

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

THESIS

REACHING TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION FOLLOWERS FOR JESUS: CHRISTIAN
MEDITATION AND CULTURAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to build on to research pertaining to Christian meditation, the Transcendental Meditation movement, and theological contextualization for possible evangelism strategy to reach adherents of TM. The first chapter begins with the purpose of the thesis as well as its limitations and research methods to be involved, with a layout of the rest of the thesis. In the second chapter, the literature review examines material from several different perspectives: Christianity, TM, the TM turned Christian, and the nonreligious field of science. The third chapter includes historical background on Transcendental Meditation, its interaction with Western culture, a historical and scriptural background and Biblical word study on Christian Meditation as well as a comparison between Christian meditation and TM. Chapter four examines approaches to TM by other major religions, secularists, as well as secular disciplines and areas of life such as the clinical and health sciences, psychology, legal issues, and popular culture; the chapter ends with discussion on approaches to TM by Christian enthusiasts and evangelists. The fifth chapter concludes the thesis by narrowing the focus to the worldview of TM adherents, and in light of that and the chapters before, explores bridges and strategy for evangelism before closing. Rather than substituting a form of Christian Meditation for TM, the preferred bridge is to focus on truth found in the Gospel as a replacement for the lies and broken promises of TM.

This thesis is dedicated

In loving memory of

My mother Janice Carver Woodward (July 22, 1950-December 13, 1998)

And my father Wallace Mawyer Woodward (November 19, 1943-June 15, 2015)

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Chapter I: Introduction

There is so much information and fascination with meditation in today's society that it can cause confusion for Christians, including both new and future converts. This confusion occurs because meditation is a dimension common in many religions and with different goals for each one. If approached carefully and in a biblically sound, informed manner, meditation could be contextualized as a source to spread the Gospel rather than a cause of confusion.

Many different contexts, religious and otherwise, involve meditation, and have differing understandings of what it means to meditate. The following are some examples of how different contexts define the concept of meditation. In modern English the Merriam-Webster defines the verb meditate as: "1: to engage in contemplation or reflection; 2: to engage in mental exercise (as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness."¹ As for the field of psychology, the American Psychological Association Definition defines meditation as: "profound and extended contemplation or reflection, sometimes in order to attain an altered state of consciousness. Traditionally associated with spiritual and religious exercises, it is now increasingly also used to provide relaxation and relief from stress."²

For example, in the context of the academic study of religion, the *Watkins Dictionary of Religious and Secular Faiths* defines meditation as "a general term referring to a wide variety of religious disciplines designed to bring the meditator to an experience of enlightenment, liberation, or awakening."³ As for Transcendental Meditation, the definition of meditation and

¹ *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*. s.v. "Meditate" Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2007, p. 771.

² Gary. R. VandenBos. "Meditation". *APA Dictionary Of Psychology*. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2015, p. 563).

³ Gerald Benedict. *Watkins Dictionary of Religions and Secular Faiths, The*. s.v. "Meditation" (London: Watkins Publishing, 2008, p. 350).

TM's version of it will be discussed in chapter three. Also to be considered are, its history of development as a movement including both religious and nonreligious involvement and engagement with contexts and disciplines outside TM. As with the TM definition above, the definition of meditation as it applies to the Christian tradition and the Bible will be further explored in chapter three, as well as a word study including biblical uses of Hebrew words in the Old Testament and Greek words in the New Testament that translate into the English word for "meditate" or "meditation" as well as a historical background of meditation in Christianity over the centuries.

The purpose for contextualization is to develop a biblical and relevant strategy for the church to clearly define meditation from a Christian perspective and contextualize it for recipients from non-Christian backgrounds so that meditation can possibly be used as a bridge for sharing the Gospel.

The purpose for investigating different world religions will be to serve as a solid, informed foundation of the backgrounds of the major religions and their take on meditation. Once this is established the missionary can attempt to contextualize the Gospel for the person(s) they are attempting to reach by understanding the background of the recipient. The most relevant ones here are Hinduism because that is the background of the founder and the basis of his TM movement, as well as other religions, specifically ones that are growing in practice of TM because they are practicing it alongside their own religion, particularly Buddhism. This thesis will include a variety of views both for and against TM by people from other religions later on.

The approach will seek to clear up confusion involving meditation as it is defined in Christianity compared to other contexts, particularly that of TM. With this in mind meditation

can be used to reach the lost and bring them to Christ. In order to do this, both secular factors and spiritual perspectives must be examined.

The problem of confusion arises because the act of meditation is present in many of the world's major religions, including Christianity. Another factor that adds to this confusion is that much of American society is religiously illiterate outside of religious traditions that teach meditation. Most people in American society have a very basic understanding, if any, of meditation. This has led many Christians to fear meditation altogether and avoid it.

To solve this problem of confusion there needs to be an evangelistic strategy to use meditation as a means for the Gospel of Christ to reach people through meditation; this would distinguish the various definitions of meditation and its purpose(s) in various religious and secular contexts, which will cover the Webster definition of meditation, the psychological definition of meditation, the Christian definition of meditation and also the general definition of meditation as understood in the academic field of comparative religion/religious studies.

This project will not aim to cover *every* religion involving meditation but the most relevant ones, namely TM and Christianity. Instead, there will be a brief history highlighting the roles of meditation in various relevant religions including Christianity. In addition to this, medical and psychological benefits to meditation will be briefly highlighted before narrowing to the Transcendental Meditation movement as the main focus for application. Because of the possibility of confusion and/or syncretism between religions due to differing concepts of meditation, syncretism will be addressed and attempts to avoid it will be included.

Methodology

Research Methods will take a qualitative approach.⁴ The research question is whether the concept of mediation can be used to contextualize the Gospel for people of non-Christian backgrounds without causing syncretism of the message of Jesus.

Methods will be qualitative, as described in *Research Design* by John C. Creswell. Qualitative research is focused on the specific contents of data and their interpretation based on research of a given social situation, as well as its participants. The composition organization allows for flexibility in methods of presentation.⁵ Methods will include a mainly qualitative research approach.

This project will proceed with the collection of qualitative data. The qualitative data will include the following information obtained from public domain: contents from pre-existing interviews conducted by others and published, public documents, and audiovisual materials. Interview contents used here have already been conducted by others and published for public access. Documents used include public documents such as government documents and newspapers, journal articles, scholarly books, ethnographies, theses, dissertations, and information published by primary sources on the matter from multiple perspectives. The instructions will establish a clear procedure to be used from one interview to the next.⁶

Audiovisual Materials for this project would include physical evidence, films or videotapes, sounds, cell phone texts and email messages, and stimuli of senses; here, they would include examination of photographs and videotapes, sound recordings found online or available

⁴ John W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009) 206.

⁵ Ibid, 232.

⁶ Ibid.

at a library. For TM they include taped interviews, blog entries, journal and newspaper articles, and primary sources published by people including those both currently as well as formerly involved with TM. Literature includes that published and distributed by TM organization, literature from both adherents as well as opponents to TM including religious and nonreligious, and government documents include court records. Ethical Considerations often include identification of: researcher, sponsoring institution, method(s) of selecting participants, and purpose of research, benefits type and level of participant involvement, notification of risks, confidentiality guarantee, and assurance to participant's option to withdraw at any time, provision of contacts. Since no participants were used in this project, and all sources were already known to the public due to their published material, there were no concerns for confidentiality.

Chapter Division

There are five chapters, including the Introduction, the Literature Review, and three more chapters. The introduction opens with the topic, purpose and methods of study for this particular project, and layout of the paper. The second chapter consists of a literature review, examining literature on TM from different perspectives. The third chapter provides historical background on both as well as use of the concept of meditation as used in the Bible. The fourth Chapter examines approaches to TM from people outside of the TM organization. The fifth and final chapter looks at the worldview of TM and based on information concerning that and all the previous chapters, attempts a strategy to reach followers of TM with the Gospel, concluding the thesis.

Summary of Each Chapter

The first chapter, the introduction, opens with the topic and purpose of the thesis, followed by an outline for the rest of the paper. Also discussed in the introduction are the methods and procedures of the study, and types of sources to be used.

The second chapter is the Review of the Literature, which examines three sources on TM: one as a primary source published by TM organization and written by its founder, the next source is from a Christian perspective and opposes TM, and lastly, the third source is non-religious, examining the studies concerning the effects of TM on mental health.

The third chapter is on the historical backgrounds, definitions and comparison on meditation in TM and Christianity as well as a word study on the biblical uses of the words that translate into the words “meditate” and “meditation” from the Old (Hebrew) and New (Greek) Testaments in the English Bible, using the King James Version. The history of TM includes a background of the movement itself, its founder, and its engagement with Western culture. The historical background on meditation in Christianity includes a brief history of mediation as practiced in Christianity, the Christian theological definition as found in a biblical dictionary, as well as a word study on the Hebrew words of the Old Testament and the Greek words of the New Testament that translate into the English words “meditate” and “meditation.” Each of these includes the Hebrew or Greek word, its definition, its usage in the King James Bible, and comments based on that information and other commentaries. This section also examines how Christians stand on meditation in general and ways that meditation is practiced in Christianity.

The fourth chapter discusses both positive and negative reactions and approaches to TM by Christians, religions other than Christianity, and people from nonreligious contexts. This includes Christians and adherents of other religions who also practice TM alongside their own

faith traditions, as well as opponents of TM. Additional contexts include legal aspects such as court cases, education, government, the health and medical sciences, physical sciences, and popular culture.

The fifth chapter examines the worldview of TMs, and in light of that information in addition to material from the other chapters, attempts to devise a strategy to reach adherents of TM with the Gospel. In order to do this some evangelism concepts and models will be discussed and applied to TM so that a bridge may be built. This chapter, with its proposed solution for evangelizing TMs, concludes the thesis.

Results and Conclusion

The results will consist of a contextualized approach based on consideration of history and evidence from multiple perspectives and information explored on TM, Christianity, meditation, and evangelism, followed by a conclusion to end the paper. In addition to the information on TM and related topics explored throughout the thesis, evangelism models will be applied as an attempt to build a bridge to TM to reach them with the Good News.

Thesis Literature Review Outline

Relevant literature includes content on the categories of Meditation, Meditation in Christianity, the Transcendental Meditation Movement, and contextualization of the Gospel in Christian missions. The general area of meditation includes its use not only in religion but also in psychological therapy, business, and education. Literature on the role of meditation in Christianity includes topics such as spiritual formation and word study, especially on the context and usage of the word(s) that translate into the English word “meditation” from the biblical texts in their original languages. Literature pertaining specifically to the Transcendental Meditation Movement includes primary sources from the perspective of the movement as well as opposing

literature, especially as found in Christian theology. Contextualization involves not only critical contextualization but also the issue of syncretism.

Meditation

Mediation has been used in many contexts, both religious and nonreligious. Religiously, meditation is a concept present in many of the world's major religious traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and some sects of Islam. Scriptures from these traditions specifically mention meditation.

In general, for the academic field of religious studies, scholar Ninian Smart has established seven dimensions of religion, as discussed in his book, *Dimensions of the Sacred*. The dimensions are: the ritual or practical dimension, the doctrinal or philosophical dimension, the narrative or mythic dimension, the emotional or experiential dimension, the legal or ethical dimension, the social or organized dimension, and the artistic or material dimension.⁷ Meditation falls under what Smart refers to as the ritual/practical dimension. The *Watkins Dictionary of Religions and Secular Faiths* defines meditation as “a general term referring to a wide variety of religious disciplines designed to bring the meditator to an experience of enlightenment, liberation or awakening.”⁸ Religious Studies scholar Mary Pat Fisher describes meditation as “The consciousness is initially turned away from the world and even from one’s own feelings and thoughts, letting them all go. Often a concentration practice, such as watching the breath or staring at a candle flame is used to collect the awareness into a single, unfragmented, focus.”⁹

⁷ Ninian. Smart. *Dimensions of The Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs*. (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 10-11.

⁸ Benedict, *Watkins Dictionary*, “Meditation,” 350.

⁹ Mary Pat Fisher. *Living Religions, 8th Edition*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: 2011), 8.

Meditation has also been used in the context of psychological therapy as well as mental and physical health. The U.S Department of Health has conducted many studies focusing on the effects of meditation of physical health, over 380 of which focused on the Transcendental Meditation technique alone.¹⁰

Meditation in Christianity

For the tradition of Christianity, meditation is a concept present in both the Old and New Testaments. Theologian Ronald Youngblood Defines meditation as “the practice of reflection or contemplation.”¹¹ In addition to the physical and mental health mentioned above, Christian meditation is also used in pastoral counseling, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Transcendental Meditation Movement

Literature in this category includes primary sources from the founder and followers of the movement as well as opposing views from outside the tradition. Primary sources include works written by the founder, as well as the official website for Transcendental Meditation and the website for Maharishi University of Management. Also included in primary sources are works by followers of Transcendental Meditation as well as any scriptures used by the founder or his followers. Sources by the founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, include a book by him addressing Questions and Answers about Transcendental Meditation. Even though leaders of the

¹⁰ "What's The Evidence?", *Tm.Org*, last modified 2017, accessed February 13, 2017, <http://www.tm.org/research-on-meditation>.

¹¹ Ronald F. Youngblood. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Meditation." (Nashville, TN; Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.)

Transcendental Meditation movement insist that the technique and lifestyles are not religious, its origins are from Hinduism.¹² Scriptures used include the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita.

The official website for the Transcendental Meditation movement has information on the technique, the movement, or the Maharishi University of Management. There is also a page addressing questions and answers with the founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi containing snippets of his answers from past interviews.

The website for Maharishi University of Management contains more background information for the TM movement. There is a page with some information on Maharishi Mahesh Yogi on his founding of the Transcendental Meditation movement as well as his founding of the Maharishi University of Management.¹³

Outside the tradition there are opposing views from the perspective of Christianity as well as legal issues that Transcendental Meditation movement has encountered. TM appears in much of Christian literature under the label “cult.” Scholar Kenneth Boa states: “The current TM propaganda is quite deceptive, for there are really two levels in TM: the public (exoteric) and private (esoteric).”¹⁴ An example of this is the fact that people outside of or new to TM practice it alongside their own religious traditions without knowing that the two are incompatible. The private side would know what the mantras mean and at some point, would likely be discouraged from practicing other forms of meditation, while the public is advised that they can practice TM

¹² Rob Boston. "Levitating over the church-state wall? Hollywood celebrates, ex-Beatles join forces to push transcendental meditation in public schools." (*Church & State* 62, no. 6 (June 1, 2009): 127-128). *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 3, 2014), 7.

¹³ “About Maharishi Mahesh Yogi”. *Mum.Edu*. Last modified 2016. Accessed August 15, 2016. <https://www.mum.edu/about-mum/about-maharishi-mahesh-yogi/>.

¹⁴ Kenneth Boa. *Cults, World Religions, and the Occult*. (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1990), 204.

because it is not only compatible with but can also enhance the practice of their own religious tradition.

Contextualization of the Gospel in Christian Missions

A leading expert on contextualization of the Gospel in Christianity is Paul G. Hiebert. Hiebert has published many books and papers on the subject, as well as addressing the issue of syncretism and what it would do to missions. In his book, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, Hiebert presents three different views of contextualization.¹⁵ The first is non-contextualization, which dismisses the need of the missionary or evangelist to research the context of the people that they are trying to reach, leaving the missionary prepared mostly just for culture shock, awkwardness, and misunderstanding.¹⁶ The second view of contextualization is Uncritical contextualization, which Hiebert says results in cultural relativity and equal treatment of all without question.¹⁷ Lastly, critical contextualization measures culture against scripture, in order for any weaknesses to be identified and turned away from to come closer to God's will; the truth of God must always be the center of the message.¹⁸ Failure to use the Scripture as the basis for communicating the Gospel results in syncretism.¹⁹

¹⁵ Paul Hiebert. *The Gospel in Human Contexts*. (Grand Rapids; Baker, 2009), 19-29.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 19-20.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 23-36.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 29.

¹⁹ Paul G.Hiebert. "Checks against syncretism." (*Christianity Today* 35, no. 2 (February 11, 1991): 39-40. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 3, 2014), 39.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In consideration of contextualizing the Gospel to reach TM adherents, literature to be reviewed should include primary sources from the tradition itself, Christian material on the tradition, a source from a TM adherent turned Christian, as well as secular literature on Transcendental Meditation, including one from the health sciences and the other from law. Content reviewed here includes one from each of the above contexts. First to be examined is the primary source from within Transcendental Meditation, followed by a source on TM from a Christian perspective, lastly a sample of literature from a context that is unreligious altogether.

Primary Sources: Transcendental Meditation

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi wrote a book on his movement called *Transcendental Meditation with Questions and Answers*.¹ The book was first published in 1967; the copy to be reviewed here is the fourth and most recent edition, published in 2013. Though this source provides some information about Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's life before his movement, most of the detail begins at TM and the Spiritual Regeneration Movement in 1957 and highlights his many achievements or activities related to the movement that have happened since it began.²

The purpose of this book is to explain in detail the core teachings of Transcendental Meditation as well as to clear up any confusion surrounding some of its teachings. It also explains the benefits of practicing TM. The book is divided into two parts; in Part one Maharishi Mahesh Yogi provides background on Transcendental Meditations and then explains its teachings. In part two he addresses answers to questions raised by his audience. These

¹ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Transcendental Meditation with Questions and Answers*. 4th ed. (Maharishi Foundation International-Maharishi Vedic University, 2013).

²Ibid., contents page.

interactions are sorted by discussion topic.³ The book then concludes with the last part of a footnote begun about halfway through the book, and appendices. The appendices include a ten page list of the author's achievements compiled by Jai Guru Dev, and a list of other books by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.⁴

TM is believed to bring health benefits including relief of tension, both physical and mental relaxation, healing of psychosomatic illness, improved breathing, increased energy, delay in the aging process, and reduced acidity in the body.⁵ Other benefits include improved learning and an increased desire to learn.⁶

The first part explains the founder's definition of TM, the ultimate goal of TM, and teachings of TM on certain topics: origins in absolute consciousness, the absence of enduring happiness, the cause and cure for suffering, the process of TM, the wandering mind, the way to realism to the consciousness, Bliss, and absolute attributes of the divine, unfoldment of latent faculties, and TM on health and education.⁷ The second part answers questions on the following topics: Transcendental Meditation, Mantra, relationship between mind and body, free will if the individual, cause, effect, and karma, the result of healing from TM.⁸

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi defines Transcendental Meditation as: "a process of leading the mind towards the subtler glories of creation, till the subtlest field is transcended to get on to the transcendental, divine bliss."⁹

³Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 36-38.

⁶ Ibid., 38-40.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, 48.

As one of the many goals of TM, Maharishi explains its emphasis of searching deep within the self, “in which dwells the essence of life and the source of all wisdom, all creativity, all peace, and all happiness. It is that place which has been called, in the Christian teaching, the “Kingdom of Heaven within.”¹⁰ As far as the goals of TM, the author says the its ultimate goal is “cosmic consciousness” and that it can also be referred to as Knowledge of Christ, the Kingdom of Heaven, Nirvana, and goals in other major religions.¹¹ Maharishi describes cosmic consciousness as an objective consciousness, shifting from subjective consciousness.¹²

Maharishi makes other brief references to other religions including Christianity throughout the book. Near the beginning of the book when explaining origins and the nature of the soul, Maharishi refers to Christ, saying, “‘The Kingdom of Heaven’ in which ‘the Father and I are one,’ meaning a level which knows no duality.”¹³

Christian Sources

The book, *Cults, World Religions, and the Occult: What They Teach and How to Respond to Them*, written by Ken Boa, contains a chapter about TM which will be reviewed here.¹⁴ According to the back cover of the book, Dr. Boa’s credentials include a Bachelor of Science from Case Institute of Technology, a Master of Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, a Doctor of Philosophy from New York University, and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Oxford. His ministry occupations include teaching, mentoring, speaking, and writing.¹⁵ Dr. Boa has written many books, writes the monthly teaching newsletter, *Reflections*,

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 40.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 7.

¹⁴ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation."

¹⁵ Ibid., 197-209.

and has his own website, Ken.Boa.org.¹⁶ Boa rejects TM in favor of Christianity on the notion that its claims are irreconcilable with the truth of Christianity.¹⁷

The purpose of this book is to inform Christians about religious traditions outside of Christianity and equip them in how to respond the way Jesus would.¹⁸ The Chapter on Transcendental Meditation clears up many of the inconsistencies surrounding Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's movement known as Transcendental Meditation while providing a historic background of the movement and also highlighting key points for Christians to keep in mind when they encounter the movement and its followers.¹⁹

The book itself includes an introduction, a body, a comparison chart, and a bibliography.²⁰ The body is divided into twenty-seven chapters grouped into four main sections with a brief introduction at the beginning of each: major non-Christian religions of the East, major pseudo-Christian religions of the West, occult religions and systems, and lastly, new religions and cults; this last section includes a chapter on Transcendental Meditation.²¹ For the sake of space and relevance in consideration of the thesis topic only the chapter on TM will be examined in great detail. This chapter consists of a historical background of the development and teaching of Transcendental Meditation, a Biblical evaluation, and concludes with some notes for the Christian to consider when encountering TM or its adherents.

Boa includes information on not only the movement itself but biographical information on its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, from his educational credentials to his spiritual

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 209.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Ibid.

experience and authority.²² Upon the death of Mahesh’s spiritual master, Guru Dev, Boa states, “In 1956 he named himself Maharishi (‘Great Sage’), and In 1959 he journeyed to the United States to found the Spiritual Generation Movement.”²³ Boa highlights the changes in marketing and recruiting techniques of the program, including its presentation as an educational organization rather than a religious one, allowing it to slip into many areas of culture and government undetected where otherwise it would be rejected as a religious movement or agenda. TM manages to do this by clinging to “scientific” claims, enabling it to win over adherents from nonreligious contexts. Boa also highlights a glaring inconsistency between TM’s claims of being “unreligious” and the fact that it is based on raja yoga in Hinduism and is embedded in Vedic theology.

Boa’s Biblical evaluation of the Transcendental Meditation movement emphasizes five key points.²⁴ First, TM’s literature contradicts Biblical Christianity at every area.²⁵ Second, TM’s view and definition of God is so different than that of Christianity that one cannot say they are the same God.²⁶ Boa’s third point of emphasis is that TM’s concept of humanity as an extension of God completely contrasts the Christian distinction between God the Creator and humans as His creation.²⁷ Boa’s fourth point emphasizes the fact between the two founders, Jesus as the Christianity’s founder was set apart in His life while Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, though intelligent, only continued and passed on traditions that he had learned.²⁸ Lastly, Boa’s fifth point of emphasis in his Biblical evaluation of Transcendental Meditation is the fact that TM’s initiation

²² Ibid., 197-209.

²³ Ibid., 198.

²⁴ Ibid., 206-208.

²⁵ Ibid., 206-207.

²⁶ Ibid., 207.

²⁷ Ibid., 207.

²⁸ Ibid., 207-208.

requires a ceremony involving a repeated mantra, which violates command not to use meaningless repetition in prayer (Matt. 6:7).²⁹

Lastly, Boa concludes his chapter on Transcendental Meditation with four points for Christians to consider when they encounter it or its adherents. First, he points out that the combination of western concepts of parapsychology and consciousness with Eastern religions deceives its target audience by claims of fulfillment of their spiritual desire and “scientific” evidence to prove that it works, enabling vulnerable people to believe what they want to hear so they will buy into it.³⁰ Secondly, Boa emphasizes that “even though people do not need to change their beliefs to practice TM, but the practice of TM can change people’s beliefs, especially those who want to go on to more advanced levels,” reminding the reader of the irreconcilable differences between the Vedic tradition of Hinduism and Biblical Christianity.³¹

Primary Sources: TM turned Christian

Christian theologian and convert from TM, John Weldon wrote a two-part article titled "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium." Although these were published separately, they will be examined here as two parts to one article for the Christian Research Institute. John Weldon is a Christian who used to adhere to TM, and is a writer for Christian Research Institute.³² Weldon was initiated into TM in 1970 and left in 1976.³³ The mantra assigned to him at his initiation was “aing,” which refers to Saraswati, a Hindu deity.³⁴ Weldon left TM

²⁹ Ibid., 208.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 209.

³² John Weldon. "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part One) - Christian Research Institute." Christian Research Institute Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium Part One. 2004. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.equip.org/article/transcendental-meditation-in-the-new-millennium-part-one/>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

concluding that: “few religions are as deceptive or defective as TM.”³⁵ Part one of the article focuses on the question of whether TM is a religion while Part two of the article examines whether it actually works.

Part one examines the question of TM being a religion and includes information on multiple sources. Weldon first notes his own experience with TM and how his conclusion of TM when he left it was only reinforced by researching information from the primary source, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and others.³⁶ Next, before providing a brief historical background on the TM movement and its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Weldon presents some facts and figures to illustrate the impact of TM on many different contexts of life.³⁷ After the historical background, Weldon addresses the purpose of TM, supporting his claim with quotes and facts from primary sources to illustrate his point.³⁸ The next two sections of part one challenge two of Maharishi’s most problematic claims: that TM is not a religion, and that TM is best friends with Christianity. As for whether or not TM is a religion, Weldon highlights examples of the opposite, presenting religious approaches of TM by quoting the founder’s own words, the oath professed by TM instructors, and his own experience with religion in TM.³⁹ He also points out that TM began as a clearly religious organization.⁴⁰ In addition, Weldon observes that the U.S. courts’ ruling TM as a religion when TM was brought to court in *Malnak v. Yogi*, where parents objected when their children, enrolled in courses for the “Science of Creative Intelligence,” were being taught to worship Hindu deities while under the claim that TM and Science of Creative

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Intelligence are “not religious.”⁴¹ As for whether or not TM and Christianity are “friends”, Weldon presents evidence concluding that they are not. He discusses theological inconsistencies of TM with Christianity’s understanding of Jesus and the concept of salvation and atonement.⁴² Weldon states that unlike Christianity, Maharisi views Jesus as equal with the rest of humanity, and himself as “the way” to God.⁴³ Weldon indicates the view of TM on salvation is that there is no sin for humanity to be saved from and that each individual is God.⁴⁴

In Part Two of the article, Weldon examines the evidence concerning the question of TM and if it really works like it claims to in its advertisements. He opens Part two with Maharishi’s claims the TM is scientifically proven by over 500 studies conducted by prestigious institutions including Harvard, Princeton, and others, and published by respected journals including *Science*, *Scientific American*, and others.⁴⁵ Weldon follows by addressing research problems, the maharishi effect, proof of TM by spiritual science, profane education and science, the dangers of TM, inconsistencies between TM and the Hindu tradition it is based on, and concludes the article with additional proof that TM does not fulfill its claims.⁴⁶ Research problems addressed by Weldon include bias or potential for bias due to that fact that most of the studies were conducted by the TM organization or people sponsored by it.⁴⁷ He notes that studies conducted independently from TM or its affiliates often conclude with different results, drawing suspicion from many that it purposely omits any evidence that is unfavorable to support TM’s claims.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ John Weldon. "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two) - Christian Research Institute." Christian Research Institute Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium Part Two Comments. 2004. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.equip.org/article/transcendental-meditation-in-the-new-millennium-part-two/>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Weldon quotes Nobel Prize winner chemist Melvin Calvin: “Maharishi’s principle business is collecting money from new acolytes. He doesn’t know anything about science; but he does know that cloaking his dogma in scientific jargon is the only way to gain legitimacy.”⁴⁹ In his discussion of the maharishi effect, Weldon first defines it and examines its claims. The Maharishi Effect is based on the idea that if one percent of a population meditates that it will be enough to reduce illness, accidents, and crime.⁵⁰ The extended Maharishi Effect uses the square root of one percent of the world’s population as its basis will achieve the above results as well as reduced unemployment, decrease in terrorism and international conflict, improvement in EEG results from Yogic flying, and improved relationships between the east and the west, and a decrease in reoffending in criminals, worldwide.⁵¹ In light of these claims, Weldon points out that Social statistics in TM’s U.S. capital, Fairfield, Iowa, indicate the opposite.⁵² In his discussion of Maharishi’s spiritual science as proof of his claims, Weldon comments that Maharishi’s definition of science is very different than the commonly understood one, allowing flawed science and spiritual activity to pass as science.⁵³ As far as profane education and science, Weldon note that Maharishi treats all non-Vedic education as inferior to that of TM.⁵⁴ Weldon points out the irony of Maharishi’s claim that education aside from that of TM is a fraud, provided the deception of claims made TM.⁵⁵ In addressing the dangers of TM, Weldon cites evidence from several sources contrary to TM’s claim that it is harmless.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Weldon states that there are significant inconsistencies with Hinduism and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's practice of it. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was born not into the Brahmin caste but a working caste; the Brahmin caste involves spiritual leadership.⁵⁷ Also, Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati, a disciple of Guru Dev, states that Maharishi did know the guru, only not as a disciple but an employee.⁵⁸ Lastly, despite his own violation of the Hindu tradition of staying involved with the caste one was born into, Maharishi warns very strongly against breaking that tradition.⁵⁹

In his conclusion to the article, Weldon brings to light some additional evidence disproving Maharishi's claims. First, he notes that Maharishi violates the Hindu tradition from which TM is based by charging for Vedic teaching.⁶⁰ Depending on the audience, Maharishi's answer tends to vary; when speaking about TM mantras being unique to TM by stating that any word could be used to achieve the desired results.⁶¹ Weldon also presents more examples of the meditative practices of TM being religious in nature despite claims to the contrary, as well as more evidence from court cases involving TM.

Secular Source: Health and Medicine

A group of scientists wrote a paper on the health benefits of meditation, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research*. According to the front page this study was conducted by the University of Alberta Evidence-based Practice Center in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in Rockville, MD.⁶² Near the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Maria B. Ospina et al., *Meditation Practices for Health: State Of The Research*, ebook, 1st ed. (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: University of Alberta Evidence-based Practice Center, 2007), accessed December 3, 2015,

beginning of the paper, it is clearly stated that none of the researchers are affiliated with any groups for or against the use of meditation. To clear up any bias, they state: “The investigators have no relevant financial interests in the report. The investigators have no employment, consultancies, honoraria, or stock ownership or options, or royalties from any organization or entity with a financial interest or financial conflict with the subject matter discussed in the report.”⁶³

The sole purpose of this research paper is to evaluate the research methods and findings and on the effectiveness of TM and other major forms of meditation in the context of the health sciences.⁶⁴ The study focuses on the three most commonly studied forms of meditation, which includes TM.⁶⁵

The study consists of front matter including citation, preface, acknowledgements, abstract, and a contents page; four chapters covering introduction, methods, results, and discussion; a reference page, a list of relevant studies, and abbreviations.⁶⁶ Lastly, the study concludes with ten appendices: technical experts and peer reviewers, consensus development, exact search strings, review forms, excluded and nonobtained studies, references of multiple publications, tables for Topic II, Characteristics of Clinical Trials of Meditation Practices for the Three Most Studied Conditions, Characteristics of Studies Included in Topic V, and Characteristics of Studies on the Physiological and Neuropsychological Effects of Meditation Practices.⁶⁷

⁶³ Ospina, et. al, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research*, ii.

⁶⁴ Ibid., v.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ospina, et. al, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research*, title page through J-20.

⁶⁷ Ospina, et. al, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research*, xiii.

The introduction includes definitions and categories of various types of meditation used in the study.⁶⁸ Before placing a practice into a category, it would have to meet the following five criteria just to be considered as mediation for the purpose of the study:

- (1) utilizes a specific and clearly defined technique, (2) involves muscle relaxation somewhere during the process, (3) involves logic relaxation (i.e., not “to intend” to analyze the possible psychophysical effects, not “to intend” to judge the possible results, not “to intend” to create any type of expectation regarding the process), (4) a self-induced state, and (5) the use of a self-focus skill or “anchor” for attention.”⁶⁹

Of its five categories of meditation, the study places Transcendental Meditation under the category of mantra meditation.⁷⁰ The study defines TM as “a technique derived from the Vedic tradition of India by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.”⁷¹ Because so much surrounding the technique is confidential to formally trained practitioners of TM, it was not possible to obtain details concerning its criteria for success to be used in the study.⁷² The methods for analysis in the study consisted of five criteria: the practice of meditation, the state of research on its therapeutic use in health, evidence concerning the effectiveness and efficacy of meditation practices, evidence concerning the role of effect modifiers for meditation practices, and evidence concerning neuropsychological and physiological and effects of meditation exercises.⁷³ TM is defined in

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2-3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁷¹ Ibid., 29.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., vii.

context in the first step of analysis.⁷⁴ For the state of the research involving all of the meditation studies including that of Transcendental Meditation, the findings showed that “Overall, we found the methodological quality of meditation research to be poor, with significant threats to validity in every major category of quality measured, regardless of study design (p. 3).”⁷⁵ For the third step, the results for efficacy and effectiveness of TM on health concerning blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, body weight, diet, anger, stress, exercise, and self-efficacy for patients with hypertension was no better than health education directed at managing these areas.⁷⁶ For the evidence concerning object modifiers, for this project there were very few cases where a study analyzed for object modifiers and even fewer of those involved TM.⁷⁷ The only health conditions considered for these analyses consisted of hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and substance abuse.⁷⁸ For hypertension, there were only 27 studies and of those only seven of those analyzed for effect modifiers; of those studies only four involved TM.⁷⁹ Of 21 studies involving meditation and cardiovascular diseases, only two analyzed for effect modifiers; neither study involved TM.⁸⁰ Finally, for the 17 studies on the effects of meditation on substance abuse, only four analyzed for effect modifiers and of those, only one involved TM.⁸¹ Overall, there was not enough information on the role of effect modifiers to draw any conclusion to their influence. Lastly, the fifth criterion was examination of evidence involving the neuropsychological and physiological effects of meditation.⁸² Of 311 studies on this aspect of meditation, 47 involved

⁷⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 152-157.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 152-156.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 152.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 154.

⁸¹ Ibid., 155.

⁸²Ibid., vii.

TM.⁸³ The health conditions in the study on neuropsychological and physiological effectiveness included blood pressure, body weight, heart rate, stress, anger, self-efficacy, total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, dietary intake and physical activity.⁸⁴ All of these areas of health compared results with TM to results with Health Education, and for blood pressure there was also comparison between TM and Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), none of which had proved Transcendental Meditation to have any significant effect of improvement neuropsychologically or physiologically than health education.⁸⁵ The results with the effect of TM on blood pressure when compared with PMR showed significant improvement in blood pressure.⁸⁶ Based on the evidence available, strong conclusions on the effectiveness of TM or other meditation practices cannot be made yet.⁸⁷

Primary Source: Secular, Legal

Informed by his experience from the Malnak v. Yogi case, Julius Poppinga wrote journal article "Transcendental Meditation - How Long Can Its PR Transcend Its Realities," for The Christian Lawyer.⁸⁸ Though published as an article, this piece is actually a transcript of a lecture presented by Julius B. Poppinga, United States District Court legal counsel involved with the case known as Malnak v. Yogi, for the plaintiffs.⁸⁹ The lecture was given April 1977 in Virginia,

⁸³Ibid., 157.

⁸⁴Ibid., 112.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 148.

⁸⁷Ibid., 210.

⁸⁸ Julius B. Poppinga. "Transcendental Meditation - How Long Can Its PR Transcend Its Realities." *The Christian Lawyer* 7.2: 38-47. Accessed: 12-31-2015. http://heinonline.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/chrislwyr7&div=18&start_page=38&collection=journals&set_as_cursor=0&men_tab=srchresults# . 38.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

months before the October ruling that TM is religious in nature and in violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment.⁹⁰ The article itself was not published until about a year after the lecture it transcribes here, and begins with a quote from Judge Meanor's ruling opinion: "...in light of the prior judicial recognition of teachings such as those of the defendants as religious, no inference was possible except that the teaching of SCI/TM and the puja are religious in nature; no other inference is 'permissible' or reasonable."⁹¹ Poppinga provides a brief background to TM, including its origin as an explicitly religious organization with quotes from its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as well as literature published by the organization, illustrating its image as seen by most of the public, making a distinction between TM and SCI.⁹² He says that TM is the practice itself and that SCI is the theory behind that practice.⁹³ He then identifies and addresses four major problems he sees with TM and the public.⁹⁴ The problems are: TM's claiming to be nonreligious but showing clear treatment of it as a religious activity; its conflict with the United States Constitution, its unethical marketing, and its claim of superiority.⁹⁵

In his address of the religious (or not) stance of TM, Poppinga notes the contrast between TM's claims that it is not religious and then quotes words from its founder and literature that show it being treated very clearly as a religious practice.⁹⁶ He also points out that not only is it religious despite claims to the contrary but also completely in conflict with the concept of God as

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, 40.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 43-44.

applied to the God of Christianity, where God is the Creator and humans His creation, and with TM it is taught that the meditator *is* God.⁹⁷

Poppinga next addresses the problem with SCI/TM with Constitution in TM's violation of separation of church and state as defined in the religion clauses of the First Amendment.⁹⁸ Citing his current case at hand, he uses the SCI courses in the New Jersey public school system as a prime example.⁹⁹ He says that Maharishi plans "to use the agencies of our government for the propagation of his faith."¹⁰⁰ Poppinga notes that not only has Maharishi used government resources for something in violation of its own constitution, it has been taught in the military as well as American prisons.¹⁰¹

The third problem with TM's image that Poppinga addresses is its mistreatment of the consumer and deception of its audience through false advertising.¹⁰² He compares the marketing of a religion as not religious to a culture that doesn't speak its language to General Motors putting a Chevrolet engine in an Oldsmobile and expecting it to pass without question.¹⁰³ He also points out that even those TM adherents who are not concerned about where or not it is religious will still be concerned about having been lied to.¹⁰⁴

Lastly, Poppinga addresses TM's superiority claims. He uses evidence by quoting Maharishi's own words describing what he (Maharishi) describes as "unfit."¹⁰⁵ His definition includes anyone who follows anything outside of TM and Maharishi's intolerance for those he

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 40.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

calls unfit only shows that neither Maharishi nor his movement is inclusive as presented to the public. Poppinga describes this elitist attitude as TM's own downfall and "its time bomb."¹⁰⁶ Poppinga closes his presentation by stating that he believes the public deserves to know what they are getting into and that the only way to do it is to spread the word.

This chapter reviewed literature concerning TM from different perspectives, religious and secular. The religious perspectives included a primary source written about the movement by the founder himself, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a source written by a Christian theologian, and another source by a Christian who used to adhere to TM. The secular sources included one from the medical and health sciences and the other from law. In the primary source, *Transcendental Meditation with Questions and Answers*, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi provided a glimpse of the practice and its teachings and attempted to define TM as well as clear up confusion regarding it. In the Christian source, scholar Ken Boa points out conflicts between TM and Christianity and highlights inconsistencies, warning other Christians against the dangers of its practice; the source reviewed is a chapter on TM taken from his book addressing cults, *Cults, World Religions, and the Occult*. Boa is a leading expert in the field of theology and provided comparison and contrast between the core beliefs and teachings of TM as opposed to Christianity and also provided additional background information on the TM movement and its founder. The source from the TM adherent turned Christian was written by John Weldon and in it Weldon not only uses research but also the uniqueness of his own experience with TM, in a way making him also a primary source. The source from the health and medical sciences is from a group of scientists examining the state of research on the effects of meditation on patients' health, one of the meditations of the study included TM. This literature sample provided information on TM from a

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 46.

nonreligious point of view based on findings of physical evidence. Lastly, the legal source, Julius B. Poppinga, discusses the problems of TM's presentation as "unreligious" and practice as a religion with the public in relation to areas of life such as religious, legal, the consumer, and claims of superiority. He is also a primary source on TM concerning its involvement with government as he was a legal counsel for the plaintiffs in *Malnak v. Yogi*.

Next, after the literature review has concluded, Chapter three will cover the historical backgrounds of TM, its founder Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and the Christian concept of meditation as used in the history of the church and in the Bible, including a word study and contrast between the concepts of meditation in TM as opposed to that of Christianity.

Chapter III: Backgrounds, Definitions, and Comparison on TM and Christian Meditation

Before proposing a strategy for reaching followers of TM with the Gospel of Christ, it is necessary to examine the historical backgrounds of TM and its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Christian uses of words concerning meditation in the English Bible, history of meditation in Christianity, TM engagement with Christianity, and a comparison between the two. This chapter of the thesis will discuss TM and Christian mediation backgrounds, Biblical word study on the words translating in the English Bible as “meditation” and “meditate,” TM involvement with Christianity, and comparison between the concepts of meditation in Christianity and practices in TM. The next chapter will explore both positive and negative reactions to TM by world religions including Christianity, atheists and agnostics, as well as secular contexts. The secular reactions to TM to be discussed in the next chapter include areas such as health and medical sciences, psychology, government, education, and popular culture.

A. TM Definition

Transcendental Meditation is defined by its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as “a process of leading the mind towards the realization of the Self, a process by which the pathless path can become reality for the individual. Meditation takes the mind first to the subtler aspects of creation, then to the subtlest and, finally, beyond the subtlest to the undivided glory of the transcendental source of mind.”¹ Upon introduction, recruits start the process by enrolling in a series of courses which include initiation.² The beginning courses alone cost the client a total of

¹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. *Transcendental Meditation with Questions and Answers*. 4th ed. Maharishi Foundation International-Maharishi Vedic University, 2013, 16.

² Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 208.

\$ 960.³ Then on top of that there are additional expenses such as teacher training programs which are about twelve weeks long and cost about \$1000 to participate.⁴

TM: A Historical Background

As for a historical background on Transcendental Meditation it is difficult to find primary sources with any information on TM or its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, dating before the movement. In addition, any timelines of TM provided in those primary sources also tend to list everything the Maharishi has done as “achievements.” In his entry for on the movement at the database for the World Religions and Spirituality Project at Virginia Commonwealth University school website, scholar Scott Lowe provides a timeline including events before and since the establishment of TM, including facts less than favorable toward Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and TM. Even then some of the dates listed in Lowe’s works have question marks by them.

The movement currently known as Transcendental Meditation was introduced by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was born as Mahesh Prasad Varma in 1915 in Raipur, India.⁵⁶ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi graduated from in 1940 with a degree in Physics from Allahabad University.⁷ Following graduation, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi became the disciple of

³ Tm.org. "Transcendental Meditation Course Fee". Last modified 2016. Accessed January 5, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/course-fee>.

⁴ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 200.

⁵ Scott Lowe. "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation." World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation. Accessed December 16, 2015. <http://www.wrs.vcu.edu/profiles/TranscendentalMeditation.htm>. Lowe comments that much of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s background is uncertain, including his time and place of birth. Lowe has his year of birth as 1918 with a question mark next to it and other sources used for this thesis have either different dates for his year of birth, if a birthdate is there at all. Lowe does not have Maharishi’s place of birth.

⁶ Harold Rabinowitz. "Pat 1: V Eastern Faiths Chapter 3: Hinduism." In *Religion in America: A Comprehensive Guide to Faith, History, and Tradition*, 580-613. New York, NY: Sterling, 2011, p. 597-598. Unlike Lowe, Rabinowitz has Maharishi’s birth year as 2015 and does not include the name he was given at birth.

⁷ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 198.

Hindu guru Swami Brahamanada Saraswati, or Guru Dev.⁸ He studies under Guru Dev for about thirteen years, ending with the death of the Guru.⁹ After the death of Guru Dev in 1953, he retreated to a cave for two years in the Himalayas, declaring himself the title Maharishi in 1956 and came out to spread the ideas of TM to people of India.¹⁰ In 1956, Maharishi also published *The Beacon Light of the Himalayas*, his first book.¹¹

Beginning and history of TM

1957-1967: The First Ten Years

In 1957, Maharishi started the Spiritual Regeneration Movement, now known as Transcendental Meditation.¹² Throughout the following decade, Maharishi distinguished between seven states of consciousness.¹³ The tour for Maharishi's new Movement began in 1958 in the Himalayan region with the goal of spreading TM to the rest of the world.¹⁴ In 1959 TM spread to England and the United States.¹⁵ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi established his organization in California as a nonprofit, though at this point it is still being presented as religious.¹⁶ The very next year, Maharishi founded the International Meditation Society.¹⁷ In 1963, he published his

⁸ Lyle L. Vander Werff. "Transcendental meditation: a challenge to the church." *Reformed Journal* 26, no. 5 (May 1, 1976): 24-28. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed September 3, 2014), 24.

⁹ Christopher H. Partridge. "Indian Religions." In *New Religions: A Guide: New Religious Movements, Sects, and Alternative Spiritualities*, 158-210. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, (2004), 182.

¹⁰ Joseph H Hall. "Transcendental Meditation: Profile of a Westernized Eastern Religion." *Presbyterian* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 1978): 24-32. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed September 3, 2014), 26.

¹¹ Partridge, "Indian Religions," 182.

¹² Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. *Science of Being and Art of Living: Transcendental Meditation*. Newly Rev. & Updated. ed. New York, NY: Plume, 2001, 309.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Translation of the Bhagavad-Gita: Chapters 1-6, in the Light of Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation, Scientific Research Results*. New York, NY: Arkana, 1990, 298 .

¹⁵ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 298.

¹⁶ Lowe, Scott. "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

book, *The Science of Being and the Art of Living*.¹⁸ In 1965 Maharishi applied the Vedic Principle of action to TM and published his own translation and commentary of the Bhagavad-Gita.¹⁹ In 1967, TM became prominent in western popular culture when the Beatles began practicing and promoting TM.²⁰

1967-1976: TM goes Scientific

In 1968, Maharishi started Maharishi International University (now known as Maharishi University of Management) in Iowa.²¹ In 1970 brought the first of what would later become over six hundred separate studies spanning over two hundred universities globally concerning a scientific approach to supporting TM.²² The first of these studies appeared in *Science* magazine and claimed to have concrete data that TM was an efficient practice with scientifically proven results.²³ Maharishi established his science of consciousness, or more widely known as Science of Creative Intelligence in 1971.²⁴ Maharishi's World Plan to solve past and present problems globally began in 1972 by training over two thousand teachers of Science of Creative Intelligence in Spain.²⁵ The same year, Maharishi expanded on his Science of Creative Intelligence begun the previous year by developing a course on the subject consisting of recorded lectures.²⁶ The following year in 1973 each of those teachers world-wide were to lead one of over two thousand centers for the plan, each of which would teach TM and Science of Creative

¹⁸ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 299.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Lowe, Scott. "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

²¹ Partridge, *New Religions*, 183.

²² Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 300.

²³ Lowe, Scott. "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

²⁴ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 300.

²⁵ Ibid., 301.

²⁶ Scott Lowe "Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science and Science." *Nova Religio* 14, no. 4 (May 1, 2011): 54-76. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 3, 2014).

Intelligence.²⁷ Achievement of the World plan would be often referred to as the “Maharishi Effect,” beginning in 1974.²⁸ The central claim of this effect is that one percent of the world’s population practicing TM is enough to reduce violence and world suffering.²⁹ In 1975 Maharishi announced the Dawn of the Age of Enlightenment.³⁰ TM-Sidhis were introduced to TM and the public in 1976.³¹ The same year TM had claimed to reach half a million followers.³² The TM-Sidhis are a group of supposedly super-powerful meditators involved deep enough in TM to defy gravity by levitating or “yogic flying.”³³ The name is a misspelling of the Sanskrit word for “siddhi” used in traditional Hinduism and trademarked for use by TM.³⁴ Yogic flying was and is claimed by promoters of TM to accomplish the Maharishi Effect by spreading consciousness to other people.³⁵ Somewhere near the end of this decade or the beginning of the next one, TM reached one million followers in the United States.³⁶

1977-1987: TM in Court

In 1977 Maharishi created a Campaign for Ideal Society that he would accomplish by sending yogic fliers to over 108 different nations.³⁷ In the late 70’s TM was brought to court in the United States on the claim that its program, Science of Creative Intelligence, was being taught in public schools under the false pretense that it was in no way religious, when in fact its

²⁷ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 301.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 301.

²⁹ Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two)."

³⁰ Lowe, "Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science and Science." 62.

³¹ Lowe, "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

³² Vander Werff, Lyle L. "Transcendental meditation: a challenge to the church." *Reformed Journal* 26, no. 5 (May 1, 1976): 24-28. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed September 3, 2014), 24.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ Lowe, "Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science, and Science," 63.

³⁵ Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two)."

³⁶ Lowe, "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

³⁷ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 302.

initiation ceremony involved the of mantras in the names of Hindu deities.³⁸ The court ruled that TM was in fact in violation of the establishment clause of the first amendment by using government resources to promote its teachings which proved to be religious in nature.³⁹ The Extended Maharishi affect was introduced by scientists in 1978.⁴⁰ The Extended Maharishi takes the effect to the next level by supposedly decreasing crime everywhere in over a hundred nations.⁴¹ With the “square root of one percent of the world’s population” at the time, over 7,000 yogic flyers create what Maharishi called the Global Maharishi Effect.⁴² In 1979, TM adherents flock to by the thousands to Maharishi’s U.S. headquarters in Fairfield, IA.⁴³ TM started a new chapter in the 1980s with Maharishi’s science known as “Vedic Science and Technologies,” trademarked by TM.⁴⁴ Though presented as new and trademarked, they are actually elements that have existed in Indian culture for ages, and consist of: “Ayurvedic medicine, gemstone therapy, astrology, ritual chanting, and more,” introduced to Western culture as an original TM product.⁴⁵ In 1980 Maharishi commented on the Rig Veda and introduced the Science of Life as the key to immortality.⁴⁶ In 1981 Maharishi compiled Vedic texts into a collection he refers to as “Vedic Science and Technology,” or the “Science and Technology of Consciousness.”⁴⁷ Despite his own words claiming TM to not be religious in nature, in 1982 Maharishi introduces the Vedic Principles and Programs for aligning life with God’s will.⁴⁸ Maharishi opens 1,008 colleges of

³⁸ Catherine L. Albanese. "Chapter 9: East Is West: Eastern Peoples and Eastern Religions." In *America: Religions and Religion*, 283-323. 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub., 1992), 306-307.

³⁹ Boston, "Levitating over the church-state wall?" 127.

⁴⁰ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 302-303.

⁴¹ Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two)."

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Lowe, "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Lowe, Scott. "The neo-Hindu Transformation of an Iowa Town." *Nova Religio* 13, no. 3 (February 2010): 81-91. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 15, 2015), 85.

⁴⁶ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 303.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 304.

Law Globally, including the Maharishi University of Law in England.⁴⁹ In 1984 Maharishi held large World Peace Assemblies in various nations across the globe to prove effectiveness of the Maharishi effect.⁵⁰

1987-1996: TM Worldwide

In 1987 Maharishi proposed a plan for World Peace, followed by a Master Plan for Heaven on Earth was established in 1988 and is said to have gone into effect in 1989.⁵¹ Maharishi also claimed the Berlin Wall and the handshake between the United States and the Soviet Union to be proof of that it works.⁵² Maharishi presented to every nation his Alliance with Nature's Government in 1990 applying Natural Law to professional context in order to prepare "Heaven Builders" followed the next year by summoning governments across the globe to align with his Constitution of the Universe to parallel the Government of Nature to ensure solid leadership.⁵³ Over these two years, Maharishi Gains over 100,000 students in two hundred Maharishi Vidya Mandir Schools established in India.⁵⁴ Maharishi established a political party in 1992 in the United Kingdom known as "the Natural Law Party."⁵⁵ According to scholar Scott Lowe, names given to such organizations within TM as the Natural Law Party and others, are intentional in their governmental nature and implications, including the establishment of their own currency, the Raam.⁵⁶ To increase the impact of the Constitution of the Universe on methods of government globally, Maharishi instated the Program for Natural Law-Based

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 304.

⁵¹ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 305.

⁵² Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two)."

⁵³ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 305.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Partridge, *New Religions*, 184.

⁵⁶ Lowe, "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

Administration in 1993 and brought 4,000 Yogic flyers from 64 nations; that same year MBA and computer science classes based on Maharishi's Vedic Management debuted at Maharishi Institute of Management.⁵⁷ It should also be noted that the word "management" has a completely different meaning in the context of TM than it does in most contexts in western culture. In western culture management is usually understood in a business and/or organizational setting where people work together using resources and teamwork to accomplish a common goal or goals. In the context of TM, the same word refers to how managers do their jobs in relationship to Maharishi's Vedic Science and Technologies.⁵⁸ 1994 Maharishi finds a connection between the sciences and religions based on his claim of finding the Veda in human physiology.⁵⁹ While the connection is mentioned in a primary source published by the organization behind TM, that connection is not did not explain in the source, nor does the source specify which Veda(s) Maharishi is referring to in his claim. To prevent the birth of enemies, Maharishi suggested that a prevention wing be established for every army.⁶⁰ In 1995 Maharishi Colleges and Universities using the Vedic Approach to Health open around the World; Campuses for Maharishi Vedic University open in India and Campuses Maharishi University of Management are established in four different nations including the United States.⁶¹ Without any explanation as to why, this year is referred to in TM literature on Maharishi as his year of "silence"; however it could be easily understood as his year of higher education given that he was still actively involved in his movement, it was his only area of activity highlighted for that year and he established many institutions of higher education either based on and/or related to TM.⁶² In 1996 all of Maharishi's

⁵⁷ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 306.

⁵⁸ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Science of Being and Art of Living: Transcendental Meditation*, xxxii.

⁵⁹ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 306.

⁶⁰ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Science of Being and Art of Living: Transcendental Meditation*, xxx.

⁶¹ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 306.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 307.

established schools set their focus on the self and consciousness, or the Hindu concept of Atma, in recognition of Total Knowledge aimed at higher consciousness.⁶³ This piece of information, including the reference to Hinduism, was found in a primary source from the same organization claiming that it is *not* promoting a religion.

1997-2006: TM responds to Violence

In 2001, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Maharishi established a plan to achieve lasting world peace.⁶⁴ Efforts toward lasting world peace were carried out by 40,000 Vedic Pandits engaging in Yoga by the Ganges in India.⁶⁵ It was also in no way explained how this would accomplish the goal of world peace. In 2004, the Campus of Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, made headlines when one of its students was found dead.⁶⁶ The murder not only endangered the students but also the reputation of the university, TM, and its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as many suspected a cover-up attempt. In addition, it led people inside and outside the movement to question that if TM and its related practices were said to bring world peace, there would be no room for crime or violence on the campus. Despite the court's ruling in 1979 against TM being taught in public schools (*Malnak v. Yogi*), TM has had some success.⁶⁷ Rob Boston noted that while schools in California were resistant to TM involvement with their public-school system, attempts to bring TM to public schools Arizona have been met with little to no resistance.⁶⁸

⁶³ Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi. *Bhagavad-Gita: Scientific Research Results*, 307.

⁶⁴Ibid., 309.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Antony Barnett. "Murder Rocks The Maharishi University". *The Guardian*. Last modified 2004. Accessed December 29, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/may/02/usa.theobserver>.

⁶⁷ Boston, "Levitating Over the Church-State Wall?" 127.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 128.

2007-Present: The rest of Maharishi's Life and TM since his Death

In January of 2008, Maharishi welcomed the new year as the Year of Invincibility.⁶⁹ The founder of TM, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, passed away in February of 2008.⁷⁰ He was 91 years old.⁷¹ Based on research by Scott Lowe, it appears that the organizations within TM are being handled on a regional basis.⁷² Due to the fact that Maharishi appointed several leaders within the organization as “kings,” it is not clear who is in charge of what since his death. Lowe also notes that due to competition, the leaders that Maharishi did appoint are not known for being particularly captivating, so they would have posed no threat to his popularity or authority while he was living. It is also believed that his remaining family are attempting to gain control over locations of the organization in India.⁷³ Although the organization is very private about its internal affairs, TM is still continues to be successful since Maharishi's death.

History of Western engagement with TM

Secular Engagement

TM has encountered and interacted with many contexts that are not religious, such as medical science, psychology, government, education, and popular culture. Its involvement with psychology and the health sciences has won followers including well-known individuals in the arts. These individuals include actors and directors in television and film, musical artists, and

⁶⁹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Transcendental Meditation with Questions and Answers*. 4th ed. Maharishi Foundation International-Maharishi Vedic University, 2013. 158-159.

⁷⁰ Sullivan, Patricia. "Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; Was Meditation Guru To The Beatles". *The Washington Post*, 2016. Accessed March 18, 2016. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/05/AR2008020502752.html>.

⁷¹ Boston, "Levitating Over the Church-State Wall?" 2009, 128.

⁷² Lowe, "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

⁷³ Ibid.

television personalities. TM's involvement as an educational organization has gained it access to government resources and also caused some legal conflicts.

Religious Engagement

As far as engagement with religious contexts, TM, despite claims in its advertisements that it is not religious in nature, has roots in Hinduism and actively engages in Hindu spiritual life and activities. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has written commentaries and produced entire new translations of Hindu sacred texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita. Also, this claim has enabled the movement to gain followers of other religious traditions including Christianity and other major world religions, as well as atheist and agnostic adherents. Adherents to traditions other than TM are attracted to it because the claim that it is not religious is understood by the religious followers to mean that it is safe and that there is no risk of conflicting with the teachings of the said religion. The same claim can attract atheists and agnostics to TM because they see it as something they can try without the fear of religion being imposed on them. In addition, non-religious followers can be attracted to TM by means of its claims for health benefits supported by scientific studies.

Christian Meditation Definition

As an example of a Christian definition of meditation, Ronald Youngblood's Bible Dictionary defines the word meditation as:

“the practice of reflection or contemplation. The word meditation or its verb form, to meditate, is found mainly in the Old Testament. The Hebrew words behind this concept mean to murmur, a murmuring, sighing, or moaning. This concept is reflected in Psalm 1:2, where the blessed man meditates on Gods law day and night. The psalmist also prayed that the meditation of his heart would be acceptable in Gods sight (Ps.:19:14). Joshua was instructed to meditate on the Book of the Law for the purpose of obeying all that was written in it (Josh.:1:8).

The Greek word translated as meditate occurs only twice in the New Testament. In Luke 21:14 Jesus instructed His disciples not to meditate beforehand in answering their adversaries when the end of the age comes. The word may be understood in this passage as the idea of preparing a defense for a court appearance. Paul, in 1 Timothy 4:15, urged Timothy to meditate, or take pains with, the instructions he gives. The idea of meditation is also found in Philippians 4:8 and Colossians 3:2. Meditation is a lost art for many Christians, but the practice needs to be cultivated again.”⁷⁴

Biblical Words for “Meditation” and “Meditate”

In the King James Version of the Bible the English word “meditate” is used fourteen times; the word “meditation” is used six times. The Hebrew words for these in the original texts vary, as three different words are used for Meditate and five different Hebrew words are used for meditation. For the English translation of meditate in the New Testament there are two different Greek words used.

Old Testament Words for “Meditate” and “Meditation”

Hebrew words for “meditate.”

In the Christian Old Testament, the English word *meditate* is used twelve times and the word *meditation* is used six times. The Hebrew words for *mediate* in the original texts are *suwach*, *hagah*, and *siyach*.⁷⁵

Suwach. The word *suwach*⁷⁶ is pronounced soo'-akh and used in Genesis 24:63; “And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming.” The dictionary in the back of Strong’s Concordance defines

⁷⁴ Ronald F. Youngblood. *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Meditation.” Nashville, TN; Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

⁷⁵ James Orr, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Entry for 'Meditation.'" "International Standard Bible Encyclopedia". 1915. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/meditation.html>.

⁷⁶ The word *suwach* is numbered 7742 in *Strong’s Concordance*.

this word as “To muse pensively.”⁷⁷ In Genesis 24:63 it translates into English as “meditate” and here Isaac meets his bride-to-be, Rebecca, on his way to meditate. It spans verses 61 through 66 where Isaac and Rebecca are married at the end of Chapter 24, which is entirely about finding Isaac a wife. Benson’s commentary notes that Isaac preceding to meditate immediately followed by camels arriving could be God’s answer to his prayer and meditation.⁷⁸

Hagah. The word *hagah*⁷⁹ is pronounced, daw-gaw', and defined in Vine’s Expository Dictionary as “to meditate, moan, growl, utter, speak.”⁸⁰ It is used in Joshua 1:8, Psalms 1:2, 63:6, 77:12, 143:5, and Isaiah 33:18. Joshua 1:8: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Here he is commanded to meditate on the law to be thoroughly familiar with it. In the opening of Joshua in Moses’ place as leader, Joshua prepares to enter Palestine. The surrounding passage is verses 2-10, where God instructs Joshua to lead Israel. Matthew Henry’s commentary emphasizes that the instruction is not for contemplation but for awareness of God’s law for best possible obedience to Him.⁸¹

Psalm 1:2: “But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Here the author emphasizes the importance of knowing God’s word. It is found in Psalm 1, containing six verses comparing and contrasting the lifestyles and choices of the Godly and the ungodly and the consequences of both. Matthew Henry’s Concise commentary

⁷⁷ Strong, James. “Suwach.” *New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2003, 138.

⁷⁸ Benson, Joseph. 1857. *Genesis 24:63*. Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments (Complete). N.p. Accessed February 18, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/>.

⁷⁹ The word *hagah* is numbered 1897 in Strong’s Concordance.

⁸⁰ Vine, W.E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr. "To Meditate". *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words With Topical Index*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

⁸¹ Henry, Matthew. 1706. *Joshua 1:1-9*. Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete). N.p. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henrycomplete/genesis/>.

notes the necessity of God's people to address His Word to understand and follow it for growth and a Godly life.⁸²

Psalm 63:6: "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the *night* watches." Psalms 63:6 stresses the closeness of God's people in their thoughts toward Him. It is found in Psalm 63, with eleven verses and a thirst for God. The Commentary for the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, notes that David's gratitude for God is enough to keep him awake.⁸³

Psalm 77:12 focuses on remembering God's deeds "Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?" The Psalm contains twenty verses and emphasizes remembering God's actions. Dr. Charles H. Spurgeon's commentary *Treasury of David* remarks the author's remembrance of God's past deeds brings hope that He will continue to meet His people's needs.⁸⁴

Psalm 143:5: "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands." Like previous Psalms using the word *hagah*, Psalm 143:5 involves recognition of all that God has done. Psalm 143 petitions God to help His people. Like other Psalms using the word, it brings hope but also there is contrast between a current, stressful situation and happier times in the past.⁸⁵

Isaiah 33:18: "Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where *is* the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?" The verse refers to thoughts of fear, dread, and

⁸² Henry, Matthew. *Psalm 1:1-3*. Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Concise). N.p., 1706. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/genesis/>.

⁸³ Kirkpatrick, A.F. *Psalm 63:6*. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Commentary). N.p., 1906. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/63-6.htm>

⁸⁴ Spurgeon, Charles H. *Psalm 77:12*. Treasury of David. N.p. 1885. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/treasury-of-david/psalms-77-12.html>

⁸⁵ Kirkpatrick, A.F. *Psalm 143:5*. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Commentary). N.p., 1906. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/63-6.htm>

anxiety. Found in chapter 33 it addresses the people of Jerusalem before deliverance from oppression. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges commentary suggests that with such fast and immediate relief from distress God's people would need to use effort to remember what they were saved from.⁸⁶

Most of the uses of the word *hagah* acknowledge and worship God as supreme ruler, concentrate and engage with His law and word, and remember the good that He has done gratitude, even in difficult times.

Siyach. The dictionary in the back of Strong's Concordance defines *siyach*,⁸⁷ (pronounced see'-akh) as: "converse (with oneself, and hence, aloud) or utter: commune, complain, declare, meditate, muse, pray, speak, talk (with)."⁸⁸ This word occurs in Psalms Chapter 119 in verses 15, 23, 48, 78, and 148. All of the verses using this word are in Psalm 119, and focus on praising God's word.

Psalm 119:15: "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways." In verse 15, the author shows thought and consideration toward God. Matthew Henry's Concise commentary notes the author's intention to put enough thought and focus on God's Word and law over his own wisdom and knowledge for Godly practice.⁸⁹

Psalm 119:23: "Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." The word here refers to the author's focus on God's word instead of what enemies

⁸⁶ Skinner, J. Isaiah 33:18, Isaiah Vol 1& 2. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Commentary). N.p., 1897 & 1898. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/isaiah/33-18.htm>

⁸⁷ The word *siyach* is numbered 7878 in *Strong's Concordance*.

⁸⁸ Strong, James. "siyach." *New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2003, 140.

⁸⁹ Henry, Matthew. *Psalm 119:15*. Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Concise). N.p., 1706. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/119-15.htm>

are doing. When God's people focus on Him and His word, they are refuse to let enemies distract them from His truth; even when it seems the enemy may win, God favors those who seek Him.⁹⁰

Psalm 119:48 "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes." The author loves and prioritizes God's law. Matthew Henry's Complete commentary shows the author's intention to think about God's law and practice it for a Godly life.⁹¹

Psalm 119:78: "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts." Verse 78 again involves the author choosing to focus on God rather than adversaries. Benson's commentary highlights the author's choice to focus his time and energy on God rather than his enemies.⁹²

Psalm 119:148 "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." And lastly, verse 148 pertains to the author staying awake to think about God's promises. Matthew Henry's commentary emphasizes both reading God's word and engaging for understanding and right practice.⁹³

Most biblical uses of the word *siyach* follow a pattern to focus on God, His law, and gratitude. This keeps God's people aligned with His will comforts them in times of distress.

⁹⁰ Kirkpatrick, A.F. *Psalm 119:23*. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Commentary). N.p., 1906. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/119-23.htm>

⁹¹ Henry, Matthew. 1706.*Psalm 119:48*. Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete). N.p. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/psalms/119.html>

⁹² Benson, Joseph. 1857. *Psalm 119:78-79*. Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments (Complete). N.p. Accessed February 18, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/119-78.htm>

⁹³ Henry, Matthew. 1706.*Psalm 119:148*. Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete). N.p. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/psalms/119.html>

Also, it can show enemies a proper example to follow should they decide to turn their focus on God and side with Him and His people.

Hebrew words for “meditation.”

The Hebrew words used for the English word “meditation” in the Old Testament are *hagiya*, *higgayown*, *haguwth*, *siyach*, and *siychah*.⁹⁴

Hagiya. The lexicon at BibleStudyTools.com defines *hagiya*,⁹⁵ (pronounced haw-gheeg') as “whisper, musing, murmuring.”⁹⁶ This word is used in Psalm 5:1; “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.” Here the author asks God to pay attention to his thoughts. It is in Psalm 5 focuses on prayer to God for guidance. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges commentary speculates in this case the meditation may be an unsaid prayer to God from the author.⁹⁷

Higgayown. The dictionary in the back of Strong’s Concordance defines *higgayown*⁹⁸ (pronounced hig-gaw-yone') as “a murmuring sound, i.e. a musical notation (prob. Similar to the modern *affettuoso* to indicate solemnity of movement); by impl. A machination;- device, Higgsion, meditation, solemn sound.”⁹⁹ This word is used in Psalm 19:14; “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” Here the author intends his words and thoughts to be pure and Godly. It is in Psalm 19 and focuses on the word and deeds of God. Barnes’ Notes on the Bible comments that meditation

⁹⁴ Orr, James, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Entry for 'Meditation'". "International Standard Bible Encyclopedia". 1915. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/meditation.html>.

⁹⁵ The word *hagiya* is numbered 1901 in *Strong’s Concordance*.

⁹⁶ Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius. "Hebrew Lexicon entry for Hagiya". *The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon*. Accessed February 17, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/kjv/hagiya.html>

⁹⁷ Kirkpatrick, A.F. *Psalm 5:1*. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Commentary). N.p., 1906. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/5-1.htm#tsk>

⁹⁸ The word *higgayown* is numbered 1902 in *Strong’s Concordance*.

⁹⁹ Strong, James. “Higgayown.” *New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2003, p. 33.

means the following: that God is powerful enough for His people to align their thoughts with His will; that we should pray for that; and our desire for it shows great loyalty in person praying.¹⁰⁰

Haguwth. The dictionary in the back of Strong's Concordance defines *haguwth*¹⁰¹ (pronounced haw-gooth') as: " musing;- meditation."¹⁰² This word is used in Psalm 49:3 "My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." Its use here is to emphasize awareness and wisdom. The Psalm focuses on the fact that wealth cannot save humanity. Matthew Henry's concise commentary notes the author's focus on God's word and teaching as more important than the world's, because God's truth is eternal.¹⁰³

Siyach. The word *siyach*¹⁰⁴ (pronounced see'-akh) is used in Psalm 104:34 "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." The Lexicon at BibleStudyTools.com defines it as "meditation, complaint, musing, plaint, complaint, dubious, anxiety, trouble, talk."¹⁰⁵ Here it centers on Godly thoughts. The surrounding passage focuses on praising God. In Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Barnes notes the joy the author finds in thinking about the person and deeds of God.¹⁰⁶

Siychah. The word *siychah*¹⁰⁷, is pronounced see-khaw' The dictionary in the back of Strong's Concordance defines it as: reflection; by extens. Devotion: - meditation, prayer."¹⁰⁸ This word is used in Psalms 119:97: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day," and

¹⁰⁰ Barnes, Albert. *Psalm 119:14*. Barnes Notes on the Whole Bible (Updated and Expanded). N.d. N.p. . Accessed March 1, 2016. <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bnb/>

¹⁰¹ The word *haguwth* is numbered 1900 in *Strong's Concordance*.

¹⁰² Strong, James. "Haguwth." *New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2003, 33.

¹⁰³ Henry, Matthew. *Psalm 49:3*. Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Concise). N.p., 1706. Accessed February 24, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/1-3.htm>

¹⁰⁴ The word *siyach* is numbered 7879 in *Strong's Concordance*.

¹⁰⁵ Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius. "Hebrew Lexicon entry for "Siyach." *The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon*. Accessed February 17, 2016. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/kjv/siyach-2.html>

¹⁰⁶ Barnes, Albert. *Psalm 104:34*. Barnes Notes on the Whole Bible (Updated and Expanded). N.d. N.p. Accessed March 1, 2016. <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bnb/>

¹⁰⁷ The word *siychah* is numbered 7881 in *Strong's Concordance*.

¹⁰⁸ Strong, James. "Siychah." *New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2003, 141.

99 “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.”

Both of these verses emphasize the author’s love for God’s law and the blessing of wisdom that comes from meditating on it. They are in Psalm 119, which praises God’s word.

New Testament Words for Meditate

In the New Testament, the English word meditate is used twice and the word meditation is only used in the Old Testament. The Greek words that translate into “meditate” in the New Testament are *promeletao* and *meletao*.¹⁰⁹

Promeletao

*Promeletao*¹¹⁰ (pronounced prom-el-et-ah'-o) is used in Luke 21:14 “Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer.” Vine’s Dictionary defines it as “to premeditate.”¹¹¹ In Luke 21:14 the word is used in reference to Jesus’ followers thinking about how they will defend themselves, but instead Jesus asks them to trust Him to provide the necessary answers when the time comes. The surrounding passage concerns Jesus’ audience worrying about how to recognize and respond to end times. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges emphasizes that Jesus was telling His followers not to be anxious or preoccupied for a defense when challenged, because God provides when needed.¹¹²

Meletao

Meletao,¹¹³ (pronounced mel-et-ah'-o) is used in 1 Timothy 4:15 “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.” Vine’s Dictionary

¹⁰⁹ Orr, James, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Entry for 'Meditation'". "International Standard Bible Encyclopedia". 1915. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/meditation.html>.

¹¹⁰ The word *promeletao* is numbered 4304 in *Strong’s Concordance*.

¹¹¹ Vine, W.E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr. "Meditate". *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words With Topical Index*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

¹¹² Farrar, F.W. Luke 21:14. Luke. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Commentary). N.p., 1891. Accessed March 2, 2016. <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/luke/21-14.htm>

¹¹³ The word *meletao* is numbered 3191 in *Strong’s Concordance*.

defines *meletao* as “to care for, to attend to, practice.”¹¹⁴ Here it refers to focusing on the teachings and practices of Christ to contribute to the kingdom. It is in Chapter 4 which emphasizes the importance of thought and practice of God’s word to be a minister of Christ. Benson’s commentary emphasizes the thoughts and words of the meditator and God as well as the meditator’s action in relation to those; the truth of God is to be thought about and considered to practice for a Godly life.¹¹⁵

Also, not listed in Bible dictionaries under Greek or Hebrew words for meditate, or meditation, another verse in the Bible that uses “meditate” in some English translations is Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things (NKJV)” The King James Version translates from the Greek word *logizomai* to the English word “think.”¹¹⁶ Other translations, where the KJV reads “think” in this verse, use the word “meditate” as in the New Kings James and the Voice translations. Even it does not translate to “meditate” in every English translation, and even though it involves a different historical context than other uses of “meditate,” the message itself could be applied to help the meditator and its use is consistent with most if not all biblical words translating to “meditate” or “meditation.” Like others translating to these in English, the verse only reinforces the idea of the Christian focusing on God and not on evil. There is a strong, consistent pattern encouraging the Christian meditator

¹¹⁴ Vine, W.E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr. "Meditate". *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words With Topical Index*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

¹¹⁵ Benson, Joseph. 1857. 1 Timothy 4:15. Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments (Complete). N.p. Accessed February 18, 2016. http://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/4-15.htm.

¹¹⁶ W.E., Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Jr. "Think". *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words With Topical Index*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

to place priority on the blessing of God in their thoughts, word, and actions, the curse of problems in a temporary world.

The differences between meditation in Christianity and in TM

In light of the above information of biblical usage of words for meditation and TM's use of it, an observation could be made that almost every form of Biblical word used for meditation involves thought, awareness, and/or engagement with God. None of the definitions allow room for the meditator to leave their mind completely open to anything and everything. They all focus on God, who he is, His Holy Word, His deeds, or any combination of the above; none of the meditations are empty but they are focused. Also, none of the biblical uses of any words translating into English as "mediate" or "meditation" treat the human being as equal to or part of God. All the verses, explicitly or implicitly, treat God as the ultimate authority over humanity. All of the verses also regard God as a person.

In TM, to meditate is defined as: "a systematic technique that allows mental activity to settle down to a silent state of awareness where the mind is calm, collected, yet fully expanded, fully awake."¹¹⁷

Views of Christian meditation and TM.

Some Christians are against meditation in general, or even mediation in Christian context. Some are fearful because they automatically associate any type of meditation with Asian religious traditions.¹¹⁸ The Christian practice of meditation has been forgotten by some, and it

¹¹⁷ Robert Roth. *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation: A New Introduction to Maharishi's Easy, Effective and Scientifically Proven Technique for Promoting Better Health, Unfolding Your Creative Potential-and Creating Peace in the World*. Rev. and Updated ed. Fairfield, IA: Maharishi University of Management Press, 2002, 11.

¹¹⁸ Hedding, "The Uniqueness of Christian Meditation," 1.

has been centuries since it was a common tradition.¹¹⁹ In his book, *Prayer of Heart and Body*, Thomas Ryan says that rather than learning intellectually about God that the meditation allows the Christian to know Him through direct experience.¹²⁰

Christian meditation has been around as long as Christianity itself, including the three major branches, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant including evangelical denominations.¹²¹ In his thesis on the difference between Christian meditation and eastern meditation, Hedding notes that with a few exceptions, anything written on meditation by Christians is for the most part at least seven hundred years old.¹²²

Some categories of meditation in Christianity include: hesychastic, mantric, intellectual, devotional, and scriptural. *Hesychasm* is the focus of divine revelation from God, often through quiet solitude free from distraction to focus on Him.¹²³ Mantric meditation is done through the repetition of a sacred word or name.¹²⁴ Intellectual meditation is based on an eastern monastic tradition involving the focus of the mind, or nous, on God rather than worldly things.¹²⁵

Devotional meditation is defined as a “a broad term referring to the many strategies, often derived from spiritual formation exercises designed to foster awareness and attention on God.”¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 31.

¹²⁰ Ryan, Thomas. *Prayer of Heart and Body*, 15.

¹²¹ Fernando Garzon. "Christian Devotional Meditation for Anxiety" (2013). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 74. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs_fac_pubs/74.2013, 60.

¹²² Hedding, "The Uniqueness of Christian Meditation," 12.

¹²³ Francis Leneghan, "Preparing The Mind For Prayer: The Wanderer, Hesychasm And Theosis", *Neophilologus* 100, no. 1 (2015): 121-142, accessed February 14, 2017, <http://link.springer.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/10.1007%2Fs11061-015-9455-3>, 121, 124.

¹²⁴ J. Mermis-Cava, "An Anchor And A Sail: Christian Meditation As The Mechanism For A Pluralist Religious Identity", *Sociology of Religion* 70, no. 4 (2009): 432-453, accessed February 14, 2017, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/216754710/abstract/284F2E60CC1E4767PQ/1?accountid=12085>, 437.

¹²⁵ Columba Stewart, "Evagrius Ponticus And The Eastern Monastic Tradition On The Intellect And The Passions", *Modern Theology* 27, no. 2 (2011): 263-275, accessed February 15, 2017, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2010.01675.x/full>.

¹²⁶ Thomas Frederick and Kristen M. White, "Mindfulness, Christian Devotion Meditation, Surrender, And Worry", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 18, no. 10 (2015): 850-858, accessed February 14, 2017, <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/full/10.1080/13674676.2015.1107892>.

Scriptural meditation is reading the Bible with the intention of engaging and internalizing the Word of God.¹²⁷

Early examples of Christians in meditation include St. Marcarius, Diadochus, and St. John Climacus, in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹²⁸ In the 1500s St. Ignatius implemented the idea of meditation as a way for the Christian to find his or her self in God's story; this is still used today, centuries later and is often referred to by Christians as "scriptural drama meditation."¹²⁹ Other types of Christian meditation are scriptural truth mediation and Christ-centered present moment awareness.¹³⁰ Other well-known Christians who have practiced meditation through the centuries include St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa, Evagrius of Pontus, and others.¹³¹ Groups within Christianity that have used it include: Orthodox, Society of Friends, and Quietists.¹³²

In early Christian Monasticism, there was emphasis on meditation, but it was different from eastern traditions or Transcendental Meditation. In the fifth and sixth centuries, Christian meditation often focused on repeating Jesus' name.¹³³ Christian mystic St. Macarius, advised another Christian to: "meditate on the Gospel and the other Scriptures, and if a thought arises within you, never look at it but always look upwards, and the Lord will come at once to your help."¹³⁴ St. Marcarius is an example of a hesychastic meditator in Christianity. This was done to

¹²⁷ J. Stephen Yuille, "Conversing With God's Word: Scripture Meditation In The Piety Of George Swinnoek", *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5, no. 1 (2012): 35-55, accessed February 15, 2017, http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=vic_liberty&id=GALE|A327357702&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon#, 36-37.

¹²⁸ Ryan, *Prayer of Heart and Body*, 35.

¹²⁹ Garzon, "Christian Devotional Meditation for Anxiety," 64.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 62, 66.

¹³¹ Benedict, *Watkins Dictionary*, "Meditation," 353.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Ryan, *Prayer of Heart and Body*, 35.

¹³⁴ Douglas E Burton-Christie. "The Call of the Desert: Purity of Heart and Power in Early Christian Monasticism." *Pro Ecclesia* 7, no. 2 (1998 1998): 216-234. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 7, 2016), 225.

place the focus of the Christian on God instead of whatever their problems were. The goal behind this meditation was a peaceful effect known as *hesychia*.¹³⁵ Hesychia is a Greek word that translates into English as “quietness.”¹³⁶

One group of Christians who practiced meditation was known as the Desert Fathers, starting around the fourth century.¹³⁷ Desert Father Evagrius of Pontus approached prayer as intellectual communication with God.¹³⁸ He referred to this as “prayer of the mind.”¹³⁹ Evagrius emphasized dispassion as important to focusing on communication with God.¹⁴⁰ In his work *On Prayer*, Evagrius writes “The whole war between us and the unclean demons is about nothing else except spiritual prayer, because spiritual prayer is particularly offensive and intolerable to them and particularly beneficial and propitious for us.”¹⁴¹ He also notes in his writing that dispassion itself is not enough if the person is still focused on the problems because even by attempting to solve them the individual is still focused on the problem and not on God.¹⁴²

A Christian leader who recommended the repetition of Jesus’ name was St. John Climacus.¹⁴³ St. John Climacus is an example of a Christian who practiced mantric meditation. St. John Climacus was a seventh century monk who sought contemplation of God which solved

¹³⁵ Ibid, 226.

¹³⁶ Curtis Elliott, "Mission As Ascetic Experience: Hesychasm And The Anthropology Of Sergei Horujy For Mission Theology", *Mission Studies* 28, no. 2 (2011): 230-231. *ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost* (accessed November 29, 2016) .

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Vincent Rossi, "Dispassion And Pure Prayer", *Religions*, no. 2 (2012): 93-106, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/912386062?accountid=12085>.

¹³⁹ Elliott, "Mission As Ascetic Experience," 232.

¹⁴⁰ Rossi, "Dispassion And Pure Prayer," 94.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ryan, *Prayer of Heart and Body*, 35.

the conflicts of dispassion and doubt, liminality and eschatology and between community and the individual, which he saw as possible challenges to living a Godly life.¹⁴⁴

St. Francis of Assisi was a thirteenth century monk who practiced meditation.¹⁴⁵ St. Francis had visions of God that came from deep reflection on His word and regular prayer.¹⁴⁶ He emphasized meditation on God's word and in his writings, *Admonitions*, that "Where there is inner peace and meditation, there is neither anxiousness nor dissipation."¹⁴⁷ St. Francis' focus on the word of God is an example of scriptural meditation.

An additional Christian leader involved in meditation was St. Thomas Aquinas.¹⁴⁸ Unlike the focus of St. Francis and those in the Franciscan tradition on imitation of Christ, Aquinas looked at meditation and contemplation in a more intellectual perspective.¹⁴⁹ Aquinas method of meditation is an example of intellectual meditation. Though he believed that internal and external factors such as distractions and worldly desires could interfere with one's contemplation and prayer, he believed that that they may not be a problem if used to enhance one's walk with God in a way that would serve Him.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Jonathan L. Zecher, "The Angelic Life In Desert And Ladder: John Climacus's Re-Formulation Of Ascetic Spirituality", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21, no. 1 (2013): 117-130. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed November 27, 2016).

¹⁴⁵ Dorothea Marie Epple, "The Experiences Of St. Francis: Parallels For Christian Social Workers", *Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work* 37, no. 1 (2010): 81, 83. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/230169327?accountid=12085> (accessed November 27, 2016).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 83.

¹⁴⁸ Kevin Hart, "Contemplation: Beyond And Behind", *Sophia* 48, no. 4 (2009): 443-444. Accessed November 27, 2016. <http://link.springer.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/10.1007%2Fs11841-009-0131-6>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas J. Bushlack, "Mindfulness And The Discernment Of Passions: Insights From Thomas Aquinas", *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 14, no. 2 (2014):157, 160. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1622689446?accountid=12085>.(Accessed November 27, 2016).

Hugh of St. Victor of the twelfth century saw meditation as both a learning discipline and a spiritual one.¹⁵¹ He viewed meditation as a necessary spiritual discipline to open the way for other spiritual disciplines in one's relationship with God.¹⁵² Hugh described three different spiritual focuses of meditation: moral virtues, the commandments, and divine works.¹⁵³ The steps involved in Hugh's description of spiritual meditation involve: the admiration or acknowledgement of a topic in one of the above categories; questioning the reality behind it; investigation for an answer; the answer itself, and contemplation of the answer.¹⁵⁴ Hugh describes the effect of meditation as similar to being in one's own ark alone with God.¹⁵⁵

St. Augustine was a Christian monk from the sixteenth century who used devotion and memory to reflect on Genesis as the model for spiritual life with God.¹⁵⁶ St. Augustine's meditation is an example of devotional meditation. Augustine's prayer life focused on engaging the mind, emotions and motivation for a direct link to God.¹⁵⁷ St. Teresa of Avila, also of the sixteenth century, emphasized what is known as a prayer of union and the way as a means to achieve it through importance of contemplative prayer and meditation on the greatness of God.¹⁵⁸ Her works were part of the inspiration behind Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte Guyon and the

¹⁵¹ Matthew R. McWhorter, "Hugh Of St. Victor On Contemplative Meditation", *The Heythrop Journal* 55, no. 1 (2011): 110-122, accessed November 21, 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259551158_Hugh_of_St_Victor_on_Contemplative_Meditation, 11-112.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁵⁶ Andrés G. Niño, "Spiritual Exercises In Augustine's Confessions", *Journal of Religion and Health* 47, no. 1 (2007): 99. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 29, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁵⁸ Mary Margaret Anderson, "Thy Word In Me: On The Prayer Of Union In St. Teresa Of Avila's Interior Castle", *Harvard Theological Review* 99, no. 03 (2006): 333-336, 340-341. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/229477649?accountid=12085>. (Accessed November 27, 2016).

Quietist controversy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁵⁹ Meditation in the Society of Friends, or Quakers, is closely related to the Quietist movement because they both focus on internal spiritual life with God.¹⁶⁰ Protestant Bishop Joseph Hall, a ...of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was influenced by Augustine and wrote several works on meditation titled *The Arte of Divine Meditation, Meditations and Vowes*, and *Heaven on Earth*.¹⁶¹ Despite this, Hall saw meditation as no more than a means to turn the mind on a spiritual item through dialog on a topic.¹⁶² Hall identified three types of meditation: two deliberate forms of meditation- logical and emotional- and then what Hall referred to as an “occasional” meditation because it was prompted by external factors.¹⁶³

Hesychasm has been practiced in Orthodox Christian meditation since the fourth century and continues to the present.¹⁶⁴ More recently, twentieth century Orthodox Christian Sergei Horujy of Moscow has stressed the importance of the *hesychia* and its impact on Christian missions.¹⁶⁵ Horujv sees *hesychia* as necessary for mission as a spiritual practice, to be on one accord with God to live in His will and serve His kingdom.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ Ward, Patricia A. "Madame Guyon And Experiential Theology In America". *Church History* 67, no. 03 (1998): 485. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 28, 2016).

¹⁶⁰ Elaine Pryce, ""Negative To A Marked Degree" Or "An Intense And Glowing Faith"?: Rufus Jones And Quaker Quietism", *Common Knowledge* 16, no. 3 (2010): 521. . *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 27, 2016).

¹⁶¹ Frank Livingstone Huntley, "Bishop Joseph Hall And Protestant Meditation", *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 10, no. 2 (1977): 57-59. *Academic Search Alumni Edition*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 30, 2016).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁶⁴ Elliott, "Mission As Ascetic Experience," 228.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 240-241.

Types, Benefits and Importance of Christian Meditation

There have been few studies on the effects of Christian meditation on health, one of which, conducted in South Africa by Steven D. Edwards and David J. Edwards, found that “.”¹⁶⁷ The study focused on a small sample of ten practicing Christians ranging in age from 21 to 85.¹⁶⁸ They meditated for at least fifteen minutes each, resting before-hand for two minutes to prepare.¹⁶⁹ During this time the subjects’ blood volume pulse (BVP), electromyographic (EMG), electroencephalographic (EEG), and respiratory activity were documented.¹⁷⁰ The specific focus involving the Christian meditation, involved concentration on the Trinity and its effect on health and the spiritual life of the Christian.¹⁷¹ The study combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods and included a section at the end about theological suggestions of the findings.¹⁷² The study concluded: “participants found the integral investigation into Trinity meditation practically and theologically valuable and meaningful.”¹⁷³

Psychologist Fernando L. Garzon at Liberty University says Christian meditation has many mental health benefits such as counseling and psychotherapy for Christians, especially those with anxiety.¹⁷⁴ Garzon is for Christian meditation because he says that it can heal, grow the relationship with God in love, as well as that of the neighbor and the self.¹⁷⁵ Garzon acknowledges numerous forms that Christian Devotional Meditation can take when used in

¹⁶⁷ S D., Edwards and David John Edwards. "An integral investigation into the phenomenology and neurophysiology of Christian Trinity meditation." *Hts* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 3, 2014), 1.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p 1-2.

¹⁷² Ibid., 1.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷⁴ Garzon, Fernando. L. "Christian Devotional Meditation for Anxiety" (2013). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 74. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs_fac_pubs/74.2013, 59.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 60.

therapy, noting the following three: “scriptural truth meditation (STM), scriptural drama meditation (SDM), and Christ-centered present moment awareness (CCPMA).”¹⁷⁶ He describes scriptural truth meditation in two different types; STM focused on God and that focused on the Bible itself.¹⁷⁷ The STM focusing on God emphasizes his character and the relationship between Him and the meditator.¹⁷⁸ The STM focused on the Bible highlights bible passages that are short enough to be said in one or two exhales during breathing exercises.¹⁷⁹ Garzon expresses scriptural drama meditation as a means by which the meditator considers their place in God’s narrative.¹⁸⁰ Scriptural drama meditation consists of immersion in the biblical narrative through use of the senses and imagination, particularly the parables and narratives of the Gospels.¹⁸¹ This form of meditation was developed by Ignatius and today takes the form of retreats in many Christian denominations.¹⁸² Other forms it takes in modern times include the formation of relevant habits in daily life over longer periods of time as well as methods of therapy.¹⁸³ He defines Christ-centered present moment awareness as a version of mindfulness meditation adapted for practice by Christian meditators.¹⁸⁴ This entails the application of present moment awareness to the Christian meditator’s relationship with God.¹⁸⁵

Garzon is open to the idea of adapting methods of meditation from other religious traditions as he demonstrates in a presentation by refocusing, when appropriate, some of the

¹⁷⁶ Garzon, "Christian Devotional Meditation for Anxiety," 62.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 62-64.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 64.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Garzon, "Christian Devotional Meditation for Anxiety," 64.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 65-67.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

concepts in other religious meditative practices to focus on God and His word.¹⁸⁶ He includes exercises for journey, awareness, and breathing.¹⁸⁷ Catholic priest, Ftr. Thomas Ryan supports, practices, and teaches the adaptation of the Hindu tradition of yoga for Christians by applying concepts to Christian devotional meditation and contemplative prayer.¹⁸⁸ Ftr Ryan also tends to use Christian meditation and contemplative prayer interchangeably.

In light of the TM definitions and the Christian definition of meditation, reaction by Christians to the practice of Transcendental Meditation has consisted of mixed responses. Theologian Irving Hexham defines TM as a “Hindu-based, new religious movement.”¹⁸⁹

Arguments for Transcendental Meditation and its compatibility (or incompatibility) with Christianity

In addition to Maharishi’s claim that TM is not religious and that it should only enhance other religions including Christianity, there are some Christian adherents of TM that support his claim. There are many Christians and whole churches as that have embraced TM as not only nonreligious but as an enhancement to their own Christian meditation.¹⁹⁰ According to the TM blog, Catholic priest Father Len Dubi and Methodist minister Reverend John Hutchinson have practiced TM for more than thirty years alongside the Christian life.¹⁹¹ According to the blog

¹⁸⁶ Fernando Garzon. Adapting Mindfulness and Other Meditation Forms for Conservative Christians. Presentation at the American Association of Christian Counseling World Conference, Nashville, TN, 2015, 1-4.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ryan, *Prayer of Heart and Body*, 3-9.

¹⁸⁹ Hexham, Irving. "Transcendental Meditation". *Pocket Dictionary Of New Religious Movements: Over 400 Groups, Individuals And Ideas Clearly And Concisely Defined*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

¹⁹⁰ Weldon, John. "Sampling of the new religions: four groups described." *International Review Of Mission* 67, no. 268 (October 1978): 407-426. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 15, 2015), 424.

¹⁹¹ Roth, Bob. "Father Len Dubi: How TM Enriches My Religious Life (Part 1)". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, 2010. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/people/christianity-and-transcendental-meditation-father-dubi-interview/>.

they both understand it as not being religious.¹⁹² In Bob Roth's blog entry based on his conversations with the two Christian leaders, he notes their stress on the following: "(a) is not religious in nature, (b) does not conflict with their religion," and "(c) only enriches their Christian faith."¹⁹³

TM engagement with Christians

Many other Christians oppose the practice of TM on the basis of its Hindu roots which contradict the beliefs and biblical worldview of Christianity.¹⁹⁴ Former TM adherent turned Christian John Weldon states that TM directly conflicts with Christianity.¹⁹⁵ He says that TM and Christian Meditation, or as he calls it, CM, are "polar opposites."¹⁹⁶

There seem to be numerous conflicting understandings of TM, depending on the audience. There is the understanding that it is nonreligious, as TM has advertised in order to receive government funding and to gain followers from contexts other than that of religion.¹⁹⁷

This has been successful as it has gained TM government support as an educational organization rather than a religious one.¹⁹⁸ This claim is also helpful to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his organization because it not only attracts followers of traditions outside of TM that otherwise would not participate, but the impression that it is not religious could win followers who are atheist, agnostic, and legally speaking, the statement that it is not religious could lead

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Weldon, John. "Sampling of New Religions." 424.

¹⁹⁵ Weldon, John, and Zola Levitt. *The Transcendental Explosion*. Irvine, CA: Harvest House Publishers, 1976, 176-177.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 200.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

the government to assume automatically that TM poses no risk for violations of the religion clauses of the first Amendment.

There is the pantheistic, Universalist approach where Maharishi says that TM fulfills religion: “Here is the fulfillment of every religion in the simple practice of Transcendental Meditation. This belongs to the spirit of every religion; it has existed in the early stages of every faith, it is something which has been lost.”¹⁹⁹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi backs his claim by his argument that its truths can be found in other religions that adherents to other faith traditions should adopt its practice to enhance their spiritual lives in light of what their traditions already teach.²⁰⁰

There is the exclusivist approach where Maharishi claims that TM is the only true Hinduism.²⁰¹ Christian Theologian John Weldon points this out in his book, *The Transcendental Explosion*. In a supporting quote against unbelievers and opponents by the Maharishi himself, Weldon states that TM does indeed have what he calls a “dark side.” In the Maharishi’s statement, he claims that the opponents and anyone in disagreement with the teachings and core beliefs of TM cannot be allowed to continue in existence as they are ignorant and that light cannot coexist with darkness, but naturally in this scenario TM is the light and everything else is dark.²⁰²

This chapter has examined the historical backgrounds of the TM movement, its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Christian meditation, Biblical terms for meditation as used in the

¹⁹⁹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. *Science of Being and Art of Living: Transcendental Meditation*. Newly Rev. & Updated. ed. New York, NY: Plume, 2001, 254.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Weldon, and Levitt. *The Transcendental Explosion*., 13.

²⁰² Ibid.

original Hebrew and Greek texts, comparison of Christian Meditation and TM, and attempts by TM to engage with Christians. The next Chapter will examine more deeply where Christians stand on the matter. It has also compared and contrasted the concepts of meditation between the Christian Bible and TM. The next chapter will explore approaches to TM by other religions, as well as reactions to TM by nonreligious contexts such as the health and medical sciences, the field of psychology, education, well-known figures in popular culture, and legal issues.

Chapter IV: Approaches to TM

Other Major Religions

In addition to Christian supporters, TM also has a following in other religions. As far as reactions to TM by other religions, Latter-Day Saints have some adherents to TM, and some critics. In his master's thesis for Brigham Young University, though noting differences between Mormonism and TM, Gregory Cherry says the issue of whether TM is a religion depends on which definition of religion one uses.¹ As for TM enthusiasts adhering to Judaism, Rabbi Abraham Shainberg has been practicing TM for over ten years.² He says that in the TM videos he watched when he first found out about it that Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was perfectly in line with Orthodox Judaism.³

TM has also had influence in Buddhist communities. Buddhist monk and TM instructor Reverend Koji Oshima has been involved in the training of TM for over 3,000 Buddhists throughout southeast Asia.⁴ Buddhist nuns at Thai school Dhammajarinee Witthaya brought TM to the school to help the students in the at-risk community where the school is located.⁵ Buddhist TM adherent insists that "no one is ever required to change any of their own personal beliefs or cultural traditions" and that TM is "completely in line with mainstream Buddhist teachings."⁶

¹ Gregory C. Cherry, "Transcendental Meditation And Mormonism" (M.A., Brigham Young University, 1974), 28.

² Bob Roth. "Orthodox Rabbi Speaks On His 9-Year TM Practice". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, 2010. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/people/rabbi-transcendental-meditation/>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bob Roth. "Thousands Of Buddhist Monks In Asia Learn Transcendental Meditation". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, (2011). Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/meditation/buddhist-monks/>.

⁵ Stephanie Finamore. "TM Becomes Integral Part Of Buddhist School In Thailand". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, (2012). Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/students/tm-becomes-integral-part-of-buddhist-school-in-thailand/>.

⁶ "Religious Leaders - David W. Orme-Johnson, Ph.D.". *Truthabouttm.Org*. Last modified (2006). Accessed July 19, 2016. <http://www.truthabouttm.org/truth/IndividualEffects/IsTMaReligion/ReligiousLeaders/index.cfm>.

Some Muslims also support TM. On the religious leaders' page of Dr. Orne-Johnson's website Truthabouttm.org, there is a page containing letters posted by leaders of various religious traditions who also practice TM, four Muslims who have written letters in favor of TM. Nada Haider says "TM is not a religion and it does not in any way require individuals to change their personal beliefs or practices; yet, by promoting a clear mind and a clean, stress-free nervous system, it helps one to live the highest values of religious life."⁷ Mohammad Haghverdi writes, "However, TM does not replace my religion it is only an excellent support to it. TM does not provide an alternative faith; it is not a religion."⁸ Coming from a family that has practiced both Islam and TM since 1973, Dr. Atmane Kouider recommends TM as an enhancement to Islamic practice.⁹ The last of the four Muslim leaders who posted on the page, Miral Shaaban supports TM and like the others on the page, encourages it and sees it as a way to strengthen Islamic practice.¹⁰

Others in Islamic communities are against TM and approach it as a gimmick.¹¹ One blog aiming aimed at clearing up confusion about Islam, "Questions on Islam," approaches TM as a combination of Hinduism and Buddhism.¹² The author of the entry, Mustafa Aydin, refers to theologian M. Enes Ergene's statement that in some contexts TM and other activities are presented as exercises rather than religious activities to be more marketable to some religious groups.¹³

⁷Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "What Is The Islamic Opinion Of Practices About The Utilization Of Bio-Energy In Humans, Such As Reiki, Yoga And Meditation?". Blog, *Questions On Islam: Let There Be No Question Unanswered*, 2010. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.questionsonislam.com/question/what-islamic-opinion-practices-about-utilization-bio-energy-humans-such-reiki-yoga-and-medi>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

There are some adherents in the Mormon tradition who also support TM on the basis that there is much in common with TM and the Later-Day Saint tradition as well enhancing spiritual life. Like Gregory Cherry, Latter-Day Saint priest Marc Stephens encourages the practice of TM as compatible and even beneficial to the Mormon religious tradition.¹⁴

Secularists

As for secularists, there is little information in either direction to indicate how atheists and agnostics feel for or against TM since its audience includes people even in secular contexts. John Weldon notes that even if nonreligious people adhere to TM for secular perks that TM claims to bring with it, they are just as much victims of fraud as religious targets because they are also being lied to as well.¹⁵

Secular Disciplines

Secular disciplines involved with TM include the fields of medical science and psychology, law and government, and entertainment in Western culture.

Clinical health studies: medical science

So far from the sources it is unclear as to any named practitioners of TM from other traditions are fluent in Sanskrit or if they have had any teaching about comparative religions. Health organizations involved with TM include the American Heart Association and the American Psychological Association. If one checks the websites for these organizations, one can find: The American Heart Association has many journals, two of which have studies in favor of TM used on the TM website. While it there is no indication that the site is affiliated with TM or

¹⁴ “Religious Leaders,” Truthabouttm.org, 2006.

¹⁵ Weldon, “Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two).”

MUM, there is content on its website showing positive results for the effects of TM. The first one, an AHA Statement published in *Hypertension* Journal, supports TM by its report that based on studies with mixed or negative results testing different types of Meditation, TM had the most beneficial results.¹⁶ The statement concluded: “other meditation techniques are not recommended in clinical practice to lower BP at this time.”¹⁷ As stated in the report on the status of research concerning TM and other methods of meditation on health, many of the studies conducted involving health benefits of TM are tainted by flaws in technique.¹⁸

The American Psychological Association

Despite studies that have shown positive effects of TM, there are also some that show otherwise. According to physician Herbert Benson, shows that the exact same health benefits can be found in a non-religious manner outside the context of TM closing by one’s eyes, sitting down, relaxing muscles from head to toe, and simply repeating “one” for ten to twenty minutes daily.¹⁹ With this information, it is not only clear that the effects claimed by TM are not only unoriginal to TM but they can also be done without spending any money.²⁰ Other studies, such as the one fromexamined earlier in the literature review, concluded that the evidence in the study was not enough to prove or disprove the effectiveness of TM on health.²¹

¹⁶ R. D. Brook, L. J. Appel, M. Rubenfire, G. Ogedegbe, J. D. Bisognano, W. J. Elliott, and F. D. Fuchs et al. "Beyond Medications And Diet: Alternative Approaches To Lowering Blood Pressure: A Scientific Statement From The American Heart Association". *Hypertension* 61, no. 6 (2013): 1360-1383, p 6.

¹⁷ Brook, et.al, “Beyond Medications and Diet,” 6.

¹⁸ Ospina, et. al, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research*, 3.

¹⁹ Vander Werff, Lyle L. "Transcendental meditation: a challenge to the church." *Reformed Journal* 26, no. 5 (May 1, 1976): 24-28. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed September 3, 2014), 26.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ospina, et. al, *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research*, 210.

Psychology

In a leading organization for the discipline of Psychology there are at least four different words concerning meditation, only one of them pertaining to TM (the first word for meditation being defined in the introduction). Other APA definitions of meditation include concentrative and mindfulness forms of meditation.

Concentrative meditation is defined as: “a type of meditation that focuses on a single stimulus (e.g., breathing); a specific image (e.g., a Yantra); a specific sound, syllable, word or phrase (see Mantra); or a specific thought. It is the opposite of insight in that thoughts unrelated to the stimulus do not enter the consciousness.”²²

Mindfulness meditation is defined as: “a type of meditation in which thoughts, feelings, and sensations are experienced freely as they arise. Mindfulness meditation is intended to enable individuals to become highly attentive to sensory information and to focus on each moment as it occurs.”²³ In a dictionary of psychology terms,

TM is defined by the American Psychological Association as:

“a technique of concentrative meditation for achieving a transcendental state of consciousness. Based on the Bhagavad-gita and other Hindu writings, it was introduced in the United states in 1959 by Indian-born guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The modern version of the original discipline consists of six steps that culminate in sitting with one’s eyes closed, while repeating a mantra, for two twenty-minute periods a day. Repetition of the mantra serves to block distracting

²² Vandenbos, “Concentrative Meditation”. *APA Dictionary Of Psychology*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2015.

²³ Vandenbos, “Mindfulness Meditation”. *APA Dictionary Of Psychology*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2015.

thoughts and to induce a state of relaxation in which images and ideas can arise from deeper levels of mind and from cosmic source of all thought and being. The result is said to be not only a greater sense of well-being but also more harmonious interpersonal relations and the achievement of a state of ultimate self-awareness and restful alertness.”²⁴

Legal Issues and Court Cases

None of the court cases involving TM have come up in official TM literature. Much like business advertisement, nothing unflattering is to be found in official literature content for TM. This section will explore just a few of TM movement’s many courtroom encounters:

Malnak v. Yogi

The court case, *Malnak v. Yogi*, occurred in 1977 as the result of twelve plaintiffs, the first named one being Malnak, who objected to the teaching in New Jersey public schools of a course called “The Science of Creative Intelligence,” which claimed to be “non-religious” but required students to become involved with Transcendental Meditation and its Hindu roots.²⁵ The case was brought to court on the grounds that the course in question violated the First Amendment in that it used government funds for a “neutral” course which in fact taught a religious practice.²⁶ The plaintiffs included four parents of two children in the New Jersey public education system, The other plaintiffs included members of the Coalition for Religious Integrity, non-profit Maryland corporation Americans United for Separation of Church and State,

²⁴ VandenBos, Gary R. “Transcendental Meditation”. *APA Dictionary Of Psychology*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2015, 951-952.

²⁵ *Malnak v. Yogi* 440 F. Supp. 1284. Dist. Court, D. New Jersey, 1977.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

California corporation known as the Spiritual Counterfeit Project, and a clergyman native to New Jersey.²⁷ The contents of the textbook in addition to expert witnesses and evidence of the puja ceremony led to the decision of Judge Meanor that the defendants had in fact violated the First Amendment.²⁸

After being ruled in violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment in the district court, the case was appealed to the third circuit of the United States Court of Appeals in 1978.²⁹ After examination of the expert witness testimony, accepted proofs involving the puja, and the course textbook, in February of 1979 Circuit Judges Aldisert, Adams, and Hunter ruled in agreement with the findings of the district court, that the Science of Creative Intelligence course as taught in public schools did indeed violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment in that it taught religious traditions on public property using taxpayers' money.³⁰

Doe v. Yogi

In 1986, Doe V. Yogi was argued in the United States District Court of Washington, D.C. The plaintiffs included six John Does and one Jane Doe, the first John Doe seeking \$9 million in damages from defendants Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, et.al. on the charges of intentional infliction of emotional stress, negligence, fraud, and breach of warranty.³¹ The charges were based on claims by the plaintiff that eleven years were lost to the practice of TM and learning related techniques and activities, four of those lost to full-time work with little to no pay in return, while being isolated to the defendants through intimidation and separation from any social life or activity outside the TM movement.³² Another issue raised by the John Doe I was physical injury

²⁷ *Malnak v. Yogi*, 1977.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Malnak v. Yogi* 592 F. 2d 197. (Court of Appeals, 3rd Circuit, 1979).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Doe V. Yogi* 652 F. Supp. 203 (Dist. Court, Dist. of Columbia 1986).

³² *Doe V. Yogi*, 1986.

he suffered in Yogic “flying” attempts.³³ Defendants Yogi et. al moved for a summary judgement to remove charges brought by the plaintiff. Of the charges brought by John Doe I, Judge Gasch ruled that he only would be allowed to continue with the charges of fraud and negligence, as the judges ruled that the evidence presented failed to meet criteria for negligent infliction of emotional distress.³⁴ It was decided that the evidence did meet the criteria for fraud based on the fact that evidence supported the defendants representation claiming scientifically proven results to the plaintiff while at the same time being unclear if the facts behind the science were available to the defendant, whether the defendant was capable of interpreting the studies, or if the plaintiff had evidence that the defendant knew promised results would not be achieved.³⁵ The plaintiff’s charges met the criteria for negligence on physical evidence but not for emotional distress, intentional or negligent.³⁶

Kropinski v. World Plan Executive Council

The following year, TM would face court again, this time in the United states Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. charged with fraud, negligence, and intentional tort by Robert Kropinski against Maharishi International University (now known as Maharishi University of Management) and the World Plan Executive Council.³⁷ The plaintiff, Kropinski, accused the defendant of financial, physical, and psychological, damage resulting from misrepresentation of their part. ³⁸ The final decision of the case was that even though Kropinski could not continue his with his accusation of thought reform without a proven expert witness, he could continue to

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Kropinski V. World Plan Executive Council-US* 853 F. 2d 948 (Court of Appeals, Dist. of Columbia Circuit 1988).

³⁸ *Kropinski V. World Plan Executive Council*, 1988.

press charges of negligent infliction of personal injury against the defendant.³⁹ With that the court remanded and partially reversed.⁴⁰ If pressing charges against the defendant for thought reform in the new trial, Kropinski would have to find an expert that was “qualified” or between the time of this decision and the new trial the expert used at this one would have to gain the required credentials in order to continue with that charge.⁴¹

Hendel v. World Plan Executive Council.

In 1992, TM again faced accusations of fraud, negligent and intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of physical injury, as well as accusations of unfair trade practice, this time brought to court by Diane J. Hendel, in *Hendel v. World Plan Executive Council*.⁴² Due to evidence and the statute of limitations, the defendants moved for a summary judgement based on this and in January of 1996 the judge s ruled that Hendel’s charges be dismissed on the grounds that they did not meet the three year statute of limitations.⁴³ Hendel appealed the ruling of this motion on the grounds that her claim fell under the discovery rule.⁴⁴ The case was then affirmed, with Judge Ruiz dissenting.⁴⁵

Popular Culture and Entertainment

Music

TM has influenced some of the most well-known entertainers in music including the Beatles and the Beach Boys.⁴⁶ In an interview Guardian, Beach Boys’ Mike Lowe said they were

³⁹ *Kropinski V. World Plan Executive Council*, 1988.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Hendel v. World Plan Executive Council* 705 A. 2d 656 (DC: Court of Appeals 1997).

⁴³ *Hendel v. World Plan Executive Council*, 1997.

⁴⁴ *Hendel v. World Plan Executive Council*, 1997.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Simpson, Dave. "The Beach Boys' Mike Love: 'There Are A Lot Of Fallacies About Me'". *The Guardian*. Last modified 2013. Accessed June 14, 2016.

introduced to TM around the same time AS THE Beatles.⁴⁷ The Beatles were introduced to TM in 1967.⁴⁸ According to an interview conducted by film director David Lynch with musician Paul McCartney, the Beatles were introduced to TM by Patti Harrison (bandmate George Harrison's wife) when she heard that Maharishi Mahesh Yogi would be in town giving a lecture.⁴⁹ McCartney likened the feeling of meditation to the lightness of a feather.⁵⁰ McCartney says about Maharishi: "He had a very infectious sense of humor."⁵¹ McCartney describes the Beatles' time with Maharishi's mentorship as "inspirational."⁵² McCartney's bandmate Ringo Starr says in his experience he found TM to be especially helpful with songwriting.⁵³

Other musical acts involved with TM or related events include Katy Perry, Sheryl Crow, Ben Harper, and Moby.⁵⁴ Katy Perry was so enthused about TM that on her birthday one year she asked her fans to donate to the TM cause if they wished to give her a birthday gift.⁵⁵

Film

TM has also significantly influenced the film industry; individuals in film who are or have been involved with TM include David Lynch, Hugh Jackman, Russell Brand. Additional entertainers in the film industry who are involved with TM include:

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Partridge, Christopher H. "Indian Religions." In *New Religions: A Guide: New Religious Movements, Sects, and Alternative Spiritualities*, 158-210. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004, 182.

⁴⁹ Hartnett, Heather. "David Lynch Interviews Paul McCartney About Transcendental Meditation (Part 1) | Transcendental Meditation® Blog". *Tm.Org*. Last modified 2010. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/people/david-lynch-interviews-paul-mccartney-about-transcendental-meditation/>.

⁵⁰ *Paul McCartney Remembers His First Meditation With Maharishi (Part 2)*. Video, 2010. Accessed June 13, 2016. <https://youtu.be/3qrb3P-b6iA>.

⁵¹ *David Lynch Interviews Paul McCartney About Transcendental Meditation (Part 1)*. Video, 2010. Accessed June 13, 2016. <https://youtu.be/h9CzJkxKKd0>.

⁵² Hartnett, Heather. "Paul McCartney Remembers His First Meditation With Maharishi (Part 2) | Transcendental Meditation® Blog", *Tm.Org*, last modified 2010, accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.tm.org/blog/maharishi/paul-mccartney-first-meditation-maharishi/>.

⁵³ Hartnett, Heather. "My Interview With Ringo Starr | Transcendental Meditation® Blog". *Tm.Org*. Last modified 2010. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/people/my-interview-with-ringo-starr/>.

⁵⁴ Mainquist, Linda. "A Very Happy Birthday To Ms. Katy Perry". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, 2016. Accessed June 13, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/people/happy-birthday-ms-katy-perry/>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

David Lynch has practiced TM for forty-three years, leading to his involvement with projects and funding for the cause of TM as well as intentional and unintentional press for the movement.⁵⁶ Lynch's projects with TM include: financial contributions to the TM cause, launching his own organization to further it, writing a book on it and sponsoring related fundraising events, many of which feature celebrities whom Lynch has occasionally interviewed about their involvement with TM. As for financial investment in TM, it was reported that David Lynch spent \$1 billion on fundraising for TM and that was for one campaign in 2003 alone.⁵⁷ Also Lynch has brought awareness about TM to many in his audience through his organization. The website for his organization, the David Lynch Foundation, contains information on TM as well as related projects, including his promotion of TM in schools, known as the Quiet Time program.⁵⁸ The foundation also works to promote TM to other areas such as the military, prisons, homeless shelters, people living with HIV, and women.⁵⁹ Three geographic locations with heavy involvement are the cities of Chicago and Los Angeles, and the continent of Africa.⁶⁰ The foundation has also held fundraising and awareness events including concerts, conferences, and tours where Lynch and/or others serve as speakers on the topic of TM.⁶¹

David Lynch has even published a book on TM: *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity*.⁶² Films on TM involving Lynch include: *Meditation Creativity*

⁵⁶ Lynch, David. "Message From David Lynch", *Davidlynchfoundation.Org*, last modified 2016, accessed June 9, 2016, <https://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/message.html>.

⁵⁷ Weldon, John. "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part One) - Christian Research Institute." Christian Research Institute Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium Part One. 2004. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.equip.org/article/transcendental-meditation-in-the-new-millennium-part-one/>.

⁵⁸ Lynch, David. "Message From David Lynch", *Davidlynchfoundation.Org*, last modified 2016, accessed June 9, 2016, <https://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/message.html>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹"Featured Past Events | David Lynch Foundation". *Davidlynchfoundation.Org*. Last modified 2016. Accessed June 16, 2016. <https://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/featured-past-events.html>.

⁶² "David's Book". *Davidlynchfoundation.Org*. Accessed July 15, 2016. <https://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/catching-the-big-fish-meditation-consciousness-and-creativity.html>.

Peace: A Documentary of David Lynch's 16-Country Tour.⁶³ In addition, Lynch has conducted interviews with followers of TM including well-known entertainers such as Paul McCartney of the Beatles.⁶⁴ One example of unintentional press for TM involving David Lynch includes a young fan and filmmaker David Sieveking, who began a documentary titled, "David Wants to Fly," on Lynch that turned into a film about TM due to the director's heavy involvement in the practice.⁶⁵ According to the film's director, Sieveking, Lynch was not pleased with the final product and had his attorney threaten to destroy the director's career.⁶⁶

Film actor Hugh Jackman was introduced to TM at the age of twenty-four.⁶⁷ On using meditation to manage stress, Jackman says, "For me, the best way to handle that was meditation. So I meditated before I hosted the Oscars, I meditate before I go on stage, I meditate in the morning and lunchtime when I'm on a film set. And it's like it resets."⁶⁸ Jackman's wife and son also practice TM.⁶⁹

Actor Russell Brand has also helped to support the cause for TM.⁷⁰ At a premiere of Lynch's documentary on TM, Brand said "I have become a better human being through this meditation," and credits TM for helping him overcome alcoholism and drug addiction.⁷¹ At the

⁶³ Julie Eagleton. "Meditation Creativity Peace: A Documentary Of David Lynch'S 16-Country Tour". Blog. *TM Blog: Transcendental Meditation*, 2012. Accessed July 15, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/news/meditation-creativity-peace/>.

⁶⁴ Heather Hartnett. "David Lynch Interviews Paul McCartney About Transcendental Meditation (Part 1) | Transcendental Meditation® Blog". *Tm.Org*. Last modified 2010. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/people/david-lynch-interviews-paul-mccartney-about-transcendental-meditation/>.

⁶⁵ Anja Wiest. "Interview: David Wants To Fly". *ExBerliner*, 2010. Accessed July 14, 2016. <http://www.exberliner.com/culture/film/david-wants-to-fly-an-interview-with-david-sieveking/>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "How To Handle Stress And Live Authentically According To Hugh Jackman", Blog, *TM Blog*, 2014, accessed July 14, 2016, <http://www.tm.org/blog/?s=Hugh+Jackman>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Mario Orsatti. "David Lynch And Russell Brand Join Forces To Bring TM To 1M At-Risk Youth". Blog. *TM Blog: Transcendental Meditation*, 2013. Accessed July 15, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/video/david-lynch-and-russell-brand-join-forces/?leadsource=CRM1322>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

time of the event and the interview that took place there, Brand had been practicing TM for four years.⁷²

Television

TM has also had impact with the television industry, including names such as Ellen DeGeneres, Oprah Winfrey, and Jerry Seinfeld. Television actress, comedian, and talk show host Ellen DeGeneres claims that she is not good at meditation and describes TM as a “beautiful experience.”⁷³ The previous comments were given at an undated TM related fund-raising event at which DeGeneres informed her audience that she had been practicing TM for one year.⁷⁴ Actress and talk show host Oprah Winfrey describes her experience with TM as “powerfully energizing yet calming experience. I didn’t want it to end. When it did, I walked away feeling fuller than when I’d come in.”⁷⁵

In his discussion of TM with two other TM adherents on *Good Morning America*, actor and comedian Jerry Seinfeld says of his experience with TM that “It’s very hard to explain. ... I was describing it to somebody. I was saying it’s like having you know how your phone has a charger—it’s like having a charger for your whole body and mind. That’s what TM is.”⁷⁶ Seinfeld stated in the discussion that he has been practicing TM for over 40 years.⁷⁷

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ TM.org, *Ellen Degeneres Explains Why TM Is The Only Meditation That Works For Her*. Video, n.d. Accessed July 8, 2016. <https://youtu.be/iIJwVGJ-hL8>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Sam Katz. "Oprah’s Experience With Transcendental Meditation". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, 2013. Accessed July 8, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/meditation/oprah-magazine/>.

⁷⁶ Mario Orsatti. "Transcendental Meditation On ABC’S Good Morning America: It’S Like A Cellphone Charger For Your Mind". Blog. *TM BLOG: Transcendental Meditation*, 2012. Accessed July 8, 2016. <http://www.tm.org/blog/video/seinfeld-stephanopoulos-talk-tm-on-good-morning-america/?leadsource=CRM1440>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

As for the above-named entertainers in Western popular culture who practice TM, it has not been made clear if any of them have studied Comparative religions or are fluent in Sanskrit.

Christian Enthusiasts

In addition to Christians Father Len Dubi and Reverend John Hutchinson mentioned earlier in previous Chapter there are many other Christians who practice TM alongside the Christian life. “On the Truth about TM” website the page with religious endorsements also includes promotion of TM not only from Father Len Dubai but four other Catholics and one Methodist minister.⁷⁸ Enthusiasts for TM who also practice Christianity approach TM with the understanding that it is not a religion, eliminating any conflict with Christian beliefs and encourage it based on benefits documented in health journals and scientific studies.

There is no indication in the sources as to whether any of the said Christian TM supporters are fluent in Sanskrit or informed about Hinduism.

Christian Evangelists

Evangelists against TM include religion and theology scholars Kenneth Boa and John Weldon. While there have been many attempts by Christian opponents to warn both Christians and non-Christians about the dangers of Transcendental Meditation and its cult characteristics, there have been little to no attempts to contextualize the Gospel for adherents to this movement. This thesis attempts to build on the attempts that have been made in research in an effort to find a common ground and hopefully evangelistic opportunities to reach TM followers for Jesus. This effort will be the highlight and focus of the next and concluding chapter. In his thesis for Liberty

⁷⁸ “Religious Leaders,” Truthabouttm.org, 2006.

University, graduate Edward L. Hedding focuses on a comparative study between meditation in Christianity and meditation in eastern religions, highlighting key differences as to why concepts and practices of Eastern religions are incompatible with biblical Christian meditation.⁷⁹ In particular he specifically notes the danger of leaving the mind completely open as is mostly done in meditative practices of eastern religions as leaving the mind open could let anyone or anything in.⁸⁰ At the same time when Hedding does mention the importance of clearing the mind for Christian meditation, it is made perfectly clear that this is different than emptying the mind in eastern meditation because in Christianity the meditator does not stop thinking but rather filters out any that will become a hindrance between the Christian and God.⁸¹ In his book *Kingdom of the Cults*, evangelist Walter Martin states that “TM ignores Jesus Christ almost totally, although Maharishi teaches that anyone can become as enlightened as Jesus Christ through the application of TM techniques.”⁸² Dr. Boa points out the idolatry involved with TM practices in that a person is required to begin the practice of TM by the puja, or initiation ceremony which involves Hindu deities, the ceremony itself passed off as “showing gratitude.”⁸³ Boa also points out the fact that the name of the ceremony itself, puja, which means “worship,” is often unknown to the initiates because many are not fluent in Sanskrit.⁸⁴

This chapter discussed on reactions to TM by people outside of the movement, both religious and secular, in opposition as well as in favor of. The religious approaches to TM to outsiders, both for and against, included Christianity, Mormonism, Judaism, Islam, and

⁷⁹ Edward L. Hedding, “The Uniqueness Of Christian Meditation” (Master’s, Liberty University, 1986), 1-4.

⁸⁰ Hedding, *The Uniqueness of Christian Meditation*, 40.

⁸¹ Hedding, *The Uniqueness of Christian Meditation*, 41.

⁸² Walter Martin. "Chapter 15: Eastern Religions." In *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 351-363. Rev. and Expanded ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1992), 363.

⁸³ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 202-203, 208.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Buddhism. Nonreligious perspectives included the health and medical sciences and psychology, law and government, and popular culture including form of entertainment such as film, television, and music. The next and final chapter will focus on the TM follower, discussing worldview, (in) compatibility of TM with Christianity including an in-depth look at how TM practitioners approach meditation and Christianity. Based on all the previous information concerning TM, Christian meditation, and reactions to TM from those outside of TM, the aim of the final chapter will be to seek a strategy to reach followers of TM for Jesus.

Thesis Chapter V. The TM Practitioner, Bridges and Strategy for Reaching TMs, and Conclusion.

This fifth and final chapter examines the TM adherent, Bridges and Strategies to Evangelize TMs, and a conclusion for the thesis. Examination of the TM Practitioner includes information on day to day life; worldview analysis based on that information, as well as information from individuals who left TM including some of those left it for Christianity. Some of the information on daily life will be drawn from primary sources including the official TM website, websites for people who left the movement, and student policies found in schools from levels of preschool through higher education that are associated with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as well as published interviews. The analysis of TM is drawn from a model presented by Evangelist Charles Kraft. Bridges and strategies include applications of key concepts learned in courses and course reading materials in the Global studies program at Liberty University School of Divinity including Duane Elmer, David Hesselgrave, Paul Hiebert, and others placed in the context of reaching TM followers. The conclusion will reflect on everything in this chapter in light of information presented in the previous chapters and applied to followers of the movement based on information before coming to a close of the thesis.

The TM Practitioner and Worldview

Worldview

In evangelist Charles Kraft's article Culture, Worldview and Contextualization, worldview is defined first as: "patterned, learned presumptions."¹ In the next paragraph he elaborates further:

¹ Charles Kraft. "Chapter 64: Culture, Worldview, and Contextualization". In *Perspectives On The World Christian Movement: A Reader*, Ralph D. Winter and Stephen C. Hawthorne, ed. by, 400-406. 4th ed. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009, 401.

“Worldview, the deep level of culture, is the culturally structured set of assumptions (including values and commitments/allegiances) underlying how a people perceive and respond to reality. Worldview is *not separate* from culture. It is included in culture as the deepest level of presuppositions upon which people base their lives.”²

Kraft breaks worldview into six main subsystems identified as the following: Social, language, religion, economics, technology, and a miscellaneous category he labels as “etc.”³ Of these, the social one is the most complex because it breaks down further into family, kinship, education, and social control.⁴

As with the other areas included in Kraft’s model of worldview, TM has its own equivalent of most if not all of them as well as attempts to engage with those subsystems outside the context of TM. As for the educational component of the social subsystem of worldview, TM has affiliated schools, from preschool to K-12 to higher education at the doctoral level, many if not all of them accredited.⁵ An example of K-12 schools, TM has Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment. For higher education in the U.S., there is Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, IA.⁶

Social control can be found in the rules and conduct sections of the student handbooks for various levels within the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment. The school uses a combination of TM and the Science of Creative Intelligence.⁷

For all students from kindergarten through the twelfth grade, the school prescribes bedtimes and schedules for students varying according to the level of the student, to ensure what

²Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "School Profile: Maharishi School Of The Age Of Enlightenment". *Maharishischooliowa.Org*. Last modified (2015). Accessed July 28, 2016. <http://www.maharishischooliowa.org/about-us/school-profile/>.

⁶ "Accreditation", *Mum.Edu*, last modified (2016), accessed July 28, 2016, <https://www.mum.edu/about-mum/accreditation/>.

⁷ *Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment: Middle/Upper School Student And Parent Handbook For Consciousness-Based Education*. Ebook. 1st ed. Fairfield, IA: Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, 2013. Accessed January 2, 2016, 11-12.

they refer to as “Quality of Life” outside of class for the health of the student and for their success in school; There is a reminder to stay consistent with TM daily on school days as well as weekends, holidays, and vacation.⁸ As for behavior, the school emphasizes early on the importance of kindness and constructive behaviors in children, healthy, practical, dress, and a strict organic diet, avoiding the following;

“Genetically engineered foods, Chocolate, Peanuts, Cooked honey (Please check package labels for honey. If a cracker or cookie contains honey it is probably cooked), Non-vegetarian (This includes products containing eggs, lard, gelatin, etc.), Hard, aged cheese, Artificial colors or preservatives, Canned food, Leftovers, Milk and sour taste mixed (milk and strawberries). Note: It is permissible to use yogurt, buttermilk, or sour cream as leavening in cakes, muffins, or other baked goods made with sugar.”⁹

The handbook for this level also says that since the school is already equipped for the child’s needs, children are not to bring toys to school.¹⁰

The handbook for the next level in the school covers the lower school, or kindergarten through the sixth grade.¹¹ Though the students have been trained in many students in Maharishi’s teachings begins at preschool, the fourth grade is where they are officially introduced to TM.¹² The code of conduct says that students are required to wear school uniforms; to be polite to all individuals including teachers, parents, school employees and classmates; to be quiet in the hallways so they do not disturb classes; and they must adhere to the policies against drugs, tobacco, alcohol and those against bullying, harassment, and

⁸ *Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment: Lower School Student And Parent Handbook For Consciousness-Based Education*. Ebook. 1st ed. Fairfield, IA: Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, 2012. Accessed January 2, 2016, 16.

⁹ *Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment: Maharishi School Preschool and Child Care Parents’ Handbook Ebook*. 1st ed. Fairfield, IA: Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, (2012). Accessed January 2, 2016.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment: Lower School Student And Parent Handbook For Consciousness-Based Education*. Ebook. 1st ed. Fairfield, IA: Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, (2012). Accessed January 2, 2016.

¹² Ibid, 10-11.

discrimination toward classmates and adults.¹³ Students also must keep only organic foods in their diets.¹⁴

Lastly, the highest level of the school is that of the middle (7-9), and upper (10-12).¹⁵

Expectations for life outside school the students at these levels are:

“Regular practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi program including on weekends, holidays, and vacations. Sufficient rest to balance dynamic activity. The following bedtimes are recommended: Grades 7–9: by 9:00 pm Grades 10–12: by 9:30 pm; Regular, nourishing meals in the company of family members, especially parents and adults; Abstinence from the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco (See “School Rules”); Respect for others in word and deed.”¹⁶In addition they, like the younger levels, they are required to wear school uniforms.¹⁷

Lastly, at the postsecondary level, Maharishi University of Management has a student handbook with a code of conduct. The code of conduct emphasizes the importance of respect and consideration for others, and prohibits the following behaviors: disruption, any form of dishonesty, abusive and inappropriate language, theft, trespassing, threats or harassment, tardiness, sexual misconduct and any activity that threatens the safety of anyone on campus.¹⁸ As for dress code the student handbook says that students are to dress modestly with no extreme

¹³ Ibid, 25, 30-31.

¹⁴ Ibid, 27.

¹⁵ *Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment: Middle/Upper School Student And Parent Handbook For Consciousness-Based Education*. Ebook. 1st ed. Fairfield, IA: Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, 2013. Accessed January 2, 2016, 4.

¹⁶ Ibid,19.

¹⁷ Ibid, 20-21.

¹⁸ "Student Code of Conduct." Maharishi University of Management Student Code of Conduct Comments. 2015. Accessed December 10, 2015. "About MUM." Maharishi University of Management Alcohol and Drug Policy Comments. 2015. Accessed December 11, 2015. <https://www.mum.edu/admissions/for-parents/alcohol-and-drug-policy/>.

hairstyles or revealing clothes, as well as no stains or tears in the attire.¹⁹ The university prohibits smoking, alcohol, and drugs.^{20 21}

TM/Maharishi's government

Maharishi and the TM movement have established forms and attempts to form their own government. The Maharishi has his own political party based on the teachings of TM; this party is known as the Natural Law Party.²² It has been established in over 80 countries including the United States and has attempted to run over 300 political candidates for various offices in Germany and over a thousand to run for office in all fifty states of the U.S.²³ Maharishi's attempts at government also include establishing his own currency, the Raam, which the organization has attempted to use internationally.²⁴

Interaction with Government outside TM

US government funding as an educational organization rather than a religious one enables the organization to get around the Establishment clause on religion in the First Amendment, as

¹⁹ *Student Handbook 2015-16 Academic Year*. Ebook. 1st ed. Maharishi University of Management, 2016. Accessed July 28, 2016. http://portals.mum.edu/Customized/Uploads/ByDate/2016/February_2016/February_4th_2016/Student%20Handbook%20Revised%202.4.1621451.pdf, 25.

²⁰ "About MUM." Maharishi University of Management Tobacco Free Campus Comments. 2015. Accessed December 11, 2015. <https://www.mum.edu/admissions/for-parents/tobacco-free-campus/>.

²¹ "About MUM." Maharishi University of Management Alcohol and Drug Policy Comments. 2015. Accessed December 11, 2015. <https://www.mum.edu/admissions/for-parents/alcohol-and-drug-policy/>.

²² Weldon, John. "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part One) - Christian Research Institute." Christian Research Institute Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium Part One. 2004. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.equip.org/article/transcendental-meditation-in-the-new-millennium-part-one/>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lowe, Scott. "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation." World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation. Accessed December 16, 2015. <http://www.wrs.vcu.edu/profiles/TranscendentalMeditation.htm>.

demonstrated by its ability to gain government financial assistance to spread a “non-religious” technique to minors on public property.²⁵

Despite claims that it is nonreligious, TM is based on Raja yoga and the mantras that leaders assign to their initiates are names of or references to Hindu deities. This poses a problem as a subsystem of the world view definition defined by Kraft is religion, and TM may or may not be considered religious depending on the audience it is trying to reach.

The world view for TM is very complex, as the movement tries to market its product to people religious or not, in contexts that are religious or not. TM has its own worldview, the center of which is the teachings of its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who was a follower of Hinduism. All of the other subsystems as described in Kraft’s model revolve around the teachings of Maharishi whether they are religious or not. Because they clearly are despite claims to the contrary, the center worldview part and the religious subsystem are one in reference to Kraft’s model. Many members of the western culture audience, especially in the United States, are easy targets to recruit because of the education component of the social subsection of worldview: the majority have little to no education in the area of comparative religion, and because of this they are unable to detect inconsistencies in a religion new to them or even a religious movement attempting to pass as a nonreligious one. The lack of or minimal education about comparative religions in western culture also leads to vulnerability to TM in other areas of the western worldview. For example, in the technology subsystem, TM uses Vedic Science to reach adherents in the field of science and technology. As Scott Lowe comments, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s view of science is nothing like the one used in most of the world.²⁶

²⁵ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 200.

²⁶ Lowe, "Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science and Science.," 58.

Their stance on Jesus as Savior is completely different and in conflict from how Christians view Jesus. Their stance on the Jesus and the Holy Trinity is that Jesus was not God or the second person of the trinity but only an enlightened Hindu and that He did not suffer for the sins of humanity.

Their understanding of being on “one accord” with God is a point of considerable confusion and syncretism, or risk for it. Followers of TM believe that when others become “enlightened” by practicing TM as they believe Jesus was, they will realize that they are God.²⁷ In biblical Christianity, there is a clear understanding that while Jesus was and is both God and man, other humans are only humans; with the exception of Jesus no human is God. In the Bible, God is the Creator and humanity is part of His creation (Genesis 1:28). This can be demonstrated by examining the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, the Tower of Babel in Genesis the Ten commandments in Exodus, The Johanne Prologue in the opening of the Gospel of John and then in Acts. These are all examples of people being on one accord with God, each other, or both in negative and positive ways.

Humans are created in the first chapter of Genesis, with the distinction that they are the creation and not the Creator (1:28). In the story of the Fall (Genesis 3), Adam and Eve are seduced by the serpent to eat the forbidden fruit with the assumption that they will be like God (v. 4-6), the consequences of which leads not to being equal to God but to their eviction from the Garden (v. 22-24). The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) Again, humanity tries to be equal with God by building a tower to reach where He is, with no indication of doing it for His will or to serve Him; He knocks it down and disrupts communication by confusing the languages, as His

²⁷ Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part One).

people had communicated in one language to conspire in building the tower. An abused privilege is lost. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) address how humans are supposed to treat God and each other; as far as idolatry and distinction between the creator and creation the first commandment orders the people not to have any gods before God (v. 3), and the second commandment orders them not to make any likenesses of Him (v. 4,5). The Johanne Prologue (John 1:1-18) clearly places Jesus as both divine and human. The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-23, John 1:32-34) while not explicit, strongly implies a triune God, distinctly illustrating a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts (2:1-13) places God's people together in the same place, understanding each other despite knowing different languages. Here is a positive example with humans being on one accord, with *both God and each other*; not to be His equal but to honor Him together and serve His kingdom, and out of gratitude for all He has done. In light of the earlier passages examined here, it is clear from this one that the people do not see themselves as equal to God or in competition with Him but recognize and adore Him for who He is. TM does not see a separation between humanity and God and it does not recognize Jesus sacrifice on the cross to save humanity from sin. It also fails to recognize humanity as any less perfect than God. Also, in TM literature, while Maharishi uses Jesus' statement in the Bible "The Father and I are One," he does it as if Jesus was referring to all of humanity in relation to God; He was only referring to *His own relationship to God* and nowhere in the Bible does it say that any human other than Jesus is equal to God.

Also in contrast to Maharishi's claims that TM is not religious, and his claims that TM is compatible with Christianity and other religions, he is known to have said that the way to salvation is through the Vedas of the Hindu tradition that TM is based on.²⁸

²⁸ Weldon & Levitt, *Transcendental Explosion*, 69.

Levels of Practice

As scholar Ken Boa stated in his book, Transcendental Meditation has two levels, an exoteric, public one and an esoteric or private one.²⁹

The exoteric one involves TM as it is presented to the public; this has changed depending on the audience the movement is trying to reach.³⁰ The esoteric level involves the basis of TM which does not change and as Boa notes, one usually has to be involved with TM for a significant amount of time before being fully aware of TM's true nature.³¹ It is important to note that the two levels contradict each other in that practitioners of one know much more about the true nature of TM than the other one. For example, an instructor of TM would know that TM is in fact a religious in nature while the new recruit that he or she would be initiating into the practice would still be under the impression that it is not religious. The exoteric part of the presentation of TM is the "scientific" and "educational" images its founder and leaders have tried to convince people it is while the esoteric is the part which they attempt to hide.

Social Constructs Among TMs

Though no adherents of TM, present or former, were available to be interviewed specifically for this thesis, content was found containing some statements, comments, and interviews of current and former TM adherents.

As for currently practicing TMs, some interviews and examples of daily life could be found, including handbooks and catalogs for (kindergarten through the twelfth grade levels) and

²⁹ Boa, "Chapter 23: Transcendental Meditation," 204.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

Maharishi University of Management. The content in these catalogs provide insight into expectations for school life and beliefs, and practices for students and families involved with the movement. In an interview featured in Mary Pat Fisher's *Living Religions*, TM practitioner Wolfgang Hecker, stated that he was first introduced to TM by a friend in 1958 and has been doing it since; he was drawn by the positive signs he saw in others who practiced it.³² Hecker also notes that one has to be advanced in the practice of TM before attempting yogic flying.³³ As with many other practitioners, religious or otherwise, he maintains that TM is not religious.³⁴

Negative experiences of former TMs have been detailed in books, articles, websites, and blogs, including some sites established specifically for former members.

Former TMs

While TM has an official website and many affiliated ones, there are also many websites and publications that oppose it, particularly former members documenting their negative experiences with the movement. Two of those are the International Cultic Studies Association (ISCA) website and the TM-Free blog.

On the ICSA website there is documentation of personal experience with TM shared by former practitioners of the movement. Former TM practitioner Stephen Coleman, was introduced to TM as a teen in the 1970's when he saw Maharishi Mahesh Yogi appear on the Merv Griffin show.³⁵ He became interested and found a TM instructor near home and was initiated at the age

³² Mary Pat Fisher. "Chapter 12: New Religions." In *Living Religions*, 465-500. 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2011), 476.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Stephen Coleman. "A Personal Experience Of Transcendental Meditation (TM) And The TM Movement". *A Personal Experience Of TM*. Last modified 2014. Accessed December 17, 2015. [icsahome.com](http://www.icsahome.com), "Transcendental Meditation - International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA)". Accessed December 17, 2015. <http://www.icsahome.com/groups/tm>.

of twenty three, followed by others he would introduce to TM.³⁶ Coleman then applied to Maharishi University of Management and was accepted, later becoming skeptical of TM and then being expelled after his freshman year.³⁷ Coleman states of his experience with TM and the university: “I told the Vedic psychology instructor that his course cured my insomnia and told the business teacher that I learned how not to teach business.”³⁸

The TM-Free Blog contains posts from former TM adherents who left the movement due to negative experiences. Former TM follower Gina Catena is a regular contributor to the site with many posts including a letter and a series of articles on Lifton’s Thought Reform criteria as applied to TM with discussion of the criteria in eight parts. The letter is addressed in response to a high school in California attempting to bring TM to schools, with the concern that while most of the facilitators of TM have good intentions, TM is in fact a religion and does not belong in the public-school system.³⁹ She states “Alcohol and tobacco come with warning labels. TM lacks a warning label.”⁴⁰ Catena also notes her personal experience with the movement as it lasted forty years and effected three generations of her family.⁴¹ The author situates herself with the movement by sharing her involvement *in favor of* TM in schools when she was with the movement, acknowledging her role at the time in bringing it to public schools; then in another context at the end when she notes that she has at three children who have attended the said high school.⁴²

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹ Gina Maria Catena. "Letter To San Rafael School Board. Or. How TM Lures The Young And Vulnerable". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. <http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/01/letter-to-san-rafael-school-board-or-how.html>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Catena's articles on the application of psychologist Dr. Robert J. Lifton's thought reform to TM consist of eight parts examined over six articles. Lifton's concept of thought reform consists of eight criteria. The first one is milieu control, or controlled internal communication; Catena applies this to her experience with TM, for example the mantra that the initiate is instructed to keep in strict secrecy, as well as the filtering of any information the organization does not want its audience to hear, such as news reports conflicting in any way with the image or teachings of TM.⁴³ The second of Lifton's criteria is mystical manipulation; examples to be found in TM include the claims by the leader to be holy or chosen by God, as well as planned events that are to appear spontaneous, as "miracles" serving as supernatural "proof" that the practice works or that the leader is telling the truth.⁴⁴ The third of Lifton's thought reform is a mandate for purity, rejecting anything contrary to the group and shaming anyone in the group for having any association with such, as Catena notes was her experience with TM.⁴⁵ The fourth criterion is confession; the TM devotee must confess or share a story of a supernatural, spiritual experience as "proof: of their devotion, the more elaborate the better; such a requirement could lead a person to fabricate a false experience in order to be accepted by the group and most importantly the leader of that group.⁴⁶ In her article Catena cites "golden soma dripping down my scalp" as an example she heard from another in her experience practicing TM.⁴⁷ The fifth of

⁴³ Gina Catena. "Lifton's Thought Reform Criteria Applied To TM. Part One Of Eight". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. <http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/01/liftons-thought-reform-criteria-applied.html>.

⁴⁴ Gina Catena. "Lifton's Thought Reform Criteria Applied To TM. Part Two Of Eight". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/01/liftons-thought-reform-criteria-applied_29.html.

⁴⁵ Gina Catena. "Lifton's Thought Reform Criteria Applied To TM. Part Three Of Eight". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. <http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/02/liftons-thought-reform-criteria-applied.html>.

⁴⁶ Gina Catena. "Lifton's Thought Reform Criteria Applied To TM. Parts Four And Five Of Eight". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/02/liftons-thought-reform-criteria-applied_12.html.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Lifton's criteria is called sacred science; no matter how false or unlikely the group or leader's teachings appear to be, they are to be accepted by the audience as sacred, infallible, and without question.⁴⁸ Catena described any form of questioning of a message or teaching in TM by a recipient as "akin to blasphemy."⁴⁹ The sixth criterion involves "loading the language."⁵⁰ Words used one way outside the movement context are used a different way inside the group; any disagreement or negative response to the group's teachings, beliefs, or message is worded in negative language and any response in favor of the group teachings is encouraged with positive language, for example, if a TM devotee has doubts, anxiety, or any negative results from TM then they are said by TM leaders to be "unstressful."⁵¹ The seventh criterion for Lifton's thought reform is the importance of doctrine over the individual.⁵² Catena's example of this as applied to TM is her experience of being discouraged if ever in disagreement with TM; points of disagreement with the teachings of TM are always seen as the fault of the individual and the doctrine is never to be questioned; if one questions it the questions are turned around on them and their questions are never answered or addressed.⁵³ The eighth and last of Lifton's criteria for thought reform is the dispensing of existence. Outsiders are seen as the "other" if they are acknowledged at all.⁵⁴ Catena notes that to be acknowledged by TM devotees a person must

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Gina Catena. "Lifton's Criteria Of Thought Reform Applied To TM. Parts Six And Seven Of Eight". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. <http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/02/liftons-criteria-of-thought-reform.html>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Gina Catena. "Lifton's Criteria Of Thought Reform Applied To TM. Part Eight Of Eight". Blog. *TM-Free Blog Skeptical Views Of Transcendental Meditation And Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, n.d. Accessed January 1, 2016. http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/02/liftons-criteria-of-thought-reform_26.html.

often become one; since her exit Catena has encountered both those in her former community who shun her as well as those who welcome her with the hopes of her return to TM.⁵⁵

TM turned Christians

TM also has followers who left it in favor of Christianity. Before converting to Christianity, Dr. Kai Druhl was so involved with TM that he eventually moved up the ranks to become an instructor of the program at Maharishi University of Management.⁵⁶ In a news report about a murder that had taken place on Campus at the University since his departure in 2000, he was asked about his experience as a faculty member during negative and emergency situations on the premises. He informed the reporter that he was told that he “must not allow any bad news to leak out. You were required to keep up this image of a perfect campus at all costs.”⁵⁷ Dr. Druhl converted to Christianity when he left TM and Maharishi University of Management in 2000, after meeting TM’s founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1990 and noticing “signs of demonic oppression,” due to the fact that after the meeting Druhl had problems controlling facial movements during meditation which he did not have before meeting Maharishi.⁵⁸ Dr. Druhl tried one more spiritual solution by engaging with “A course in Miracles,” which turned out for him to be a false version of Christianity.⁵⁹ Despite the spiritual journey up until that point, Dr. Druhl was deeply moved when he joined a local church, describing the following experience: “when I

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Bob Abernathy. "July 8, 2005 ~ Transcendental Meditation | July 8, 2005 | Religion & Ethics Newsweekly | PBS". *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*. Last modified 2005. Accessed January 7, 2016. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2005/07/08/july-8-2005-transcendental-meditation/11899/>.

⁵⁷ Barnett, "Murder Rocks The Maharishi University."

⁵⁸ Mike Shreve. "Kai Druhl's Personal Story". *TheTruelight.Net*. Last modified 2002. Accessed July 28, 2016. <http://www.thetruelight.net/personalstories/kaidruhl.htm>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

kneeled and prayed the sinner's prayer, all of a sudden I burst into tears, and felt a great burden lifted from my heart.”⁶⁰

Evangelist Dr. John Weldon was initiated to the TM program in 1970 and has written much on the topic, including some sources used here.⁶¹ His assigned mantra for meditation was “ieng.”⁶² In 1976 after leaving the movement Weldon concluded about TM that: “few religions are as deceptive or defective as TM.”⁶³ The same year he published a book exposing the false claims of TM.⁶⁴

Reaching TMs

Examining Contextual Bridges to Evangelism and Discipleship

In Christian missions and evangelism there is a list of criteria proposed by Dr. Keith Eitel that are rooted in the epistles of Paul and can be used to screen a cultural setting for biblical and unbiblical practices.⁶⁵ Dr. Eitel presents the following criteria:

- “1. Does it contradict any clear teaching of Scripture? 2 Tim 3:16-17
2. Does it violate or do harm to my body (mentally, physically, or spiritually) as the temple of the Holy Spirit? 1 Cor 6:19- 20 Or, will it enhance the Holy Spirit’s development and expression of Christ’s holiness in and through my life? 1 Thess 4:1-8
3. Does it cause my weaker brother (or non-believer by implication) to stumble in coming closer to Christ? 1 Cor 8-10

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ John Weldon. "Sampling of the new religions: four groups described." *International Review Of Mission* 67, no. 268 (October 1978): 407-426. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 15, 2015), 424.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part One)."

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Keith E. Eitel “Scriptura or Cultura: Is There A Sola In There?” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*. (Fall 2012) 55:1, 74-75.

4. Does it violate the express will of my spiritual head? Eph 5:22-6:9; Rom 13:1-7
5. Does it glorify God? 1 Cor 10:31 Or, Can I ask God to bless it with a clear conscience? Rom 14:19-23”⁶⁶

Based on all of the sources examined in this thesis, TM fails theologically at every point on this scale. At the first point, there are many conflicts with the Bible. As for the second point, the practice of TM brings the Christian away from Jesus rather than closer to him. On the third point, the misinformed Christian practicing TM could accidentally cause others, inside and outside the church, to stumble. For the fourth principle, if the spiritual head or leader is right with God, then TM violates it because the spiritual head is supposed to lead others to Christ. Lastly, TM fails on the fifth point because not only does it fail to glorify God but it seeks to glorify the human self.

Additionally, Maharishi’s misuse of Bible verses sets the stage for Paul Hiebert’s definition of uncritical contextualization, leading to syncretism.⁶⁷ The Christian who is uninformed about TM or comparative world religions can take his use of it compatible with Christianity if they do not do their research. Hiebert says it is important to keep in mind that a literal translation of a message is no guarantee that the meaning is upheld when translating to another culture.⁶⁸ Maharishi’s use of various Biblical verses could lead the Christian to believe that TM is compatible with Christianity if they accept it without criticism. Maharishi refers to “the kingdom of Heaven,” “the Father and I are one” and other phrases in the Bible.⁶⁹ Romans 14:17 states, “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Hiebert. *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 19-29.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 24-25.

⁶⁹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 2, 7.

and joy in the Holy Spirit.” That said, the Bible’s use of the phrase as worded does not mean that the source of wisdom, creativity, peace, and happiness is from the self but from the Holy Spirit working in the individual. At another point, he refers to parts of Christ’s words, “‘The Kingdom of Heaven’ in which ‘the Father and I are one,’” with the implication that humans are equal with God.⁷⁰ This statement is a reference to John 10:30, and taken completely out of its biblical context because when Jesus says “I” He is referring to *Himself*, not all of humanity. Jesus is saying that He is God’s Son; nowhere in the Bible does it say that His disciples or any other humans are the same as or equal to God. Critical contextualization allows the Christian to detect when Scripture is distorted into something unbiblical. Critical contextualization equips the Christian to find bridges between cultures while critiquing everything on both ends against scripture, screening out anything that is contrary to God’s word whether it exists in the missionary’s culture or that of the recipient.⁷¹

There are some, if only a very few, points about the practice of TM that could be consistent with the Bible but these are not theological in nature; rather they are found in many contexts. The emphasis on kindness and respect in the school handbooks could compliment Christianity because that particular behavior is already encouraged in the Bible; Jesus says to His disciples to love one another (Matthew 22:38-40). In consideration to the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, TM and its schools’ policies against the use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol could be seen as helpful and in line with caring for the body.

⁷⁰ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 7.

⁷¹ Hiebert. *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 28-29.

While there are many obstacles to reaching TMs with the Gospel, such as the risk of syncretism that comes with any evangelism attempts as well as the earlier discussed conflicts between the worldviews of TM with Christianity, there are also points of advantage.⁷²

There are some points with TM that could be seen as advantages for evangelism. There are both cultural advantages and linguistic advantages. Culturally, even though TM is based on Hinduism, an Eastern religion, some parts of it have been adapted for western culture. A linguistic advantage is that even though much of TM involves Sanskrit, much of western culture speaks English; many of the texts used by TM adherents in Western culture have had to be translated or published in English so the audience could read and understand it.

Strategy for reaching TM

Based on the above, there are also some things to consider when speaking with TMs about their faith and/or also involvement with Christianity. Because every person is different, it is important to know more about the person to understand the uniqueness of his or her situation before attempting to share the Gospel. Evangelist David Geisler calls this “pre-evangelism,” which he defines as “tilling the soil of people’s minds and hearts to help them be more willing to listen to the truth.”⁷³ One area to consider is their situation at the beginning and leading up to the person’s involvement with TM. The other is what they may be giving up in order to know Jesus.

For example, the TM adherent may or may not have much if any prior education or experience in the fields of Christianity, TM, or the religion it is rooted in, Hinduism. With that in

⁷² Kraft, p. 405. Kraft does not refer specifically to any religion aside from Christianity in his statement on syncretism but he does acknowledge the risk of it that comes when a Christian attempts to contextualize the Gospel for a non-Christian audience.

⁷³ David Geisler and Norman L Geisler, *Conversational Evangelism*, 1st ed. (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Pub, 2014), 25.

mind it is important to gauge the person's understanding of both TM and Christianity before attempting to share the Gospel. It is also important to know what exactly attracted the person to TM. An example of this would be a person who suffers from an anxiety disorder (like the author of this thesis) and searches for remedies, willing to try anything until that stress is relieved.⁷⁴ Anyone can be a target, including non-religious people, as long as there is something that the TM organization believes it can sell a solution to.

For non-religious TM adherents, it is important to get to know them and find out how far involved they are in TM. If they are still on the level that they believe TM is not a religion, then they must be shown the true nature of TM. As Weldon points out in his article, even if religion does not matter to the atheist or agnostic TM follower, it will matter that they as they consumer have been lied to and have likely spent a large amount of money on a lie.⁷⁵ As a possible bridge to Christianity, the Christian might even show the TM devotee that in Christianity it is encouraged to test the spirits (1 John 4:1); where Maharishi and his organization discourage any questioning.

For Christians practicing TM, several things must be brought to their awareness. First, they must be shown the contradiction between his claims that TM is not religious and the true definition of the initiation ceremony; worship of Hindu god(s) being passed off as not religious because the initiates are often native to or fluent in English and the words in the ceremony are not. The next contradiction they need to be made aware of is the fact that Maharishi takes the Bible completely out of context in his efforts to win Christians to his audience. It should also be

⁷⁴ The author of this thesis does not, never has practiced TM and never plans to but does have more than one of the health issues that TM claims to be a miracle cure for, making for likely vulnerable target audience had there been no previous studies in comparative religion on the part of the potential target.

⁷⁵ Weldon, "Transcendental Meditation in the New Millennium (Part Two)."

pointed out to the Christian TM practitioner the incidents where Maharishi has denied the death and suffering of Christ on the cross for the salvation of His people.

For Christians as well as those who do not yet know Jesus, the Biblical uses of meditation could be suggested as an alternative to TM, along with an explanation as to how Christian meditation is different from TM and more beneficial to the meditator. In addition, all the person needs is a Bible and if they do not have one, many churches give them out or they can be purchased for as little as a dollar or a few cents in retail stores; a person does not need to spend thousands of dollars to meditate.

Reaching devotees to TM involved at a deeper level will likely be more challenging in light of Lifton's criteria of thought reform applied by Gina Catena. The more deeply involved they are with TM the more isolated from outside information they are likely to be. Depending on the level of practice, some TM adherents may or may not be allowed to communicate with individuals outside the movement; even if they are allowed to, they may not even acknowledge anyone outside of TM. If they are allowed to communicate with people outside of TM, they may automatically disregard anything that is not favorable to TM.

When encountering TM followers who were drawn to the movement due to advertised promises to solve medical problems, there are biblical forms of meditation that could bring them close to Jesus as well as possibly be used to treat some health issues such as anxiety, as encouraged by psychiatrist Dr. Fernando Garzon.⁷⁶

Also important is to consider what the evangelist is potentially asking the TM adherent to give up in order to follow Christ. If the person the Christian is trying to reach is a student at any

⁷⁶ Garzon, "Christian Devotional Meditation for Anxiety," 67, 68.

of Maharishi's schools, turning away could result in being expelled, as happened to Stephen Coleman. If the person works for any of TM's organizations and turns away that person faces termination, as Stephen Coleman also experienced as he was a student enrolled and employed at Maharishi University of Management. Another point of conflict is the person's community and family; Gina Catena's family was heavily involved with TM when she left the movement. Depending on a person's family situation, if their whole family is involved and the person tried to leave the one trying to leave faces the possibility of being shunned by their family. In addition, any of the above could affect one's living situation; if the person loses their ability to pay rent; if they live with their family or someone in the movement they could be thrown out; if they are expelled from their school like Stephen Coleman they lose not only their credits and academic standing but also their dorm, like he did; and since he was also employed through the university they terminated him from his job.

Like many religions, even though TM claims to be nonreligious, adherents who have tried other forms of meditation or found by the Maharishi to be fallible have been shunned temporarily and many permanently for making TM "impure" with types of meditation deemed by the Maharishi to be inferior.⁷⁷ In trying Christian meditation or even challenging the validity of TM the adherent risks getting shunned and barred from his or her community.

In light of all the information examined and the limited TM-turned-Christian sources, there was no indication as to whether any of them switched to Christian meditation after leaving TM or if they practiced any type of meditation at all. There is little information on particular needs that drew them to TM that they could try to better meet with Christianity; even in cases

⁷⁷ Lowe, "World Religions & Spirituality | Transcendental Meditation."

where the reasons for turning to TM are known, there is no mention in the sources found in this thesis of whether it had anything to do with why they would end up leaving TM for Christianity. Because of this there is no example available for the purpose of this thesis to know whether or not Christian meditation is effective as a replacement for TM. One pattern, however, that has been consistently present in former TMs, whether or not they converted to Christianity, is the deceit and violation of trust involved with TM. Of the few sources that left Transcendental Meditation for Christianity, there is a consistent pattern of trust found in Christ in contrast to the violation of trust practiced in TM.

Conclusion

Areas for Further Study

Other areas for further study include observation of Christians and adherents to other monotheistic religions who also TM alongside their own faith traditions. Other areas for further study could include more medical studies done to see how beneficial TM is to health. The health studies could focus on the problem areas in research methods specified in health publications such as the one used in the literature review.

The thesis has built on investigation concerning meditative traditions of Christianity and the Transcendental Meditation movement, followed by theological contextualization for potential evangelism approaches to reach adherents of TM.

The first chapter laid the foundation of the thesis, addressing its limitations and involved research methods. Research methodology involved a qualitative approach using public sources found in libraries and online including books, scholarly articles, and video and sound recordings, and other published materials by primary sources and experts.

In the second chapter consisted of a literature review which examined written material from multiple perspectives: Christianity, TM, the TM turned Christian, and the nonreligious field of science. These sources included both scholarly and primary sources such as a book by the TM founder Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and former TM turned Christian John Weldon. A primary source from a non-religious, non-religious context was Julius B. Poppinga, who was involved in church –state court cases concerning TM. Scientific sources included a study on the state meditative practice and health. A religious scholarly source included in the literature review was theologian Ken Boa.

The third chapter included historical background on Transcendental Meditation, its interaction with Western culture, a historical and scriptural background and Biblical word study on Christian Meditation as well as a comparison between Christian meditation and TM. The information on TM included its definition and foundation as well as its interaction with western culture since it started. Christian meditation was defined followed by discussion of its history and a word study on biblical uses words translating to the English words “meditate” and “meditation.” The word study included the Hebrew words used in the Old Testament as well as the Greek words used in the New Testament, each one defined and discussed in its biblical context.

Chapter four observed approaches to TM by other major religions, secularists, as well as secular disciplines and areas of life such as the clinical and health sciences, psychology, legal issues, and popular culture; the chapter ends with discussion on approaches to TM by Christian enthusiasts and evangelists. Religious reactions both for and against TM included adherents to Islam, Mormonism, Buddhism, Judaism, and others, as well as those practicing TM alongside their own religions. Secular disciplines attitudes included the clinical and health sciences,

psychology, the United States law, and popular culture. The disciplines of health science and psychology included definitions of TM and other related terms as defined by the American Psychological Association and involvement with TM by various health organizations with mixed results published about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of TM on health. The legal contexts consisted of several encounters in the court room by TM involving charges of fraud, negligence, and physical and psychological distress, and violations concerning the religious clauses of the First Amendment. Areas of popular culture affected by TM consisted of music, film, and television.

The fifth chapter concludes the thesis by focusing on the worldview of TM adherents, exploring connections and strategies for evangelism regarding information about TM and Christianity up to this point, and considers areas for further study before closing. Also taken into consideration were remarks found in content published by both current and former TM adherents. The worldview analysis consisted of evangelical concepts applied to the practice of the TM movement. The end of the thesis, the original focus on the possibility of Christian Meditation as a replacement for TM shifted due to lack of examples to be found on its effectiveness in converts to Christianity. There was a common pattern of trust violated with TM in former TMs, Christian or not, and restored in the truth of the Gospel.

Evangelism runs risk of syncretism between the contents and meaning of the Gospel with the contents and meaning of the cultural and/or religious message as understood in the context of the recipient. An important thing to remember in all cases but especially with TM is that there is an even higher risk of confusion or syncretism being that its founder takes Christian scriptures completely out of context to win over Christians into practicing TM. Awareness of the differences in meaning of canonicity, revelation, and inspiration is important not only when

considering the context of recipients of the Gospel and the original Biblical context behind that message but also any cultural factors that could hinder the Christian evangelist and their understanding of the message he or she is trying to share. In addition, the Christian should remember to consider the variety of backgrounds of their audience when attempting to share the Gospel, and keep in mind also the background of the movement.

If any of the above is neglected or misunderstood, the Christian attempting to bring others closer to Christ may actually end up pushing them away if efforts are not done carefully.

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