

Patriarchy's Post Election End Days

by Rob Okun

700 words

Soon after the presidential race is decided it will be imperative for the U.S. to hold a series of town hall conversations; one must be about rejecting patriarchy. Male domination continues to play too big a role in aggravating the divide that afflicts us.

Which representation of manhood we choose will in part contribute to determining what kind of a country we'll be: Proud Boys country or a land promoting compassionate men; a Handmaids Tale world of subjugation or a nation advancing empowered women.

Regardless of who is president come January, Trumpism will still be with us, as will the aforementioned Proud Boys, the faux militia Wolverine Watchmen, the civil war-promoting Boogaloo Boys, and the ex-military/police Oath Keepers. Not to mention the misfits shooting up schools, nightclubs, houses of worship and movie theaters—even threatened sitting governors. White male supremacists one and all.

So as 2020 draws to a close, it's hard to ignore a flashing caution light: unless we acknowledge the connection between those groups' brutish expression of patriarchy and its white collar counterpart, represented by the likes of Mitch McConnell and Brett Kavanaugh, rather than hearing patriarchy's last gasp, we'll be supplying it with fresh oxygen.

[“The culture is changing and becoming in some ways more like \[former vice president Joe\] Biden,” Jackson Katz, creator of a new documentary called “The Man Card: Presidential Masculinity from Nixon to Trump,” told the *Washington Post*. But is it changing quickly enough?](#)

“Trump still clearly has a large appeal to men who understand the more traditional appeal of aggression, physical strength, the willingness to authorize violence,” Katz says.

While Trumpists at best reflect [Archie Bunker](#) 20th-century masculinity, Biden offers “a more complex 21st-century version...” Katz believes. “It's compassion and empathy and care and a personal narrative of loss.” As a white man in his seventies, it may seem odd that Biden is the poster boy for a kinder, gentler manhood; nevertheless he has a national platform to promote it.

With the pandemic hopefully being responsibly managed, 2021 will be a time for a different kind of healing, beginning with youth, especially boys and young men.

Males may not initially acknowledge how much courage it takes to embody compassion and empathy, and conversely how cowardly it is to rely on callousness and indifference. It's on us to teach them, bringing

into focus a new boyhood, a transformed manhood. We'll have to demand parents, educators, coaches and other mentors develop [programs that nurture young men's emotional growth and wellbeing](#).

I've long advocated that the CDC pilot a program at Head Start for teachers to cultivate boys' emotional intelligence. Perhaps now, with the contrast between the presidential candidates' brands of masculinity still fresh in our minds, a new Congress can address such legislation.

None of this will be easy. Nevertheless, there are bright spots. Even within the narrow world of electoral politics, the number of women winning elective office is a powerful antidote to patriarchy's poison.

Strong women—from Stacey Abrams of [Fair Fight Action](#) to Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer—are a corrective to the misogynous rants we've endured for four years. They represent a model of womanhood more men may be willing to embrace once we've finished rounding the corner on the orange mandemic.

Unfortunately, that model of empowered womanhood is suspect, branded as feminist. While feminism simply denotes believing in the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes, over the last four years Trump et al. have sought to destroy it at every turn. With Kamala Harris as vice president, and Joe Biden's brand of masculinity an antidote to Donald Trump's white male supremacy, conditions are ripe for men to begin to reconsider feminism.

To bridge the political and cultural chasm that has split open the U.S., we'll need to acknowledge that patriarchy's grip—if not its final gasp—and the assault on feminism are two sides of the same coin. We may have begun to acknowledge that racism has its knee on the necks of Black people, but to fully heal America we'll have to admit patriarchy has its other knee on the necks of women. Come January it's imperative we do that. Are you in? I hope so.

~~~~~

*Rob Okun ([rob@voicemalemagazine.org](mailto:rob@voicemalemagazine.org)), syndicated by [PeaceVoice](#), writes about politics and culture. He is editor-publisher of [Voice Male](#) magazine.*