

## UPF-Asia Pacific Webinar: The World at a Turning Point: The Role of the Media

Ursula McLackland  
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Manila, Philippines -- "The World at a Turning Point: The Role of the Media" was the theme for the second International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) Zoom webinar, which placed its focus on media in the Asia Pacific region. (The first event was on June 9 from Europe; IMAP is one of UPF's six primary associations, having as its goal the support of socially responsible and moral media). In addressing this theme, the media representatives turned a critical light on themselves. There was general agreement that their social responsibility went beyond just reporting raw facts in an unbiased manner, even though this basic assumption is being challenged in today's polarized press. Panelists noted that news outlets should be viewed as participants and partners in nation building. One speaker used the term a patriotic media.



There were 527 registered participants from 48 nations. This breaks down to a live audience of 317 on

Zoom and 48 Facebook links. On Facebook, there were 1,500 views and 44 shares. A distinguished group of 10 panelists from seven nations was invited. The webinar was broadcast in five languages: English, Thai, Cambodian, Indonesian and Russian. The event was moderated by Dr. Robert Kittel, education director for UPF-Asia Pacific. Recognition and gratitude go to Dr. Thomas Walsh, chair of UPF International, for his insight in helping select this topic.

Mr. Thomas P. McDevitt is chairman of the Washington Times. This was his first public speaking platform as the acting global coordinator for IMAP after its launch in Korea during the World Summit 2020 in February. He emphasized that the media needs to look for hidden trends in current history. Working with Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for 47 years showed him that their insights, guidance and scholarship on the nature of our time are singularly profound.



The turning point that Mr. McDevitt focused on was Dr. Moon's address at the prestigious Kennedy Caucus Room in the United States Senate on November 30, 2016. He said this was a primary thesis statement in nearly every speech she has given and quoted her as saying, "We look at this world and see unspeakable, inarticulate misery happening all around the globe. This is impossible to solve with mere human power. What should we do from here on forward? We should start a movement that once again attends God as the original owner of the universe in our families, countries, and world."

In his summary remarks at the end of the 90-minute program, Mr. McDevitt stepped away from the camera and mic to grab a copy of the book *Mother of Peace*, which he displayed promptly. He encouraged the audience to get a copy as it is being sold on Amazon, highlighting that Dr. Moon's story as a child escaping North Korea, growing up as a refugee in a war-torn land, standing beside her husband of 52 years as they built a worldwide foundation, and then successfully taking the reins of this global movement after his passing is profound and inspiring.



Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, chairman of UPF in the Asia Pacific region, gave opening remarks and presented an overall background of UPF and IMAP, saying that the role of the media is critical in forming healthy public opinions. He explained further, saying, "What is needed today is a responsible and accountable media." Then he asked, "How can we protect our society from misinformation, stigma and fake news?"

Dr. Chung-sik Yong, UPF's regional group chair for the Asia Pacific region, said that UPF's founders have taught that our universal values come from the family because it is our most important and fundamental institution. Then he added, "Since family building is nation building... one of the most



important roles of a patriotic media is to help protect and promote the integrity of the family."

H.E. Ek Tha is the spokesman of the Council of Ministers, advisor to the Ministry of Information and standing vice-chairman of the Royal Government of Cambodia. He spoke about the importance of being trained in order to be an effective media spokesperson and listed 10 criteria for the job. He mentioned that his country hosted the 16th Asia Media Summit last year. UPF-Cambodia worked closely together with H.E. Ek Tha and his team during the Asia Pacific Summit. Our meeting, though virtual, was immediately warm and friendly.



Mr. John Ruddick is a media commentator for the Sydney Morning Herald, the Spectator and Sky News TV. He lives in Sydney, Australia. In 2018, he wrote a book titled Make the Liberal Party Great Again. He said that journalists should be like judges -- impartial. He observed with passion and solid facts the ongoing destructive polarization in the media and particularly in the United States during this election year. He hopes that UPF and IMAP can bring us together and provide the much-needed foresight for this to happen.

Mr. Devsagar Singh is executive editor of newsabode.com in New Delhi, India, with vast experience in both international and Indian media. He emphasized the importance of the media being truthful, yet not creating fear. Ultimately, he said, the impact of the media needs to be appropriate and positive. The media has a social responsibility, that is, not to be too morbid in reporting about fatalities during the coronavirus.

Mr. Barbie Atienza spoke next. He is head of External Affairs of the Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation and president of the United Print Media Group (UPMG), Philippines, an association of major newspapers -- broadsheets and tabloids, magazines and books. He said that the media needs to be objective, accurate and reliable while working with people and the government; the outcome of a responsible media is to inform, inspire and empower.

Mr. Subash Ghimire graduated from Harvard University in 2014 and has been the editor-in-chief for the Republica English daily in Nepal for the past six years. He stood in on behalf of Mr. Binod Gyawali, who was not able to join the webinar because of the sudden passing of his brother in law. Mr. Ghimire explained that the media is changing rapidly, and this is being accelerated due to the current crisis. He appreciated collaborating with other media personalities, finding it very useful.

Mrs. Merly Christina Barlaan, the International Vice-President for the Asia chapter of the Women's Federation for World Peace International, is a producer and co-host of Women's World, a weekly webinar for women. She facilitated the 30-minute question-and-answer session.

At the conclusion of the webinar the panelists and audience were invited to two up-coming events:

The International Summit Council for Peace–Asia Pacific webinar on Monday, June 29.

The Rally of Hope, on Sunday, July 19, a digital megaevent with a global audience of up to 1 million, featuring Dr. Moon and dignitaries from all regions of the world.