International Brotherhood and the Radio

Address

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GENUINE BROTHERHOOD of mankind is the basis of the Christian doctrine. It has been the goal of centuries of struggle to make the world a better place in which to live. The objectives of all the striving of the Western world today could not be better summarized than in the concept: international brotherhood. No simpler formula has ever been devised.

But in this complicated technical world of ours today, simple ideas are often lost in the confusion mankind has created for itself. We must constantly endeavor to clarify and put in perspective the basic truths. This is particularly true in radio. Of all man’s inventions radio works most swiftly and irrevocably. It penetrates into the farthest corners of the world. It brings with the speed of light the latest news and views. And when it has spoken, the words cannot be recalled.

But radio is only a tool — a technical machine that has no soul of its own. It may be used for the greatest good of mankind, or the most sinister evil. It may bring enlightenment to hundreds of millions, or may darken their minds and sow confusion. We have seen, and are seeing again today, to what varied ends this instrument can be used.

It is the task of all men of good will in the world today to insure that radio — and all other media of information — work for the peace of the world and not its destruction. We must spread tolerance and not hate over the air waves; we must repeat again and again the eternal values upon which democracy is founded: dignity of the individual, objective justice, respect for opponents’ opinions, freedom of religion and peaceful arbitration of differences. Above all, we must devote ourselves to the telling of the truth — everywhere and to everybody. Only on the basis of truth can confidence of people in each other be developed.

I know that realization of these aims is not easy. In the confusing pattern of the world today it is not always easy to discern the truth or to state it clearly. But we must not relax our efforts because the goal is difficult to achieve. We must expose falsehood; we must combat error and prejudice. And we must speak out in defense of tolerance and human dignity. To many it may seem futile to speak of human dignity when behind the Iron Curtain millions of human beings are condemned to the degrading misery of concentration camps. And the hate-filled diatribes that stream over the air from Moscow and its satellites tempt even the mildest of men to righteous anger.

But we who believe in mankind must not be provoked to answer in kind. We cannot allow intolerance and hatred and abuse to shake our faith. The strength of the West is rooted in it and we must continue to work for vindication of this faith. We must strengthen and make more secure the moral basis of our Western civilization, drawing together groups and people into closest brotherhood.

Through radio we can make a great contribution to this task. By allowing the views of all major groups to be voiced over the ether, by bringing to the hundreds of millions of radio truthful, objective reporting, by pledging ourselves to tolerance and understanding, by assuring everywhere that radio does not become an instrument of the state or of any special group or interest, we can serve effectively the cause of international brotherhood.

GERMANY — FREE GERMANY, the area of the Federal Republic — is a splendid example of what can be done. There great progress in this direction has been made since 1945. German radio in the Federal Republic is no longer a tool of a propaganda ministry. It is the property of the people, controlled by public service corporations made up of representatives of the major groups of the German people. It is pledged to a broadcasting code which emphasizes tolerance, honesty, truthfulness and public enlightenment. And experience thus far has shown it takes its responsibilities seriously. I am sure that the free German radio, if it continues to remain true to its ideals, will be a constructive force in the re-alization of international brotherhood.

Western German radio is not unique in this respect. All over the free world there is evident a genuine desire to foster greater inter-group understanding and tolerance. The code of the American Broadcasters Association, translated daily into practice, has contributed greatly to furthering inter-group education in the United States. The BBC and Radio-Diffusion Francaise are models of fair, restrained reporting. The foundation for our further work exists. Our task is to make such activities more effective, permanent and widespread.

The creation of a world organization for brotherhood is one of the steps to accomplishment of this task. Within the framework of its over-all activities must be a group dedicated to fostering and strengthening the work of interbroadcasting and drawing attention to practices which impede progress toward inter-group understanding. It should make appropriate proposals to proper international, national and private bodies which can aid in correcting undesirable trends and it should keep before the world through radio the ideals of this organization.

The importance of stressing these ideals cannot be overestimated. They are the ideals of free and honest men and women everywhere. They are the heritage of Western civilization. We must show our determination to preserve them against the sinister forces of totalitarianism and intolerance wherever they exist. We must progressively translate them into practice. If we do this, we need not fear the ultimate outcome of the struggle for men’s minds which renders the world today.