

Globalization and the Media: Looking to the Twenty-first Century

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November 26, 1997
Fourteenth World Media Conference
JW Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC, USA

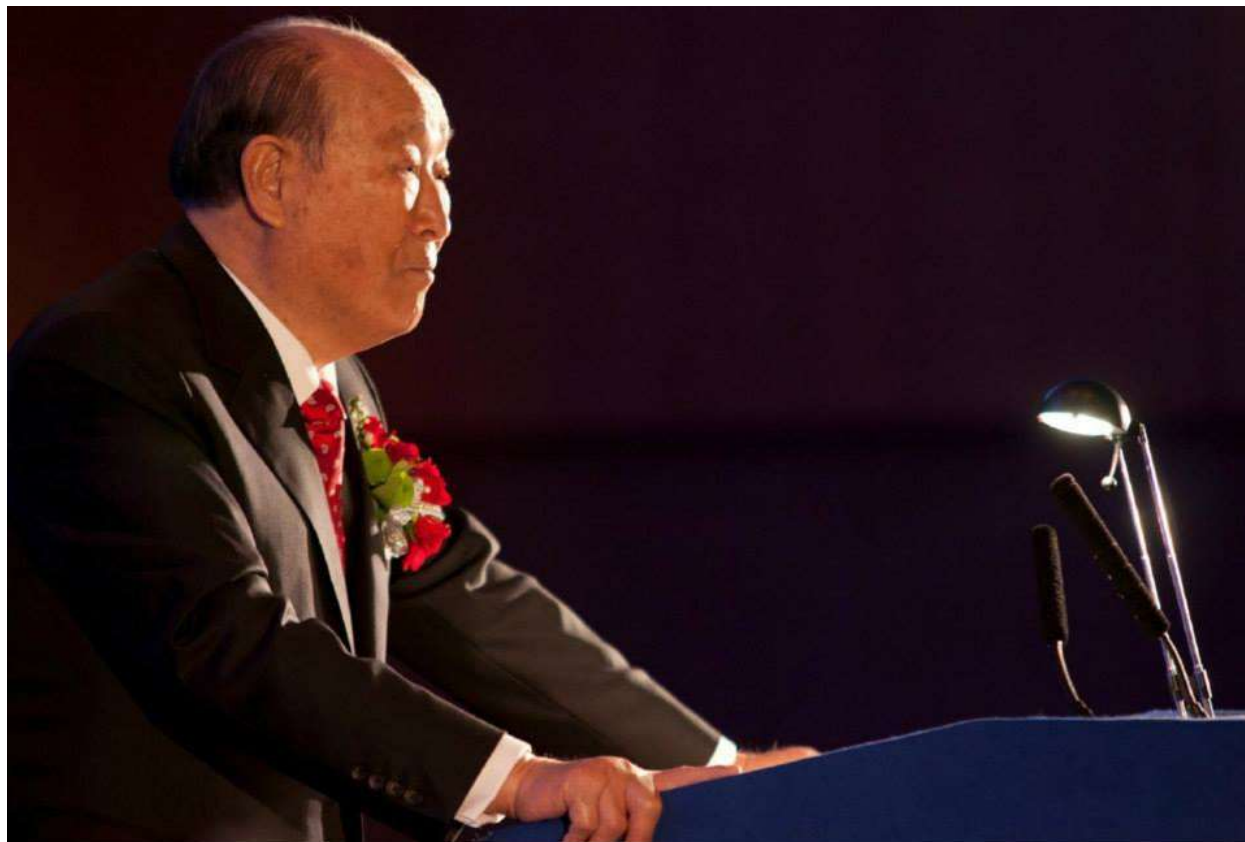


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Honorable chairman, distinguished speakers and participants, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to express my deep gratitude to you for your participation in the fourteenth World Media Conference, which is being held as part of the third World Culture and Sports Festival here in Washington, DC.

Rapidly changing media environment

I find it particularly meaningful that you will be discussing various issues faced by the media as it seeks to respond to the age of globalization in the twenty-first century, which will arrive in just a few years.

We live in an age when the global environment is undergoing exceptionally rapid change. It is incumbent upon the media to respond to these changes more quickly and wisely than other sectors of society. Otherwise, humanity faces a future of even greater confusion and instability.

Right now, the most significant factor bringing about change in the world is that our means of communication increasingly function at the speed of light. Every day, new technologies are developed that seem to transcend time and space and connect even the farthest corners of the world in a matter of seconds.

In the past, newspaper editors would demand that reporters gather local news and publish it more quickly than anyone else. But what is the situation in 1997, just three years prior to the beginning of the twenty-first century?

Today, when reporters consider their local community, they do not think merely about the physical and geographical region in which they live. They also think about their associates and neighbors around the world with whom they are connected by e-mail.

When a reporter gathers information concerning this or that issue, he or she uses the Internet to find relevant material from around the world. For those who gather information, the local community no longer refers just to the region in which they live but to the whole world.

As recently as one hundred years ago, at the start of the twentieth century, news often traveled by train,

ship or even at times by carrier pigeon. People had to wait days or weeks even for such important news as the battlefield situation in the First World War.

In the latter half of the 1990s, however, the Internet and telecommunications have made it possible to transmit news in a matter of seconds. The entire world can receive information about major news events almost simultaneously. It can be said today that the entire world is our local community and that local news has come to mean news about the whole world.

Because electronic communications technology is bringing the world together in this way, economic and cultural exchanges have already entered an age without borders.

The age has arrived when all the world's citizens influence one another's lives. The economy of any particular country or region cannot but be influenced by the world economic situation.

For these reasons, we need to think of the world as constituting a single community. We have to pose the question, What must be the content and form of the media in a global age?

Responsibility of the media in the age of globalization

I hope that in the course of this conference you will have a great deal of discussion on a variety of topics related to this question, and that you will obtain valuable results. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to present some of my views on globalization and the media in the twenty-first century.

First, I think the media in a global age needs to move beyond "functional journalism" and toward "value journalism." The news media do not entirely fulfill their mission by simply giving their audiences a factual account of the news. Rather, through commentary and criticism, the media have to awaken their readers and viewers to an awareness of truth and lead the way in elevating society's spiritual and moral values.

In the global information age of the twenty-first century, the citizens of different nations will exercise tremendous influence on one another across national boundaries. Thus, the immoral aspects of any one major country's culture can easily have a corrosive influence on the people of other countries. The coming of the information age, which itself is a result of advances in industries that apply communication and information technologies, is the fundamental factor hastening us into a world in which information is shared by all humankind. In such a world, merely reporting the facts of the news will be much too simplistic. The media will have the important role of determining how to interpret and evaluate the facts, thus providing the direction that guides the audience.

Here it is important to examine the worldview, or the philosophical and historical outlook, held by media organizations and journalists themselves. In other words, journalists will need to share constructive and idealistic values regarding humanity and world peace and prosperity. In this manner, we need to develop a global perspective.

If the kind of media that satisfies people's base desires and interests based upon purely commercial motives sets the trend, then the world will become an even gloomier and unhappier place in the twenty-first century.

We have been through the most difficult ideological war during the twentieth century. Isn't it true that during the ideological struggle of the Cold War, communism's dialectical materialism was on the ascendant in many parts of society? Only a few years ago, even many intellectuals and journalists in the free world came under its influence and were totally confused.

I met the challenges of that age with the greatest seriousness. Consequently, I was subjected to much misunderstanding and criticism. On the one hand, I led the Unification Thought movement and the campaign to realize ideal families. On the other hand, I worked to liberate the communist bloc and to teach students and intellectuals in its countries a system of values to prepare them for the world after communism.

In 1982, at a time when the free world was confronting its greatest challenge of the Cold War, I founded *The Washington Times*. It was a time when Washington, DC, which in many ways is the capital of the world, had only one newspaper, *The Washington Post*.

At the time, I observed the world not merely from the standpoint of the international power relations of the Cold War but from the standpoint of the history of God's providence of salvation. I had already warned that the Soviet communist empire would soon come to an end. During preparations to hold the second international congress of the Professors World Peace Academy in Geneva in 1985, I told scholars from around the world that the theme of that conference must be, "The Fall of the Soviet Empire."

The scholars, who viewed the situation from the perspective of U.S.-Soviet relations at the time, were stunned to hear this and were at a loss. In the end they were persuaded, and the conference was held under the theme I had suggested.

When the eleventh World Media Conference was held in Moscow in April 1990, I met with then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. I was accompanied by a group of free world journalists whom we had come to know primarily through *The Washington Times*. In my meeting with President Gorbachev, I told him that the future of atheistic materialism could be nothing other than self-destruction, and that he must repudiate materialism and attempt to revive spiritual values rooted in religion.

Within two years of that meeting, the communist Soviet empire collapsed. My prediction in 1985 concerning the end of the Soviet empire came true, and many scholars who were aware of that were again amazed.

The greatest problems will be immorality and corruption

Where do you think Rev. Moon gets this ability to predict historic changes in the world situation? I would like to tell you quite honestly the reason. Without any doubt it is that, as a religious leader, I stand in close communion with God. I have an absolute commitment to bring about God's plan and God's Will for the future of humankind.

I have consistently appealed to leaders in all fields of life -- those entrusted by God to prepare to build the future world -- so that they may fulfill their responsibilities.

The age of the Cold War is coming to a close. Humankind is at a critical point. We need to prepare for a new millennium in which we can live on earth as brothers and sisters under one God, based on the principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values. We need to ensure that the world of the twenty-first century and beyond will be a world of peace, in which all humankind will be able to live in freedom and prosperity, sharing in love and happiness.

The issue of ideological confrontation between East and West has ended. We now need to resolve the issue of the difference in economic standards between North and South. I have previously advocated the sharing of technology and the construction of the International Peace Highway. This arises from my insight that humanity needs to be united as one family and live in a state of interdependence.

Now, as the East-West Cold War has ended and science and technology are advancing day by day, the world can grow into a single community. But do you think that humankind will automatically live in peace and happiness? Absolutely not. During the twenty-first century, human society will face issues even more fundamental and more dangerous than those of the Cold War.

According to what I have perceived, the most serious problem that will beset humankind in the future world will be the issue of immorality and moral decadence destroying family values. Moral decadence is truly the original sin that pushes humanity into the abyss of suffering and despair. Whether the world of the future will resemble heaven or hell will be determined by whether we can establish a moral code that sustains the purity of the family and protects family values.

Is it possible that issues faced in common by many countries throughout the world -- such as the moral decline of young people, endless drug-related crimes, rising divorce rates, family breakdown and the spread of AIDS and illicit sex -- can be resolved by means of political power? Until now, we have been unable to solve these problems even through education in schools or religious instruction.

What good will economic prosperity and political freedom do a society if it is unable to resolve the issues that cause all its families to live in agony? Humankind has come to a point where it has to find a teaching that protects and uplifts family values, and a method to put such a teaching into practice. In the post-Cold War age, we need to protect and uplift family values.

This is the most important message that I would like to give to you journalists who are participating today, representing all journalists around the world.

The global Blessing movement is the twenty-first century revolution

Currently, the third World Culture and Sports Festival is taking place here in Washington, DC, and the international Blessing ceremony will be on November 29, at the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium and around the world. Initially, it was planned that 3.6 million couples would participate in the Blessing event. Surprisingly, though, the number of participating couples will exceed 36 million, ten times the original goal and even a few million beyond that. This celebration, encompassing all humankind, will surely be the foundation for a magnificent beginning, encouraging all people of the world to determine to protect and uplift family values.

I ask you journalists assembled here, as well as the leaders who have been participating in this festival, to give us your enthusiastic cooperation on the national level. Let us develop this event into a global festival involving 360 million couples. Expanding and solidifying this movement for true families, so that it becomes a worldwide phenomenon, is surely the most important spiritual and cultural revolution for humankind in the twenty-first century.

Last June, in remarks commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of *The Washington Times*, I announced my intention to establish newspapers in 185 countries and to start a news service to link the entire world as a local community. This enormous project is founded on my conviction about the future that I described above. Springing from my dedication, it is a gift to the people who will live in that future world. I would like to request participation and cooperation in this project on the part of the many distinguished journalists gathered today from around the world.

I hope that you will have very fruitful discussions and debates during this conference.

Thank you very much.