Born Again: Experimental Evidence on the Economic and Social Impacts of Religious Renewal

Francesco Loiacono[i] Andreas Madestam[ii] Jakob Svensson[iii]

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Abstract

Pentecostal-Evangelical Christianity is one of the fastest-growing religious movements in the world, with more than 600 million adherents and much of its expansion concentrated in the Global South. This paper provides experimental evidence on the economic and social effects of religious renewal. Partnering with a Pentecostal-Evangelical church in Uganda, we randomize the church's main outreach activity to encourage new membership. Those induced to join become more religiously engaged. On average, they also expand their business networks and increase their earnings, consistent with the congregation functioning as an economic platform. The platform logic suggests larger gains for those entering with thinner networks. In line with this implication, women, whose economic networks tend to be thinner, experience substantial gains in business connections, business activity, employment, and earnings. Men experience no comparable economic gains; joining instead strengthens their beliefs in work as worship and in faith as a route to material success. The same institution thus functions as an economic platform for women, while primarily reshaping beliefs and non-market behavior for men.

[i]European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. E-mail: loiaconf@ebrd.com

[ii]Stockholm University, Department of Economics. E-mail: andreas.madestam@su.se

[iii]Stockholm University, Institute for International Economic Studies. E-mail: jakob.svensson@iies.su.se

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1 Introduction

Pentecostal-Evangelical Christianity has grown over the past half-century from a current within Protestantism into one of the world's largest religious movements. More than 600 million people identify with it, most of them in the Global South. In sub-Saharan Africa its adherents account for 35 to 60 percent of all Christians (World Christian Database, 2024). Membership is demanding: joining typically follows a personal conversion, and members devote long hours to gatherings and prayer and contribute tithes and offerings. How religion shapes economic behavior has interested economists and social scientists since at least Smith (1776) and Weber (1930), and remains central to a large modern literature (Iannaccone, 1998; Iyer, 2016; Becker et al., 2024). Yet there is little causal evidence on how religious renewal reshapes individuals' economic and social trajectories.

A central challenge in studying these effects is that religious renewal is endogenous: individuals who join high-commitment churches may differ systematically from those who do not. We overcome this challenge by embedding random assignment in the outreach activities of a Pentecostal-Evangelical church in Uganda.[1] The church recruits new members through pastoral visits and invitations to its services and other activities. In two mid-sized towns, the church selected neighborhoods for an outreach drive and set the number of households it intended to target. Within these neighborhoods, we listed and surveyed roughly 3,600 households, twice the church's outreach target, and randomly assigned half to the outreach group. Over the following four weeks, the church directed its recruitment efforts toward these households, combining pastoral visits with follow-up contact and additional social activities intended to encourage participation.

Joining produces religious renewal. Twenty months after the outreach, the share attending services more than once a week at least doubles. Intrinsic religiosity, the view of faith as an end in itself, rises by 0.45 standard deviations, while extrinsic religiosity, which captures faith as a means to social or material ends, does not change. Joining also has substantial economic effects. Monthly earnings rise by 26 percent, alongside increases in business ownership, employment, and hours worked, with much of the increase in employment and hours worked occurring through business creation.

[1] Section 4 describes the safeguards separating the research from the church's religious activity, together with the ethics approvals obtained in Uganda and Sweden.

What produces these gains? The commitments described above are what scholars of religion call strictness, and the workhorse framework treats a strict church as a club (Iannaccone, 1992, 1994; Berman, 2000). Costly demands screen out the uncommitted and raise the time members spend together, allowing a congregation of committed, frequently interacting members to sustain collective goods. Consistent with this characterization, we show that joining substantially increases adherence to strict religious norms and practices. Two economic implications pull in opposite directions. Repeated interaction can turn the congregation into a platform through which members build trust and exchange information about customers, suppliers, credit, and work (Auriol et al., 2020; Seabright, 2024; Auriol et al., 2026). Yet the club's claims on time and income can crowd out secular activity (Berman, 2000; Campante and Yanagizawa-Drott, 2015). Beyond the club mechanism, strictness could also transform members psychologically, instilling discipline and relieving distress, or shift norms in ways that harden group boundaries and limit openness to new ideas and trading partners; sermons across sub-Saharan Africa reinforce such boundaries against holders of traditional beliefs, with real economic costs for those excluded (Le Rossignol et al., 2026). Where the teaching stresses traditional gender roles, joining could pull women out of market work. Our average results favor the platform mechanism. A business-network index rises by 0.30 standard deviations, and joiners become 34 percent more likely to discuss business opportunities with fellow congregants, while indices of self-control, psychological distress, tolerance, and moral attitudes are unchanged. The data also suggest that giving increases. The data also suggest that giving rises with earnings. A simple bounding exercise places post-joining tithes and offerings at 10 to 18 percent of earnings, in line with the 10 percent tithe the movement prescribes. Even at the upper bound, more than half of the earnings gain stays with the member.

The platform model also implies that the value of access to a new network should be greater for individuals with more limited existing networks. Auriol et al. (2026) incorporate this feature into a model of churches as multi-sided platforms, in which demand for faith-based networking is highest among those with more limited access to secular economic networks. In sub-Saharan Africa, these constraints are strongly gendered. Women's business networks tend to be thinner and more reliant on kin than men's, and referral networks can exclude women even when they are equally productive (Fafchamps, 2004; Beaman et al., 2018). Long-standing norms and institutions further restrict women's market activity (Alesina et al., 2013; Field et al., 2010; Duflo, 2012; Jayachandran, 2015). In line with this view, interventions that expand women's access to peer networks have increased their business activity (Field et al., 2016; Bandiera et al.,

2020), while Christian institutions have historically altered women's economic opportunities in Africa through mission education (Nunn, 2014). If the church functions as an economic platform, joining could therefore generate larger gains for women.

Women and men are equally likely to join, at 34 percent in each group, and increase their attendance and intrinsic religiosity to similar degrees. Their subsequent responses differ sharply. Women who join experience a 41 percent increase in earnings, a 16 percentage point increase in employment, a 25 percent increase in weekly hours, and an 18 percent increase in consumption. Their business-network index rises by half a standard deviation. More suggestively, the sources of support they draw on to run businesses shift away from family and toward church members and other non-family contacts. By contrast, estimated effects for men on earnings, employment, business ownership, and network outcomes are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero, and we can reject equality of the male and female effects on both the economic and network indices. Joining nevertheless changes men's beliefs. Work as worship and the belief that faith can lead to material success, two ideas central to the movement's economic theology, rise by roughly half a standard deviation among men, as does the belief that God controls life outcomes. Their patience and prosociality also increase, while alcohol use declines. None of these beliefs or behaviors changes for women.

We interpret the male pattern as a change in religious identity without corresponding economic gains. In a setting where men are expected to provide, beliefs that cast effort as worship and material success as a reward to faith may reinforce a provider identity when market outcomes are weak, consistent with models in which identity provides a source of status distinct from market outcomes (Cole et al., 1992; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000). The same congregation may therefore operate through different margins for men and women: expanding access to economic networks for women while strengthening religious identity for men. Which margin matters depends on the constraints that are binding prior to joining.

Our findings contribute to the economics of religion, where individual-level causal evidence remains relatively limited compared with a rich macro-historical literature.[2] That literature shows that religious doctrine and institutions have shaped human capital and long-run development (Becker and Woessmann, 2009; Squicciarini, 2020; Valencia Caicedo, 2019), that religious assets and authority can shape political power (Rubin, 2017; Bazzi et al., 2020), and

[2]See, among others, Barro and McCleary (2003); McCleary and Barro (2006); Becker and Woessmann (2009); Cantoni (2015); Becker et al. (2016).

that religious and secular providers compete strategically for adherents (Bazzi et al., 2025). Conversion in colonial Africa also responded to economic incentives (Nunn, 2010), while the expansion of Christianity continues to reshape social relations on the continent (Le Rossignol et al., 2026). Becker et al. (2024) provide a recent synthesis of this literature. Our paper is most closely related to Bryan et al. (2021), who provide experimental evidence on the effects of an evangelical values and theology curriculum among poor, predominantly Christian households in the Philippines and find increases in religiosity and income six months after the intervention. We study a distinct margin of religious renewal by experimentally shifting entry into an active religious congregation through the church's own outreach. We find substantial effects of joining on members' social networks, economic outcomes, beliefs, and behavior in the longer run (20 months after the outreach).

The results also speak to work on how organizations create economically valuable networks. Cai and Szeidl (2018) show that randomly assigned business meetings can improve firm performance in China. We find that participation in a religious congregation can similarly expand business networks, with the largest economic effects among members whose pre-existing networks are more limited. This provides empirical support for models in which religious organizations can function as platforms that facilitate economically valuable interactions (Seabright, 2024; Auriol et al., 2026).

Finally, the gender results connect religious participation to work on female entrepreneurship in low-income countries. A recurring lesson of this literature is that women's economic opportunities depend not only on capital and skills, but also on the social networks through which information, referrals, and business opportunities flow (Duflo, 2012; Jayachandran, 2015). Peer-based interventions have increased women's business activity (Field et al., 2016; Bandiera et al., 2020), while referral networks can disadvantage women even when they are equally productive (Beaman et al., 2018). We show that joining a religious congregation can relax constraints on women's access to economic networks. At the same time, the institution leaves men's economic outcomes largely unchanged while substantially reshaping their beliefs, highlighting that religious participation can operate through very different channels across groups. These differential responses raise broader questions about how religious participation interacts with existing economic constraints and, more generally, about the role of religion in economic development.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the Pentecostal-Evangelical movement and the Ugandan setting. Section 3 presents the conceptual framework that organizes

the analysis. Section 4 describes the experimental design and validity checks. Section 5 reports the results, and Section 6 concludes.

2 Background and Context

2.1 The Pentecostal-Evangelical Movement

Pentecostal and Evangelical Christianity together form one of the largest and fastest-growing segments of global Christianity. According to the World Christian Database (2024) and the World Religion Database (2024), people identifying as Pentecostal, Evangelical, or both account for between 25 and 41 percent of Christians worldwide in 2020. The lower bound assumes complete overlap between the two groups, while the upper bound assumes none. The true share therefore lies between these bounds. Even the lower bound corresponds to more than 600 million adherents. Figure 1 documents the expansion of the movement over time, while Figure 2 shows how the population shares of the major world religions have evolved over the same period. Growth has been concentrated in the Global South, above all in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

Both traditions emerged as renewal movements within Protestantism, Evangelicalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Pentecostalism in the early twentieth, and both place personal conversion and active religious engagement at the center of Christian life. Today their congregations operate alongside Catholic and mainline Protestant denominations such as the Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. The traditions share core Christian doctrine but differ in organization and devotional practice. Religious identity commonly centers on a conscious conversion experience, described as being "born again." Pentecostal congregations in particular emphasize direct experience of the Holy Spirit through speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophecy. Worship is participatory and expressive, with a strong emphasis on music, collective prayer, and personal testimony. Participation is also typically intensive. Beyond Sunday services, congregations organize Bible studies, prayer meetings, revival gatherings, and small-group activities throughout the week, and members are encouraged to devote substantial time to prayer.

The two traditions are historically and institutionally distinct, but many congregations, particularly in the Global South, combine Evangelical doctrine with Pentecostal worship. Throughout

the paper we refer to this overlapping and often blended set of traditions as the Pentecostal-Evangelical movement.

2.2 Context: Uganda

In Uganda, Pentecostal-Evangelical Christianity is widespread and operates alongside several other major religious traditions. Christianity arrived in the late nineteenth century, and today roughly 85 percent of Ugandans identify as Christian, with Muslims accounting for most of the remainder and smaller shares holding traditional beliefs. Catholic, mainline Protestant, Pentecostal-Evangelical, and Muslim communities operate side by side in a competitive religious environment. Pentecostal-Evangelical churches are an established presence: 35 percent of our baseline respondents identify with the movement. We therefore study the movement as part of the religious mainstream rather than as a marginal or newly arrived group.

The religious market also varies considerably in organizational scale. In the study towns, large Catholic parishes and mosques coexist with numerous smaller Protestant congregations. The size distribution among Pentecostal-Evangelical churches is particularly dispersed. Many congregations are very small and operate from pastors' homes or simple rented premises, while a few have developed into large, established churches. This pattern is not unique to our study sites. Research on Pentecostalism in Uganda documents both the rapid proliferation of small congregations and the simultaneous expansion of large churches, including megachurches (Gusman, 2009, 2016). Large Pentecostal churches have also become a prominent organizational form elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2015). Our partner church belongs to this latter group. It is large and well-established with the organizational capacity to conduct outreach at scale. Studying outreach by such a church therefore captures an important margin of the movement's expansion.

The study takes place in two mid-sized towns in the Central and Eastern regions, each with a population between 150,000 and 250,000 (Figure 3). In both towns, the outreach targeted neighborhoods into which the partner church was seeking to expand. In one town, the partner church had been established relatively recently, while in the other it had operated for considerably longer. Both towns are urban and peri-urban environments characterized by informal employment, small-scale enterprise, and high religious participation.

Table 1 reports baseline characteristics. Respondents are on average 32 years old with nine years of schooling; 63 percent are women and 61 percent are married. Employment is high,

at 78 percent, and 42 percent operate a business. Average monthly earnings are 153 USD at purchasing power parity. Religious life is nearly universal: 99 percent believe in God, roughly 80 percent identify as Christian, and 19 percent as Muslim.

The sample contains a higher share of women than the urban population as a whole. This largely reflects the household-based recruitment procedure. Both baseline survey visits and the Church visits took place primarily in the afternoons, when women were more likely to be at home, in part because their businesses were more often home-based. Women were also more likely than men to agree to participate. To assess representativeness, we compare male and female respondents separately with nationally representative data from the Uganda National Panel Survey and Afrobarometer. Within gender, our respondents closely resemble their urban counterparts in age, education, employment, and selected attitudes.

3 Theory of Change

Joining the Pentecostal-Evangelical movement typically entails frequent participation in services and related activities, repeated interaction with other members, and adherence to shared norms about everyday behavior. In the sociology of religion, such patterns of costly participation and behavioral demands are referred to as religious strictness.[3] Strictness taxes members' time through multiple weekly meetings and long services, and their income through tithes and offerings. It can also constrain conduct, including alcohol use and sexual behavior. Within Christianity, these demands tend to be more pronounced in Pentecostal-Evangelical churches than in the mainline denominations with which they compete. In our control group, Pentecostal-Evangelical respondents attend services more than once a week at substantially higher rates than Anglicans and Catholics. An index of religious strictness that combines participation in religious activities beyond the main weekly service with adherence to behavioral norms is also significantly higher among Pentecostal-Evangelical respondents than among other Christians.

We use strictness to organize four channels through which participation may influence economic outcomes: club goods and networks, work-related beliefs, psychological transformation, and moral and social attitudes. We develop the first channel formally because a simple model helps organize the empirical analysis; the remaining channels are described verbally. Each captures a class of mechanisms rather than a single hypothesis.

[3]The concept goes back to Kelley (1972) and was formalized by Iannaccone (1994).

3.1 The Congregation as Club and Platform

A central insight in the economics of religion is that churches can be understood as clubs providing collective goods to their members (Iannaccone, 1992): mutual support in times of need, information about economic opportunities, referrals to customers and suppliers, and informal credit. Because the benefits are shared while the costs of participation are borne individually, congregations face a free-rider problem. Strictness can mitigate this problem by screening out less committed members and sustaining participation among those who remain. This mechanism should matter most where markets for insurance, credit, and information work poorly.[4]

A simple formulation makes the logic precise. Following Iannaccone (1992), individual i with taste for religion θ_i divides a time endowment t between secular activity and religious effort r_i, so that secular consumption is $C = c(t - r_i)$. The congregation produces a religious good $R(r_i, \bar{r})$ that rises with own effort and with the average participation of other members, $\bar{r}$, and membership carries a compliance cost κ that captures the behavioral and financial demands of strictness. The individual joins if

$$U_i^{\text{in}} = u\big(c(t - r_i)\big) + \theta_i \, v\big(R(r_i, \bar{r})\big) - \kappa \geq u\big(c(t)\big) = U_i^{\text{out}}. \tag{1}$$

Two mechanisms follow. First, strictness generates selection. The cost κ is borne by all members, while the value placed on the religious good increases with θ_i. Higher compliance costs therefore disproportionately discourage individuals with a low valuation of religious participation, leaving a more committed membership with higher average religious effort $\bar{r}$. Second, participation itself can be self-reinforcing. When own and others' religious effort are complementary, a higher $\bar{r}$ increases the return to individual participation, while the norms, monitoring, and peer enforcement of a committed congregation can further shape behavior (Berman, 2000). The formulation also highlights that the effects on utility and economic outcomes need not have the same sign. Religious effort takes time from secular activity and κ claims resources, so earnings and consumption may fall even when joining raises utility.

The club model treats the congregation's output as religious. The platform view adds an economic output. Repeated interaction among committed members can build trust and transmit

[4] Chen (2010) shows that religious participation rises when religious groups provide mutual support during economic crises, and Auriol et al. (2020) show that religious giving falls when formal insurance becomes available, consistent with churches supplying collective goods sustained by participation and contributions. Seabright (2024) discusses religious organizations as providers of collective goods that compete for members and resources.

information. Auriol et al. (2026) formalize this idea in a model in which faith-based organizations operate as multi-sided platforms and religious participation helps screen potential economic partners. The congregation can therefore function as a networking technology as well as a place of worship (see also Seabright, 2024). We capture this extension in reduced form by letting membership also generate economic value $W(\bar{r}, n_i)$, increasing in $\bar{r}$ and decreasing in the quality of the member's outside economic network n_i:

$$U_i^{\text{in}} = u\big(c(t - r_i)\big) + \theta_i \, v\big(R(r_i, \bar{r})\big) + W(\bar{r}, n_i) - \kappa. \tag{2}$$

The first argument of W captures the value of interacting with committed, frequently participating members. The second captures diminishing returns to network access: an additional network is less valuable when existing economic networks are already more developed.

3.2 Work-Related Beliefs

A second channel operates through beliefs about work, effort, and economic success. Weber (1930) argued that Protestant theology fostered a "spirit of capitalism," emphasizing effort, thrift, and the idea that worldly success can signal divine favor. Contemporary Pentecostal-Evangelical teaching stresses related themes, including work as a religious calling and effort and success as morally meaningful. Strictness reinforces this teaching through repetition: frequent participation exposes members to the doctrine far more often than a weekly service would. (McCleary and Barro, 2006). Under this channel, joining may change work-related beliefs and attitudes, including work ethic, patience, and future orientation, which may in turn affect economic behavior.

3.3 Psychological Transformation

A third channel operates through psychological change. The born-again experience emphasizes personal renewal and a break with past behavior (Koenig et al., 2012). A new religious identity can provide structure and motivation that support self-control and habit change (McCullough and Willoughby, 2009). Strictness supports the transformation: explicit rules and regular routines reduce the demands on individual willpower and make new habits easier to sustain. Under this channel, joining may improve self-regulation, reduce behaviors that undermine economic functioning such as heavy alcohol use, and lower psychological distress by providing mean-

ing, community, and perceived divine support. These changes may in turn affect employment, effort, and earnings.

3.4 Moral and Social Attitudes

Joining may also change moral norms and social orientation. Pentecostal-Evangelical doctrine and practice often emphasize traditional views of family and gender and may strengthen boundaries between members and non-members (Iannaccone, 1992; Norris and Inglehart, 2004). Strictness sharpens these boundaries: visible and costly compliance marks members off from non-members. Across sub-Saharan Africa, sermons can reinforce such boundaries against holders of traditional beliefs, with economic costs for those excluded (Le Rossignol et al., 2026). Deference to religious authority and pressure to conform can also reduce openness to dissent and novelty (Guiso et al., 2003; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). Under this channel, joining may affect patterns of social interaction both inside and outside the household. The economic implications are ambiguous. More traditional gender norms could reduce women's market participation, while stronger in-group orientation could increase cooperation within the congregation but limit exchange with outsiders. Some of the main effects of this channel may also lie outside the economic domain.

3.5 From Framework to Analysis

We use the framework to organize the empirical analysis. We first examine whether joining deepens religious engagement and adherence to strict religious norms and practices. We then study economic activity together with the two sides of the club mechanism: changes in economic networks and the time and financial costs associated with participation. The remaining channels motivate our analysis of work-related beliefs, self-control and psychological well-being, alcohol use, moral attitudes, and tolerance. Measures from each of these domains were collected at endline.

The platform extension also yields a simple comparative static. Because $W(\bar{r}, n_i)$ decreases in n_i, economic gains generated through network access should be larger for individuals with more limited outside economic networks. This implication motivates our focus on gender in Section 5.6, given the substantial gender differences in access to economic networks documented in Uganda and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. We also examine heterogeneity by income and baseline denomination.

4 Research Design

The research design introduces random variation into an outreach campaign chosen and implemented by a Pentecostal-Evangelical church in Uganda, without altering the neighborhoods, planned scale, or religious and social content selected by the church. The objective is to generate exogenous variation in joining while preserving the way the church recruits new members in practice. This section describes the choice of partner and intervention, the randomization and estimation strategy, the main threats to identification, and the ethical considerations raised by the design.

4.1 Partner Church and Intervention

The choice of partner was guided by the aim of studying an organizational form that represents an important margin of the Pentecostal-Evangelical movement's expansion. We sought a church that combined Evangelical doctrine with Pentecostal worship, was actively engaged in evangelism and neighborhood outreach, and was sufficiently large to conduct outreach at scale. The church also needed to accept random variation in whom it contacted within an outreach campaign it had itself chosen to undertake. On these criteria, we identified a large Pentecostal-Evangelical denomination with congregations across Uganda. For confidentiality, and in line with our agreement with the partner, we refer to the denomination throughout as *The Church*.

The intervention introduces random variation into one of The Church's outreach activities. The outreach begins with household visits by pastors, who introduce The Church and invite individuals to attend Sunday services. During the outreach period, these invitations are supplemented by social activities following the Sunday services and by follow-up contacts encouraging attendance. The research design therefore varies exposure to an outreach campaign that The Church uses to attract new members, rather than altering religious doctrine, the content of services, or the form of religious participation offered to those who attend.

Importantly, The Church selected the neighborhoods in which the outreach would take place and determined the scale of the campaign before the research team became involved in its implementation. The research team then introduced random assignment within these pre-selected outreach areas. The design involved three stages: listing and baseline surveying of households followed by random assignment; implementation of the outreach by The Church; and an endline survey approximately 20 months later.

4.1.1 Listing, Baseline Survey, and Randomization

The Church identified target neighborhoods surrounding its congregations in two mid-sized towns in Central and Eastern Uganda and set an outreach goal of approximately 1,700 households. About one month before the outreach, the research team listed households in these neighborhoods, all located within three kilometers of the respective congregation, using a random-walk sampling procedure. Each enumerator was assigned a geo-referenced starting point and a direction, surveyed the household closest to the starting point, and then listed and surveyed every sixth household along the assigned direction until the target was reached, replacing unavailable households with the nearest neighbor.

In all, some 3,600 households were listed, roughly twice The Church's outreach target (Figure 4). Of these, 3,524 completed the baseline survey and entered the randomization. Households were then randomly assigned to encouragement (1,763 households) or control (1,761 households), with randomization stratified by town, distance to The Church, and a baseline socioeconomic status index.

4.1.2 Data

We interviewed respondents at baseline and endline. The baseline survey was administered during the listing, shortly before randomization in June 2022. The endline survey took place approximately 20 months after the intervention, in February 2024. Of the 3,524 randomized respondents, 3,280 were re-interviewed.

Both surveys cover demographics, religious affiliation and practice, economic activity, networks, beliefs, and attitudes. The endline additionally includes incentivized lab-in-the-field tasks. Most outcomes are therefore measured in both waves. Unless stated otherwise, multi-item measures are standardized and combined into indices, and each table lists the underlying components. Religious outcomes include attendance at any place of worship and at The Church, as well as intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity measured using the standard scales of Allport and Ross (1967) and Gorsuch and McPherson (1989). We also measure beliefs emphasized in Pentecostal-Evangelical teaching. Work-as-worship and prosperity beliefs follow Neubert et al. (2014), while the belief that God controls life outcomes adapts the powerful-others dimension of Levenson (1981), following Bryan et al. (2021).

Economic outcomes follow standard household-survey modules covering earnings, employment, business ownership, hours worked, consumption, and assets. Network outcomes record

whether respondents discuss business or job opportunities with others and with members of their place of worship, and the number of people with whom they have such discussions. These questions were designed for this study.

Psychological and behavioral measures include the K6 psychological distress scale (Kessler et al., 2002), self-control items from Tangney et al. (2004) as adapted by Bryan et al. (2021), and a short optimism scale (Nießen et al., 2022). Patience is measured using the incentivized staircase task from the Preference Survey Module (Falk et al., 2023). Pro-sociality combines incentivized play in an investment game (Berg et al., 1995), which provides measures of trust and reciprocity, with dictator-game giving (Forsythe et al., 1994) and survey measures of trust and altruism. The survey also records alcohol use.

Moral orientation is measured using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al., 2011), with the underlying foundations aggregated into communal and universalist indices following Enke (2020). Tolerance and openness are measured using attitude items toward outgroups and new ideas.

4.1.3 Implementation

Pastors from The Church visited households assigned to the encouragement group; control households were not visited as part of the outreach campaign. Members of the local research team guided pastors to the assigned households but were not present during the visits. The visits typically lasted 10 to 15 minutes. Pastors introduced The Church and its activities, provided information about service times and locations, invited the individual to attend the following Sunday service, and typically ended by inviting the individual to join in prayer.

During the following four weeks, The Church organized additional social activities after the Sunday services, including music, games, raffles, and refreshments. The Church also followed up with households assigned to encouragement, primarily through SMS reminders, with smaller numbers receiving phone calls or additional in-person contact. Appendix Figure A1 summarizes these follow-up contacts. All religious messages, services, and social activities were determined and delivered by The Church.

4.2 Estimation Strategy

Our benchmark intention-to-treat (ITT) specification regresses the endline outcome Y_i on the randomized assignment indicator $Z_i \in \{0, 1\}$, controlling for the baseline value of the outcome, $Y_{i,0}$, and fixed effects $\eta_{s(i)}$ for the randomization strata:

$$Y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Z_i + \delta Y_{i,0} + \eta_{s(i)} + \varepsilon_i. \tag{3}$$

The inclusion of $Y_{i,0}$ makes equation (3) an ANCOVA specification, which improves precision relative to both the post-only regression and differencing (McKenzie, 2012); for outcomes collected only at endline, the term is omitted. The coefficient α_1 captures the effect of assignment to the outreach group. Because assignment was randomized, α_1 identifies the causal effect of the encouragement provided there are no spillovers and attrition is unrelated to assignment. We report robust standard errors throughout.

Our primary estimand is the effect of joining The Church. We define joining, $D_i \in \{0, 1\}$, as attending The Church at least a couple of Sundays per month, measured one to three months after the outreach. Using assignment to the outreach group as an instrument, we estimate the local average treatment effect (LATE) by two-stage least squares:

$$D_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 Z_i + \gamma_2 Y_{i,0} + \eta_{s(i)} + u_i, \tag{4}$$

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \hat{D}_i + \beta_2 Y_{i,0} + \eta_{s(i)} + \nu_i. \tag{5}$$

Here, $\hat{D}_i$ is the predicted value from the first stage, and the same baseline control enters both stages, so the two equations carry a symmetric set of exogenous regressors. Identification of the LATE additionally requires an exclusion restriction, that assignment to the outreach affects subsequent outcomes only through its effect on joining The Church, and monotonicity, that assignment weakly increases the probability of joining for all individuals. Throughout the results, we report ITT estimates first and then the corresponding IV estimates of the effects of joining for those induced to join by the outreach.

4.3 Validity Checks

Random assignment establishes comparability between the encouragement and control groups at baseline. Three additional concerns are relevant for identification: spillovers, differential attrition, and, for the IV estimates, the exclusion restriction.

Spillovers. Spillovers could arise if treated individuals pass information about The Church to control households or if controls attend because of exposure to treated neighbors. Such spillovers would tend to reduce the difference in church participation between the two experimental groups. Several features of the data suggest that they are limited. Only 6.5 percent of control respondents attended The Church regularly following the outreach, and approximately half of these individuals had already attended The Church at baseline.

We examine spillovers more directly in two ways. First, among control respondents, we test whether the share of treated neighbors predicts joining The Church (Appendix Figure A2). For each radius from 10 to 250 meters, we regress an indicator for joining The Church on the share of neighboring households assigned to encouragement, including the randomization controls. The estimated coefficients are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero across distances. Second, we examine whether exposure through pre-existing religious networks matters by relating joining among controls to the share of treated individuals in the respondent's baseline house of worship (Appendix Table A1). Neither the continuous measure nor an indicator for having any treated co-congregant predicts joining.

Attrition. Of the 3,524 randomized households, 3,280 completed the endline survey. Attrition was 6.5 percent in the encouragement group and 7.4 percent in the control group, a difference of 0.9 percentage points ($p = 0.284$). Appendix Table A4 also tests for selective attrition using baseline observables. We cannot reject the null that attrition is unrelated to treatment assignment or that its relationship with baseline characteristics differs across experimental groups.

Exclusion restriction. Interpretation of the IV estimates as the causal effect of joining requires that the outreach affect endline outcomes only through induced participation in The Church, and not through the encouragement itself. In principle, the pastoral visit and its follow-up reminders, or the social activities offered after services during the outreach period, could have such direct effects. The design limits the scope for them. The initial interaction was brief, typically 10 to 15 minutes of information about the church, follow-up contact consisted mainly of short SMS reminders to attend (Appendix Figure A1), and the additional social activities were concentrated in the four-week outreach period. The timing of the first stage works in the same direction: joining is measured one to two months after the outreach, so the endogenous variable captures participation extending beyond the encouragement window rather than attendance during the push itself. Outcomes are then measured approximately 20 months later, a long horizon for a brief informational contact to affect earnings or networks other than through

sustained participation. These features make persistent direct effects of the encouragement less likely, although the exclusion restriction cannot be tested directly.

4.4 Interpretation

Religious belief is already widespread in the study population: 99 percent of respondents report believing in God or Allah at baseline. For most respondents, joining The Church therefore represents an intensification or reorientation of existing religious engagement rather than a move from nonbelief to religious belief. Nineteen percent of respondents are Muslim, and for them the reorientation means crossing a religious boundary rather than moving within one. Compliers include Muslims roughly in proportion to their sample share (Figure 5), and we find no systematic differences in effects by baseline religion. We interpret the intervention primarily as generating religious renewal through entry into a Pentecostal-Evangelical congregation, whatever the respondent's starting point. The distinction between renewal and conversion from nonbelief is also relevant for external validity. Much of the movement's expansion has occurred in settings where religious belief is widespread and Christianity is already well established.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical assessment of the experiment depends importantly on the distinction between activities chosen by The Church and those introduced by the research design. Before the research team became involved in implementing the outreach, The Church had selected the neighborhoods in which it planned to operate and determined the approximate number of households it intended to contact. It also determined the religious message, the invitation to Sunday services, and the social activities associated with the outreach. The study did not increase the total scale of the planned outreach or alter its religious or social content. Instead, within the areas selected by The Church, the research team listed a larger pool of households and randomized which households would receive the outreach that The Church had already decided to undertake.

The roles of The Church and the research team remained separate throughout the study. The Church organized and carried out the outreach and determined what pastors communicated during visits and services. The research team determined the random assignment, guided pastors to the assigned households, and independently designed and financed the surveys and other research activities. The Church did not initiate the research, and the research team received no financial compensation from The Church. No member of the local research team, including

enumerators, was affiliated with The Church. The research team conducted the data collection and analysis independently and retains full responsibility for the paper.

Pastors were compensated by the research project only for the additional time required to implement the randomized protocol, in particular for restricting visits to households assigned to encouragement and for assisting the research team in identifying treated individuals who attended services during the initial outreach period.

The study was reviewed and approved by the relevant research ethics committee in Uganda and by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority and was registered in the AEA RCT Registry.

5 Results

5.1 First Stage: Joining The Church

Figure 6 shows the distribution of attendance at The Church, measured one to two months after the outreach. The encouragement shifts individuals from never attending toward regular participation. In the control group, 91 percent never attend and 6.5 percent attend at least a couple of Sundays per month; in the encouragement group, the corresponding shares are 57 and 34 percent. Table 2 reports the regression estimates. Our endogenous treatment variable in the IV analysis is an indicator for attending The Church at least a couple of Sundays per month. The encouragement raises this measure from 6.5 to 34 percent, providing a large and precisely estimated first stage.

5.2 Who Joins? Complier Characteristics

The LATE applies to those whose participation was affected by the outreach. To characterize this group, we recover complier means for baseline covariates following Abadie (2003) and Marbach and Hangartner (2020). Figure 5 shows that compliers closely resemble the full sample in gender, age, and education, as well as in employment, earnings, business ownership, and prior religious engagement. The estimates therefore apply to a relatively broad group of potential joiners rather than to a narrowly selected subgroup.

5.3 Religious Intensification

Table 3 examines religious engagement at endline, roughly 20 months after the outreach, measured at any place of worship rather than at The Church alone. Panel A reports ITT effects and Panel B the implied effects of joining. Attendance rises across the distribution, with particularly large effects at the intensive margin. Among joiners, the share attending services more than once a week rises by 41 percentage points, more than double the control mean.

Table 4 turns from religious practice to motivation, using the standard item batteries of Allport and Ross (1967) and Gorsuch and McPherson (1989), which we standardize and combine into two indices. Intrinsic religiosity captures faith as an end in itself ("I have often had a strong sense of God's presence"), while extrinsic religiosity captures religion as a means to other ends ("I go to religious services because it helps me to make friends"). Joining raises intrinsic religiosity by 0.45 standard deviations, while leaving extrinsic religiosity unchanged. The pattern indicates internalized commitment rather than instrumental affiliation.

Joining also increases adherence to the norms and practices associated with religious strictness. Appendix Table A7 reports results for a summary measure of strictness constructed from religious practices and behavioral requirements associated with high-commitment participation. Joining produces a large and statistically significant increase in this measure. Taken together, the results show that joining entails a broader intensification of religious commitment.

5.4 Economic Outcomes

Both surveys collected detailed information on labor market participation, business ownership, hours worked, monthly earnings, and household consumption, which we summarize in an economic activity index following Anderson (2008). Table 5 reports the estimates. The encouragement raises the index by 0.09 standard deviations; the implied effect of joining is 0.33 standard deviations, significant at the 1 percent level. Looking across the individual outcomes, monthly earnings rise by 62 USD at purchasing power parity, 26 percent of the control mean, employment by 9 percentage points, business ownership by 13 percentage points, approximately one quarter of the control mean, and hours worked by about 6 hours per week. The asset index rises by 0.20 standard deviations, significant at the 10 percent level, while consumption is positive but imprecisely estimated.

The employment response is concentrated in self-employment rather than wage work. Business ownership rises substantially, while wage employment does not change. A back-of-the-

envelope calculation supports this interpretation. Multiplying the 13 percentage point increase in business ownership by control-group mean earnings gives approximately 31 USD per month, about half of the estimated earnings increase. The additional six hours of weekly labor supply are also consistent with increased time devoted to business activity.

5.5 Mechanisms

We next examine the channels that may account for the economic effects. The club-and-platform channel operates through economic networks, while the time and financial demands of participation work in the opposite direction. Other potential channels operate through work-related beliefs, psychological change, and moral and social attitudes. We examine these channels in turn.

5.5.1 Network Expansion

We measure economic networks with survey questions on whether respondents discuss business opportunities with others, whether they do so with members of their place of worship, and how many people these discussions involve; parallel questions cover job opportunities. These measures capture contacts through which economically relevant information and assistance may flow.

Table 6 reports the estimates for business networks. Joining raises the business-network index by 0.30 standard deviations. The increase is concentrated in congregation-based ties. Joiners become 16 percentage points more likely to discuss business opportunities with members of their place of worship, an increase of about one third relative to the control mean, and the number of business contacts among fellow congregants rises by 41 percent. The corresponding estimates for business contacts more generally are positive but less precisely estimated. Job networks, by contrast, show no statistically significant change (Appendix Table A2), consistent with the employment effects operating primarily through business creation rather than wage employment.

5.5.2 Financial Costs

Religious participation also carries financial costs through tithes and offerings. We do not observe giving to The Church directly, but the joint effects on earnings and consumption allow

us to bound the increase in giving. Joining raises monthly earnings by about 62 USD and consumption by about 31 USD. The difference of approximately 30 USD provides an upper bound on incremental giving if none of the additional resources are saved or invested.

Figure 7 translates this bound into a post-joining giving rate under different assumptions about giving before joining. If compliers gave nothing before joining, the upper bound implies post-joining giving of approximately 10 percent of earnings. If they previously gave 5 percent, the corresponding bound is about 14 percent; if they previously gave 10 percent, it is about 18 percent. These are upper bounds because any increase in saving or investment reduces the amount attributable to giving. The estimates are therefore consistent with a substantial increase in giving, while also showing that increased giving does not absorb the full increase in economic resources: consumption rises alongside earnings.

5.5.3 Beliefs, Psychology, and Attitudes

The remaining channels concern work-related beliefs, self-regulation and psychological well-being, and moral and social attitudes. We measure work-as-worship, prosperity, and divine-control beliefs; patience, self-control, and optimism; incentivized pro-sociality; alcohol use; psychological distress (Kessler et al., 2002); and measures of openness and tolerance. Appendix Table A8 reports the estimates for the full sample.

The pooled estimates provide little evidence that these channels account for the average economic gains. The estimated effects on work-related beliefs are positive but far from statistically significant. We also find no clear changes in self-control or psychological well-being and no systematic shift in moral or social attitudes. As we show below, however, these average estimates conceal sharply different responses among women and men.

5.6 Gender and the Church as platform

The platform model implies that access to a new economic network should be more valuable for individuals whose existing networks are more limited. Gender provides a natural way to examine this implication. As discussed in Section 3, women's business networks tend to be thinner and more reliant on kin than men's, while referral networks can disadvantage women

even when they are equally productive. If the congregation functions as an economic platform, joining could therefore generate larger economic gains for women.[5]

Before turning to economic outcomes, we establish that the outreach affects religious participation similarly for women and men. The first stage is essentially identical by gender: regular attendance among those assigned to the outreach group is 34 percent for both women and men, and we cannot reject equality of the effects on joining ($p = 0.91$). Within each gender, compliers also closely resemble the corresponding baseline sample. The effects on subsequent religious engagement are similar as well: we cannot reject equality of the effects on endline attendance, intrinsic religiosity, or extrinsic religiosity (Appendix Table A6). Thus, the differences in economic outcomes documented below do not reflect differences in take-up or in the degree of religious intensification.

Table 7 reports the economic effects of joining separately by gender. For women, the economic activity index rises by 0.50 standard deviations. Earnings increase by 41 percent relative to the female control mean, employment by 16 percentage points, and weekly hours worked by 11 hours. Business ownership and consumption also increase, and so does the asset index, though these effects are estimated less precisely (p-values between 0.06 and 0.09). As in the full sample, the increase in employment is concentrated in business activity. For men, we find no statistically significant effects on earnings, employment, business ownership, hours worked, consumption, or the economic activity index. We can reject equality of the female and male effects on the economic activity index ($p = 0.047$).

Table 8 reports the corresponding results for business networks. Joining raises the business-network index for women by 0.50 standard deviations. Women become more likely to discuss business opportunities and report more business contacts, including substantial increases in contacts through their place of worship. For men, none of the business-network measures increases significantly, and we can reject equality of the effects on the business-network index across genders ($p = 0.042$). Job-opportunity networks show weaker changes for women and no significant effects for men (Appendix Table A3).

Additional, more suggestive evidence helps characterize the changes in women's economic networks. Among women who operate businesses, the sources of business assistance shift

[5]As additional checks, we examine whether the effects vary systematically with baseline income or religious denomination. We find no clear differences along either dimension in religious engagement, business networks, or earnings; see Appendix Table A7.

away from family and toward non-family contacts, including church members, friends, neighbors, and former employers (Appendix Figure A3). By contrast, women's increased ability to raise emergency funds operates through their own savings and earnings rather than greater borrowing from social contacts, and we find no corresponding increase in job offers. These patterns suggest that the expansion of women's networks is most closely associated with business support beyond existing family ties rather than with credit or wage-job referrals.

Men participate and intensify their religious engagement to a similar degree as women, yet experience no detectable economic or network gains. This raises the question of whether joining affects them along other dimensions. Figure 8 reports effects on beliefs and non-market behaviors. Among men, joining substantially increases three beliefs closely related to the movement's economic theology: work as worship, the belief that faith can lead to material success, and the belief that God controls life outcomes. Each rises by roughly half a standard deviation. Joining also increases patience and pro-sociality and reduces alcohol use among men. We find no evidence that joining shifts men toward more conservative social attitudes; if anything, openness and tolerance increase. For women, by contrast, the estimates for these beliefs and behaviors are generally close to zero, with some evidence of lower psychological distress.

Taken together, the gender results strengthen the platform interpretation of the average economic gains. Women, whose economic networks are more limited, experience both a substantial expansion of business networks and large gains in economic activity. Men experience neither, despite similar take-up and religious intensification, but show substantial changes in religious beliefs and non-market behavior. The same religious institution therefore appears to operate through different channels for women and men, with the economic returns to network access depending on the constraints individuals face prior to joining.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper provides experimental evidence on the economic and social consequences of joining a religious movement. By embedding randomized variation in an outreach activity of a Pentecostal-Evangelical church in Uganda, we identify who joins when encouraged and estimate the effects of joining for those whose participation is affected by the outreach.

Joining produces sustained religious intensification. Twenty months after the outreach, those induced to join attend services more frequently, report substantially stronger intrinsic religiosity, and adhere more strongly to the norms and practices associated with religious strictness,

while extrinsic motives for participation remain unchanged. On average, joining also expands congregation-based business networks and raises earnings, employment, and hours worked, with much of the increase in economic activity occurring through business creation rather than wage employment. A bounding exercise suggests that giving increases to levels broadly consistent with tithing, while consumption rises alongside earnings. By contrast, we find little evidence in the full sample of changes in work-related beliefs, self-regulation, psychological well-being, or social attitudes large enough to account for the economic gains. Taken together, the average results support the view of the congregation as an economic platform through which repeated interaction creates economically valuable relationships and information.

The platform interpretation also has a clear implication for where these gains should be largest: among individuals with more limited economic networks outside the congregation. The gender results support this implication. Women and men join at the same rate and intensify their religious engagement to a similar degree, yet the economic and network gains accrue almost entirely to women, whose outside economic networks are more limited. Men respond along a different margin. Joining substantially strengthens beliefs in work as worship, the link between faith and material success, and divine control over life outcomes, alongside increases in patience and pro-sociality and reductions in alcohol use, but without corresponding gains in networks or economic outcomes.

What might account for these sharply different responses? One possibility is that women and men enter the congregation facing different constraints. For women, access to economically valuable networks appears to be a more binding constraint, and participation in the congregation expands those networks. For men, the setting is strongly patriarchal, with clear expectations that they provide for their households. Beliefs that connect effort and material success to faith may therefore reinforce a provider identity when economic outcomes are weak. The same religious institution may thus generate economic returns for one group while primarily reshaping beliefs and non-market behavior for another.

These findings have implications both for the economics of religion and for our understanding of the relationship between religion and economic development. They show that the same religious institution can simultaneously provide economically valuable network capital and reshape beliefs and non-market behavior, with sharply different effects across otherwise similarly engaged members. At the same time, the results caution against interpreting the expansion of Pentecostal-Evangelical Christianity solely through its average economic effects. The substantial economic gains for women coexist with little detectable economic gain among male par-

ticipants, while their beliefs about work, material success, and divine control change markedly. Whether such changes ultimately reinforce economic effort, shape how men respond when economic opportunities are limited, or have consequences in other domains remains an open question. More broadly, these gender differences raise new questions about how religious participation interacts with pre-existing economic constraints, and how those interactions shape the broader relationship between religious renewal and economic development.

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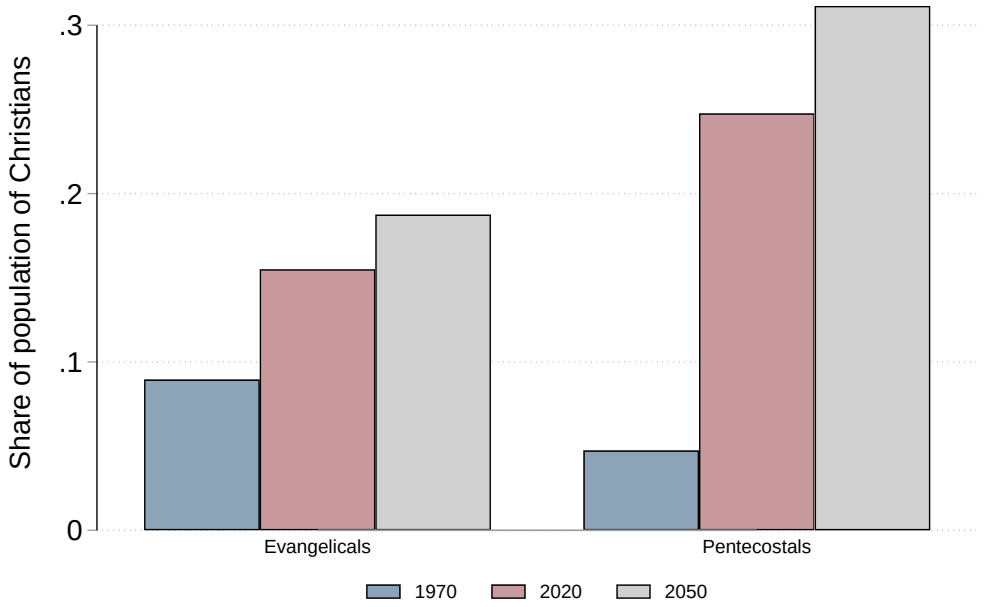
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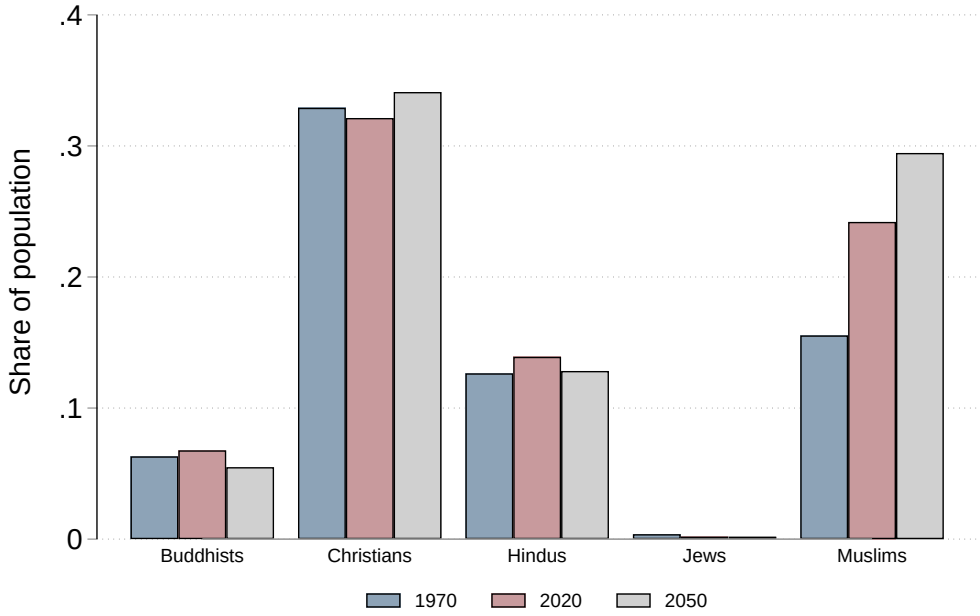
Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Global Growth of Evangelicals and Pentecostals



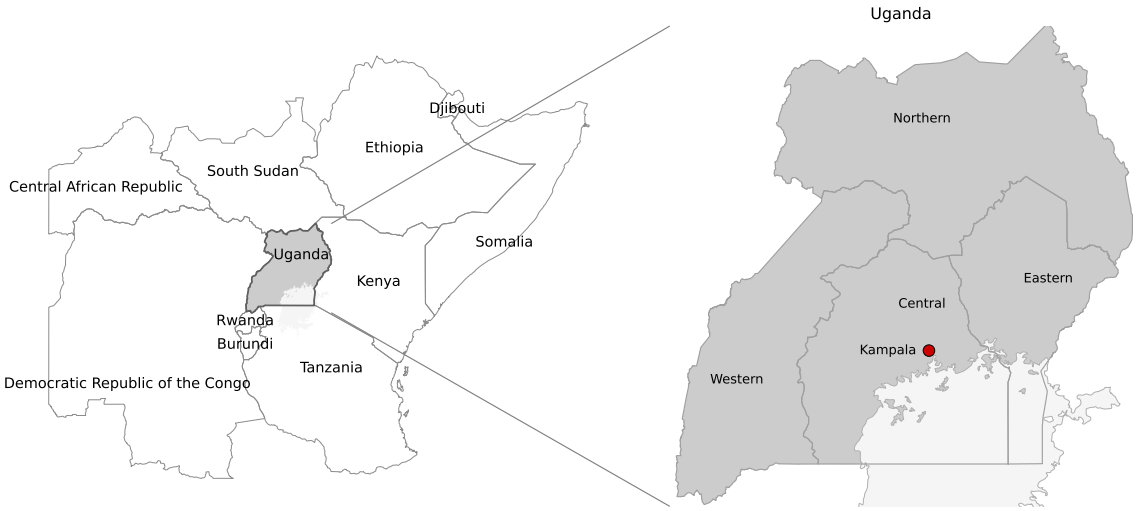
Notes: This figure shows Evangelicals and Pentecostals as a share of all Christians worldwide in 1970, 2020, and projected for 2050. Globally, the Pentecostal-Evangelical movement has grown from approximately 5 percent of Christians in 1970 to roughly one-quarter by 2020, with continued expansion projected through 2050. Source: World Christian Database.

Figure 2: World Religions: Share of Global Population



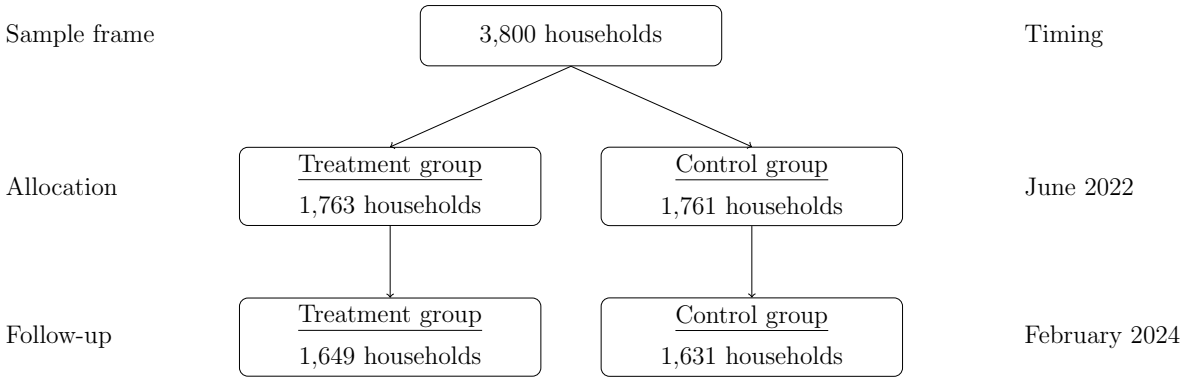
Notes: This figure shows the share of world population by major religion in 1970, 2020, and projected for 2050. Source: World Religion Database. Estimates for 2020: Christians 2.5 billion, Muslims 1.9 billion, Hindus 1.1 billion, Buddhists 0.5 billion, Jews 15 million.

Figure 3: Study Location: Uganda



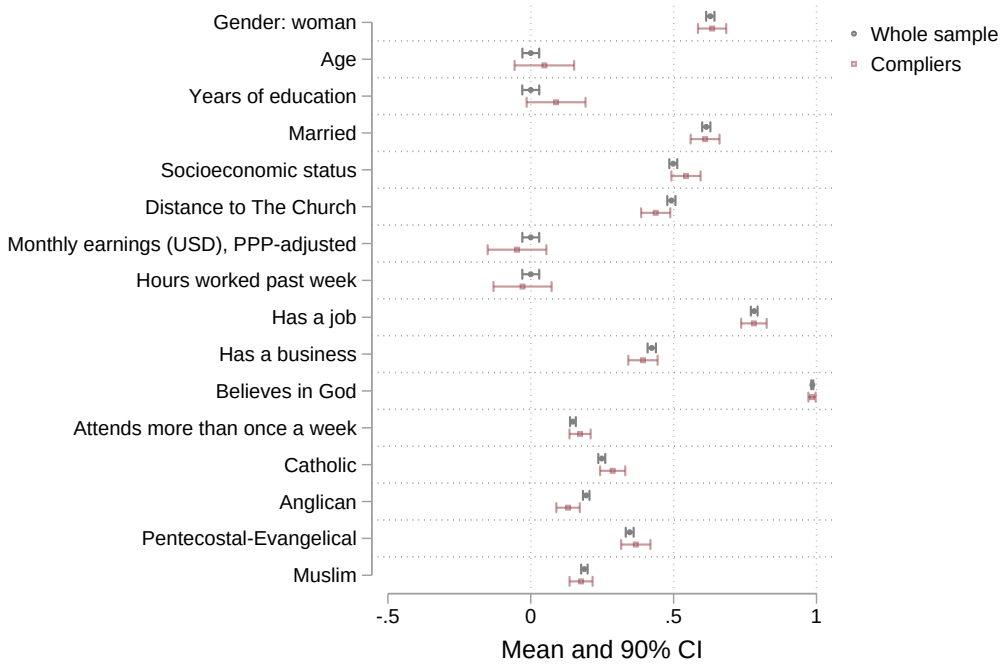
Notes: This figure shows Uganda's location and administrative regions. Left panel shows Uganda's location in East Africa. Right panel shows Uganda's four main administrative regions (Northern, Eastern, Central, Western) with the capital Kampala marked. Our study takes place in two mid-sized towns in the Central and Eastern regions.

Figure 4: Experimental Design



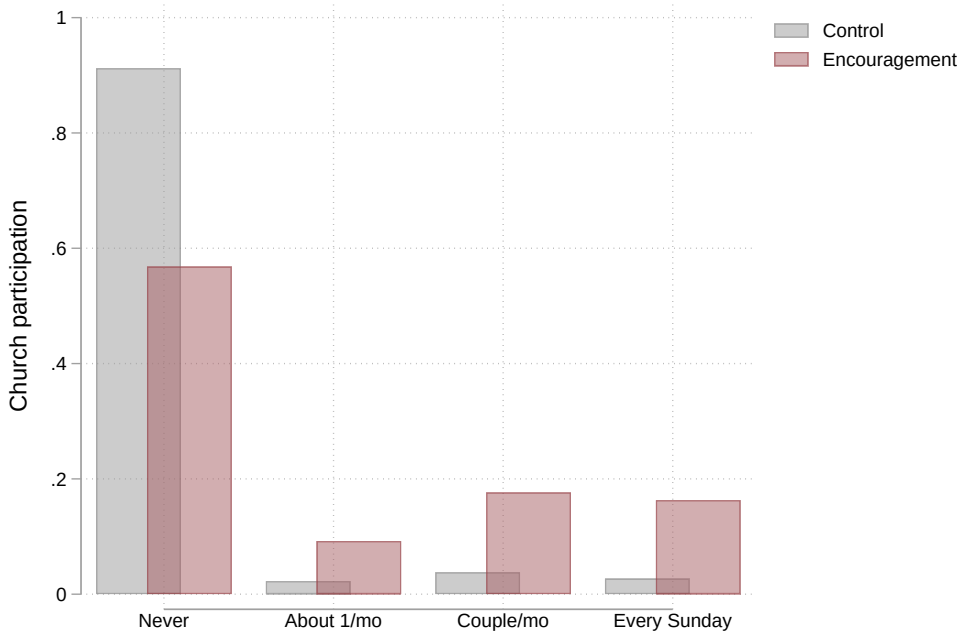
Notes: This figure shows the experimental design and sample flow. We listed approximately 3,600 households within a 3-kilometer radius of partner churches in two mid-sized towns. After baseline surveys in June 2022, households were randomly assigned to treatment (receiving pastoral home visits) or control conditions. The endline survey was conducted in February 2024, approximately 20 months after the intervention.

Figure 5: Characteristics of Compliers vs. Whole Sample



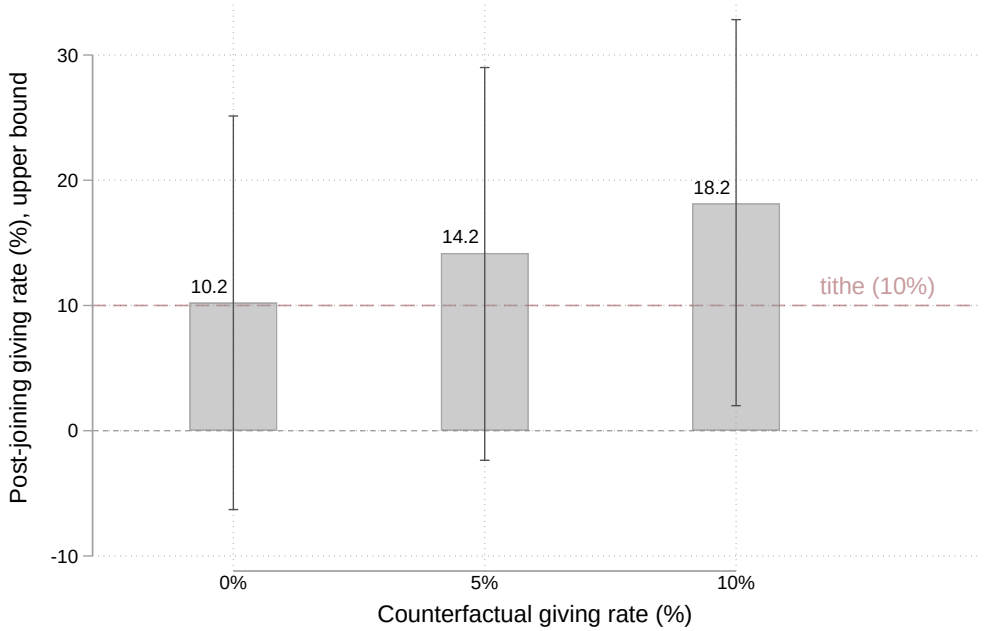
Notes: This figure compares baseline characteristics between the whole sample and estimated compliers. Complier characteristics are estimated following Abadie (2003) and Marbach and Hangartner (2020). Points show means and whiskers show 90% confidence intervals. Compliers are broadly representative of the full sample across demographic, economic, and religious characteristics.

Figure 6: Distribution of Partner Church Attendance by Treatment Status (Post-Outreach)



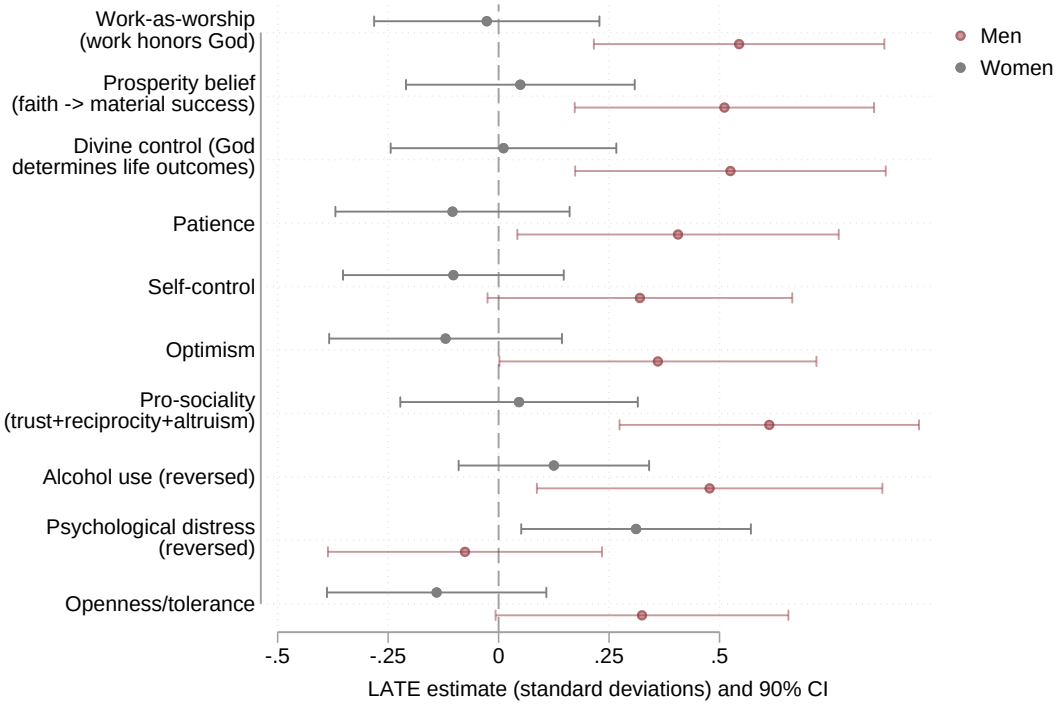
Notes: This figure shows the distribution of church attendance at the partner church, measured one to three months after the outreach, separately for treatment (Encouragement) and control groups. Church participation is measured on a four-point scale: Never, About once per month, A couple of times per month, and Every Sunday. Encouragement outreach shifts people from never attending the partner church to attending regularly. In the control group, 91% never attend and only 6.5% attend at least a couple of Sundays per month. In the encouragement group, the same shares are 57% and 34%.

Figure 7: Implied Giving Rate at The Church After Joining: An Accounting Upper Bound



Notes: This figure shows the giving rate at The Church implied by the LATE estimates, under alternative assumptions about compliers' giving rate before joining. For a counterfactual prior giving rate $\tau_0 \in \{0, 5, 10\}$ percent (horizontal axis), the implied post-joining giving rate is $\tau_1(\tau_0) = 100 \times [(\Delta Y - \Delta C) + \tau_0 Y_0] / (Y_0 + \Delta Y)$, where ΔY is the LATE on monthly earnings (62.3 USD PPP; Table 5, Column 1), ΔC is the LATE on monthly consumption (31.4 USD PPP; Table 5, Column 5), and Y_0 is mean endline earnings in the control group (239.4 USD PPP). The calculation attributes the entire gap between the earnings and consumption gains to giving and is therefore an accounting upper bound; the true giving rate is lower if part of the gain is saved or invested. Bars show implied rates of 10.2, 14.2, and 18.2 percent. Whiskers show 90% percentile confidence intervals from a paired bootstrap (1,000 replications, stratified by town $\times$ randomization strata): $[-6.3, 25.1]$, $[-2.4, 29.0]$, and $[2.0, 32.8]$. The dashed line at 10 percent marks a tithe.

Figure 8: Beliefs and Behaviors by Gender



Notes: This figure shows LATE estimates separately for women and men, with 90% confidence intervals. Estimates are from 2SLS regressions instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects; outcomes with a baseline measure (divine control, patience, self-control, optimism, alcohol use, and psychological distress) additionally control for it, and the same controls enter both stages. All outcomes are standardized to have mean zero and unit standard deviation in the control group.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	Mean	Median	SD
Gender: woman	.63	1	.48
Age	32.47	29	11.82
Years of education	9.28	10	3.65
Married	.61	1	.49
Monthly earnings (USD PPP-adjusted)	152.91	123.56	181.53
Has a job	.78	1	.41
Has a business	.42	0	.49
Hours worked last week	40.67	42	34.11
Dislikes having gay or lesbian neighbours	.94	1	.24
Favors reduced immigration (1-5 scale)	2.37	2	1.19
Believes in God	.99	1	.12
Attends service more than once a week	.32	0	.47
Catholic	.25	0	.43
Anglican	.19	0	.4
Pentecostal-Evangelical	.35	0	.48
Muslim	.19	0	.39

Notes: This table presents summary statistics for the study sample. Columns (1)–(3) report the mean, median, and standard deviation of each variable. Demographic, economic, and religious-affiliation variables are baseline values for the full sample. The two attitude rows (neighbours, immigration) are measured at endline for the full sample, and the attendance row at endline in the control group.

Table 2: First Stage: Effect of Treatment on Partner Church Attendance (Post-Outreach)

	(1) Church participation (0-3)	(2) Joined The Church
Treated	0.754	0.274
	(0.033)	(0.013)
	[0.000]	[0.000]
N	3280	3280
Mean DV	0.180	0.065

Notes: This table shows the first-stage relationship between treatment assignment and attendance at the partner church, measured one to three months after the outreach. Column (1) measures church attendance on a four-point scale: 0 = Never; 1 = About one Sunday per month; 2 = A couple of Sundays per month; 3 = Every Sunday. "Joined The Church" (Column 2) is a binary indicator equal to one if the respondent attends at least a couple of Sundays per month (categories 2 or 3), reflecting regular participation. Estimates are from OLS regressions of each outcome on treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table 3: Effects on Church Attendance at Any Church (Endline)

	(1) Attends at least once a month	(2) Attends at least once a week	(3) Attends more than once a week	(4) Attendance index
Panel A: ITT				
Treated	0.021	0.042	0.112	0.189
	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.034)
	[0.011]	[0.001]	[0.000]	[0.000]
Panel B: LATE				
Joined The Church	0.076	0.154	0.407	0.688
	(0.030)	(0.048)	(0.061)	(0.124)
	[0.011]	[0.002]	[0.000]	[0.000]
N	3280	3280	3280	3280
Mean DV	0.931	0.806	0.321	0.000

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on church attendance at any church (not just the partner church), measured at endline approximately 20 months after the intervention. Columns (1)–(3) are indicators for attending a religious service at least once a month, at least once a week, and more than once a week. Panel A shows ITT estimates from OLS regressions of the endline outcome on treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects and the baseline value of the outcome (ANCOVA). Panel B shows LATE estimates from 2SLS, instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, with the same controls entering both stages. The attendance index (Column 4) is constructed from Columns 1–3 following Anderson (2008). Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table 4: Effects on Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiosity

	(1) Intrinsic religiosity index	(2) Extrinsic religiosity index
Panel A: ITT		
Treated	0.124	-0.018
	(0.036)	(0.034)
	[0.001]	[0.593]
Panel B: LATE		
Joined The Church	0.454	-0.067
	(0.134)	(0.126)
	[0.001]	[0.594]
N	3280	3280
Mean DV	0.000	0.000

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Panel A shows ITT estimates from OLS regressions of the endline outcome on treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects and the baseline value of the outcome (ANCOVA). Panel B shows LATE estimates from 2SLS, instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, with the same controls entering both stages. Intrinsic religiosity measures religion as an end in itself (Allport & Ross, 1967). Extrinsic religiosity measures religion as a means to other ends. All indices are standardized. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table 5: Effects on Economic Activity

	(1) Monthly earnings	(2) Has a job	(3) Has a business	(4) Hours worked	(5) Monthly consumption	(6) Asset index	(7) Economic activity index
Panel A: ITT							
Treated	17.067	0.026	0.035	1.743	8.619	0.055	0.090
	(6.557)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.999)	(8.469)	(0.033)	(0.033)
	[0.009]	[0.026]	[0.044]	[0.081]	[0.309]	[0.097]	[0.006]
Panel B: LATE							
Joined The Church	62.292	0.094	0.127	6.359	31.442	0.202	0.329
	(24.075)	(0.043)	(0.063)	(3.651)	(30.956)	(0.122)	(0.120)
	[0.010]	[0.028]	[0.044]	[0.082]	[0.310]	[0.098]	[0.006]
N	3280	3280	3280	3280	3280	3280	3280
Mean DV	239.412	0.858	0.511	52.009	413.554	0.000	0.000

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on economic activity. Panel A shows ITT estimates from OLS regressions of the endline outcome on treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects and the baseline value of the outcome (ANCOVA). Panel B shows LATE estimates from 2SLS, instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, with the same controls entering both stages. Monthly earnings and consumption are PPP-adjusted (1214 UGX = 1 USD PPP, 2023). Hours worked are weekly hours. The asset index (Column 6) is an Anderson-style index of household asset ownership (six items) and indicators for improved flooring, roofing, and water source. The economic activity index (Column 7) is constructed from Columns 1–6 following Anderson (2008), so the asset index is also one of its components. Both indices are standardized to have mean zero and unit standard deviation in the control group. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table 6: Effects on Social Networks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: ITT	Discuss about business opportunities		Number of business contacts		
	With anyone	With place of worship members	With anyone	With place of worship members	Business network index
Treated	0.026	0.045	0.188	0.120	0.081
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.099)	(0.054)	(0.035)
	[0.123]	[0.010]	[0.057]	[0.028]	[0.022]
Panel B: LATE					
Joined The Church	0.093	0.164	0.684	0.436	0.295
	(0.061)	(0.064)	(0.363)	(0.199)	(0.130)
	[0.127]	[0.011]	[0.060]	[0.029]	[0.024]
N	3280	3280	3280	3280	3280
Mean DV	0.642	0.473	2.388	1.062	0.000

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on business networks. Panel A shows ITT estimates from OLS regressions of the endline outcome on treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects; the outcomes in this table are measured only at endline and have no baseline analogues. Panel B shows LATE estimates from 2SLS, instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, with the same controls entering both stages. Outcomes measure whether respondents discuss business opportunities with anyone (Column 1) and with members of their place of worship (Column 2), and the number of people with whom they discuss business opportunities, overall (Column 3) and among place of worship members (Column 4). The network index (Column 5) is constructed from Columns 1–4 following Anderson (2008). Corresponding estimates for job networks are reported in Appendix Table A2. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table 7: Effects on Economic Activity by Gender

	(1) Monthly earnings	(2) Has a job	(3) Has a business	(4) Hours worked	(5) Monthly consumption	(6) Asset index	(7) Economic activity index
Panel A: Women							
Joined The Church	76.696	0.158	0.138	11.211	68.957	0.246	0.500
	(27.690)	(0.063)	(0.080)	(4.963)	(36.223)	(0.145)	(0.160)
	[0.006]	[0.013]	[0.084]	[0.024]	[0.057]	[0.090]	[0.002]
N	2061	2061	2061	2061	2061	2061	2061
Mean DV	186.446	0.792	0.506	45.742	380.573	-0.071	-0.161
Panel B: Men							
Joined The Church	28.343	-0.018	0.100	-2.787	-31.694	0.111	0.032
	(41.382)	(0.036)	(0.104)	(4.770)	(55.944)	(0.217)	(0.174)
	[0.493]	[0.612]	[0.335]	[0.559]	[0.571]	[0.609]	[0.854]
N	1219	1219	1219	1219	1219	1219	1219
Mean DV	330.187	0.972	0.519	62.749	470.077	0.121	0.276
p-value: $H_0 : \beta_{Women} = \beta_{Men}$							0.047

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on economic activity separately by gender. Panel A shows LATE estimates for women and Panel B for men, from 2SLS regressions instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects and the baseline value of the outcome, with the same controls entering both stages. The p-value tests the null hypothesis that the coefficients are equal across genders. Outcomes are defined as in Table 5: monetary values are PPP-adjusted, and the asset and economic activity indices are constructed as described there. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

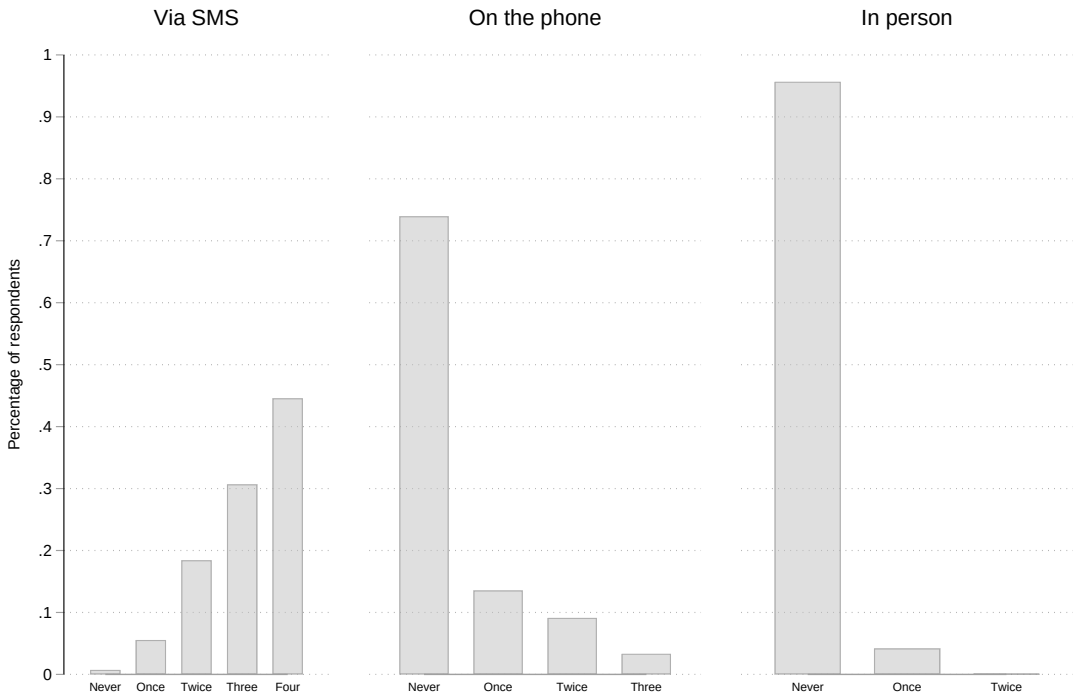
Table 8: Effects on Social Networks by Gender

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: Women	Discuss about business opportunities		Number of business contacts		
	With anyone	With place of worship members	With anyone	With place of worship members	Business network index
Joined The Church	0.202	0.244	1.081	0.610	0.496
	(0.079)	(0.082)	(0.453)	(0.256)	(0.168)
	[0.011]	[0.003]	[0.017]	[0.017]	[0.003]
N	2061	2061	2061	2061	2061
Mean DV	0.616	0.461	2.214	1.040	-0.046
Panel B: Men					
Joined The Church	-0.089	0.029	-0.025	0.144	-0.044
	(0.097)	(0.104)	(0.600)	(0.317)	(0.207)
	[0.357]	[0.784]	[0.966]	[0.650]	[0.830]
N	1219	1219	1219	1219	1219
Mean DV	0.687	0.493	2.687	1.100	0.080
p-value: $H_0 : \beta_{Women} = \beta_{Men}$					0.042

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on business networks separately by gender. Panel A shows LATE estimates for women and Panel B for men, from 2SLS regressions instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects, with the same controls entering both stages; the outcomes in this table are measured only at endline and have no baseline analogues. The p-value tests the null hypothesis that the coefficients are equal across genders. Outcomes are defined as in Table 6. The network index (Column 5) is constructed from Columns 1–4 following Anderson (2008). Corresponding estimates for job networks are reported in Appendix Table A3. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

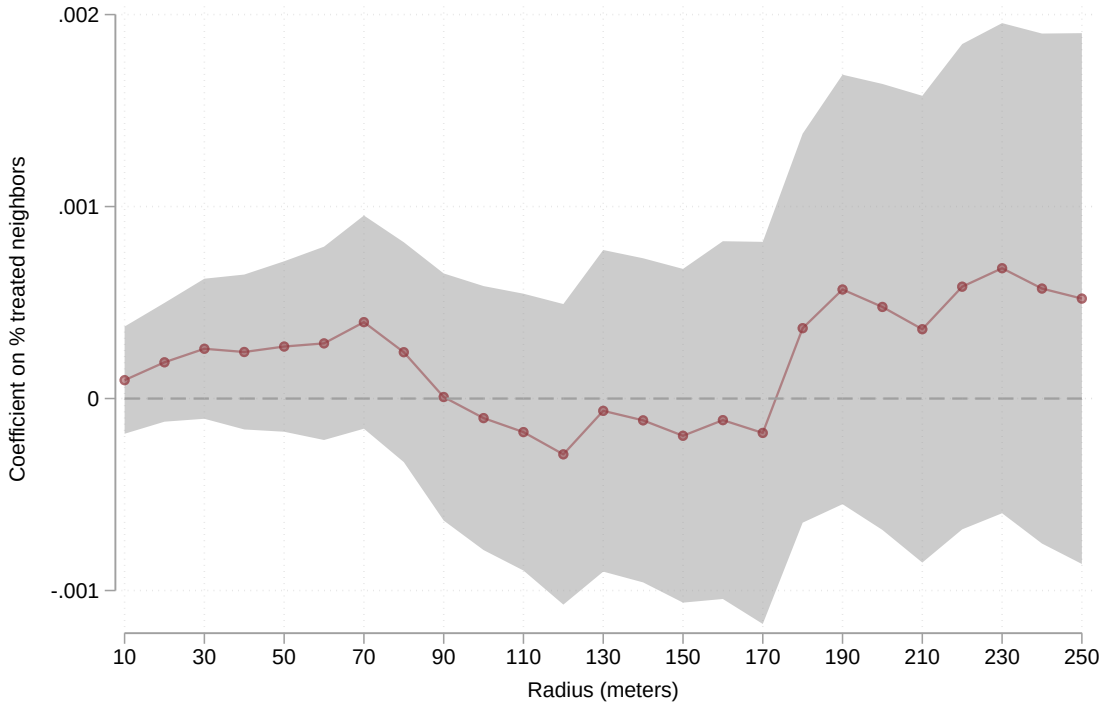
Appendix

Figure A1: Follow-up Contact Protocol



Notes: This figure shows the distribution of follow-up contacts by type for treated households. Each panel shows the percentage of treated respondents contacted zero, one, two, three, or four times via each channel. SMS messages were the primary follow-up method, with most treated households receiving multiple messages. Phone calls and in-person follow-up visits were less frequent, with the majority of treated households receiving no contact through these channels.

Figure A2: Test for Spatial Spillovers



Notes: This figure tests for spatial spillovers by examining whether the share of treated neighbors predicts church membership among control households. Each point shows the coefficient from a regression of "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) on the percentage of neighbors within the specified radius who were assigned to treatment, controlling for strata and town fixed effects. Sample restricted to control households. Shaded area shows 90% confidence intervals. The coefficients are uniformly small and statistically indistinguishable from zero across all distances, providing no evidence of spatial spillovers.

Table A1: Test for Network Spillovers

	(1)	(2)
	Joined The Church	
% treated in baseline house of worship	-0.000	
	(0.000)	
	[0.713]	
At least one treated in same church		-0.025
		(0.021)
		[0.224]
N	1,631	1,631
Mean DV	0.065	0.065

Notes: This table tests for network spillovers among control households. Sample restricted to control households. Dependent variable is "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition). Column (1) uses the percentage of treated households attending the same baseline house of worship. Column (2) uses an indicator for having at least one treated household in the same baseline church. All specifications include strata fixed effects and town fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table A2: Effects on Job Networks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: ITT	Discuss about job opportunities		Number of job contacts		
	With anyone	With place of worship members	With anyone	With place of worship members	Job network index
Treated	0.012	0.013	0.066	0.030	0.029
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.076)	(0.044)	(0.035)
	[0.494]	[0.449]	[0.391]	[0.500]	[0.411]
Panel B: LATE					
Joined The Church	0.043	0.048	0.239	0.109	0.105
	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.280)	(0.161)	(0.128)
	[0.495]	[0.449]	[0.393]	[0.500]	[0.412]
N	3280	3280	3280	3280	3280
Mean DV	0.544	0.409	1.755	0.827	0.000

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on job networks; it parallels Table 6, which reports business networks. Panel A shows ITT estimates from OLS regressions of the endline outcome on treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects; the outcomes in this table are measured only at endline and have no baseline analogues. Panel B shows LATE estimates from 2SLS, instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, with the same controls entering both stages. Outcomes measure whether respondents discuss job opportunities with anyone (Column 1) and with members of their place of worship (Column 2), and the number of people with whom they discuss job opportunities, overall (Column 3) and among place of worship members (Column 4). The job network index (Column 5) is constructed from Columns 1–4 following Anderson (2008). Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.

Table A3: Effects on Job Networks by Gender

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: Women	Discuss about job opportunities		Number of job contacts		
	With anyone	With place of worship members	With anyone	With place of worship members	Job network index
Joined The Church	0.160	0.098	0.498	0.166	0.259
	(0.082)	(0.079)	(0.334)	(0.199)	(0.162)
	[0.051]	[0.217]	[0.137]	[0.406]	[0.109]
N	2061	2061	2061	2061	2061
Mean DV	0.510	0.390	1.593	0.786	-0.062
Panel B: Men					
Joined The Church	-0.146	-0.031	-0.174	0.011	-0.144
	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.492)	(0.271)	(0.211)
	[0.153]	[0.763]	[0.724]	[0.969]	[0.496]
N	1219	1219	1219	1219	1219
Mean DV	0.602	0.441	2.033	0.897	0.106
p-value: $H_0 : \beta_{Women} = \beta_{Men}$					0.117

Notes: This table shows treatment effects on job networks separately by gender; it parallels Table 8, which reports business networks. Panel A shows LATE estimates for women and Panel B for men, from 2SLS regressions instrumenting "Joined The Church" (see Table 2 for definition) with treatment assignment, controlling for randomization-strata fixed effects, with the same controls entering both stages; the outcomes in this table are measured only at endline and have no baseline analogues. The p-value tests the null hypothesis that the coefficients are equal across genders. Outcomes are defined as in Table A2. The job network index (Column 5) is constructed from Columns 1–4 following Anderson (2008). Robust standard errors in parentheses. p-values in brackets.