

# **Manipulation and Propaganda: How to Recognise and Deal With It**

What is good reasoning and what is manipulation? How can manipulation be recognized in the private as well as in the public sphere? What is propaganda and how does it work? In this session, we will analyse some basic concepts of manipulation and countermeasures and discuss the main ideas of the Harvard concept of fair and respectful negotiation. We will then look at basic ideas established by the father of modern propaganda, Edward L. Bernays (1891 -1995) and give some illustrative examples. Finally, we will describe the freedom of Christian thinking, how to break self-censorship, overcome conformity and speak up in public persuasively and effectively.

**Ralf Bergmann**, born in 1962, is married and has three adult children, two children-in-law and three grandchildren. He received his degree in physics and a doctorate from German universities. He is or has been mainly involved in semiconductor physics and technology, photovoltaics and optical technologies at several research institutions in Germany and Australia and has also worked in industrial research. Since 2008 he is a professor and head of a research institute working on optical technologies and optoelectronics. Beyond his research, he is defending the reasonability and relevance of Christian faith, with respect to the joint concerns of physics, philosophy, and theology as well as modern western society. In 2019, he wrote the book *Gott und die Erklärung der Welt* (God and the explanation of the world), and in 2021 *Die freie Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde* (The free society and its enemies) in remembrance of Karl Poppers famous book *The open society and its enemies* and the works of Francis Schaeffer. Corresponding resources in English and German can be found in <http://www.professorenforum.de/>.

## **I. Why is there so much manipulation in the world?**

- A. Attitudes, worldviews, ideologies, and power
  
- B. Jesus on power and the heart of humans

## **II. What are we talking about? Some Definitions**

- A. Claims, argumentation, evidence, and proof
  
- B. Negotiation and manipulation
  
- C. Propaganda and conspiracy

## **III. Negotiation**

- A. Why negotiate?
  
- B. The Harvard-concept
  
- C. Goals and values

#### **IV. Manipulation**

- A. Types of manipulation
- B. Methods of manipulation
- C. Dealing with manipulation

#### **V. Propaganda**

- A. Edward L. Bernays, the father of modern propaganda
- B. Engineering Consent
- C. Propaganda in times of war
- D. Recognizing propaganda

#### **VI. Our Resources as Christians to Deal with Manipulation and Propaganda**

- A. Truth and reason - re-establishing the foundations
- B. From conformity to courage - being light and salt of society
- C. Tools for changing the scene - Asking the right questions and getting organized

#### **Some further reading:**

R. Fisher and W. Ury: *Getting to Yes – Negotiating an Agreement Without Giving In*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Penguin Books (2012)

Edward Bernays: *Propaganda*. Orange Press (2015, original 1928 and 1955)

Roger Scruton: *Fools, Frauds and Firebrands – Thinkers of the New Left*. Bloomsbury (2015)

Karl Popper: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Routledge (1994), first published in 1945

Alvin Plantinga: *Advice to Christian Philosophers*. With a special preface for Christian thinkers from different disciplines. *Faith and Philosophy – J. of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 1, S. 253-271 (1984).

Francis A. Schaeffer: *A Christian Manifesto*. Crossway (1981)

Francis A. Schaeffer: *How Should we Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. Crossway, 1976 (2005)

J. D. Hunter: *To Change the world*, Oxford University Press (2010)