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Following the
Charisma –
Understanding
Charisma Through
Followers

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Aims:

- to consider the extent to which “charisma” explains leadership
- to examine factors surrounding “followership”

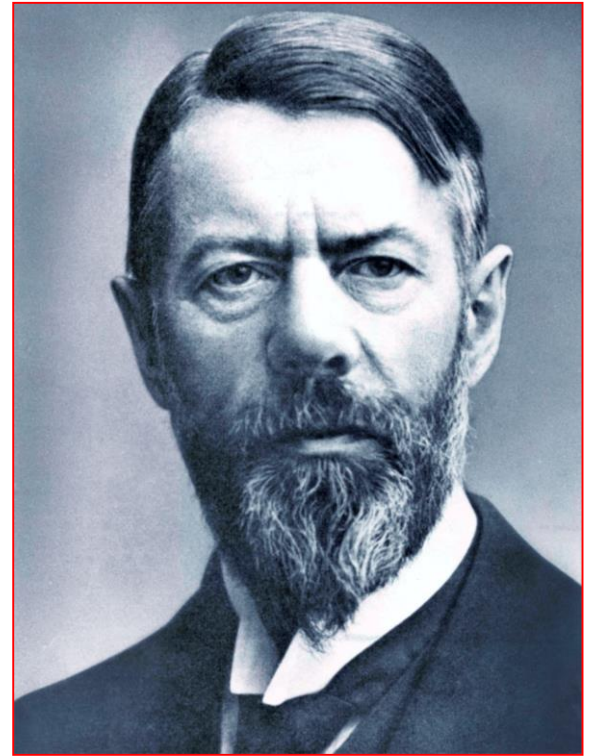


The term “charisma” will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a “leader”.

(Weber 1978: 241.)



It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma. . . . This basis lies rather in the conception that it is the duty of those subject to charismatic authority to recognize its genuineness and to act accordingly.



(Weber 1976: 242)

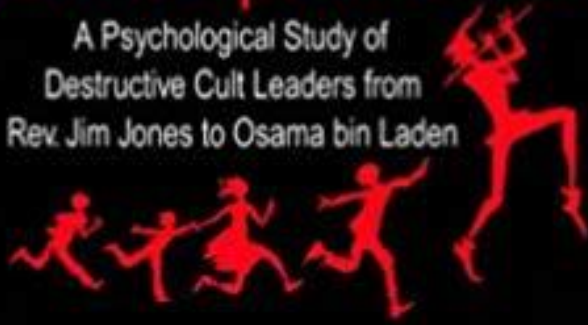
It appears that there have been legions of self-appointed messiahs, gurus, or pied pipers (I use the terms interchangeably) throughout time.



Margaret Thaler Singer,
Cults in Our Midst: 29.

Malignant Pied Pipers of Our Time

A Psychological Study of
Destructive Cult Leaders from
Rev. Jim Jones to Osama bin Laden



By Peter A. Olsson, M.D.

JONESTOWN Rev. Jim Jones

WACO David Koresh

MANSON 'FAMILY' Charlie Manson

TOKYO SUBWAY ATTACK Shoko Asahara

HEAVEN'S GATE Marshall Applewhite

SUICIDAL SOLAR TEMPLE Luc Jouret and Joe DiMambro

**AL QAEDA'S ULTIMATE
MALIGNANT PIED PIPER** Osama bin Laden

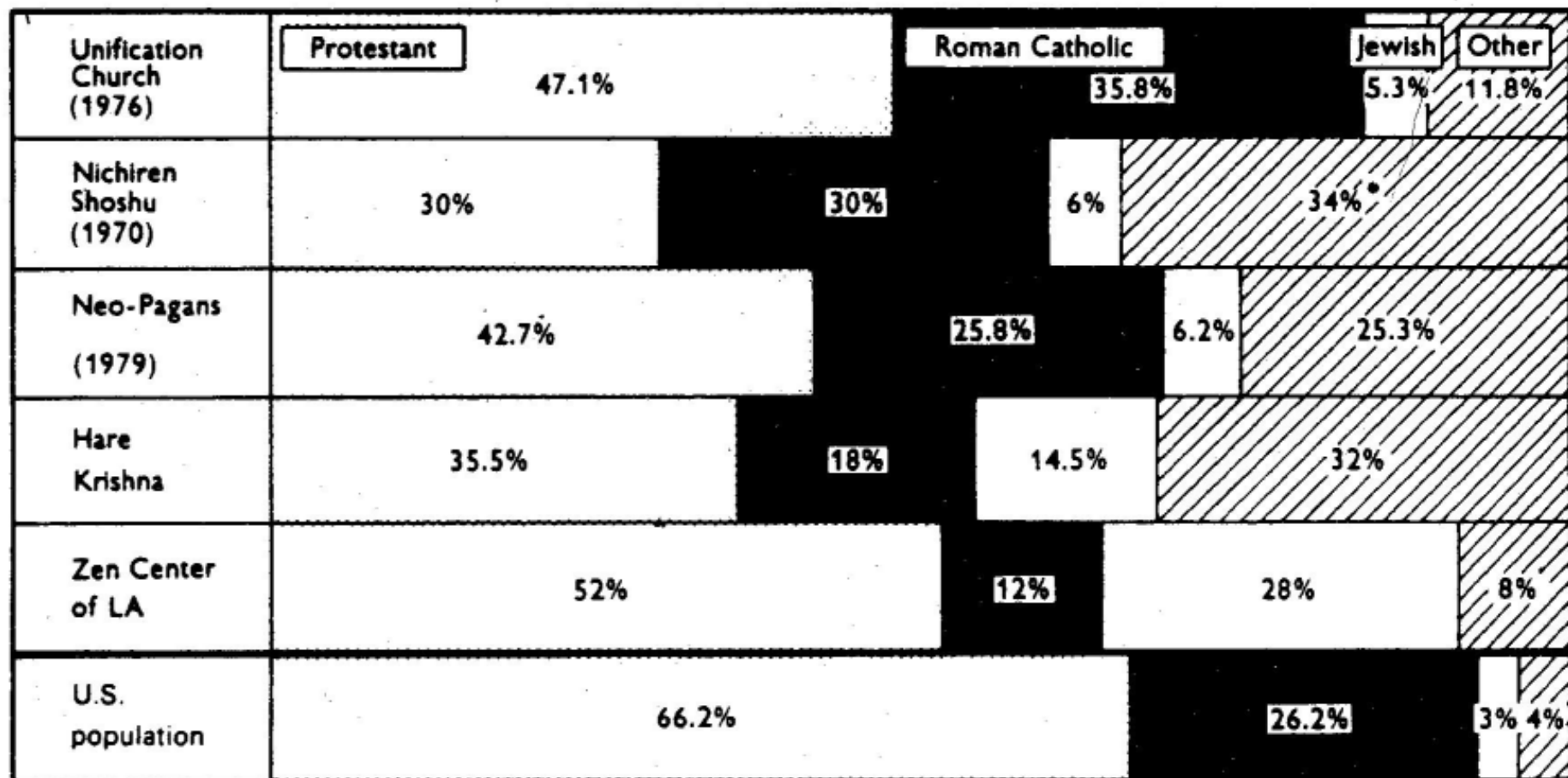
Applewhite's
following:

= 41 (200 max)

Non-followers:

= 272,899,961 (US)

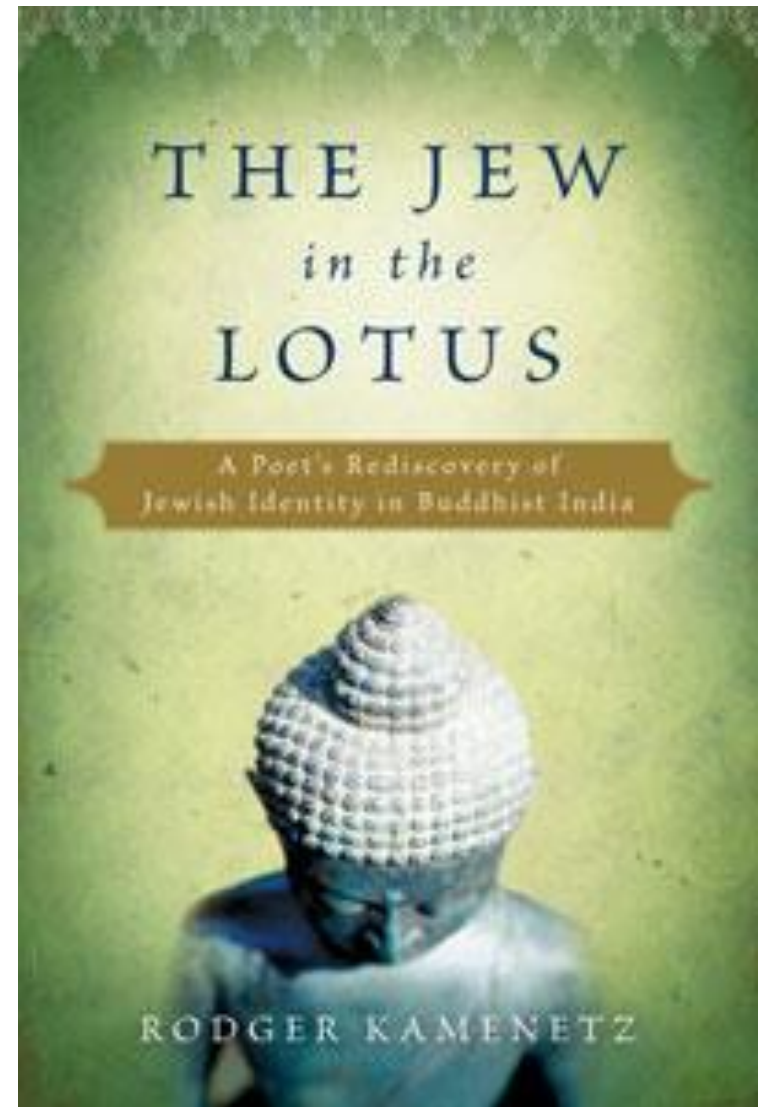
= 5,878,999,961
(worldwide)



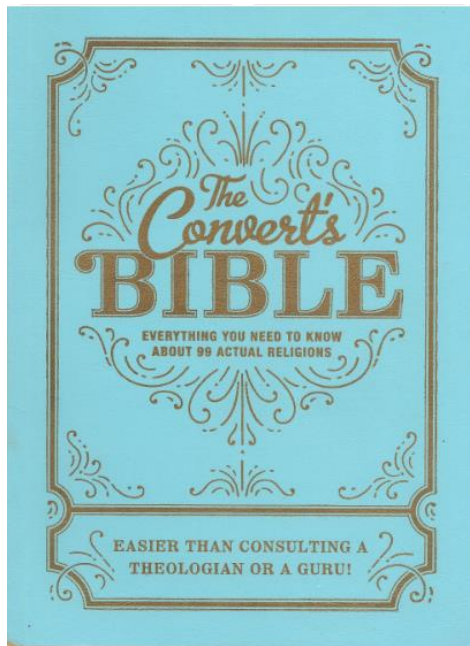
* Includes large percentage of Buddhists. (West Coast Buddhists were original Nichiren Shoshu target population)

Melton; in (ed.) Hinnells 1997: 611

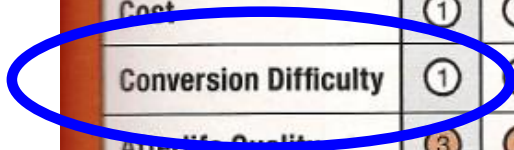
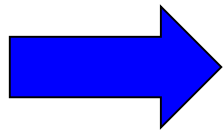
Rodger Kamenetz
(1994)
The Jew in the Lotus



“structural availability”



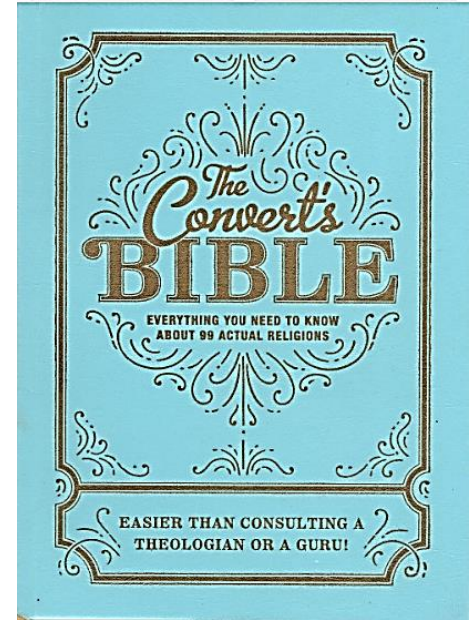
	African Independent Churches	Agnosticism	Amish	Anthroposophy	Atheism	Australian Aboriginal	Baha'i	Brahma Kumaris	Candomble	Cao Dai	Catholicism	Cherokee	Christian Science	Church of Satan	Ch...
Sex Regulations	3	1	4	2	1	2	4	5	2	2	5	2	4	1	1
Dietary Restrictions	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	5	1	3	2	2	2	1	1
Time Commitment	3	1	5	3	1	4	3	3	4	4	2	3	3	1	3
Cost	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	2
Conversion Difficulty	1	1	4	2	1	5	2	1	4	1	3	5	2	2	1
Afterlife Quality	3	3	3	5	1	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	1	3
Traditional	3	5	5	2	5	5	3	2	3	2	5	5	3	1	1
Rate of Growth	5	2	2	3	2	1	5	4	4	4	3	1	3	2	2
Holidays	4	1	2	2	1	4	3	1	5	4	4	4	1	2	3
Aesthetics	2	1	5	4	1	5	2	3	5	5	5	5	1	3	2



Easy

①

Atheism, Course in Miracles,
Osho, Scientology, TM, Unitarians,
Universal Life Church, Urantia,
Jews for Jesus



④

Difficult

Amish, Jains, Judaism, Rastafari, Vodou

⑤

Very difficult

Australian Aboriginal, Cherokee, Druze,
John Frum, Juche, Zulu

Barriers to conversion:

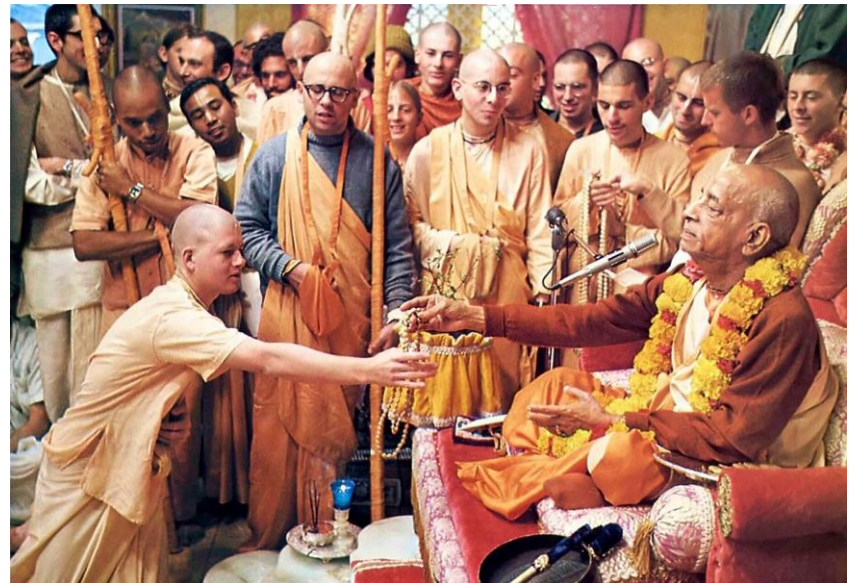
- non-acceptance
- inability / disinclination to satisfy required conditions, e.g.
 - ethnicity
 - language
 - caste
 - colour
 - dress code
 - finance
 - age
- difficult to satisfy entry requirements



“first generation converts”

degrees of commitment

- home membership
- negotiated obligations



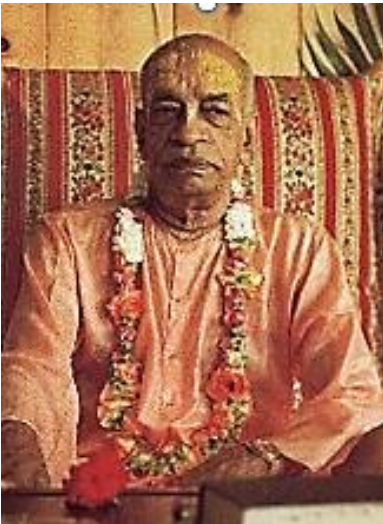
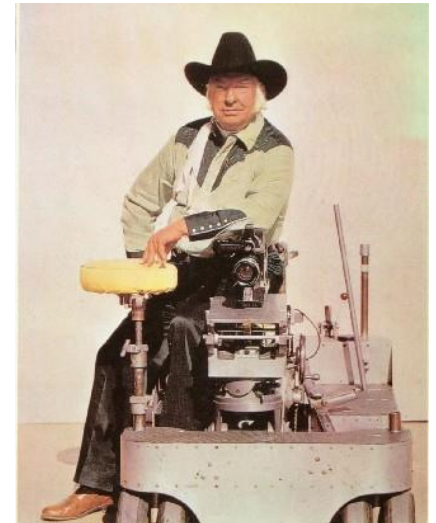


Charles Taze Russell
— the ‘dynamic leader’



Joseph Smith
— the ‘prophet’

L. Ron Hubbard
— the ‘magus’



A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada
— the ‘guru’

Methods of acquisition —



- hagiography
- the “lieutenant”
- charismatisation
- curiosity

Conclusions:

- Charisma theory has focused attention unduly on the leader.
- Conversion depends on factors surrounding the follower.
- The structures of the convert's life and of the religious community must be compatible.
- There are methods by which the leader can enhance his/her status.

The End

