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If I struggle for God's faithfulness, then I slay Goliath.

Fritz Horn

SURVEY SURVIVES ATTEMPTED SOCIAL SABOTAGE


FROM 9.45 AM ON FRIDAY 7TH DECEMBER, THE ACR invited Synod Reps to participate in a survey on the Preferred Age and Length of Service of an Archbishop, in order to elicit information for the common good.

At 6.20 pm, our analyst reported that bogus data was being entered. Very shortly after, ACR was notified that the survey was under attack in the private realms of Facebook (FB) – an attack, which on Saturday afternoon also moved to the deliberately public Twitter.

Although intended for, and only sent to, members of Sydney Synod, apparently shortly before the bogus data was noticed, a link to our survey had been posted,

detached from its intended audience and covering letter. The link was subsequently also publicly tweeted, similarly 'disembodied' from its synodical context and intention.

As reported to ACR, some Facebook participants then boasted of having entered bogus data, and there was little evidence of anybody suggesting that this was inappropriate.

Of course, the attempt was ill-conceived from the beginning. Bogus information is easily spotted and extracted. Like our previous survey (see ACR May, 2011), this one has yielded some good information, which will serve us all as we move more actively into the election processes in the new year. 

MOORE CHANGES ITS PRINCIPALS


AFTER TEN YEARS AS PRINCIPAL OF MOORE COLLEGE, Rev Dr John Woodhouse has announced his imminent retirement. A gifted Bible teacher, John intends to now give his time to completing his commentary on 2 Samuel, before moving on to the books of Kings. Members of the College will be sorry to see him go, but look forward to the fruit of his thinking emerging in print.

On 29 November the Governing Board announced that he would be succeeded by the Rev Dr Mark Thompson. Dr Thompson is a Systematic Theologian, with a special interest in the doctrine of



Scripture. He is appreciated for the clarity of his teaching, and for his commitment to gospel-centered leadership. He is well-known to Sydney Anglicans, having served in churches across the Diocese, and on several Diocesan committees, and as the President of the Anglican Church League for many years. He has also exercised strong and theological leadership internationally, especially through his writings, his personal ministry to many, and his involvement in such things as the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.

Dr Thompson has also been a long-time friend of, and frequent contributor to, the ACR. May the Lord strengthen the College greatly under Mark's term of office.

After a long awaited period of study leave, during which he will write on Christology, Dr Thompson will take up the position in May 2013. 

CHRISTMAS: THANKS FOR THE STATUS UPDATE

Steve Carlisle



IN OCTOBER 2012 FACEBOOK HIT one billion users worldwide. One in every seven people on the planet (including children) is on Facebook. It is a staggering number, isn't it?

Facebook displays all sorts of 'status updates'. Perhaps the most significant is when someone changes their status from being single to engaged, or from engaged to married. A status update can let people know so much information about you.

And this Christmas, there will be plenty of status updates which will pass through the juggernaut that is Facebook. We will share the gifts we receive and the meals we eat with whoever will listen, right around the world.

However this Christmas, consider the greatest status update of all. The Gospel of John tells about the Son of God, described as the Word, who was with God, and yet was God, and had been present forever with God. This 'Word', the second person of the trinity, had a status update. This Word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us. (John 1:14)

Christmas is all about Jesus, it is the day when the God of the universe, the second person of the trinity, the Son of God, put on flesh and became a man amongst us. Jesus, the Emmanuel, which means God with us, had his status updated, once and for all.

Of course though Jesus' status changed to being flesh, he was still fully God, and yet now fully man. And throughout his life, this God/man Jesus would be at times loved and popular, yet ultimately persecuted and killed on a cross. This eternal Word-become-flesh died on a Roman Cross. And he died there to forgive your sin, something that only he could do.

But, death would not be his status forever. Indeed after three days he would come back to life. Alive again, risen from the dead, to die no more, having paid the penalty for sin, and now reigning victorious. That is some status update!

Jesus, the Son of God made flesh has come, the greatest status update the world has ever experienced. May you know the joy which Christmas brings, that the Word has become flesh to save us. ☺

BIRTHS STRANGE AND WONDERFUL

Alison Blake



DURING THE FURY OF HURRICANE Sandy, back in October, Sally Bertouche gave birth to her first child, Sophie, after being evacuated from the hospital, down 16 flights of stairs during active labour, receiving an epidural by flashlight, as the windows around her and her husband shattered.

Reflecting on that evening, Sally said, 'I make it sound dramatic, but there have been people having babies in weird places for thousands of years'. Like Mary, giving birth to her first-born child, probably in a poorly lit stable, surrounded by the smells and 'products' of animals!

Sally and her husband James say they will never forget the effort and dedication of the hospital staff. But, sadly, we know human memories do fade over time—even if someone manages to catch the event on their phone!

More weird and wonderful than Sophie's arrival is the birth of Jesus, not because of when, where or how he was

born, but because he was born so we could be born again. That's the birth we never want to forget. He crossed from life to death so we could cross from death to life—we never want that to become a distant memory. God knows our sin blurs and distorts truth, but his Spirit and his written word together remind us that Jesus gives new birth and new life.

Is your small group Bible study taking a break? Are you having holidays in the next few months? Why not re-boot your memory of Jesus' life and life-giving death by reading John's Gospel over summer? Why not ask your spouse or a friend to join you? John wants us to continue believing that, in Christ, we really do experience life in all its fullness, the only life worth living. That's so worth remembering, and too wonderful to forget. ☺

He was born so we could be born again.

EDITORIAL

CONTENDING TOGETHER AT CHRISTMAS TIME

THE ARCHBISHOP ELECTION YEAR IS ALMOST UPON us. In August 2013 each of our Synod reps will have the onerous responsibility of casting their vote in favour of just one man. At that point their vote will arise from a conviction of heart, that 'just this one man (and not the other candidates) is the one I believe is the best to serve Sydney Anglican churches as our next Archbishop'.

Decisions *about* people are difficult. Given our nature, decisions *by* people are difficult. Decisions about people by people are doubly difficult. And yet this onerous responsibility must be exercised for the common good.

In the months leading up to August, nominations will expose a handful of good men to public consideration and evaluation. At election time everyone is tempted to be a prophet about how a person might perform in the future, but we always only have their past performance to guide us. There will be good things said of them, and bad things. Because of the importance of the decision to be made, and out of love for these, our brothers, speaking on both sides of that equation must be based on truth. Perceptions might abound, but the question must always be, 'how do those perceptions fit with reality?'

But, of course, perceptions are also part of reality. People are people, and people operate on how they perceive things to be—rightly or wrongly. The challenge is to keep testing those perceptions—against the evidence, against the perceptions of others—always in the light of God's word and praying for the Spirit's wisdom and insight.

As we seek the Lord's leading in this, we need good information about candidates and processes. Answers to Question 22 in the recent ACR survey into 'Preferred Age and Length of Service of an Archbishop' showed that to gain information, respondents stating to be members of our current Synod were *least* likely to talk with the candidate themselves (only 15% thought they would definitely talk with candidates personally), and *most* likely to converse with friends (58%). This means many conversations should be generated in order to come to a common mind, so that when each person votes it will be from a heart persuaded that 'God is with us' in this matter.

It is not the place of the ACR to dissect or critique the attempted sabotage of our survey launched from the


subterranean depths of *Facebook* last week. This will be the first Archbishop's election since *Facebook* was launched in 2004. Christians who operate within the new forms of social media must continue to act in a way worthy of disciples of Christ even within that environment and seek to influence the conversations so that they might be seasoned with grace (Col 4:5). No doubt this will require constant vigilance in order to achieve the self-regulation of this virtual world. It would be a great pity if this did not occur amongst Christian users, for the social media hold great potential for creating some of the multiple conversations that need to take place about all things, but, in 2013, about our next Archbishop.

We all know that secular political campaigns can get ugly. They are necessarily 'us' versus 'them'. Even in church politics, when forced to choose for one candidate over others, emotions can run high in the campaign process. We need to pray for godly politics and plan ahead to operate with grace in all respects, and to be ready to ask for forgiveness, and to give it, if and when required.

In the end, Christians do not contend *for* any person. Neither do we contend *against* another. As we stand together in Christian fellowship, we have a common task: to contend *for* the faith (Phil 1:27), 'bearing in mind the one thing' (Phil 2:2).

Next August, our Synod reps will not contend *against* the many, nor will they contend *for* 'just one man'. Their onerous responsibility is part of a much greater cause. Their question will be: mindful of this 'one thing', who will best stand with us, as we contend for the faith?

Just before the election processes begin in earnest, we have the joy of Christmas. Here, again, is a celebration of the 'one thing' for which we contend. What a magnificent moment, when the Son of God displayed his divinity by becoming a human being! How amazing that this was always with a view to his death, even a criminal's death on the cross (Phil 2:5–11). And yet, as one of the commentators reminds us,

this is the heavenly Head of his church! And should it then be possible that anyone in that church seeks his own, does not set the other above himself and so mind the "one thing"?¹ 

1. Barth, *Philippians*, 65.



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and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written, and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

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PREFERRED AGE AND LENGTH OF SERVICE SURVEY: INTRODUCTION

ON 7 DECEMBER ACR INVITED THOSE SYNOD Reps on our mailing list (all clergy; laity who have registered their address through our website) to complete a survey on Preferred Age and Length of Service of an Archbishop.

From Sept 2005 through to our last issue (Nov 2012), ACR has been raising the urgent need of preparing for the generational change that is now upon us as the Baby Boomers begin to retire. Our repeated suggestion that a younger Archbishop ought to be elected as part of our response to this need has been met with some concern. But is this concern about age, *per se*, or is it a concern about how long a younger archbishop would serve? And, in the complexities of such a decision, how do age and length of service relate to perceptions of competence (on other grounds)? Philosophically, it is easy to agree that age ought not to be considered, but is this just rhetoric or is it reality?

The survey was designed to provide some data about these issues and concerns.

86% of all contributors considered the role of Archbishop as important to our Diocese and the same proportion are either very concerned or extremely concerned to find the right man for this office. The same concern was not given to the survey (see p.1). The significant attempt to corrupt the data was mitigated by the analysis of each response with all data reported on—so you can make your own appraisal of the information.

The final survey had 463 contributions with excellent data gathered from 64 confirmed Synod Reps before the social media attack was launched. A total of 112 respondents were clearly identified as providing bogus answers and a further 41 ignored during two time-windows of online sabotage, the data from which was ignored. In short, from 310 surveys with good data, our interpretation is based upon 127 reported synod reps (after 11 bogus responses were removed from that number)—who will actually be involved in the election—rather than the 183 extras—who nevertheless delighted to give their opinions.

A couple of the questions asking respondents to rank several (but by no means all) options were rather complex, stretching the brain more than the average tick-a-box. These were directed at things such as the trade-off between perceived competency and age/length of service, as well as the opportunity to regularly exercise choice. As a result of the extra time required to remove the bogus data, the analysis and interpretation of the data yielded by these more complex questions will appear in a future issue.

ACR: The Long Push for Generational Change

2004, Oct	ACR returns in e-form
2005, Sept	Editorial speaks of the difficulty of older generations to trust the younger, as if they said: 'Let's not take the risk with someone untried, with little experience—the task is too important! Let's not take the risk with someone young, for goodness sake, the importance of the task demands someone at the other end of life!'
2006, April	Editorial: 'Dispensing with Old Archiepiscopal Elections'. Criticised the 'conventional wisdom' that 'a man with too many years until retirement should not be elected as archbishop. The fear is obvious: if he is a failure, we want his oversight to be short. So make him old, and we can outlive his malfunction. Instead of allowing a person's age to be the protective strategy, synods should bring in other ways of dealing with failure and protecting the future'. Suggested that all current assistant Bishops should not stand. 'As the assistant bishops take themselves out of the running, and as the Synod articulates a clear vision of expectations and restraints beyond just counting birthday candles it can begin to look to a different generation. It is that generation to whom the future properly belongs.'
2006, Oct	'Bizarre about Bishops': Reprise: All present Bishops shouldn't stand
2006, Dec	Policy 4 of Diocesan Mission ought to include reform of the Archbishop's office and the election process. For our benefit we should come up with 'some gospel-centred vision for the future office of Archbishop of Sydney that will fit the kind of leadership styles which will best serve the future churches of this ever-changing city'.
2006, Dec	The appointment of Al Stewart as Bishop 'may not break the baby boomer barrier, but he gives it a good bruising'.
2007, June	The Archbishop Must not Be an Outsider
2010, June	Shopping List for Archbishop, Part 1: #2: 'He must be under 57'. The reason? 'It is time to get a younger man into the office—especially at this crucial leadership changeover period from early baby-boomer to generation next.' There are great heroes in favour: 'On the upside of longer terms, with Barker, Mowll and Loane amongst those with the longest terms previously, surely the advantages of a lengthy term for a strong, conservative evangelicalism speak for themselves. [...] In 2013 [Jensen's age at election, 57] age should therefore set the upper limit: this time, the age should come down even further 'Loane-ward', 'Barker-ward', or even 'Mowll-ward'.'
2010, Oct	Shopping List part 2: #11, Must be aware of the generational change that is now occurring. 'the next election therefore needs to reach a long way down the age scale'
2010, Dec	The revolution Is Over: the retirement of the baby boomers is about to begin. The election must be set within this context: we have to be ready for a whole new world, 'generational change is the next big challenge that must be faced'
2011, Jan	Special edition to the new synod, included 'the age factor'. Younger representatives are important, since a generational shift is about to begin. Expressed the hope of lowering the age of synod, to allow for 'the generational change that must occur'.
2011, May	Report on several local conferences, including one at St Philip's York Street, at which May 2011 speakers were at the 'younger statesman' end of things. Suggested that these conferences may represent the 'paradigm shift that is about to bring us the future', perhaps signs of 'a new generation of leaders' emerging.
2012, Oct	A Young Archbishop for a New Bishops court? Editorial: Closing the Gap by Reaching Over it: 'Of course, age only becomes an issue when you make it one. If all likely candidates were in the line-up for their merits alone, then the selection of the most likely suspect is based upon who is the best person for the job at hand. [...] Once a selection is made on merit, if the age-factor is then introduced, it may turn out that the best candidate just happens to be younger than another. But then his age becomes an asset, not a liability, for the person considered best on merits then has a longer term to apply his many advantages to the role. And time enables steady, slow-paced changes for the better.' [and more]
2012, Dec	Analysis of Survey into Preferred Age and Length of Service

In the meantime, a report on all the data from our survey is available for viewing from our website: www.australianchurchrecord.net. A fuller report on preferred age and length of service also contains details on how bogus data was exposed.

PREFERRED AGE AND LENGTH OF SERVICE SURVEY: AN INTERPRETATION

Age as a Factor

Men in their 50s have an immediate head start and will easily solidify votes they attract. Synod members are most likely to vote for a candidate who is in their 50s, but are open to an older or younger man if he can be shown to be more competent for the job. The synod members who responded won't have difficulty with a man aged 46 to 60, but are nevertheless open to being persuaded to elect a man as young as 31 years through to one 67 years, but it will be an uphill battle for men at either end of the age spectrum.

Length of Service

Synod is less sure of itself over the issue of length of service. There is much more negativity about potential lengthy service, as well as strong resistance to a very short term in office. It is only men who can serve for between 8 and 17 years that will find an easy path with Synod. Outside this range, there is resistance to overcome. However, the Synod is nevertheless open to being persuaded about a man who might serve anywhere between 3 and 42 years.

This is a surprising outcome, for, to correlate the issues, we are more open to a man serving a long period of time than we are to the man who is young enough to provide this length of service. In addition, our current retirement age means an older archbishop will not have the years available to serve a long term, even though we might want him to.

Rhetoric or Reality?

Quite a number of respondents indicated that age and length of service would make absolutely no difference to the way they voted. As principled as this may seem, one of the options approved was a length of service between 38-42 years. However, when this same group were asked the maximum length of time they would want their favoured young candidate to be in office, 34% of the same group declared that any longer than 20 years they would look to find an older, less competent candidate in this election. Since this shows that the rhetoric of 'length of service not being a factor' has little impact even on other parts of the same survey, it is unlikely to have much traction at the time of voting.

Another example of this rhetoric producing internal inconsistencies is found amongst those respondents who contributed prior to the social media attack: 76% said that they would choose between candidates on the sole basis of competency, but 56% indicated age would contribute in some way to how they would vote for a man aged 41-45.

When it actually comes time to put pen to paper and vote, it seems that age will be a factor no matter what rhetoric abounds to the contrary.

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

The exact wording can be found in the survey itself, but here are the questions stripped down to their basics.

1. How important is the Archbishop's Role?
2. How concerned are you for the Right person to be elected?
3. Ideally, what should be the age of AB at election?
4. Once the issue of competence is decided, does age change your opinion?
5. How does length of service effect likelihood of voting for them?
6. Would you choose a person of more acceptable age over one of greater competence?
7. Ranking scenarios for filling office of AB for 30 years— varying ages and lengths of service.
8. What is the ideal length of service?
9. Ranking scenarios for filling office of AB for 30 years – varying competencies, ages and lengths of service.
10. If the most competent is young, what is maximum term to give him?
11. If your preferred candidate is old, what is minimum term to give him?
12. If you arrived at a preferred candidate on other grounds, what age would you like him to be?
13. Would you be influenced to vote for someone younger if your friends were doing so?
14. Would you be influenced to vote for someone older if your friends were doing so?
15. Advantages of an older person?
16. Disadvantages of an older person?
17. Advantages of a younger person?
18. Disadvantages of a younger person?
19. How are you connected with the current synod?
20. From which region?
21. Did you vote in the last election synod?
22. How will you gain information about candidates this time around?
23. Your age?
24. Your gender?

The Archbishop's Sweet Spot

The two-fold factors of age and length of service are currently connected directly by the retirement age of 68. It means that a 'sweet spot' appears for men in their late 50s. Both their age and length of service lie in the zones of maximal acceptance. A man between the ages of 56 and 60 is most acceptable because of

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their age and such a man serves for between 8 and 12 years, the most desirable length of service. It makes a lot of sense: a man with experience who still has enough years to do something in the job.

Breaking the Nexus?

One way to limit the effects of this sweet spot for men of a particular age is to provide for a fixed term for an archbishop. It would allow for both older men and younger men to be considered on their merits alongside those in their late 50s. This option was debated and rejected by Synod in 2010.¹ Another way would be to limit the impact age and length of service have on our own decision making and just pick the best man for the job. This requires an openness to a longer or shorter length of service than we may, at first theoretical glance, desire. There already seems to be room for a bit of movement here, since even though the average most-desired length of time of service is 12 years (Question 8), the average most-desired age for an archbishop is 51 years (Question 12).

1 http://sydneyanglicans.net/news/no_fixed_term_for_archbishops

Will we find the right man?

Choosing a man based on age and length of service makes decision-making simple: you don't actually have to examine people carefully to make your choice. One can rationalize it as giving the person sufficient time to do something, while mitigating risk by not giving them too long. The problem with operating solely on the criteria of age and length of service is clear: you won't necessarily have the best man for the job.

To find the best man requires careful examination, it requires testing of their character, of their convictions, and their competency. Due to the size of the Synod this will take good information, time, and many conversations for us to be led to the man God wants as our next Archbishop. Pray that everyone on Synod would be open to find the man who has the best qualities to lead our Diocese, and pray for godly discussion as we get there. ☪

ARE YOU TOLERANT?

Phil Colgan



I HAVE BEEN CONVICTED LATELY OF the need to speak out against the prevailing view of tolerance in our society. Tolerance has become the most important virtue in modern Australia. To be called intolerant is now as bad as being called a bigot or racist.

The true meaning of tolerance is to put up with what you disagree with. So, to tolerate someone is to respect their right to believe something that you don't think is true or to respect someone's right to act in way that you don't agree with. This is indeed a commendable trait and all Christians should in this sense be tolerant of those who disagree with us.

However, tolerance has come to mean something that it was never meant to. Tolerance now means that you have to accept another person's beliefs or actions as equally true and valid (even if they are logically inconsistent with yours!). Truth has become relative, so to claim that you might know the true or right answer is, by definition, intolerant. Worse still is to question whether a person's life style might be harmful or inappropriate.

As Christians, we are called to be truly tolerant—respecting and loving even those we disagree with. However,

we must be willing to be called intolerant. We must be willing to stand up and say that certain beliefs and lifestyles are wrong. We must be willing to say that we respect people's right to disagree while still pointing out their error.

Sadly, this prevailing view of tolerance has not just scared Christians into remaining silent in the world for fear of being called "intolerant". Even more insidiously it has crept into the church with regard to our attitude to the Bible. It now grates on us to hear other views questioned or declared wrong. Often I talk to Christians who are happy to hear the positive affirmations of Scripture but who dislike any teaching that points out error. Sadly, at this point our problem is with the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles! It was Jesus and the Apostles who demanded that anyone who teaches God's flock not only teach the truth but also refute error.

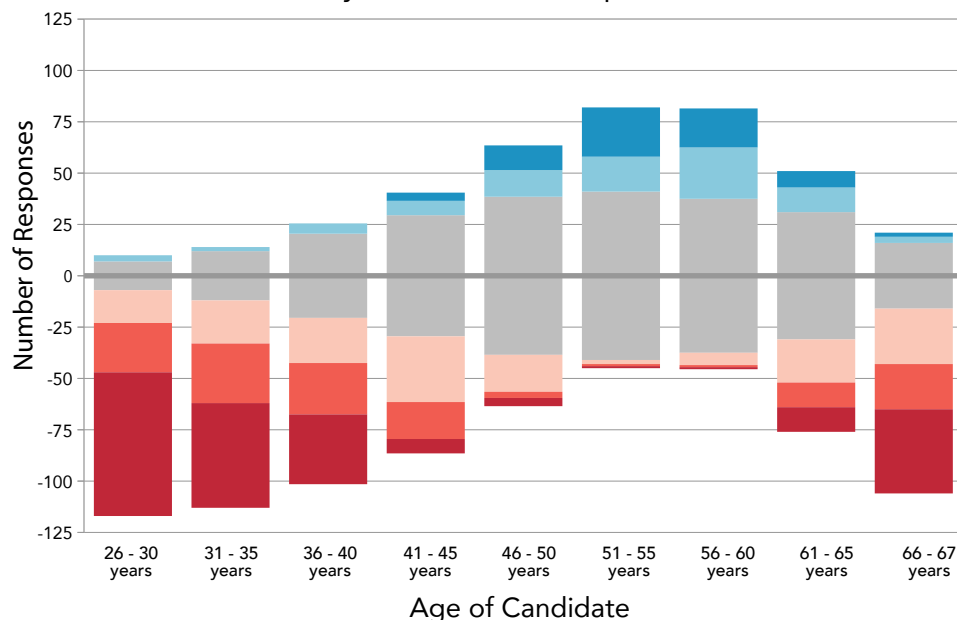
I wonder if a worthwhile prayer for us all might be that we will be tolerant (in the true sense) as we intolerantly (in the modern sense) work out and declare the truth of God's word? ☪

Truth has become relative.

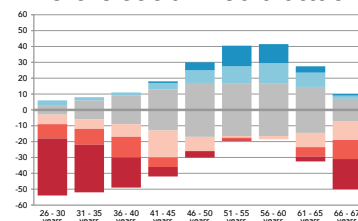
SURVEY RESULTS

Effect of Age of Candidate on Voting

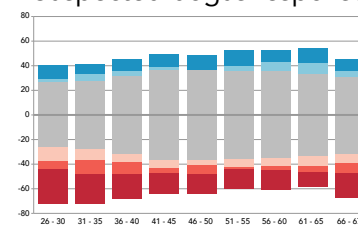
Synod Members' responses*



Before social media attack

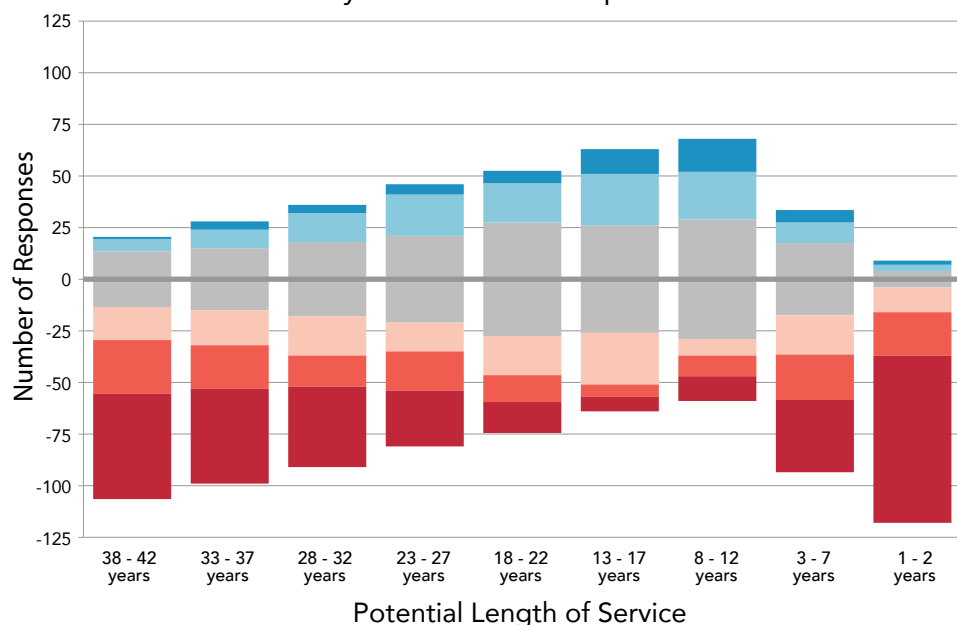


Suspected bogus responses

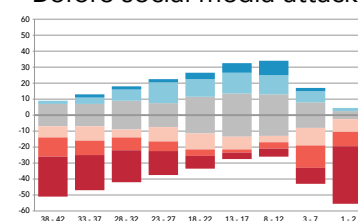


Effect of Length of Service on Voting

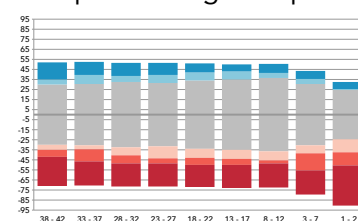
Synod Members' responses*



Before social media attack



Suspected bogus responses



Increased or decreased likelihood to vote for a favoured candidate

- much more likely to vote
- wouldn't change my opinion
- much less likely to vote
- more likely to vote
- less likely to vote
- never vote for them

*survey respondents claiming to be members of the current Synod with bogus data removed

THE RHETORIC OF THE CONSPIRACY THEORY

Peter Bolt



THE CONSPIRACY THEORY continues to have abiding traction for those who wish to woo the masses—or at least a small circle of the masses.

For the rhetoric to work, a number of elements need to be in place. There needs to be a closed circle of people, so that an ‘insider-outsider’ feel is generated, as they lean forward and whisper in each others’ ears. Maintaining a constant adversarial ‘us-them’ will be important, and, to do so, don’t forget how effective witty remarks, newly invented slogans, and little jokes (or even outright snipes) together, at the expense of ‘the others’ can be.

Amongst those ‘others’, you need a focus, a target. This victim will be sacrificed for ‘us’, by being made the perpetrator of the conspiracy (which will be wicked, by definition).

You also need some prophets. Drawing upon their amazing powers not shared by mere mortals, these great ones are able to discern ‘what is really going on’. They call

out the conspiracy. But (surely it goes without saying?), only to their own little huddle in their corner of the playground. For the prophets to maintain the aura of supernatural ability, of course, they have to be able to read *simply everything* in the light of their conspiracy theory.

If the target gets wind of the conspiracy theory and denies the charge, or refutes it with all kinds of evidence, the prophets must maintain their course, undaunted.

The denials and refutations must be now incorporated into the conspiracy theory. That’ll bring about an ever increasing adulation of the fans and sycophants: “how can the prophet see what nobody else can see, not even the people who are the target of the attack?”.

How indeed. ☹

Able to read simply everything in the light of their conspiracy theory.

JOHN CHAPMAN: A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

Peter Bolt



‘AREN’T YOU COLD?’ THE FIRST words I heard from John Chapman. Directed at me. Bowral in the Southern Highlands, 1975 mid-winter. I was in thongs and he was freezing and so I was crazy.

I was recently converted. No follow-up in those days. The Christians I had fallen amongst took me to a personal evangelism training course run by John for a month. God, Man, God, What if you do?, What if you don’t?. That was it. Looking back I am thankful to have John as my first Christian instructor. And that my follow-up was learning the gospel and how to share it.

Our second encounter was in Moree, 1976. I learned later John served a curacy there many years before. He was back to run ‘dialogue meetings’ and, home from the University of NSW, I went along to one. Apparently John used to be a very big man. He spent the night of ‘dialogue’

cracking hilarious stories about how much weight he had lost through Weight Watchers, and asking what should he do with all the loose skin hanging around him now? He spoke about forgiveness and how you got forgiven. A gigantic bikie asked a lot of questions. About Jesus and about weight loss.

John was a regular visitor to us at University of NSW. Church houseparties, evangelistic preaching, teaching the Bible. I learned 1 John from him, I remember, and he always taught the Scriptures well.

The 1978 August Outreach was a turning point for the ministry on campus. John evangelized as a tag-team with Paul Barnett. People were being converted like fruit falling from the tree. I wondered how these men could so boldly preach to thousands on the Library Lawn. I narrowly escaped giving my testimony in the same venue.

For the landmark 1980 mission at USyd, a bunch of us from UNSW went over to evangelise students from ‘the

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JOHN CHAPMAN: A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

other place'. We were kitted up with a gospel presentation called 'Two Ways to Live', still hot off the press. At the public meetings John tag-teamed with Phillip Jensen. Phillip preached around 2WTL. John evangelized by explaining something from the Gospel of John. I found myself checking his talk against the criteria of 2WTL, and thinking 'He hasn't preached the gospel'. Then it hit me, 'No, he's just preached the Gospel'. The problem was clearly mine. My long journey with the Gospels stretched out before me.

As the success of USyd 1980 mission thrilled us all, University missions began to roll around the campuses of Australia. Once again at UNSW in 1981, John led a dialogue meeting in which the whole floor of a residential college attended, all nonchristian. No weight loss. No bikies. Plenty of Jesus, forgiveness, and questions answered brilliantly.

For my student minister positions when at Moore College, 1982-1985, I worked with two of John's ex-colleagues in the Department of Evangelism. So John was always there in the shadows, and often in the pulpit. Or heckling in the crowd. He taught my Moore class 2WTL.

My first curacy at Mosman was alongside one of the members of John's Board. John, again, a regular preacher and evangelist for the congregation. He asked me to teach the Bible at his City Bible Studies. I loved the opportunity.



After I moved to Mt Druitt, John agreed to evangelise for the church. The enthusiastic congregation was disappointed they had asked so many friends who didn't come. The building was full. John encouraged us to see that God was in our midst. I soaked up his gospel enthusiasm.

I loved evangelism. When I was asked to join the faculty at Moore, I asked John whether this was a backward step. He told me not to be an idiot. He wanted academics who knew the main game was Christ's mission. Get in there. I did.

I loved John's writing. For years *What is a Christian?* was always with me, at least temporarily. I was always giving it away. I learned from *Know and Tell the Gospel*. I helped him earn plenty of royalties by giving away so many copies of *A Fresh Start*. I had written *Mission Minded*, but just used it myself. I showed it to John. 'You have to publish it so that others can use it too. What are you sitting on it for? Get it to Tony! [Matthias Media]'

He critiqued student sermons at Moore. The room down the corridor from mine was filled with laughter as one-to-one

he helped them to preach better. The faculty morning teas were always lively when John was in for the day. He invited me to join his Board. Then he retired! He had sussed me out to replace him, so soon after my arrival on faculty. Evidently academic work was important, but not for too long!

Arriving in Cambridge for my PhD studies, Sept 1993, turned up in church the first Sunday. John was evangelizing. Later when in England, he visited. My three-year-old found his lap immediately comfortable, and he was comfortable with her. Another time I dined with him in London—and on him. He was spending the royalties from *Fresh Start*.

When I went back to Moore in 1997, John was again a regular visitor. He joined us at the ACR writing in every issue on the gospel we preach and proclaim. He was always a great encouragement to keep at it.

In 2009, his friend Len Abbott had lost his sight but loved Australian history. John read my biography of William Cowper to him, out loud. He boasted, 'Pete, I bet I'm the only person in the world who has done that!'

In February 2012, he agreed to an interview so I could learn a bit more of gospel work in Sydney. He had been seriously ill the Christmas before, but now recovering. As I walked into Donald Robinson Village, I heard the cheery cry from the balcony, 'Pete!'. I looked up to see him leaning on his stick with one hand, while the other waved his welcome.

For a month or so mid-year, I read through a large number of letters John had written to a friend studying in the USA for 3-4 years. How I loved his comments on Australian politics, or those of Sydney Anglicanism; his care for his friend; his delight in people. His ongoing and tireless activity for the gospel shone through it all, although rarely given centre-stage.

On 15 November I heard the news that Chappo had reached his final hours. I grieved this moment. I prayed and asked a friend to pray as well. I had known him so long. He had shaped me in so many ways. What would the world be like without John Chapman's, 'dear brother'?

The next day, he was gone. For some reason at the news, I recalled the warning he so often gave in his preaching. 'Jesus died for you. Wouldn't it be terrible to arrive in God's heaven and hear him say, "what are you doing here, unforgiven?"'

That isn't John Chapman.

He has now gone home. ☹️

He was always a great encouragement to keep at it.