

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: David Carlson on When Good Intentions Serve Harmful Causes

Knut Holdhus
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Good intentions manipulated. Illustration: ChatGPT



David Carlson in 1997

Understanding ideological manipulation: American academic on how ordinary people are misled by good intentions when evil appears as good

In the [third installment](#) of his six-part opinion series *Are We Truly Prepared in Our Current World Situation?*, published on 12 May 2026 by the [international headquarters](#) of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), Dr. David Carlson argues that one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary society is not merely political conflict or ideological disagreement, but the inability of many people to recognize how destructive ideas can spread through otherwise decent and well-intentioned individuals.

Carlson's discussion in the section titled "The Nature of Communism and How It Uses People", draws heavily upon the work of Fred

Schwarz, whose analysis of communist strategy sought to explain why revolutionary movements are often able to attract support far beyond the ranks of committed party members.

To understand Carlson's argument, it is useful first to understand the background of Dr. Fred Schwarz and the publication he cites. Fred Schwarz (1913 - 2009) was an Australian physician who became one of the most influential anti-communist educators of the twentieth century.

Concerned by the global expansion of Marxist-Leninist ideology during the Cold War, he devoted much of his life to explaining communist doctrine, strategy, and methods to public audiences. In 1953 he founded the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, which organized lectures, seminars, and publications throughout the United States and other countries.

Schwarz became especially known for presenting complex ideological questions in a way that ordinary citizens could understand. The source cited by Carlson, *What Is Communism*, originated as a lecture series delivered by Schwarz and later published by Chantico in Long Beach, California. The work sought to describe not only communist philosophy itself but also the broader network of supporters, sympathizers, and unwitting collaborators that, in Schwarz's view, enabled communist movements to gain influence within democratic societies.

Although written during the Cold War and reflecting the political assumptions of that era, the publication

remains an important historical example of anti-communist thought and has continued to influence certain religious and political commentators.



Dr. Fred Schwarz (1913-2009), physician, writer, political commentator, at an anti-communist press conference in Los Angeles October 14, 1964

Drawing upon Schwarz's framework, Carlson notes that people associated with communist causes can be divided into several categories. The first group consists of committed communists themselves - individuals who consciously embrace and advance communist ideology. Beyond them, however, lie several additional categories that Schwarz believed were often more significant because of their numbers and social influence.

One such category is that of "fellow travelers". These are individuals who may not formally belong to communist organizations but who nonetheless support policies, movements, or cultural trends that advance communist objectives. Whether through political activism, intellectual advocacy, or participation in social campaigns, their actions align with goals that they may not fully acknowledge or recognize.

Another group is composed of sympathizers. According to Schwarz, these individuals often believe that communist movements can be moderated through understanding, tolerance, or goodwill. They may hope that revolutionary organizations will eventually become constructive partners in society if given sufficient acceptance and encouragement. Carlson questions this assumption, arguing that such optimism underestimates the

fundamentally destructive nature that thinkers critical of communism have historically attributed to its ideology. From this perspective, sincere hopes for accommodation can become a source of vulnerability rather than a path toward reconciliation.

Schwarz also identified what he called "pseudo-liberals". These are often educated professionals, academics, intellectuals, lawyers, and others who are deeply engaged in theoretical discussions about society and social reform. They frequently champion causes involving justice, equality, or civil liberties. Carlson suggests that such individuals may sincerely believe they are advancing noble principles, yet they can become detached from practical realities. In Schwarz's analysis, they sometimes employ legal or intellectual arguments in ways that unintentionally support movements whose ultimate objectives are far more radical than the values they publicly profess.



Peace activist August 8, 2020

Perhaps the most striking category is that of the "dupe". Drawing upon dictionary definitions, Schwarz describes a dupe as a person who is easily deceived or misled. Such individuals need not possess malicious intentions. On the contrary, they are often patriotic, compassionate, and genuinely concerned about improving society. Their vulnerability lies not in bad motives but in their inability to recognize when they are being manipulated by more determined ideological actors. Because they respond readily to appeals framed as humanitarian, moral, or socially beneficial, they can be recruited into campaigns whose deeper purposes remain hidden from them. From Schwarz's perspective, the list would likely have included:

Peace movements

Nuclear disarmament campaigns

Anti-war coalitions

Anti-fascist organizations

Anti-colonial and national liberation campaigns

Civil-rights and anti-racism campaigns

International friendship societies

Student protest movements

Certain labor and trade-union initiatives

Campaigns against military spending



February 16, 2003: An elderly American woman raises her fist in opposition to her country's imminent invasion of Iraq

Carlson argues that these categories remain relevant in the present day. In his view, many people who contribute to harmful ideological movements are neither openly revolutionary nor consciously evil. Rather, they participate because they have accepted certain narratives, assumptions, or social pressures without fully examining their origins and consequences. As a result, they may unknowingly assist agendas that contradict the very values they believe they are defending.

This concern connects to a broader theme within the [Unification Principles](#). Those basic teachings of the [Family Federation](#) point out that evil does not always present itself openly as evil. People may sincerely believe they are advancing justice, progress, or humanitarian ideals while unknowingly supporting forces that oppose [God's providence](#). Thus, individuals can become participants in destructive historical movements without recognizing the spiritual implications of their actions.

One of the most relevant statements in the [Unification Principles](#) appears in the discussion of the relationship between good and evil throughout history:

"Throughout history, evil people have often masqueraded as good people, by advancing causes and policies which superficially appear good."

This theme is developed further in the Introduction's explanation of how conflicting ideologies emerge and how people can be drawn into movements that appear righteous while actually serving purposes contrary to [God's providence](#). The Introduction argues that the struggle of history is not simply between obviously good people and obviously evil people, but between forces and ideas whose true character is not always immediately apparent.

David Carlson contends that many people today are convinced they are promoting goodness, justice, or progress while remaining unaware of the larger ideological currents influencing their thinking. The central warning of this section is therefore not directed solely at committed ideological activists but at ordinary citizens as well. Vigilance, discernment, and a willingness to examine the underlying assumptions behind social and political movements are presented as essential safeguards in a rapidly changing world.

In this way, Carlson's discussion extends beyond a narrow critique of communism and becomes a broader reflection on how ideas influence human behavior. His underlying message is that societies are most vulnerable when people cease to question the forces shaping their beliefs and actions. Understanding the difference between conscious commitment, sympathetic support, intellectual rationalization, and unwitting participation is therefore portrayed as an important step toward preserving both personal integrity and social responsibility.

Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author.

Dr. David Carlson is an educator and author with over 30 years of experience teaching world religions, philosophy, and family values. He holds a Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University and spent more than a decade in South Korea as a professor of Korean history and culture. Until his retirement in 2014, Dr. Carlson served on the faculty of the Cheongshim Graduate School of Theology. His published works include *Sunrise on Christology* and *The Dawning of a New Culture*, as well as serving as co-editor of *Explorations in Unificationism*. Having held both academic and pastoral positions throughout his career, he currently resides in Indianapolis, Indiana.

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Japan: Abusive State To Shape Children's Beliefs

June 8, 2026 • The News Desk



Human rights expert rings alarm bells over Japan's abusive approach to families belonging to large religious minority Family Federation



Logo of *Bitter Winter*, the world's leading online magazine on religious liberty and human rights.








second installment of her *Bitter Winter* series published on 2nd June

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Patricia Dwyer, Member of

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winter series, published on 2 June 2026 and examining the consequences of Japan's campaign against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), international human rights attorney Patricia Duval argues that the controversy has progressed beyond efforts to dissolve the religious organization and entered a far more sensitive and consequential arena: the relationship between parents, children, and the state. According to Duval, recent government policies and public statements suggest an agenda that extends beyond regulating a religious movement, aiming instead to influence the beliefs, values, and identities of the children raised within it.

More from Duval: [Japan Breaking Faith of Children of Believers](#)

On the first installment in Duval's series: [Beyond Dissolution: A Religious Purge in Japan?](#)

On the first installment in Duval's series: [Next Target After Dissolution: Believers' Rights](#)

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The author notes that international human rights law recognizes not only freedom of religion but also the rights of parents to direct the moral and religious education of their children. This principle reflects the understanding that families play a primary role in transmitting values, traditions, and beliefs across generations. While governments may intervene in cases of genuine abuse or neglect, Duval argues that disagreement with a family's religious convictions does not constitute a legitimate basis for state interference.

Particularly troubling to her is the characterization of so-called "second-generation believers" [\[See editor's note below\]](#). In the rhetoric of some "anti-cult" campaigners, individuals raised in religious households are portrayed as people who remain psychologically constrained by doctrines learned in childhood and who require assistance to escape them. Duval argues that such language presumes the invalidity of the beliefs themselves and denies the possibility that adults may freely choose to retain the faith in which they were raised. Under this logic, continued adherence becomes evidence of indoctrination rather than an expression of personal conviction. Paris-based attorney Duval points out,

"The argument that second generation followers [\[See editor's note below\]](#) 'suffer' and need help is a fabrication designed to justify the indoctrination of these children in Japanese public schools. The following developments show that, in reality, if there is any suffering, it is the result of the Japanese authorities' policy of stigmatization and the destruction of families."

The [article](#) also scrutinizes a government support plan introduced after the controversy surrounding the [Family Federation](#) intensified. Duval maintains that the measures outlined in the plan are directed largely toward children of believers, whom authorities appear to regard as potential victims requiring intervention. She contends that these policies are premised on the assumption that religious education within [Family Federation](#) families is inherently harmful and that children should be encouraged to distance themselves from the worldview of their parents.

Ultimately, Duval's argument is that the current trajectory of Japanese policy raises profound questions about the limits of state power in a democratic society. While governments have a legitimate interest in protecting children from abuse, she insists that this responsibility must be balanced against fundamental freedoms. The danger, in her assessment, is that efforts presented as child protection may actually be a campaign against religious transmission itself, particularly when directed at a disfavored minority faith. Duval writes,

"It is clear from this explanation that the goal is to prevent the children of [Unification Church](#) members from becoming believers and followers of that religion in the future."

This [second article](#) therefore frames the debate not simply as a dispute about one religious movement but as a broader test of principles that affect all

Patricia Duval – member of the Paris Bar Association, specializing in international human rights law. Has defended the rights of religious and faith minorities both in France and internationally. Photo (2025): [Sekai Nippo](#)



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families. If the state can classify the religious education provided by one group of parents as a form of harmful indoctrination because it conflicts with prevailing social norms, Duval suggests, the precedent may eventually extend far beyond the [Family Federation](#). The questions raised concern who has the authority to shape children's beliefs. Duval has a clear answer,



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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“Yet it is precisely the right of parents to educate their children in accordance with their own convictions that States Parties, including Japan, have sought to protect through Article 18(4) of the ICCPR: ‘The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.’”

More from Duval: [Japan Breaking Faith of Children of Believers](#)

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Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: Second-generation members [\[See editor's note below\]](#) of the Family Federation in Japan at a demonstration for religious freedom outside the parliament (Diet), protesting against abusive state persecution, 4th May 2025. Photo: FFWPU

[Editor's note: The term “second-generation members” generally refers to people who were raised in a religion by parents who belonged to a religious organization, rather than joining it themselves as adults.]

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