

Mind Control in the 1990's: Neuro-Linguistic Programming

By Rick Branch

In recent years, several [New Age](#) groups have entered the realm of the business world under various guises.

One of the most widespread is Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). This organization is very prevalent among the medical and legal professions.

According to the *Seminars and Certification Trainings* manual, produced by NLP, "Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a practical application of how people think. Described as 'software for your brain,' NLP allows you to automatically tap into the kind of experiences you want to have," (p. 1).

Keeping this relatively simple and unassuming definition in mind, the following information will demonstrate why NLP should be classified as a New Age philosophy.

Index

[Influential Sources](#)

[Advertising Policy](#)

[NLP Doctrine](#)

[Conclusion](#)

Influential Sources

"In the early 1970's Dr. Richard Bandler and Dr. John Grinder through careful study of acknowledged masters of communication and change such as Drs. Milton Erickson, Virginia Satir, George Bateson and Fritz Perls, discovered what made these individuals so effective and in the process developed the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming," (**The New Age Catalogue**, 1988 ed., p. 85).

One of the models for NLP was Dr. Milton Erickson who heads the Milton Erickson Foundation in Phoenix, Arizona.

This man was the founder of the technique known as Ericksonian

Hypnosis.

In this type of [hypnosis](#), Erickson teaches the students how to, "communicate with the whole person by utilizing conscious and *unconscious* levels. Dr. Erickson also taught us (his pupils) how to utilize and *bypass client resistance by embedding* therapeutic interventions in seemingly casual conversation," (*Ibid*; emphasis mine).

These technique, which the NLP freely admits adopting to its purposes, are the same processes that Radio Stations once used and Television Stations are still allowed to use.

That is, Subliminal Messages, or the act of tapping into the unconscious mind apart from the persons conscious knowledge. This act of "planting" an idea in someone's unconscious mind is both unethical and unbiblical.

The example for Christians should be that of [Jesus Christ](#) who said "I spake openly to the world; I even taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said," (John 18:20-21).

Another of the NLP's primary role models was Fritz Perls. Dr. Perls has a long career of New Age teachings.

In 1961 Michael Murphy and Richard Price opened a new residential community which came to be known as Esalen.

Located in California's Big Sur area, Esalen "helped mid-wife much

of what came to be known as the *human-potential movement*. Seminar leaders in Esalen's first three years included Gerald Heard, Alan Watts, Arnold Toynbee, Linus Pauling, Norman O. Brown, Carl Rogers, Paul Tillich, Rollo May, and a young graduate student named Carlos Castaneda," (**The Aquarian Conspiracy**, p. 137; emphasis mine).

It was here at Esalen that "...Fritz Perls came to live..." in the 1960's. This new community, of which Perls was a part, was "...seeking ways the insights of this new human-potential movement could be applied to the larger society," (*Ibid*, p. 139).

Thus the very foundation for Bandler and Grinder's NLP is based in the New Age motif. However, it can be argued that because a group has its origins in a non-Christian movement, that does not, by necessity, cause the new group to be non-Christian also.

For that reason, it is categorically imperative that the practices and teachings of the new group be equally scrutinized.

Advertising Policy

Much insight can be quickly gained by the advertizing policies a group maintains.

That is, where does the group advertize its product? For reasons which are obvious, few Christian bookstores carry Anthon LeVey's **Satanic Bible**.

By the same line of reasoning, few bookstores which specialize in the [Occult](#), stock the [Holy Bible](#). Advertisers and publishers will

always target the most receptive audience.

If a determination can be made as to the characteristics of a group by where they place their advertising dollar, and with what other advertisers they associate, then it becomes critical that NLP's policies be observed.

In the January/February 1989 issue of the *New Age Journal*, the NLP printed the following Box Ad: "REACH YOUR POTENTIAL - NLP is a method for enhancing human development and creating change gracefully. Discover effective tools for the *New Age*," (p. 96; emphasis mine).

In another periodical which caters to a large extent to New Age promotion, this ad appeared:

"NLP - The Magic of Communication. Through pre-sentation, demonstration, games and exercises, you will learn how to... Learn the 'magic' of personal power," (*Fun Ed*, Fall 1989, p. 15).

In the same magazine are ads for [Tarot Card](#) readings, [Yoga](#), [Palm Reading](#) and Developing Your Psychic Powers.

Few advertisers who honestly attempt to sell a product will target an audience they feel will not be receptive.

NLP Doctrine

Up to this point the historical influences and groups with which the NLP associates have been discussed. It is now time to allow the publication of the NLP to speak for itself. The following quotes are

taken from the *Seminars and Certification Trainings* (Fall 1989-1990 Spring) manual.

In the Master Practitioner Training, "You will learn: Submodality Patterns (such as) Change core beliefs.... Rapidly re-imprint formative experiences..." (p. 5).

While there is nothing inherently wrong with the act of changing a core belief, it is the process whereby that belief is changed that must be called into question.

Every person who has become a Christian has had their core beliefs changed. For contrary to Man's natural belief, is the recognition that Man is a sinner, separated from God, and deserving of nothing but death (Romans 3:23, 6:23).

In an NLP 6-day Advanced Andreas Intensive one learns "...of guilt and shame, and how to change them easily and elegantly into positive resources that enhance self-esteem," (p. 6).

It must be pointed out that while guilt and shame in the form of self-recrimination can be taken to a dangerous extreme, they do serve a valuable emotional and theological purpose.

Throughout the Bible these and other emotions are said to be ways in which God draws Man unto Himself. These are used to exhibit Man's depravity and God's righteousness. To reinterpret, minimize or dismiss entirely these emotions are to tamper with God's creation and His purpose for our lives. (John 16:8-11, Acts 2:37-40 and Romans 2:14-15).

In a seven-part VHS series, Tape #4, *Perceptual Grids*, the NLP

teaches how a "Trance... can make old problem behaviors seem unfamiliar and ridiculous, and refocus attention on desired outcomes," (p. 8).

The act of entering a trance is accomplished by shutting down the conscious mind and allowing the unconscious or sub-conscious mind to take over.

This action is a very dangerous process. For it is at this open moment that the defense system, the conscious mind, which God created in Man, is turned off.

As Dick Sutphen, expert in Subliminal programming has explained, if a suggestion or command is given during this time, "...the suggestions are not challenged by your conscious mind, they are accepted by your subconscious, which begins to create the circumstance necessary to change your life so it will match your new beliefs," (*Body Mind Spirit*, May/June 1989, p. 41).

Both Sutphen and the periodical *Body Mind Spirit* are pro-New Age.

Finally under the heading *Who Takes NLP Training?*, the following information is found:

"People taking NLP training often report unanticipated desirable changes in themselves and their abilities from participating in the various exercises that make up more than a third of trainings. They describe improving their ability to learn and *developing new levels of awareness*.

"The benefits of NLP are being able to tap your own undeveloped

potential and being able to respectfully learn the skill and talents of others. We are on the threshold of a *quantum leap in human capacities*, with no end in sight," (p. 14; emphasis mine).

Contrary to NLP's claims, Man has only one potential. That potential is to sin and it is that sinful nature which sent the Son of God to the cross. With reference to a new level of awareness, Man only reaches a new plateau by casting all his trust on the one who can forgive sin, our mediator between God the Father and Man -- Christ Jesus. (Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Timothy 2:5).

To anyone who has ever read either a Christian book, maga-zine or article on the Pantheistic nature of the New Age, all of these statements found in one of NLP's official publications rings true to the New Age Philosophy.

Conclusion

One final argument against the claims of the NLP, interestingly enough, does not come from a Biblical perspective. Rather, it comes from a government study completed by the U.S. Army.

The study, conducted by the National Research Council (NRC), completed in 1988, and entitled Enhancing Human Performance, under the commission of the U.S. Army, examined the claims of the NLP.

"The NRC researchers checked out other frontiers of human potential as well, including accelerated learning, biofeedback, and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). NLP which postulates connection between behavior and neurology and claims to train students to `read' others by noting their eye position and choice of

language, was also dismissed as having a social rather than a neurological basis," (**The Fringes of Reason, A Whole Earth Catalog: A Field Guide to New Age Frontiers, Unusual Beliefs & Eccentric Sciences**, 1989 ed., p. 196).

Thus, from both a Biblical and a secular perspective, Neuro-Linguistic Programming fails to fulfill its claims.

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