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CHANGE OF HEART:
A TEST OF SOME WIDELY HELD THEORIES
ABOUT RELIGIOUS CONVERSION[1]

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For at least a century social scientists and religious believers have engaged in a controversy about the nature of religious conversion. Put more simply, social scientists often dismiss claims that God intervenes directly in individual lives; instead, they have suggested, such events have human origins.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, when religious conversion was heavily stressed among religious groups in the United States, several social scientists developed alternative explanations for what was happening. Some gathered the beginnings of empirical evidence relevant to their arguments. Religious believers counter attacked. They questioned the ability of any empirically-based science to deal with "non-empirical reality". They suggested the skeptics' assertions were just as much an act of faith as were the claims of believers. Social scientists, of course, denied this and suggested it would not be necessary to "prove or disprove" the existence of God if one could account for the same phenomena without reference to non-empirical considerations.

The issues were never settled. First of all, social scientists had competing arguments about what "really" was going on and did not reconcile their differences in any systematic way. Secondly, those who looked for empirical evidence rarely gathered data that could be used to disprove their own arguments, so that testing was not particularly rigorous. Despite these lacks, the argument gradually went to the skeptics by default as the practices of organized religion began to change. Religious conversion became a bit declasse, stressed primarily among fundamentalist sects, the poor, the distressed, or among groups tied to an earlier way of life (e.g. among more rural areas of the nation). Religious intellectuals for the most part lost interest in the phenomenon,

except as "deviant behavior" they were happy to let the social scientists explain. Thus religious conversion became a phenomenon of minor intellectual interest, one that social scientists grouped with such "related" behavior as "commitment to a deviant ideology" or "socialization into adult roles."

Interest in conversion revived in the United States during the late 1950's, when a number of American soldiers who had been prisoners of war to the Chinese began coming home "converted" to communism. Some scholars began studying the circumstances under which this occurred, and comparing it to transformation which occurred in the name of religion or of psychotherapy.[2]

But while interest in the topic revived, the skeptics' argument was in no way challenged until large numbers of young people began turning to the "Jesus Movements" of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Once again religious conversion became highly visible to intellectuals and academics. Religious enthusiasm began to swell on college campuses; students (including the children of some secularized intellectuals) began to experience "change of heart" and to ascribe it to divine intervention in their lives.

The new clientele not only made an interest in religious conversion more stylish among intellectuals; it also challenged some of the causal assumptions that had become prevalent. For here were converts from affluent, externally happy circumstances. Early efforts to describe "Jesus Movement" people as youths seeking a way out of drugs[3] proved too simple: while some "religious communities" recruited primarily from that milieu, others did not. Nor could parental upbringing explain why many of the enthusiasts turned to religion for meaning in

their lives. Large-scale explanations--for example that youth were retreating into religious fantasy because of disillusionment with the established culture and with radical politics as an effective means of remedy[4]--rang hollow when the backgrounds and perspectives of individual enthusiasts were examined more closely. Too often, in terms of previous activities and interests, the wrong people were being converted.

This contrary-evidence makes the "self-evident" character of conventional social science explanations questionable. It may be time for a renewed series of tests of arguments about the nature of religious conversions, taking information about the current crop of converts and organizing it in terms of the logic of the arguments being made. Hopefully this paper will offer a first step in that direction.

This paper will review some influential social science arguments about the nature of conversion, and will suggest some problems of measurement and proof that have plagued earlier efforts to test these theories. It then will offer a new test of some of the same arguments, using data gathered from members of one of the more interesting developments within the current "Jesus Movements." This test will involve Catholic Pentacostals, who claim to have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and to have re-oriented their lives around this encounter with the Divine; it will compare them to a control group of Catholics from similar backgrounds who have not experienced this change of heart. We will ask the following questions: 1) to what extent are converts subject to the kinds of influences which social scientists have said account for what had happened to them? 2) Is this coincidence? (When a larger population containing both converts and non-converts is studied, many people may be found who are under such influences. Are converts

located disproportionately in the ranks of those facing these circumstances?) 3) Just how important an influence on conversion are the various social factors being studied? (How much of the total variance in outcome is explained by different kinds of social influence? How much is explained when all of them operate together?)

CLASSIC ARGUMENTS FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCE LITERATURE

1. Religious Conversion as a Fantasy-Solution to Stress One major stream of argument and description in the social sciences begins with the assumption that religious experience, at its essence, is a projective fantasy, a magical solution to situations of stress encountered in dealings with other persons. The argument was stated eloquently by Sigmund Freud,[5] was further elaborated in the 1920's by Thouless and Leuba in their analysis of sexual symbolism in the writings of saints and mystics,[6] and in Flower's argument that sheltered children are more likely to seek conversion;[7] it appeared again in the arguments of Flugel and Fenichel during the 1940's about God as a fantasy Father-figure projection of the super-ego,[8] in the Mayer-Gross study of 1955 applying obsessional-neurosis theory to the study of Presbyterians, Plymouth Bretheren and Jesuits,[9] and in the Festinger studies noting the attractiveness of religious conversion to persons in social circumstances of high ambiguity and discomfort.[10]

A comparable argument, stated in social rather than psychological terms, grows from the influence of Karl Marx.[11] From Marx's description of religion as an opiate for the masses has come a large number of studies relating involvement in religious experience to social situations of major disadvantage. H. Richard Niebuhr traced the origins of Christian (fervent) sects to the poor existing in circumstances of major

stress.[12] Cantril,[13] Clark,[14] and Pfister's[15] studies of the 1940's argued that the working classes and the poor in America were more deeply involved in religious experience than were other population groups. Anton Boisen traced the growth of minor religious sects, which stress direct conversion experiences, during the depression of the 1930's.[16] Milton Yinger[17] argued that persons at a competitive disadvantage, socially, participate disproportionately in the religious activities of organized religion. Vittorio Lanternari traced the growth of nativistic millenarian religious movements in colonial areas subject to domination by Europeans.[18]

Andrew Greely lumps these arguments together as a "comfort theory" of religion, suggesting that these varying arguments have in common a view of religion and religious experience as functioning primarily to stabilize or comfort the individual or social unit in time of stress.[19]

2. Religious Conversion as the Culmination of Earlier Socialization. Another tradition within the social sciences approaches religious experience and conversion as learned behavior, comparable to any other kind of socialization. As confirmation of this, its adherents have pointed to the oft-noted tendency for women to be more highly involved in religious experience and activities,[20] to the high proportion of religious converts coming from religious homes,[21] and to the tendency for the oldest child in a family to identify more completely with the values of his or her parents.[22] They have noted that Catholic students trained in parochial schools seem more deeply identified with attitudes and positions of the Catholic Church than do students trained elsewhere.[23] Thus this tradition would seek the origins of susceptibility to "conversions experience" in previous training.

3. Religious Conversion As Encapsulation. A third tradition sees religious conversion as the product of immediate social interaction and dependence, perhaps made easier when an individual is under stress or has had previous exposure to the perspective, but basically a process in which one comes to adopt a new self-identity as a result of absorbing the frame of reference used by persons around one. Ruth Wallace's study of converts to Catholicism from among inquirers at the Catholic Information Center in Toronto, Canada, showed that inquirers were far more likely to convert if they were tied by strong affective bonds to devout Catholics; indeed, that the best hunting ground was found among non-Catholics who were just forming family-bonds with devout Catholics.[24] Michael Harrison found that openness to conversion was closely related to absorption into devout friendship circles.[25] John Lofland, studying conversion to a deviant cult believing Christ had returned to earth in the orient and that the end of the world was eminent, found conversion to be the end product of a process of increasing investment of time and energy in interaction with believers, coupled with a closing off of other social avenues until the exotic frame of reference became a believable base for behavior.[26] Indeed, Lofland and Stark's generalization of the conversion process (which they call a "value-added" model) combines each kind of argument described above into an interactive process-model: I quote:

> "For conversion a person must:
>
> 1. Experience enduring, acutely felt tensions
> 2. Within a religious problem-solving perspective,
> 3. Which leads him to define himself as a religious seeker;
> 4. Encountering the D.P. at a turning point in his life,

5. Wherein an affective bond is formed (or pre-exists) with one or more converts;
6. Where extra-cult attachments are absent or neutralized;
7. And where, if he is to become a deployable agent, he is exposed to intensive interaction."[27]

PREVIOUS EFFORTS AT PROOF

In his book, Religious Behavior, Michael Argyle has drawn together a catalog of previous quantitative research in the area of religion, attempting at the end a summary of findings as they relate to the arguments mentioned above and to some additional concerns of his own. It is a useful compilation, if not particularly reassuring as to the "state of the art" in the late 1950's. Many studies in this area were done so poorly as to be inadmissable as evidence pro or con: they involve strange choices of populations, questions which are only tangentially relevant as evidence for the argument being put forward, or other crudities common to early efforts to do quantitative research in this area. In short, they are not worth "replicating" because the original study is of insufficient validity to be interesting. Others, however, including some of the more recent quantitative studies, hold more interest.

Lacking in almost all studies, however, is any careful effort to use relevant control groups to disprove the contentions being put forward. It is a logical fallacy to argue, for example, that psycholigical stress accounts for religious conversion when you can only show that a high proportion of converts are under stress. Perhaps a high proportion of all persons (converts and non-converts alike) experience stress of this kind. Again, to show that converts come from religious homes means nothing unless you can showthat non-converts are less likely to do so.

This need for a control-population may seem obvious, once stated, but it is far from clear in many cases just what people should be sampled for purposes of comparison. If the converts exhibit some unusual constellation of social characteristics, it may prove difficult indeed to duplicate these among a control population: one has to know where to find persons with those characteristics and how to estimate the appropriate universe from which to draw a comparison sample.[28]

It is not surprising that many studies have been content to base their arguments on distribution of traits among converts, rather than to proceed more logically in terms of their argument--i.e., to compare the distribution of converts and non-converts among persons who possess the trait in question and among those who do not. The data which follow will show the price that is paid for such sloppy methods of proof, however. We will find patterns similar to the classic arguments when we look only at internal distribution of traits among the converts. Rather different pictures will emerge, however, as we begin to argue more carefully.

As initial evidence, we have data gathered from converts to one of the more dramatic expressions of the current Jesus Movement, Catholic Pentecostals who claim to have received the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit", a physical-spiritual transformation usually involving speaking in unknown tongues (glossalalia), extreme joy, total dedication to Christ, direct communication with God, and the conscious re-ordering of one's life around these encounters. Rather than attempt a random sample of Catholic Pentecostals across the country, we have used a snow-ball sample (asking each respondent to name other members of the movement) in an effort to study the entire group of converts within a more

limited locale. This permitted us to gather data, for purposes of comparison, on a randomly chosen sample of Catholics in the area where our main group of converts center their activities. Thus we can ask whether the group susceptible to this kind of conversion differs in any significant way from the larger target-population for this religious movement. For this study, a Catholic who reports receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit will be defined as a religious convert, while a Catholic chosen for study through random sampling procedures will be called a "control".

The movement began as a Catholic-student phenomena, recruiting locally from students at a large secular university which dominates the community where major activity has been centered. Accordingly the study selected, for controls, a sample of students at that University who had indicated a Catholic preference.[29] (This seemed to be the target population for the movement locally; thus one could compare converts and non-converts from the same milieu.) Because of other interests besides the test of conversion arguments, we also gathered data from Catholic Pentecostals in another secular university where the Catholic hierarchy actively discouraged the movement, and from a non-student chapter elsewhere.

We attempted, thus, to secure a 100% universe of persons in contact with the Catholic Pentecostal movement in three geographically-similar communities, where conditions for recruitment differed. In the community where major activity of the movement was centered, we received back 231 mailed questionnaires from the snow-ball sample of names, a response rate of 65%. The secular university chapter facing open hostility from the Catholic Church sent back 30 questionnaires, a response

rate of 88%. The non-student chapter sent back 16 (76% of the Catholics involved). Our control sample came to 158, a response rate of 72%.

Unfortunately for the tidiness of this study, the membership of the Catholic Pentecostal Movement began to shift between the time when our study design was planned and actually executed. The Catholic Pentecostal movement, like dynamic movements elsewhere, had not stayed within the recruiting bounds seen previously. High school students, Catholic seminarians, nuns and priests, and adults in the community were beginning to come to the movement. A number of persons who had been students at the university were dropping out to devote themselves full-time to "the service of the Lord". And Protestants, both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal in background, were beginning to associate themselves with the group. Thus the neat convert-control sample of the study design no longer provided exact comparison groups.[30]

This paper, consequently, will provide a series of comparisons, of greater and lesser exactness, in an attempt to look honestly at the range of persons who entered the movement at the time data were gathered and yet to argue as tightly as possible. The main line of argument will look at Catholic students at the secular university who report having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, 38 persons, and at 158 Catholics chosen as "controls". Then as further tests of the arguments being made, we will use two looser definitions of "convert". The one compares all Catholic respondents who report having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (152 persons) with the earlier control group (158). This provides groupings intuitively easy to compare--Catholics divided almost exactly between converts and controls (49% and 51% respectively). But it is a "loose" comparison in the sense that

the control includes only current university students. The second comparison treats all persons drawn to the group, Catholic or Protestant, "Baptized" or not, as "seekers". Since the control group remains the same (Catholic students at the secular university) the "test" conditions become even less exact. The three comparisons together, however, should give a clearer picture than would be possible from any one alone. They allow a comparison under fairly controlled external conditions, and then show whether the findings apply to "seekers" and "converts" more generally.

The first series of hypotheses discussed earlier view religious conversion as a major shift in world view and commitment of one's energies, one which occurs as an adaptation to high stress situations. Some who argue this way see conversion as the creation of a fantasy solution to otherwise distressing circumstances; others see religious roles and statuses being substituted for secular ones that have become problematic. In either case, to test the argument one needs measures of stress that might be present among a population.

Respondents, of course, are making self-reports and might be expected to react somewhat defensively to "debunking" explanations of this kind. Moreover, the majority are highly educated, likely to have heard such explanations and to be alert to questionnaire items which imply psychological rather than religious explanations for their experiences. Consequently the measurement of "stress" was approached with some care. Stress indicators were scattered at different points throughout the questionnaire, and whenever possible were placed in a context that should minimize defensiveness. For example, we asked about problems experienced with members of their family and about

problems in regard to sex in the context of changes which might have come as a result of receiving the Baptism. This provided a "before" and "after" measure which allowed frankness about earlier stress without participating in a "put-down" of the experience of conversion. At another point in the questionnaire the respondent was asked whether he (or she) had found loneliness to be a major problem in the preceding two years. They also were asked whether they had considered themselves to be in the midst of a spiritual crisis during that time period, and whether they had actively sought counseling for personal problems. Anyone who answered "yes" to any of these questions was coded as having been subject to actively-perceived psychological stress during the period preceding conversion.

A second set of stress indicators were built from the arguments of John Lofland and Ruth Wallace. Would persons involved in major role shifts--contemplated marriage, widowhood or divorce, a change of occupational plans, decisions about leaving school or religious orders, newcomers to the secular university--be particularly susceptible to conversion? Here the measure is not <u>perceived</u> stress but stress-producing <u>circumstances</u>.

A third indicator of possible stress grew out of the socialization literature and in particular from a suggestion by Guy E. Swanson that middle siblings may be inclined to seek fantasy solutions to stress. Swanson argues that the eldest child has power advantages when sibling conflicts arise during childhood and that the youngest often have manipulative advantage because of their age. Accordingly we asked whether middle children are more susceptible to conversion than others.

Because these converts came from a fairly privileged financial strata we could not test arguments that conversion appeals primarily to the economically disadvantaged. But we could ask whether persons who come from less-privileged backgrounds than the general population being studied are more susceptible to conversion (either as a response to stress engendered by the effort toward upward mobility or because of greater familiarity with conversion traditions from their pasts). Our fourth, and most indirect, measure of possible stress, compared students from blue-collar or other non-college families with those whose family status made college attendance more traditional.

Table 1 shows the distribution of these signs of stress among all Catholics who reported receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Table 1 about here

Four out of five Catholic converts to Pentecostalism reported that they were under active psychological stress during the preceding two years. Over half had been involved in potentially stressful role changes, and almost the same number reported that they are middle siblings. Less than a third, however, were making a major change in their own social status as compared with that of their parents. Thus three out of four measures of stress are found frequently among Catholic Pentecostal converts, with the most direct measure of stress found among eighty percent of these respondents.

Table 2 shows how these same measures are distributed among the other comparison groups for this study. The two columns on the

Table 1: Distribution of Stress-Influences among Spirit-baptized Catholic Pentecostals

	(n = 152)
Psychological Stress Actively Felt in past 2 years (any of the following: conflict with family, problems with sex, severe loneliness, spiritual crisis, actively sought counseling)	83% (152)
Potentially Stressful Circumstances Involved in Major Role Shifts (any of the following: Change of career, decision whether to stay in school, decision re: marriage, decision whether to give up plans/career in religious order, newcomer to university)	56% (153)
Middle Sibling (stressful socialization role)	45% (153)
Social Mobility Change (parents job or schooling not college-oriented)	37% (144)

left compare distribution of these characteristics among other "convert populations". When all persons in contact with the movement are

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Table 2 about here

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considered (whether Catholic or not, "baptized" or not), a rather similar pattern emerges. This also is true when the sample is limited to Catholic converts currently enrolled in the state university (the locale from which the control-group of Catholics was drawn). The university converts have a noticeably higher proportion of middle siblings, and an even stronger incidence of self-reported stress.

When the Catholic-student "controls" are added to the picture, however, the argument appears more questionable. Stress, as measured here, apparently is a common experience for converts and non-converts alike. Two-thirds of the control group report situations of active psychological stress. Again, two-thirds (a higher proportion than the converts) are involved in major role shifts within their life situation. They are less likely to be middle siblings, but a rather similar proportion are involved in change of social background.

If information were available only about converts to the movement, as has been true for most studies of conversion available heretofore, one might be tempted to assume that psychological stress explains susceptibility to conversion. For with the exception of one measure (which admittedly is the weakest of the four available) there is a high distribution of stress-indicators among the converts studied.

Actually, evidence organized in this form is essentially specious. The argument claims that stress is the <u>cause</u> of conversion.

Table 2: Distribution of Stress-Influences Among Various Comparison Groups

% saying "yes" Circumstance:	Among all persons in contact with the Catholic Pentecostal Movement	Among Catholic university-student converts	Among Catholic university-student controls
1. Psychological stress actively felt in preceding two years	75% (277)	92% (38)	67% (158)
2. Potentially-stressful circumstances (role shifts in preceding two years	52% (280)	53% (38)	66% (158)
3. Stressful socialization role (middle sibling)	41% (280)	50% (38)	36% (158)
4. Change of social status	36% (260)	38% (37)	41% (152)

To show that persons under stress are more likely to convert, one should look at the distribution of converts and non-converts among persons under stress; then one should examine this distribution for persons not under stress. I presented the evidence in its more specious form because many earlier studies, lacking a control group which would allow such comparisons, have proceded in just this way. Our findings, thus far, are comparable to the kind of evidence normally reported. It is time, now, to look at the evidence more carefully.

Table 3 compares Catholics who currently are enrolled in the state university, both converts and "controls". For each measure Table 3 reports the proportion of converts to be found when the influence is present and when it is absent. Finally it provides a statistical measure, Somers "D", which tells how well one can predict whether a respondent will be a convert if one knows whether the stress-influence is present or absent. (Somers "D" is peculiarly appropriate to the kind of samples involved in this study, and it requires no statistical assumptions other than those met by our various sampling procedures. If the claimed-influence has no effect Somers "D" will hover around .000. If the influence always produces conversion, Somers "D" would produce a score of 1.00. If it never had this effect, the score would be -1.00. Thus it gives an intuitively clear sense of whether the influence being measured has major impact on conversion or not, and allows a comparison of how much relative help different measures are for predicting the likelihood of conversion.

Not all persons under stress need to convert for the argument to be convincing: there are, after all, a variety of ways to deal with stress. Similarly, some converts might be found among persons not

subject to stress even if the argument is correct, for there could be other routes to conversion as well. But if psychological stress is a major influence in religious conversion, a higher proportion of persons under stress should be converts, in contrast to the proportion of converts found among persons not under stress. If stress is irrelevant

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Table 3 about here

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to conversion, approximately the same proportion of converts should be found among persons under stress and among those lacking this condition. Thus, since converts make up nineteen percent of the persons being studied in Table 3, about that proportion of converts could appear "by chance".

One quarter of the persons reporting actively felt stress are converts, contrasted with about a twelfth of the persons not reporting this. Yet the Somers' "D" measure shows this information helps predict who will be a convert only about one time out of five. Among both converts and controls so many persons experienced personal stress that it becomes a relatively ineffective predictor. The greater propensity of converts reporting stress, moreover, may be an artifact of the way questions were asked: quite sensitive psychological stress areas were tapped in the context of changes made by the baptism of the Holy Spirit; thus non-converts had less opportunity and less motivation to report some sensitive areas than did a motivated convert. Given the loaded form of the question and the mild Somers' "D" score, I am unconvinced that this measure, by itself, explains very much.

Table 3: % Converts Among Groups Exposed to Different Stress Situations but Coming from the Same Social Milieu (Catholic students attending a large, secular, university campus)

(Spirit-baptized Catholic university students + a control sample of Catholic university students) (n = 196)

Stress Situation:	YES	(number of persons reporting this)	NO	(number of persons reporting this)	Somers "D" (measure of how much this helps predict conversion/nonconversion)
1. Actively felt psychological stress	25%	(139)	8%	(55)	.1973
2. Potential Stress: major role shifts	16%	(125)	25%	(71)	-.0935
3. "Style of coping" stress: middle sibling	25%	(76)	16%	(120)	.0917
4. Social mobility change	18%	(77)	20%	(112)	-.0235
Expected by chance if stress influence is irrelevent to conversion	19%		19%		.0000

The only other stress measure having more converts than would be expected by chance is the middle sibling indicator of possible "coping styles". Somers "D" shows this to be of even less help in predicting who the converts will be. On the basis of Table 3 I conclude that psychological stress arguments, as measured among this group of converts and controls, do not go very far toward explaining susceptibility to conversion.

When "convert" is redefined to include all Spirit-Baptized Catholics in the study, and a comparison is made with the earlier control group, the results are similar. Only the "loaded" personal stress measure has much predictive value and this remains at the same level as before. When all seekers are compared with the student-controls, even this drops away. (This might be expected if the outcome depends on motivating converts to report stress. Seekers are less different in this respect from controls.) Table four offers no greater confirmation of the argument than did the more strictly controlled test.

Table 4 about here

A second tradition in the social sciences explains conversion in terms of socialization, or previous training. Conversion, by this argument, is less a change of heart than a final acceptance of relationships and commitments taught one as a child. Thus if one is brought up to be religious, conversion to any kind of religion is considerably more likely.

Four measures seemed appropriate to the socialization argument. First, the social science literature argues that religious roles are

Table 4: Two Looser Tests of the Stress Argument

% converts by stress-situation among:

	A. All "Spirit-baptized Catholics" + Catholic sample of university students (n = 310)					B. All "seekers" + Catholic sample of university students (n = 438)				
Stress Situation:	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"
1. Actively felt psychological stress	55%	(230)	33%	(78)	.2145	67%	(313)	57%	(120)	.1011
2. Potential stress: major role shifts	45%	(191)	56%	(120)	-.1081	58%	(251)	72%	(187)	-.1349
3. "Style of coping" stress: middle sibling	55%	(126)	45%	(185)	.0936	67%	(173)	62%	(265)	.0517
4. Social mobility change	46%	(116)	50%	(180)	-.0487	60%	(156)	65%	(256)	-.0562
Expected by chance if stress influence is irrelevant	49%		49%		.0000	64%		64%		.0000

more stressed in our society for women than for men. Thus women should be more susceptible to conversion to this movement than are men.

Second, persons who had gone to Parochial schools, where nuns and priests attempted to implant awe for the Church and openness to the divine, might be more likely to be among the converts.

Next, persons from families where both parents were devout might be conversion-prone. And since psychologists have found that the oldest child often identifies more closely with the values of his parents, perhaps the oldest child from a devout family should be especially likely to convert.

We also asked whether persons high in previous personal piety or quite frequent in attendance at mass should be more likely to accept Catholic Pentecostalism. I hesitate to insist that these last two measures reflect socialization, since we have no evidence that the person was "raised that way"; they could have become a seeker as an adult, or simply become part of a social group that made this behavior expected. But since these measures do indicate a "prior" interest in religious search, I shall include them, though with some question.

Table five shows the distribution of these conversion-encouraging socialization influences among various groupings of "converts" and among the Catholic students used as "controls". Again in this table,

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Table 5 about here

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organization of data follows the tradition of much of the literature, rather than tight argument. (Table five shows how frequently a <u>trait</u>

Table 5: Distribution of Conversion-Encouraging Socialization Influences Among Various Groups of "Converts" to Catholic Pentecostalism and "Controls"

Socialization Circumstance:	Group being studied: 1. All "seekers" known to be in contact with the movement	2. All Catholics who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit	3. Catholic students at the state university who have had the baptism of the Holy Spirit	4. Catholic "controls" who are students at the state university
Sex: Female	57% (278)	61% (153)	71% (38)	44% (157)
Parochial Education	38% (280)	23% (153)	32% (38)	31% (158)
Parents Devout	37% (276)	39% (150)	39% (36)	26% (158)
Oldest child from a religious family	15% (276)	17% (150)	19% (36)	13% (158)
High previous personal piety	73% (261)	70% (153)	68% (38)	38% (156)
Frequent mass attendance previously	54% (221)	63% (152)	58% (38)	12% (156)

is found among various groups of converts and non-converts; it does not show how frequently converts are found among those persons subject to previous influence.) As has been true of other studies, there seems to be some support for the argument being made, though by no means universal evidence. Women, the pious, those who attend mass frequently are found disproportionately represented among the converts. On the other hand, converts show few differences from non-converts in the proportion subject to family and school admonitions to godliness.

By now, however, we should be sufficiently skeptical of arguments supported in this manner to ask for data organized in terms of the causal argument being made. Table six looks at Catholic students who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and a control group of other Catholic students; but, for each comparison, respondents are grouped according to the presence or absence of the hypothesized influence in their lives.

Table 6 about here

In Table six converts make up nineteen percent of the respondents. Thus we should expect about a fifth of each group to be converts by chance, even if the influence in question is totally irrelevant. With one exception (parochial education) groups socialized in ways that should leave them susceptible to conversion have a higher proportion of converts than would be expected on the basis of chance alone.

Table 6: % Converts among Groups Exposed to Different Socialization Circumstances

(Catholic Spirit-baptized university students + a control sample of Catholic university students) (n = 196)

Socialization Circumstance	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D" (estimate of how much this helps predict who will be a convert)
1. Sex: Female	28%	(96)	11%	(99)	.1701
2. Parochial Education	20%	(61)	19%	(135)	.0041
3. Parents Devout	25%	(55)	16%	(139)	.0963
4. Oldest child from a religious family	26%	(27)	17%	(167)	.0856
5.(?) High previous personal piety	30%	(85)	11%	(109)	.1958
6.(?) Frequent Mass Attendance	54%	(41)	10%	(153)	.4320
Expected by chance if socialization influence is irrelevant	19%		19%		.0000

Table seven, presents the same information as Table six, but with different groupings of converts. When "convert" is defined as all Spirit-Baptized Catholics, the same pattern holds. And this also is true when the definition of "convert" is widened to include all known seekers.

Table 7 about here

The Somers "D" measures for these two tables show three influences producing predictions better than those available by chance. The sex of the convert, previous practices of personal piety, and especially, frequency of mass attendance before encountering the Pentecostals, are useful for predicting which persons will be converts. The Somers "D" score for "sex" is similar to that found earlier for "active psychological stress", but its meaning in Tables six and seven seems more clear. Converts are found more often than chance would predict among the group exposed to pro-conversion socialization (i.e. among females) in contrast to what was found among persons reporting active psychological stress symptons. (In the previous Table, converts were less likely to be found in the anti-conversion circumstances.) And the measure itself is not a loaded one.

The best single predictor thus far, however, is frequency of mass attendance before encountering the Pentecostals. It is not clear whether this represents the successful culmination of earlier religious upbringing or a later development in the life of these persons.

Table 7: Two Looser Tests of the Effects of Socialization on Conversion

% converts by socialization-circumstance among:

B. Socialization Circumstance:	A. All Spirit-baptized Catholic Pentecostals + a sample of Catholic university students (n=310)					B. All "seekers" + a sample of Catholic university students (n=438)				
	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"
1. Sex: Female	58%	(163)	40%	(147)	.1753	70%	(228)	57%	(207)	.1225
2. Parochial Education	42%	(84)	52%	(227)	-.1032	68%	(156)	61%	(282)	.0724
3. Parents Devout	59%	(99)	44%	(209)	.1457	71%	(143)	60%	(291)	.1153
4. Oldest child from a religious family	55%	(45)	47%	(263)	.0803	67%	(61)	63%	(373)	.0421
5.(?) High previous personal piety	64%	(166)	32%	(143)	.3229	76%	(249)	42%	(168)	.3404
6.(?) Frequent Mass attendance	83%	(115)	29%	(193)	.5446	86%	(139)	42%	(238)	.4389
Expected by chance if socialization influence is irrelevent	49%		49%		.0000	64%		64%		.0000

How clearly is mass attendance related to prior socialization? Multiple Classification Analysis[31] (a statistical test similar to analysis of variance but more appropriate to the form of data available here) was run to see how closely frequent mass attendance was related to the childhood socialization influences just described, to childhood contacts with priests or nuns, to the various stress indicators seen previously, or to the mutual influence of all these factors working together. Findings were not encouraging for proponents of either the "stress" or "childhood" socialization theories. For the persons studied, variation in how frequently one attended mass was almost totally unrelated to any of the "stress" or "childhood influence" measures described earlier. Taken together they could at most account for only ten percent of the variation in mass attendance found among these respondents. Thus I must conclude that while mass attendance here reflects <u>current</u> religious orientation, it does not necessarily result from previous conditioning.

With this clarification of findings in tables six and seven the socialization argument seems insufficient, by itself, to account for susceptibility to conversion among the population being studied. There is evidence that the group of persons subjected to pro-religious conditioning in childhood includes more converts than one would expect by chance. But childhood training, by itself, cannot account for conversion. Instead, one's immediate orientation and practices offer far better basis for prediction.

A third set of arguments from the social sciences suggest that "immediate social influence" explains susceptibility to conversion. The potential convert becomes linked through friendship or other emotional

ties to "believers" who try to redefine for this person what religious orientation actually is all about. If the claims sound interesting, the potential convert may become an active seeker. As interaction with believers increases and interaction with non-believers proportionately declines, the seeker gradually becomes encapsulated in a social network which shares a unique world-view. The amount of discordant information coming to the seeker from others decreases as he is drawn more tightly into interaction with believers; many people around the seeker now respond in ways that take the reality of the new claims for granted. As this kind of "validation" from others continues, the seeker may begin to believe in the New Reality. Sensations previously ignored or interpreted in other ways now are seen as confirmation of claims put forward by other believers. He may even begin to produce experiences expected by his immediate associates.[32]

How might this argument apply to Catholic Pentecostals? The potential convert would be someone with positive emotional links to members of the movement. The most probable sources of such links would be friendships with individual Catholic Pentecostals, developed prior to their involvement in the movement or through contacts made at daily masses (attended only by the more serious Catholics), or perhaps introduction to the movement through a trusted leader, such as one's spiritual adviser, priest, nun, or teacher. Accordingly we have a measure of frequency of mass attendance before encountering the movement, a question showing whether trusted associates were the source of introduction to the movement, and an indication of whether any of one's three closest friends were Catholic Pentecostals at the time one first encountered the group.

The encapsulation process itself is harder to capture through use of self-reports. We asked whether time spent with Pentecostals increased during the exploration period before Baptism and asked for an after-Baptism measure of number of close friends who are Pentecostals. We also asked about positive and negative feedback received from close friends and relatives during the exploration period. These questions provide at least a crude approximation of the social influence argument, but they have two major drawbacks as test of the argument. First, one might expect the process to be most effective when the person involved is unaware of its occurrence. If so, one might question how important an influence encapsulation actually had been for those persons sufficiently aware of its existence to report it--or whether failure to report it actually means it was not going on. But the sample used for this study provides an even more serious hindrance to test of the argument. Relatively few of the non-convert "controls" studied here had explored movement claims sufficiently to have been <u>available</u> for an encapsulation process to have taken place. A more appropriate control-group, consequently, would be seekers who had explored the movement but who had not joined the group. Seekers, however, drop from the sight of converts fairly quickly when they reject the groups claims. The snow-ball sampling method used for this study thus produced only a small number of persons who had been in contact with the group but who had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These "seeker-controls" may not be typical of enquirers who drop away.

Part of the "immediate social influence" argument can be tested directly, however. We can see whether persons easily accessible to Pentecostals are especially likely to convert. We can see whether

kinds of information heard about the group influences openness to conversion. Finally, we can ask whether converts have been involved in encapsulation experiences with Pentecostals during their period of exploration. (If they have, it will not prove that this causes their conversion, as we have seen in previous arguments about the distribution of stress among converts. But if they have not, it would cast serious doubt on that part of the "social interaction" argument.)

Table eight shows the distribution of circumstances making one susceptible to social influence attempts by Pentecostals among various groups of converts and the controls. Seekers, the entire range of

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Table 8 about here

Spirit-baptised Catholics, and converts among the current university student population vary in the proportion that came to the movement through direct social influences of the kinds just mentioned. But all show considerably higher proportions of persons in these circumstances of potential-influence than is true for the controls. The contrast between "converts" and "controls" is especially noticeable in terms of frequency of mass attendance before encountering the group, the number of Catholic Pentecostal friends known before exploring the group, and the amount of positive information about the movement heard from friends or close relatives.

Table nine looks at distribution of converts among groups exposed to these social influences and among groups not so exposed. It, of course, presents a fairer test of the social influence arguments

Table 8: Distribution of Social-influence Circumstances Among Various Groups of "Converts" to Catholic-Pentecostalism and Among "Controls"

C. Social-Influence Circumstance	Group being Examined: 1. All "seekers" known to be in contact with the movement	2. All Catholics who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit	3. Catholic Students at the state university who have had the baptism of the Holy Spirit	4. Catholic "controls" who are students at the state university
1. Attended mass frequently	54% (221)	63% (152)	58% (38)	12% (156)
2. Introduced to the movement by a trusted associate	63% (261)	60% (148)	43% (37)	18% (157)
3. Previous friendships with Catholic Pentecostals	33% (280)	36% (153)	29% (38)	05% (158)
4. Positive inputs from close friends or relatives during exploration	42% (280)	67% (153)	53% (38)	04% (158)

than did Table eight. The contrasts are striking. Where one could

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Table 9 about here

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expect converts to make up about a fifth of each group if immediate social influence were unimportant, converts in fact make up from 35 to 77% of the groups subject to immediate social influence, and only about 10 to 15% of the persons not subject to such influence. The Somers "D" scores show that information about immediate social circumstances helps greatly in predicting who is likely to be a convert.

Table ten repeats this test on two other groupings of converts; first it looks at all Catholics who have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and at the control group already seen. Then it compares all "seekers" with the control group of Catholic students. In all cases the results are the same. Immediate social influence makes a noticeable difference in susceptibility to conversion.

Table 10 about here

These data give strong support to the argument that positive social reinforcement encourages conversion. But they do not yet amount to a demonstration that the process of encapsulation is responsible for the change. Few converts will be surprised to learn that a religious movement grows by the contacts it makes through friendship circles and other social networks in which the converts participate. Nor will many observers be surprised to learn that people who receive positive feedback

Table 9: % of Converts Among Groups Exposed to Different Kinds of Immediate Social Influence

(Catholic, Spirit-baptized university students + a control sample of Catholic University students n = 192)

C. Social Influence Circumstance	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D" (estimate of how much this helps predict who will be a convert)
1. Frequent mass attendance	54%	(41)	10%	(153)	.4320
2. Introduced to movement by trusted associates	35%	(45)	14%	(149)	.2146
3. Previous friendship with Catholic Pentecostals	58%	(19)	15%	(177)	.4264
4. Positive inputs from close friends or relatives during exploration	77%	(26)	10%	(170)	.6633
Expected by chance if immediate social influence is irrelevant to conversion	19%		19%		.0000

Table 10: A Looser Test of Immediate Social Influence Arguments

% Converts Among Groups Exposed to Different Kinds of Immediate Social Influence

C. Social Influence Circumstance	A. All Spirit-baptized Catholics + a control sample of Catholic university students					B. All "seekers" known to be in contact with movement + control sample of Catholic university students				
	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"
1. Frequent attender at Mass	83%	(115)	29%	(193)	.5446	86%	(139)	42%	(238)	.4389
2. Introduced to movement by trusted associates	75%	(118)	31%	(187)	.4387	85%	(193)	43%	(225)	.4186
3. Previous friendships with Catholic Pentecostals	87%	(63)	39%	(248)	.4779	92%	(102)	55%	(336)	.3680
4. Positive inputs from close friends or relatives during exploration	94%	(109)	25%	(202)	.6974	96%	(168)	44%	(270)	.5272
Expected by chance if immediate social influence is irrelevant to conversion	49%		49%		.0000	64%		64%		.0000

about a movement explore it more seriously than those who do not. The "immediate social influence" argument becomes interesting when it goes beyond these demonstrations to show how a person comes to shift his understanding of the world under the influence of others.

We will not be able to test "encapsulation" arguments as thoroughly as we might like. Instead of non-convert controls we need "seekers who did not convert". Our snowball sampling method, however, produced only seventeen persons who reported extensive contact with the group but who did not plan to receive the baptism. An additional eighteen described themselves as actively seeking the baptism, and twenty-five others indicated contact with the group, no baptism in the Spirit and left their "seeking" status unclear. Given the active proselyting activity of the movement in the surrounding community it undoubtedly attracted many more initial seekers than remained in view. Official reports of the movement during this time period estimate that about one fourth of the 1089 recorded visitors to their meetings eventually sought the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.[33] If this is the case we have no way to judge whether the non-convert seekers available for study represent a cross-section of those who have been in contact with the group or not. Any "test" of the argument, therefore, must be even more tentative than those presented earlier. We can, at least, see whether experiences appropriate to an encapsulation process are typical for converts during the period they explore the group. And we can see whether the proportion of converts among active seekers varies with exposure to encapsulation experiences. But we must remember that non-convert seekers have not had an equal opportunity to be chosen for study (due to the selective memory of informants). Thus the outcome of

such a test will be far from conclusive. If converts lack encapsulation experiences, on the other hand, it should be possible to reject the explanation whether or not an adequate control group is available for comparison.

If the Spirit works its effects at once, there would be little opportunity for social encapsulation to occur. However, only fourteen of the one hundred sixty-four respondents who described receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after contact with the group reported receiving it the same day as their first encounter. And only twenty-six more received the baptism within a week. Thus almost four-fifths of the converts explored for a period of time before receiving the sign of conversion, and explored for at least three weeks or longer. In short, for the overwhelming majority, conversion took long enough to make a process like encapsulation possible.

With whom did seekers talk about what was happening? Forty-five percent turned to members of their family for reactions. Eighty-three percent discussed the matter with close friends. About a third of the seekers turned to teachers, religious advisers, or other persons they trusted. While only twelve percent of the family advisers were Pentecostals, about forty percent of the close friends contacted and about the same proportion of other reactors were actually Pentecostals. Thus, while most seekers used pre-existing friends and social relationships for feedback during the exploration period, a large minority turned to persons already positively disposed toward the claims of the movement.

Eight out of ten seekers turned to close friends for advice. Seventy percent of these friends gave either positive or neutral responses. The response from others outside the family was similar,

and over half the family members responded positively or at least neutrally. The vast majority of these seekers, in short, were not receiving discordant information from family or friends (or at least were not remembering it if it came).

What was happening to their contacts with persons who shared a Pentecostal world-view? Twenty-one percent report spending less time with regular companions during the time they were exploring the movement but had not yet received the baptism. (Among those lacking Pentecostal friends or advisers the proportion reporting that they spent less time with their normal companions is slightly higher.)

All of the eventually baptized report that during their period of exploration they spent time with others who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Fifty-six percent report that the amount of time spent with persons who had received the baptism increased noticeably during this period. About half that many report that they spent more time with other seekers who had not yet received the baptism.

One final piece of evidence lends additional support to an encapsulation argument. Thirty-nine percent of the currently baptized report that they now spend more time than previously with persons who are seeking but who have not yet received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Table eleven summarizes these findings.

Table 11 about here

Encapsulation, however, would seem to be a stronger consequence of conversion than cause of it. As table twelve shows, about a third

Table 11: Encapsulation of Seekers While Exploring the Catholic Pentecostal Movement

a. Use of regular companions during exploration period	Close Friends	Family	Others
% of seekers who turned for advice to	83.2%	45.4%	33.0%
% of advisers who were Pentecostal	40.0% (164)	12.0% (89)	42.0% (71)

b. Kinds of reactions received from regular companions whose advice was sought	Close Friends	Family	Others
- Basically encouraging or else neutral	71.9%	56.5%	82.5%
- Discouraging	28.1% (160)	43.4% (83)	17.5% (63)

c. Relative amount of time spent during exploration period	Same amount of time as earlier	Less time than before	More time than before	
- With regular companions if some were Pentecostals	68.3%	17.5%	14.3%	(63)
- With regular companions when none were Pentecostal	68.3%	23.6%	8.1%	(123)
- With other seekers	68.4%	8.8%	22.8%	(171)
- With baptized Pentecostals	37.2%	6.7%	56.1%	(180)

of the converts report that they now spend less time than previously with their former friends. Almost three quarters of the converts report that they spend more time with others who have received the baptism and nearly four out of ten report that they now are spending more time with seekers who have not yet received the baptism. Moreover, about sixty percent of their current friends among the Baptized are persons they met in the movement rather than previous contacts.

Table 12 about here

These findings are sufficiently congruent with "social influence through encapsulation" argument to prevent us from dismissing it out of hand. But as we have seen earlier, when self-reported stress was high among converts but explained little, such findings in no sense prove that encapsulation causes conversion. Table thirteen divides seekers into groups in which "encapsulation" might be occurring and into groups where there is little evidence that it is happening. It then compares the proportion of converts among the seekers in the various groups.

Table 13 about here

Table thirteen shows that encapsulation aids conversion. (Ninety-two percent of encapsulated seekers in our study received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, compared with seventy percent of seekers not under this influence.) But the high proportion of converts among

Table 12: Encapsulation Since Conversion

% baptized converts who report spending

	Less time than before	The same time as before	More time than before	(number answering)
... with former companions	33%	54%	13%	(188)
... with seekers who have not received the baptism	7%	54%	39%	(176)
... with other baptized Pentecostals	2%	25%	73%	(185)

Table 13: A Preliminary Test of Encapsulation Arguments

Proportion of converts among seekers who

	YES	(n)	NO	(n)	Somers "D"
1. Turned to already known Pentecostals for advice during exploration	100%	(25)	75%	(187)	.2460
2. Had Pentecostal friends and began spending more time with them, or else had no Pentecostal friends and began spending less time with former companions	86%	(35)	78%	(148)	.0865
3. Increased amount of time spent with other seekers	89%	(38)	77%	(131)	.1100
4. Increased amount of time spent with baptized Pentecostals	88%	(101)	69%	(77)	.1842

	FULL	(n)	PARTIAL	(n)	NONE	(n)	
5. Summary: proportion of converts by degree of encapsulation experienced by informant (as combinations of preceding four measures)	92%	(36)	85%	(81)	70%	(57)	.1808
Expectable by chance if encapsulation is irrelevant to conversion	78%		78%		78%		.0000

persons for whom encapsulation did not occur shows that encapsulation is not a necessary condition for conversion. Indeed, only about a fifth of all seekers, and less than a quarter of those who actually "received the baptism", report encapsulation experiences. Not surprisingly, under these circumstances, the Somers "D" measure of how often one can predict conversion by knowing encapsulation status is rather low. Encapsulation greatly encourages conversion, but it is of little more help in predicting who will convert once one becomes a seeker than is psychological stress.

The results of these "encapsulation tests" must be taken with a grain of salt, since not all seekers had the same chance to be studied. None-the-less as a first test of the encapsulation argument, they show serious problems in assuming that it is social influence rather than simply social contact that accounts for susceptibility to conversion.

Thus far data about converts to Catholic Pentecostalism and a control group of Catholic university students have cast doubt on the ability of psychological stress or previous religious socialization to explain why some people are susceptible to religious conversion and others are not. Immediate social influence has had a more obvious impact on the conversion process. A crude first test of arguments about the process by which social influence reshapes world-view suggests that encapsulation (a selective shift in social reinforcement) encourages conversion but happens to only a minority of those who actually convert.

Some of the more sophisticated social science arguments about religious conversion, of course, would not claim that any single

influence could account for such a basic shift in personal orientation as conversion represents. Rather they would argue that it is the mutual interaction of these various forces which makes a person susceptible. Socialization, for example, might lay a groundwork which, under circumstances of immediate psychological stress and accessibility to certain kinds of immediate social influence would lead to a high rate of conversion. John Lofland's value-added model of steps leading to conversion to a deviant religious perspective, for example, builds just such an argument.

We might ask, then, whether the various kinds of social influences seen here together exert a stronger influence toward conversion than any might by itself. And we also might ask an additional question: when all is said and done, how much of the variance in conversion and non-conversion actually has been explained by the social influences seen here?

To begin answering these questions we first used a statistical program called Automatic Interaction Detection, which showed whether any of the variables used here has a different kind of effect on conversion when it is combined with the other variables also being studied.[34] When we discovered that this was not a problem, we ran a Multiple Classification Analysis, a statistical program akin to Analysis of Variance, to see what proportion of the observed variance between being a "convert" or a "control" was explained by each set of arguments taken together and by all of the arguments in joint interaction with one another. (Due to the nature of the control group studied, of course, we could not subject the full range of encapsulation arguments to this

test; but we could look at the broader argument about immediate social influence.)

Multiple Classification Analysis lets one ask two questions: first, how strong an influence does a single measure actually have on the outcome in question, when other factors also are at work? (Beta scores give an approximation of this measure of influence for each "explanatory" variable.) Second, when all of the "explanatory influences" are combined, how strong an influence do they have, in combination, on the outcome in question--in this case, on one's location among the convert or control population? (A correlation measure, R^2, provides this estimate.)

MCA is the only program for analysis of variance, to my knowledge, which can deal with data of the kind available here. The test is not ideal in some respects: it was designed for samples of considerably greater size than we have and it assumes a fairly even division of people on the dependent variable. (In our case, this would mean about the same number of converts and non-converts.) It is not entirely clear how its scores are affected when either of these assumptions is violated. Consequently we present its results cautiously. This will not be a definitive statement of <u>how well</u> these measures of social science arguments have explained susceptibility to conversion. Rather it will be a first estimate of whether they should be taken seriously at all in accounting for what has happened.

Table fourteen presents R^2 scores for different combinations of respondents, grouped according to the arguments made earlier and for subgroups randomly chosen to give each "control respondent" the same chance of being selected for comparison with non-converts, but keeping

the number of persons in each group similar. Since the R^2 is always an estimate for a particular set of data, this score will vary for each sample studied. Together the R^2's reported in Table fourteen suggest a range of explanation statistically possible for this combination of measures. There is probably little point in asking which R^2 is most reliable. Rather, we might ask whether arguments that can account for the amount of variation included within this range are important explanations of what is happening.

Table 14 about here

How much of the variation in susceptibility to conversion can be accounted for in terms of the influences examined earlier? Estimates vary for each of the samples being studied. As Table fourteen shows, this estimate ranges from a low of twenty percent for one sample to a high of forty-three percent for another. In the weakest case, the measured influence is high enough to demonstrate that social factors (as distinct from religious ones) affect the outcome. But even the strongest result shows less than half of the variation explainable in social terms. Thus while they seem to influence the result, they hardly determine it.

Their power as explanation comes even more into question when one examines the Beta scores for the individual measures included in these tests. For the single most influential measure consistently turns out to be the prior religious orientation of the respondent, as measured by the frequency with which he or she attended Mass before encountering the movement.

Table 14: Total Amount of Variance (in being a convert or not) Which is Statistically Explainable by the Combination of Arguments Tested Thus Far. (Multiple Classification Analysis results for various groupings of the data.)

Range of variance "explained" for varying samples:

$$R^2 = .20 - .43$$

Test 1: Strict controls: university students (converts/nonconverts) but with skewed distribution on the dependent variable

$$R^2 = .24 \qquad (n = 196)$$

Test 2: Strict controls (as above) but converts/nonconverts in equal numbers. (Controls randomly assigned to subgroups for comparison with university student converts.)

Random Group A: $R_2^2 = .20$ (n = 76)
Random Group B: $R_2^2 = .29$ (n = 76)
Random Group C: $R_2^2 = .31$ (n = 76)
Random Group D: $R^2 = .35$ (n = 76)

Test 3: All Spirit-baptized Catholic/university student controls (larger sample, approximately even distribution on dependent variable, but less-strict "control" of argument)

$$R^2 = .43 \qquad (n = 310)$$

Test 4: All seekers/university student controls (larger sample, but distribution on dependent variable skewed)

$$R^2 = .35 \qquad (n = 432)$$

How much does each set of arguments contribute to the total explanation? Table fifteen shows the Beta scores, as combined by types of arguments presented earlier. It then divides each set by the R^2 estimate for that sample, a measure which shows the relative importance of each set for the final outcome.

Table 15 about here

Prior religious orientation, as realized in frequent Mass attendance, offers a contact point for social influence to work. But it is not clear that Mass attendance represents a distinctly "social" influence in itself. Accordingly, we present a Multiple Classification Analysis that omits this powerful explanatory measure. (This, of course, permits each remaining variable to have a larger individual effect on the outcome, but also allows one to see how much total variance can still be explained when this influence is missing.) As Table sixteen shows, the R^2 scores for each sample declined to the point of questionable importance when mass attendance was omitted from the list of potentially explanatory variables.

Table 16 about here

How social influences affect conversion becomes intuitively clear from the Automatic Interaction Detection programs used on these data. As you may remember, we originally used the A-I-D (automatic interaction detection) program to see whether any variables, in

Table 15: Comparative Explanatory Power of Various Kinds of Arguments

	R^2	Beta^2 scores:				$\Sigma B^2/R^2$			
		Stress	Soc'lzn	Mass Att.	Soc.Infl.	Stress	Soc'lzn	Mass Att.	Soc. Infl.
Sample 1 (as in Table 14)	.2408	.0134	.0134	.1541	.0597	.06	.06	.64	.25
Sample 2 Random Group A	.2015	.0468	.0159	.0585	.0535	.23	.08	.29	.27
Random Group B	.2887	.0541	.0000*	.1049	.0946	.19	.00*	.36	.33
Random Group C	.3119	.0019	.0094	.2267	.0521	.01	.03	.73	.17
Random Group D	.3531	.0415	.0096	.2388	.0101	.12	.03	.68	.03
Sample 3	.4296	.0213	.0134	.2057	.0748	.05	.03	.48	.17
Sample 4	.3498	.0276	.0080	.1381	.0942	.08	.02	.39	.27

Table 16: % of Variation Explained When Religious Orientation is Included/Excluded from the Argument

	R^2 when frequency of mass attendance is included	R^2 when frequency of mass attendance is omitted	d
Test 1			
As in Table 14	.24	.11	.13
Test 2			
Random Group A	.20	.16	.04
Random Group B	.29	.19	.10
Random Group C	.31	.12	.19
Random Group D	.35	.14	.21
Test 3	.43	.26	.17
Test 4	.35	.23	.12

combination, had a different relation to conversion than they had when used only by themselves. This necessary prelude to the Multiple Classification Analysis, however, offers a unique chance to see how social factors relate to conversion among persons who attended Mass frequently before encountering the Pentecostal Movement, and among those who did not. A-I-D is essentially a sorting device. It ignores all theoretical arguments being put forward and simply divides a data set into ever smaller groups of respondents. It first sorts them into two groups on the basis of the single variable submitted to it which provides the greatest contrast in terms of the dependent variable. It continues this sorting procedure with each new group created, making smaller and smaller groupings of the cases by adding a second, third, etc. variable as divider. A-I-D continues this sorting indefinitely, until it either runs out of cases or finds that no new division makes a difference in terms of the independent variable. A-I-D then prints out a "tree" showing the sequence of groups it has created and the mean score on the dependent variable for each of the groups shown. Thus it lets you see at a glance the combinations of variables which are most conducive to the result in question and those which are least conducive (as well as groupings which are intermediate).

For the present study the A-I-D program used convert/non-convert as dependent variable. Not surprisingly, in view of what we already know, the first sort (for every sample group studied) was between persons who had attended mass frequently before encountering the Pentecostals, and those who had not. Then, totally ignoring all the arguments put forth in this paper, it sorted Mass-attenders into groups that had

varying proportions of converts in them, seeking to create all-convert groups if possible. It also sorted infrequent-Mass-attenders into smaller groups, finding those combinations which provided almost no converts and those which seemed more conducive to conversion. Because the A-I-D program's first sort was on the basis of Mass Attendance, it lets us see the effect of other influences among the already pious and among those who are not.

Figure 1 presents an A-I-D Tree obtained when the program was run on the sample consisting of all "Spirit-baptized" Catholics plus the control group of Catholic university students. Because this "intermediate" definition of 'convert' provides a sample about evenly divided between persons who had converted and those who had not, its use of mean scores for conversion ($\bar{y}$) gives an intuitively clear sense of what is happening. All 'converts' receive a y-score of 2.0, while all 'controls' receive a y-score of 1.0. Thus, for the sample as a whole (seen in Group one) not quite half of the 275 respondents are converts, giving a $\bar{y}$-score of 1.476. Of these, 176 persons attended Mass weekly or less often when they first encountered the Pentecostal group (Group 2). Less than twenty-eight percent became converts, so that the group has a $\bar{y}$-score of 1.278. In contract, Group 3 consists of the 99 persons who already were attending Mass daily or almost daily when they encountered the movement. About seventy-two percent of them converted, giving a $\bar{y}$-score of 1.828.

Each new grouping in the A-I-D Tree "holds constant" the cluster of circumstances summarized in the groups connected to its left by a line and shows what happens to conversion when an additional circumstance is added to that cluster. Thus the Tree divides the sample into

nineteen subgroups, with the group farthest to the right always being the combination of circumstances which made the most difference in conversion-outcome for this sample. The group least likely to convert (Group 6) falls at the top right of the tree, while the group most likely to convert (Group 9) falls at the bottom right of the tree.

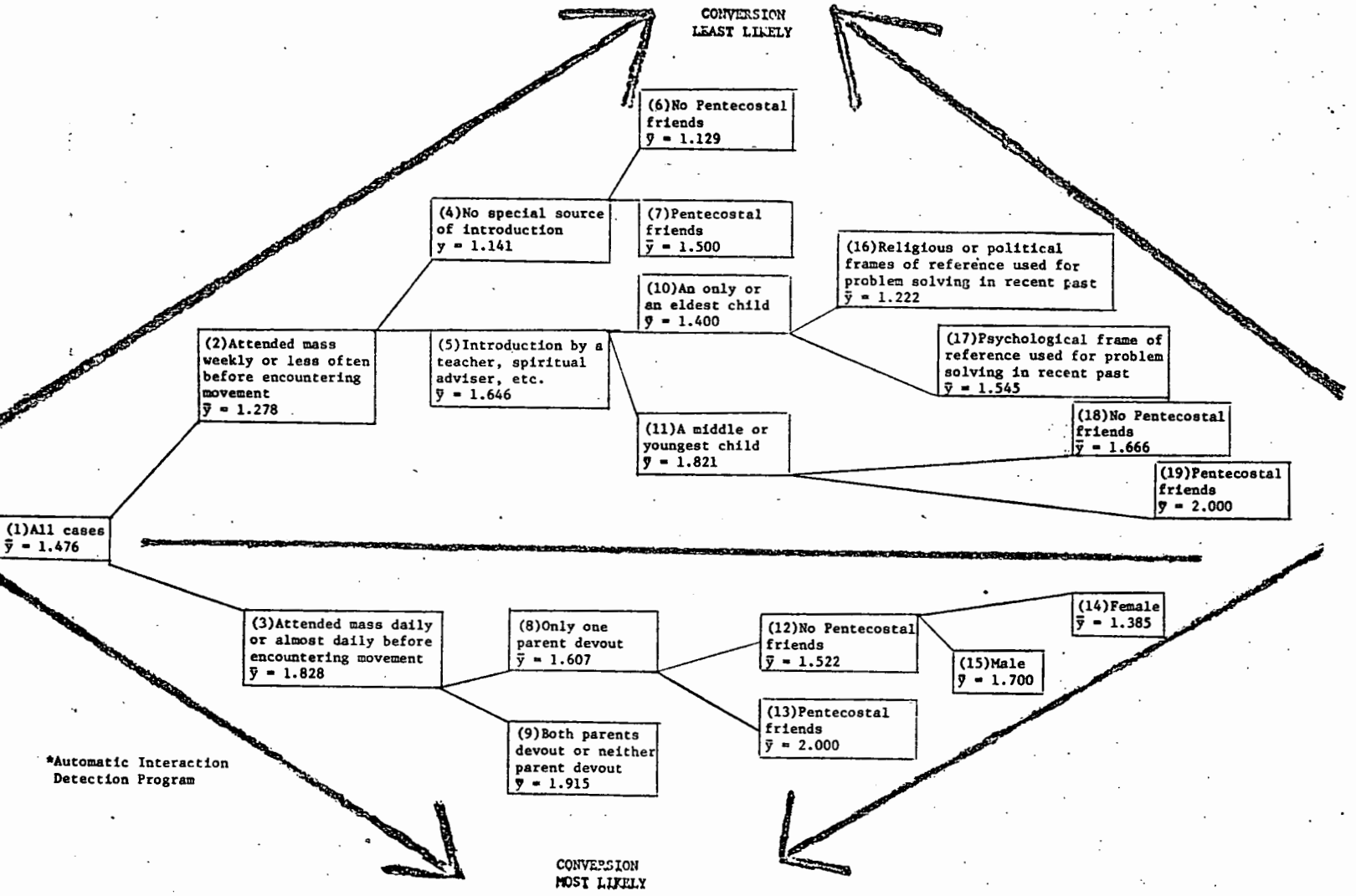
Figure 1 about here

Who proved most susceptible to conversion? The largest group (#9) consists of seventy-one persons who, when they first encountered the Pentecostal movement, already were attending Mass daily or almost daily and who came from homes where parents had a fairly consistent approach to religion. (I.e., both parents were quite devout or else neither parent was.) Sixty-five persons facing these circumstances converted, giving a $\bar{y}$-score for the group of 1.915.

Two other sets of circumstances also produced a high proportion of converts but occurred less often. These are represented in groups 13 and 19. Group 13 consists of only five persons, all of whom converted. They have in common daily Mass attendance before encountering the group; in contrast to the persons in Group 9, they did not come from homes where both parents had a consistent approach to religion. But all of these persons had close friends who were themselves Pentecostals. In contrast, not quite half of the persons in similar circumstances who lacked close Pentecostal friends (Group 12) converted.

Only one cluster of circumstances produced a high number of converts among persons not already religiously oriented when they encountered the group (Group 19). This group consists of thirteen

Figure 1: A.I.D.* "Tree" Showing Proportion of Respondents Who Became Pentecostals Under Varying Combinations of Conditions
(If no respondents in a group became Pentecostals, $\bar{y} = 1.0$; if all respondents in a group became Pentecostals, $\bar{y} = 2.0$.)



Number of Respondents + Standard Deviation Found Within Each Group

Group	N	S. Dev.	Group	N	S. Dev.	Group	N	S. Dev.
1	275	.499	8	28	.488	15	10	.458
2	176	.448	9	71	.278	16	9	.416
3	99	.377	10	20	.490	17	11	.498
4	128	.348	11	28	.383	18	15	.471
5	48	.478	12	23	.152	19	13	.000
6	124	.335	13	5	.000			
7	4	.500	14	13	.487			

persons who were at best "habitual" Mass attenders; however they were introduced to the movement by a teacher or spiritual adviser, were middle or younger children in their family of origin, and like Group 13, they had close friends who were Pentecostals. All of them became converts, giving a $\bar{y}$-score of 2.0. Where Pentecostal friends were lacking (Group 18) the $\bar{y}$-score falls to 1.666. Where other of the circumstances also are missing, the proportion of converts becomes smaller still.

The circumstances least conducive to conversion are represented by Group 6. This consists of 124 persons who attended Mass weekly or less often before encountering the movement, who were not introduced to it by a teacher or spiritual adviser, and who lacked close friends who were Pentecostals. Less than a quarter of this group became converts, giving a $\bar{y}$-score of 1.129. Other clusters of circumstances are associated with intermediate proportions of converts.

In brief, the Pentecostal movement's claims become more believable when reinforced by trusted persons in one's immediate environment. Given a consistent religious upbringing (whether devout or not) and a current "seeking" orientation, such reinforcement is not necessary. Only under fairly rigorous combinations of social upbringing and immediate social reinforcement are such social influences likely to produce serious encounter with the claims of religion among persons not already actively "seeking". One's upbringing and one's psychological state are not always irrelevant, but are of only minor help for predicting who will be a convert.

SUMMARY: This paper has used information gathered from converts and seekers involved in the Catholic Pentecostal movement and from a control group of Catholic university students from the same geographic area. It has found little support for social science arguments which explain susceptibility to religious conversion in terms of psychological stress, and only slightly stronger support for arguments seeing religious conversion as the culmination of earlier socialization experiences. Immediate social influences, from close friends, trusted leaders, and family members have greater impact. Where encapsulation occurs (in the sense of closing off contact with non-believers and entering into major interaction with a group of people accepting the believers' claims) conversion becomes almost automatic, but this occurred for only a small proportion of those who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Multiple Classification Analysis, a program akin to analysis of variance, showed that these varied social influences, when seen at work together, seem to have some impact on susceptibility to conversion, but do not have sufficient influence to account for the phenomenon. Current religious orientation makes far greater difference in susceptibility to conversion than anything else studied, but we were unable to account for difference in such orientation in terms of personal stress, socialization, or immediate social influence. An A-I-D analysis suggests that the social influences studied here make the greatest impact on those persons not already involved in an active religious quest, and that immediate personal influences are more important than one's psychological state or one's prior socialization. Overall, however, the social science

arguments examined here have not been terribly persuasive when applied to this group of converts to one branch of the Jesus Movement. It is time for more serious testing of such arguments on a wider range of religious converts. The results of this first test suggest that we may need to start afresh in our effort to understand what really is going on.

FOOTNOTES

1. I wish to thank a number of persons and institutional sources for help in the preparation of this study. A University of Michigan Rackham Research Grant, #FRG-1474, paid for the cost of gathering the data on which this study is based and for much of the cost of preparing that data for analysis. A National Institute of Mental Health Traineeship Program provided two research apprentices, Frank Solomon and Jeffrey Leiter, who helped with computer analysis of the data.

A number of questions included in the survey used for this study were suggested by Michael I. Harrison, John Lofland, and Guy E. Swanson. Additional suggestions came from two members of the movement, Phillip Thibideau and Sister Mary Tinsley. Michael Harrison supervised administration and coding of the questionnaire. Daniel Ayers helped solve a number of computer problems that arose during the study, and Mary Scheuer proved to be an invaluable assistant in the operation of various computer programs and the preparation of tables used in this paper. Robert Kahn, Emilie Schmeidler, Paul Siegel, and John Sonquist each made suggestions which made the organization of data more illuminating. I take full responsibility for any inadequacies of the study, but am grateful to these people for enriching it in the substantial ways that each has done.

2. See, for example, I.E. Farber, Harry F. Harlow, and L.J. West, "Brainwashing, Conditioning, and DDD," Sociometry, 20 (1957), 271-285; Robert J. Lifton, Thought Reform; Virginia Pasley, 21 Stayed; William Sargant, Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brainwashing; Edgar Schein, Coercive Persuasion; Hans Zetterberg, "Religious Conversion as a Change of Social Roles," Sociology and Social Research, 36, 3 (Jan.-Feb., 1952), 159-166.

3. See Robert Adams, "Mainlining Jesus: The New Trip," Society, 9 (February 1972), 50-56; Ronald Enroth, Edward E. Ericson, Jr., C. Peters, The Jesus People: Old Time Religion in the Age of Aquarius; Mary Harder, James T. Richardson, and Robert B. Simonds, "Jesus People," Psychology Today, 6, 7 (December 1972), 45ff; Lowell D. Streiker, The Jesus Trip: Advent of the Jesus Freaks.

4. See James Nolan, "Jesus Now: Hogwash and Holy Water," Ramparts Magazine, 10, 2 (August 1971), 20-26. A more dispassionate but similar explanation appears in John Lofland, "The Youth Ghetto," in Edward O. Laumann, Paul M. Siegel, and Robert W. Hodge, editors, The Logic of Social Hierarchies, 774.

5. Sigmund Freud, Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents.

6. R.H. Thouless, An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion. J.H. Leuba, The Psychology of Religious Mysticism.

7. J.C. Flowers, An Approach to the Psychology of Religion.

8. J.C. Flugel, Man, Morals, and Society; O. Fenichel, The Psycho-Analytic Theory of Neurosis.

9. W. Mayer-Gross, E. Slater and M. Roth, Clinical Psychiatry.

10. L. Festinger, H.W. Rieksa and S. Schachter, When Prophecy Fails.

11. Karl Marx, "Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right."

12. H. Richard Niehbuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism.

13. H. Cantril, The Psychology of Social Movements.

14. E.T. Clark, The Small Sects in America.

15. O. Pfister, Christianity and Fear.

16. Anton T. Boisen, Religion in Crisis and Custom.

17. Milton Yinger, "Religion and Social Change: Functions and Dysfunctions of Sects and Cults Among the Disprivileged," The Review of Religious Research, 4 (1963), 65-84.

18. Vittorio Lanternari, Religions of the Oppressed: A Study of Modern Messianic Cults.

19. Andrew Greeley, The Denominational Society.

20. The greater propensity of women to be involved in religion has been a constant theme of social scientists. In the U.S. the community studies literature frequently presents this theme (see for example, Robert S. Lynd and Helen Lynd, Middletown in Transition, 297; or, Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, Small Town in Mass Society, 236). Michael Argyle summarizes quantitative studies of sex-differences in religious response in Religious Behavior, 71-79.

21. Edwin D. Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion, 294, presented one of the earliest empirical arguments of this kind.

22. See Stanley Schachter, "Ordinal Position, Anxiety and Affiliation," in The Psychology of Affiliation, especially pages 62-89; William D. Altus, "Birth Order and its Sequelae," Science, 151 (January 1966), 44-49; Brian Sutton-Smith, John M. Roberts and B.G. Rosenberg, "Sibling Associations and Role Involvement," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 10 (January, 1967) 36; or the excellent summary article by Kenneth Kammeyer, "Birth Order as a Research Variable," Social Forces, 46 (1967), 71-80.

23. Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor, A Sociologist's Inquiry, 270.

24. Ruth Wallace, "Some Social Determinants of Change of Religious Affiliation," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of California, Berkeley, 1968.

25. Michael I. Harrison, "The Organization of Commitment in the Catholic Pentecostal Movement," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1971.

26. John Lofland, Doomsday Cult, A Study of Conversion, Proselytization, and Maintenance of Faith.

27. John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," American Sociological Review, XXX (December 1965),874.

28. Consider, for example, John Lofland's argument about the conditions which lead to conversion to the religious cult he studied. It was relatively easy to find the "unique group" to be studied, the converts, for they were in contact with one another. It would be a far more difficult research task to locate people who could compose an appropriate control group to test his argument: they would need to possess quite specific characteristics which are not distributed generally in the population and they would be unlikely to be in contact with one another.

29. Controls were chosen from the Newman Center file of students who had indicated a "Catholic-preference" when enrolling for study at the state university. Names were filed alphabetically, in drawers. Using a table of random numbers, a random starting point was selected in each drawer; every fiftieth name thereafter was selected for inclusion in the control sample. In contrast, an attempt was made to secure the name of every active Catholic Pentecostal in the area.

30. It follows that any descriptions of characteristics of Catholic Pentecostals in this paper is time-based, reflecting the characteristics present among persons in contact with the movement in three cities during the spring of 1969. Since that time the membership and organizational character of these groups has continued to evolve.

31. For a description of this program, see Frank Andrews, James Morgan, and John Sonquist, Multiple Classification Analysis.

32. John Lofland has given perhaps the fullest exposition of this argument. See his books, Doomsday Cult and Deviance and Identity, and the article "Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," op. cit.

33. "A Pastoral Report on the Catholic Pentecostal Community in Ann Arbor," April, 1969, (mimeographed), 3.

34. For a description of this program see John A. Sonquist and James N. Morgan, The Detection of Interaction Effects.

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