

Becoming Lutheran Qualitative Analysis Summary

Exploring the Journey of American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran

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General:

Survey conducted using: SurveyMonkey

Summary: The qualitative survey is the second survey in the Becoming Lutheran research project. While the first survey captured quantitative data, this survey attempts to provide reason, motives, and insights to the quantitative data. To learn more about the quantitative study please refer to, *Becoming Lutheran Quantitative Analysis Summary*.

Problem Thesis:

The journey for American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheranism thought is a long, difficult, and sometimes scary road. The shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is not something that just happens overnight, nor is it an easy shift. The shift has linguistic, emotional, worldview, and epistemological challenges that accompany it, thus producing a great deal of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty for the individual. This also presents a challenge for Lutheran pastors in knowing how to minister to parishioners coming out of American Evangelicalism into their parish.

Purpose Thesis:

Purpose: The purpose of this Major Applied Project (MAP) is to learn about the linguistic challenges, emotional struggles, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts of American Evangelicals who have begun making this shift into Lutheran thought, as well as Evangelicals who have already made the shift. Furthermore, this MAP will attempt to identify patterns in the journey from Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. By diagnosing possible patterns and identifying common characteristics in the journey, I hope the findings will provide insights and comfort for those who are experiencing the journey. I also hope to glean from the study ways in which Lutheran pastors can more effectively care for and shepherd these individuals who are in the journey towards Lutheranism.

Date of Survey:

Begin Date: February 9th of 2013

End Date: March 11th of 2013

Survey Participant Response:

Total Response: 252

Final Admitted Surveys: 224 (Note: The 224 participants consisted of 200 participants from the first quantitative survey and 24 new participants.)

Disqualified Surveys: 28

- 3 new participants were disqualified due to their answer on a screen question.
- 23 participant surveys were discarded due to the surveys being very incomplete (i.e., only 10-20% complete).
- 2 new participant surveys were removed from the final calculations for not meeting the criteria of the study.

Statistical Accuracy:

The qualitative survey results represent 65.15% of the participants from the first quantitative survey (i.e., 200 qualitative responses divided by 307 quantitative responses equals 65.15%).

Qualitative Survey Analysis:

The qualitative survey was analyzed by an analysis group to ensure objectivity. The analysis meeting was held on March 17th of 2013 at Sidney Lutheran Brethren Church in Sidney, MT. The analysis team consisted of 3 men and 3 women of whom there were clergy, laymen, and church workers from 2 different denominations (i.e., CLBA, LCMS).

Qualitative Results:**1) Before you began the journey towards and into Confessional Lutheranism, where did you acquire your Christian teaching?**

Generally speaking, while in American Evangelicalism survey participants acquired Christian teaching from popular bestselling authors, authors that seemed to be at the top of Evangelical bookstore top 10 lists at one point or another. More specifically these authors are not historic, but currently alive, with the exception of C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. Participants also acquired a majority of their Christian teaching from what their local pastor was teaching.

2) Where do you currently acquire your Christian teaching?

Generally speaking, survey participants who are journeying or have journeyed into Confessional Lutheranism seemed to have a balance between present-day teaching sources (i.e., Issues, Etc., Worldview Everlasting, White Horse Inn, Fighting for the Faith, Concordia Publishing House) and historical Lutheran teachers (i.e., Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, C.F.W. Walther, Hermann Sasse, and Bo Giertz). Finally, participants seemed to be much more specific and selective in what they read and who they learn from compared to how they operated before in American Evangelicalism.

3) From the first survey, 91% of respondents stated that they read and understand their Bible differently due to the journey into Lutheran thought. If applicable, briefly describe what changes/shifts happened in how you read and understand the Bible.

Generally speaking, the biggest change in how respondents read the Bible came about from a new understanding of Law and Gospel. Thus, this understanding of Law and Gospel helped respondents to see that they previously read the Bible as a 'how to' handbook on Christian living. Now though, respondents see that the Bible is not about the Christian (i.e., me), but about Jesus Christ and His grace for them (i.e., for me).

- 4) From the first survey, 93.1% of respondents stated that their view of the Christian faith changed (i.e., God, Salvation, etc...). If applicable, briefly explain 2-3 things that changed in your view of the Christian faith.**

Generally speaking, the biggest shift that occurred in how respondents view the Christian faith is that they see salvation not depending on themselves and their works, but on Jesus Christ and his atoning work for them. This shift brought about tremendous relief and assurance. Furthermore, there was a change in what respondents viewed as sacraments. While in American Evangelicalism, altar calls, sinner's prayer, and making decisions for Christ had saving power. Since the journey into Lutheranism though, the Lord's Supper and Baptism, along with the Word, are now viewed as God's saving action.

- 5) From the first survey, 86.2% of respondents stated that how they view themselves changed (i.e., their anthropology, opinions of self, etc...). If applicable, briefly explain how your view of yourself changed.**

Generally speaking, respondents changed in their view of their fallen-ness, seeing themselves much worse than they previous once assessed themselves to be. Also, the respondents expressed feeling relief and contentment since they learned that they didn't have to strive and couldn't acquire a sinless condition; they now see themselves simultaneously as a sinner and a saint.

- 6) Generally speaking, those that started attending a Lutheran church early on in their journey into Lutheran thought experienced more fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense) than anger (i.e., feeling irritable, and resentful), whereas those that waited to join a Lutheran church towards the end of their journey experienced more anger than fear). –While conducting most of my journey into Lutheranism thought while attending a Lutheran church, I experienced more fear than anger because...**

Generally speaking, participants experienced more fear than anger because there were many new things to process such as: understanding the sacraments, understanding the liturgy, and understanding absolution. More specifically, the fear was due to anxiety of the unknown. Respondents also expressed fear due to not wanting to be deceived. (i.e., I was wrong in American Evangelicalism, could I be wrong and deceived in my new journey into Lutheranism?). Finally, fear was surprisingly attached to the Gospel; the Gospel seemed too good to be true.

- 7) Generally speaking, those that started attending a Lutheran church early on in their journey into Lutheran thought experienced more fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense) than anger (i.e., feeling irritable, and resentful), whereas those that waited to join a Lutheran church towards the end of their journey experienced more anger than fear). –While conducting most of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending an Evangelical church, I experienced more anger than fear because...

Generally speaking, participants experience more anger than fear because they felt that they were deceived during all their years within American Evangelicalism. Participants felt that they wasted years and finances on false truths. Thus they became angry when, due to family ties to the church (i.e., spouse, kids in youth group, extended family), they had to remain in their American Evangelical church.

Note: See the responses to question 11 for more details on this subject.

- 8) From the first survey, 84.2% of respondents stated that the biggest linguistic challenge was that familiar words within American Evangelicalism had a different emphasis in Confessional Lutheranism. If applicable, please briefly answer the following questions in the textbox below. A) Which words experienced a change in emphasis? B) In the way that you understand these words, what did they mean in American Evangelicalism and what do they mean in Lutheranism?

Generally speaking, respondents shared that the biggest linguistic emphasis change was in who does the verbs. Otherwise stated, in American Evangelicalism the respondents saw themselves doing the majority of Christian verbs and within Confessional Lutheranism the respondents now see God doing the majority of the verbs. Further details in linguistic emphasis changes are listed below:

Word	American Evangelical Emphasis	Confessional Lutheran Emphasis
Grace	Connected to my decision	God's gift alone
Faith	Self-Generated	God's gift to me
Baptism	Mark of my obedience/my action	God delivering forgiving grace
Communion	An act of my remembrance	Christ true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins
Sanctification	-After Justification -My work	-Christ's action along with Justification -Work of the Spirit
Gospel	What we need to hear in order to make a decision	Christ Crucified for the forgiveness of our sins
Sinner	Unsaved People	All People
Sin	-My Actions -Behavior	-Very core of being -Condition
Vocation	Serving God through a ministerial calling	Serving my neighbor through roles where I am placed
Means of Grace	Sinner's Prayer and Altar Call	Word and Sacrament

9) From the first survey, 61.2% of respondents stated that familiar words used in Evangelicalism were no longer being used in Lutheranism. If applicable, which words are no longer being used?

The most consistently listed words no longer used in Lutheranism as indicated by respondents are as follows: decision, decision for Christ, free will, saved, baptism of the Holy Spirit, invitation, next level, accountability, rapture, anointed, born-again, revival, living the Gospel, altar call, sinner's prayer, purpose, personal relationship, rededicating life, spirit-led, surrender, etc...

Generally speaking, respondents indicated a diminishing of directional phrases and feeling phrases as they entered Lutheranism. Phrases such as: going to the next level, God led me, the Spirit led me, God laid it on my heart, I feel led, I feel His presence, etc...

10) From the first survey, 69.5% of respondents stated that they were challenged with learning and understanding new words in Confessional Lutheranism. If applicable, what were these new words?

Law & Gospel, means of grace, liturgy, vocation, simul iustus et peccator, catechism, synod, absolution, justification, sanctification, Lord's Supper, confession, solas, creeds, 3 uses of the Law, indicative & imperative, various Latin/Greek phrases, various Liturgy words, etc...

Generally speaking, respondents indicated that the new words tended to be older and multisyllabic.

11) If applicable, while conducting the majority of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending an Evangelical church, the overall flow of my journey declined at the midway stage because...

Generally speaking, the respondent's anger and frustration was due to the feeling of being stuck in American Evangelicalism. Furthermore, respondents indicated that there was tension at this midway stage because they found themselves at a difficult transition point where they embraced Confessional Lutheranism, yet were finding it difficult in letting go of American Evangelicalism for various reasons. Some of the reasons respondents gave were: difficulty leaving family and friends, struggle in leaving an official church positions, etc...

12) If applicable, while conducting the majority of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending a Lutheran church, the overall flow of my journey went from good to very good because...

Generally speaking, the respondents indicated that the journey went from good to very good because there were plenty of available resources and a community to support and aid them in their journey into Confessional Lutheran thought. Also, the respondents indicated that the pastors in the Lutheran churches were knowledgeable and able to adequately answer questions.