

How to Use Our Differences to Heal Our Fractured Nation

Wherever I travel around the world, I am always thankful to come home to a country I love. I'm proud that America is and always has been a nation full of promise, change and full of God. I'm thankful America is a country where I am free to worship my Savior, and I'm grateful for the many brave men and women who fought for that freedom. I'm also thankful it's a country that is always so willing to embrace the distinct, unique voices and people who live here, despite their differences.

There are so many different people to know here, with so many different cultures and backgrounds. There are so many different genres of music, types of food and colors of hair and skin. There are so many beliefs, traditions and interests. What a beautiful mosaic we must be to God as He looks down at our nation.

However, recently there has been much talk in the media regarding the state of our country and our unity as a people. Many people are saying that all of the different beliefs and belief systems people hold constitute a reason to be in fear. They say that where there are differences, there is a cause for conflict.

But I believe that is not true. I believe that it is all of our differences that make us united. It is these differences that make us America.

Focusing on negative arguments does nothing but take our mind off all that we stand to gain as a society because of our diversity. Instead of focusing on division, we should focus on these truths, which I believe will never change:

- Our God will always love, protect and bless those who

love Him.

- Most people are good and want the best for others, no matter what political party they support.
- There is always going to be someone fighting for what is right, regardless of politics.

The most beautiful thing about America is not our political foundation. The most beautiful thing about America is that we have such a unique population to begin with.

After all, God made us all individually unique and different from one another.

God didn't make us all the same, and He did that on purpose. If everyone were supposed to agree all of the time, nothing would progress. If everyone believed the same things or liked the same things, our world would be rather bland.

God designed His people with diverse gifts, talents, characteristics and qualities in order to give richness to the world. These differences should point us back to, instead of away from, Him and His hand on our lives. They should strengthen our resolve to be the diverse and fully-functioning body of Christ Paul described so beautifully in 1 Corinthians 12:14–20:

The body is not one part, but many.

If the foot says, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear says, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has established the parts, every one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him. If they were all one part, where would the body be? So there are many parts, yet one body.

So this week, as we celebrate America and our freedoms, I encourage you also to celebrate our differences. Don't let all of the varied opinions you see highlighted in the media cause you to be in fear over our country's well-being. Instead, pray that through our differences God will raise up leaders to bring us together to build a stronger America. After all, we need each other's differences, and we need each other.

I pray that you have a wonderful Independence Day. {eo}

Mikel French has challenged spiritual awakening all across America, where many celebrations extended into multiple weeks, and has conducted celebrations in France, Sweden, Russia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Germany, South Africa, Malawi, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Haiti, Japan, Singapore, India and Thailand. He conducted an outreach celebration in Manila, Philippines, reaching 200,000 teenagers with the book of hope. Through the generous support of partners, he has presented the message of Jesus Christ to millions of people in the nation of Russia through televised citywide soul-winning celebrations. Mikel considers it an honor to assist in conducting the annual pastor's conference, where thousands of pastors from Russia's 11 time zones come for training, teaching and equipping. Mikel and his wife, Marsha, reside in Tulsa, Oklahoma.