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Founder, 1898

Utah Gospel Mission

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Kurt Van Gorden
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Share and Prayer Newsletter -- February 2008

Dear Friends in Jesus,

On February 8, 2008, the U. S. Census Bureau estimated the world's population was 6,649,329,375 people. It is calculated that approximately 146,000 people die daily. These are large numbers when we think of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). This gives us every reason to value missionary work worldwide.

Jesus also told us that no sparrow falls from its nest without God's knowledge (Matthew 10:28), and He added that we are of more value than many sparrows. God knows how to place the right people in the right place to share His word, as we lovingly submit to His overall plan. Do not be afraid to share His Word those around you.

TM Founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, dies without recanting his blasphemy of Jesus Christ's suffering

The founder of Transcendental Meditation, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, died at age 91 on February 5, 2008. He was catapulted to instant popularity in the mid-1960s, as he swept the counter-culture generation into a meditation frenzy and gathered a following of some 5-million people. This figure counts only the initiates who took his course, which was then \$35.00 and is now \$2,500.00, but he also opened wide a door for other self-styled gurus to gather several million additional people into Hindu meditation.



Let me get straight to the point about the difference between TM and Christianity. Maharishi lowered Jesus to the substandard level of a good teacher and denied his suffering for our sins and his Gospel message. Maharishi wrote, "I don't think Christ ever suffered or Christ could suffer ... It's a pity that Christ is talked of in terms of suffering ... Those who count upon the suffering, it is a wrong interpretation of the life of Christ and the message of Christ ... How could suffering be associated with the One who has been all joy, all bliss, who claims all that? It's only the misunderstanding of the life of Christ" (*Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, pp. 123-124). In stark contrast, we have the eyewitness

testimony of Christ's followers (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16), who testified that Jesus Christ offered Himself for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2), and whose crucifixion, suffering, and death was planned in eternity (Revelation 13:8). His bodily resurrection was attested by hundreds of witnesses (1 Corinthians 15) whose testimony became historical fact. The Bible refutes Maharishi's misguided revision of Christ.

In TM's more popular days, I witnessed to TMers where ever I found them or their meetings. I remember one couple who I met while they were driving a VW bus in Maine. They were on their way to a meeting to become advanced TM teachers. They came from Christian backgrounds, but were never rooted in the Bible, due to the liberal views of their church. At least I had a starting point with the Bible that we held in common.

After meeting with them for three days and going over the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Christianity, both of them repented and became born again Christians. I left them with a pastor that I knew in the area. That was when I saw that these people, who were seeking inner peace, could be satisfied by finding Jesus instead.

Over the years, I have gone to several TM meetings to talk to their people about the Gospel. Cindy and I have been to their Maharishi International University in Farifield, Iowa, to talk to their most advanced and dedicated people. This university is where they claimed that they could levitate and bounce or hop from one location to another in their enlightened state. Even their most dedicated people can come to Christ. Read the following story that we received just this week.

The Story of a TM Student Who Found Jesus Christ



I was baptized in the Episcopal Church as an infant. While in high school, in Long Beach, California, I arranged for the TM group and International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna) to conduct campus presentations. I willfully took the wrong path to explore Eastern Mysticism and Transcendental Meditation.

After high school, I spent five years at the Maharishi International University, in Iowa, and took the advanced levitation and "hopping" program in the Golden Dome.

I moved to Santa Monica, California, in 1980, to be close to Maharishi's TM Center, where I participated in Ayurvedic and Siddha programs. (Ayurvedic medicine is Indian folklore medicine that has been popularized by Maharishi's former disciple, Deepak Chopra.) Going deeper in meditation techniques, I told my husband that we had to live near Encinitas, to be close to Yogananda Pramahansa's Ashram Center, where the Self Realization Fellowship has its temple and meditation gardens.

My family went through unbelievable hardships as we moved to Guam and endured five typhoons, an 8.2 Richter scale earthquake, and then, when shipping our possessions back to the United States, the cargo ship was in a collision and sank with all of our possessions. In California, our troubles got worse, but I still depended upon my wonderful "Self" to get me through.

It was then that I got on my knees and begged God to help me. Mercifully, the real God answered me immediately. I joined a Bible study and God revealed himself to me when I read John 1:1. I saw that the Bible, instead of my "Absolute Self," offered everything that I had been looking for. It was such a relief to know that I did not have to depend on my "Self" anymore, which was a colossal waste of time.

My husband has become a Bible-believing Christian and our two teenage sons know Jesus as their friend and Counselor. They get together weekly with their friends for dinner and Bible study. They are not ashamed of the Gospel.--Leslie George Marshall

What a wonderful and encouraging story this is!

Mormon Church President, Hinckley, Dies . . . Thomas S. Monson Becomes New Prophet

On January 27, 2008, the 97 year old Mormon prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, died. He was a General Authority in the Mormon church for 50 years, and prior to that he had another 20 years of church employment.



His doctrine on God the Father being a man, an exalted resurrected man from another planet, is no different from Joseph Smith's false teaching on the subject. He wrote, "**God is in form like a man.** He is personal. He speaks, and has spoken to man. He is exalted, and by human standards he is all-wise and all-powerful . . . He is the father of the spirits of all men . . ." ¹ He denied the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one God, which is the norm in Mormonism, where these comprise three gods, born at different times and places in the universe. He stated, "People cannot understand why we separate the three members of the Godhead into individuals."²

The new Mormon prophet is Thomas S. Monson, who is 80 years old, has been a General Authority for 40 years.

1 *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p.236.

2 *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p.239.

At the press conference for his new assignment, he spoke of the transition, "President Hinckley and I met together, in various meetings, nearly every day . . . It is inevitable that our thinking would be similar, therefore there will be no changes from the courses we have been pursuing . . . the doctrine is constant."³



In recent years, a few evangelical Christians have been teaching that the Mormon church is changing. We sharply disagree. One does not test the mere outward appearance, we must test the internal doctrines, and, in contrast to these Christians, Monson has made it clear in 2008 that no doctrine is changing, his Mormon "doctrine is constant."

A review of Monson's statements on God the Father and salvation, shows us that he teaches nothing different from Joseph Smith on this.

God the Father and the Trinity: "God Himself is a soul, composed of a spirit and of a **body of flesh and bones, as tangible as man's.** He is a resurrected, glorified, exalted, omniscient, omnipotent person . . ." ⁴ I point out to Mormons who say that the Father is a resurrected man, that this means that he had to die, with which they agree.

What does Monson think of the Trinity, as stated in the Nicene Creed? His conclusion is, "The results were a **maze of confusion** and a compoundment of error."⁵ This is the Mormon position from Smith's time to now. They have always denied the Trinity and made God into a man.

Salvation for the Dead: "None is exempt from the great obligation of performance of temple work for the dead . . . the greatest and grandest duty of all is to labor for the dead . . . **if we neglect the work for the dead, all our other good works notwithstanding, we shall find ourselves under severe condemnation.**"⁶ Who condemns the Mormon in this, but the Mormon god (and their prophet Monson)? The Bible does not teach salvation for the dead. We die once and then we are judged (Hebrews 9:27).

Earning Heaven and Saving Ourselves: "It is the celestial glory which we seek. It is in the presence of God we desire to dwell . . . Such blessings are **earned.** A high report card in **mortality qualifies us to graduate with honors.**"⁷ "Our duty in addition to **saving ourselves** is to guide others to the celestial kingdom of God."⁸ The Mormon heaven is always gained through human works.

Thank You for Your Participation

We have had over 250 requests for specific information on biblical analysis of false beliefs this past month. We also received our application for our booth for this year's Utah State Fair will be September 4-14. We invite your participation. Thank you for your prayers and gifts.

Love in Jesus, Kurt and Cindy Van Gorden

3 From the tape of the press conference held on 2/4/08.

4 "An Invitation to Exaltation," *Ensign*, Jul 1984, 69

5 *The Search for Jesus*, p.3

6 *Favorite Quotations from the Collection of Thomas S. Monson*, p.113

7 *An Invitation to Exaltation*, p.16

8 *Be Your Best Self*, p.144