents, n=71) had at least one parent professing. 74% of respondent's parents had held a meeting in their home. Workers designate the location of meetings, and having one in one's home is seen as a sign of favor. In responses to other questions some respondents reported that their families were long-term members, expressed in terms of generations, as in "fifth generation born and raised" (Question 25, response 68). The majority of respondents whose parents professed and had meetings in their home had mid-week Bible studies (90% of

55 respondents to this question), or Sunday morning meetings (58) (Question 37). Notably, two respondents added that they grew up on the convention grounds, the location of the four-day annual conventions for all members in the state. That these respondents lived on the convention grounds means that an even larger portion of their time would have been consumed with additional visits from workers and Two-by-Two members, as well as preparing for and maintaining the convention buildings and grounds. Those that live on the convention grounds are highly favored among sect members and workers, and are generally encapsulated to an even greater degree than are other members.

Due to the encapsulating nature of the sect, I had hypothesized that members who were considering disaffiliation would be reluctant to discuss their intention very widely among other sect members. Responses to survey questions 29 and 30 seem to support this: only 40% (n=33) of respondents had discussed their intention to disaffiliate, and most who had revealed their intentions to other members had done so to only one member (of 32 resp. to question 30, mode =1; median = 4). Some respondents did indicate that they had expressed their intention to a wider audience of members in their testimony at meeting, or even during a meeting at convention.

When asked about the strength of their faith during their last year of membership, 63% of respondents to Question 32 categorized their faith as “very strong” or “somewhat strong” (n=29, 22 respectively), while 37% reported their faith as having been “somewhat weak” or “very weak” (n=7, 23, respectively).

Overall, the respondents to this survey experienced a high degree of encapsulation in this sect, as evidenced by their length of membership, high weekly attendance at meetings, high

rate of baptism, strength of faith, reluctance to discuss plans to disaffiliate, and behavioral proscription to sect doctrine.

Motivations for disaffiliation (Variable 2)

Because sect members experience a high degree of encapsulation (that is, their friends, relatives, concerns, activities, and thoughts are predominantly associated with the sect and its members), I hypothesized that former members would each have multiple motivations for disaffiliation. The survey findings supported this claim as well. The survey used the following four questions to test this hypothesis:

Question 25 This question is very important for our research. Please describe your reasons for leaving the 2x2s. Feel free to copy and paste from another source in which you have described these reasons.

Question 26 Listed below are some of the possible reasons for leaving the 2x2. Did you or do you share any of the following motivations? (Please select all that apply).

- Workers asked me to stop taking part in meetings / I was excommunicated
- I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church
- I felt that church doctrine was wrong
- I felt discontentment with church members
- The Workers mistreated me or my family
- The Friends mistreated me or my family
- I witnessed harm done by the Friends or workers
- I felt too restricted
- I wanted to stop feeling guilty about what I wanted to do
- I realized that I only believed because it was what I was taught or what was expected of me
- I did not agree with the subservience of women to men in the group
- I did not agree with their views on homosexuality
- I felt like I was pretending or living a lie
- My spouse or significant other wanted to leave the 2x2s
- I wanted my children to be raised differently than I was
- I was influenced by talking with former 2x2s

- I was influenced by reading publications by former 2x2s
- I was influenced by reading websites by former 2x2s
- I attended a worldly church service
- Other _____

Question 27 Listed below are the motivations you selected in the previous question. Please rank them in the approximate order you experienced them. (Qualtrics carried forward the respondents' answers from Question 26)

Question 28 Listed below are the motivations you selected. Please select your three strongest motivations for leaving the 2x2s. (Qualtrics carried forward the respondents' answers from Question 26)

Responses to the three closed questions about motivations, Questions 26 through 28 will be discussed first.

The first closed-ended question regarding motivations used the list of supplied motivations, and received 83 responses. Table 1 displays the most frequently selected motivations to Question 26, representing 64% of the responses.

Table 1. Selected responses: motivations for disaffiliation from supplied list (Question 26)

Motivation	Total
I felt that church doctrine was wrong	55
I felt like I was pretending or living a lie	43
I felt too restricted	42
I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church	41
I realized that I only believed because it was what I was taught or what was expected of me	41
I witnessed harm done by the Friends or workers	36
I wanted to stop feeling guilty about what I wanted to do (9)	31
I did not agree with the subservience of women to men in the group	31
I felt discontentment with church members	29

The total number of responses for all possible responses to this question was 545, meaning that of the 19 choices, each one was chosen an average of 28.7 times. Further, each respondent selected an average of 6.6 selections of the 19 possible selections.³ Clearly, then, each responded did have multiple motivations for disaffiliation, the primary one relating to Two-by-Two doctrine.

The following question, Question 27, asked respondents about the order in which they experienced the motivations they had selected in Question 26. The most common order selected was initially, “I felt church doctrine was wrong” followed by “I felt like I was pretending or living a lie” or “I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church. The most common motivation experienced third was tied between “I felt too restricted”, “I realized I only believed because it was what I was taught or what was expected of me” and “I felt discontentment with church members” followed by fourth, “The workers mistreated me or my family.”

In the third closed question regarding motivations, Question 28, respondents were asked to select their three strongest motivations from those they had previously selected. The most frequent selection was “I felt that church doctrine was wrong.” Table 2 displays the most frequently selected responses for the three strongest motivations for disaffiliation.

³ To be clear: 545 total responses were received for question 26. The number of possible motivations (not including “Other”) included in the question were 19. 83 respondents completed the question. Therefore, the number of selections per respondent (545 / 83) was 6.6 and the average number each selection was made (545 / 19) was 28.7.

Table 2. Three strongest motivations for disaffiliation, selected from responses to Question 28

Motivation	Total	Percentage
I felt that church doctrine was wrong	40	57%
I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church	26	33%
I felt like I was pretending or living a lie	22	28%
I witnessed harm done by the Workers or Friends	21	27%
I realized I only believed because it was what I was taught or what was expected of me	21	27%

To illustrate the findings from the three closed questions regarding motivations for disaffiliation (Questions 26-28), the discussion will now consider the responses to the open question, Question 25. This open question allowed respondents to enter textual responses describing their disaffiliation experience, and received 77 responses. These responses included both lists of specific reasons and more detailed personal narratives. Appendix C contains the full-text of all responses to this question. There were several repeated themes in the responses to this question, many including motivations for disaffiliation such as:

- mandatory obedience to workers
- realizing that sect is more “worker-focused” than Christian
- pressure to “fit in” with members
- abuse or abusive behaviors
- not wanting to lead a double life
- exclusivity; believing that the Two-by-Twos are the only way to Heaven
- learning of the origins of the sect
- questioning contradictions in doctrine / preaching by the workers

Some selected responses are included here which highlight these themes, in addition to underlining the encapsulation experienced in the sect. These first four quotes speaking to Davidman and Griel's (2007) description of seeing **holes in the sect's worldview**:

...the church is extremely exclusive and seems to shun those unaffiliated and look down on non-members for no apparent reason other than they are not professing. There was never any concern for the outside community or helping others less fortunate. I also found it particularly odd that the workers or the leaders of the church received no education or training in theology, but the majority of lessons were based on personal interpretations, so you can imagine how varied the church was nationally when you saw the different community cultures within the church from region to region. I also never felt like the focus was on a relationship with God, but doing what the workers told you and fitting in. It seems like members would just accept certain beliefs that had been handed down to them by other members and workers that had convinced them it was right without viable explanation or reasoning. What really did it for me is the fact that it came to light that several head members of the church were raping girls and one of them happened to be very close to me and nothing was ever done about it by anyone. Some workers were even caught molesting children and I just thought that the culture of the church created opportunities for this to continue through their secrecy and exclusion of "worldly" influences. I felt more like I was being brainwashed rather than encouraged to grow spiritually and this church preyed on people that may have been more vulnerable than others... (portion of response #12)

-We are the only "true" Christians talk

-This fellowship goes back to the shores of Galilee, was an outright lie (hidden origin)

-Call themselves non-denominational when they are very denominational

-Told me I had to quit smoking to be baptized...Jesus did not lay that on me. (I did quit smoking later)

-The workers snaring people

- It's all about the workers : they are the Pharisees Jesus spoke of.

-The money: they keep all donations and pretend to be poor. They don't care for anyone. I like Christians that nurse others and build hospitals, and orphanages and schools to glorify God in the name of Jesus their savior.

- The workers are just about their own glory. They can see no other glory.

I could just go on and on like this, but will stop here. (response #71)

[I] had a hard time following the rule book which consisted of 2 rules. 1. Do what the Workers say. 2. If you do not do what the Workers say you are out! Also, [name removed] and his inappropriate behavior with a young lady in our meeting was the final straw. (response #59)

At the time I left, I was unsettled by inconsistencies I noticed in the previous year. It started with noticing self-righteousness, being proud of one's humility. Shortly before I left, I was shaken from learning about sexual indiscretions by the workers, with the final straw being hearing a contradictory statement from a worker at convention. Since the preaching and testimonies are supposed to be what God gives the individual to speak, how could He give a contradictory statement? So, upon that observation and the subsequent scolding from my father, I realized I was more unsettled than ever. Boiled down, the initial reasons for leaving were mostly surface observations that didn't make sense at the time. Later, I began to research online on forums, boards, and the few sites that exist. After about six years after I left, I stumbled upon a site called "Preach the Word" where a minister had a sermon series exposing cults and the dangers of associating with them. After hearing the sermon specifically about the Two by Twos, I felt that my leaving was justified. I felt I had definitive, scriptural proof the Two by Twos are a toxic religion. I felt peace with that knowledge.

For me, to know that I am not involved with a religion that is illegitimate by concept and design, has given me the strength and peace to carry on with my life.

A few specific reasons I left:

- 2x2s lied about origins
- 2x2s protect ministers who abuse their position of power
- 2x2s are repressive, especially to women
- 2x2s are inconsistent in their actions compared to what they believe and preach
- 2x2s rob people of their spirit - members become like robots
- Worker-worship (response #1)

Many of the following responses also speak to seeing holes in the sect's worldview, but, as

Brinkerhoff and Burke (1980) discussed, they also allude to a **crisis of faith** that prompted their disaffiliation:

I realized that almost everything the 2x2s believed in was actually exceedingly judgmental and small minded. Their legalistic beliefs led to so much abuse: physical, sexual, but most prevalent (at least that I knew about) was psychological. Their beliefs, and their blind faith in them still haunt me (response #9).

I realized that if I invited an outsider to Gospel meetings that I did not believe many of the things they were bound to hear. It got down to that I could not in good conscience promote to others what my life was centered around. I could no longer live with the hypocrisy" (response #64)

I was 'groomed' for the work throughout my childhood - this however coincided with my realization that I was gay. I had to fight very hard to make sense of deal with my identity in terms of the limited frame of reference we were raised in. It so happened that at this time, that I also discovered the lies behind the meetings - and it completely caused my whole world to shatter. It became a good reason for me to leave, and deal with my sexuality once I was out of the confines of the meetings. (response #72)

The following respondents highlight **negative social tagging** (Bahr 1989) by fellow sect members, and the impact that it has, or could have had:

1. The discovery of the true origins of the religion and knowledge that I was lied to as a child by one who was present on the first bicycle mission in 1897-98.
2. The conflicts between how Jesus did things and how the Workers did things such as healing, dealing with divorce, and ex-communicating.
3. The realization that most were not motivated by love but by fear of displeasing the others. (response #30)

The way is incredibly legalistic and unfortunately unwilling to accept questioning. I questioned the stance on divorce and remarriage, celibacy for the ministry, this being the only way, double standards and so on. Unfortunately upon doing this I was labeled as unwilling, bitter, questioning, a trouble maker....and on and on. As a male I never had the double standard that was imposed on the women but had serious reservations about that as well. I actually had a good childhood, but had issues with doctrine, self-righteousness, hiding issues, double talk and other (unfortunately) unchristian behavior from people who claimed to be "the only ones". (response #50)

Finally, these respondents speak directly to the **change in role** illustrated by Ebaugh (1988) that disaffiliation had in their lives:

...I read the withdrawal of meeting privileges from our home as a distancing action which while not intended to make us quit, threw serious impediments into our opportunity for service. (portion of response #32)

As I mentioned I was in the work for 14 years. [...] I realized there were some things that while in the work, I tried to ignore. For instance, the many, many things I did as a worker that was [sic] for the conscience of others, but not my own. I began to wonder why

would there be things that God did not convict me⁴ of that I am expected to do? Isn't the whole premise that we did not have to go through a high priest, but could communicate directly with God and be convicted and taught.

Also during the years in the work, I had taken on attitudes that judged people on how well they fit into this system called "the way". Somehow I was taught that, because I was not alone in that attitude. I was taught that the weak were more likely to be judged by the workers rather than shown longsuffering or patience. Jesus would seek the weak over the strong and the "religious". In my years as the older worker, I saw favoritism shown by one of the overseers and unbridled envy and jealousy by co-workers.

I lost confidence in my own conviction that there was power in this type of worship to actually have the Spirit of Christ in our life. It seemed as though there was no power to do what Jesus said, "As I have loved you, love ye one another, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples." It seemed that, that was not how we were identifying ourselves as disciples at all. I knew from being in the work that workers for the most part, are defensive about being asked questions.

I cannot speak for any other worker then myself, but my defensiveness was because I also questioned and didn't have the answers. But I was not ready to acknowledge that yet. (response #16)

Clearly, though the respondents quoted above each had varied motivations to disaffiliate, each questioned what had been "obvious," "natural" and "implicit," to cite Berger's plausibility theory (1969: 46). As Wright (1984), Bromley (1991) and Davidman and Griel (2007) write, few of these respondents cited a singular event that motivated their disaffiliation, yet their responses each substantiate each of the disaffiliation typologies previously discussed, including finding holes in the worldview of the sect (Davidman and Griel 2007), having a crisis of faith (Brinkerhoff and Burke: 1980), experiencing negative social tagging (Bahr 1989), and seeking and weighing alternative roles (Ebaugh 1988).

I had hypothesized that the implausibility of sect doctrine in disaffiliates' lives would be the strongest motivation for their disaffiliation. This claim was supported by the findings across each of the four questions about motivations for disaffiliation. Doctrine was mentioned either

⁴ This respondent is using the phrase "convict [...] of" in its spiritual sense, rather than its legal one: Her spiritual conscience was not persuaded to act or refrain from acting in certain ways to avoid error or sin.

directly or indirectly by 51 of the 77 respondents (or 66%) in the open ended responses, it was the most frequently selected motivation from the list of 19 supplied motivations; further, it was the motivation the majority of respondents reported experiencing first when considering disaffiliating, and was the strongest motivation reported when respondents were asked to select their three strongest motivation. Three other motivations which were frequently mentioned or selected across these four questions about disaffiliates' motivations were "I felt like I was pretending or living a lie," "I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church," and "I realized I only believed because it was what I was taught or what was expected of me."

In the author's experience as a sect member, other sect members would claim that disaffiliates had left the sect because they were "bitter" or "discouraged in spirit," "hard-hearted," had "lost their vision" or were persuaded to leave by other former Two-by-Twos. Though motivations that spoke to these sentiments were included in the list of possible motivations and could have been added in the open ended responses, this data does not support these claims. Though much of the data reported by these respondents about their motivations to disaffiliate from the sect is obtained solely through their retrospective accounting, and is not representative of all former members of the Two-by-Two sect, it is clear from this data that respondents each have multiple motivations for disaffiliation from the sect, the strongest relating to the implausibility of sect doctrine.

Duration of Disaffiliation (Variable 3)

I had hypothesized that respondents would report that the decision to disaffiliate would be a lengthy process, given the highly encapsulated nature of the sect. When asked specifically about the length of time that respondents took to make the decision to disaffiliate, most

respondents reported that they had made this decision over the course of several months, over the course of a year, or over the course of several years, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Duration of Disaffiliation Process, all responses to Question 32

Response	Total	Percentage
I made the decision over the course of a month or less	12	15%
I made the decision over the course of several months	22	27%
I made the decision over the course of a year	15	19%
I made the decision over the course of several years	32	40%
Total	81	100%

In the previously discussed open-answer question about disaffiliation motivations, several respondents indicated that their disaffiliation was a long-term process, evidenced by the following quotes:

...Even after discovering all that info, and knowing I wanted to leave, it still took me 3 years to make the final break. That's how brain-washed and unsure I was (portion of Question 25, response #5)

At the age of 15 worked out I was growing up in a cult. It took another 4 years before I had the courage to leave... (selection from Question 25, response #38)

Another respondent added "I had to do a lot of processing a few years later" (Question 25, response #49). Other responses indicate that this disaffiliation process may not yet be complete for several respondents:

...Their beliefs, and their blind faith in them still haunt me. (Question 25 response #9)

...I'm still finding scriptures that the 2x2 faith has erroneously interpreted and It takes time for me to let that sink into my head, the differences... (Question 61 response #13)

... The healing process took many years. It was worth all of the struggle to be where I am today. (Question 61 response #31)

...I feel that my views concerning meeting have softened over the years ... However I'm still bothered by the thought in the back of my mind that I'm doing something wrong and that my mom probably believes that I'm not saved. (Question 61 response #39)

...I still have a lot of anger for the crushing guilt I was subjected to as a member and feel that the church took the best years of my life from me. Also, I have been alienated by most of my large family due to having left the faith. (Question 61 response #42)

Given the social ties that are created between members, and the emphasis on attendance and support of Two-by-Two meetings, the decision to disaffiliate cannot have been made lightly or quickly. As an individual's paradigm shifts, they must form an entirely different world-view, social circle, and activity schedule; one's "social cocoon" is destroyed. As Davidman and Griel write, the defection meant "unlearning lifelong roles and the community's idiomatic ways of speaking, thinking, and acting and learning new, unfamiliar ones" (2007:207).

Current social ties and contact with Two-by-Two members (Variable 4)

In terms of sect doctrine, respondents did report significant changes between their behaviors while members and their current behaviors as disaffiliates. For the 39 females who responded to the question concerning behaviors, a strong majority had changed their hairstyle (n=33), now wear pants or shorts (n=38), now use makeup (n=29), now wear jewelry (n=31), own a television (n=27), go to a theater to watch movies (n=33), listen to the radio (n=35) and consume alcoholic beverages (n=30). The 37 male respondents to a similar question reported many of the same behaviors, including owning a television (n=29), going to a theater to watch movies (n=28), listening to the radio (n=29) and consuming alcoholic beverages (n=21). A few respondents mentioned that their behaviors did not change because they were already doing things against sect doctrines when they were a member, and some added that some of these behaviors were acceptable for Two-by-Twos in their area(s), though this was not the case in the

author's experience. Therefore, it is unclear if these respondents biased these statistics by responding that they had made these changes when they have in reality continued these more mainstream behaviors. Regardless, the desire to appear and behave more "worldly" in whatever manner is a desire that goes against the encapsulation of the Two-by-Two sect, and speaks to these respondents disaffiliation motivations.

Three-quarters of the respondents to this survey reported that one or both of their parents currently profess (76% of 77 respondents, n=59) and a majority reported that both of their parents currently do (57% of 77 respondents; n=44). Further, many respondents state that they are in regular contact with current Two-by-Two members (89% or 72 of 81 respondents). Most of those they are in contact with are family members (n=61) and/or friends (n=37) (multiple selections were allowed). Though many report having this regular contact, the comfort level they felt when around those members was mixed: of 81 respondents to this question, 31% felt very comfortable, 23% felt somewhat comfortable, 31% somewhat uncomfortable and 14% very uncomfortable. Though respondent's reported comfort level around their family or friends is not necessarily related to their status as a non-believer amongst believers, their status as a non-believer must cause some tension during the interaction, or in the relationship. Restated, even though most respondents had regular contact with current Two-by-Two members, about half of respondents felt somewhat or very uncomfortable being around current members.

Most respondents had not been contacted after their disaffiliation in order to ask them to revisit a meeting (65% or 53 of 82 respondents to Question 37). However, about half of all respondents had visited a Two-by-Two service since disaffiliating (52%, or 43 of 82 respondents to this question). Of the 43 that had visited a service, 31 (72%) had revisited a funeral of a Two-by-Two member that was led by workers; 28 (65%) had revisited a meeting of an annual

convention, 20 (47%) had revisited a Sunday morning meeting and 18 (42%) had revisited a Gospel meeting (multiple selections were allowed).

The relatively lengthy disaffiliation process and its psychological impact on former members underline the encapsulating effect of the Two-by-Two sect: if it were easy to disaffiliate, the process would be quick and painless and would cause little discomfort when those who had left were around current members. However, according to these respondents, this is definitely not the case.

As for the former members' current faith practices, most report that they have no doubts about their faith (Question 46, 68% of 75 respondents; n=51) and most believe in God (Question 44). Respondents were also asked about the significance of certain practices in their religious lives, and the majority found the practices either very significant, or very insignificant. For example, 28 respondents found reading a religious or inspirational text very significant to their religious lives while 22 found it very insignificant; further, 22 found attending a religious service very significant while 28 found doing so very insignificant (Question 45). The majority of respondents have attended non-Two-by-Two service since disaffiliation (78% or 63 of 81 respondents to Question 47). However, 60% of those who have attended are not members of any religious organization (Question 50). Those that have joined an organized church are predominately members of a non-denominational Christian church (n=9) (Question 51). The most common type of service visited by former Two-by-Two members in this sample are (in order of frequency) Christian non-denominational, Baptist, denominational Christian, Catholic and Methodist, though many other types of church services were selected as those that had been visited by these respondents. From responses to Question 49, the frequency of attendance at non-Two-by-Two church services were also at the extremes: 30 respondents reported attending once a week or more frequently, while 16 reported attending once or fewer

times per year. Therefore, for those respondents who do attend services by an organized religious church, it appears that their attendance and other religious or spiritual practices are very important to them. However, a large portion of respondents do not belong to nor do they regularly attend church services of any kind, nor do they find other religious or spiritual practices very significant in their lives.

Though it is unclear how Qualtrics allowed one of the respondents to complete this survey, this respondent's responses to the open-ended questions shed some light on the attitude of current Two-by-Twos to former members and are generally representative, in the author's experience. When responding to the question "Please describe your reasons for leaving the 2x2s" (Question 25) this respondent answered:

I have not left the truth and never will because there is no other way. The true early Christian church met in homes. The early church had itinerant preachers. The early church did not build physical churches. God dwells in the heart not in a building. There is no other way that these things are evident. I have seen Jesus in this way and know with all my heart, soul and mind that there is nothing that will shake the true church of God. I hope the person conducting this research goes and listens to the workers preach, and doesn't sit on the side line criticizing the workers with information they have received from discouraged ex believers who left because they were bitter. I pray for you.
(response #76)

Claiming to have the only true religion, a religion which would be revealed by the reading of the Bible and prayer and listening to the preaching of the workers, and assuming the worst of any non-believer are frequently expressed sentiments by Two-by-Two members. Though the goal of this research was not to explore current Two-by-Two's feelings about disaffiliates, the defensiveness and supercilious tone are typical of current Two-by-Twos, in this author's experience.

LIMITATIONS

An Internet survey was chosen because it is inexpensive, allows for anonymity and thoughtful reflections on responses, and does not introduce possible embarrassment or result in socially desirable answers when discussing sensitive issues. I have used many closed questions in the survey to make it as easy to complete as possible, though a common understanding of each of the questions cannot be assumed. Performing this survey through alternate methods (in print or over the phone) may have yielded more comprehensive results, though it would have made anonymity impossible, may have caused potential embarrassment, and may have increased socially desirable responses.

I cannot claim that results are representative of all of who have disaffiliated, since I have no way to quantify the population to determine an appropriate sample size. I do not address those who have had doubts about the sect but continue professing, nor do I address those who have disaffiliated after experiencing a lower degree of encapsulation. As a self-selected sample, respondents were biased by being highly motivated to complete a survey on this topic. Further, they are respondents who are capable of and motivated to join a group of former members in an online forum, and so their responses may be even less representative of all former members. Restated, these respondents may have more extreme views than a random former Two-by-Two may have, though they may potentially have more studied views about the sect. Further, because this research relies on the retrospective self-accounting of respondents, it cannot be claimed that their responses represent the “actual” motivations that were operative at the time of disaffiliation. Rather, their descriptions of these motivations provide a window on how former Two-by-Two members have conceptualized or re-conceptualized the difficult and protracted disaffiliation process.

CONCLUSION

As a sect, again, a term which Two-by-Twos would reject, the Two-by-Twos claim to be the archetype of authentic Christian religion whose values are at odds with the larger world around them. By maintaining very distinctive beliefs and holding themselves apart from many worldly influences, Two-by-Two members form “social cocoons” (Griel and Rudy 1984:202) which mandate unity of belief. As a highly-tense sect, the Two-by-Twos encapsulate their members in a “closed social world” which is socially maintained as being plausible (Stark and Bainbridge 1985:60). Though Troeltsch’s continuum between sects and churches has been described as cyclical (Finke and Stark, 1992), there is little evidence in this study’s data of the Two-by-Two’s becoming more church-like.

Substantiated by the findings of this study, the previously obvious reality of former members’ religious world, previously maintained either by the dense social network of workers, family members, or friends in the sect became unnatural; their social reality became implausible. In this sample the gradual process each respondent undertook to disaffiliate was most strongly related to doctrine, meaning that the holes that these respondents saw in the sect’s paradigm prompted or supported their disaffiliation. Other disaffiliate typologies were also confirmed by respondents to this survey, including some disaffiliations substantiating Bahr’s “negative social tagging” (1989), and some initiated by a crisis of faith (Brinkerhoff and Burke 1980). For these highly encapsulated former members, the disaffiliation typology of a change in role (Ebaugh 1988) necessitated the “unlearning lifelong roles and the community’s idiomatic ways of speaking, thinking, and acting and learning new, unfamiliar ones” (Davidman and Griel 2007:207). Though the former Two-by-Two members who responded to this study’s survey had negative experiences either while they were members or during their disaffiliation, their willingness to articulate and explore their motivations for disaffiliation is uplifting. Since little

has been written about this particular sect, it is imperative that disaffiliates who were once highly involved in such an encapsulating group find a voice or language to describe their disaffiliation process.

In terms of sociology of religion, religious participation in this sect impacted the daily activities and behaviors on the micro-level lives of respondents. Further studies could examine these micro-level changes in more detail or could document any possible changes in doctrine that would speak to this sect becoming more church-like.

APPENDIX A. Qualtrics Survey

This survey was opened December 20, 2012 and closed February 20, 2013

Q1 The purpose of this survey is to find out about your decision to leave any affiliation you may have had with the 2x2 sect (also known as the Cooneyites, the Truth, Christian Conventions, or the Church without a name). We hope to learn about what motivated you to leave the 2x2s and your religious experiences since leaving. This survey was created in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters' degree in Sociology at the University of Kentucky. Your participation is completely voluntary and all of your responses will remain confidential. This survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. You may decline to answer any of the questions even after indicating that you consent to participate in the survey. Please take your time on each question. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in people's stories and experiences in their own words.

Q2 Please note: For the purposes of this survey the capitalized word "Friends" refers to members of the 2x2s who are not workers and the word "friends" (uncapitalized) refers to your personal friends.

Q3 Please indicate your decision about participating in this study. Agreeing to participate indicates that you are over age 18, that you have read the information provided above and that you have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time.

- I agree to participate (1)
- I would rather not participate (2)

If I would rather not particip... Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q4 Do you currently profess?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q5 Have you ever professed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Were your parents 2x2s when you were ...

Q6 When you professed, approximately how many meetings did you attend in an average week? (Please include Sunday fellowship, Bible study and Gospel meetings)

- 0 (1)
- 1 - 2 (2)
- 3 - 4 (3)
- 5 or more (4)

Q7 How old were you when you professed?

Q8 For how many years did you profess?

- less than 1 year (1)
- 1-3 years (2)
- 4-6 years (3)
- 7-10 years (4)
- 11-13 years (5)
- 14-16 years (6)
- 17-19 years (7)
- 20 years or more (8)

Q9 Were you baptized by the 2x2s?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Were you baptized by the 2x2s? Yes Is Selected

Q10 How old were you when you were baptized?

Q11 Did your parents profess when you were growing up?

- Yes, both of my parents professed. (1)
- Yes, one of my parents professed. (2)
- No, neither of my parents professed. (3)

Q12 Do either of your parents currently profess?

- Yes, both of my parents profess. (1)
- Yes, one of my parents professes. (2)
- No, neither of my parents profess. (3)

Answer If Were your parents professing when you were growing up? No, neither of my parents professed. Is Not Selected Or Do either of your parents currently profess? No, neither of my parents profess. Is Not Selected

Q13 Were meetings ever held in your parents' home?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Were meetings ever held in your parents home? Yes Is Selected

Q14 What kind of meetings were held in your parents' home? (Select all that apply)

- Sunday morning meetings (1)
- Midweek Bible studies (2)
- Union meetings (3)
- Gospel meetings (6)
- Special meetings (4)
- I grew up on the convention grounds (5)

Q15 Have you ever had meetings in your home?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Have you ever had meetings in your home? Yes Is Selected

Q16 What kind of meetings were held in your home? (Select all that apply)

- Sunday morning meetings (1)
- Midweek Bible studies (2)
- Union meetings (3)
- Gospel meetings (6)
- Special meetings (4)
- I lived on the convention grounds (5)

Q17 Are you married or in a relationship equivalent to marriage?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Are you married or in a relationship equivalent to marriage? Yes Is Selected

Q18 Has your spouse or significant other ever professed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Has your spouse or significant other ever professed? Yes Is Selected

Q19 Does your spouse or significant other currently profess?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q20 Have any of your grandparents ever professed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure (3)

Answer If Have any of your grandparents ever professed? Yes Is Selected

Q21 Do any of your grandparents currently profess?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- All of my grandparents are deceased (3)

Q22 Did you ever consider going into the work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Please describe your reasons for leav...

Q23 Did you ever go into the work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To This question is very important for o...

Q24 For how many years were you a worker?

- less than 1 year (1)
- 1 - 5 years (2)
- 6 - 10 years (3)
- 11 years or more (4)

Q25 This question is very important for our research. Please describe your reasons for leaving the 2x2s. Feel free to copy and paste from another source in which you have described these reasons.

[PAGE BREAK]

Q26 Listed below are some of the possible reasons for leaving the 2x2. Did you or do you share any of the following motivations? (Please select all that apply).

- Workers asked me to stop taking part in meetings / I was excommunicated (1)
- I felt lied to when I found out about the origins of the church (2)
- I felt that church doctrine was wrong (3)
- I felt discontentment with church members (4)
- The Workers mistreated me or my family (5)
- The Friends mistreated me or my family (6)
- I witnessed harm done by the Friends or workers (7)
- I felt too restricted (8)
- I wanted to stop feeling guilty about what I wanted to do (9)
- I realized that I only believed because it was what I was taught or what was expected of me (10)
- I did not agree with the subservience of women to men in the group (11)
- I did not agree with their views on homosexuality (12)
- I felt like I was pretending or living a lie (13)
- My spouse or significant other wanted to leave the 2x2s (14)
- I wanted my children to be raised differently than I was (15)
- I was influenced by talking with former 2x2s (16)
- I was influenced by reading publications by former 2x2s (17)
- I was influenced by reading websites by former 2x2s (18)
- I attended a worldly church service (19)
- Other (20) _____

Q27 Listed below are the motivations you selected in the previous question. Please rank them in the approximate order you experienced them.

[Carry forward responses selected from Q25]

Q28 Listed below are the motivations you selected. Please select your three strongest motivations for leaving the 2x2s.

[Carry forward responses selected from Q25]

Q29 Before leaving the 2x2s, did you discuss your separation from the group with any 2x2 member?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Before leaving the 2x2s, did you discuss your separation ... Yes Is Selected

Q30 With approximately how many 2x2 members did you discuss leaving the group?

Q31 When you think about the year before you left the 2x2s, how strong was your religious faith during that year?

- Very strong (1)
- Somewhat strong (2)
- Somewhat weak (3)
- Very weak (4)

Q32 How quickly did you make the decision to leave the 2x2s?

- I made the decision over the course of a month or less (1)
- I made the decision over the course of several months (2)
- I made the decision over the course of a year (3)
- I made the decision over the course of several years (4)

Q33 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Answer If What is your gender? Female Is Selected

Q34 Have you made any of the following changes since leaving the 2x2s?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
I have changed my hairstyle or hair length (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wear pants or shorts (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wear makeup (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wear jewelry (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have pierced ears (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I own a television (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch movies in a theater (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I listen to the radio (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I drink alcoholic beverages (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use profanity (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use tobacco products (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Answer If What is your gender? Male Is Selected

Q35 Have you made any of the following changes since leaving the 2x2s?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
I have changed my hairstyle or facial hair (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wear shorts (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I own a television (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch movies in a theater (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I listen to the radio (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I drink alcoholic beverages (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use profanity (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use tobacco products (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q36 Since leaving the 2x2s, how comfortable are you when you are around current 2x2 members?

- Very comfortable (1)
- Somewhat comfortable (2)
- Somewhat uncomfortable (3)
- Very uncomfortable (4)
- I have not experienced this situation (5)

Q37 Have you been contacted by any member of the 2x2s since you left the group for the purpose of asking you to return to meetings?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Have you been contacted by any member of the 2x2s since y... Yes Is Selected

Q38 By whom were you contacted? (Please select all that apply)

- a worker who is not related to me (1)
- a worker who is related to me (2)
- a Friend who is not related to me (3)
- a Friend who is related to me (4)

Q39 Have you revisited any type of 2x2 church service after leaving the group?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Have you revisited any type of 2x2 church service after l... Yes Is Selected

Q40 Which of the following church services did you revisit after leaving the 2x2s? (Please select all that apply)

- a meeting at convention (1)
- a Sunday morning meeting (2)
- a midweek Bible study (3)
- a Gospel meeting (4)
- a Special meeting (5)
- a funeral service (6)

Q41 Are you in regular contact with any current member of the 2x2s?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Are you in regular contact with any current member of the... Yes Is Selected

Q42 With whom are you in regular contact? (Please select all that apply.)

- family members (1)
- friends (2)
- workers (3)

Q43 Which of the following statements best expresses your belief in God?

- I do not believe in God. (1)
- I do not know whether there is a God or not. (2)
- I believe in a Higher Power, not a personal God. (3)
- I believe in God some of the time. (4)
- Though I do have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God. (5)
- I am certain God exists and I have no doubts about it. (6)

Q44 In your religious life, how significant are the following practices?

	Very significant (1)	Somewhat significant (2)	Neither significant nor insignificant (3)	Somewhat insignificant (4)	Very insignificant (5)
Personal prayer (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meditation (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading a religious or inspirational text (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening to religious music (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watching a religious program on television (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending a religious service (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saying grace before eating a meal (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrating religious holidays (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q45 Do you ever have doubts about your faith since leaving the 2x2s?

- I have no doubts about my faith. (1)
- I sometimes have doubts about my faith. (2)
- I often have doubts about my faith. (3)
- I constantly have doubts about my faith. (4)

Q46 Have you attended non-2x2 religious services since leaving the 2x2s?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To What is your current age?

Q47 What types of religious services have you attended? (Please select all that apply)

- Baptist (1)
- Catholic (2)
- Christian (3)
- Christian, nondenominational (5)
- Church of God (6)
- Churches of Christ (7)
- Disciples of Christ (4)
- Episcopalian / Anglican (8)
- Hindu (9)
- Jehovah's Witness (10)
- Jewish (11)
- Lutheran (12)
- Methodist (13)
- Mormon (14)
- Muslim (15)
- Pentecostal (16)
- Presbyterian (17)
- Seventh Day Adventist (20)
- Unitarian Universalist (18)
- Other (19) _____

Q48 On average, how frequently do you attend any type of religious service?

- multiple times per week (1)
- once per week (2)
- 2-3 times per month (3)
- once a month (4)
- every other month (5)
- several times per year (6)
- once a year (7)
- I do not attend any religious services (8)

Q49 Are you currently a member of a church?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To What is your current age?

Q50 To which religious denomination do you belong?

- Baptist (1)
- Catholic (2)
- Christian (3)
- Christian, nondenominational (5)
- Church of God (6)
- Churches of Christ (7)
- Disciples of Christ (4)
- Episcopalian / Anglican (8)
- Hindu (9)
- Jehovah's Witness (10)
- Jewish (11)
- Lutheran (12)
- Methodist (13)
- Mormon (14)
- Muslim (15)
- Pentecostal (16)
- Presbyterian (17)
- Seventh Day Adventist (20)
- Unitarian Universalist (18)
- Other (19) _____

Q51 How long have you been a member of this church?

- one year or less (1)
- 2-4 years (2)
- 5-10 years (3)
- longer than 10 years (4)

Answer If Are you married or in a relationship equivalent to marriage? Yes Is Selected

Q52 Does your spouse or significant other attend this church?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Does your spouse or significant other attend this church? Yes Is Selected

Q53 Does your spouse or significant other also belong to this church?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Does your spouse or significant other attend this church? No Is Selected

Q54 Does your spouse or significant other attend a different church?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Does your spouse or significant other attend a different ... Yes Is Selected

Q55 To which religious denomination does your spouse or significant other belong?

- Baptist (1)
- Catholic (2)
- Christian (3)
- Christian (Disciples of Christ) (4)
- Christian, nondenominational (5)
- Church of God (6)
- Churches of Christ (7)
- Episcopalian / Anglican (8)
- Hindu (9)
- Jehovah's Witness (10)
- Jewish (11)
- Lutheran (12)
- Methodist (13)
- Mormon (14)
- Muslim (15)
- Pentecostal (16)
- Presbyterian (17)
- Seventh Day Adventist (20)
- Unitarian Universalist (18)
- Other (19) _____

Q56 What is your current age?

- 18-25 (1)
- 26-35 (2)
- 36-45 (3)
- 46-55 (4)
- 56-65 (5)
- 66-75 (6)
- over age 75 (7)

Q57 What is your race?

- White/Caucasian (1)
- African American (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native American (5)
- Pacific Islander (6)
- Other (7)

Q58 What is your current marital status?

- Single, have never been married (1)
- Married, this is my first marriage (2)
- Separated (5)
- Divorced (3)
- Remarried after a divorce or separation (6)
- Widowed (4)

Q59 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School (1)
- High School / GED (2)
- Some College (3)
- 2-year College Degree (4)
- 4-year College Degree (5)
- Master's Degree (6)
- Doctoral Degree (7)
- Professional Degree (JD, MD) (8)

Q60 Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

Q61 If you know of other people who might be interested in taking this survey, please supply their names and email addresses below.

Q62 Thank you very much for participating in this study. If you have any further questions or concerns, please send them to Julene Jones at julene.jones@uky.edu. To save your responses, please click "Next page" at the bottom of this screen.

APPENDIX B. Operationalization of variables in survey questions

Table 4 lists the survey questions that operationalize each variable.

Table 4. Survey questions by variable

Variable 1: Degree of encapsulation while a Two-by-Two	5-11, 13-16, 18, 20,22-24, 29-32, 34-35
Variable 2: Motivations for disaffiliation	25-28
Variable 3: Current faith / faith practices	43-55
Variable 4: Current association with Two-by-Two members	12, 19, 21, 36-42
Demographics	17, 33, 56-59
Opt out / fail questions	3-4

APPENDIX C. Responses to Qualtrics Survey Question 25

Question 25. This question is very important for our research. Please describe your reasons for leaving the 2x2s. Feel free to copy and paste from any another source(s) in which you have described these reasons.

<p>1. At the time I left, I was unsettled by inconsistencies I noticed in the previous year. It started with noticing self-righteousness, being proud of ones humility. Shortly before I left, I was shaken from learning about sexual indiscretions by the workers, with the final straw being hearing a contradictory statement from a worker at convention. Since the preaching and testimonies are supposed to be what God gives the individual to speak, how could He give a contradictory statement? So, upon that observation and the subsequent scolding from my father, I realized I was more unsettled than ever. Boiled down, the initial reasons for leaving were mostly surface observations that didn't make sense at the time. Later, I began to research online on forums, boards, and the few sites that exist. After about six years after I left, I stumbled upon a site called "Preach the Word" where a minister had a sermon series exposing cults and the dangers of associating with them. After hearing the sermon specifically about the Two by Twos, I felt that my leaving was justified. I felt I had definitive, scriptural proof the Two by Twos are a toxic religion. I felt peace with that knowledge.</p> <p>For me, to know that I am not involved with a religion that is illegitimate by concept and design, has given me the strength and peace to carry on with my life. A few specific reasons I left:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2x2s lied about origins- 2x2s protect ministers who abuse their position of power- 2x2s are repressive, especially to women- 2x2s are inconsistent in their actions compared to what they believe and preach- 2x2s rob people of their spirit- members become like robots- Worker-worship
<p>2. Once my eyes were opened to the way other Christians led their lives I began to disagree with the way The Truth did things. Then I learned of all of the sexual abuse being hidden, the way money was passed, excommunications, and most of all the hypocrisy, I left and knew I would never go back.</p>
<p>3. See the following link http://www.anotherstep.net/ourstory/</p>
<p>4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-False doctrine-Financial fraud-Misled about history of the church-Sex abuse cover up in the ministry-Preaches only true path to heaven-Uncomfortable around members-Corrupt leaders-Disbelief in god
<p>5. I discovered information online that outlined the history of the 2x2s (how it was started in the late 1800s by William Irvine in Ireland). Having never felt a true conviction to 'profess', but doing it because it was expected of me, it was the final step in deciding that I had no interest in continuing what I had long considered a farce of a life. Even after discovering all that info, and</p>

<p>knowing I wanted to leave, it still took me 3 years to make the final break. That's how brain-washed and unsure I was.</p>
<p>6. Main reason: exclusivity. Belief that the 2x2 was the only right way.</p>
<p>7. Because their beliefs and practices didn't line up with the Bible--which they claimed was their only standard. Because they lied; claimed they started with Jesus - and the truth was they started with Wm Irvine about 100 years ago. Because I was in close contact with others I could not deny were Christians who were not 2x2s; which meant the F&Ws were not God's Only True Way on earth. Asked myself: Why stay in such a hard way to serve God? And didn't want the heavy burdens to be put on my children also. So I cut short my losses, left the 2x2 system and began a mission to help other questioning 2x2 learn about the history, et al.</p>
<p>8. It was a gradual process- the leaving. I started finding more and more info about the Cooneyites which the group i attended never said anything about..started going to less and less mtgs and kinda climaxed with a total leaving of the group and upset...I was able to sort things out and come to live at peace with myself seeing the 2x2's as victims themselves. I thank the internet. Wouldn't have much of a clue aside from the internet what was happening. I feel that leaving the 2x2's is making me so much the wiser and been learning ever since in all respects</p>
<p>9. I realized that almost everything the 2x2s believed in was actually exceedingly judgmental and small minded. Their legalistic beliefs led to so much abuse: physical, sexual, but most prevalent (at least that I knew about) was psychological. Their beliefs, and their blind faith in them still haunt me.</p>
<p>10. first, I need to clarify some previous answers 1 "Professing" is poorly defined. I consider myself still professing Godliness, just not in the 2x2 system. 2. Both my parents are deceased, professing 2x2ism until they died in their 90's. 3. My first wife "professed" 2x2ism, rejecting that system twenty years before she slipped into eternity. 4. My present wife is not, and has never professed 2x2ism. I was falsely accused of something I simply was totally innocent of doing/being, and excommunicated. Now I know I was being set free but it was very difficult to endure at the time.</p>
<p>11. I left in the late 1970's as a teen. The rules were too oppressive and I felt I would be going to hell anyways for living a double life- so why not just quit. Mom and Dad were both professing so it was difficult.</p>
<p>12. I left the Truth for several reasons, and I will try to be as informative to you as possible. First, I don't agree with several of their practices, such as not celebrating Christmas or any other Christian holidays, because I feel that this is just bizarre and never received a satisfactory answer when I asked. I also never understood why pants were so "worldly" and not allowed. My mother made me wear shorts in the winter time to school because she wouldn't allow pants of any kind, and this is without leggings or tights. Crazy!! There just seemed to be a double standard for the men and women of the religion concerning clothing. Also, the church is extremely exclusive and seems to shun those unaffiliated and look down on non-members for no apparent reason other than they are not professing. There was never any concern for the outside community or helping others less fortunate. I also found it particularly odd that the workers or the leaders of the church received no education or training in theology, but the majority of lessons were based on personal interpretations, so you can imagine how varied the church was nationally when you saw the different community cultures within the church from region to region. I also never felt like the focus was on a relationship with God, but doing what the workers told you and fitting in.</p>

It seems like members would just accept certain beliefs that had been handed down to them by other members and workers that had convinced them it was right without viable explanation or reasoning. What really did it for me is the fact that it came to light that several head members of the church were raping girls and one of them happened to be very close to me and nothing was ever done about it by anyone. Some workers were even caught molesting children and I just thought that the culture of the church created opportunities for this to continue through their secrecy and exclusion of "worldly" influences. I felt more like I was being brainwashed rather than encouraged to grow spiritually and this church preyed on people that may have been more vulnerable than others. There is a blatant lack of organization or any type of true administration and education for leaders. It is just a joke to me and I am thrilled to not have to feel guilty about wearing pants now, a weight has been lifted when I discovered what a relationship with God was really like and this church was not "The Way".

13. When I left I had spent six years preparing for a place in the work. This means I had been accepted but put on a waiting list until the overseer of my area felt that I was old enough to start in the work. The 2x2s were my life - everything I did was for the group, the workers, and to help others find the truth so that they would not go to a lost eternity. I spent that time with the workers learning about their lives and I started to see people being mistreated within the group and came to a decision that I could not in good conscience suggest that other people join a group where there was so much abuse. At this point I also came to see the way the group conducted itself as very unhealthy. I couldn't accept the attitudes that I was expected to adopt about others outside of the group. The thing was that I was so indoctrinated into the group that I felt that I was caught between a rock and a hard spot. I didn't want to go to an unsaved eternity especially as I was a prodigal and was in that space of not being a worker but not being just a normal Friend. Yet, I couldn't live in the hell that the 2x2 group had become. I felt that I couldn't grow anymore that I was being stifled and there were many other reasons but not being able to live with myself inside of the group perhaps was the biggest reason for leaving.

14. I went away to college and formed my own opinions.

15. Felt too restricted in pursuing career path, esp as NO family professed ie no ties. But I would have left MUCH earlier if I knew the celibate ministry was/is having sex with each other, with married Friends, with children, ...

16. As I mentioned I was in the work for 14 years. I got burned out as I found the life of the work very difficult. I have an introverted personality and all the endless visits and two hour meals, 3 times a day exhausted me mentally. So when I left the work, I exercised my right to privacy and except for a few Friends I didn't hang out with the Friends and I only went to Sunday morning and the occasional gospel meeting. It helped me to process things better. I realized there were some things that while in the work, I tried to ignore. For instance, the many, many things I did as a worker that was for the conscience of others, but not my own. I began to wonder why would there be things that God did not convict me of that I am expected to do? Isn't the whole premise that we did not have to go through a high priest, but could communicate directly with God and be convicted and taught.

Also during the years in the work, I had taken on attitudes that judged people on how well they fit into this system called "the way". Somehow I was taught that, because I was not alone in that attitude. I was taught that the weak were more likely to be judged by the workers rather than shown longsuffering or patience. Jesus would seek the weak over the strong and the "religious". In my years as an the older worker, I saw favoritism shown by one of the overseers and unbridled envy and jealousy by co-workers.

<p>I lost confidence in my own conviction that there was power in this type of worship to actually have the Spirit of Christ in our life. It seemed as though there was no power to do what Jesus said, " As I have loved you, love ye one another, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples." It seemed that, that was not how we were identifying ourselves as disciples at all. I knew from being in the work that workers for the most part, are defensive about being asked questions.</p>
<p>I cannot speak for any other worker then myself, but my defensiveness was because I also questioned and didn't have the answers. But I was not ready to acknowledge that yet.</p>
<p>17. Because they believe they are the only ones with a chance at salvation which means everyone but them will burn in hell for eternity.</p>
<p>18. I became very disillusioned when my sister-in-law worker made demands that I leave my own home with my family (including husband children & my own mother living with me at the time) & move into my father-in-laws home so she could go back into the work after she had been home taking care of her mother. It wasn't just that she demanded it but insinuated that that I was selfish if I didn't do so & my husband was "henpecked" because he wouldn't make me do so. It was also that another sister worker attempted to talk me into moving. Not one worker stood by me & said anything against her. Only one of the friends made any effort to show any sympathy for me. All of these reasons why, not only she, but all the friends acting the way that they did--began to dawn on me of just how the internal workings of the truth were so psychologically manipulating.</p>
<p>19. Judgementalism Exclusivism</p>
<p>20. I went back to school to get my masters and realized how much I was missing in terms of socialization and culture. I was not supposed to have friends "outside." I was also looked down upon for continuing my education. I began feeling more and more restricted.</p>
<p>21. My first wife was a slut and deserted my son and myself a week after his 2nd bday. After 4 years I remarried and was tossed out. But, I was planning on leaving. I was told to pray for my wife's death, rather than bother the workers about permission to remarry.</p>
<p>22. I left the 2x2's after learning about all of the CSA and other sexual crimes that have been going on in the worker-ship for almost the entire 2x2 existence. I also was one that had been lied to about the origins of the 2x2 faith. I refused to back up the 2x2 faith with my presence or my money!</p>
<p>23. I quit believing in that type of God</p>
<p>24. Did not like the restrictive lifestyle. Wanted to be like our "Worldly" friends, and people we worked with. Did not like being exclusive and our contempt of other Churches.</p>
<p>25. God called me away from the group.</p>
<p>26. It's a cult</p>
<p>27. Got fed up with the lies and criticisms of other religions</p>
<p>28. I came to the realization that they weren't the "only way" to Heaven; that there were other Christians out there. I saw the cruel way they manipulated people with guilt, shame and other ways of spiritual abuse--and it didn't seem like God would operate in that manner.</p>
<p>29. Discovered that William Irvine was "the beginning" not what I was always taught, ie "the shores of Galilee."</p>
<p>30. 1. The discovery of the true origins of the religion and knowledge that I was lied to as a child by one who was present on the first bicycle mission in 1897-98. 2. The conflicts between how Jesus did things and how the Workers did things such as healing, dealing with divorce, and ex-communicating.</p>

3. The realization that most were not motivated by love but by fear of displeasing the others.
31. The more I saw, the more I saw people being hypocritical.
32. An extended discussion of my exit can be found at this link - http://professing.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=general&action=display&thread=17741 I post under the pseudonym of 'what'. [A portion of this respondent's initial post in the thread provided is included here:] <u>Quit, Pushed out or Excommunicated?</u> This is the central question that seems to be driving much of the contention about our leaving the f&w fellowship both on-line and in discussion with our friends. I certainly did quit going to meeting because it was an act of volition on my part. Yet, I continue to feel I was pushed out. I read the withdrawal of meeting privileges from our home as a distancing action which while not intended to make us quit, threw serious impediments into our opportunity for service. Some of the friends are wanting me to think of it as purely a material decision made by the workers; that Bible studies in split homes can cause practical issues within the marriage, so caution needs to be exercised, et cetera. But somehow I don't really feel this has been done for my own good. From the other side of the fence, some ex's feel I was ex-communicated from the fellowship. IOW, the workers preferred to see me leave. I don't actually believe that either. Interesting how we interpret events to re-inforce our own baseline assumptions about life's matters. [...] I have decided that service to my God and Saviour is likely better placed in some other regiment, so we will see where this goes. The most significant change in my core beliefs is that unity in the kingdom is enhanced through my being open to the Spirits' work in the lives of all who confess the Christ (1 John 4), regardless of their ultimate disposition before the Throne. I would like to have retained that working assumption from within the f&w fellowship, but it seems that our actions along that line have been 'read' in a much different way than we intended. The result of that is that the workers took actions that distanced us from the fellowship, and well, here we are.
33. Did not believe in God.
34. I was not willing to live the lifestyle - it was very strict in the 1960s.
35. I professed after having a dream that I was burning in hell. Fear is not a good motivator for me, and before long I just could not keep up the charade of following the dress code, saying all the right things when praying and in testimony, and being a "good" girl. I had been told that I would have to give up my unprofessing boyfriend in order to be baptized and, although I did it, I was furious and never got over being angry. After a few years of dressing and looking like a freak, I just stopped going. I never felt God's presence. I always thought something must be wrong with me because I had no joy.
36. History cover-up. Earthly Founder. Unbiblical. The more I learned the less I could stand being associated with them.
37. Even though I was born and raised going to meeting, I never believed. I hated the hypocrisy of it all even as a young kid. I was allowed to act one way away from meeting (wore jeans, went to movies, played sports, watched TV) then had to hide all those things about myself around the friends. I also never logically understood how we could be the only people in the entire world that would go to heaven. Because of these main things, I have never attended meetings again after moving out of my parents house in 2002.
38. At the age of 15 worked out I was growing up in a cult. It took another 4 years before I had the courage to leave. At the time I was fully prepared to leave my family as well.

39.	Offended by [name removed] (worker). Left because they told me to quit reading and praying with another professing friend. I followed Matthew 18:15-21 and they were very upset. The main reason I left was because they taught that I should obey them instead of God. see http://www.2x2ministry.org/why_i_left.php
40.	confusion and bad teaching from parents that makes it impossible to feel peace in the meetings. i would like to work out this confusion so i could share in the fellowship with my wife and kids.
41.	I didn't really believe but was very passive about leaving. Knowing the family trauma etc that it would cause vs my ability to stay under the radar and live my own life. However, I married "outside" and that meant the local Overseer got involved. He considered this required a period where I (we) would attend gospel meetings only, followed by a "we'll see.." decision point. At that point I realized I had no reason to go back, and I didn't. (Your "changes since leaving" question later is imprecise. Take drinking alcohol, for example: I drank alcohol before I left the 2x2 so drinking it now is not a change.... Same with most of the other questions - radio, cinema, makeup ...etc ...)
42.	MY REASONS FOR LEAVING THE 2X2's I had professed as a teen-ager and was baptized at convention. After convention, I was envisioning my future life as a '2x2'. I came to the realization that I could no longer go on and pretend or act as if I was a perfect '2x2'. I just knew in my heart, there was 'no way' that I could follow all the unwritten 'rules'. SO GOD AND I HAD A "LITTLE TALK". "I'm in an impossible situation!" "I just got baptized as the next step for an approved '2x2". "I knew that I was a 'hypocrite' - A person who pretends to be an approved '2x2' but in reality I was not. "If the only way to get to heaven is via the "only way 2x2's", then I guess I was destined to go to hell." "So if I was going to hell - then it seems that I had no choice but to have a 'hell of a good time" getting there." "Finally - I knew that there I was 'no way' that I could continue to be a '2x2'." "God - So what do I do now?" I don't believe God actually answered me at this time. God totally answered my 'impossible situation!' much later in life. At the time of my 'little talk' - It seemed to me that God would have become 'very angry' with me and 'all hell would occur' - This didn't happen - in fact nothing happened! However, a warm, comfortable feeling came over me. God seemed to answer! "DON'T WORRY - BE HAPPY" "EVERY THINGS OKAY" "i AM NOT ANGRY" I left the 2x2's over 40 years ago. The main reason was that I was not going to be a "hypocrite" because I knew that's what I would have been if I had continued to try to live up to the 'expected unwritten rules and regulations'
43.	I was asked to stop going to meetings and taking part. I did not chose this, but this was decided by the workers and I was told of their decision when I went to Sun morning meeting
44.	I met some Christians and attended a church service outside of meetings and realised they had something we did not have. The Holy Spirit touched me and opened my eyes. And then after that I read a book with a couple of pages about the meetings in it which stated that the group had been started by a man and not Jesus like we had been taught,
45.	Lack of belief in the Christian God Sexual abuse by a worker
46.	Sexually molested by 2 workers as a child, 50+ years ago. Sold convention ground in name of Christian conventions of Australia, lied about it deception by claiming no knowledge. Cover up of criminal CSA
47.	I was very unhappy with the hypocrisy present in the 2x2 church. I eventually came to believe that it is just another man made church. At that point I left to find a more biblically sound church
48.	In my experience with leaving meetings (May 2010), I took it upon myself to read and

contemplate what was written in the New Testament about salvation and prayed fervently to God that he would grant me an understanding that would lead to peace in my life. I hope I can make myself clear, but what I received from that process was an understanding about salvation by grace that stood apart from what I had absorbed from being in meetings my whole life. I realized that my beliefs about salvation were essentially "assumed" beliefs as opposed to beliefs that I received from my own searching of scriptures and praying to God. That is not the fault of the "fellowship" but I believe it is the experience of many who were raised in it. I don't recall workers in Gospel meeting providing an expository teaching of the scriptures that pertain to salvation, but rather more about "the ministry of Christ", meeting in the home and justification of the 2x2 way being the only right way. They of course did not come out and directly say that the fellowship was the only true way. Instead, a person listening draws the inference over a long period of meetings. I feel very strongly that the preaching of the "Gospel story" can be delivered very directly in a couple of meetings. Unfortunately, the workers are burdened with trying to tell the story of Jesus PLUS indirectly show people that the fellowship is the only true way until "they" get the revelation.

49. I went to graduate school in an area of the country with very few friends. I couldn't imagine not professing, but once peer pressure was reduced, I started doing things with worldly friends and then started missing more and more meetings. No one chased after me. I drifted away. I had to do a lot of processing a few years later.

50. The way is incredibly legalistic and unfortunately unwilling to accept questioning. I questioned the stance on Divorce and remarriage, celibacy for the ministry, this being the only way, double standards and so on. Unfortunately upon doing this I was labeled as unwilling, bitter, questioning, a trouble maker....and on and on. As a male I never had the double standard that was imposed on the women but had serious reservations about that as well. I actually had a good childhood, but had issues with doctrine, self-righteousness, hiding issues, double talk and other (unfortunately) unchristian behavior from people who claimed to be "the only ones".

51. Realization that the 2x2s were no different than any other denomination; that workers do not agree among themselves on major points of doctrine; boredom!

52. (1) The workers used my name as a false witness against a new convert whom they excommunicated.
(2) The worker stopped the Sunday meeting to scold my wife about something she knew nothing about.
(3) The workers lied to and about each other and the friends to have a young man arrested and prosecuted.
(4) I was accused of promoting immorality among the young people -- I actually confronted the workers with their lies young people,
(5) The elder and another man from our meeting met in jail and one refused to speak to the other because he was "evil".
(6) A worker told me my wife and I had a perverted private relationship -- very long story.
(7) People were being booted out and we were advised not to speak with them or anything.
(8) I was reported to the police for disturbing the church, by a man I who did not come to my meeting.
(9) The elder of the meeting screamed for 90 minutes non-stop and uninterrupted on the phone -- the workers approved.
(10) The elder's wife told me in front of the workers that my wife makes her sick to her stomach, and repeated it.
(11) I was accused of having a convention for people who had been put out of meetings -- it was really a picnic of professing friends.

<p>(12) Overseers were consulting about what to do about the "convention" I was planning.</p> <p>(13) I reported a worker to the police for raping children for 25 years, and he got life in prison.</p> <p>(14) The workers where I live now preach a different gospel than where I came from.</p> <p>(15) The ex-Catholic 5-year professing elder of our meeting gave me a long lecture about there being workers' lists every year since Jesus Christ.</p> <p>(16) He told me I had an evil spirit and he couldn't have fellowship with me.</p> <p>(17) The friends in the area were all told to avoid socializing with me and my family.</p> <p>(18) The wife of the man who reported me to the police perjured herself in court on her husband's direction -- in a case against another friend.</p> <p>(19) Workers 2000 miles away, whom I'd never met, were warning my friends (Friends) to shun me because I was teaching a false doctrine. Eventually a worker told me what the false doctrine was, and I had never heard of it and none of my friends ever heard of it.</p> <p>(20) I made it my business to become knowledgeable on the history of the 2x2s and Christianity (27 credit hours of university credits).</p> <p>(21) They tried to kick me out, but they couldn't ever prove I had lied about anything, so I left on my own terms.</p>
<p>53. The "weight" of it all became more than I could bear. I chose to "go to hell" rather than continuing, even though I really didn't understand what was causing the "weight". I had been divorced for 5 years, and the "gospel grapevine" and shunning was horrible, but I didn't realize at the time that it had anything to do with my leaving.</p>
<p>54. The exclusivity of the 2x2s believing that they are the only ones who are 'saved'. The focus on 'the meeting in the home' and 'the homeless preacher' as being necessary for salvation, rather than a focus on Christ. The fact that, when the Friends speak about 'the Way' and 'the Truth', they are not speaking about Christ, but the meetings. The fact that they do not ask if someone is 'Christian', but rather, if someone is 'professing'. In fact, in my experience, 'worldly Christians' and other churches were seen as being damned. One did not associate with other Christians, unless it was to invite them to a mission of. Also, and most importantly, the fact that I was never sure if I was saved because salvation depended on more than the blood of Christ - I had to live like Christ (and because he was 'just a man who came to show us how to live') it meant that I should be able to live like that too. Of course, I couldn't, because I'm human and I became more and more depressed because I knew I could never be good enough no matter how hard I tried. I believe I am saved by grace through faith in Christ and his atoning blood - not by works or anything I can do myself. However, a doctrine of 'grace' is seldom, if ever, preached by the 2x2 ministry. I hope these comments give some idea. I could write reams but these are the main reasons.</p>
<p>55. When I discovered that the beginnings in Ireland. This led to further investigation and the lies became too much to tolerate.</p>
<p>56. Two main reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I discovered discrepancies by the score between what Workers teach and what the Bible teaches - for example we were taught by Workers that Jesus Christ was/is our elder brother, "a man just like you and me" while the Bible clearly shows Him in control of laying down and taking up His life, as well as entering a locked room without opening the lock or the door (for just a couple of the superhuman things He performed). 2. We were taught by Workers that our church "went right back to Christ" "was established by Christ" (in the first century, while many of those Workers were very much aware that the 2x2 church was founded by William Irvine in the later 1800s in Ireland -- i.e., those Workers

knowingly lied to us while claiming to be the only human spokespersons for God on earth.
57. found that my beliefs had changed and I did not fit in
58. My desire to experience life and live "normally"; join the human race, was stronger than my convictions for my family's belief system. The legalism became so oppressive along with my inability to reconcile what I read in the Bible with how we did things. I also came to know normal Christians who attended normal churches (or not) who were more confident and real in their salvation than I (and many Friends and family) and who were doing more for God's Kingdom than I saw anyone in the "truth" doing, workers and Friends alike. Two of my fathers four siblings are lifetime workers, (his youngest brother and only sister, now in their 80s) highly revered, "famous workers", so I would (or am) still highly recognizable amongst the Friends. Lots of family and extended peer pressure to remain inside. I am now age 56, married with three children, so I'm long removed from the cult but because of mother and four siblings still in, it remains part of my life and experience.
59. Had a hard time following the rule book which consisted of 2 rules. 1. Do what the Workers say. 2. If you do not do what the Workers say you are out! Also, [name removed] and his inappropriate behavior with a young lady in our meeting was the final straw.
60. Legalism, false doctrine, exclusive beliefs, not growing in faith, dishonesty with history,
61. it was not right
62. There was never a definitive time when I left. I just drifted away. I grew up in what they called a "divided home". My subsequent lifestyle wasn't conducive to being in meeting.
63. The 2x2 doctrine as preached by the workers did not align to the Bible Key areas of difference were the 2x2's did not preach grace, did not believe in the Trinity and had a form of ministry which did not match the way in which the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. The 2x2's were exclusive and did not accept that any other Christians outside their way could be saved. When questioned about key beliefs the main 2x2 workers were incredibly defensive and accusatory.
64. I realized that if I invited an outsider to Gospel meetings that I did not believe many of the things they were bound to hear. It got down to that I could not in good conscience promote to others what my life was centered around. I could no longer live with the hypocrisy.
65. I had suspected for many, many years that the group was not what it said it was... I had studied other cults,(Mormons) for many years as well. I became VERY ill in 2008, and needed assistance, financially, medically, emotionally, and socially... I had been unable to go to meetings due to my illness, (I was NEVER contacted by anyone from my meeting, nor any workers,). Because I was home alone a lot, and still had internet access, I began to read the newspaper reports from Ireland, those very early reports of Irvine's shenanigans, and began to put all the pieces together. I also began to realize that my paternal grandparents, must have been approached by those very early workers, in South Dakota, or Nebraska. I spent several hours studying the timelines connecting Irvine's workers and my family of origin. AS my illness worsened, and I was even more alone and had thoughts of suicide, one night I literally fell on the floor begging the Lord to make all of this information clear to me.. One Friday AM, I could no longer take the pain of my illness, and called 911 for help..... I spent 10 days in the hospital, 4 pints of blood, among many other treatments, including serious surgery on my stomach. When I came home, I spent hours praying for the REAL TRUTH.... Just before Thanksgiving in 2009 I was feeling well enough to return to meetings, I went with my only sibling and his wife. He was elder that day, in the home that the meetings were in, the bread and wine were passed, I took my tiny piece of bread, and when the lady next to me went to pass the cup, my sister in law,

reached out in front of me and took the cup away.... I watched to see if my brother had seen it, and he had not.... That was the final straw. I had received NO HELP whatsoever from any professing persons, including my family....My family was of no help either.. I had read about the shunning that would happen, but I had ALREADY been shunned way before I stopped going... I went home that day, and praised the Good Lord that he had led me OUT of the burdens of that cultic faith.. I was totally disillusioned about the negative impact that the group had had on my family of origin..... I was not really angry, just sorry that my ancestors had ever come into contact with these people. My sibling and his wife, remain in the clutches of the group, but the REALLY good news is that my niece's husband and her children have left the group as well, I have prayed and prayed for the truth, the REAL TRUTH to be revealed to them some day. Thanks for your studies of this group,

66. We (my wife and I) were excommunicated in 1999 because we refused to unconditionally support the workers in actions they had been taking to remove certain Friends from the fellowship (i.e. excommunicate them), and in removal of meetings from some homes where the elders had raised concerns regarding some of the workers' actions and behavior. Our reasons for not supporting their actions was because of concerns we had regarding moral behavior of some workers, the way that money was being obtained through estates, etc.

67. I struggled with 2 issues:
1. The origins of the 2X2's. I was told it was passed down from Jesus but I didn't believe it and was never convinced with the lack of evidence presented to show me that it did. I read a lot about the dark ages and the killing off of the Apostles and early Christian Church so I knew that no Church (other than Catholicism) survived the dark ages in an organised form.
2. I struggled with the claimed authority of the leaders to act in God's name - ie. lack of Priesthood authority to baptise and make rules for members (friends). It seemed to ad-hoc form me and up to the workers own decisions on everything that mattered. That did not seem to be how God would run his Church on Earth as he is a God of Order.

These 2 issues came to a head when I was in my late teens and I was accused of serious sin that I did not commit. I was never given a chance to tell my side of the story...just accused of the sin by the workers and then told I was not to participate in meetings. This confirmed that the workers had no God-given authority or guidance from the Holy Ghost as they would have known that what I was accused of was false if they were truly inspired by the right source.

68. Two of the friends from my meeting were arrested for different crimes and it started a three-year cascade of events (and revelations for me!). We had seen too much corruption and hypocrisy. My mother and I left together and my father followed less than 1 year later. I am fifth generation born-and-raised in the church so it was a big deal.

69. Once I discovered the true origins of the 2x2s, I couldn't close my eyes to the truth (unintentional pun!). I had always questioned many things. I am a seeker, and a questioner, and that was never encouraged. I was held captive by the "one true way" until I learned that it didn't actually date back to Jesus. Once I was confident of that, I walked away.

70. My professing mother died suddenly at 56yrs. i found no comfort from mtg people at that stage as common talk was it was God's will. I found more realistic comfort and support from some good friends I had met through my work. I was becoming disillusioned with it all. My spiritual experience was changing and I could not in honestly uphold that lifestyle anymore. I still am a spiritual person but time has revealed to me how 'cultish' the meetings was especially now with reading the info about William Irvine. Unfortunately my mother died before I knew about all this and could not discuss it with her. I feel sorry on her behalf as she believed it was

<p>the original true way and not started by man! it seems all a bit of a farce now. Cheers.</p>
<p>71. -We are the only "true" Christians talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -This fellowship goes back to the shores of Galilee, was an outright lie (hidden origin) -Call themselves non-denominational when they are very denominational -Told me I had to quit smoking to be baptized...Jesus did not lay that on me. (I did quit smoking later) -The workers snaring people - It's all about the workers : they are the Pharisees Jesus spoke of. -The money: they keep all donations and pretend to be poor. They don't care for anyone. I like Christians that nurse others and build hospitals, and orphanages and schools to glorify God in the name of Jesus their savior. - The workers are just about their own glory. They can see no other glory. <p>I could just go on and on like this, but will stop here.</p>
<p>72. I was 'groomed' for the work throughout my childhood - this however coincided with my realization that I was gay. I had to fight very hard to make sense of deal with my identity in terms of the limited frame of reference we were raised in. It so happened that at this time, that I also discovered the lies behind the meetings - and it completely caused my whole world to shatter. It became a good reason for me to leave, and deal with my sexuality once I was out of the confines of the meetings.</p>
<p>73. Realized that I didn't believe in god from a very young age (around 10-12) and started to try and withdraw from meetings, avoid convention whenever possible. Reasons for leaving the truth in particular was the contradictory teachings, murky history, lack of theological clarity and of course, with any religion, outright unsupported claims.</p>
<p>74. Sickened by a woman who always talked about the outsiders who did not know God. Read internet info on beginnings. Started to see that scripture didn't fit 2x2 theology.</p>
<p>75. I left because I found through reading information online that the gospel/teachings of the 2X2's is false according to the Bible. I heard and believed the true gospel of God's grace and free gift of salvation from reading my Bible and studying other Christian teachers online. I also began to attend a church before I left meetings and realized what I had once believed was just a lie. I then could no longer fellowship with the friends and workers so I left with my four children before any of them professed.</p>
<p>76. I have not left the truth and never will because there is no other way. The true early Christian church met in homes. The early church had itinerant preachers. The early church did not build physical churches. God dwells in the heart not in a building. There is no other way that these things are evident. I have seen Jesus in this way and know with all my heart soul and mind that there is nothing that will shake the true church of God. I hope the person conducting this research goes and listens to the workers preach, and doesn't sit on the side line criticizing the workers with information they have received from discouraged ex believers who left because they were bitter. I pray for you.</p>
<p>77. Even though I grew up in a family where every member professed and many of my family members had meetings in their homes, I never felt like I fit in. I was always a tomboy growing up and the criticism I experienced for simply being who I was was enough to dissuade me from ever professing. growing up I always hating going to meeting and being around the</p>

friends because I felt like I was constantly being judged and criticized and I felt like the only way I could ever fit in and be a "good professing woman" would be to change every aspect of who I was as a person. I always hated the way women in the truth were subjected to an entirely separate set of rules that were much harsher than the rules that dictated men's lives and I felt that it was quite telling that the older brothers were constantly harping on the women. I had always had every intention of leaving the truth as soon as i was able to financially support myself

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