IMPLICATIONS OF ABSENTEE COURTSHIPS

by

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William Rolfe Kerr
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review of Literature</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtship definitions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken engagements</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex and courtship</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis dimensions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method of Study</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Findings</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length and nature of pre-separation courtship</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of agreements</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content and frequency of correspondence</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward the purpose of separation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental influence</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with new partners</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality and attitude changes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary and Conclusions</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for further study</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Cited</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case interview summaries</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In our society today the progress of many courtships and engagements is interrupted by separations of varying periods of time and for various reasons. Hill (1949) found that wartime family separations cause a two-dimensional crisis constituting a hazard to the continuance of the relationship both at the time of separation and at the time of reunion. The assumption is made that a courtship would be affected in a similar way. Blood (1963, p. 161) says,

Both partners change somewhat while they are apart. This is not due to the separation alone, however, for personality changes go on constantly. When people are together, changes are adjusted to as they occur. New interests and behavior patterns emerge so gradually that people who see each other regularly hardly realize what is happening. If the same people had been apart, the cumulative effect of the same changes would be conspicuous. Note how parents are never so startled by their children's growth as relatives who haven't seen them for a whole year. Personality changes not only pile up during separation but also are accentuated by it. When people are together, they are exposed to similar influences. Separation inevitably involves a different environment. In the case of military service, this change is especially marked.

Research dealing with the problem of maintaining a courtship under conditions of separation has primarily been limited to its consequences without specific consideration of the influence of variables which may affect its outcome. The purpose of this study has been to identify and determine the significance of some variables which may tend to influence absentee courtships toward
either termination or continuation of the relationship. The following variables were studied to determine their relevance to and influence on the outcome of courtship separation: the extent of acquaintance and relationship prior to separation, nature of agreements made at the time of departure, content and frequency of correspondence, attitudes toward the purpose of the separation, types of activities and involvement of both parties during the separation, and changes in personality and goals which may or may not be present during the progress of the separation. This study made a further attempt to identify any additional variables as they emerged showing potential influence on the outcome of the absentee courtship.
A review of literature indicates that there has been limited research performed on the implications of absentee courtships. Extensive research was performed by Hill (1949) concerning the problems which confront the family under conditions of wartime separation. Young couples, who are separated during their courtship experience some similar problems to those experienced by the married couple separated for some cause, but each must resolve its own peculiar situation. Professional journals and books dealing with this subject have placed primary emphasis on maintaining the married relationship, but some recognition is also given to the maintenance of absentee courtships. This is done through discussions of courtship definitions, broken engagements, separation, correspondence, sex and courtship, and crisis dimensions.

**Courtship Definitions**

Bell (1963) and Cavan (1963) gave definitions of dating and courtship by describing them as a process of moving from ego-centered interests to increasingly pair-oriented involvement. The transition from casual to serious dating includes a de-emphasis of social popularity with others and an increase in the value placed on the affection between two people. The serious dating aspects of courtship are marked by progressively intensified commitments.
At some point in the dating process, the quality of the relationship changes. A couple begins to date only each other, and they discuss tentative possibilities of marriage. This period is generally considered courtship. When the marriage plans are formalized and announced, the courtship usually progresses to engagement. Random dating, dating steadily, going steady, being pinned, and becoming engaged are all parts of a continuous process which tends to lead towards marriage. Many of the factors of pair-identification occur prior to engagement and are important contributing factors to the couples as the relationships progress. Engagement tends to minimize individuality and to emphasize the couple relationship. Prior to engagement most young people follow all or parts of the process mentioned above. Bell (1963) defined going steady as the agreement between two people that they will not date any other individual. For the college student who is a member of a fraternity, the pinning ceremony marks an intermediate stage between going steady and becoming engaged. Some couples choose to consider the pinning as official engagement, but there is no generally accepted interpretation of this. Burgess and Wallin (1953) in a study of college age students found that 69.3 per cent of their respondents had gone steady at least once. A similar study conducted with younger people showed that 30 per cent of the boys and 46 per cent of the girls had gone steady before they were sixteen years of age. According to Blood (1963) the chief danger involved in steady dating is premature commitment to the wrong partner. When a couple goes together year after year, they subconsciously take the relationship for granted. Family and friends often exert unintended social pressures that keep a young couple together.
Duvall and Hill (1953) stated that the engagement should be long enough to perform the many functions of testing, discussing, learning, fighting, and loving which underlie successful marriage. It is safe to state that the engagement should rarely be shorter than six months, and rarely longer than two years, depending on the length of previous acquaintance and the extent to which the engagement functions have already been started in the courtship process. Bowman (1960) cautioned against the opinion often expressed that on the basis of a few months' courtship a couple may, without risk, enter upon an engagement of several years duration.

Goode (1964) stated that people fall in love with other people in their same circle of eligibles who have similar traits. He discussed Winch's theory of "Need Complementarity" where individuals have certain personality needs which fit or fail to fit those of others. Individuals are more likely to be attracted to one another if their needs complement one another. Davis and Kerckhoff (1962) compared the ideas of complementing of needs and homogamy as they function in the courtship. Their findings support the idea that homogamy functions more in the early stages of courtship and the need theory comes into being as the couple progresses and becomes more deeply involved.

Broken Engagements

Burgess and Wallin (1953) stated that steady dating finds the couple playing the role of friends changing into lovers. This gradually changes into the role of prospective husband and wife. They think of their future roles and
careers as interlinked. They begin plans for the future which make engagement not merely the final stage in mate selection but also a psychological preparation for marriage. The broken engagement not only interrupts the love relation but also destroys the conception of common objectives and plans. It causes stress and strain to both members of the couple or at least to one of them. Case studies of broken engagements suggest that the process of breaking an engagement can be analyzed in five phases. These are (1) difficulties encountered before the final break, (2) circumstances of breaking the engagement, (3) reactions of the couple to the broken engagement, (4) engagement on the rebound with someone else, and (5) learning from the experience.

Landis (1965) stated that in the background of the breakup are such factors as repeated misunderstandings and conflicts and growing awareness of differences in background, aspirations, values, and life plans. There may be parental opposition or the opposition of other relatives and friends, coldness due to separations, or growing awareness of obnoxious or at least undesirable personality traits. Perhaps there is also a growing awareness of cultural, economic, religious, or other differences that foreshadow trouble.

Duvall and Hill (1953) stated that an engagement may be broken by any crisis which changes the basis on which the engagement was launched. Burgess and Locke (1963) and Burgess and Wallin (1953) indicated that causes for broken engagement can be grouped into five basic factors: (1) superficial attraction, (2) separation, (3) parental opposition, (4) cultural divergencies, and (5) major personality problems. In cases of superficial attraction, the
couple appears to have been drawn to each other romantically only to find in the engagement period an absence of one or more of the elements essential for a lasting union, such as deep affection, temperamental compatibility, or common interests. A period of separation is often a factor in broken engagements. Certain of these undoubtedly fall under the heading of superficial attraction, since the relationship has not sufficient depth to be maintained during separation. It also seems that many engagements would have led to marriage if the separation had not occurred. Courtships often do not survive long periods without personal contact, especially when the two are not able to communicate fully by correspondence.

Cavan (1963) was able to identify certain obstacles in the dating and engagement sequence that led to termination of the engagement by using a small series of first hand accounts. Three types were found: First, something may interfere with the progress of the dating and engagement sequence. The intrusive element may be the objection of parents, separation over a long period of time, illness of one partner, pressure from some institution, such as a church in an interreligious courtship, or some other factor not directly involved with the process itself. Second, the broken engagement may result from the inability of one or both of the partners to move through the sequence. Third, they may not be well mated and find that they have decreasing satisfaction in their relationship. Sometimes more than one hazard appears in a courtship. This author further stated an example of an anxious young couple involved in a forced separation due to military service. The separation forced an early engagement and prevented the romance from
progressing through the desirable growth sequence. After the separation and war experience, they were no longer well matched due to changing needs and goals.

Bell (1963) quoted Landis and Landis (1958) as having found the most common reasons given for broken engagements to be loss of interest by 45 per cent of the men and 38 per cent of the women, separation by 20 per cent of the men and 18 per cent of the women, parents by 9 per cent and 11 per cent, incompatibility by 9 per cent of both sexes, and other reasons by 17 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.

**Separation**

Christensen (1958) stated that some couples have their courtships interrupted by frequent or long periods of separation due to events such as military service, college attendance, etc. Contrary to folklore, he stated that absence does not make the heart grow fonder—except for someone else. Love development comes most easily when the persons are able to interact at close range and without breaks in their relationship. It is true that some relationships are strengthened by short separations allowing them to gain perspective and feel the pangs of separation. It must also be recognized that some adjusting can be done through correspondence and phone calls; but, in time, memories fade and letters may be misunderstood. Under conditions of long absences and contrasting experiences, loved ones frequently drift apart. They may grow out of love with each other and grow in love with others nearer by. Love needs to be fed by personal contact and continuous association. This
author stated that it is usually not advisable to become either engaged or married prior to a lengthy separation. There are no absolute rules, of course. So much depends on the maturity of the two personalities, the degree of their involvement, and the length of separation. For most couples, however, if the separation is to be as much as a year or more, it would seem wisest to settle for a gentleman's agreement whereby they remain unpledged but have the understanding that they will keep in touch by correspondence and that they will continue the relationship when they get together again if they are still of the same mind.

Blood (1963) cautioned that both partners change somewhat while they are apart and stated that this is not due to separation alone. Personality changes go on constantly. When people are together, changes are adjusted to as they occur. New interests and behavior patterns emerge so gradually that people who see each other regularly hardly realize what is happening. If the same people had been apart, the cumulative effect of the same changes would be conspicuous. When people are together, they are exposed to similar influences. Separation causes different environments. In the case of the military, this change is significant. No matter what aspects of personality are involved, changes are likely to result from the contrasting experiences of the separated partners. The greater the contrast, the more they will grow apart in philosophy of life, personal habits, recreational interests, and emotional maturity. The shock effect of these changes can be reduced and the nature of pending readjustments anticipated by adequate communication, the principal
vehicle of which is correspondence. Letters are a sad substitute for face-to-face conversations (or other appropriate face-to-face activities), yet they can do much to convey emerging aspirations and interests and problems. Misunderstandings which arise must be clarified in later letters. This adds to the nerve-racking slowness of questions and answers through letter writing.

Blood continued by saying that interaction is one of the conditions of love. Conversely, separation tends to destroy it. The longer the separation, the greater the deterioration. This all results in the fact that separation is a major cause of severed relationships. Even couples who avoid new involvements tend to find their rapport dwindling and their new interests and divergences growing. New involvements, however, are probably the greatest threat to separated relationships.

Landis (1965) and Bernard, Buchanan, and Smith (1958) agreed that military obligations come at critical occupational and family periods in the lives of young men. They cut into the dating and mating stages of family life. In the late teen years personality is very receptive to new impressions. It is, therefore, wise for a young couple to realize that the young man who comes home after two or more years of military service may not be the same as when he left. New experiences and new companions are likely to make a very deep impression on his values, personality, and interests. Many couples meet this situation by becoming engaged but postpone marriage until after the term of service. This provides an emotional bond to help the young people through the separation and loneliness. Letters filled with affection and plans for the
future help to compensate. If a couple drifts apart under these conditions, it is much easier to break an engagement than to dissolve a marriage. Other couples, even those who feel sure of their love, decide to postpone even a tentative decision until after the period of separation. Both agree to date and to plan their lives as they choose without a feeling of obligation to the other. This puts the relationship to the strongest possible test. If they remain in love and eventually marry, they feel sure that their love was true. Bowman (1960) and Landis and Landis (1958) favored this latter approach.

Peterson (1956) and Arlitt (1943) gave advice to couples who experience courtship separation by saying that they should consciously pursue togetherness by contributing to some fund for the future. It doesn't matter what the purpose is; the important thing is that they both share in the activity during the separation. They should read mutually selected books and write comments back and forth. Their letters should be frequent and filled with references to past happy times and happy expectations for the future. The attitude each partner has toward the service or separation itself is important. If they regard it as an imposition, the separation will be very difficult. A united attitude will bring a feeling of common interest in a great cause. Couples can prevent fears and insecurity by constantly reassuring each other and telling of interesting and pleasant events. Thought, care, and careful planning are all essential in keeping a good relationship alive while couples are separated. The curve of forgetting indicates that all things may be forgotten in time if adequate stimulation does not recall them.
Correspondence

Burgess and Wallin (1953) stated that separation may result in the breakup of a certain proportion of engagements where there may have been a very strong feeling of mutual attraction. This takes place particularly among couples who have difficulty maintaining their relationship by correspondence. One or the other is likely to drift into keeping company with a person who becomes more emotionally and physically present than the absent fiance.

Duval and Hill (1953) stated that in the ideal engagement, separation immediately after the announcement is not advisable. Many important functions of the engagement period are overlooked. There are, however, several young couples who are working out their engagement duties quite conscientiously by correspondence. They do this by making every effort to keep their letters full of information about day-to-day experiences which tell about the changes in personality. The correspondents frequently exchange candid photographs and snapshots. These keep the couple up to date on physical appearance and give a visual picture of the places and people each is meeting. The couples find that some questions may be discussed more deeply and somewhat more objectively by correspondence than by face to face conversation; for example, attitudes about children, money, religion, a wife’s working, the use of leisure time, and the place of sex in marriage. Letters should not preclude direct discussion of these matters at a later date, but they do serve to clear up many questions during the separation. To be frank and honest is to be wise and realistic in letter writing. This is an art which needs to be developed—how
to write what is happening without arousing anxiety, and yet not encourage unwarranted and glamorous ideas by telling too little. In brief, many of the functions of engagement can be carried out successfully by correspondence, but a period of association should be planned for before marriage to work out the problems of intimate relationships which remain. Hill (1945) described the major objective of correspondence, as a technique of maintaining family solidarity, as being a process of sharing the new worlds each in entering. Three variables operate to make this correspondence ineffective: (1) Ability to communicate feelings on paper is an art not often mastered. (2) Censorship may restrict full expression under wartime conditions. (3) Misinterpretation of what is written frequently occurs. Wishful thinking plays an important role in the interpretation of letters. With all its shortcomings, correspondence remains the main means of salvaging separated relationships.

Hill (1949) found in his study of wartime family crises that communication devices for maintaining a sense of family unity were exceedingly important. Adjustment to separation was distinctly improved by the number of letters written, the number of topics covered, and the adequacy of the communication. These evidences of keeping in touch with one another also appeared associated with good reunion adjustment, the father being thereby better prepared for his family when he returned. The content of the letters is often the key to adjustment rather than the number written. Both, however, appeared significant in their influence on adjustment. If the wife poured out her affection and troubles in her letters, she obtained a release from her
household worries and tensions; and if in turn his letters were loving and affectionate, she obtained great satisfaction from them. No communication, however, could patch up the split between a nagging home and an escaping husband. These findings confirmed one of the initial hypotheses of the author. He determined that adequate communication cushioned the separation and reunion crises and strengthened the relationship.

Sex and Courtship

Duvall and Hill (1953) stated that the extent of physical intimacy is one of the most difficult questions of the engagement period. Some caressing and expressing of warm affection is normally desired and is definitely helpful in the process of preparation for the intimacies of marriage. But while some love making is desirable, full expression of the sex urge in premarital sexual intercourse has hazards of guilt and shame which are extremely difficult for many couples to overcome. It is wise to have some kind of understanding on this matter so that each can notify the other of the proximity of the boundaries already set.

Ehrman (1959) expressed some concern about petting activities, stating that it includes a series of acts ranging from the mere impulse of holding hands through to, but short of, sexual intercourse. Young people involved in these activities are beset with the mental questions which reveal the conflicts they face. They wonder if they have gone far enough to show affection or if they have gone too far to be respectable. This author felt
that petting is as significant in its consequences to later marital happiness and adjustment as are premarital sexual relations. The primary concern for virginity versus non-virginity has produced a neglect in having a concern for the results of petting.

Kinsey (1949) and Burgess and Wallin (1953) found a statistically significant relationship to exist between couples' church attendance and the frequency of their premarital intercourse. Couples are most likely to have sex relations before marriage if the couple members have had sex experience with some other person, if they have been engaged sixteen months or longer at the time of marriage, or if couple members have different religious affiliation. Landis and Landis (1950) stated that from one-third to one-half of all engagements do not end in marriage. Couples who discard their moral standards because they are engaged may defeat the purpose of the engagement. They are missing their chance to take a level look at marriage while they still have time to change their minds. Many young people feel a compulsion to marry a person with whom they have been intimate and go on into an unwise marriage even if an undesirable pregnancy does not force it. In contrast to this, Kirkendall (1961) found in one of his studies that the effect of intercourse, in and of itself, on the strengthening or weakening of a relationship is indirect and minimal. Examination should be made of other factors of the relationship than just whether or not intercourse did occur. Intercourse is an overt and distinguishable event to which various consequences can be attributed, yet the data of his study suggest that much more than this is involved. Christensen
(1960) found this to be relative and different with various localities and religious and social values.

Burgess and Wallin (1953) analyzed premarital sex activities stating that the increase in freedom of association of young people before marriage is a universally recognized phenomenon in American society. These activities have been accelerated, if not caused, by many other changes which have taken place during the past two generations. The invention of the electric light which turned night into day, the mass production and universal use of the automobile which has tremendously increased the mobility of young people, the romantic patterns of love-making vividly presented by the motion pictures, the lifting of the taboo on sex discussion and teaching, the emancipation of young women from previous restrictions on smoking, drinking, and frequenting night clubs and taverns, the dissemination of information about the use of contraceptives, and the decline in the extent and effectiveness of parental supervision have all had their effect.

Crisis Dimensions

Separation may be the source of crisis between married partners and courtship partners. Selby (1963) defined a crisis event as the emotional state or reaction of an individual to a situation too difficult or new to be handled by the person's normal and habitual problem solving faculties. Hill (1949, 1958) described crisis as being equal to the event, interacting with the crisis meeting resources, interacting with the definition made of the event. This author
found in studies of marriage adjustment under times of stress that good marital adjustment is predictive of good adjustment to separation and to reunion. Foreknowledge and preparation for a critical event mitigates the hardships and improves the chances for recovery. Both wartime and peacetime separations render a disservice to most families. Voluntary separations should not be undertaken without serious thought of the consequences. And although the average couple seldom thinks of reunion as a crisis, it would be better if they did. Blood (1963) stated that the inevitability of change during separation necessitates a readjustment process on return. When couples recognize in advance that differences are normal, they will be less disturbed. If they approach reunion determined to work out a new relationship with a partial stranger, they are more apt to succeed. Even if no observable differences arise, it must be recognized that the relationship is most likely to have been weakened by the absence of close contact. Whether a couple is married or not, the courtship process must begin all over again to some extent. Trust and a feeling of intimacy must be rebuilt. Since the time necessary for rekindling love cannot be predicted in advance, separated couples should leave their relationships open-ended rather than predetermine their wedding dates.

Foote (1956) stated that despite correspondence and visits, the hazards are quite substantial that mates who are separated because of military service will grow apart. At best their reunion requires a complex reweaving of past feelings and events. Not only returning soldiers but also others who have been apart for other reasons have much re-relating to do in order to
get fully back together. Long separations increase the hazard that couples will not be able to restore their earlier relationship.

Cuber (1945), Duvall (1945) and Hill (1945) gave advice to couples experiencing separation and reunion by stating that unresolved loneliness is a hazard to the separation. The girl or wife at home should welcome the veteran home as a person, not as a veteran. She should not be concerned about initial disagreements. She should allow time to find and rebuild common ground, not making advance plans and decisions before he returns. She should listen understandingly and realize that, while away, men tend to idealize persons, places, and sentiments, resulting in distortion of how things were. She must recognize and accept the changes which occur and let him know how good it is to have him back.

Crises are less likely to occur during the separation and at reunion if advance planning and preparations are made in anticipation of difficulties.

Summary

Duvall and Hill, Blood, and Bowman were in agreement that courtship and engagement should be long enough to perform many basic functions in preparation for marriage. Couples involved in short and interrupted engagements have a tendency to neglect these functions.

Cavan, Landis, Burgess and Wallin, and Burgess and Locke agreed generally in their findings that engagements are broken because of superficial attraction, separation, parental opposition, cultural divergencies, and major personality problems. Duvall and Hill pointed out the fact that an engagement
may be broken by any crisis which changes the basis on which the engagement was launched.

Christensen and Blood concluded that separation is a definite hazard to a courtship and placed primary emphasis on the difficulty of adjusting to the changes which occur during the period of absentee courtship. Landis felt that military obligations come at critical times in the lives of a young couple and that youthful vulnerability to new impressions and environments cause many changes.

Bowman and Landis and Landis agreed in their favoring a separation where the partners are left with their freedom to date others and delay decisions for marriage until the separation is ended.

Hill found that correspondence and other means of communication are extremely important in maintaining a sense of family unity and in giving security to an absentee courtship. He felt that the content of the letters is more important than the frequency.

Duvall and Hill found that couples have difficulty determining the extent of physical intimacy they can accept without feeling shame and guilt. Ehrman stated that the concern for virginity has produced a neglect of concern for the results of petting. Kinsey and Burgess and Wallin found a significant relationship between a couple's church attendance and the frequency of pre-marital sexual intercourse. High frequency of church attendance produces a low frequency of premarital sexual relations. Burgess and Wallin stated that modern developments, attitudes, and freedoms have brought an increase in sexual activities.
Hill found that families experience a crisis when the father-husband is taken from the home for military service. He found even more significant crises to occur at reunion. Blood, Foote, and Hill related this same situation to courtships and stated that a new courtship and rebuilding process must be anticipated and conscientiously pursued after the separation.
METHOD OF STUDY

The sample for this study was limited to twenty young couples who are representative of persons having experienced the influences of separation through participation in, or support of, the missionary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church and hereinafter referred to as the Church. A large percentage of the young men of the Church accept calls to serve abroad as missionaries for periods of two to two and one-half years. These calls generally come to young men between nineteen and twenty-one years of age—the peak of courtship activity for most young people. This study specifically involved ten couples whose courtship endured the separation and resulted in marriage and ten couples whose courtship terminated during or following the separation. Couples were selected simply on the basis of availability and willingness to participate. The only limitations for participation were that the couples' courtships must have progressed at least to the point of going together steadily and they must have made some indication to each other that they would try to maintain their relationship during the period of separation. Couples at all stages of courtship from going steadily to engagement were selected to provide a broad scope to the study.

Of the forty people contacted for participation in the study, only two girls had reservations about being included. They both felt that they did not
qualify under the limitation of stage of courtship required. They were included because the boy friend in each case interpreted their courtship to have been well within the limits of the study. These were both couples whose relationship terminated. One girl refused to complete the interview; the other completed it with reservations and provided only sketchy information. All other participants were highly cooperative and showed a real interest in the study.

No specific hypothesis was tested, but hypotheses for testing in future research were determined.

Individual interviews were conducted with all participants to explore the results of their absentee courtship experience and the attitudes they have and had toward it. The interviews were held in a private office and were recorded on tape. Before each interview began, the use of the recorder was discussed; the study was explained; and assurance was given that all information would be held in confidence and that it would be presented in such a way as to preserve anonymity. The average interview lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour.

The interviews were conducted alternately with individuals of a terminated couple and then the members of a couple whose relationship endured. This aided in keeping a balance in the sequence and emphasis of certain questions. The interviews were transcribed from the tapes, and the summaries are presented in the Appendix. The original words expressed in the interviews are used to the maximum extent possible except as slight changes were necessary to prevent identification of the interviewee.
An interview schedule was drafted for consistency, but an atmosphere and understanding of freedom to discuss any subject desired by the participants was maintained. This enabled them to be completely free in their expressions and not feel bound to a given subject. This not only provided discussion of causes and effects but also encouraged the expression of feelings about the results of their experiences.

At the close of each interview, the participants were asked to respond by mail to questions dealing with the extent of their physical and emotional involvement with their partners. Less than half of them completed this request which indicates either an inadequacy in the explanation and approach by the interviewer or that the threat of the information requested was too great. The questionnaire given to the participants is included in the Appendix.
FINDINGS

A study of absentee courtships becomes deeply involved in the dynamic and unstable processes of dating, courtship, engagement, broken engagements, personality differences, changes in goals, and the unpredictable nature of the love relationship of a young couple. Each of these variables operates in relationship with each of the other variables producing a complex situation which makes it impossible to determine specific causes for either termination or continuance of an absentee courtship. A very successful approach used by one couple may prove quite unsuccessful for another. This study may aid in the identification of some of the various attitudes, problems, and considerations of young couples anticipating and experiencing courtships under conditions of separation.

The outcome of an absentee courtship may be influenced by some or all of the following variables: the length and nature of the pre-separation courtship, nature of agreements made at the time of separation, content and frequency of correspondence, attitudes toward the purpose of the separation, parental influence, involvement with new potential love partners, and crises resulting from personality and attitude changes which cannot be reconciled either during the absence or the reunion period. All couples in this study experienced these to some extent, but there was no consistent pattern in the degree to which the variables influenced the relationships. Length of courtship
varied from six months to five years, and the stage of courtship went from dating steadily to engagement. Agreements concerning the activities of the girls ranged from strict no-date policies to complete freedom. The men in this study did not date because of the nature of their church service. The variation in correspondence content went from extremely emotional love letters to rather cold and impersonal news letters. Frequency of correspondence varied from a letter each day to one or two letters a month. The extremes expressed by the girls in their attitudes toward the purpose of the separation followed a line from bitterness and resentment to complete encouragement and implied insistence that the fellow serve as a missionary. Many parents had no influence, but others played a major role in the continuation or termination of a courtship. A wide range of involvement with new partners existed, and personality and attitude changes were met with no concern by some couples and as a complete crisis by others.

Length and Nature of Pre-separation Courtship

Length of courtship seemed to have no effect that could be generalized. One couple who had dated only six months prior to separation maintained their courtship and married shortly after reunion. A couple who had dated for nine months before separation terminated their relationship. Several four year courtships terminated, and an equal number of these longer courtships continued on to marriage. The stage of the dating relationship had little effect. Whether a couple had been engaged or had just dated steadily seemed to have little
influence on the outcome. The engaged couples, however, did experience more difficulty than was expected. One girl said, "I'm sure that if he had given me a ring I would have resented it. If we had been engaged and if I had taken the fatal step to break that engagement, the results would have had final implications. Nothing would have been left to hold me to him or him to me."

Findings from the questionnaire on physical involvement were not conclusive. Not all cases completed this questionnaire. The information may have been threatening to them, or the interviewer didn't emphasize the importance of completing and returning the form. Those forms which were returned showed a definite trend towards the respondents having participated in moderate necking and petting, and their activities had taken them slightly beyond what they could accept and affirm as being within their moral values. Those who responded felt no connection between these activities and the outcome of their absentee courtship. If the assumption is made that non-response to this questionnaire was caused by the threat of the information requested, a further assumption could be made that some of these couples may have gone substantially beyond a point which they could accept and affirm. No conclusions can be drawn regarding this problem without further research.

Nature of Agreements

The freedom, or lack of freedom, given to the girls was important. Nineteen of the twenty girls in the study did accept and participate in dating activities with new partners. The one girl who did not date expressed her
feelings by saying, "My missionary gave me complete freedom to choose my course of action. I knew that I could accept a date at any time, and I had told him I would date if I wanted to. He accepted this approach and encouraged me in it." This couple was married soon after the end of the separation period. Another girl who was engaged and had agreed to total commitment with no dates became disinvolved with all activities except her employment and church participation. She said, "I felt guilty and ashamed when I had desires to date. I mooned around, cried a lot, and wrote mushy letters feeling proud that I was stronger than the other girls who had to rely on dates and outside activities to wait for their missionaries. I was just kidding myself because I eventually reached a point where I had just 'had it' and couldn't go on without some activity." This couple was married only after many months of difficult adjustment and effort to re-establish their relationship.

This study indicates that a courtship is more likely to endure if the girl is given her freedom to choose her activities. Strict no-date commitments expressed verbally or through an engagement ring appear to cause emotional stress and some resentment. This type of commitment seems to introduce a hazard to the continuance of an absentee courtship.

**Content and Frequency of Correspondence**

A majority of the cases felt the frequency of correspondence was very important. They preferred one letter a week at regular intervals. One fellow said, "It is more important to have regular letters than frequent ones."
One girl, however, felt that she could write more interesting and spontaneous letters if she was not bound to a certain day each week. There was unanimous agreement that daily correspondence is not advisable. It was felt that this frequency would become a burden for both to find meaningful and helpful information to write and that it would interfere with the work being performed by the men in this study. The strictly love letter approach was denounced by all cases. Most felt the letters should be weighted towards encouragement and news of home and school activities with some comments of reassurance and love in each letter.

**Attitudes Toward the Purpose of the Separation**

The interpretation the couples put on their relationship as it affected their attitudes toward the separation was very important. Of the ten terminated couples, seven of the girls either had feelings of resentment toward the separation, did not involve themselves in the activities of their boyfriends, or did not share his devotion to the cause which he served. Not one of the girls from the endured group expressed any negative feelings toward the purpose of the separation, but each encouraged and supported and shared in the experience.

**Parental Influence**

Several parents had an influence on the outcome of the absentee courtships. Some parents of the young men either interfered with the activities of
their son's girl friend or became very bitter toward the girl when she started dating other fellows. One girl's parents became involved in the career planning of their potential son-in-law. This had a significant and detrimental effect on the couple's relationship. Many positive influences were noted, however. The parent-girl friend relationship was beneficial where the girl was invited occasionally to her boy friend's home for dinner, was taken to family reunions, was able to share some correspondence with the family, and was made to feel that the parents understood and supported the degree of freedom given her. Several of the girls' parents assisted by giving their daughters encouragement to make no final decisions until the boy friend returned.

Involvement With New Partners

Five of the ten terminated relationships were caused directly or indirectly by involvement with new dating partners. Some of these cases experienced other difficulties before the new involvement. The other five terminated couples were unable to adjust to each other and cope with the crises they met at reunion. All couples in this study felt, as they looked back on their experience, that it is better to risk this possibility of new involvement than to deny the girl her freedom of activity.

Crises Caused by Personality and Attitude Changes

Seven of the ten couples who successfully endured the separation met reunion crises. These were caused most frequently by difficulties in adjusting
to the personality and attitude changes of both partners and by the fellows' desiring to date other girls before settling down. The reunion event is a most critical stage in the absentee courtship process. One girl said, 'I really didn't question our relationship until after he got home. Two years is a long time, and we just couldn't anticipate how much we would change. Our first dates after his return were tense and uncomfortable. Neither of us seemed to know what to say; our interests were so different now. We had just changed too much in different directions to be able to regain the feelings we had held for each other.' In contrast to this, one of the fellows whose relationship endured said, "A missionary goes through a change in personal values and in the values that he looks for in a mate. As my values changed, I could see her values changing in the same direction; and I could see that she was living the kind of life that I desired in a prospective wife. This made a lot of difference in her being able to wait for me and in my wanting her to wait." Twelve of the twenty couples experienced reunion crises. Seven of these were able to overcome their problems, but five were not able to make the necessary adjustment. Three of the remaining eight couples experienced no crisis at reunion, and five were either married or strongly committed to someone else thus preventing the occurrence of a crisis.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The most frequent causes listed for termination were: changes made by one or both partners, new involvements, inability to make agreements and stand by them, unsatisfactory agreements, difficulties in meeting the crises of reunion, and correspondence failure through either irregular and infrequent letters or inability to write letters which were encouraging, meaningful, and reassuring.

The most frequent causes given for continuance were: a deep and abiding love, forgiveness and understanding, the agreement to allow the girl her freedom to date, the opportunity to observe other couples in advance and anticipate and plan for the separation and its problems, a meaningful correspondence pattern, and a mutual acceptance and united attitude toward the purpose of the separation.

The most frequently listed and most meaningful considerations of advice were: allow the girl her freedom to date, obtain advice as to what should be expected, become acquainted with how other couples have conducted their period of separation, don't leave the girl at home with an engagement ring, allow the fellow to date others after his return if he wishes, realize that letter writing becomes the primary vehicle of maintaining the relationship, have similar goals for life beyond the separation, maintain a united
feeling through interest, involvement, and participation in the cause which is
being served by the separation, advise parents to use wisdom in their actions,
don't be too sure that it will work out, expect change, trust each other, don't
make any final commitments to each other about what will be done after the
separation, and try to make similar efforts for parallel growth and development.

Conclusions

This study supports the following conclusions:

1. The causes leading to termination or continuance of an absentee
courtship vary with each case; however, there are some generalizations which
appear quite consistently.

2. The agreement which allows the girl her freedom of choice regarding her
dating activity is the most frequently recommended approach to beginning an absentee courtship.

3. Reunion is a critical event in the absentee courtship process.
Crises often occur which must be anticipated and resolved. The couple who
marries very soon after reunion is taking the risk of overlooking serious
problems which may have developed during separation.

4. The engagement ring, rather than being a binding force, appears
to be a hazard to the absentee courtship.

5. Mutual attitudes regarding the purpose of the separation seem to
have a positive effect on the outcome of the absentee courtship.
6. Couples who plan for the separation and anticipate the problems which may occur appear to be more likely to maintain their relationship.

7. Correspondence received once a week and containing a balance of news and love seems most likely to aid the absentee courtship.

8. The two dimensional crisis of family separations as presented by Hill was not experienced in the absentee courtships of cases in this study. The initial separation crises did not occur, but the reunion crises were quite definite and critical.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

This study was limited to twenty couples who were selected simply on the basis of availability. The sample is not representative of any population except themselves. Analysis of the absentee courtship experience of these people suggests that, while each relationship is in many ways unique, there are some generalizations which apply to most, if not all, couples. How fully these generalizations apply to a more representative population can only be determined by further research.

Based on the findings of this study some hypotheses to be tested would be:

1. The engagement ring represents a hazard and threat to the continuance of the relationship during an absentee courtship.

2. The reunion represents a critical and difficult phase of the absentee courtship.
3. Absentee courtships are more likely to endure if mutual feelings of acceptance and conviction exist toward the purpose of the separation. An example of this would be the girl who, with strong patriotic feelings, gives full encouragement and support to her fiancé's involvement in military operations.

4. Extensive pre-separation physical intimacies have a detrimental effect on absentee courtships.


Case Interview Summaries

To insure consistency in the interviews, six basic categories were explored with each case: Courtship background information, Nature and results of agreements, Content and frequency of correspondence, Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation, Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship, and Advice to others. Cases are presented individually, not by couples, and are reported at random. In addition, some details are omitted to insure confidentiality and anonymity. Cases are not presented sequentially in their endured or terminated categories in an effort to prevent identification and further preserve anonymity.

Case 1

Courtship background information. Case 1 started dating his girl early in high school and dated her for approximately four years before their separation began. They never made a verbal agreement to go steady as such until the time that she accepted his fraternity pin, but they went "more or less steady" right from the beginning. As near as he could remember, neither of them had accepted other dates. "We just took it as a matter of fact with no real threat of other dates." They became pinned approximately three months before he left for the mission. They had very few arguments, disagreements, or misunderstandings during their four-year courtship. There was no sign of their having had to meet and adjust to any courtship crises.

Nature and results of agreements. They agreed to stay pinned at the time he left and decided that she should try to continue to wear his pin for one
year, after which she could take it off and date or do what she wanted. "Of course she always had the option to take it off and date at any time she wanted." He thought that she had full understanding and acceptance of this agreement with its freedoms. In expressing his feelings and his understanding of her feelings about the agreement he said, "In the first place she didn't really want to date after I left, expressed no desire to, and felt that by being pinned she would have the pressure taken off. Fellows, knowing that she was pinned, wouldn't jump at the chance to ask her out, knowing that I was gone. After a year, or at least a period of time like this, she could make up her mind and tell, after I had been gone for awhile, just what she wanted to do." He interpreted this to mean that she wanted a period during which she could actually have a pin on which to rely as her reason for not accepting dates. After this she could look at the whole situation more objectively without having the same pressures.

After one year had passed, she expressed the desire to keep the pin. He told her again that at any time she wanted to take it off she could, but she decided to keep it. As far as he knew, she did not accept any dates. He felt good about this fact, but most of all he was reassured that their agreement had been the best possible one for them. He said, "I felt that she should have the freedom of choice to do what she wanted because if she felt there was a binding agreement that wouldn't let her go out, she would resent that fact and build up a feeling of resentment toward me." They had seen examples
of this type of problem and had been able to observe other couples experiencing the effects of a separated courtship. This helped them in deciding for themselves the type of agreements they would make. He sensed a significant importance in the fact that she had a complete understanding of her freedom to do as she chose to do. He said that many couples who are engaged or fully committed find that the girl later resents having a binding contract and will rebel against the whole idea.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** His letters were a combination of expressions of love and reassurance and discussion of his general missionary activities. He tried at the same time to keep an interest in what she was doing rather than just talking too much about his mission. He tried also to eliminate meaningless happenings which would be difficult for her to relate to or to see anything of significance. Her letters to him were very helpful, and he discussed them in terms of excellence. She wrote a combination of news about home and her feelings of love for him. She often sent newspaper clippings. There were very few occasions where he felt any difficulty in their ability to communicate through their letters. He said, "I'm sure that over a period of two years there is bound to be an occasional misunderstanding. We discussed this before I left realizing that misunderstandings do occur, so we set up a barrier against it. We agreed not to jump to conclusions but to write asking for more information. A statement like, 'I didn't understand what you meant in your last letter where you said such and such,' usually brought an acceptable explanation without any reason for hurt feelings or accumulated concerns." He said that
over the period of the two years it was difficult through correspondence to
determine what changes she was making and what she would be like when
he returned, but he remembered thinking back and considering the possible
changes and thinking there was only one way to find out—that being to go
back and find out for himself after the mission. He never at any point
regretted her waiting or questioned his love for her. She never expressed
anything in her letters that made him wonder about her feelings, but
occasional minor problems arose from pressures put on by other people who
thought she should be more active socially. She would express these things to
him, and it seemed to help her to get them off her mind.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. He had planned on
going on a mission for many years, so right from the beginning of their court-
ship they were conscious of and planning for the experience. As the time for
his leaving approached, he said, "She hesitated a bit because it wasn't the most
pleasant thing to think of being separated after going together for so long."
There were times of apprehension, but both of them were very happy that
he did serve as a missionary. They discussed it often prior to his leaving,
and they had close friends going through the experience. They followed the
experiences of their friends realizing that their time was coming. He esti-
mated that for at least two years before he left they discussed frequently and
seriously the experiences that would face them. During the period of the
separation she taught a church auxiliary class and kept very active in all
church activities. He never expressed to her a concern that she should be
doing more in the Church in order to grow spiritually concurrently with him. They had discussed this also before he left. He encouraged her in the job that she had in the Church by asking how it was going and how she enjoyed it. He remembered having discussed with her before he left that he would be involved constantly in missionary and spiritually oriented work. They recognized that differences might develop through their letters, so they tried to prepare themselves for it by discussing the importance of her church activity and writing their letters in a way to help her growth and increase her attachment to his experiences. He tried to foster the feeling that the mission was a joint venture and that she was a very real part of the team. He expressed that she hadn't changed a great deal except that she had "become more mature and was able to see the more important things in life."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. They experienced no difficulties in adjusting to each other after his return. He felt she had waited faithfully, and they were able to start right where they left off two years earlier. They were married within a very few months following his return. He felt that the secret of their success was the amount of discussion they had before he left and their time of observing others in anticipation of their own separation. He said, "I think it was mostly just the setting up of the whole thing. Of course, after going together for such a long time, we knew each other very well, loved each other very much, and were able to understand better the things that were said in our letters."
Advice to others. He suggested that couples who are quite serious and have intentions for marriage should in advance set up the whole plan, a two-year plan, rather than just a short term plan. They should acquaint themselves with how other couples have conducted their period of separation. This will help them determine what situation would be best for them—whether they should make a contract with each other such as engagement or pinning or whether it would be better to leave with no definite commitment. He felt that each couple should decide for themselves because there is no single solution which would be best for every couple. "Of greatest importance," he said, "is giving the girl her freedom to date if she wishes."

Case 2

Courtship background information. Case 2 went with her fiance for four years prior to his departure. She received a diamond from him, and they were engaged for about three months when she gave the ring back to him. She related the circumstances of the engagement and said, "I hadn't been at all aware that he was going to offer me the ring, and in the whirl and excitement it seemed right to accept it. There were many situations which entered into my decision to break the engagement, but I felt mainly that with our plans to go on to college and with no definite wedding plans in sight it just wasn't the time to be engaged." After breaking the engagement, they continued their courtship on a steady dating basis, but the relationship was still without definite objectives in sight. She wasn't really serious with him, and she questioned their future. She hadn't had serious arguments with him before he left, but
they did have some misunderstandings concerning their religious values. She seemed to be more religious than he, and minor conflicts sometimes arose between them. Disagreements never extended for any length of time.

**Nature and results of agreements.** When he left for his mission, they weren't seriously committed to each other. They both seemed to know how the other felt but didn't make any verbal commitments or agreements. She saw him off and promised to write. Nothing was said about her going out on dates, but she had no reservations about accepting a date if she wanted to go out. She did date toward the end of his mission but didn't get serious with anyone.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** Both she and her fiancé wrote to each other about once a week during the first year. A period followed where the letters were scattered and infrequent, but toward the end of the mission they increased again. The frequency never returned to the once a week level. Their letters were not what you might call love letters, but she had a tendency to express more love and affection than he. His letters were primarily concerned with his mission. Early in her correspondence she expressed often her concern for his happiness and her desires for his success. He kept her well informed as to his progress and the difficulties he experienced during the first part of his mission. She expressed that his first companion wasn't a good missionary and that his own background in the Church was weak. "His first few months were very difficult, but after his initial adjustments and a change of companions his experiences were wonderful. He made a lot of changes." When asked how her feelings toward him progressed during the
mission, she said, "It was really a great feeling for me. I had known him so well through his high school and early college days when he was quite immature, and to be able to observe his growth and many changes was wonderful." Their correspondence helped her to gain greater insight and understanding of him as a person. She was able to recognize a change in his outlook on life. Before he left, he had no idea of what he wanted in life; but his mission gave him his start through building confidence in his abilities. She said that their letters didn't really have any effect on the fact that they ended up together but just bridged the gap while he was gone.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. She was very happy with his plans to serve as a missionary. She had grown up in a home where missions were part of the family life. She described her feelings by saying, "I always felt something special for him, but our families are quite different. I felt that he needed to mature and establish values which I had received just from my every day home life. His family tried in their way to instill religious values in him, but those values weren't well established in themselves, so he wasn't too firm in his spiritual convictions. I just had the hope that the mission would help him in this way and thus help our relationship. He knew how I felt about a mission, but the decision to go was all his own." He kept her informed about the families he was teaching, but she didn't become involved with any of them. The main benefit she received from this was to know that he was engrossed in his work and was serving a good and successful mission. When he left, there was no concept of the mission's being a joint
venture. "It was purely his mission at the time he left; but at times I seemed to become a part of it, but not too much."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

When he came home, she seemed to be more ready to get married than he. She felt that she had become stagnant by staying at home, not going on to college, and by only accepting a few dates during the separation. She said, "I shouldn't have done it that way, but I did." They went together for about three months then decided they weren't getting anywhere. They decided that he needed to find for himself what he wanted, and she was to do the same. She then moved away, and they didn't see each other for several months. He later heard through the grapevine that she was getting serious with another fellow. He called her trying to get a date, but she quite passively told him that she was busy. He insisted that he was going to see her and drove to where she was living that night. "We made our decision that night that there was no sense kidding ourselves; we were in love with each other." They were married a few months later. She continued, "He had found himself in his school work and proved to himself through his mission, and now college, that he could be a success. He established his goals and plans for the future. This growth and change in his attitudes settled in me the feelings that I had had for years that frustrated me about him."

When he first returned from his mission, she was not going out with anyone. In his mind and in hers they were tied to each other; not because of a ring or any agreement, but just from the long courtship that they had had. He wanted to go with her, but he also wanted to go with other girls. She summarized
his feelings by saying that he had to go through a process of not only finding and reassuring himself in school, but also he wanted in some way to be able to start everything anew. The fact that both of them dated others for several months helped them realize what was important in their lives and what they really meant to each other. She said, "It took us until a year after his return to find our true feelings. By dating others he found what he wanted in life, and fortunately part of that turned out to be me."

Advice to others. She feels that every case is different and to advise without knowing the individuals is difficult. She said, "The missionary-girl friend relationship is a marvelous experience. You can grow together and feel the things that are happening. I would, however, never recommend that a girl wait with a diamond. In two years you never stop growing; you can grow together, or you can grow apart. One person may mature more than the other and cause real adjustment frustrations. So why not wait but do it without the binding commitments of an engagement. I guess it is just like a dog that is tied down always wants to get away. A ring doesn't mean that much. Freedom allows you to know how you feel and do what you feel, but a person tied down has some real emotional problems. The girl should be allowed to date if she wants to, but I think it is wrong to have a set rule that she should date. It should be a casual separation. If I had had a diamond, I'm sure it would have been very difficult for both of us. It would have interfered with his mission; it would have been difficult for me; and it would have meant very little by the end of the two year period. He was such a new person when he returned that
it would have been like being engaged to a stranger." She did say, however, that she had no trouble falling in love with the new person that he became because he now was really the person that she was trying to find in him all the time.

Case 3

Courtship background information. Case 3 dated his girlfriend for four or five years before he left for his mission. They both had occasional dates with others, but they went quite steadily most of the time. They saw each other daily during the six months preceding his departure. Because of the pending mission, they decided against becoming engaged or even committing each other to a strict steady dating arrangement. Generally they got along very well. They seemed to enjoy similar things and were quite compatible. Any disagreements were discussed freely and resolved without long arguments or periods of strained relationships.

Nature and results of agreements. He felt that their agreements concerning his girlfriend's activities were acceptable and morally right. His emotions, however, reacted negatively to them. He said, "A guy is always hesitant to let his girl date someone else, but we felt this was the best situation because a girl who sits home gets stale and misses out on a lot of activities and personal development. We agreed that while I was gone she should go out with other fellows, but she was not to get serious with anyone until I returned. I accepted this agreement as I could see it would benefit her and perhaps even me in the long run." She did date several fellows
during his absence and became quite serious on two or three occasions.

She didn't have as much contact with his family as he thought she should. Some special occasion was required for her to go see them. He said, "If I had known that she was keeping in contact with them, it would have made me feel better and more secure about her feelings toward me. It would have given me reassurance of her attachment to me." They both got along well with each other's families, but he felt some adjustment to the pressures and drives of her family. He recognized definite personal gain from those pressures but didn't feel too comfortable with them at times before his mission.

Content and frequency of correspondence. When asked how often she wrote to him, he said, "Not often enough!" She had written once a week at first but gradually dropped off to one letter every two or three weeks. Often there was only one a month. He felt that the least she should do was to write regularly and frequently. He could see other missionaries receiving a letter each week, and he felt deprived of the interest and support that he thought she would show. She wrote good letters when she did write, but he just wanted them to be more frequent. He wrote to her once a week and then gradually followed the pattern of her letters. She said something in each of her letters that implied her love and expressed her faith and prayers in his behalf. She remained quite loyal in this respect even though she dated other fellows often. They had decided that she shouldn't discuss her dates in her letters to him. They felt that this would conflict with his work and make him more critical of her than he ought to be. His expression of love to her was quite genuine
at first, but toward the end he felt it became quite shallow and repetitious. He tried to keep her informed of his activities and about the people he was teaching. She didn't involve herself in any way or show any real interest in these people. The only misunderstandings they had through their correspondence came with her occasional mention of some activity which she attended or was planning to attend. She did attend some activities which he felt were not appropriate for a girl who was waiting for a missionary.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. His girl friend encouraged him to go on his mission more than anyone else. She told him once that she wouldn't marry anyone who hadn't served on a mission. He saw and felt the importance of the mission but admitted that she was the prime motivating force. He has no regrets or bad feelings toward her because he thinks he probably would have gone anyway. In the end it was his decision anyway. She had always been active in the Church and continued the same way during his absence. On occasions he felt that she should do more studying of the gospel and implied this to her. He was aware that she resented this implication. He considered the mission to be a joint venture because of her influence. They shared the experience at first, but later she didn't seem to be involved in it as they had originally desired.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. When he returned, he thought there would be no trouble; but they had more difficulty then than at any other time. He said, "I guess that my being away in the mission field had not only caused physical distance but also emotional
distance. I wasn't as impressed with her when I returned as I remembered before I left." When he returned, they both expected things to be the same as they had been; but the emotional feelings just weren't the same. While she had been going out, there had been a few things happen which bothered him. They had a lot of arguments about this, but after two or three months they were able to slowly straighten their feelings out. They were able to forgive, forget, and look toward the future.

Their problems mainly evolved around her having become more serious with a fellow than they had agreed she should. "In fact she let herself go far enough that she received two or three different proposals for marriage. I thought this was just going too far." He felt she could and should have stopped those relationships before they progressed that far. He continued, "As long as it was a friendly relationship, I didn't care how long they knew each other or how often they were together; but when they became romantically involved, I felt she wasn't following the agreement that we had made." He recognized that perhaps her feelings had modified somewhat during the separation and that she wasn't as sure about him as she had been. He too saw other girls after his return whom he wanted to date just to help him judge better his own feelings. "This really bugged her!" They both had developed some new interests and some disinterests during the separation. He dated a few other girls, but she had the opinion that when he returned they would either get serious and get married or just call it all off. He didn't feel this way. He wanted to come home and date her plus some other girls. This caused a lot
of conflict initially for them. She felt that he was sneaking out behind her back and going on dates. He felt that she had had two years to go out, and that he was justified in dating other girls at least for a while. It took them about three months to settle down enough to work jointly toward a solution to their problems. He finally gave in and decided that to make it work he would have to forego his desires to date others. He said, "Well, I guess I didn't miss it that much anyway." They became engaged a short time after this decision and were married a few months later. He felt that this is one of the biggest adjustments a fellow must make if his girl waits for him. He must decide whether to stick with her and not question anything or go with others taking the chance of widening the gap between them. Once they were married, he realized that their happiness was real and that it had all worked out very well and to their mutual benefit and happiness.

He felt that she had changed during the two years but not to the extent that any of those changes created a problem. Through increased maturity she became more practical and realistic. He said, "She toned down her idealistic approach to the Church, and I improved spiritually, so we just balanced each other."

The major factors aiding them in the continuance of their relationship and eventual marriage, as he conceived them, were that he let her date and become more aware of the world, they had very basic and strong attractions for each other, and they were able to face their disagreements objectively with mutual desires for a solution.
Advice to others. "The girl must be allowed to go out with other fellows, or she just won't develop." He suggested that this would provide a more mature relationship after the reunion." Also of great importance is the ability and necessity of a couple's being able to recognize, face, and make decisions about certain problems before the separation begins. They need to recognize the importance of close communication through their correspondence. This is particularly important when the girl is dating. After the missionary returns, both of them need to be very patient and understanding. The missionary must be patient because of increased and advanced maturity, and the girl must realize that the missionary has been somewhat deprived socially and may have desires to date others for awhile. An understanding attitude and a desire to work through their problems are also essential items of which a couple should be aware."

Case 4

Courtship background information. Case 4 first met and began dating her boyfriend about one year before he left for his mission. They dated steadily and several times each week during most of that time. They were engaged with a somewhat loose arrangement. No formal announcement was made. She was dating no one else. They had a very smooth courtship for that year with no arguments or misunderstandings. Their dating was extremely varied and enjoyable.

Nature and results of agreements. At the time her boyfriend left, they made no formal commitments to each other. She did tell him that she
would wait, and they could see if it would work out for them when he returned. He didn’t expect her to stay home and not date even though she kept his ring. He wanted her to keep the ring, and she wanted to keep it for a feeling of security. They decided that she wouldn’t wear the ring, and she waited for several weeks before she started dating. After this she dated often but never became serious with anyone. Her contact with his parents was infrequent and on a superficial basis.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** During the first year she wrote at least three or four letters a week to him, but slacked off to one a week during the second year. His letters followed about the same frequency. She felt this frequency was good and didn’t remember having received any indication from him that he felt that she should have written either more or less. She felt that their correspondence kept them close to each other because they wrote so often.

At first his letters were very discouraging for her because he was having some trouble adjusting to the area, the people, and the work. After awhile his letters improved as he began to enjoy his work. She gained a lot from his letters and enjoyed them very much. He wrote part about his mission and part about them. "He usually always wrote a paragraph or two about something we had done or about something we were going to do." She wrote mainly about school and the activities she was in. She didn’t discuss her dates, and he didn’t ask about them. They had no misunderstandings through their correspondence.
Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. "I really didn't want him to go on a mission, and it took me a long time to accept the fact that he was going." As the time drew closer, she decided that it was the right thing. In giving her reason for not wanting him to go, she said, "Well, for one reason, two years is an awfully long time. People change a lot in that long a period, and I just thought it would ruin things. I would be coming back to school, and he wouldn't be here. I just didn't want him to go. We were quite serious, and it just wasn't worth it to me." She feels that missionary service in general is fine for some people, but many fellows are forced into going by parents or by other social pressure. "It is good if they go with the intentions that it is for their own use rather than because their parents or someone else wants them to go." She felt his intentions were good. This helped her in accepting his decision to serve. She felt they would have gotten married that next year if he hadn't gone. She wanted to finish college, so this thought also helped her to see some advantage in his going. She said, "I finally just decided it would be better if he went because he did have the desire to go."

She wasn't active in the Church during his absence. She attended occasional meetings but didn't involve herself to any extent. She never conceived the mission to be a joint venture and found that she never really felt a part of it at all. His letters did mention facts about his mission and people whom he was teaching, but she couldn't remember any of them, and she never responded in her letters to him about them. He expressed to her some
concern about her inactivity, but she was never upset by this or concerned enough to attempt to change.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.
She didn't question their relationship until after he got home. "Two years is a long time, and we just couldn't anticipate how much we would change."
Their first meeting and subsequent dates were "tense and uncomfortable."
Neither of them seemed to know what to say or do. They went together a very few times but found their lives to be quite different from what they had been and from what they had both anticipated. She felt quite uncomfortable when she was with him. They had only one good talk after his return; communication was difficult. "We decided we would date others and still go together occasionally, but things just fell apart for us very soon." She felt that the greatest contributor to the termination of their relationship was the fact that their interests were now so different. He was now so involved in the Church, and she wasn't. "I just felt that it wasn't what I wanted yet. I was afraid it would tie me down, and I wasn't ready to be tied down by the Church. My ideas and attitudes toward the Church had changed during the two years. His had also. When he first went out, he didn't know where he stood with the Church. When he returned, he definitely knew where he was going and what he wanted out of life. The Church was more important to him than it had been, and it was much less important to me than it had been before he left." She said, "I feel we both changed too much in different directions for it to work out for us."
Advice to others. She said, "I just don't feel qualified to give advice to anyone on this subject."

Case 5

Courtship background information. Case 5 dated his girl friend for about four and a half years before he received his call to serve on a mission. During that time they went steady for about three years and were engaged for approximately one year. They experienced many disagreements and times of stress during their courtship. Tentative wedding plans had been made and later changed when the mission call was received.

Nature and results of agreements. Following the advice of others, they broke their engagement before he left for his mission. He felt that if she just stayed home with a diamond on her finger she would have a difficult time and feel a lot of anxiety about her lack of activity. He reasoned that these difficulties and anxieties could be averted if she was allowed to go out with the understanding, of course, that she not get serious. He had observed several cases of friends who had experienced absentee courtships; and in every case where the girl was tied down, they broke up. He thought that to give her a free rein and allow her to go out would prove to be the best arrangement for both of them. Even though they terminated their relationship, he feels that the girl should have her freedom.

His girl friend was bitterly opposed to breaking the engagement at first, but he was sure that her feelings changed soon after he left. At the time he departed, she had no interest in his approach to her freedom. Her thoughts
were focused on him alone, so she didn't worry about what she would be doing. She didn't want to date, go to college, or join a sorority; he encouraged her in all of these. He said, "I look back at it now and realize that I was just cutting my own throat a little bit at a time. I felt it was for her own good, and she soon realized this and completely changed her viewpoint." After he got into the mission field and found that she was dating, he changed his mind and wanted to continue the engagement. He said, "As long as she wasn't dating it was okay; but when she started, I got jealous. I wanted her to put the ring back on, but by that time she didn't want to. She started dating very soon. In fact, I talked to her on the phone about one month after I left, and I know she had a date that night because I asked her." They had agreed before he left that he wouldn't ask her about her dating. While visiting on the phone, he casually asked her what she was doing; and her answer hinted of a date that night. He insisted that she tell him whom it was with, which also violated their earlier agreements. He said, "I had no idea that she had been dating; and when I found she was and especially when I found whom she was dating, I just didn't like it. I know this caused concern on her part. I felt at this point that it was my fault because I wasn't following the guidelines that we had set down before I left. I just felt that I had made most of the rules, so I could also change them."

In describing the guidelines to which he referred, he said, "Well, it began with my decision to go on a mission in the first place. At the time that I made this decision, we had planned on getting married soon, and she
had not intended to go to college. With my planning to leave, I encouraged her to go to the university. She opposed this because she felt that with the diamond she would not be able to experience the social aspects of college. This, too, led to our decision to break our engagement. Then before I left, I told her that there were three fellows whom she was not to go with. She ended up marrying one of them. That was one of the limitations that I put down that I guess I shouldn't have. I also told her she could go with anyone as long as she didn't get serious."

Her relationship with his family had been excellent until she started dating. After this they were very cold whenever they saw her. This coldness and her own guilty feeling kept her from visiting with them and thus prevented any help that they could have given. She even mentioned to him that she was being treated much better by the families of other fellows than by his own.

Content and frequency of correspondence. He wrote to her once or twice a week, and she wrote to him every day for the first month or so. This frequency slowed slightly but not significantly until they made their final break. He felt the frequency was okay. He said, "It was the highlight of each day, but I guess I was really still at home for the first couple of months. I was thinking of her all of the time anyway, so it didn't make any difference." Their letters were almost entirely love letters. They had several phone conversations also which he now considers to be a bad idea. "Opportunities for getting too personal and insisting on answers are just too frequent over the phone." He felt that he had created many of their problems by prying into things which
were her private business.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. He had not discussed with her the possibility of going on a mission until he had made the decision. She resented his not visiting with her about it and tried to discourage him. She was basically a religious person; but she made no attempt, to his knowledge, to keep current with him in a growing knowledge of the gospel. She continued her activity in the Church through regular attendance and a job in the Sunday School.

He tried to keep her involved in his mission by having her keep his journal. Initially she was interested in doing this, but she never started it. He was sending letters marked as journal letters in addition to his love letters. After he had been out a few months, he asked her how the journal was progressing; she indicated that she hadn't opened the journal letters. This was the first real indication he had that she was not interested in his mission, and it brought him to the realization that "all was not well in Zion."

He had talked to her about the mission in terms of its being a joint venture and that she could be a part of it through the journal. "I thought she was starting to feel this when I left, but it didn't last long if it existed at all."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. After he had been gone for eight months, she notified him of her intentions to marry another fellow. He had suspected a notice like this, but hadn't really let himself admit it. "I knew it was coming far enough in advance that it didn't shock me terribly," but he admitted that it bothered him for a long time.
He still thinks of her often and compares other girls to her. He says that he feels no bitterness now and that she had no obligation to him. He feels that she was a very dependent person and married for security. He said that she also realized for the first time that she could date about anyone she wanted. Their steady dating had not allowed this. "She really thought that I had caused her to miss a lot."

He listed the cause for their problems as being a matter of trust. He said, "She mentioned time and time again that I didn't trust her and that I insisted on knowing everything that she was doing. She said, 'You don't trust me; you don't leave anything to me.' I guess this was true." He also mentioned his unwillingness to follow the agreements which they made before he left and their too frequent, personal, and prying phone calls.

Advice to others. He would encourage the girl left behind to have her freedom, but both of them must be willing to adhere to the agreements they make. "If an agreement can't be kept; it shouldn't be made."

Case 6

Courtship background information. Case 6 went with her boy friend for about two years before he left for his mission. They had daily contact during the six months preceding his departure. They were neither pinned nor engaged though they had talked of it often and wanted to take that step. She felt a strong love for him, and he had expressed a similar feeling for her. Both of them wanted him to go on a mission, and they both wanted to go to college. "Or at least I did, and I thought he did," she said. They knew that
to get engaged at that time would bring some problems of wanting to get married when there were many things for both of them to do first. She said, "We decided not to become engaged, but we were very committed to each other." She had a very close relationship with him and experienced no serious conflict after their initial courtship adjustments.

**Nature and results of agreements.** She didn't have any dates for several months; and when she did begin dating, it was with casual friends she had known for years. She felt a freedom to date but had little desire to do so during the early stages of their separation. She accepted very few dates during her freshman year at college and found little interest in participation in any activity. This general situation continued for more than a year when she did start going quite often with a fellow. She had no deep interest in him but found the enjoyment of going and participating in fun activities very satisfying. Nothing ever developed with this relationship except that it became the focal point for conflict with her missionary.

Prior to her boyfriend's leaving, they had discussed just what her activities ought to be. He left her to understand that he trusted her completely and that if she wanted to go out, she shouldn't feel tied. He wanted her to be happy and enjoy this time as much as possible and do everything that she could to have herself ready for the time of his return. They had made definite plans to marry when he got home. They didn't set a date, but anticipated it as being very soon after his return. There was no question as to whether they would marry; it was just a matter of when it would be. She said, "This was one thing
that made my break with him so difficult; we had been so sure." He had said that he was going to do all in his power to be a perfect missionary, and he let her know that she really counted to him and to the mission. "He was not going to shove me aside; this is why I waited so long."

She remained extremely close to his parents during the separation and found them to be a great help in keeping her morale high and her interest in him active.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote to him once a week, and he wrote to her about the same except for one period of misunderstanding. She tried to make her letters spontaneous and interesting. This frequency seemed to give them plenty to write about without causing their letter writing to be a burden or obligation. Her early letters were primarily concerned with her love for him, but they gradually progressed to being love letters with lots of news and information. He always put forth effort to get a nice letter to her. She said, "Even if the demands on his time only allowed two paragraphs, they were sincere and reassuring." They didn't discuss her dating activities in their letters. They felt this may just add difficulty to his mission experience. She said, "I didn't want to make him homesick; and I'm sure that if I had written about how I missed him and about all the nice times we had had together, it would have just made it harder. I think he felt the same way."

When asked if she gained a deeper understanding of him as a person through their correspondence, she said, "He changed so much, and his letters
became so business-like that often his comments about me and for me were reserved to a couple of short comments at the end of the letter. This gradually influenced my thinking quite a bit. It must have aggravated me and made me feel somewhat rejected because when something did happen, I seemed to go to pieces. He did become a stranger to me in many ways."

They had only one significant misunderstanding during their correspondence. This incident, however, had a direct effect on the eventual termination of their courtship. She had written to him concerning a slight problem she faced at the time, and his reply was rather caustic. She had noticed earlier quite a change in his letters over the period of his mission. The first real change came after he had been away for about four months. "His letters took on such a broad scope. He seemed to be understanding so many wonderful things. I was so happy about this and was trying to live his mission with him as much as I could. Later as he progressed more in the mission, his letters became so authoritarian and took on a 'this is the law' approach. I suppose this is the way that he felt he had to be under the circumstances of his position, but he used it on me too. When he responded to the problem that I faced, he wrote without understanding and with total condemnation. This just killed me because I had waited and had stood by the agreements we had made." She didn't write back to him for awhile because she didn't want to send the type of letter she would have written. They did start writing later and continued to the end of his mission, but the letters had lost the meaning they had held before.
Attitude toward the purpose of the separation. Both of them wanted him to have the experience of a mission and felt that it was vital for their success and happiness. She felt that he had a sincere desire to preach the gospel, but she thought that part of his motivation may have been from his desire to make amends for some of his earlier teenage conduct problems. She felt that she influenced him a great deal in his decision to go. She had referred to missionary service indirectly from the beginning of their courtship. She said, "I would say, 'The person I marry is going to be a person who takes his religion seriously enough that he would be willing to serve.' He must have got the message." She was certain that he accepted the mission call by his own choosing, however. "Certainly he had encouragement, but it was his decision. He was very successful in a difficult mission; and when he came home, he wanted people to know that this was his work, not that of some angel sitting at home saying, 'Yes, see what I have done.'"

At the time his letters became more business-like, he made implications that she should be doing more in the Church. "When I discussed my problem with him, he replied that problems are a direct result of sin and error and that I should shape up. This really hurt me because I didn't think I deserved this. I had been doing the best I could." She had done some extensive reading in the scriptures and had stayed very active in the Church through attendance and a teaching position. She described her spiritual growth and some of the conflict with her missionary when she said, "In high school I felt that I found the Church, and I was going to hang on to it to the point that I
became a bit narrow minded. Then as I came to college and took some religion classes along with my other college work, I just started relaxing more. This doesn't mean that I was falling away; it just meant that I was really enjoying my beliefs more and feeling them deeply rather than superficially. They became a part of me. As a result of this I became more tolerant of people, and I felt in return I was getting only dogmatic intolerance from him. He had a tendency to condemn so many people if they weren't one hundred percent in line with the Church. Condemnation solves few problems and closes many doors. The 'thou shalt not' approach is not always the answer. As I felt this coming on, it bothered me; and I felt that it was just some strange person whom I couldn't understand and didn't even want to be around."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

When the time came for his return, she met him and found a rather uncomfortable situation. She had expected it to be different and anticipated taking a while to straighten their feelings out. It appeared that neither of them were in the mood to try. One of the first things he said to her after his return was, "I want you to know that I'm not happy here." She didn't really try to understand this at the time, but she reasoned later that there were some long range implications. She said, "It's probably a long story. He had some earlier days when he was a bit of a roughneck and had lost sight of what he wanted to do. When we started going together, he gradually seemed to gain some purpose. I've never seen such a change in a person. We really did get along well. For a year I don't remember one cross word. I think that when he went on his mission, he
found a real identity. He found a man that was able to direct himself in the way that he wanted to be. He had done this himself without push from parents or a girl friend. This is something that is very important to him. I think that when he came home, he had this terrible feeling that I was going to start pushing him into something and not appreciate what he had done for himself. He was also afraid that people would remember him as he had been and not truly forgive him and recognize him as he really is. I was fighting with his identity too. I remembered the boy that I had first met whom I was not impressed with at all.

Then I remembered the boy whom I had gone with the second year. I was very fond of this boy—well, I was in love with him; there's no kidding about it. Then there was the person that changed on his mission. I knew him for four months, and then he became a new person. I was at home trying to put the pieces together and figure out who this person was. Then there was the person that wrote the horrible authoritarian letter. Then there was the person who came home from the mission. You know, most missionaries are accused of being self righteous at first, and they are so tied up in knots that they don't know what identity to claim. This self righteous identity seemed to fit him at the time, so I pinned it on him in the back of my mind. So here were five people, and I didn't know actually which one he was any more. I really didn't know him, and he didn't know me, so he pinned an intellectual identity on me. He also managed to tell me that I had lost my faith, which just killed me. We just didn't have any communication at all. It was just too bad because there were some miserable months that followed. The sad part is that both of us wanted so bad to have
what we had had, but we were afraid that things had changed so much that we
couldn't find it again. Going to school had changed me, and I had some different
ideas about the things that I wanted. You can't help it. Learning does change
your attitudes about things and broadens your outlook. He felt that I was too
broad minded about some things. I still had a very strong belief in the Church;
I just didn't want to wear it or bear it every minute.

"We really didn't have a very good beginning to our courtship. I
don't know what kept us together for that first little while because there was
so much conflict. Maybe it was just that I was determined to change him—I
don't know. When I saw difficulties coming back, I thought, 'Oh no, I'm not
going to spend another year trying to change a person. It wouldn't work; he
doesn't want it, and I wouldn't want it either.' So I just thought we should
stop it right there before we got all involved again."

They experienced some changes in goals. Education had become so
very important to her that she felt it would be a shame if he couldn't also
enjoy this "awakening for learning." When asked if he didn't have an equal
desire for education, she said, "Well, I'm not sure whether that was it or if
he just thought this was another project that I had for him. I don't blame him.
I think he wanted to do some of the motivating. And this is something that
bothered me. I felt that I always had to motivate him, and I wanted a man
that could lead me and give me direction and push." They never discussed
this. In fact, they "avoided it like the plague." She thought that he would be
sensitive to it. They were together only a few times after he came home, and
each time there was so little communication and so much defense that it wasn't a happy arrangement for either of them. She thought during their last date, "It's so much easier to go with other boys; why fight it and make it hard. Why not let him go his way, and I'll go mine."

The main factors contributing to the termination of their relationship were the length and period of their separation, her loss of his identity, confusing involvement with other fellows, and lack of communication and ability to rebuild their relationship after his return. There were also conflicting ideas regarding ambitious plans for the future.

Advice to others. She said, "This problem is so individual that to give advice is difficult. We thought that of all couples we would make it. For one thing, a couple should have similar goals for life beyond the mission. This undermined us from the start. Write good letters and understand the importance of close correspondence. Let the girl date by all means. Even when I dated, I felt lonely, but it wasn't a forced loneliness. If I had felt that this unkind person had forced me to abstain from social activities, I would have had a terrible resentment." She feels that the girl should keep active in the Church and do all she can to keep on a spiritual level and that the couple must not write unkind letters. She asked, "How can you tell a person not to be so sure?" "Every couple should be aware that even those most sure have problems. We felt such a harmony and positive feeling that our absentee courtship would end successfully, that it was difficult to understand anything. It was hard to admit, but perhaps termination was the successful end for us."
Case 7

Courtship background information. Case 7 began dating his girlfriend during their junior year of high school. They went together right up to the time that he left for his mission. He gave her his fraternity pin a few months before his departure. They viewed the pinning as an intermediate step between steady dating and engagement. "Though no definite plans were made, we did discuss extensively the prospect of marriage. We were committed enough to each other that we hardly expected anything to change during the time we were to be apart." He felt they had had a pretty good courtship. "We had one major fight, but we were generally able to discuss openly any differences of opinion we had." He said, "I think she felt I was quite immature. A lot of things I did were quite painful for her. For a long time she was not convinced that I would ever grow up; but after we got pinned, I think we both felt that we had a good and mature relationship which would most likely end in marriage."

Nature and results of agreements. They decided that she should keep the pin with a passive agreement that she didn't have to wear it or remain pinned during his mission. "I felt that my pin would be a memento of me to keep the flame alive. She felt this way too, but gradually I got the feeling that she would just as soon not have it. The agreement that she didn't have to wear the pin was somewhat nebulous. We had discussed marriage, but we did have the understanding that she could date freely while I was gone. We were just going to put our trust in the Lord. If it was the right thing and if she didn't meet someone in the interim that would change our plans, then we
would go ahead and get married as planned." She started dating soon after he left, and he expected it. She let him know that she was going out occasionally and eventually hinted that she was "enjoying herself." He felt happy that she was not just sitting at home in misery, but "her enjoyment seemed more satisfying than I had anticipated."

She had a close and frank relationship with his parents. "They were well aware of her dating and progressive change of heart."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** He wrote to her once a week, and he felt a very close relationship with her through their correspondence. He tried to balance his letters with equal love and news. "My love increased for her while I was gone, but it may have been a matter of 'absence makes the heart grow fonder.' In her case it was 'absence makes the heart grow fonder for someone else.' Her letters were weighted on the news side and didn't talk about us as much as I did in my letters." He discussed her letters and the results of their correspondence by saying, "This was rather interesting. I had been out several months and had been receiving at least two letters a week. All of a sudden, without warning, she missed a month and then wrote, 'You know we talked before you left about the rare possibility which might develop that I wouldn't be here when you returned and that we would place our trust in the Lord and be confident in his decision; well, don't jump to any conclusions, but I've wondered about this lately.' After this I had a sinking (he corrected himself and said sneaking, but decided that perhaps sinking was proper) suspicion of what was coming; so I, not to be outdone, wrapped up her picture and sent her a letter closing things off. Her next letter had a
classic beginning, 'Needless to say, I was quite shocked by your last letter.' She then proceeded to tell me of her wedding plans with this 'wonderful fellow.' This was the end of our correspondence and of our courtship."

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. Before he received his mission call, she supported and encouraged him in his plans. "She had an excellent concept of the meaning and purpose of a mission. She did react negatively when she found where I was going, but this reaction was temporary."

When asked what type of relationship he had with her between the time that he entered the mission home (All Mormon missionaries spend one week in the mission home, located in Salt Lake City, Utah, immediately before their departure. Administrative, travel, and missionary program instructions are given at this time,) and the time that he actually departed, he said, "This might be an interesting and significant factor. I had the feeling that as soon as I had been set apart as a missionary the time had come for me to be totally committed. As far as I was concerned it was hands off. The last night in Salt Lake after the final testimony meeting, she and I walked over to the temple grounds, had a good talk, knelt in prayer together, and had sort of a final farewell kiss. After this we went back to the mission home, and standing there in a group I had back in my mind that we were supposed to keep at arms length from girls from this time forward. Dad approached me with the keys to the car and asked me if I would like to take my girl out for one last fling. Well, I put my foot down and said, 'No, I'm a missionary now; we're leaving early in the morning, so I've got to get to bed early.' I think this really hurt her."
His girl friend remained very close to the Church during the mission and never implied any dissatisfaction with these activities or with the activities of the missionary. They made no active attempt to grow concurrently in knowledge and spiritual understanding. "It was just assumed that we would both grow this way."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. They terminated their relationship about half way through his mission. He hadn't changed in his feelings a great deal, but just anticipated a break coming from her. She was married before he completed his mission. He said, "I think the greatest single cause for the termination of our courtship was that I had hurt her a lot through much of our time together. I'm sure the fellow she married gave her royal treatment. She couldn't forget the way that I had treated her even though we had talked about it before we got pinned, and I had resolved to change. There were evidently a lot of little things that I did or did not do which appeared to her as neglect of her interests and basic concerns. All of these things made it easy for her to fall in love with someone else who was close, available, and actively interested in her."

Advice to others. "My advice to others would not be so much oriented to a pending separation, but more to the basic courtship relationship the couple has even before the separation is anticipated. Be considerate of each other and build a strong bond and commitment to each other that can survive any problems associated with an absentee courtship."
Case 8

When Case 8 was asked if she would participate in this study, she indicated an initial interest and willingness to be included. Very early in the interview she stated that she really hadn't been serious at all with the missionary she had dated. She asked that the interview be terminated when she realized that some definite feelings of commitment were necessary to satisfy the requirements of the study.

The fellow whom she dated had quite a different concept of their courtship. He left for his mission with the understanding that she would wait for him, and he looked seriously towards marriage after his return.

Either time and guilt dimmed her memory, or the emotional excitement of separation clouded his ability to perceive their true relationship. She married another fellow about a year after he departed.

Case 9

Courtship background information. Case 9 started going with his girlfriend early in high school and went with her quite steadily most of the time. "She was my girl." He said, "We were engaged for a short time, and then we found out what we were getting into and decided to wait for awhile." He felt that at the time he left for his mission they had very strong feelings for each other. He felt that their relationship was strong even though they had had some unstable times. They never had any serious arguments before his mission, but he did express his opinion that any trouble they did have was a result of their long steady dating.
Nature and results of agreements. It was unsaid but understood that she would wait for him. He wasn't worried about breaking up during his mission. He said, "It would have been hard for awhile, but I think we had the feeling that whatever happened would be for the best. I felt that she would be fair about it all." He didn't feel that it was fair for him to commit her to wait with a ring but to let her be free. From observing other couples, he had developed the opinion that to have a strong understanding with no definite commitment was best for both of them. He felt that a ring wouldn't make the difference between her waiting or not waiting. He said, "I felt that her freedom to do what she wanted would be the best, and maybe that may have a greater psychological effect on her than to try to commit her with a ring. I never thought that putting a ring on a girl's finger would make her wait. Sometimes it even works in reverse."

His girl didn't date too much while he was gone, but at the time he was glad she was dating even though he was worried that she might find someone else. He had felt that their future relationship would be better if she had this freedom while he was gone.

Content and frequency of correspondence. He wrote to her once a week during the first year. His writing became less frequent then with occasional long periods without a letter. Their correspondence increased during the last two months. Her writing followed about the same pattern as his. Their letters were generally weighted more in the direction of news and interesting events as opposed to expressions of love. He felt that she was
sincere when she expressed her love, but she had to say very little for him to catch her feelings. The general tone of her letters expressed more love to him than any actual words. The main reason they were writing was to keep their feelings active towards each other. They had no misunderstandings through their correspondence and felt generally that their correspondence was satisfactory.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. His girlfriend was very active in the Church and had grown up in a home where missions were respected and common. She wanted him to serve as a missionary, but he felt that he made his own decision. "She had an influence on my life. I knew what was right and wrong, but I didn't always do what I should. The good was always magnified when I was with her. I knew that she thought a mission was important, and I knew it would please her, but I never seriously thought I would be a missionary until the last year before I actually left." When asked how he felt about his mission as it progressed, he said, "Wonderful! I was able to build my confidence, and I found that experience to be the turning point in my life. I had never enjoyed success in any similar activity before. The mission gave me this. She also recognized this and I believe it was a major factor in her life. One of the reasons she wanted me to go was to gain stability in my life and thus correlate our thinking more. We had some differences in values, and the mission seemed to diminish those differences and bring us together."

He knew she had a strong belief in the Church, so he didn't worry about her. He felt that for the most part the experience was conceived as a
joint venture. They wanted to share the mission, but he felt that it was primarily his mission alone. It was a challenge to him, and he wanted to succeed strictly on his own. He had recognized no parental influence on either side in affecting the outcome of their separation. His parents had some contact with her during the mission, but their visits were infrequent and not too meaningful.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

Their courtship became a bit strained after his return. Their problems were associated mainly with different goals to be accomplished before marriage. She would have accepted marriage soon after his return, but he wanted to establish himself in school and develop some ground on which he could ask a girl to marry him. He may have had some doubts about her but feels that they were just surface doubts. He wanted also to test himself to see how he felt about other girls. Even though they didn't go together very much during the year following his return, he never developed any serious feelings for anyone else. He said, "After several months had passed, I heard a rumor that she was considering marriage to someone else. That is all that it took; I got in touch with her and proposed to her. She accepted and three months later we were married."

He felt that both of them had learned much by their experience of dating others. They each gave themselves opportunity to fall in love with others, but neither of them felt the love that they had known with each other. That period also gave them the opportunity to accomplish individually many things they had wanted.
He gave credit for their success to their early courtship and the feeling he always had that she would be a good wife and mother. He was never able to feel this with the other girls he dated. "I guess that with our similar long range and family goals our lives were just meant to be spent together."

Advice to others. He suggested that a couple should write regularly and keep close contact. He felt the best letters are those which express the individual feelings, selves, and activities of both of them and leave the love portion of the letter to play a minor but reassuring role. "They should make the mission the most important thing. He should work hard; she should live an ordinary life with the Church being foremost. I would tell them not to make any strong commitments until the missionary returns from his mission."

Case 10

Courtship background information. Case 10 dated her boy friend for three years before his leaving for his mission. They dated each other daily during the six months preceding his departure. They had made no definite steady dating agreement, but they had only a very few other dates during the duration of their pre-mission courtship. "We had a very fine courtship with very few misunderstandings."

Nature and results of agreements. She said, "We agreed that I would go out and that I would wait for him until he came home. We also agreed that I wouldn't make any decisions until he returned, but I would be free to go as I pleased. I felt real good about this agreement because I helped make it, and
he didn't pin me down. He was real good and very lenient about it. We also had an agreement that I would write and tell him when I went out on dates, but we found out later that this wasn't a good idea. After the first date that I had, I wrote him and told him how much fun I had had. Even though it was just with an old friend, it upset him quite a bit. We decided at that time that it would be better if I didn't tell him about my dates. This worked out much better for both of us. The only other situation I discussed with him was the one fellow that I dated quite often. I did this only because I felt bad about doing anything behind his back. Nothing ever came of this relationship. It turned out that my love was strong enough for him that I waited the two years." She said that she felt obligated by her word that she would wait. "At times I begrudged the fact that I had given my word to wait for him, but I'm very happy now that I did."

Content and frequency of correspondence. They both wrote once a week and felt good about this frequency. She said, "Our correspondence was very good. Occasionally I wrote twice a week, but I decided that was too much." She felt that more frequent correspondence would have kept his mind too much on things at home. She was confident that he enjoyed her letters. She said, "Now, I'm not saying that my letters were the best in the world, and I don't know what kind of missionary he would have been if I hadn't been writing, but I do know that I stressed the religious aspects of my life and of his experiences in my letters. I know they helped him fulfill a better mission."
She tried to keep him in touch with her activities in school and in the Church. During the first part of his mission, her letters were weighted heavily toward expressions of love. "I think that when a fellow leaves for a mission after going with a girl for so long, it is only natural that her letters will stress her deep love for him. As time progresses during the separation, the expressions of love in the letters diminish; but that doesn't mean the love diminishes."

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. Her boy friend had received very little encouragement from home to serve on a mission. "I had always wanted him to go and had tried to give him subtle encouragement right from the time that we started getting serious. It was really hard for him to go because we were so much in love, but I felt that if he could go on a mission it would change his whole life. It did; he is quite a different person. I did everything I could to get him to go, yet I would say that I didn't want to force him into going. I know that some people thought that I was putting the pressure on him. I remember many times that I was really afraid that he wouldn't go. I do believe that it was his own decision in the end even though I did influence him."

She kept close contact with him and with many of the families he was teaching. She also kept his missionary journal. He sent weekly entries to her for his diary. "This helped me to always keep in touch with what he was doing. I enjoyed this very much even though it did at times seem to be a burden. It did keep me closer to him." She was very close to the Church, and
he recognized this and never suggested that she should be doing more to grow concurrently with him. "I felt that I had an investment in his mission."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. "I feel that one reason for my waiting the two years for him was that he put forth a lot of effort to keep me interested in him. He always let me know in his letters how thankful he was that I had played a prominent role in his decision to serve on a mission. He kept me feeling that I mattered to him, and that I was part of the team. To leave him would have been very difficult. When he and I reunited after his mission, everything seemed great. I told him that I felt okey about his dating other girls because I had done my share of dating while he was gone. At first he didn't want to; but as he got into school, he could see that it was a good idea. Then I didn't like the idea. I guess it is human nature, but I just got jealous. My work at the time limited my acquaintances, so it just appeared that he was having all the fun and still had me when he wanted me. This finally got to me so I moved to another city to work. I seemed to feel better for awhile because I felt that I had left this constant strain of wondering who he was going out with and how our relationship was going. As far as I was concerned, we were through. I thought of him often, but I wouldn't take him back for a long time. Eventually, I just knew I had to stop fighting with myself. I called him, and we were soon back together again." They were married a few months after this. She feels that her parents influenced her in many ways to wait for him. "They had known the love I felt for him, and they just wanted me to be sure before I left him."
This basic love for him seemed to keep them together.

Advice to others. She said, "I would advise a couple definitely not to be tied to each other when the missionary leaves. Especially don't be engaged! My dating helped me to appreciate him more and made me realize that I had given myself a chance to go with others and compare. I would also advise a girl to let her boy friend date others when he gets home. This may be the hardest thing in the world for her to do, but he needs to have a period when he can compare and get his feelings straightened out. This period of freedom usually helps them."

Case 11

Courtship background information. Case 11 went with his girl friend for about one year before he left for his mission. They went steady for about six months of that time and found that their courtship was free from any conflict. He said, "We always got along real well."

Nature and results of agreements. They agreed that she would wait for him, but she was to date other fellows while he was gone. He said, "I felt that she should go out and not just sit home doing nothing. I had seen other girls who had promised to wait and not date, and it just couldn't be done. I also felt that this was an important time in her life, and she should be going out and having fun." He felt very good about the agreement. He knew that she dated during his mission, but she had given him no details about her dates or the number of fellows she dated. He said, "I didn't want to know
about them because I knew that it would bother me. I would have been particularly concerned if she had dated someone whom I didn't like, so it was just best that she not discuss her dates with me."

He feels that both of their parents played a key role in their relationship. His girlfriend had a very good association with his parents, and "her parents seemed to like me." This was a good influence that helped them to honor their agreements.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** Both of them wrote letters once a week. He felt that this frequency was just right. He had seen some missionaries being distracted from their work by more frequent correspondence. He said, "Sometimes they were out looking for the mailman when they should have been working." Her letters to him were mainly news letters. She didn't express a lot of love except in the close of her letters. "Occasionally she might write more about her feelings for me, but not a great deal. My letters were about the same, but we both did express enough love that we knew where we stood with each other." Through their correspondence he was able to learn more about her spiritual convictions than he had ever known before. He said that the reason he hadn't known them before may have been that he hadn't been that interested before. "Through her letters I could see that she was growing spiritually, and that was important to me." He evaluated their correspondence as being "very effective and one of the main factors leading to our eventual marriage."
Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. He had planned for a mission for years and found that she supported him in this. She wanted him to have that experience and encouraged him in every way. She was very active in the Church, and she kept him informed as to the activities in which she was involved. "This helped me a lot," he said. "A missionary goes through a change in personal values and in the values that he looks for in a mate. As my values changed, I could see her values changing in the same direction; and I could see that she was living the kind of life that I desired in a prospective wife. This made a lot of difference in her being able to wait and in my wanting her to wait for me."

She often wrote to some of the people he was teaching and would participate in periods of fasting and prayer for the benefit of those people. "This gave me the feeling that she was interested in what I was doing, and that she felt a responsibility to assist me."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. "I never had any doubts about her at all. Even when I knew she was dating, I trusted her completely. She was always frank with me. In fact, the one letter that she did write about a fellow she was dating was written because she was concerned that someone else would write and not present the proper picture. She was starting to go with him quite a bit, but she let me know that she still felt the same towards me even though she was dating him. This bothered me at first, but I did trust her word, and she knew that I trusted her. As it worked out, she had told me the exact situation, and her relationship with
that fellow didn't continue very long."

When asked if they had any difficulties after he returned, he said,
"Yes, I went out with a few other girls for awhile, and this seemed to bother her. I just wanted to go with some different girls to have an opportunity to compare. I knew right from the first that I wanted to marry her, but I wanted to be able to express some freedom for awhile." There was no specific event that brought them strongly back together. "We must have just decided that we had accomplished all we wanted to apart, and we felt our love enough for each other that we got married."

He listed their correspondence, her being a part of the mission experience, her close activity and feeling for the Church, parental influence, and their agreement that she should be free to date as the most significant factors leading to their successful experience with an absentee courtship.

Advice to others. He advised strongly that the missionary should not force the girl to stay home and not date. "She should not tell him the details about her dates and shouldn't even mention them except in the case of some problem which she feels must be faced and discussed." He places a lot of value on the relationship of the couple to both sets of parents. He also stated that their letters should leave no question as to their love, but should not be limited to this.

Case 12

Courtship background information. Case 12 began dating her boy friend during her junior year in high school. She dated him right up to the time that he
left for his mission and went steady with him most of that time. "We never met what you would call a crisis because we were quite serious, but there were times of concern and disagreement."

**Nature and results of agreements.** When her boy friend left for his mission, they had decided that she would wait for him until he came home. She said, "We made no agreements as to what my social activities should be. We tried to talk about it, but we found that it was hard to talk about my dating other fellows when our feelings were so much on each other. There was no agreement that I wouldn't go out. As we would discuss his plans to serve as a missionary, he would occasionally make comments that maybe he wouldn't go. This gave me a panicky feeling. I'm quite sure I would have married him anyway and been happy, but I wanted to go to college. Not only did I want to go for the education, but I also wanted to have the opportunity for more social life. I just wanted to date other fellows before I settled down to married life. I never really knew how he felt, except that we did discuss the fact that I shouldn't go with anyone more than four or five times. He felt that I wouldn't be getting serious if I limited myself in this way." When asked if she felt free to do about what she wanted, she said, "No, I felt tied down. I knew that I was supposed to be waiting for a missionary, so I felt a lot of pressure from my own feelings and from other people. I think that he and I did have a fair understanding of the problem, but other people just made it difficult. My folks really wanted me to wait for him, and they gave me a bad time about the fellows that I dated. I was always hearing comparisons of these fellows and my missionary. They
seemed to be sincere and wanted to help, but their efforts almost caused me to rebel and not wait." She did get quite serious with one fellow while he was gone, and she felt that the missionary played the primary role in getting her to break up with him. "This was not by anything he said but just by what he was."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote to him three or four times a week at first. She expressed her feelings about this frequency when she said, "It gets to be a real grind, and you get a feeling of obligation that isn't good. Having to write that often soon causes you to feel that you begrudge the letters. Soon those feelings are transferred to him. I just wouldn't write that often again." Her early letters were mostly concerned with her love for him, but she tried to include some news about activities on the campus. "After awhile there just wasn't anything to write about. I didn't feel that I should write love letters when I was dating other fellows the way that I was. The things that we were doing were so different, and he didn't want me to write about my sorority activities, so I would write about our families until I would run out." She felt that he didn't want to hear only about her church activities, just as she didn't want to hear only about his mission. She said, "I was never really sure what he wanted to hear. I wish we could have decided somewhere along the line just what type of letters we should write." She felt that their correspondence was less than satisfactory.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She was very happy about his plans to go on a mission. She said, "I was glad he was going for a lot of reasons. I felt we were too young to be as serious as we were. I had
always wanted him to go, and I knew the value of what he would be doing. I was very close to the Church and kept very active while he was gone. I didn't have any jobs in the Church during that time, but I would have given anything if the bishop had asked me to do just something." She said that her missionary made no attempt to preach to her while he was gone, and she was glad that he didn't. "It would not have been good because he hadn't done it before he left. We had a good understanding of what we both believed. Had he preached to me during his mission, I would have felt that he was out there wondering what was happening to me and that I wasn't stable enough to care for myself and uphold my beliefs. He implied that I was changing, but he made no reference to my losing my faith or anything like that."

In an effort to keep current with him in his activities, she started to keep his missionary journal. "This was real good for a while, but then it got to be a drag. This isn't a good thing. I just didn't appreciate the time that it took to keep that up." She realizes now that she was happy doing it until she started dating other fellows regularly. She enjoyed hearing about the families he was teaching, but she had difficulty keeping an active interest in them. "I just wasn't motivating myself in the right way."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

When he completed his mission, she wasn't serious with anyone else; but she was still dating others. After her first few dates with him, she realized that things could be very much the same as they had been before. "I just felt different with him than with the other fellows. He hadn't changed except
in his maturity. We went together when he got home, but he still dated others. I felt very insecure with this. I didn't know what he expected of me, and I didn't know if I was wasting my time. It didn't seem fair, but it was just what I needed to bring me around in my thinking. It also helped him. He went with some good girls, and I believe that he was able to feel a lot better about me because of the opportunity to compare." This continued for several months until she confronted him with her feelings and wanted to know if he felt they could ever get back to the close relationship they had had before. "If he didn't feel it, I didn't want to waste any more time." This seemed to be the turning point for them. They became engaged soon after and were married within a few months.

She gave credit to him for the type of person he was and the way he treated her when he was with her. "This is what kept my thoughts with him." She never had any question about his strength in spiritual matters, and she knew that he would be a good husband and father. She said, "Even though I resented some of the things my parents did and said, I do feel that they were understanding and made me feel guilty enough when I wasn't being faithful that I was able to straighten myself out."

Advice to others. "First I would tell them not to write every week and don't call each other on the phone except for special occasions. A telephone call is so much more pressing than the things that you say in a letter. If you really want to wait for a missionary, don't let yourself get going with anyone very often. Going to church can keep the relationship stronger than anything else. If you are doing what you should in the Church, you will be
thinking of the missionary more." She also said that parents should be advised to use wisdom in their actions.

Case 13

Courtship background information. Case 13 had his first date with his girlfriend just six months before he left for his mission. They had known each other for about a year before that. They dated once a week for a month or so, and then it increased to three or four times a week. He said, "There was never any agreement to go steady, but we just gradually found ourselves with that situation. The first that we ever discussed this topic was the time that we actually began talking about marriage itself. We loved each other a great deal, so we discussed marriage as we would be concerned with it after I returned from my mission. This was taking place about one month before I was to leave."

Nature and results of agreements. He wanted her to date and be free to do what she wanted. "I felt that she should be free to find someone else if things happened that way. I had mixed emotions because I realized that I was taking a chance doing this. I was fortunate to have some friends who took an interest in her and saw that she was taken out to certain activities, but she really didn't have a desire to date very much. She accepted only a very few dates during the entire time that I was gone. I feel strongly that it is unwise, unkind, and unrealistic to ask a person to wait without having some social interaction. This would just limit a person's growth too much."
Content and frequency of correspondence. They both wrote once a week. He didn't know why they had decided on this frequency of correspondence, but he felt that it was the right amount. He felt that any more would have had a detrimental effect on his mission. He tried in every letter to express his love as well as to discuss the meaningful happenings of his mission. Her letters were much the same as his. She encouraged him in his work, and he felt that her letters were one of the main reasons they were able to stay together.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. He said, "I hadn't planned on going on a mission until I had been going with her for two or three months. In fact, I have to attribute a great part of my decision to serve on a mission to her influence. She came from a very spiritual and missionary-minded family. She never said very much about it, and she didn't pressure me at all, but I knew that she wanted me to go. Finally this became uppermost in my mind." He felt that by her letters, support, encouragement, and by her previous influence she was a very real part of the mission experience. He tried to keep her informed about his activities and about the families he was teaching. "She often wrote and asked about those people and made me feel that she was interested in what I was doing."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. His girl friend waited faithfully for him, and they were married a few months after his return. He listed as significant factors to their success, "Our basic and genuine love which grew and developed even during our separation, a
mutual appreciation and growing understanding of the Church which kept us together while we were apart, and our correspondence."

Advice to others. "I would advise a young man to find the type of girl with the spiritual background and determination that my wife has. She made it work for us."

Case 14

Courtship background information. Case 14 dated her fiance for about four years before he left for his mission. Most of the time they either went steady or were engaged. They broke their engagement a short time before he departed. When asked if they had many problems during their courtship, she said, "Yes, we fought all the time. I think back now and realize that he was more like a big brother. Everyone looked up to me because I was going with someone older. He seemed to understand me, but we still fought. I guess he felt that he was like a big brother, so he could tell me what to do."

Nature and results of agreements. When her boy friend was interviewed for his mission, he was advised not to be engaged while he was gone. She didn't agree with this. "It was such a change to all that we had planned. He was convinced of the value of such a decision at first, thinking that I would be more apt to wait for him if I had a chance to date other boys during his absence." She did agree to break the engagement and decided to go to college. She kept the ring but didn't wear it, thinking that when he returned they would just begin where they left off. Soon after he had gone, he decided that it wasn't
such a good idea, and he tried to get her to wear the ring again. By then she could see that it was going to be fun and more successful without the ring.

She was very upset at first about his breaking the engagement. She said, "I had gone with him for so long that when he told me he had decided to go I couldn't accept it. At the time, I was willing to sit home; but I'm glad I didn't agree to that because it wouldn't have worked either." When he heard that she was dating some fellows more than twice, he would call her on the phone and tell her to put the ring back on and quit school. "He thought I was having too much fun." By that time she was enjoying school and the opportunity to look around. He never accepted her reluctance to start wearing the ring again but, rather, became quite hostile. She said, "He was worrying too much about it. The longer he was away, the more convinced I became that he was where he should be and I was doing what I should. He didn't ever look at things from a good viewpoint. Some of the letters he wrote really shocked me to think he would be that strong minded and bull headed toward me. I felt that if he thought much of me he wouldn't do that."

She had a very good relationship with his parents at first. His mother called her quite often, and she visited the family frequently. She could tell, though, that they really wanted to know what she was doing. She said, "They were just being sweet and wanted to help, but I took it all wrong. I thought they were being nosey. I was trying so hard to find what I wanted to do, and I didn't want anyone else trying to find out for me." At one point his mother called her and said that she had just received a heart broken letter from the
missionary. In this letter he had given his mother the responsibility of finding just what was happening. She told his mother that she just didn't know and that she wished they would just wait and let her decide. "They didn't think much of me after that, and it made me feel bad because we had been so close." She said, "I just felt so much pressure that at times it seemed that I was in prison."

Content and frequency of correspondence. She wrote to him at least twice a week; and then as she got busy, she found it hard to write that often. She said, "He didn't want to know about my dates, and there just wasn't that much else to write about. It hardly seemed worthwhile just to continue writing and saying 'I'm still thinking of you.'" As her letters dropped off, his phone calls increased. They called each other very often. She felt that this was very bad for his mission and that he just didn't lose himself in his work like he should have. She had difficulty finding things to say in her letters, and his letters were full of instructions as to what she should and should not do. "He became just like a parent standing over me with a hammer insisting on certain actions. I became very rebellious and lost my feelings for him out of a fear that he would be this type of person the rest of his life. I could picture him standing there giving me every instruction."

She said, "Our letters were primarily filled with affection. In fact, that is all they were because I had tried mentioning a couple of activities I had gone to, and he wrote and said, 'How come you did that!'" She felt there should be a balance between love and news in the letters. "We both needed love and reassurance, but we just had too much love and not enough quiet
discussion about our lives as they actually were."

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. She felt there were two sides to her feelings about his serving a mission. She didn't want him to go, but she did see value in the experience. Her thinking and life had not been oriented to the thought of a mission.

After serving in the mission field for a few months, he gave her several church books as a present and asked that, as a present to him, she read them. She said, "I thought this was rather funny. It was a beautiful present but such a change from the presents he had given me before. Well, I planned on reading them some day, but my college days just didn't seem to be the time. It made me feel that he didn't approve of me the way I was and that he wanted to change me, but I wasn't going to change. If he didn't approve of me as I was, then that was just too bad. This also made me feel that he was going to be getting over religious, and I wasn't quite ready for that. I feel that I was religious and close to the Church, but I felt there were other more important things to do than sit down and read the Bible for long hours."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. She terminated their relationship and married another fellow about a year after her missionary had left. She had met this fellow and recognized in him many gentlemanly qualities that impressed her. She thought at the time she met him that if she was to date, he would be the type she would enjoy being with. She said, "He seemed like a fresh, new, and interesting approach to dating." She started dating this fellow and found that she got along much better with him
than with her missionary. Serious dating gradually developed over the months, and her missionary continued his attempts to break them up. She described these attempts and the effect on her by saying, "He just kept calling me and telling me I could not continue what I was doing. I immediately put up a barrier between us and told him that I didn't appreciate being told what I could and could not do. It ended in constant bickering and feelings that we could never make it work for us. I feel to this day that if I hadn't married my husband I would not have married my missionary anyway. There had been so much conflict and bitterness and lack of respect for my feelings that there would have been too much to overcome. Our fights prior to his mission also had an effect on my thinking. My husband's actions and treatment of me were a complete reversal from the way my missionary had treated me. There is no question also that my husband's being near at the time I was having trouble with my missionary had its effect. He was understanding, reassuring, loving, and available. I fell for him."

She listed the causes for the termination of their absentee courtship as being a combination of many problems. "We never got along before he left. The broken engagement was too much of a blow for me. If he thought enough of me to give me a ring and set a wedding date, how could he ask me to put it off for two more years? The good of the mission seemed secondary to me; I could see only the personal inconvenience. My attitude was questionable, and I recognize it." She also blamed their frequent phone calls. Things were said that would not have normally been said. "It just provided
a way to get nasty with each other." She said that they failed to establish a deep and mutual understanding before he left. "We were just on a teeter-totter when he left. I didn't agree with the way he wanted me to wait, and then he reversed his feelings on me. We didn't set or agree on a common goal for which we could strive."

**Advice to others.** "The missionary should take the chances involved and let his girl go her way and make her decisions without interference. The girl should not bother him with every little problem she has through frequent letters and phone calls. If a girl really wants to wait, she should not go out very much. The boy shouldn't be authoritarian in his approach to his girl and her activities." She also feels early steady dating has its bad effects here also. "There wouldn't have been so much fascination to the new dating experience if I had dated other fellows before."

**Case 15**

**Courtship background information.** Case 15 courted his girl friend for two years before he left for his mission. "There was a significant age difference between us which prevented a full-fledged courtship. Her parents being very wise and prudent made a rule that when school started I could see her only a certain number of times each month. I was allowed to call her every day, however. This was our relationship for nearly two years; but as the time came closer for me to leave, many of the restrictions were removed." They dated three or four times a week during the last three
months. He said, "We were just going steadily because her parents wouldn't allow her to actually go steady at that age. We both had occasional dates with someone else." They had no arguments during their courtship, and they were able to accept their dating restrictions without resentment. He said that they felt very strongly about each other and had talked about marriage, but they realized that they were both too young to discuss it seriously.

**Nature and results of agreements.** He said, "I made it very clear that it was only fair to her that she go out with other boys while I was gone. She understood this without question." She promised him that she would wait for him and be available when he returned. They agreed to write to each other once a week in an effort to keep their feelings strong. He had some misgivings about the freedom that he was giving her. He said, "I was old enough to realize that it was the right thing to do, but I was too young to accept it. It was the only fair and right thing to do." She dated soon after he left, and he knew that she was going with several different fellows. He wasn't able to keep too close to her activities because their correspondence agreement didn't hold up as they had planned. He said, "We didn't correspond very frequently. During the first few months, I wrote faithfully every week and heard from her only about once a month. We lost contact by the end of the sixth month. As a result I didn't know exactly what her dating activities were until the end of my mission. This shocked and hurt me to know how steadily she had gone with some of the fellows she dated. Our
correspondence had been revived, but she never informed me of her activi-
ties."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** They had good intentions
of writing regularly and often to each other but did not accomplish it. He
said, "I felt very deeply about her, and I'm sure she felt the same toward
me. When she didn't write every week as we had agreed, I was disturbed.
I made several entries in my diary indicating that I couldn't understand why
she wasn't writing. This did cause some periods of depression, but I don't
think it had a detrimental effect on my mission. Correspondence was our
only link, and it failed."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** He had planned for
a mission since his early teen years. She wanted him to go and encouraged
him right from the beginning. He indicated that her feelings didn't change
as the time for his leaving came close. He said, "In my subconscious I
wanted her to resist and hold back as an expression of her love, but this
didn't come. There were tears on the day that I left, but I'm sure there
were no misgivings. She had been active in the Church and had a strong
feeling for missionary work, so I shouldn't have been surprised that she
supported me right to the time that I left."

While he was on his mission, he tried to encourage her to do more
study of the scriptures. "She had been teaching a Sunday School class but
had never really read the principal works of the Church. As I read and
catched the power of the scriptures, I wanted her to feel the same thing.
She never commented or gave a response to my suggestions to do more, but I'm quite confident that she just ignored my feelings on this. I went about it with the wrong approach; it was my whole life, and I couldn't understand why it wasn't hers."

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.**

During their correspondence failure, he felt that everything was over for them even though he still had a deep love for her. When he returned home, he still felt real doubts about their relationship; but he felt that he needed something to tie to. "I wanted and needed to be close to someone and to have someone care for me." He dated his girl for a few weeks but soon found that the bonds of love they had felt no longer existed. He said, "In the process of growing up, all of us change; and I found that our interests had changed during our separation. For one thing my letters demonstrated this change to her. They were too preachy, and they contained too much about the Church and not enough about things that would interest her. There was a gap in our emotional maturity even when I returned."

He feels that their relationship was terminated because of the difference in their ages, the lack of adequate correspondence, and her desires for something different from a "strictly spiritual menu." He said, "We couldn't share our mission and make it a joint venture because of her feelings. I wanted this so bad that perhaps my enthusiasm was too much for her to cope with."
Advice to others. In offering his advice for future absentee courtship participants, he said, "Most of all no matter how committed they are, this period will bring many changes; and a couple should not be tied down. Even if they are engaged before the mission, the girl should have her freedom. This is a time which she can learn to meet other people and grow and be a better wife if things do work out." He also recognized that the missionary must be conscious that there may be a difference in the spiritual commitment that is felt by the girl. He said, "The missionary must be able to accept this as normal without feeling that he must call his girl friend to repentence."

Case 16

Courtship background information. Case 16 dated her fiance for approximately four years before he left for his mission. Steady dating, though without verbal agreement as such, began about seven months after the first date. Their steady status just became a gradually accepted fact. Except for a very few dates with other boys before she started going with him, he was the only boy she ever dated. They became pinned about two months before his departure. They had only minor differences of opinion and misunderstandings during the courtship.

Nature and results of agreements. Before he left, they decided to stay pinned for the first year of his mission. It was her opinion that he would have liked her to stay pinned during the entire two years, but she thought that he didn't want to pressure her, and she certainly didn't want to
be pressured. She had no dates during the entire two year period. When asked how she felt about this during the separation, she said, "It didn't bother me, but everyone else worried about me and thought I should date, but I had told him that if I wanted to I would, but I just didn't want to." She had many opportunities during the two years to accept offers for dates. She implied that keeping the pin was security for her and allowed her to have a part of him with her. She didn't feel that the period of separation was difficult. She said, "You can make it what you want. You can sit around and mope about it all the time, but you don't have to." She involved herself in school, a sorority, and many fun times with her family and with his. She did do many things with his family. They took her to family reunions, shared many letters, and generally kept in very close contact. She felt this association with his family was very helpful.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote to him every Friday and periodically sent a card for special occasions. Her letters included news about things happening on the campus and varied in emphasis between news and love. He wrote a lot about his mission but never preached to her. She had been very conscious of this, and they had discussed it before he left. She was very satisfied with his letters and indicated that they made her feel very good whenever she read them. They never had any misunderstandings through their correspondence. She said, "We felt that if things were to go wrong for us it would probably be through something like this, so we were conscious of this both before he left and also in writing our letters."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She felt very much a part of his mission through their premission discussion of its being a joint
venture. They would often write such things in their letters as, "Our mission will be completed before we know it." She knew of his plans for a mission and anticipated the separation for a long time before he left. When asked how she felt about his going, she said, "Just before he left, I tried to talk him out of going; but down deep I really wanted him to go." Her reasons for wanting him to go were that he wanted to serve as a missionary, and she felt the experience would help to make him more mature and would help him decide just where he wanted to go in life. She also looked at this experience as one that would help him to be a better family man. She did say, however, that she would have married him even without the mission experience. When he actually received his mission call, she was very happy for him and didn't experience any strong or difficult feelings about the pending separation. They had talked and thought about it for so long that it was quite natural. She didn't find the separation to be unusually difficult, and there were no particular periods of crisis or increased difficulty. She remained very active in the Church and pursued her own spiritual growth. She did appear to be sensitive to any suggestion from him that she do more. She said, "He didn't preach to me, thank goodness!"

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.**

When her fiance returned, he had no desire to date other girls; and they found no difficulty at all in readjusting to each other. They were married shortly after his return. She felt that the main reason for the successful conclusion to their absentee courtship was the way they had planned together for the
mission. She said, "We tried to anticipate and discuss in advance all the problems that might come up. We didn't miss very many of them."

Advice to others. She said that every couple is so different that she wouldn't even try to give any "sure answer" advice. They, in fact, were often upset by everyone giving them advice as to how they should handle their absentee courtship. If she were to go through the experience again, she would change nothing. She said, "I was so sure that we were meant for each other that I had no reason to think about going out with other fellows except for occasional entertainment." She felt her activities at school and in her sorority helped her greatly because of the companionship and frequent activity. "The complete freedom to choose your course of action along with advance preparation with your missionary are essential items of advice for any girl anticipating a two year separation. Also keep close through regular and meaningful correspondence."

Case 17

Courtship background information. Case 17 went with his girl for approximately three years before he left for his mission. They had no steady agreement as such, but they only dated a few others during that time. They saw each other daily and dated at least three or four times a week during the last six months before he departed for his mission. He said, "She hinted that she wanted either to get engaged or pinned, but I was hesitant, and later we both decided that we didn't want to. We finally were able to realize that
it wouldn't be fair to her or to me. She never really gave up the idea totally. As the time came closer for me to leave, the subject came back up often. It seemed to me that she was grasping out for security more than anything else."

They had occasional arguments, but they were just minor disagreements. "This had always stood out in my mind as one of the outstanding aspects of our relationship. We have always been able to communicate well and give each other a chance to express concerns and difficulties. We both have had a deep and strong belief in prayer, and we prayed often together. This helped us a great deal in building a strong bond."

Nature and results of agreements. "The agreement that we had was that she would go out; and as far as I was concerned, I didn't want to know about it. We discussed keeping a close communication. We felt this was our best chance of survival. I promised her that I would write once a week. Probably the best agreement we made was that she was to keep my missionary journal. This kept us close together."

She did mention to him some details about her first date. This really bothered him. "While I was trying to make the adjustment to missionary work, my mind just couldn't handle the thoughts of having her go out with some other guy when I couldn't be there. I'm sure that it was mainly pangs of jealousy. You know, I wanted her to go out, but then I didn't." He had mixed emotions about their agreements about her having the freedom to date. He said, "I didn't feel good about it because I didn't want to face the competition and the concern; but as I had studied and prayed about the situation and talked to other
people, I realized that an active person like her just couldn't be asked to stay at home. We both felt that things would work out for the best if we did our best with the responsibilities of the mission and with our own daily lives. As I look back on it now, I have no question but that we made the right decision to give her the freedom to date."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** He wrote to her once a week, and at first she wrote to him every day. He said, "I wrote to her and asked her to stop writing that often because it was interfering with my work." After this she wrote twice a week for the remainder of his mission. This seemed to satisfy him, but he said that that should be the maximum. In comparing a newsletter to a love letter, he said, "A newsletter is best; but if the girl loves the fellow, she should word her letter in such a way that it conveys love. Both should express their love in the conclusion of their letters if it is felt sincerely. If she can express thankfulness and support for the work that he is doing, it will be a boon to his morale." He did feel that an occasional real love letter wouldn't do any damage, and the reassurance that it gives the missionary is good. He said, "I knew one missionary, though, who was almost destroyed as a missionary by the love letters that his girl sent to him. He was never able to leave her at home and out of his mind."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** "She had a great influence on me. She never really set her foot down, but she always let me know what her preferences were. She wanted me to go on a mission. We both
felt good about the Church, but she was much stronger than I. I think she gained a great deal of satisfaction from seeing the changes that I made during my mission. She gave me encouragement and praise for what I was doing and accomplishing." He felt strongly that her attitude toward keeping his journal helped greatly in keeping them together. "We were able to share my mission through that experience. She was able to keep close to what I was doing, and she would often respond in her letters to certain situations that I had described. This kept our communication line open in a very effective way." He sent her a list of scriptures that he memorized and some of the tracts that were used in their teaching with the thought that she would enjoy reading them, but he didn't ask her to read them. Her strength in the Church was not a question to him.

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.**

"We had some trouble when I got home. Our communications kind of broke down. Before I got home, she had written and said that if I wanted to go out with other girls for awhile after I returned she would understand and feel okey about it. She didn't want me to feel that I was totally obligated to her. Initially I wasn't concerned about doing this, but it did sound like a good idea. After I had been home awhile, I did feel a need to do this for my own self adjustment and assurance of my feelings. Our problems began here. She said that it was alright, but down deep she resented it. Several months elapsed with only an occasional opportunity to go with her. I was beginning to feel that it was all off, and I'm sure she did. An appropriate phone call came along at
the right time that gave us the opportunity to discuss our situation. A date that evening brought apologies and a proposal for marriage." The strength of their courtship and the joint mission experience that they had shared were the significant influences in their staying together and surviving the reunion crisis.

They did experiment for a short time with being engaged after he was in the last half of his mission. She felt that she had had some fine opportunities to date and that now she was ready to sit out the remaining months and prepare for his return. They made this agreement, and she started wearing his ring. He said, "It was only a matter of two weeks when I noticed a change in her letters, and after about two months, we both agreed that it wasn't good for her. The tone of her letters had changed. The things that had meant the most to me before in her letters were missing. She was no longer giving me the encouragement that she had done but was now talking about the things we would do after I got home. She was a much better person when she wasn't tied down. Being tied down inhibited her so much that she pulled herself into a shell that just brought misery to her and to me. After the ring was returned and she again had her freedom, her letters changed again to the type that sustained me in my missionary efforts and thus sustained our relationship."

Advice to others. "I feel that two things happen if the girl doesn't date. She begins to live in a shell, and she doesn't develop. Though the missionary and she do not grow in the same way, he is making tremendous
growth and change; she can't just bide the time and expect to be on a par with him when he returns. I believe that the difference in personality at the end of two years' separation would be so great if there wasn't some mutual growth, that there would be real difficulty for readjustment to each other."

He feels that the amount and quality of correspondence is very important and that faith in each other is essential. He said, "The fact that we both had opportunity for other dates helped us also. Though it was almost the undoing of our relationship, it turned out to be the very thing that brought us strongly back together realizing how much we meant to each other." He says that a couple should have a good advance understanding of the mission experience and what it can mean to them.

Case 18

Courtship background information. Case 18 met her fiance in a church meeting, and their lives have been tied close to the Church ever since. She dated him for about six months before he left for his mission. She said that they didn't go with anyone else, but they had never made any agreements about going steady. "We had a strong feeling of commitment to each other when he left for his mission, but he didn't want to tie me down to the extent that I couldn't enjoy myself." She said that they hadn't had an argument in their entire association.

Nature and results of agreements. "I agreed that I would wait for him unless I found someone else. He did want me to accept other dates
while he was gone." She went out on two dates, but she was involved in a lot of other activities and didn't feel the need for a lot of dates. She did feel free to make her own decisions about her activities.

Content and frequency of correspondence. "I wrote to him once a week and no more." She described the reason behind her positive "and no more" by saying that she felt he was on a mission to preach the Gospel and not worry about home and a girl friend. Her letters were primarily oriented to encourage him in his work and to let him know that she supported him. They read some church books concurrently, so they would ask questions back and forth in their letters about their reading. "We did express our love for each other in our letters, but this was a very minor part of our correspondence."

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. She said that her fiance's family didn't give him any encouragement to serve on a mission, so she felt that it was her place to do all she could to help him decide what he wanted to do. "At first he didn't really want to go, but he recognized how important I felt that it was. He decided that he too wanted it later. I was just raised to respect missionary service, and I felt that he would be a better husband if he had that experience." She had a strong feeling that she belonged to the mission experience which he had. "It was definitely 'Our' mission." She was very active in the Church during his mission and continued an active study program to increase her knowledge of the Church.
Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

"Our absence just brought us closer together. I felt before he left that he was the one for me, and I realized that his absence would be a test for us. We passed the test and got married a few months after his return."

Advice to others. "I would tell a young girl not to have her mind too set on the fact that she loved only her missionary and that she would be there when he got back. If it doesn't work, there will be real difficulties. She must have faith in the Church and in her missionary."

Case 19

Courtship background information. Case 19 started dating his girlfriend during their senior year in high school. They went together for approximately two years before he left for his mission. Steady dating began quite early for them, and it continued through most of the two years. There were very few arguments and misunderstandings during that time.

Nature and results of agreements. His girlfriend had been wearing his school ring during the steady dating portion of their courtship. When he was about to leave, he took the ring back. They agreed that she would wait for him, and they would eventually get married. They agreed that she would go out, but he thought they had agreed that she would go out to a lesser degree than she did. He said, "I'm sure that we discussed just how much she should go out; I don't remember just what we decided, but it is obvious that she forgot what we decided too." He continued, "I probably didn't want her to go out
because I thought our chances would be better if she didn't. I did realize, and she helped me come to this realization, that she didn't want to sit home alone for two years." She started dating about three weeks after he left. He found out about her dating activities from various sources, but she didn't give him any details. "I'm not sure how I felt about having to get the information from other people. In a way I would have liked her to keep me posted on just what she was doing, but it may have been bad to know the details." His girl did become pinned to another fellow at one point during the separation. When asked what caused her to break up with that fellow, he said, "I would like to think that it was because of me, but I'm not sure. I was broken up about it for awhile, but I never really thought that it was ended. I just threw myself into my missionary work all the more, and waited to see what would happen. It wasn't too long until she started writing again. She had broken up with the guy."

Content and frequency of correspondence. They both wrote to each other at least twice a week. He feels now that this was too often, but admits that at the time it seemed very good. "I can see now that I wasted a lot of time with my letters. They didn't help me to understand her any better, and I let them take too much of my interest." He blamed some of their later problems to the "inadequate correspondence." He said, "I always tried to read too much into her letters, so I was over suspicious about what she was doing. I would challenge her on some things, and her reactions were negative." His letters were quite expressive of affection for her, and he
felt that her letters had a good balance. "We didn't communicate very well
the thoughts that we had."

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. "We decided early
in our courtship that I would be going on a mission; we planned for it together,
and she gave me her full support and encouragement. I appreciated her encour-
agement, but I would have gone even if she had opposed the idea." He suggested
that she keep his missionary journal in an effort to keep her involved in his
activities. She did this for most of the mission, but it was never finished.
"When she became interested in this other guy, the diary was put away and
was never written in again even though we worked out most of our problems." He never had the feeling that she should be doing more in the Church.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.
She had been writing to him more faithfully toward the end of his mission, but
for some reason hadn't written during the last three weeks. Because of this,
he didn't see her right at first when he returned. He said, "We finally got
together and started going out quite a lot, but there was no commitment at that
time. I started going out with other girls and did so right up to the time that
we got engaged. I had decided soon after I got home that she was the one
that I wanted to marry, but I continued to date others. When I analyze my
motives, I realize that I dated others mostly just for spite. She had gone
out a lot while I was away, so I felt justified. It hurt her quite a bit, but
it did help me by comparison to settle my thinking concerning her."
He was confident that she waited better by having her freedom than she would have if they had been engaged. "She just isn't the type of girl that I could have tied down for that long and expected to keep her good will." He felt that the fine courtship they had before his mission was strong in both of their minds and kept them together. Their parents figured quite strongly in their relationship also. Both parents influenced their thinking and determination to put forth the effort to keep together. "At times, this worked in reverse, though." He said also that the fact that she kept his diary for most of the time helped her to keep close to him and to feel that she was a part of the mission experience.

Advice to others. He said, "I would recommend no engagement. The long waiting period is not helped by this. One letter a week is enough; let the diary be a better source of information for the girl. The girl should involve herself actively in school and church activities. Parents should be cautioned not to interfere."

Case 20

Courtship background information. Case 20 dated her boy friend for about two years before he left for his mission. She was still in high school and was restricted somewhat in her dating activity, but they dated daily during the summer vacations. Her parents insisted that she have occasional dates with other fellows, but they dated as steadily as possible. They had few, if any, arguments or disagreements. She said, "We were
both too agreeable before his mission."

Nature and results of agreements. At the time her boy friend left, they discussed their situation and decided that she shouldn't expect to sit home. "Since I was still in high school, it was silly of him to think that I was going to sit home; so I told him I wouldn't. I promised him that I would still be here when he got home and that we would be able to start again where we left off. We agreed to keep in close contact through the mail and try to maintain our relationship."

She accepted her first date two days after he left, and she dated several fellows during the two year period. She felt that their agreements left her free to do this. She said, "There was a big difference in our maturity. He was much more mature than I was, and he would have liked to have left with a more serious commitment and with more restrictions on my activities. He was much more serious in his letter writing as far as the two of us were concerned. I wouldn't respond to these comments, but he kept writing and wanting to discuss our future plans. I wasn't ready to discuss future plans; I was too young and immature to be talking that big."

The results of her dating amounted to no more than good social activity for her, but their relationship suffered. Her missionary wasn't able to accept her free and easy approach.

She had a very good relationship with his parents during the first few months of the separation. "We saw each other often, and we shared photos and letters. As I started dating other fellows frequently, my
relationship with them dwindled."

Content and frequency of correspondence. Her boy friend wrote more often to her than she wrote to him for quite some time. "He would write and ask why I wasn't writing more regularly, so I would hurry and get one in the mail. Our letters were very different in content too. Mine were very newsy, and his were filled with talk about marriage. I just didn't like it that way, and I got to the point that I didn't like to read his letters. I was sorry and almost felt guilty that I didn't feel as serious as he did. Here I was dating other fellows frequently, and he was talking about taking me to the marriage altar. He didn't like the type of letter I was writing, so he finally wrote and said, "I just can't go on like this; I must know how you feel. Your letters seem so distant and cold and nothing like the relationship we had before I left." She wrote back to him and told him, "I like you very much, but I can't say that I'm in love with you. Time and distance has made me feel a bit different. I would just rather continue our relationship on a strictly friendship basis until you get home, and then we can see how we feel." Neither of them wrote for several weeks; but after they got started again, they continued to write until he completed his mission.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. "Right from the time of our first date, I knew that he was planning for a mission. I felt good about this and wanted him to go. Quite honestly, by the time he was ready to leave, I was ready to have him leave. This really sounds bad, but I was beginning to feel more tied down than I wanted to be. As the time
approached for him to go, I got more sentimental and shed some tears, but it was good for both of us to be apart."

She was very active in the Church and had been all her life. "In spite of my activity he was always trying to get me to read the scriptures along with him. I just found myself too busy. One thing that used to make me feel bad was that we were going to pray at a certain time each day. I found soon that I just couldn't do it. My prayers weren't sincere, and it seemed a bit silly to be praying with him one minute and going out for a date the next. I soon quit. It wasn't that I didn't feel good about prayer or that I didn't want to assist him by my prayers, but the simultaneous prayer just didn't seem right at the time. He is a very religious boy, and it got to the point during his mission that I felt that he was a bit radical. I guess when a person is on a mission and living it day in and day out, he soon thinks about nothing else. I just had more interests than that alone. He wanted me to feel the same twenty-four hours a day missionary spirit that he felt, but I couldn't. He often closed his letters as if they were a prayer, which almost seemed sacrilegious to me. He was just on a much higher spiritual level than I was. I would like to have been on his level, but I just couldn't cope with it at the time."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

They continued to write and keep in touch with each other on a cooler basis during the second year. When he got home, they went together and had a good time; but he was still more serious than she. "He issued me an
ultimatum giving me a choice of either progressing with our courtship without
competition from anyone else or he would step out of the picture. I tried to
tell him that I would still like to go with him, but I wasn't ready for marriage
and wouldn't be for quite some time." They had a few dates after this, but
they had difficulty on every date, so the relationship gradually deteriorated.

When asked to list the factors which caused their relationship to
terminate, she said, "First of all would be my immaturity and unreadiness
for marriage compared to his maturity and readiness for marriage. Second
would be our poor communication and entirely different approach in our
letters. Third would be my dating of other boys and building new interests.
Fourth would have to be the difference in the spiritual maturity in our relation-
ship. He wanted to pray when we were on dates. This bothered me because
I thought those sacred moments should be saved for the person that I was sure
to marry. With my reservations about our situation, I just couldn't say Amen
to some of the things he said in his prayers. We were on different levels."

Advice to others. She said, "Two years' separation brings two almost
completely different people back together. To try to start right where you
left off is impossible. A person needs more maturity than I had before she
even gets involved with a missionary courtship."

Case 21

Courtship background information. Case 21 had a long courtship
with his girl friend that lasted through their high school days and continued
on until he went on his mission. They had talked about marriage often, but they had made no definite plans and were not engaged. He said, "We went steady most of the time that we dated, but there was never an exchange of a class ring or a formal agreement that we were tied to each other. We both assumed it and enjoyed our relationship without the binding agreements. We did feel quite an obligation and commitment to each other, and we felt that our love would last through the years."

Nature and results of agreements. "We really didn't talk too much about making agreements and decisions about her activities. If we did, it wasn't in enough detail for me to remember it. We did agree that we would write to each other and that she would be here when I got home. I didn't actually come right out and ask her to wait for me, but I'm sure that impression was left with her.

He didn't want to know about her dating activities. He said, "I just wasn't interested in knowing what she was doing with those other fellows, and I didn't want her to feel that she had to account to me for every minute she was with another boy. I just didn't want to set down a lot of ground rules. I wanted her to be free and wanted mainly just to know that she was there and supporting me in my activities. I think she would have liked me to lay the law down and tell her just what I expected, but I'm the type of guy that doesn't like to get obligated anymore than I have to, and I don't want to obligate any one to me if I'm not ready to feel the same obligation. I hesitated to commit myself for two years, and I didn't want to force a commitment of any kind on
her. I would have never thought of being engaged during my mission because of the unfairness to her and the uncertainty. I just couldn't ask a girl to sit home and sew while I was being so active in a dynamic endeavor like my mission."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** He wrote to her once a week during his entire mission. She wrote twice a week during the first six months and then once a week during the remainder of the time. He felt good about the frequency after they were both writing once a week. He said that a missionary needs regular word of reassurance and encouragement from home. "The regular letter is more important than the frequent one." Her letters expressed very little love. "Sometimes they got a bit romantic, but I'm not the type of person who likes to read or write that kind of letter, so I made that understanding clear before I left. She did reassure me of her feelings to the point that I had no questions about her." His letters followed much the same pattern with enough love to reassure but concentrated on the activities of his missionary work.

He felt that their letters may have affected their courtship. He said, "Her letters seemed to reflect her personality, and she would use some of the same terms that she had when I was at home. Many of these things bothered me before my mission, and they did in her letters. This may be trite, but it did make me conscious of the fact that she wasn't changing as I subconsciously hoped she would.
Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. When he first told his girl friend that he was thinking about going on a mission, she didn’t want him to go. "Later she saw that I really had desires to go, and she made up her mind to be behind me and support me in my decision. In her correspondence she often indicated that she was grateful that I had accepted the call to serve and that she was sure it was the best thing." He felt that she had had no positive influence on him in his decision to go. Regarding her activity in the Church, he said, "I think she is quite close to the Church and was very active all the time that I was gone. I sometimes got the impression that she was just active to make an impression on me because I was in the mission field. She spent so much time talking about it in her letters that I sometimes questioned her sincerity. As I think about it now, I realize that I had told her not to talk about her social life; so she may have had little else to talk about. I may have judged her wrongly." He felt that they considered his mission as a joint venture. "She often mentioned in her letters that she was enjoying the experiences of 'Our' mission." She also kept his diary which helped to keep her close to his activities.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. "When I returned home," he said, "she was there to meet me; it was very good to see her, and at first it looked like everything was going to be wonderful." They went together often for the first few weeks; but after he got into school, his studies and busy schedule seemed to interfere. He
said, "She felt that I should spend more time with her, but I just couldn't afford the time to be with her as often as she wanted. To make matters worse, I had some desire to date other girls just as she had dated other fellows during my absence. She couldn't accept this; and after I did take some other girls out, the good feelings that we had seemed to disappear." Their courtship ended completely within a few short weeks. He said, "I really didn't feel sure of my feelings for her right from the time that I got home, and I didn't feel at ease around her family. I feel concerned now at times that maybe I should have tried harder to work it out, but my feelings had just changed.

**Advice to others.** He said plainly and succinctly, "Be able and willing to expect and accept change."

**Case 22**

**Courtship background information.** Case 22 started going with her fiance while she was in Junior High School and continued right to the time that he left for his mission. They had no commitment to go steady until the year before he left, but they had only a very few other dates during their courtship. She accepted his fraternity pin a few months prior to his leaving. They had some difficulty during their courtship with arguments over other dates. "Some of them were rather severe, but they didn't last very long."

**Nature and results of agreements.** She said, "I kept his pin though we didn't actually stay pinned. I kept it for security knowing that he would
have to come back to get it." They agreed that she would date when she wanted
to, but she was to use some wisdom in the number of dates she went on. She
was to go with a variety of boys and try not to go too often with any one
fellow. She dated two or three times a month. "There were a few guys that
I really enjoyed being with, but I never got serious with any of them." She felt
good about her dating, and she thought that her missionary accepted her
activities too.

She had frequent contact with his family. "They kept very close to
me and made me feel that I was part of the family. This had a lot of influence
on me. It was nice to know that they wanted me to wait. I must say that at
times I felt they were trying to stay too close, but I would prefer this over
having no contact at all with them."

**Contact and frequency of correspondence.** She tried to write to him
once a week, but she wasn't always able to accomplish it. She told him about
her dates until he wrote and ask that she not talk so much about them. She
tried to keep him informed about school activities and friends. He would
write about his mission experiences and combined enough love with his letters
to keep her interested. She felt his letters were very good and never left her
with any question about his feelings for her.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She said, "I had
planned on his going on a mission right from the time that we started to get
serious with each other. I wanted him to go; and I know that if he hadn't
gone, people would have blamed me. I felt that he needed to have more
religion or at least have it mean more to him. I also felt that he would be a better husband and father after he had been a missionary." She was very active in the Church and tried conscientiously to increase her knowledge of the Church while he was gone. "I enjoyed very much receiving information about the people he was teaching. I tried to keep in touch with their development."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.
She said, "I always planned to marry him and found that there was no change in our feelings when he got home, so we just didn't waste any time. I'm sure I loved him, but I was most conscious of thinking that he was such a good person that I shouldn't let him go." They were married a few weeks after he completed his mission.

Advice to others. "I would do it the same way again as long as I could feel that I wasn't tied down. The best answer, though, is to find a man that has already been on a mission."

Case 23

Courtship background information. Case 23 dated his girl friend for one and a half years before leaving for his mission. They started going steady after two or three months, and they found little difficulty in getting along. She had his school ring as a symbol of their steady agreement. They had discussed some plans for marriage and anticipated this to occur after his mission.

Nature and results of agreements. "We decided that she should date while I was gone. We planned that she would wait for me, but we felt she
should wait and date, not wait and rot." She didn't date for quite a long while after he left; but after she started dating, she went often with several different fellows. She told him about the dates she had, but she didn't identify the date with the boy involved. "I felt quite a bit of jealousy about her activities, but I was sure that I had to let her go out if I wanted her to be there when I got home. This must have backfired on me because it wasn't too long until she was getting very serious with one of the fellows she dated." She became engaged after he had been gone about a year and a half. Though her engagement didn't last, they were never able to get back together.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** He wrote to her once a week, and she wrote to him at least two or three times a week. This frequency continued for about six months. After this they both slowed down gradually until she wrote to him informing him of her engagement. There was no exchange of letters after that time. He expressed mostly news about his mission, but did include some love comments in his early letters. "Her letters were filled with so much love and 'mush' that I figured she was writing enough for both of us. As time progressed, I realized that there was just too much of it. I got tired of it and felt that it really couldn't be genuine. To be honest, it almost got sickening. We hadn't discussed the type of letter that we wanted, so I guess it was my own fault." She at one point recognized that his letters were rather cold, so she wrote and asked him if he was only writing out of a feeling of obligation. "I didn't want to tell her, and it hadn't occurred to me that way, but her mentioning it made me realize that I did feel that way."
Neither of them appreciated the other's letters.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. She encouraged him to go on a mission and helped him in making his preparations to leave. He had planned for a mission for a long time. "There were tears when I left, but I think she was happy that I had accepted the call to serve. I thought a lot of her, but I was really relieved to be on the plane and on my way."

He said, "She showed no interest in the people that I was teaching. I would mention them in my letters, and she would never make any reply. I wanted to have her involved in my mission and take an interest in it, but she didn't seem to have a desire to be a part of my work." He also tried to get her to study more about the scriptures, but she didn't want to do this. He said, "I finally began thinking that she was becoming quite 'Gentile' and that it would be better if she found someone else."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. "I felt that she had gone with some questionable fellows; and where she hadn't made an effort to be interested in my mission, I just felt a relief when she told me of her engagement. She wrote later telling me of breaking her engagement, but I didn't feel there would be a chance for us to get back together. I had just cooled off by the time that I finished my mission." He went to see her, but never had an official date. They agreed that they had both changed and that neither of them had a desire to try to work out their relationship as it had been. They ended their courtship but continued a close friendship.
Advice to others. "Our biggest problems as I saw them were her lack of interest and her mushy letters. A couple must have more to maintain a relationship than that. We hadn't anticipated any of the situations we ran into. If a couple could be helped in advance to picture some of the future that they may experience, I'm sure they could have a better opportunity than we did."

Case 24

Courtship background information. Case 24 went with her fiance for about four years before he left for his mission. They dated nearly every night during the last six months preceding his departure. They were not dating anyone else but had decided not to commit themselves by any agreement. She felt that they had experienced a courtship marked with some immaturity and frequent, though minor, misunderstandings. She said, "I was very immature in my relationship with him. This was mainly because I had gone with him for so long that I didn't even know how to visit well with other fellows. In fact, I didn't even have a best girl friend." She recognized and expressed this as a very narrow way to grow up. None of their problems were very serious, but she didn't feel that they had handled them very well. After he left, she felt that through her association with other people she learned how to deal with misunderstandings and areas of conflict much better.

Nature and results of agreements. Before her fiance left, they agreed upon and were committed to the idea that she would not marry or make a
decision leading to marriage until he returned. She was here when he completed his mission but only through survival of situations which nearly ended in marriage. She accepted and felt good about their original agreement. She said, "It was the only fair thing for me to do because we had gone together for so long and had known each other so well. I felt that it was my duty, and he wanted me to be here. I felt that I had enough freedom to find someone else if it happened that way, but I didn't want to make any decisions until he returned, so I would know for sure."

She accepted her first date soon after his departure in the face of her parents' opposition. They objected to her commencing her dating activities so soon and going so often with the same fellow. She did become serious with one of the fellows she dated. Her reasons for breaking up with him included her feelings for her fiance and her parental objections. She said, "I may have accepted his proposal for marriage if it hadn't been for the way they felt about it." She is very thankful now for what they did and the firm stand they took. They were not so much concerned about the boy friend himself, but they wanted their daughter to keep her word by at least being here when he returned.

She didn't want to be very involved with his parents for the same reason that she and he had not committed themselves to each other. They just couldn't anticipate the end results of the separation. His parents were always very nice to her, and she felt bad when they saw her with another fellow. She just wouldn't let herself get close to them, so she didn't make
regular visits to their home.

   **Content and frequency of correspondence.** She tried to write him once a week at first, but her letters gradually dropped off to about once a month toward the end of his mission. She said that he was the better letter writer. He kept up with the once a week frequency most of the time. Their letters were mostly just news letters. Perhaps on special events there would be a love letter, but they weren't very frequent. There was some expression of love in most of the letters even if it was only passing reference to their feelings. The letters didn't seem very warm to her, and she thought that his were less expressive of affection than hers. "He just didn't take the time to be emotionally and deeply involved in his letters. They were just mainly about his mission." She evaluated their correspondence as being less than satisfactory because it just didn't serve the function of keeping them close and involved with each other.

   **Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She felt strongly that he should serve as a missionary because it would strengthen him spiritually. She was "tired of having arguments with him about just what should be done in the Church with the very basic commandments." She also said, "I knew that we were too young to get married, and I wanted to continue my education. Quite frankly, I thought a mission was a good way to get him out of the way for two years, so I could accomplish some of the things that I wanted."
Early in the mission she felt strongly that the mission was a joint venture. This was mainly due to the influence she had on him in his decision to serve. She said, "No matter what anyone says, I don't think he would have gone on a mission if I hadn't pushed him." She has noticed only thankfulness, however, for her influence. He never implied that she should be doing more in the Church. She expected it and wanted it. She felt that she would have respected his missionary ability more if he had. She looked for this as an indication of his spiritual growth.

She found it difficult to be involved with him and his work, and she reasoned that their efforts not to be obligated to each other may have been the cause. "He just didn't try to keep me involved," she said. He did, however, ask her to keep his journal which would have involved her, but she decided that she didn't want that kind of involvement. She didn't want to develop a situation that may cause difficulties if their relationship didn't endure the separation period. She was very active in the Church during his absence, but she didn't allow herself to share fully his experience.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. They did have some difficulties when he returned. They had been so strongly committed to the idea that she would wait for him that when she came close to not waiting, problems were created. She was still here and available when he returned, but they had difficulty deciding if they should still go together, and if so, to what extent. She referred to this as being a "major crisis" for them. "It took a lot to resolve it," she said. They finally decided to stay
together and soon were engaged and later married. The problems were hard for her to identify and define. She had many hesitations about marriage to him, and he seemed to resent having a responsibility or obligation to her. He wanted to date other girls. She said, "When he found out what my activities had been while he was gone, he wanted to get back at me by going out. Of course, I didn't want to tolerate that. I guess I was just selfish. After I decided that I really loved him and wanted to marry him, I just decided to play his game by letting him date; and I dated also. I took the chance that it would make him jealous and bring him around, and it worked." They are happily married now.

She was influenced by her parents desiring her to wait for him. The opportunity that the separation gave her to go out with other fellows and thus make comparisons with her boyfriend also aided her in her decision to wait for him. She experienced a different feeling with him than with the others. She was happy that they hadn't committed each other too much, and she was especially glad that they hadn't been engaged. She said, "I'm sure that if he had given me a ring I would have resented it." She conceived a broken engagement as an experience with final implications. When she got serious with another fellow, she may have accepted his proposal realizing that there would have been some real damage done with a broken engagement. She said, "If I had taken the fatal step to give a ring back, had I been engaged, there would have been nothing to hold me to him or him to me." Their quiet type agreement that she would not marry before he returned gave them a
flexible yet firm bond which satisfied their needs.

Advice to others. She said, "You never know what is going to happen when you are so young. I think it is foolish to leave the girl at home pinned or engaged. Even more foolish is to have made definite wedding plans." She expressed a need for the girl to be flexible and patient after the missionary comes home. "Most of them want to spread their wings for awhile after their return. Just be flexible and move slow until you are able to adjust to each other again."

Case 25

Courtship background information. Case 25 and his girl friend started dating each other in the ninth grade and went together all through high school and a year of college. They started going steadily during their senior year in high school. He said, "I didn't believe in going steady, so I just went steadily with her. What that means is that I was going steady without the agreement. This continued up to three months before I left for my mission at which time we became engaged." He felt that their engagement had been a result of her feelings more than his. "She thought that this would be the easiest way to wait, and I wasn't going to interfere with the security that this gave me." He felt certain that she would wait for him; and if she wanted to do it with an engagement ring, that was all the better. They had a good understanding with each other through their courtship and had only occasional disagreements.
Nature and results of agreements. He said, "We really didn't discuss what she should do. She just felt she wouldn't have any problem at all. I talked her out of staying active in her sorority, and she decided that she shouldn't be active in other social activities. This was much harder on her than either of us realized that it would be. She seemed to be starving for some attention and some type of activity. I wasn't aware of this until near the end of my mission, and I don't think she was for a long time, but it finally caved in on us. Her employment brought her into contact with a lot of young people, and she had a roommate who was always dating and bringing boys to their house. This gave her the idea that she shouldn't be sitting at home wasting herself. To see her roommate getting dressed up and going out finally got to her. I'm sure this was the deciding factor which led to her decision to break our engagement." He had only a very few months left in his mission when the break came. She wrote to him and told him that she was going out and felt that she should not remain engaged any longer. He said, "Though I was worried and upset for awhile, this did take some pressure off me. I guess we all get a little cautious after a long separation, and it just seemed to me that I was now in a better position to come back and win her if I wanted her. I was quite confident that she wouldn't make any final decisions until I was back."

Content and frequency of correspondence. They wrote to each other every day for the first four months and then slowed down to once a week. He said, "We would have to quit our missionary work to get home and check the
mail box, but after it slowed down it wasn't so bad. I really thought that it was helping me to adjust to my mission by getting that much mail from home, but really I was just adjusting to a courtship by mail. "Their letters were mostly news with enough love to let them know of each other's feelings. She quit writing after she started dating so there was no occasion for her to tell him of her dates. "We had had a good correspondence until that time."

Attitude toward the purpose of the separation. "We had always just accepted the fact that I would be going on a mission, so we didn't discuss it that much before I left. She was very much in favor of the mission, and I'm sure that she wanted to be engaged so that she could be an active part of the experience. I kept her informed about the families that I was teaching, and she responded often to comments that I had made about them. I think we put forth a lot of effort to share the mission." They had an agreement to study the scriptures at the same hour of each day. This worked for awhile but didn't last long. He was not aware of offending her by suggesting this program and pushing for it. Though he was not sure, he thought that she had been very active in the Church right up to the time that she started dating. At that time he thinks that she rebelled against many things including the Church.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. Their relationship had not recovered during the remainder of his mission, so he was very uncertain of what he would find when he came home. He described that situation when he said, "The night after I got home, I went down to see her. We dated only once or twice and then broke it off with what seemed to be a
final decision. She just wasn't interested in me. I don't think she was serious with anyone else, but she was going quite a bit with one fellow. She acted like she liked him just to put me on the defensive. I still felt that this would pass and I would marry her some day. I always felt that she was for me, but I didn't want to swallow my pride, so I just let it go for about a year. At that point I called her and asked for a date. We were married three months after that first date. After we both gave in, got over our stubbornness, and admitted that we were in love, it was just a matter of taking enough time to get reacquainted and adjusted to each other."

He discussed their major problems by saying, "That roommate caused most of the trouble. I'm convinced that if they hadn't lived together there wouldn't have been a problem. She was going out and having so much fun, and all my girl had to do was sit at home and listen to her records. She finally succumbed to the pressures and example of that roommate. When my girl did start dating, my folks resented it and caused some animosity between them. There had been a close relationship between them before that."

He said that they were able to overcome their problems by the confidence that he had that it would work and by encouragement at appropriate times from certain people.

Advice to others. "There is no one answer for every couple. You have to take everything into consideration. It depends mostly on the girl. You have got to leave her happy if you want her. If you want to tie her
hands when she doesn't want them tied, you are foolish. If the girl wants them tied, that is her decision. In spite of our problems, I would probably do it the same because she asked for that arrangement. In reality I would have to say that the best arrangement would be for the girl to wait if she can, and if not, let them both accept it. With this understanding the girl would be free to date, and there wouldn't be bad feelings and pressure by others. This would allow her to get out enough to keep up to what is going on." He also suggested that the missionary should be careful not to come home with a radical and self-righteous attitude and use it on his girl.

Case 26

Courtship background information. Case 26 started going with her boy friend when she was in the eighth grade and he was in the ninth grade. They started going steady a year later and did so off and on during the four years before he left for his mission. She said, "We did break up occasionally, but we never stayed apart very long." They were together daily during the six months preceding his departure. She said, "Though we felt a deep love for each other, we had many problems and misunderstandings during our courtship. He seemed to be a jealous person, and this caused many arguments."

Nature and results of agreements. "I was going to keep his class ring, but I told him that I would be going out. I didn't promise him that I would marry him, but I did promise him that I wouldn't be married to someone
else before he came home. I felt this would give us a fair chance to try to get back together after his mission. I wasn’t married when he came home. He didn’t want me to go to college because he thought that I might get involved with the wrong type of fellow. When I did go to college and became very active in school activities, he became very upset. He resented my being in front of people. I guess he was just extremely jealous. Up to that time he and I had been very serious and had written very serious letters. We continued to write, but we gradually became more distant. I started dating someone that I liked and accepted a fraternity pin after my missionary had been gone for three-fourths of his mission. We had been so serious and felt so good about each other that I felt real bad when he got so mad when I started participating in some activities. I felt that he didn’t have a right to get mad; in fact, I thought he should be happy that I was being able to do things and keep happy while he was gone. I had always been happy with the things that he had done, and I was very happy with the experience that he was getting on his mission. I wanted him to be happy with my activities, but he resented the fact that I would be doing things on my own without him. He wrote a very nasty letter about it. This was what started our problems. He was a very possessive person and didn’t want me to accept dates. Oh, he said that he wanted me to go out, but it was obvious that he didn’t mean it. Even when we went together in high school, he didn’t even want me to say hello to other boys at school. He didn’t want me to date while he was gone, but there was no sense telling him that I would stay home when I knew that I wouldn’t."
She kept close to his mother for quite a long time after her missionary left; but when she started dating, his mother became quite bitter toward her. "This is unfortunate, and I think it isn't fair for parents or the missionary to think that a girl should isolate herself. The missionary has his work, and it is such a big part of his life. A boy loves a girl when he leaves for what she is then and hopes that she will be much the same type of girl when he returns. I think that a girl will change more by just sitting home than by being active. Her personality will change in reverse. If the missionary builds himself up to think that the girl won't go out, he is hurt much more when the girl finds that she must go out to keep herself in balance. If he expects her to go out occasionally, both of them will be better off."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote to him at least five times a week for the first few months, and he wrote to her once or twice a week. After she got into school, she didn't have the time to write that often. She said about writing that often, "I wouldn't and couldn't do it again. I felt at first that it was good for him to know that I was thinking of him every day while he was trying to adjust, but I now think that once a week for both of us would have been much better." He wrote a combination of love and news in his letters. "He would write about how he wanted me to be close to the Church and how we would go to the temple to be married when he got home. He also talked about the things that he was doing. I never had any question of his love for me. My letters were mostly love letters until he started getting mad about my being active in school. Then I didn't feel right
about telling him that I loved him as always because I wasn't sure that I loved the person that wanted me to be a nobody at school." They quit writing after she became pinned to the other fellow.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She said, "I was very happy about his plans to go on a mission. All during our courtship, I had periodically felt that our steady dating was becoming a drag; and I would want some freedom. His mission would now give me this. Of course, I was glad that he was going for the sake of the mission itself. I was heartbroken when he left, but deep down I was happy to see him go." They tried to share the experience and feel that they were in the program together. He would often tell her, "I'm out here for both of us." She felt very good about this at first; but by the time she was feeling cool toward him, he had quit mentioning it in his letters. She said, "At first it was like I was out there with him." She felt that this is especially good if the girl influenced the missionary in his decision to go on a mission. She was only semi-active in the Church while he was gone.

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.** They didn't correspond during the last six months of his mission and had no contact with each other until an accidental meeting at school after his return. They had a good talk that day and two or three dates after that, but she was getting quite serious with the fellow whom she later married, so she wasn't very interested in the missionary. They never got back together.
She said, "When you are away from a person, you forget a lot about the past relationship. I don't believe in the idea that 'absence makes the heart grow fonder.' His possessive attitude had a big effect on me. I really believe that he would have been perfectly happy to have me sit home and knit for two years. He expected me to grow spiritually just like he was, but I don't see how that is possible. These things combined with the fact that I fell in love with someone else are the reasons that our courtship was terminated."

Advice to others. "I think if it is true love it will endure. It has worked for many. They need to remind each other of their love and encourage each other. I don't think any girl should sit home to wait for her missionary. The girl should date in moderation, however. If the girl can be involved in the missionary's activities, they will stay much closer and have a better chance of staying together. I don't think it is good when the missionary insists on knowing all the details of the girl's activities. He shouldn't pry into her personal business at that time."

Case 27

Courtship background information. Case 27 started dating his girlfriend when they were in the eighth grade. In the five year courtship that followed, he had less than twelve dates with other girls. He said, "We were always matched and dated steadily all the time. We actually had the agreement that we would not go with anyone else during the last year before I left for my mission." He gave her his fraternity pin a few months before his mission; they had discussed the possibilities of marriage to take place soon
after his return. They had a few disagreements during their courtship, but frequent arguments and misunderstandings did not occur.

Nature and results of agreements. They decided that she should keep the pin without the obligation of wearing it unless she wanted to. "I put no hard restrictions on her activities. The only thing I wanted her to do was to limit her dates to no more than three times with one fellow. I'm not sure whether she followed this, but she at least knew what I felt about it." He felt that she had dated more than she had originally planned, but she let him know what her activities were. He said, "I never had any desire to break up with her during my mission. I felt okey about her dating, and she always reassured me of her feelings for me." She shared many activities with his family which he felt must have helped her a great deal. "She never did anything behind my back because I think she wanted very much to wait until I got home, and she didn't want to break up."

Content and frequency of correspondence. He wrote to her once a week and could remember only missing two or three weeks. He tried to include information about his mission experiences which would be interesting to her. "Before I left for my mission, we agreed to close our letters with 'I love you as always.' As long as this was in our letters, we knew that everything was going okey. If it wasn't, we knew that something was wrong. I admit that there may have been times that it was put on the letter out of a feeling of obligation and not complete conviction, but most of the time it was very serious and considered as our only way of knowing how the other felt. This
caused me to evaluate my feelings about her at every letter which made me consciously think about her once a week." He said that it was a confidence builder to see it in her letters. These code words had meaning only to them. His girl wrote to him at least once a week about school, vacations, family, church activities, and some about her feelings. He felt that she wrote very good letters which reassured him and never caused them to have a misunderstanding.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. He had planned to go on a mission for years, so they had anticipated the separation. "It was no real blow to me to have to leave her. I had tremendous confidence that she would wait for me because she had supported me so much in my decision to go." She would often participate with him in fasting and prayer for some of the people he was teaching. He tried to keep her up to date with their growth so that she could share his mission with him. He considered her as being a part of the missionary team. She was very active in the Church.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. When he returned, they found that they had been able to maintain their love for each other. They became engaged within a few days after his return and were married within three months. He said, "She may have been concerned about my getting back into school and getting some other interests, so she was all for getting married soon. I really didn't have any other interests, so it all worked out very well." They had no difficulty in readjusting to each other. He said, "I think we kept a close enough correspondence that we were
able to keep up to the changes that we both were making during the two years."

Advice to others. "I'm sure she would have had a hard time waiting if I had insisted that she not accept dates. We had seen a girl who had tried to wait without dating. She did fine for several months, but then she just went to pieces and made life difficult for herself and her missionary. If a couple can have confidence in their love and be confident in each other, their chances will be much better."

Case 28.

Courtship background information. Case 28 dated her fiance for one year before his mission. They started going steady about four months prior to his leaving. She hadn't been going with anyone else for quite awhile before that. This was just the point at which they made the formal agreement that they were committed to each other. "Our courtship was almost perfect. We didn't have any arguments at all."

Nature and results of agreements. "We decided together that if I was here when he got home, then we would make our plans for the future. We both hoped that it would work out that way, and I was really going to try to wait for him. We decided that if something else developed that he would accept it as being the way that it should be. He told me to go out when and with whom I wanted. He said that it was my life, and he was going to be gone for two years, so he didn't expect me to sit home and just wait. He didn't want to know whom
I went with. We discussed all of this very much, and we felt united in our
decision to handle it this way." She did date quite a bit during his mission,
but she never got serious with any of the fellows she dated. She had a very
close relationship with his family which helped keep her thoughts close to him.

Content and frequency of correspondence. She wrote to him once a
week and remembered missing only two weeks during the entire two year
period. He wrote to her about the same way. They felt very good about this
frequency. "It seemed to be enough to keep us informed and was not so often
that it became a burden." She would talk about his mission as much as she
could. He would tell what he was doing, and she would try to respond to what
he had said. "Of course we had some love in our letters too. His were good
letters and reassured me of his love for me. I feel that our letters kept us
together." The only misunderstanding she had from his letters was with his
mention that he might want to date other girls after his return. She said, "I
didn't say anything to him about it. I thought maybe he had just been in a bad
mood and that he would forget all about it. This became one of our problems
later." She did mention one fellow to him that she was dating. She had heard
a rumor that someone was going to write to him and tell him about her
activities; so she decided that if he was to hear it, he should hear it from
her. She wrote and explained her situation and let him know that he was
still the only one she loved. He wrote back and assured her that he trusted
her in anything that she did. She said, "How could I do anything out of line
when he trusted me so."
Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. "I had always been taught that young men should go on missions, and I wanted my husband to have had that experience. I felt that it would help our home life and help in raising our children. I'm sure he felt the same way." She felt that he would have gone even if she hadn't encouraged him because he had planned on it most of his life. "At times in his letters he would talk about things in the home and make some reference to 'our children' which really encouraged me." She felt that she was a very real part of the mission most of the time. She said, "I shared his mission and enjoyed it very much." She kept in close touch with some of the families that her missionary was teaching, and took an active interest in their progress.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. They had some difficulties for awhile after he returned. She said, "I started going with this one fellow quite a bit before my missionary got home, and I was with him the night that he did come home. I wasn't aware that he was coming that night. I wasn't at all serious with this other fellow, but it was just bad that I had to be with him the night that my missionary returned. He had changed so much; I couldn't believe it. That first night it was easy to discuss things with him, but after that the more we went together the harder it was. We felt like complete strangers. He had grown in his knowledge of the Church which was wonderful, but he just wasn't the same jovial, fun guy that I remembered. He was so solemn and quiet that it was like death row. He just seemed to have a hard time adjusting, and I didn't seem to be able
to help him. I felt bad when he started dating other girls. He would tell me how much he thought of me, and then I would see him with someone else. This would just tear me apart. I guess he wasn't ready to settle down yet. There wasn't much I could do about it but let him go ahead and get it out of his system. I tried to say nothing about it, but it was hard because I loved him and was ready to get married. This continued for several months with my never bringing up the subject of marriage or of his dating activities. He continued to show enough sincere interest in me that I felt I could be patient and work it out with him at his own speed. When he finally came around, believe me, I didn't hesitate." They were married about fifteen months after he returned from his mission.

"The fact that he trusted me was the most important fact that kept me waiting for him during his mission, and the fact that I loved him kept me waiting for him after his return." She said that her freedom to date made her feel better about the separation and made it easier to wait. The influence of their parents also helped them along. "He was just worth waiting for."

Advice to others. "The ideal agreement is to have the freedom that I had; and though it was hard, I must admit that letting him go out with other girls after his mission was good. The girl must keep close to the Church and make every effort to grow spiritually along with her missionary."

Case 29

Courtship background information. Case 29 went with his girl friend for more than four years before he left for his mission. They had gone steady
for most of the four years with occasional short breaks. He took other girls out during those breaks. She was the only girl that he went with to any extent. He said that they argued often and found it hard to be real compatible even a majority of the time. He said, "I think our fighting problems started because we started going together too young. We didn't know what we were arguing about half the time." They had discussed marriage but not to the point of making promises to each other.

**Nature and results of agreements.** They made no definite agreements, but he did tell her that she should date and have fun. He said, "We did discuss and kind of agree that she would wait and we would try to make a go of it when I got back. We didn't give her any set pattern that she should follow. We wanted to get married after I got home, but felt that the two years could bring some changes, so we just left our agreements open. We both felt that she should have her complete freedom." His girl did date quite often during his mission and became serious with another fellow about half way through the two years. "I knew this would probably happen as I saw the way her letters progressed, so I prepared myself for it. She later broke up with that fellow, but our relationship never got started again until after I got home."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** He wrote to her once a week right up to the time that he found that she was serious with this other guy. For the first four or five months, she wrote about twice a week. After that she wrote once a week until they stopped writing altogether. He said, "Her letters were very good with no mushy stuff in them. They were just
good solid letters. They were encouraging and the type of letter that we had decided to write before I left. We had heard that letters should not overdo the love aspect, and they should be encouraging. She did put enough love in her letters that I knew how she felt. My letters were about the same. I think I put enough love in them for her at first, but I know it dropped off toward the end."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** "She didn't want me to go on a mission at first. This wasn't because of any reservations about the mission itself, but just the idea of being separated. She wanted me to have the mission experience and finally realized that I would be going, so she encouraged me and helped me to make all the necessary arrangements. I had planned for a mission for many years." He felt that when she got to college she was influenced away from her activity in the Church. He said, "She got involved in doing a few things that I didn't appreciate or approve of. I resented her activities. She was influenced by some people in a way that really caused a gap in our feelings."

For several months they viewed the experience as a joint venture. She was very interested in the families he was teaching and often asked about them in her letters. He felt that everything went very well until she got into college, and then many things changed. They tried for a short time to study concurrently, but this too did not continue beyond the first few months.

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.**

When asked to describe the conditions of their break during his mission, he
said, "We had talked on the phone, and we both expressed our love. Everything was just fine. Right after that her letters and the things that she said in them began fading, so I wrote and asked her what was wrong. She wouldn't tell me anything definite. I finally wrote to her breaking off our relationship saying that I felt she was changing too much and that she must be involved with someone else or her letters wouldn't be so different." She then wrote to him telling the complete story. They didn't correspond after this for several months at which time his girl friend had broken up with the other fellow and tried to revive her relationship with the missionary. He said, "I didn't answer her letters because I just wasn't interested anymore."

When he came home, he had convinced himself that he would never date her again. He said, "A few days after I got home, she called me and asked if she could talk to me. I thought that it would be a good time to get the things back that I had given her, so I went to see her. It was good to talk to her, but I didn't have any desire at the time to continue our courtship. We soon started seeing each other, though, on occasional weekends; and our courtship gradually started again. I was dating another girl quite a bit at the time. Before long she told me that she wouldn't go on this way any longer. We had had a long enough courtship before that she didn't feel we needed to go through a competitive situation again. She said that it was either her or the other girl but not both. That is when I stopped dating the other girl. From then on it went real well for both of us. This gave me the opportunity to express my feelings for her and know for sure how she felt."
He had sent her the letter terminating their relationship during his mission because of her attitude toward the Church and because of her involvement with a different fellow. He said that his letters must have been too business-like for her. "I loved my mission and spoke almost entirely of it. She was thinking that I loved the mission more than I did her and that I was happier in the mission field than I had been at home with her. She just couldn't balance the difference in the type of love and happiness that it was."

When asked to describe how they got back together, he said, "I think the best thing was that she really repented of what she had done and tried with all her heart to make amends for what she had been. I was impressed with her efforts to get her life in order. When I saw this, I started dating her and soon started feeling the things that I had felt before. One thing that I noticed that was so different from before was that we no longer found ourselves arguing all the time. We have had no arguments or misunderstandings since I got home."

They continued their courtship right through to marriage about a year after his return.

Advice to others. "The girl should be able to go out while the missionary is gone. They should write regularly and keep close contact. I definitely feel that it is wrong to leave a girl at home with an engagement ring. I think most of the girls that wait for their missionaries have the agreement that they will date but still wait for him to get home."
Case 30

**Courtship background information.** Case 30 dated her boy friend from the time they were sophomores in high school. She dated a lot of other fellows, but she always came back to him. "I hated to go too steadily because I enjoyed the companionship of other fellows, but he was always there, and I had quite a crush on him. We never went steady as such, but we had an understanding that when we were getting along fine we would limit ourselves to each other. He was pretty good and had very few other dates. It was I who did the dating. We went together right up to the time that he left for his mission, and we were pinned during the last three or four months of that time." She viewed their pinning as a step towards engagement. They had decided that if it all worked out for them they would become engaged when he returned from his mission and that marriage would follow shortly. They had discussed a possible date for the wedding. They had few arguments during their courtship, but she was often hurt by the things that he would do. She said, "The only thing that made it hard for me was that he was never one to show his affections. Occasionally on special occasions, he would send a card or something; but as far as little things that mean a lot to girls, he would most often disregard them. This hurt me quite a bit, with our relationship. Many of the other guys that I dated were not this way. I guess in a way that was why I stuck to him; he was different, and it challenged me to keep his affections."

**Nature and results of agreements.** She continued to wear his pin after he left. She said, "As I recall, we decided that if I wanted to date I could; but
I still had his pin if I wanted to wear it. After he left, I didn't want to date at all. I was very earnest in my waiting for a few months. I had many opportunities to date, but I turned them down saying that I was waiting for a missionary." She started dating about four months after he left. "I accepted my first date with the fellow whom I later married. When I started dating him, it was with the understanding that I was waiting for my missionary. He had been on a mission also and was now supposedly waiting for a girl who was on a mission. We just had a companionship relationship, sharing in common the trials of waiting for a missionary. This gave us both a chance to get out to activities and not just sit home on a shelf. Well, a lot of good things get started in strange ways! I think any girl gets tired of just sitting around when you are used to going out and being quite active. I was getting tired of not having close companionship with someone. I wasn't getting tired of waiting for my missionary because I sincerely thought that I would still wait for him at that time. I do remember very vividly, though, just how enjoyable that first date was." She didn't feel resentment about not being able to go out or guilt when she started dating because he had left her with the understanding that she could go out if she wanted to. "He didn't want me to resent the situation, so we did have a very flexible pinning agreement."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** Both she and her missionary wrote about once a week for several months, and she felt very good about this frequency. She would occasionally let her letters slip to one every two weeks after she began dating quite a bit. "His letters lacked a lot of affection. There were occasional references to us and what we could do together when
he got home, but most of his love was just expressed in his 'All my love' closing comment. This just wasn't very much for a girl to cling to." Her letters followed the pattern set by him. She would try to encourage him and mention things that were happening at home that may interest him. She felt that it wasn't her place to change the approach to their correspondence. "I thought that he was writing the type of letter that he wanted to receive, so I reserved any very definite expression of love." She said, "He was just all missionary, and I didn't feel that I should do anything that might detract from that."

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. When asked how she felt about his going on a mission, she said, "I was all for it. I have always wanted to marry a returned missionary, and I wanted him to have the experience of the mission. This gives them a good foundation and helps them grow up in their thoughts and ideas. I think they come home men after having been sent out as boys." She was very active in the Church and attempted to look at the mission as a joint venture. She often asked him about the progress of the families he was teaching. She didn't engage in an active study program in an attempt to increase her spiritual knowledge along with him.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. "One of the biggest problems that we had came from the difference in our maturity. I was quite a bit older than my missionary, and I think that I was waiting for him to grow up. I saw a change in him during the progress of his mission, but I had started dating quite seriously and found that I was
getting tired of 'just' dating. I still felt that I had to wait for him to develop more. He seldom had a serious thought or expression when it came to me. He was 'gung-ho' missionary from the time that he received his call. In fact, the night that he was to leave, his folks asked him if he wanted to take the car so we could be alone on his last night; he refused. He just didn't want to have any other influence. This hurt me quite a bit. I felt that I loved him very much, and this was a lot to ask of me. It wasn't easy for me to have our courtship interrupted at this time, and I felt that I deserved a little more concern." She mentioned this as having quite an effect on her thinking as she began to fall for the fellow that she married. He treated her with much concern and consideration. "I found him to be concerned with me and not just with himself and the rapid pace of life that I had known with my missionary." She had dated her husband for quite awhile before she mentioned anything about him to her missionary. He knew that she was dating, but she hadn't given him any details. She remained close to his parents and even told them of her changing feelings before she told the missionary. They had treated her very well and seemed to understand her problem. She said, "They were always so sweet that it was harder to make the break with them than it was with the missionary."

She said, "I can remember when I first started realizing that I was developing a feeling for my husband. During the summer between school years when he was away except for weekends, I realized that there was more than just a mutual assistance relationship going for us. We were just trying
to fool ourselves into thinking that we were helping each other wait for our respective missionaries. I put off telling my missionary about it not knowing just how fast things would develop or if definite plans would be made at all. I didn't know when my husband would propose to me or offer me a ring. He was farming and couldn't afford it, but I thought I might get a ring when the crops were in. I guess it wasn't good to keep my missionary waiting, but I didn't have anything definite to tell him. He finally sensed that my letters weren't very warm at all and that they even dropped off in number. Anticipating what may happen, he wrote and put me on the spot for some information and even implied that maybe we should call it all off. I then wrote and explained that I was sorry, but I had fallen for this other fellow and felt that I couldn't wait any longer for him. He replied later and explained without any bitterness his feelings and expressed his best wishes for our happiness. This made it easier for me than I had expected."

She felt that if he had been older than she so that she wouldn't have had this idea of waiting for him to grow up, things may have been different. Her ideas also changed as to the type of life that she wanted. "For a long time I wanted a more glorified life in the spotlight. My missionary was the type of person who would have given me this. After I got a little older, I think that I realized the importance of having a good relationship with my husband and building a home life for a family in an area that would be conducive to good living. My husband is giving me this type of life."
The ideas that she and her husband had of mutually waiting for missionaries had some definite effect on them. "Though we were really using this idea as a front, it became a very effective way of sharing problems and getting to know each others' feelings about life."

Advice to others. "I am so happy now that to advise someone to approach their separation differently would seem strange. Just let the girl be free, and both she and the missionary should have an open-minded realization of what may happen. I do think their problems would be lessened if there could be a more definite expression of their feelings for each other in their correspondence."

Case 31

Courtship background information. Case 31 dated his girl friend for less than a year before he left for his mission. Through official dates and study dates, they had almost daily contact with each other. They were pinned a short time before he departed and had become quite committed to each other. Their courtship was short but extremely smooth. He said, "In fact, hind sight now says to me that things were too smooth. I have the feeling that some conflict leads to a deeper contact and understanding. A genuine, as opposed to a superficial, relationship can often be tested if there is some disparity. I think now that we really hadn't taken time to make a realistic evaluation of our relationship."

Nature and results of agreements. He initially wanted very much to have her wait for him, and he left with the understanding that she intended
to do so. At first she didn't want to date, and he didn't want her to, but they left the situation quite open. After her first date, she wrote a long depressing letter to him telling him of what a horrible time she had and how much she wished that he was home with her. This made him feel that he should be with her. They hadn't discussed or made any agreement concerning what details she would discuss about her dating. He said, "As a result she gave me much information that really tore me up." She began her dating slow but gradually began dating quite frequently. He had her keep his fraternity pin even though they agreed that she wouldn't wear it.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** His girl wrote to him daily for the first four months. He looked forward to those letters and said, "As long as I didn't feel a real attachment to my mission, her letters were all that I had." He wrote to her about three or four times a week. In commenting on the frequency of their correspondence, he said, "I think this frequency was wrong and distracting. In addition to the problems caused by that frequency, we also had problems come from the feelings expressed in the letters. She just wasn't concerned with what was going on out there with my mission. During the early part of my mission, her letters just pulled me farther from the spirit of my mission and made my adjustment more difficult." They did continue to write through the entire mission.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** He hadn't planned on serving as a missionary until a short time before he received his call. At first he had many doubts, his parents gave him no encouragement, his girl
friend resisted, but his friends and other relatives influenced him in deciding

to accept the call to serve. He described his feelings by saying, "I had quite

a few anxieties because my background in the Church really wasn't that

strong. Because of the nature of my home life and my parents' attitude, I

hadn't had the traditional upbringing in the Church that is generally found in

this locality. I had a lot of doubts as to just what a mission was all about,

whether it would be of value to me, and whether I could contribute any con-

structive influence to other people." His girl friend at the time was a better

member of the Church than he according to his evaluation. She didn't appear
to have any basic antagonisms toward missionary service in general, but

she gave him the feeling that she didn't want him to go.

As he began his missionary efforts, he often questioned his motives

for being there. The position which his girl friend had taken regarding these

feelings was described when he said, "I don't think it was intentional on her

part, but her letters did reinforce my feelings that I really didn't want to be

in the mission field." A change in missionary companions and improved

physical surroundings marked the beginning of his change and attachment
to the cause which he served. He completed a successful mission and holds

many fond memories of the spiritual experiences and rewarding service of

that time.

As he adjusted to his work and gained a love for it and the people,

he wanted to share the experience with her. He sent her his diary and made

a special effort to let her know what he was doing in the hope that she would
keep the diary up to date and thus keep involved with him. He often discussed with her the people he was teaching, but she never responded or showed interest in their progress. He didn't know if she didn't want to be involved or if this was just an indication of her general attitude toward missions. "She became quite detached in her feelings about my activities. Her letters indicated greater concern with what was happening at school, what the fraternities and sororities were doing, and what life in her apartment was like." He wasn't sure how active she had been in the Church while he was gone because she never mentioned it, but he was quite sure that her contact with it was infrequent. He tried to encourage her to greater activity and study. She did start reading the scriptures at one time, but gradually her conflicting interests and commitments interfered.

Circumstances of the termination or continuation of the relationship. When he returned, they found that they had made changes in their lives which took them in very different directions. They both had very different goals for life than they had had before the mission, "We couldn't break the invisible barrier between us and communicate at any depth." He described the barrier as being a fear that both of them must have had. "We were both afraid of the changes that we recognized in each other." They dated for a short time but were never able to communicate or feel at ease with each other. At first, he wanted to continue the relationship but sensed in her a desire for a latitude of freedom to think about the situation. They set up a semi-terminating agreement which led to the discontinuance of their
courtship as soon as they started dating others.

Their inability to communicate following the mission, her detachment during the mission, her lack of concern for the Church, new dating involvements, and the personality and goal changes they experienced were the major causes for the termination of their relationship.

Advice to others. He feels that a couple shouldn't write as frequently as they did, and their letters should contain encouragement rather than discouragement. "They need to have a united feeling about the mission and share interests in the Church. A couple also needs to work hard for advance joint preparation for the mission and resulting separation."

Case 32

Courtship background information. The description which this case gives of her early courtship provides some interesting information about the dating motives and interests of a young teen age girl. "I started going with him when I was a junior in high school. I really hadn't gone with very many other fellows before I started dating him. I liked him quite a bit because he had a great personality and was a lot of fun. We started going steady after about three months. Our relationship was one of those where we went steady for awhile, had a fight and stopped for awhile, and then made up and went steady again. I really didn't date anyone else during the rest of my high school days though. He was the type of boy all girls didn't have. He always had a new car and lots of money. He would take me out to dinner
often and to a good show. We really had fun dates. These things seemed to be quite important to me; they gave me the status that I hadn't had before."

She dated him for about two years before he left; she had his high school ring; and they had discussed some serious plans for marriage.

**Nature and results of agreements.** She said, "He didn't want me to go out, so I told him that I wouldn't for awhile. I wore his ring and didn't go out for nearly a year. I didn't date during the first part of my first year at college. This was awful! We had made too many commitments. I promised him for sure that I would be here, and we even set a tentative wedding date and a lot of other silly things. Now that I look back I can see that we were too young to really know what we were doing. I think that if we had thought about things and realized how long he was going to be gone and how many things could happen, we wouldn't have made so many commitments." She started resenting the fact that she wasn't dating after about eight months. "I almost began resenting him. It was because of him that I wasn't able to go out and enjoy myself. I still thought that it would work out for us, and I looked forward to the time that he would be coming home, but all my friends were going to these fun parties while I stayed home watching television." She had a very difficult time until she started dating. Her parents gave her some problems too. "They really thought the world of my missionary; and when I started dating, they would make comments about my date and how he was nice but nothing like my missionary. I grew to resent this." His folks tried to help her, but they had some difficulty in talking with each other. "I never really
felt at ease with them."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote to him every other day for the first six months and twice a week until the last six months. "Everything was so uncertain then. I had been quite serious with a fellow that I dated, and I just didn't know what to do. I wasn't a very good letter writer for the rest of his mission. Most of his letters helped me, but he just wanted to talk about his mission too much of the time." When asked what type of letter she wrote, she said, "Well, when I wasn't dating, he was the only person that I was thinking about. I just went around school and didn't care about anyone else. I guess my letters got a bit mushy at times. Yes, they were quite mushy. I wasn't in any activities and wasn't dating, so I didn't have anything else to tell him." He had told her that he enjoyed getting her letters, but she wasn't sure. She was anxious when a letter would arrive from him, but "After I would read most of them, I was just left with kind of a cold, empty feeling. They were nice letters, but they were just so many words most of the time."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She said, "My boyfriend didn't want to go on a mission until I convinced him that he should go. I guess I thought I was being noble and felt safe because I didn't think he would go, but he did decide that he wanted to. After I realized that he was serious about going, I didn't want him to go. This made it bad because I wouldn't accept the fact that he was really going. I just wanted him to be here with me. I thought we could get married and settle down. I thought
that I could talk him out of it just like I had talked him into it, but it didn't work. I finally resigned myself and tried to support him."

She was quite active in the Church while he was gone and enjoyed the jobs that she had in the Sunday School. She was a bit sensitive to some of his comments in his letters. "He never did get real preachie to me and tell me to reform, but he talked about how he had changed and how he hoped that I was changing along with him and not away from him. It made me feel bad because I felt that he really didn't trust me and think that I was with him like I should be. I think he thought I was a big sorority girl going to all the parties and getting a bad reputation. I really had been trying to do my best. It just made me feel bad."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

"I think the biggest reason that we broke up was that I had changed too much. I don't think he changed too much. I had grown up so much, and he hadn't been around when I was changing."

They only dated a few times after he got home. She had had some other involvements with boys that confused her thinking. She was a bit serious with one of them at the time her missionary came home. She said, "We had a hard time; it was like a brick wall between us. He didn't know where he stood with me, and I didn't know where I stood with him. We didn't know where to start. He didn't make the effort, and I didn't feel it was my responsibility to try to get things going again, so it cooled off right away." She had been very happy to see him when he first got home. "We went together that day, and it
was just like he had never been gone. We talked about the same old things and people we knew, but that night I had another date. That date brought me back to reality. It was as if I had stepped into my past during the day, and now I had stepped back into my present.” He had some difficulty right at first getting a date with her, so she felt some responsibility for their problems. She said, "I had a date on the night that he happened to ask me for first. I had never turned him down before. Never! I think this kind of hurt him, and he asked, 'How far in advance do I have to apply for a date?' I didn't know what to say or do." They never recovered their old relationship.

She felt the resentment which built up because of her not dating had a big effect on the termination of their courtship. "My feelings became so resentful toward him. He was able to meet a lot of new people and enjoy himself, but I was here doing nothing. I didn't participate on any school committees; I didn't feel that I should be with a co-educational group. I just hibernated and soon felt that it was his fault that I was becoming an introvert.” She also mentioned his pride as a cause for their problems. "He had so much pride that he wouldn't let me know how he felt. He told other people that he hoped things would work out for us, but he never told me. If I had known how he felt toward me, I probably wouldn't have become so involved with this other fellow."

**Advice to others.** "I would tell a girl to tell her missionary that she hoped things would work out and that she would try to wait. She shouldn't give him any indication that she wouldn't date, but she should tell him that she
was going to have fun and do her best to be here when he got back."

Case 33

Courtship background information. Case 33 dated his girl friend for three years before he left for his mission. During the last six months prior to his departure, they were together on official dates four or five times a week, and they had daily contact through association at school. He said, "We were never pinned, and we didn't have any agreement as to going with others, but she was the only one that I dated for the last few months. She didn't go with anyone else either during the last three months. I feel that we were quite committed to each other. We had talked about marriage to the extent that we would try to work things out when I got home." They didn't have any major crises in their courtship prior to his mission. An occasional argument would occur when one of them would date another person, but these were infrequent.

Nature and results of agreements. "We were relatively serious in our feelings for each other, but we didn't make definite plans for the future. She said that she would be here when I got back, and we agreed that we would write to each other during the time that I was in the mission field with the thought in mind that we would pick up where we left off. We both realized that it may be difficult for her, and we felt that she should try in every way she could to wait." They agreed that she should be free to date other fellows which she did quite soon after he left. At first her dates were just with old friends that were interested in her and the missionary, but after six months she started dating the fellow she later married. She had only occasional
contact with his parents, so no strong relationship was developed.

Content and frequency of correspondence. They both began writing
two letters each week, but this gradually slowed to one letter or less per week.
They generally just wrote in answer to each other's letters. "Her letters
were mostly love letters. I've decided that this is one of the reasons that
we didn't make it. You just can't make it on that kind of relationship alone.
There should be a balance with informative type letters. We just had too much
emotion involved in our letters. I must admit that when I was getting them I
liked them, but I question it now as I look back. Of course, I loved her; and
I liked to hear her tell me that she loved me. That was good, but there
should have been more depth in our correspondence. My letters were a lot
the same except that I did try to keep her informed about my mission activi-
ties." As their letters slowed slightly because of either of them being busy,
some slight irritations developed. "When she was busy and didn't write for
two weeks, I got a bit upset; so I took a little longer to answer. She then
would become disturbed and wait just that much longer for her answer. This
gave us a built-in possibility for misunderstanding. We never were able to
communicate our feelings about this and face just what was causing the
problem. We just took the 'I'll show you' attitude."

Attitudes toward the purpose of separation. She was very much in
favor of his going on a mission. She had known right from the time they
started going together that he would be going. He said, "I think she was sad
to see me go, but she expected it and had planned for it. She is basically
quite religious, and she has remained active in the Church." Their only attempts to make the experience a joint venture was through his referring to one scripture each week that she was to study. "She seemed to enjoy this while it lasted."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.
As he discussed the causes for the termination of their courtship, he said, "Our relationship before I left wasn't the type that would last. It might have developed into a lasting relationship, but it was mostly just a physical attraction. Our letters should have expressed more spiritual thoughts and less love. I guess, however, that the main cause for our breaking up was that she fell in love with another guy."

Advice to others. He feels that a couple needs to have someone take the time to explain what a mission is like and what both of them should expect. "They need to make the mission a mutual and shared experience, being aware of the changes which both of them will make. Have them put enough love in their letters for reassurance but no more. A deep and meaningful correspondence is necessary."

Case 34

Courtship background information. Case 34 dated her fiancé for five years before he left for his mission. The first three years were on a very casual basis, but they dated seriously during the two years preceding his departure. She said, "We never talked about going steady, but I think I only dated two or three other fellows during that time. We had never talked about
anything very serious; it was just that we were seeing a lot of each other. We
seemed to understand what our arrangement was and what the restrictions
were." They became engaged a few months before his mission. Concerning
her engagement, she said, "It just seemed to be the only way. At the time, it
seemed to be such a life and death matter that we just had to be engaged or our
courtship would not last. We felt that this was the time to bind us together.
I couldn't look at it objectively at the time because I wasn't mature enough
to know what I was doing. I couldn't be told anything to the contrary by my
folks or anyone else who had gone through the experience. All of those who
gave us advice were very much in favor of our relationship, but they felt that
we would be happier in the long run if we would wait until he returned to become
engaged. Looking back on it now, I see that it was a bad mistake. I was just
not ready to accept the responsibility of being engaged, and I don't think it is
good for a couple to be engaged and not have marriage to look forward to in
the near future. The engagement period should be just next door to marriage.
The interim of the mission separation interferes with what the engagement is
for. I think it is fine for a couple to have the understanding that the girl will
try to wait. I think it would be best if the girl could date and limit her dates
to one or two per boy, so that it wouldn't get serious."

They had very few arguments before his mission.

Nature and results of agreements. "I was to continue on with school,
keep active in the Church, and just generally experience life without him.
After he left, I found a problem with my activities in school. I felt that I
couldn't do justice to those activities and remain as faithful to my missionary as I intended, so I dropped all of my extra-curricular activities. I'm sure I missed a lot by doing this. It didn't really bother me too much until he was well over half through with his mission. I had been very proud of myself that I had been able to do it, but I missed a lot of activities that would have helped me and in no way hindered my relationship with him. Because I was engaged and felt so strongly about not mixing in mixed groups, I really felt that I had to be on guard. A much freer arrangement would have been so much better. It is important for the girl to be able to do things without feeling guilty about everything she does. Really I didn't feel guilty, but I mooned around, cried a lot, and wrote mushy letters feeling proud that I was stronger than the rest who had to rely on other dates and outside activities to wait. I was really being true. I could have been just as true and not been so miserable."

She had a very good attitude about their agreements for the majority of the mission, but she reached a point where she couldn't continue without some dating activities. She had had a good relationship with his folks until that time.

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote to her fiancé daily for the first six months and then slowed to two a week. He wrote to her once a week. She said, "His letters were really very interesting and kept me close to him and what he was doing. He reassured me of his love and of his need for my support; I thrived on this. I felt that my letters were not as good as his. I had difficulty discussing anything except my love for him. I'm sure it must have become monotonous." Their only misunderstandings came at
the time that she began dating secretly and did not inform her missionary of her activities. When she did tell him, he was upset that she hadn't been truthful with him in her letters.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She felt that the mission plans were "marvelous." "This has always been stressed in my family, and I've taken it for granted that this is what a boy should do. I was very proud to be able to tell people that I was waiting for a missionary, and I was ready to fight if someone even hinted that I wouldn't make it. I never resented the fact that he was going even though I knew that I would miss him very much. It was difficult and a rather traumatic experience for me because I was so emotional and so in love. Yet again, it was so great to write to him and receive his letters. There is much to be gained from the girl friend-missionary relationship. The missionary has so many spiritual experiences, and the girl can grow spiritually by sharing these." They made a conscientious effort to share the mission.

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.** She said, "This is hard to identify. He had been out for about two-thirds of his mission, and I guess I had just 'had it' by then. At one time, my employment put me in daily contact with fellows my own age who were very appealing to me. One in particular seemed to feel an attraction to me, and I felt something for him, but I just wouldn't let anything materialize because I felt so guilty just thinking that I would like to go with him. Nothing did materialize with him, but the seed was planted. It wasn't that I was looking for someone, but I was so lonesome and starved for activity that I could hardly stand it. I
started to feel sorry for myself and thought, 'Here I am, just throwing my youth away sitting home when I could be going out and having a good time.' At first I tried to hide these feelings from my missionary, but he sensed it. He was very much involved with his mission and couldn't be bothered with my petty problems. Instead of writing and giving me some encouragement to hold on to what we had, he gave me the impression that he couldn't be bothered. I then accepted the same attitude. From then on it became an obsession with me, and I started dating secretly. I started feeling so guilty that I built up in my mind that I was a very bad person. Instead of my dating being a relief to me, it caused me to feel that I was committing sin. It was a bad experience. I then wrote to my missionary and told him that I was too lonely to continue without going out. I told him that I still wanted to wait for him, but I felt that we had better end our engagement. Our next letters were very sharp, and we had a bad relationship from that time on. We quit writing, and we were both hurt by it. He was in a position where he couldn't do anything about it, and I was spiteful and rebellious. I dated a lot after this. We did exchange a few letters before he came home, but the relationship was rather distant. I quit going to the Church, and convinced myself that I could salve my guilt by being just opposite to what he would want. I didn't go to the extreme, but I did have a very poor attitude.

"When he came home, we dated three times and found that we couldn't cope with the chips that we both had on our shoulders. I was getting serious with another fellow at the time, so I used this to buoy my
pride. When I broke with that fellow, I was determined not to go back to my missionary. This continued for several months when one day I found myself feeling sorry for myself and realizing what a mess I had been making of my life and just how important the Church and a righteous life were to me. All of a sudden I became conscious of thinking that if my missionary would just call me, I would be the happiest person in the world. It wasn't ten minutes after that when the phone rang, and he was on the line. We hadn't spoken to each other for several weeks; it was too good to be true. It just happened that he had visited that day with my mother, and being polite he had asked how I was. Evidently my mother told him that she had a very lonely daughter. Another day it may not have meant a thing to him, but situations were just right for both of us that day. We started dating again and struggled with the many problems that we had to overcome. We had both been hurt, and so many things had gotten out of hand, but I'm certain that we both retained our love for each other through all our misunderstandings of the previous two or three years. It took awhile to get back in the good graces of his family, but they have been wonderful to me." They were married a few months later.

Advice to others. "If I could get to a couple before they became engaged, I would advise them strongly against it. This is a bad way to start it out. The girl must keep active in the Church and in school activities. If I had been more prayerful, things could have been different. It wouldn't be my place to advise an engaged couple to break their engagement before the mission, but I would consider it."
Courtship background information. Case 35 went with his girl friend for five years before he left for his mission. They went steady for about four years of that time and were committed to each other to the extent that they had discussed marriage and planned for it after his mission. He said, "We had our share of arguments, but they were never very serious."

Nature and results of agreements. He felt that she should go out, date, have fun, and not feel tied to sit at home waiting for him. "We did set a limit that she should go out on an average of once every three or four weeks. When she got in college, I guess it was hard for her to live up to that agreement. I figured this would be the case, so at first I didn't want her to go to college. We had talked of her getting a job, so that when I got home, she would be in a position to help me through school." She did go to college and dated often while she was there. Her dating led to her becoming pinned to another fellow. This didn't come until he had been gone for nearly a year and a half, but their relationship had been strained for quite awhile before that. She had been close to his family, and her family kept very close to him. He said, "I knew that I was going to be gone for two years and that there wasn't too much that I could do about her activities, so I had to just leave her with the idea that she would wait as best she could, and I just hoped the she would be here when I returned."

Content and frequency of correspondence. His girl friend wrote several times each week for the first six months, and then she slowed gradually until the letters stopped when she got pinned. His letters usually went out once
each week. He tried in his letters to tell her of his mission experiences along with some expressions of his love. Her letters told him a lot about her activities in school. This sometimes bothered him, but he generally felt good about her letters.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** His girl friend had been very active in the Church; so when the decision was made that he would go on a mission, she was "all for it." They had discussed the mission as being a joint venture, but he felt that they really didn't conceive it this way except for the first few months. When asked if he and his girl friend made any effort to grow concurrently in knowledge of the Church principles, he said, "Up to the time that she went to college, she tried to make some growth along the same lines that I was; and she tried to keep interested in what I was doing. I sent her a list of scriptures to have her type on cards. She did this and enjoyed it. She even asked some questions that she had about some of her reading in church books. I would send information about the families that I was teaching, but she didn't seem to take too much interest in them."

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.** "I got kind of upset with some of the activities that she was in while she was in college. I felt good about some of them for her own good, but I was sure that this would make her popular and provide more chances for her to go out and get involved with someone else. I let her know that I didn't like it, and I think she didn't like that." After he got home, he felt that she was a very different girl. He said, "She even looked different." He felt that her spirituality had
dropped considerably while his had increased. He never had an official date with her after his return. He said, "She had made so many changes that I just felt that I didn't want her for a wife, and I didn't feel that it was right to deceive her by trying to ask her out. Our feelings at that time were neutral, so I felt it was best to leave things the way they were." They ended their relationship with a good talk about old times and went their separate ways with a good feeling between them.

**Advice to others.** "I think the girl should be free to date. The girl needs to have a good communication with her boy friend and try to take part in his mission in some way. The girl shouldn't make any promises that she can't keep. I know that my girl made some that she didn't keep. This hurt me and made me lose some respect for her."

**Case 36**

**Courtship background information.** Case 36 does not qualify for this study on the basis of her degree of commitment to her missionary at the time of his departure, but I include her comments because her boy friend thought that they were quite serious and committed to each other to the extent that she promised to wait for him.

She said that they had gone together off and on for three years, but they both had many other dates and were not serious. She said, "There was about a year before he went on his mission that we didn't date at all except for two dates just before he left. I didn't have any feeling of real love for him. If I did, it wasn't very serious."
Nature and results of agreements. She had no feeling of commitment to wait for him, and she gave no indication to him that she would try. She didn't anticipate anything else happening, but she had no obligation. She had no feeling of being restricted in her activities, and she dated freely and often.

Content and frequency of correspondence. They wrote to each other once every two weeks during his mission. She expressed nothing but information items about school and home town activities. She didn't express any particular feelings that she had for him. "We both signed our letters, 'Love;' but that was the extent of it." She felt that it was a strictly casual correspondence.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. She felt that it was wonderful that he was going on a mission, and she enjoyed his letters telling about his activities, but she had no feeling that their mission was a joint venture or that she had a part to play. She wasn't very active in the Church while he was gone, and still has a somewhat passive attitude about it.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. She said, "I think he was disappointed in me when he came home. I was still much the same way I had been before, and he wasn't happy with me. He just quit asking me out after a few dates. I wasn't really disappointed because there hadn't been that much between us anyway."

Advice to others. She said, "Do not stay at home. The girl must be free to date, and then just see how things are when the missionary gets home. I have found that when a missionary gets home he is a lot more serious minded than he was before, and he is affected more by what the girl is like. The
missionary goes through a very real change. This makes it hard for the girl to know just what to do. I have written to a few other missionaries, and I would rather not even see them until they have been home for about six months and have adjusted back to a more normal life."

Case 37

Courtship background information. Case 37 dated his girl friend for about three years before he left for his mission. They had gone steady during the last year preceding his departure and had found what he felt was a "deep and abiding love." He left with the understanding that they would marry soon after his return. He considered their courtship to have been "ideal."

Nature and results of agreements. He said, "I never did tell her that she shouldn't go out, and she understood this when I left. I just didn't want to restrict her that way because I thought that she might turn out to be old maidsish and stale if she had to stay home all the time." He felt that her accepting dates was fine, and he wasn't threatened by this. "We really felt that we were meant for each other, and her dating was just for the enjoyment of having something to do in the public and in society. We both felt the commitment between us was so strong that her dating would have no effect on us. I trusted her completely."

He was very pleased with her conduct and trusted her enough that he knew she would go only with the "best of fellows." He didn't want her to tell him about her dates, and she didn't until near the end of his mission.
At that point she did express some concern about a fellow she was dating. "It was not until this time that I ever worried about her. I took offense to her letting herself go far enough to even worry about another fellow."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** He wrote to his girl friend once a week, and he received a letter from her every week. He felt very good about this frequency and said that if he had written any more often he would have had difficulty finding worthwhile things to say. Her letters included a lot of love and covered things about home activities in which he was very interested. "She was always able to keep my interest in her letters!" They had only one significant misunderstanding through their correspondence; but it resulted in a lapse of communication which, though letters continued, was never revived.

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** His girl played an important role in his decision to serve as a missionary. He somewhat reluctantly said, "She had to prod me a bit. Her support and encouragement were very valuable. She was always such a good example, and she excelled in her faith and practice of her beliefs."

During his mission she followed the same course of study that he was taking and memorized scriptures along with him. "She wanted me to know that she was interested enough in what I was doing that she wanted to share my experiences. She would often ask me questions about her studies and about the missionary work. This really pleased me." She corresponded frequently with some of the people he was teaching and encouraged them in
their search for knowledge. He felt the "our mission" feeling strongly over-
shadowed the "my mission" feeling.

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.

His girl friend met him when he returned, but the feelings were somewhat
strained. He said, "When I first saw her, I guess I was a bit cold to her. We
had difficulty on our dates." His pride and trust in her had been hurt by her
reference to the fellow she was concerned about. "I thought more of her than
any other girl I had gone with, and it was hard to keep the trust that I had
before her new involvement. I understand now that she hadn't been serious
with him, but any involvement which even caused her to have any question was
too much involvement for me."

He recognized as causes for their breaking up, "our inability to
communicate after our initial misunderstanding and after my return, the very
definite changes that we had both made during the two years in our personalities
and goals for the future, and her wanting to have me start from the beginning
and be in competition with all the other guys. I just didn't feel this was
necessary with all the commitments we had made and the trust that we had.
Her parents had big ambitions for their daughter to marry well and have a
highly successful life with a prominent husband. There was a certain amount
of pressure and lack of choice as to what I should be and how long it should
take me to be it. This influenced me, I'm sure."

Advice to others. "If I was to go on a mission again, I would leave
with no ties. I would write to her with the understanding that she didn't have
to wait for me, and I was not obligated to love her when I got home. This way
there would be no misunderstandings, hurt feelings, or interrupted mission if it didn't all work out for them." He said, "We just made too many commitments to each other before I left."

**Case 38**

Courtship background information. Case 38 and her fiance started going together when they were in the ninth grade. They went steady all through high school and continued their courtship for a total of five years prior to his leaving for a mission. They had occasional breaks in their agreement to go steady which allowed a few other dates, but these were rare. She wanted to become engaged before he left, but he felt that it would be best if they didn't. They had some difficulty over this and had had difficulty during most of their courtship. She said, "We fought terribly because of our immaturity. I'm the very jealous type; and whenever a hint of another date would come up, I would get furious. These feelings just built up until we really weren't as close as we should have been at the time he left. I held out for a ring, and he held against it. I can see now that it would have been a bad idea, so I'm happy he took the position he did."

Nature and results of agreements. The only agreement that they made was that she should date other fellows and do what she wanted. She was to try to wait, but they would accept what happened without question. They hadn't discussed marriage very much because of the difficulty they had experienced during their last year. "We weren't as committed to each other at the time he
left as many people thought we were. Other boys wouldn't date me because they thought I was committed to my missionary." She had no question about her love for him even though she felt no real commitment. After she started going out, she dated several different fellows and became very serious with one fellow. Her missionary heard about her dating and stopped writing before she had a chance to tell him about it. This marked the end of their relationship as far as her missionary was concerned until after his mission. She terminated her involvement with the new fellow and tried to reestablish the relationship with the missionary, but he wasn't interested.

She initially had a good association with his folks through personal visits, phone calls, and letters. "It made me feel very close to them and much closer to my missionary; but when I started going out, I felt guilty and didn't go to see them for quite awhile. I'm sure though that I hadn't been fair, and they became very bitter."

**Content and frequency of correspondence.** She wrote three times a week until he asked her not to write so often. "He said that he loved getting my letters, but they were just coming too often for him to keep his mind on his work like he wanted. From that time it slowed to once a week and gradually stopped when I started getting serious with this other fellow." She said, "My letters were not strictly love letters. I tried to encourage him as much as I could. I tried to send him information that I thought would be valuable to him; such as, articles and poems and quotes. His letters came once a week right up to the time that he quit writing altogether. They really kept me going.
Most of them were very good; but occasionally I felt that he wasn't giving me much reassurance. He was mostly concerned with his mission. "They had a few misunderstandings through their correspondence, but she said, "We probably wouldn't have had so much trouble if other people hadn't kept writing to him and telling him stories about me."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** She knew right from the time that she started going with him that he would be going on a mission. "That is about all he talked about. I knew that if he didn't go he would be unhappy, so I was glad that he planned to go." She remained active in the Church for quite awhile after he left, but then slipped into inactivity for a few months. She said, "When we were dating, he always kept my feet on the ground and made me toe the mark. After I had a few months without him here to tell me not to do certain things, my feelings for the Church gradually crept away from me. I'm sure this was one of our biggest problems."

She tried to read some of the scriptures along with him at first, but she soon lost interest as she became involved with activities in school. She felt that it kept them close while they were doing it. She also corresponded with some of his contacts at first, but this too was dropped as her interests were diverted.

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.** 
"When I broke the other romance that I had during his mission, I started writing to him again; but he wouldn't have anything to do with me. It had been nearly a year since we had written, and I wrote three or four times, but he wouldn't
answer the letters. He finally wrote a short note saying there was nothing between us anymore." A few days after the missionary came home, she called him and asked if she could talk to him. "He was really very cool; and as we talked about what had happened, I could see that I had hurt him by my actions. He really wasn't interested, so I was sure that it was all over. I moved away to work thinking that I may as well get away and start again. After several weeks had passed, he called me and asked for a date. This was the first of a long rebuilding process which, fortunately, ended in our marriage."

She felt that her fiance's understanding and forgiving attitude was the most important factor in their being able to survive their absentee courtship. They were able to discuss their problems without arguing as they had done before his mission. Both of them had changed in this way. "If there hadn't been a fairly deep love between us before he left, I don't think we could have ever survived all the problems that I caused during his mission."

Advice to others. She said, "I can give advice only as I look back on my mistakes. The girl must remain true to her missionary. I don't mean to sit at home all the time, but she should let him know when things change and exactly how she feels. She must stay close to the Church. This will break a missionary faster than anything if he finds that his girl is at home doing things which are not proper. This is the most important thing of all! The missionary should not ask the girl to stay home unless they are engaged; but now as I think about it, if they are engaged, I think she should give the ring back. Some make it, but the chances and the difficulties are not worth the heartache. I especially
think that it is wrong to stay at home if the couple has gone steady most of the time. The opportunity that both of us had to date others helped us a great deal. We found what we really wanted without leaving any questions."

Case 39

Courtship background information. Case 39 started dating his girlfriend three years before he left for his mission. He said, "We went together to every big function and on many casual dates during that time." They became very serious about a year before he left and dated steadily for several months. There was a six month period when they didn't see too much of each other because of his being out of the state, but they did correspond while he was gone and dated again when he returned. She had started to date someone else, but she gave him the understanding at the time that he left for his mission that there was no question in her mind but that he was the one she loved. This gave him the feeling that they were committed to each other to the extent that they had a future together and they would try to maintain their courtship during his mission.

Nature and results of agreements. They made no definite attempt to outline just what her activities should be. He said, "We both felt that it was foolish for any girl to stay home and wait, and we just assumed that she would date." She did date often, but she didn't get serious with anyone. She kept in close contact with him and let him know that she was interested in him. "She was left completely free to do as she pleased."
Content and frequency of correspondence. They both wrote to each other about once a week. He felt they had a good correspondence. They continued to write through his entire mission. He said that her letters were primarily news but included just a short love comment at the end of each one. "You would have to know her personality to know that when she signed her letter 'Love' she really meant it. That was probably the biggest indication to me of how she felt. She wouldn't write to just anyone and sign a letter 'Love' because she just wasn't that forward. It was after she started signing her letters this way that I felt she was really serious. I then started being more serious in my letters too." They had no misunderstandings through their correspondence.

Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation. He had no question about her feelings about his serving as a missionary. He said, "I don't think she would have wanted it any other way. She encouraged me in my plans." She seldom mentioned the Church to him in her letters which bothered him; and when he got home, he found some disappointment in her attitudes toward it. She made no attempts to grow concurrently with him during his mission. This caused a gap in their ability to communicate at the same level. "She did show some interest in the people I was working with even though she didn't put herself out in other ways."

Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship. "When I first got home, I didn't see her for a couple of days and then accidentally ran into her at a party. The situation was clumsy, and it was hard to get
together. We did start dating and did so for a few months. At first it looked very good, but I soon became disillusioned by some of the compromises she had made in her feelings toward the Church. I may have misinterpreted her, but I didn't feel at the time that I could tolerate any slight deviation from the strait and narrow path. I could soon see that she wasn't the girl that I wanted. I had pictured her so different when I went with her before. She just seemed to have a completely different image now, and I guess I seemed different to her, too." They broke up about four months after his mission.

Advice to others. He feels that a couple should not have any strict ties. He would agree with the idea that both of them may change; and that when he gets home, they may not be compatible. "I would never have a girl sit home and wait because if she feels that she really loves the missionary, it won't hurt her to go out and date a few times. If he isn't the one, and if she finds someone else, it is probably better that she has given herself that chance. I think it is very selfish for the fellow to ask a girl to sit home and wait."

Case 40

Courtship background information. Case 40 went quite steady with her boy friend for nearly four years before he left for his mission. They had an agreement that they would not go with anyone else, and she feels that neither of them broke that agreement. They knew no real problem during their court­ship. There were occasional misunderstandings, but they had no difficulty in working through them. She said, "We would have been married that next summer had he not gone."
Nature and results of agreements. "If I was here when he got home, fine; if not, then that is just the way it would have to be." This was the way she described her freedom to do as she pleased. She said, "I was going to go out, have fun; and if I found someone else, that was just the consequences. We discussed it that way. At first he didn't like it, but I think he felt it was the only fair way. When he first left, I thought that I would be all faithful, though, and wait at home all the time that he was gone. After he had been gone for a few months, I decided that two years was an awful long time. I started dating about five months after he left. I didn't get serious with any of the fellows I dated. I just decided that when he left I knew how I felt about him, and it was worth waiting two years to find how I felt about him when he returned. I wouldn't let myself get serious."

She had a close relationship with his parents and shared many of his experiences with them. She doesn't feel that either set of parents had any influence on the outcome of their courtship.

Content and frequency of correspondence. They wrote consistently to each other once a week during the entire mission. She wrote mostly of the things that were happening in their home town which would interest him. She said, "People too often write mushy letters, and I'm sure that would get sickening after awhile." He told her what he was doing and told her about the people he was teaching. She kept his mission journal which aided in giving them something to talk about in their letters. They restricted the amount of love in their letters but did give enough reassurance that she didn't think there
was ever any question about their feelings. She didn't discuss her dates because she thought it would make things hard for him and interfere with his mission. She said, "Our regular letters did keep us together during his mission even if we weren't able to work through our problems when he got home."

**Attitudes toward the purpose of the separation.** "At first I didn't want him to go on a mission, but later I decided that it would be a good idea. He hadn't been planning on a mission, but he just decided that he was missing out on something and decided to go. I did want to marry a returned missionary anyway, so it wasn't hard to support him. I decided that anything worth having was worth waiting for. I was very happy about his decision after I had a few days to think about it."

She enjoyed keeping his journal because it helped her to keep up with what he was doing. It got a bit tiresome for her after awhile, but she did keep it all the time and was glad she had done it. "If I had to do it again, I probably would keep the journal; but I don't think I would wait for a missionary again. I'm glad I waited because it brought me closer to the Church and helped me to appreciate it. I shared his mission so close with him that it seemed at times that I was there with him." She held several positions in the Church while he was gone, and she read often in the scriptures in an effort to keep "level with him and be progressing along the same way."

**Circumstances of the termination or continuance of the relationship.**

She felt strongly that they would have married if he hadn't gone on his mission.
She said, "We grew in different directions during the separation which caused the break in our relationship. Had we been allowed to make our growth and changes together we would have been able to stay compatible, but we found too many changes after his return that bothered each of us. She described their association after his return by saying, "I met him at the airport, and it really seemed good. We got along real well for the first month, then things just disintegrated. I don't know what happened. We both decided that it just wasn't the same and that our changes were too big to overcome. We soon called it quits."

"I think we both changed as persons, and we both changed our ideas of what we wanted in a mate. We just didn't fit each other's desires anymore." She felt that they had done all they could during the period of separation to keep close.

Advice to others. She thinks that a girl must date to keep herself in balance. "If she can do this and wait, that is fine; if not, that is okey also." She warned against becoming stale, writing mushy letters, getting engaged, and said, "I wouldn't do it again—I think!"
Questionnaire

Absentee Courtship Study

1. Please indicate which category describes the results of your absentee courtship.
   a. Endured
   b. Terminated

2. Which statement most nearly describes the extent of (or limit of) the physical and emotional relationship of your courtship prior to the separation period?
   a. Very light necking and a goodnight kiss.
   b. Moderate necking and petting and more emotional kissing.
   c. Heavy necking and petting.
   d. Had sexual intercourse.

3. Which statement most nearly describes your feelings about your relationship described above?
   a. I can accept and affirm our actions as proper and well within the limits of my moral values.
   b. I can accept and affirm our actions as proper, but we went just about as far as we could go and still be within the limits of my moral values.
   c. We went slightly beyond the point which I can accept and affirm as proper and within my moral values.
   d. We went significantly beyond the point which I can accept and affirm as proper and within my moral values.

4. Did your dating relationship and resulting feelings of acceptance or guilt have any effect on the outcome of your separation? If so, in what way?

5. Please discuss any additional feelings or ideas you have related to these questions, our earlier interview, or the subject in general, in any way you feel will help promote an understanding of forces which contribute to termination or continuance of absentee courtship relationships.