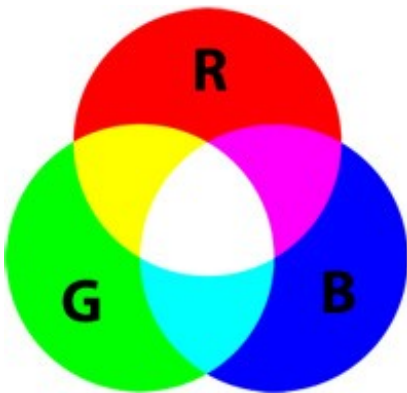




## Propaganda and The Color of Light

Sunlight is composed of red, green and blue light waves.  
Combine these together and you get white light.



Remove the red from white light and you will no longer be able to see red in anything illuminated by that light. Red will no longer exist. Remove the blue and you will no longer see blue.

This is the secret of propaganda.

Propaganda is an emotionally charged word, so we should probably establish a definition for the purposes of this discussion:

“Propaganda is a form of persuasion that refuses to consider the point of view of its opponent. Instead, propaganda will mock, vilify and demonize its opponent or ignore its opponent’s perspective completely.”

Google “propaganda” and you’ll learn the term dates back to 1622, when Pope Gregory XV decided to send out missionaries to propagate – *propagando* – the faith. To facilitate this, he created the *sacra congregatio christiano nomini propagando*. The cardinal in charge of *Propagando* became known as the “red pope” due to the importance of his duties and the extraordinary extent of his authority.<sup>1</sup>

In 1982, Pope John Paul II renamed it *the congregation for the evangelization of peoples*, probably because the word “propaganda” had been given a bad name by Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany.

Catholics in 1622 wanted to eliminate the Protestant perspective, which is only fair, because Protestants wanted to eliminate the Catholic perspective.

This polarization caused millions to die in religious wars, but that doesn’t make religion bad. It is a polarized perspective – whether in religion or sports or anything else – that’s bad.

A person can have a strong and unchangeable point of view but still retain the courtesy and breadth of vision to understand how an intelligent person might embrace the opposite point of view.

Think of your opponent as watching a sporting event from the seat exactly opposite yours. You’re both watching the same game, but his left is your right and your right is his left. So which of you is the liar? Which of you is the fool?

200 million Muslims are Shiites.

1.6 billion Muslims are Sunnis.

When the Islamic Prophet Muhammad died in 632 A.D., a debate emerged about who should be his successor. Both sides agreed that Allah is the one true God and that Muhammad was his messenger, but one group (the Shiites) felt Muhammad’s successor should be someone in his bloodline, while the other (the Sunnis) felt a pious individual who would follow the Prophet’s customs would be acceptable.

Both Sunnis and Shiites  
read the Quran,  
believe Prophet Muhammad was the messenger of Allah,  
fast during Ramadan,  
pledge to make a pilgrimage to Mecca,  
practice ritual prayer five times a day,  
give charity to the poor and  
pledge themselves to their faith.

But rather than celebrate what they have in common and use those bonds to facilitate peace and prosperity, the Sunnis and Shiites have chosen bitter war.

Democrats and Republicans seem to be making a similar choice.

I, for one, want no part of it.

**Justice and Mercy are both important and good and true.  
But they exist in perpetual tension, an eternal tug-of-war.**

I'm sure I'll be criticized for saying this, but it seems to me that one side wants to shine bold red light on the importance of protecting ourselves from those who would do us harm, while the other side wants to shine a soothing blue light on the pain of the struggling and the oppressed.

If propagandists are successful in their attempts to eliminate the red or the blue from the light that shines from America, I fear we will learn we have amputated an arm because we didn't understand its purpose.

Roy H. Williams

<sup>1</sup> TheCatholicEncyclopedia at [NewAdvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)