

Michael Brown Asks, Is This 'A Time to Heal?'

Joe Biden spoke of it during his victory-claiming, Saturday night speech. *Time* magazine has now made it its new front cover. It is, we are being told, "time to heal."

But would it be that easy? And could a party with strong, radical elements lead the way in healing?

Of course, we still do not know the final outcome of the elections. There are many court cases to hear and many challenges to review. And Christians around the country continue to pray fervently for God's will to be done.

But if it does turn out that Biden is our next president, with Kamala Harris as vice president, can he (or she) lead the way in healing a very broken, fragmented, angry nation?

He said Saturday night, "Let's give each other a chance put away the harsh rhetoric." Yes, he urged, "Stop treating our opponents as our enemies. They are not our enemies. They're Americans."

I truly appreciate those words. I applaud those sentiments. And I believe there is just as much hatred on the left as there is on the right (and probably in the middle too).

We don't simply differ with each other these days. We despise each other. We loathe each other. We demonize each other.

Would that it were as easy as saying, "Let's stop being enemies." Would that we could simply come together over shared, common values. Would that we could simply love our neighbors as ourselves. I pray that it would be so.

But as long as there are strong beliefs that the election has been stolen, there will be no healing in sight.

Conversely, should the courts overturn the current vote, there will be no healing.

And when crowds dance in jubilation at the defeat of Trump, there will be no healing.

And when BLM and antifa remain as radicalized as ever, there will be no healing.

And if Biden becomes our next president and seeks to enact many of his promised policies, as his constituents would expect him to do, there will be no healing.

And if Biden and Harris continue to advocate for the legal of slaughtering the unborn, there will be no healing.

And if Biden is serious about making transgender rights the civil rights issue of the day, there will be no healing. (Note his specific mention of "Gay, straight, transgender" in his speech.)

Even something as simple as a national mask mandate would only deepen the divide.

I personally believe that eight years of the Obama administration brought great disunity, rather than healing, to the nation.

The next four years of the Trump administration exponentially deepened those divisions and poured salt into the wounds.

And now, with the most divisive, volatile elections since the Civil War, our divisions and suspicions are even deeper.

On the left, people like Alexandria Ocasio Cortez are attacking their fellow Democrats for not being radical enough. Towards the middle-left, the "moderates" are criticizing people like Ocasio Cortez for their radical positions. And the further you go to the right, the more the left is perceived as the No. 1 existential threat to the future of the nation.

That's why both Republicans and Democrats claimed this election was about "the future of America" or "the future of our democracy." Everyone recognized what was at stake.

And should Donald Trump somehow emerge victorious to serve a second term, I see no hope of healing coming from him either, barring a change even more miraculous than his reelection.

What, then, can be done?

To be sure, we should pray that the duly elected, next president will be a unifier rather than a divider. He can set an example of civility while maintaining his convictions. He can be a man of courage without savaging his opponents. That would help in part.

But the onus of bringing healing must fall on those who claim to know the Lord. Those who believe in His values. Those who truly believe we are called to stand out from the rest of the world, marked by our conduct and our character.

We can stand firm and immovable without being nasty and petty. We can vote our convictions without engaging in partisan political mud-slinging. And, with God's help, we can even love our enemies. We can actually bless those who curse us. It is a beautifully freeing and transforming experience.

At the very least, we can practice such conduct among ourselves, among our fellow believers, even in the midst of our inevitable differences and conflicts.

As Paul exhorted the Colossians, "So embrace, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, a spirit of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. Bear with one another and forgive one another. If anyone has a quarrel against anyone, even as Christ forgave you, so you must do. And above all these things, embrace love, which is the bond of perfection " (Col. 3:12-14).

If you're a Christian, this is a command, not a suggestion.

And while the healing of a hurting, angry, divided nation is a seemingly impossible task, we can seek to bring healing one life at a time.

We can reach out with grace to an offended loved one. We can send a kindhearted (not compromised) note to an angered friend on social media. We can forgive from the heart. We can humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness where we have sinned against others.

To quote Paul again, "Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not give false testimony, You shall not covet,' and if there are any other commandments, are summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love works no evil to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:8-10).

Again, I appreciate any effort by a political leader to sound a conciliatory note and to reach out across the aisle. I simply realize that with the nature of the divisions tearing us apart, true healing will have to come from another source.

May each of us lead the way, not moving an iota from our deeply held convictions and not ceasing to fight for what is right, but walking in love and living as decent human beings.

May I count you in? {eoa}