

The Responsibility of the Media in a Divided World

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Photo date and location unknown

Distinguished chairman, esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you for traveling such great distances to attend the ninth World Media Conference. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this gathering once again in my home country of Korea. I should tell you that I have a special personal interest in bringing you to Korea, one that goes beyond the World Media Conference.

As you know, we are preparing to host the Olympic Games here exactly one year from now. This is the first time this honor has come to Korea, and every Korean citizen is busy cleaning and preparing everything in anticipation of a great many visitors who will be arriving soon, most of them for the first time.

It was my recommendation that the ninth World Media Conference be held in Korea, because I wanted you distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the press to see our Olympic preparations ahead of time and be eyewitnesses to the world. We Koreans are a very determined people who are doing everything possible to assure the success and safety of the 1988 Olympic Games.

Given that our conference theme this year is, "The Responsibility of the Media in a Divided World," it is appropriate that Korea be the location for this conference. Just thirty miles to the north, democracy and freedom confront the communist dictatorship of Kim Il Sung -- the most repressive, regimented society existing anywhere in the world. Two separate worlds, one that accepts God and one that denies God, stand face-to-face in adversarial positions.

There is no better place to find such striking and vivid differences than Korea. The peninsula of Korea is a microcosm of the worldwide struggle between freedom and tyranny, good and evil, democracy and communism.

Today, whether we like it or not, these two worlds are already at war. You might call this the Third World

War. Although it is an entirely different form of warfare from the previous two, it is nonetheless a total war.

This is a war between two ways of life, or two worldviews. Two conflicting value systems confront each other on every level of society. It is a war in which everything takes on strategic importance, not only militarily but also in the realms of politics, economics, culture and sports.

One side advocates every individual's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness -- sacred rights endowed by the Creator. The other side holds that man's destiny is determined by the state. One side holds human life as sacred and sees every human being as a child of God. The other side sees a person as no more than matter in motion. One side recognizes eternal existence and absolute values. To the other, all things are material -- temporal, transient and relative.

These two worlds are locked in a deadly struggle, like ancient gladiators fighting to the death. Many people believe these two worlds can coexist peacefully. I am afraid I cannot share their optimism. I wish I could, but I know that some things simply cannot coexist.

Light and darkness cannot coexist. Light dispels darkness. Truth and lies cannot coexist. Truth must prevail. A person cannot be both alive and dead. The dead need to be buried and the living need to continue with their lives.

The worldwide conflict today between democracy and communism is a fight between light and darkness, truth and lies, life and death. As you know, in its brief, seventy-year history, the death toll of communism has exceeded 150 million. The killing continues even today, in North Korean concentration camps, in the Soviet gulag, in the jungles of Southeast Asia and in many other parts of the world.

I experienced the cruelty of the communist system when I was imprisoned in North Korea before the Korean War. More than a prison, it was a death camp, where the average prisoner survived only six months. It was only by the grace of God that I was liberated from this terror by Gen. MacArthur's forces on October 14, 1950 -- the day before my scheduled execution.

During my two years and eight months in the camp, I experienced the evil of that system to the depths of my soul. I saw the worst of the inhumanity of Marxism in action, and I knew it could annihilate the world if left unchecked. From that time, I dedicated myself to fight and be victorious over communist ideology.

An ideology can be defeated only by another ideology, fighting fire with fire. Therefore, the deadly struggle we are engaged in today is a war of ideas.

This war cannot be fought by military means alone. Furthermore, the communists cannot be bribed into giving up. Communism can be confronted and defeated in only one way: the false idea must be overcome by a true idea in the way light overcomes darkness.

In my search for truth, I came to realize that the core evil of communism stems from its militant denial of the very existence of God and a denial of the eternal life of man. When you deny God, you are responsible to no one. You can take the law into your own hands. The ends justify the means. Man tries to take the place of God. On the basis of a complete denial of God, the doctrine of communism was born.

When we identify militant atheism as the very essence of communism, it becomes clear that the superior ideology that can put an end to communism has to be a God-affirming one. We call this ideology Godism, or headwing thought. As an absolutely God-centered worldview, Godism is the most effective weapon in the war to liberate people from communism. God alone overcomes godlessness.

The communist world, based on atheism, has failed to fulfill the human dream. Likewise, the free world has become materialistic and has forgotten God. It is falling into the same pit as communism, and it is helpless in the face of this great world crisis. In a world that is dark with confusion, Godism brings a new vision. '

Many have noted that my teaching and movement have made a constructive impact on the world -- not just in religion, but also in every area of society.

I believe it is the duty of free people everywhere to unite together with compassion to liberate the people suffering under the yoke of communism.

Our goal, then, is not just anticommunism but liberation of the communist world. In 1976, we held a rally of three hundred thousand Americans at the Washington Monument. This was the culmination of my public speaking in America. The very next day, I announced that the next rally of this type would be held in Moscow. It is compassion and love for humanity that motivates us. We are committed to the freedom of all people -- to let freedom ring in every corner of the world.

I know that nearly 2 billion people living under tyranny are waiting for this day of liberation. While free people hesitate, uncommitted and ambivalent, many perish today and every day.

In this war, the media is a crucial factor, maybe even the deciding factor. As journalists who express ideas, you play a major role in the struggle between democracy and totalitarianism. Those who recognize this can make a huge difference in the outcome. Those who do not can be manipulated. More than ever before, the pen is mightier than the sword; and the mightier the power, the greater the responsibility as well. The enormous power of the media carries with it the enormous responsibility to be a guardian of the ideals of an open and free society.

I have always believed that the media should be free, and that a free press should also be a responsible press. And a responsible press is a moral press.

What do we mean by a moral media? We recognize that human beings have God-given rights and dignity. The preservation of human rights and human dignity needs to be the standard of all ethics and morality. Therefore, the media should stand at the very forefront in the defense of freedom and the crusade against injustice. The media must lead in the fight against totalitarianism. Furthermore, in the service of morality, the media should oppose corruption and racism and vindicate the unjustly accused. A moral media needs to lead the fight against drug abuse, pornography and many other destructive vices of our society. A moral media forms the conscience of society.

I founded the World Media Association to promote free expression in the media wherever there is oppression and to encourage responsibility in the media wherever freedom of the press already exists. Furthermore, I founded this important organization to promote the spirit of truth so that all media professionals can become uncompromising champions of truth.

We have held this type of conference annually and have conducted numerous fact-finding tours with media professionals all over the world, including the Soviet Union, China, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Cambodia and Central American countries.

These tours are a search for truth, giving journalists an opportunity to experience the world firsthand. I am proud of what the World Media Association has accomplished in the past nine years.

Many of you may be seeing me in person for the first time, although I am sure you have seen many stories about me on television and in your own newspapers. You might agree that some of the more exciting stories about Rev. Moon have even helped sell more newspapers or attract a larger audience to your newscasts.

So, because I have helped you all these years, I would now like to ask you for one favor. Find out what I am teaching and what kind of life I am living. Conduct your own open-minded, thorough investigation, and draw your own conclusions. Korea is a good place to begin.

If our deliberation here can make substantial progress toward the realization of a free world, then we should commit our total effort, our resources and even our lives toward that end.

I wish you well in this worthy project.

Thank you for coming, and may God bless you.