



If You Think TM is Good, Why Not Try Bible Study?

Editorial Comment by Warren Krug

(September-October, 2005)

Transcendental Meditation is back in the news. The relaxation technique, made popular by the Beatles in the 60s, according to a recent study has been shown to significantly lower rates of death.

The new research involved a study of 202 people with an average age of 71. All the participants had either high blood pressure or a condition called pre-hypertension.

The people were divided into two groups: those who practiced Transcendental Meditation (TM) and those who engaged in some other relaxation technique. They were followed for an average of 7.6 years. The results: the TM group had 23% fewer deaths from all causes and 30% fewer cardiovascular disease deaths.

The study's director claimed Transcendental Meditation probably works because it helps lower blood pressure, makes it easier to quit smoking, strengthens the immune system, improves nervous system activity, and reduces stress hormones.

However, one can't ignore all those red flags flying around the practice.

In the first place, TM is promoted and patented by an Indian Hindu guru. According to the Christianity Today website, it is a mixture of Hindu philosophy mixed with Western psychological insights. It masks its religious nature by "mythologizing science." Indeed, the mantras participants chant are often the names of Hindu gods.

Also, the present study is somewhat suspect. Its lead author is the director of the Center of Natural Medicine and Prevention at *Maharishi* University in Fairfield, Iowa. Other researchers have pointed out the study was too small to be definitive.

Browsing the Internet with a search engine can uncover other studies of Transcendental Meditation, some supporting the practice, others finding flaws. One German study showed TM can lead to psychological problems ranging from anxiety and panic to suicidal depression.

Christians have a better solution. Meditation is extremely good—when one meditates on God's Holy Word. What can be better and more relaxing than being reminded that we have a Caring Father and a Loving Savior who is leading us to the bliss of a heavenly home? *LSI*

—Warren Krug, editor