

*This column will feature confessions of a Southern religious studies major. Jonathan will offer a light-hearted look at the little things in life that can make a big difference.*

## IT'S THE *Little* THINGS... Working for the Man

**Jonathan Chapman**  
Columnist

*"nepotism: (n) favoritism (as in appointment to a job) based on kinship"*

*-Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*



**Jonathan Chapman**

The man that I'm referring to, of course, is my father. That's right, nepotism at its best. It is Friday the thirteenth, a huge surge of severe weather is about to hit Atlanta and I am answering phones and running plans at my father's civil engineering firm. Actually, it is probably the last day that I'll work for him. I was going to work next week up until I leave for the pristine shores of Denmark, but I took a notion the other day that this might be my last time sheet turned in—and the more I think about it, the more it sounds like a good idea.

It's not that the job was particularly painful. In fact, it was fairly enjoyable as jobs go. Flexible hours, not a whole lot of interaction with people I'm not fond of—pretty

sweet deal. What's the problem? I'm working for my dad. Granted he's a good boss, and I am extremely thankful to have a job during my extended stay at home. Not to mention he came through for me after I had submitted at least a dozen applications to various stores from JCPenny to Lowe's and the Family Christian Bookstore. I just started the process too late. Everyone had already hired for the holidays, and some stores weren't even going to begin processing applications till after the New Year.

Anyway, the problem with working for your dad, particularly when he's the boss, is that not only are you Terry's son, but you are the boss's son. One completely loses his identity. I'm not Jon. I'm Terry's son. What's more, I'm the boss's kid—so be careful what you say around me! Yes, that's right, working for dad is one more way that my attempts to liberate

myself from my parents have been foiled again. That is not to say I want to be disassociated from them; but rather not be obligated to follow their rules anymore than I already have to. I don't call that mean; I call it growing up.

As I was waiting for the phone to ring, I was working on an essay for a scholarship application. The topic surrounds my core theological commitments. As if identifying those was not hard enough, I have to explain "the ways in which they (the commitments) shape his or her exploration of vocation"—in three pages doubled spaced. You might be thinking, "Come on, Jon, that's easy." Right. Check. You try. We aren't talking about pleasant notions like hope or joy or peace. Those are fine and dandy, but what I felt like I was searching for was beyond that. Those words are nice, but what lives beyond them? Where

do those words spring from? Where do we find the emotions and ideas to take us to a place where God mingles with us? What are the most basic ideas that I cling to that are formative to my faith and foundational to the way I view the world?

As I wrote my response for this essay, I kept searching for answers. All I found were questions. I'm sure it sounds cliché, but questions kept answering questions—all of them summing up in one omnipresent concern. How will I use Copenhagen (the people, experiences, etc) to help me make these commitments come to life? How will I realize grace, justice and reconciliation?

*Want to keep up with Jonathan Chapman during the Spring in Denmark? Visit his blog at [www.denmarkjon.blogspot.com](http://www.denmarkjon.blogspot.com).*

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## Political apathy in the American people

**Erin Moffet**

Opinions Editor

Elon University is privileged to have the resources to conduct a very well-respected poll of North Carolina residents. This allows students to get hands-on experience on how public opinion is obtained. Public opinion plays a vital role in the American government.

The most recent poll was conducted in the middle of November. This poll had many important issues to discuss.

At the time of the poll, nationally, President Bush was still suffering from extremely low approval ratings and Congress was asking for an exit plan from Iraq. On the state level, the newly adopted N.C. state lottery was coming under some scrutiny over the level of trust in who would be in charge of its funds.

Questions concerning these popular issues, along with other surrounding issues

such as taxes, were asked in the survey.

It was unreal to see how many people did not participate in the survey. And it was not that they chose to just not participate in the survey; they were very rude about even being asked to do so.

Everyone should jump at the opportunity to be able to voice their opinions, especially in a forum in which the government is listening and reacting. This apathy towards participating in the political process, even just on the level of a poll, is exactly what is hurting democracy.

The introduction to the poll stated that it would last roughly eight to ten minutes. That is such a short amount of time for something with such a big impact on the government. Yet people still complained that they did not have the time to participate in the democratic process.

Other people declined to participate because they were uninterested in politics or because they did not think their opinion

mattered. Some people were just annoyed by being asked to participate. These feelings that caused people not to participate are disappointing.

The government affects everyone and therefore, everyone should have an interest in it. Not necessarily in parties and candidates, but in simple things like taxes that everyone is sure to know about and have an opinion on since it affects them.

And to the people who think that their opinion does not matter: you are very wrong. It is hard for the government to listen to everyone's opinions, which is why polls are conducted. Polls are a way that the government can get a feel for the views of the American people.

So by not participating in the Elon Poll, many people missed out on a valuable opportunity to voice their opinion, where it will be evaluated by government officials.

People should not be agitated by being asked to participate, they should be thank-

ful to have such an opportunity. Ten minutes is not a lot to ask from someone for the importance of the results of a survey on government actions.

A democracy is defined as "rule by the people." If the people fail to take the initiative and the time to participate in the numerous forums available to them, then they are failing democracy.

Failure of democracy through peoples' apathy is the only way that peoples' opinions and participation will be remain unheard and unimportant.

So to everyone who feels that they are not an important part of the government and therefore choose not to participate, those actions are what cause the lack of importance of the common people in government actions taken after surveys like this one.

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