

## LOCAL VIEWPOINT

# Trump's comments pave way for cultural change

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**CITIZEN  
ACTIVE**

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We are fascinated as we watch the U.S. presidential election change politics. And now we see the campaign change our culture. The trigger was the release and aftermath of the infamous videotape of Donald Trump.

The Trump tape from 2005 provides an eerie foreshadowing of the current presidential race. Reality TV star Trump was on a bus on the TV show "Access Hollywood." He was about to make a cameo appearance on the soap opera "Days of Our Lives." Trump was wearing a microphone that turned out to be "hot."

The episode was a preview of the current election campaign. What separates the worlds of entertainment, "reality" TV, and reality itself? On the tape, Trump made crude remarks about being a star and what he can do to women sexually.

When the tape was released, we saw our culture shuddering and changing — right before

our eyes. The first sign of change was the quandary faced by newspapers and TV networks about Trump's language — like "f---" and "p---y" — which various media companies handled differently.

The second sign of change was the sound of millions of conversations. These conversations erupted on the campaign trail, throughout the

media and in living rooms everywhere. Conversations that were uncomfortable, upsetting and signalling cultural upheaval. Among the topics: "When women are not around, do men really talk like this?"

The first response was: yes, of course. This was "locker-room banter." And lewd language was appropriate for the "alpha male." One defender was an expert on alpha maledom: Trump scion Donald Jr. "They're talking, two guys, amongst themselves," the younger Trump explained, "I've seen it time and time again."

But then the narrative shifted. No, this wasn't normal. And this went beyond words, this was bragging about sexual assault. Men everywhere said that they did not talk — much less act — like this. Professional athletes spoke out: this wasn't typical of the "locker room."

The following days have seen a further cultural iolt. Women

came forward who said they had been actually sexually assaulted by Trump. This led to more cultural reflection. Should "survivors" always be believed? What about the rights of the accused? Why didn't these women come forward years earlier?

In the ensuing discussion, feminists have come under fire, especially for their excusing Bill Clinton's sexual mistreatment of women. Also, feminists have been blamed for ending what could be called "the good old days." Like, you know, before we had to bother with things like "rape culture."

But not just feminists are on the defensive. Also on the defensive are conservative religious leaders who are enthusiastic supporters of Trump. One is Jerry Falwell Jr., whose namesake father was a co-founder of the "Moral Majority."

"In my opinion, Donald Trump lives a life of loving and

helping others as Jesus taught," Falwell Jr. said. "Trump reminds me so much of my father."

An important part of this religious agenda is to defund Planned Parenthood. This would restrict women's access to abortion, birth control and other health-care services.

There is a disconcerting theme that runs through both the Trump videotape and also through traditional religious values. That theme is male privilege. And accompanying that privilege is the right of men to control the bodies of women.

What's ahead? Feminism, religious values and the overall culture are in for more disruption. Cultural change will proceed inexorably toward more openness, more empowerment and more respect. And that change will be at the levels of both the personal and the citizen.

Representing that change right now is the controversial

woman running to be the first female U.S. president: Hillary Clinton.

One wry observer of the current cultural scene is cartoonist Scott Adams, the creator of the comic strip "Dilbert." Adams early on recognized Trump's great skills, calling him a "master persuader."

"Hillary Clinton is all yours, ladies," Adams wrote recently on his blog. "She and her alleged rapist husband are your brand now."

... Are you in the "third age" of your life (i.e. retired or semi-retired) and would like to discuss the U.S. election? Join me Friday, Nov. 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Room 113 of the Brandon University education building for a session hosted by the Third Age Learning Co-operative. More info is available at [talcb Brandon.weebly.com](http://talcb Brandon.weebly.com). Open to all and free of charge.

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