

TM: Penetrating the Veil of Deception

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION: PENETRATING THE VEIL OF DECEPTION

Transcendental Meditation (TM) as taught by India's Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is making giant steps today in America. People in every spectrum of our society are beginning to practice TM as a means of mental and physical relaxation, stress relief, awareness expansion, and "development to a fully evolved state of life." Housewives, businessmen, scientists, high-ranking military officers, prisoners, students, and even young children are meditating.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

In order to gain a clear understanding of Transcendental Meditation, we must initially look at Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who has brought this technique of meditation to the West. Maharishi was born in India, graduated from Allahabad University with a physics degree, and thereafter became the favorite disciple of "His Divinity Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Jagadguru, Bhagwan Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math," at that time one of India's four great religious leaders. Just before Swami died, he commissioned Maharishi to evolve a simple form of meditation which anyone could learn and practice.



Swami Brahmananda

Maharishi consented, went into the Himalayan Mountains for two years, and emerged with a yoga technique he called Transcendental Meditation. When the people of Southern India were slow in accepting it, he decided to take it to the West, to those people "who are in the habit of accepting things quickly." He went first to London (where he achieved fame as the guru of the Beatles) and then came to America.

TM and Yoga

Transcendental Meditation is one of a great variety of yoga techniques which have come from the East. Yoga can be described as any type of mental, physical, or spiritual practice which is designed to bring one into union with "ultimate reality." Consider this definition of *raja yoga* from a current secular source:

YOGA: Sanskrit for "union." The development of the powers latent in man for achieving union with the Divine Spirit. It is defined as "the restraint of mental modifications." Eight stages are enumerated, viz. moral restraint (*yama*), self-culture (*niyama*), posture (*asana*), breath control (*pranayama*), control of the senses (*pratyahara*), concentration (*dharana*), meditation (*dyhana*), and a state of superconsciousness (*sa-*

madhi). The techniques of Yoga are recognized and applied by all schools of occultism.¹

The technique of Transcendental Meditation uses a *bija mantra*—literally, a "seed" mantra. The mantra is a secret Sanskrit word repeated over and over silently in the mind, resulting in expanded consciousness. In TM no concentration is really necessary because the *bija mantra* is firmly established in one's mind. The implantation of the mantra, like a seed being pushed into the ground, comes during the initiation ceremony. The TM ceremony itself uses the classical format of implanting the *bija mantra*.

It should be noted that the *bija mantra* is not unique to TM. It is utilized in Hindu tantric meditation and is also used by such groups as Self-Realization Fellowship (founded by Paramahansa Yogananda), The Integral Yoga Institute (led by Swami Satchitananda), and many other eclectic yoga systems.

Entering the Spiritual Realm

The silent, or "psychic" intonation of the mantra, which constitutes the whole practice of TM, makes possible entry into new spiritual realms where contact with spirits and demons is possible. Maharishi says:

... through Vedic hymns, it is possible for those expert in chanting those hymns to produce certain effects here, there or there. The universe is vast, so many worlds and all that. We do something here according to Vedic rites, particular, specific chanting to produce an effect in some other world, draw the attention of those higher beings or gods living there. The entire knowledge of the mantras or hymns of *the Vedas* is devoted to man's connection, to man's communication with the higher beings in different strata of creation.²

One Christian woman in Berkeley, California, a former teacher of TM, writes in her testimony:

As my consciousness expanded I began to become aware of the presence of spirit beings sitting on either side of me when I was meditating, and sometimes at night they would sit on my bed. In March, 1972, I attended a teacher training course in Fiuggi, Italy, where I learned from Maharishi how to be a TM

instructor. Along with about 1,000 others from all over the United States and the world, I spent three months meditating from three to ten hours a day. I had a vivid experience of demonic oppression while there, when in the night during sleep I woke with a sense of fear and apprehension, as pressure was being put all over my head and body by a spirit who was trying to enter my body. I commanded it to leave and resisted it until it left. Other supernatural experiences began to occur, such as clairvoyance, telepathy, and the beginnings of astral travel.

The Goal of TM

Transcendental Meditation is not *raja yoga* per se, but does draw heavily from it. TM actually starts with the fifth stage of *raja yoga*, *pratyahara*—withdrawal of senses from the external field of perception. The fact is, any one of the eight stages of *raja yoga* taken by itself is designed to lead to the seventh stage, *dyhana* (oneness with all yet with a remaining sense of your own existence), and then finally to *samadhi* (oneness with all with no sense of your own existence). *Samadhi*, the eighth stage, is the goal of all types of yoga. It is also the ultimate goal of Transcendental Meditation according to Maharishi:

When one sees the different perspectives in Vedic literature, one may be confused by the differences of opinion about the path of realization. But when the mind comes to *samadhi*, or transcendental consciousness, the goal of all paths is reached.³

After one has practiced TM for a sufficient length of time, local TM centers offer advanced instruction in *asana* (yoga postures—stage three in *raja yoga*) and *pranayama* (breathing exercises—stage four), as an aid in attaining deeper levels of consciousness.

How TM Is Portrayed

The public is first introduced to the practice of TM through a series of two free lectures held weekly in most communities. Advertisements for these lectures are seen on bulletin boards, in newspapers, and are frequently heard on the radio. At these lectures one is told that TM

- 1) "can be learned easily and enjoyed by everyone,"
- 2) "provides deep rest as a basis for dynamic action,"
- 3) "improves clarity of perception,"
- 4) "develops creative intelligence,"
- 5) "expands awareness,"
- 6) "insures full development of the individual in a natural way."

One is told that TM is not religious, and that the organization promoting TM* is a non-profit *educational* organization. If, at this point, a person wants to begin the practice of Transcendental Meditation, he or she must pay a large initiation fee and participate in an initiation ceremony.

The Initiation Ceremony

The initiation ceremony is the most important step in learning TM. A candidate for initiation must participate in this formal ceremony in order to receive the mantra, the secret Sanskrit word on which he meditates. The candidate is asked to bring fruit, fresh-picked flowers, and a clean white handkerchief to the ceremony. Shoes are removed, and one enters an incense-filled, candle-lit room along with the TM initiator. Kneeling before a picture of Maharishi's dead master, Swami Saraswati, the TM initiator puts the fruit and flowers on the handkerchief and places it all on a table or mantle beneath the picture. He begins singing *puja*, a Vedic hymn of worship honoring the departed masters of the Shankara tradition of Hinduism. After the hymn singing, which usually takes ten or fifteen minutes, the initiator will rise and look at the candidate, repeating a Sanskrit word which is to be his personal mantra. After being taught how to pronounce the mantra properly, the candidate begins to meditate for the first time, silently repeating it over and over until a pleasant sensation occurs. He is told to return for the next three consecutive nights for additional help in learning to meditate, and then he is on his own. It is recommended to him

*The first group which Maharishi founded was called the "Spiritual Regeneration Movement" (SRM). The function of the SRM in propagating TM was later taken over by the "International Meditation Society" (IMS). The IMS, in turn, recently changed its name to the "World Plan Executive Council" (WPEC), a move which is no doubt intended to further obscure the religious implications of TM.

that he meditate twice a day for twenty minutes at a time.

The explicit element of worship involved in the recitation of the *puja* is enough in itself to disqualify TM as a permissible practice for Christians who take the words of God seriously: "You shall not make yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath . . . you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God . . ." (Ex. 20:4-5).

Aside from the issue of worship, however, there is another significant fact about the *puja* and its function in the initiation ceremony, which TM literature never mentions. The *puja* itself is a long *mantra* which is so constructed in its rhythms and the sequence of its sounds as to produce an altered state of consciousness both in the initiate who hears it and the initiator who recites it. The purpose of this mental manipulation is two-fold. For the initiate, it places him in a semi-passive and receptive frame of mind well suited to the implantation of the mantra. For the initiator, it is believed to "tune him in" to the spiritual power (or *siddhi*) of the Maharishi and the tradition he represents so that the initiator will be empowered to transmit the mantra with psychic force to the deep levels of the initiate's unconscious mind.

This is the significance of the *mantra* as *bija*, or "seed." The initiate is advised that he should not attempt to concentrate on the *mantra* during meditation, but should simply allow it to "dwell in his consciousness." The fact is that the *mantra* can "dwell" there because it has been placed there by means of traditional ceremonial techniques.

The Religious Nature of TM

Transcendental Meditation is widely claimed to be non-religious in nature, to be compatible with all religions and to actually be of help to believers in their day-to-day Christian lives. The basis upon which this claim is made is the fact that a person can begin meditation without any prior belief-commitment. This sounds convincing to Westerners only because we are naive and uncritical. We tend to define all religion in terms of the religions we have had experience with—usually Ju-

daism and Christianity—which do place a strong emphasis on faith. In Hinduism, however, this is not the case. A distinguished scholar has observed that "A man is considered to be a Hindu in good standing, not by what he believes, but by what he does."⁴

TM's non-religious image is also deceptive in another way. While belief is not prescribed, some beliefs are definitely taught. The process of interpreting the experience of TM to the meditator is based upon an elaborate set of assumptions and hypotheses about Reality which amount to a systematic religious philosophy. The content of this philosophy is point-for-point identical to Vedantic Hinduism of the tradition of Shankara (the tradition to which Maharishi belongs).

The secular news media has sensed, if only slightly, that TM does have religious overtones. *Psychology Today* magazine wrote, "The Science of Creative Intelligence, as it is called, is clearly a revival of ancient Indian Brahmanism and Hinduism. Its origins lie in the ancient texts—Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, the teachings of Buddha, and the synthesis of these traditions by Shankara."⁵ [Note: SCI is the doctrinal teaching associated with TM.]

The Los Angeles *Times* said, "TM leaders conceded that the metaphysical base (the science of creative intelligence) behind TM is a revival of ancient Brahmanism and Hinduism."⁶

It is inevitable that in conveying this philosophy to Westerners, some of Maharishi's teaching would relate to the content of the Christian's faith. Let us then examine these teachings to determine how "compatible" they might be with Christianity.

TM and Christianity

The sacrificial death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the central teaching of historical and biblical Christianity. Maharishi says, "I don't think Christ ever suffered or Christ could suffer. It's a pity that Christ is talked of in terms of suffering."⁷ Yet we can listen to the words of Jesus Himself as He rebuked the two men on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Messiah

to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:25 NASB).

Maharishi teaches that through Transcendental Meditation ". . . very easily a sinner comes out of the field of sin and becomes a virtuous man."⁸ He also states that TM enables one to "place his life in tune with the cosmic life of absolute Being" and that to do so is "the only way out of the field of sin."⁹ But the Bible nowhere says that meditation will save us from our sins. Rather, it clearly states that we are saved from sin by the blood of Christ—". . . He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26 NASB).

What about the daily problems and hassles we all face? Maharishi says, "The answer to every problem is that there is no problem. Let a man perceive this truth and then he is without problems."¹⁰ This view is typically held by religions of the East which teach transcendence out of the present world—the world of *maya* (illusion), the world of problems and pain—to attain higher levels of consciousness where there is no duality, no good and bad, no right and wrong, no problems, no pain. But the Bible never teaches us to do this. Peter says, in Chapter 1 of his first Epistle, that, as Christians, we have a glorious inheritance from God, and that we should have our hope set on it. Yet in this life we will have trials for a purpose—"that the genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7 NASB).

How are we to live a righteous life in a day-to-day setting? Maharishi says this: "Right action without a proper basis is very hard, if not impossible. By transcendental meditation, however, it is easy to gain pure consciousness and thereby automatically to perform right action."¹¹ And yet God has graciously provided Christians with His Spirit to empower them to live a full and abundant life which is pleasing to Him. Not once does He tell us in His Word to seek "pure consciousness" within ourselves in order to live a devout life. We must look to Him rather than ourselves for power to live creative, fruitful lives.

TM, Prayer and Christian Meditation

Though the public is led to believe TM is not a religious practice, Maharishi has gone on record equating TM with prayer. When asked if his meditation was prayer, he responded, "A very good form of prayer. A most refined and most powerful form of prayer is this meditation which directly leads us to the field of the Creator, to the sources of Creation, to the field of God."¹² But there is a great difference between TM and Christian prayer.



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

Jesus said, "When you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him. Pray then in this way: 'Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name . . .'" (Matthew 6:7-9 NASB). Jesus teaches that Christian prayer is to be intelligent communication between two persons, not meaningless repetition of the same word over and over.

And what about Christian meditation? Is it, too, different from TM? Indeed it is. Psalm 1 speaks of the righteous man who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on the law day and night. This meditation is a practice where a person active-

ly uses his mind to study the Word of God, to "chew on it" and analyze it until he understands it and can apply it to his life. But Transcendental Meditation, as mentioned earlier, involves *pratyahara*—withdrawal of senses from external field of perception. The mind, rather than working actively to discern and digest, is placed in neutral, and ultimately dismissed altogether when *samadhi* (cosmic consciousness) is experienced. So Transcendental Meditation and Christian meditation can be seen to be quite the opposite of each other.

The Growth of TM

The World Plan Executive Council (WPEC) is the organization which now propagates this technique of meditation around the world. According to WPEC, over 650,000 Americans have been initiated so far, with the present initiation rate at 15,000 per month and growing. Each initiate is asked to pay a sizable initiation fee (non-students \$125, college students \$65, high school students \$55, junior high school students \$35, families \$200, young children—2 week allowance). From this source of revenue, WPEC easily grosses 1.5 million dollars (tax free) each month, thereby enabling them to expand their work at a tremendous rate. WPEC now has 350 World Plan Centers in the U.S. and 7,000 teachers of TM. Hundreds of new teachers are being trained by an elaborate video-tape system each month.

Maharishi's "World Plan"

A World Plan has been developed and is now in progress to train one teacher of Transcendental Meditation for every one thousand people in all parts of the world. The Seven Goals of the World Plan are believed to be attainable goals which can be realized in this generation. The seven goals are:

- 1) To develop the full potential of the individual.
- 2) To improve governmental achievements.
- 3) To realize the highest ideal of education.
- 4) To eliminate the age-old problem of crime and all behavior that brings unhappiness to the family of man.
- 5) To maximize the intelligent use of

the environment.

- 6) To bring fulfillment to the economic aspiration of individuals and society.
- 7) To achieve the spiritual goals of mankind in this generation.

It should be noted that, when Maharishi first came to America, he was very blunt about declaring the religious aims of TM. One only need read his book, *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi* (Bantam Books) to see this. The first organization established by Maharishi for spreading TM in this country was called The Spiritual Regeneration Movement. But Maharishi seems to have changed his tune as he became more aware of the legal situation here (separation of church and state), the pragmatic and technological mentality of Westerners, and the prestige of a "scientific" image. Transcendental Meditation is now a "scientific technique" and the WPEC is an "educational" organization, a much more palatable dish for the average American.

TM, Deception and Politics

This built-in deception found in TM is characteristic of all Eastern religions and occult philosophies. There has always been a tendency to veil the true nature of the system from the eyes of the uninitiated. Maharishi flatly states that TM, if it is to be taken to the world, must be taken to people at their own particular level. In his own words:

If the message is to be carried from generation to generation, it should be placed on the mass tendency of each generation . . . Whenever and wherever religion dominates the mass consciousness, transcendental deep meditation should be taught in terms of religion. Whenever and wherever metaphysical thinking dominates the consciousness of society, transcendental deep meditation should be taught in metaphysical terms, openly aiming at the fulfillment of the current metaphysical thought. Wherever and whenever politics dominates the mass consciousness . . . etc. Wherever and whenever economics dominates the mass consciousness . . . etc. What is suited to the present generation? It seems, for the present, that this transcendental deep meditation should be made available to the peoples through the agencies of government.¹³

The International Meditation Society

has had remarkable success so far in the U.S. political arena. The following groups or individuals have, either recently or in the past several years, officially lauded the practice of Transcendental Meditation and the activities of the IMS:

The Governor of Vermont

The Mayor of Oakland, California

The Mayor of Houston, Texas

The Mayor of Cincinnati, Ohio

The Mayor of Miami, Florida

The Mayor of Berkeley, California

The City Council of Los Angeles, California

The State Legislature of Illinois

The State Legislature of Connecticut

U.S. Senator John V. Tunney, California

U.S. Senator Adlai Stevenson, Illinois

U.S. Senator Michael Gravel, Alaska

The resolution passed by the Illinois State Legislature specifically encouraged state educational agencies to "study the feasibility of courses in Transcendental Meditation."¹⁴

The U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare has given over \$21,000 to IMS to train high school teachers how to teach TM in public schools.

On February 5, 1975, Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska introduced a resolution before the U.S. Senate entitled *Senate Resolution 64—A Resolution to Increase Public Awareness of Transcendental Meditation*. If this measure passes, the WPEC will have the stamp of approval of the United States Senate for their World Plan activities.

TM in Public Education

In the field of education, TM is being taught in many public schools and universities under the name "The Science of Creative Intelligence." According to a report by IMS, SCI has been taught for credit in the following institutions of public education:

Louisiana State University

Stanford

U. of California, Berkeley

U. of Colorado

U. of Virginia

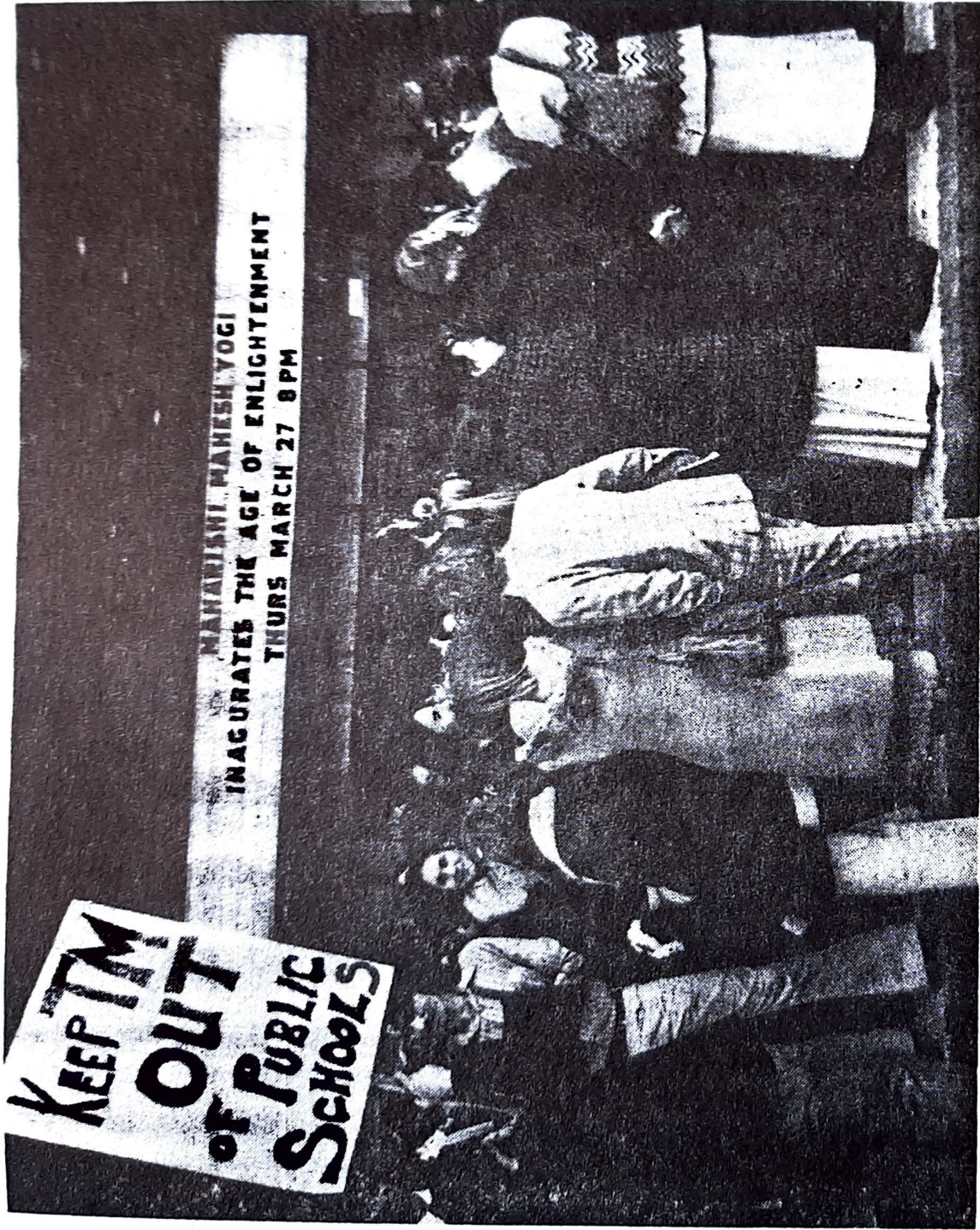
Yale

Drake

Harvard

Kent State

U. of Alaska



A large and diverse crowd attends Maharishi's lecture in San Francisco

- UCLA
 U. of Cincinnati
 U. of Miami (Fla.)
 U. of Utah
 City University of New York
 George High School (Newton, Pa.)
 Miami Springs High School (Fla.)
 Punahoe High School (Honolulu, Hi.)
 Valley Streams High School (Long Island, N.Y.)
 Watertown High School (Mass.)
 Dos Pueblos High School (Goleta, Ca.)
 Piedmont High School (Piedmont, Ca.)
 [Note: This list was dated 1972 and by now has probably been expanded.]

Other TM Activities

In the U.S. Army, Major General Franklin Davis (now retired) has publicly spoken out in favor of TM. At the time

he was commandant of the U.S. Army War College with offices in the Pentagon. Before his retirement, General Davis made these remarks concerning the teaching of TM to soldiers in the U.S. Army:

The program must be voluntary a d i rective from the Pentagon turns off the young soldier. I think the easiest way would be to keep it at post level, offering instruction in service clubs or the like, but the Army should pick up the tab and provide the instruction.¹⁵

WPEC has recently opened a university called Maharishi International University (MIU) with campuses in Fairfield, Iowa, and Santa Barbara, California. MIU is a four-year university, offering bachelor's degrees in "standard majors," and is now seeking accreditation.

A major part of the World Plan involves a World Global TV Network. KSCI-TV,

Channel 18, will go on the air this year, located in San Bernardino, California, and broadcasting to the six-million residents of the greater Los Angeles area as an "educational" TV station. The FCC has also granted a license for a similar TV station on the East Coast. Consider what has happened recently in the tiny Asian nation of Nepal:

Recognizing a necessity to strengthen national security through raising the quality of individual life, in November 1974, the government of Nepal called on the WPEC to implement its educational programs on every level of Nepalese society. Illustrative of the technological capabilities of the WPEC, within a month's time low-power low-cost television transmitters and closed-circuit video systems carried the message of higher education through SCI and TM to nearly one million people, and marked the first television broadcasting in the nation's history.¹⁶

A Christian Response to TM

It should be clear at this point that the significance of TM cannot be defined in terms of a counter-cultural "fad" peculiar to Americans or the West. The growing popularity of groups like Transcendental Meditation in this country are symptomatic of the loss of the "Christian consensus" in America. We do live in a "post-Christian" world, a world so spiritually starved that occult philosophies and Eastern religions are finding fertile ground for their seeds of delusion, deceit, and ultimate emptiness.

What is a Christian response to TM? We should be thoroughly informed as to the true nature and teaching of Transcendental Meditation. We must be able to intelligently share our faith in Christ with those entangled in this web of deception. There must be found Christians who are willing to stand up at school board and other public meetings to refute the false claims of TM. Most important of all, we must look to God for the power to live in a way that reflects His character to the people around us. Others must see in our very lives that we are different, that we know God personally.

The Christian World Liberation Front has developed a ministry called "The Spiritual Counterfeits Project." The pur-

pose of the project is to gather information about occult/Eastern/mystical groups in America, make this information known to other Christians, and to encourage Christians to confront these groups in their community.

For more information write:

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2. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi* (Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 17, 18.
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4. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York, Philosophical Library, undated), p. 28.
5. *Psychology Today Magazine*, April, 1974, p. 38.
6. *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1974, Part I, p. 20.
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8. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
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10. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
12. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi* (Bantam Books, 1968), p. 95.
13. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (Signet Books, 1968), pps. 298-300.
14. House Resolution No. 677 adopted by the Illinois House of Representatives, May 24, 1972.
15. *Soldiers Magazine*, Official U.S. Army magazine, Vol. 27, No. 2, February, 1972.
16. An excerpt from U.S. Senate Resolution 64, Congressional Record—Senate, February 5, 1975, p. S1467.

All scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible, Lockman Foundation, 1972.

