

Questions About David Virtue - 2007

<http://www.virtueonline.org/>

Why is an ordained Baptist minister so focused on the Episcopal Church-USA and wider Anglican Communion?

What are his degrees, and what institutions conferred them – and when? (verifiable answers will be posted here)

Are these institutions residential and/or resources for distance learning? What are the specific academic years during which he studied? (verifiable answers will be posted here)

Do the institutions from which he claims certificates/degrees have accreditations comparable in quality to those approved by the U.S.A.'s Council for Higher Education Accreditation?

<http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp> (verifiable answers will be posted here)

In what university library is his dissertation available?

How do his studies qualify him, a Baptist minister, to comment so extensively on the beliefs and practices of the Anglican Communion/Episcopal Church-USA? (verifiable supports will be posted here)

How are his website and other occupational endeavors funded? (He appears not to be an author of best-selling or distinguished books that produce significant income; perhaps he has family resources.) (verifiable supports will be posted here)

What news outlets actually publish his frequent press releases? (verifiable supports will be posted here)

from (adapted with reddened portions) - <http://theroadtoemmaus.org/EM/ShpMI/HGR/00HG&R.htm>

David Virtue, M.C.S., **DD.**, was educated at **Scots College in Wellington, New Zealand**. He studied English Literature and Philosophy at **Victoria University in Wellington** before going on to **London Bible College**, London, England where he completed his **Diploma in Theology**. He continued his theological studies at **Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois**. and completed his **Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies** at **Regent College, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada** with a **dissertation** on the **Idea of Man in the writings of Alexander Solzhenitsyn**.

Virtue was Religion Editor at The Province newspaper, Canada's third largest morning daily, and later as an editorial writer. He was international communications coordinator for World Vision Int., serving in Ethiopia. He worked in communications and development for the American Bible Society in New York City, and later served with the American Leprosy Missions. **He is an ordained Baptist minister (ABCUSA) and was associate pastor of St. Paul's Baptist Church, Montclair, NJ, for two years.** He was Managing Editor of the Virginia Churchman and has been a columnist, journalist and writer on religious issues for more than 20 years.

For the past ten years he has been president of a high-tech media corporation as well as editing an Episcopal Newsletter for conservative Episcopalians. He presently writes and edits an Episcopal/Anglican Online Newsletter for orthodox Anglicans worldwide reaching nearly 100,000 readers in 36 countries. He is author of two books, *A Flame for Justice*, on the life of Caesar Molebatsi of Soweto, South Africa (Lion Publishing, Oxford, UK) and more recently *A Vision of Hope*, the life story of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Habib, Cairo, Egypt (Paternoster/Regnum, UK).

from <http://www.standfirminfaith.com/mt/archives/000753.html>

Getting off the subject of my imminent damnation for a moment: I've noticed that **Virtue sometimes signs his name "D.D." or "D.D. (Alexandria).**" Knowing that the Doctor of Divinity is almost never an earned degree these days (it's generally the honorary degree awarded to bishops by their alma maters, among other things; the post-M.Div. doctorate is now the D.Min.), I was curious as to who had awarded Virtue an honorary doctorate, and/or where he had found one of the very few remaining earned D.D. programs in existence.

According to a buddy of mine, Virtue's bio used to say that the D.D. is from one Palm Harbor University. The only Palm Harbor University I'm familiar with is Palm Harbor University High School in Florida, which obviously isn't in

the business of awarding degrees. So I'm curious: Where did Virtue get the thing? (Anyone can buy one from the Universal Life Church for five bucks, but I'm assuming that's not where he got his.) DV, if you're reading this, your answer would obviously be more canonical than anybody else's--but since he's routinely called "Dr. Virtue," and his bio includes a photo of himself in a graduation gown, I'm assuming this is common knowledge for everybody in the Anglican Confessing Movement.

Thanks.

Cheers,

TH

Posted by: **TH** at July 9, 2005 05:20 PM

I have no idea, but surely a man named "Virtue" would never include an *honorary* degree designation beside his name, right? Surely...

(enquiring minds want to know :P)

Posted by: **Marty** at July 9, 2005 08:35 PM

I co-wrote heaps of books on education, but I can't name a single accredited school, off the top of my head, that offers the Doctor of Divinity as an earned degree. It has been replaced by the Th.D., S.T.D., and D.Min., and is now known pretty much exclusively as an honorary degree. So the four options that come to mind are:

- (a) He earned the D.D. from a legitimate school (probably one in eastern Europe, where there are still a few seminaries that offer it), through a program I've never heard of.
- (b) The degree was awarded on an honorary basis by a legitimate school, which most likely would have asked him to deliver a commencement address to graduating students.
- (c) He bought one. This is a pretty serious accusation, and I don't feel comfortable making it until I know the name of the school.

from http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-11-26-faith-bloggers_N.htm

Episcopal

David Virtue

Blogger: Virtue, 63, of West Chester, Pa., a full-time writer.

Blog: virtueonline.org, which grew from an e-mail list in the '90s, to a news service, to a blog.

Theme: Tracking Anglican/Episcopal disputes over money, sexuality and ecclesiastical power. Scourging "revisionists," including supporters of the openly gay bishop of New Hampshire, V. Gene Robinson.

Hot topic: Dueling with Louie Crew, whom he calls "the Episcopal Church's First Sodomite Emeritus," over whether the bishop of South Florida was right to block Robinson from speaking at a Sarasota parish.

Tone: "I'm orthodox and I make no apology. If you believe St. Paul is correct about sex, why would you jeopardize your soul?"

from the now non-operational *The Witness Magazine*

VIRTUAL TRICKERY BACKFIRES - By Ethan Flad

David Virtue's hateful "house of cards" may have finally come tumbling down. The notorious online source of an aggressive anti-women, anti-homosexual agenda, Virtue's vitriol sank to a desperate new low on Monday, August 4th.

At the 8:30am press briefing, Virtue walked up to the microphone and asked bishop spokespersons Wendell Gibbs (Michigan) and Ed Little (Northern Indiana), "Do you know that Gene Robinson's website is linked by one click to 5,000 pornographic websites?" No, responded both bishops. Virtue

followed up, "Well, now that you do know this, will this change your vote on his election?" Gibbs replied, "I would doubt the veracity of such information at this moment. It seems like a last-minute ploy." Virtue walked back to his seat shaking his head.

A last-minute ploy indeed: the phrase "dirty tricks" seems more to the point. Over the next several hours, as another, larger bomb was launched at Gene Robinson's election, Virtue's campaign to bring down the bishop-elect began to unravel.

A review of "Robinson's website" — the page that describes him on the Diocese of New Hampshire's site — reveals no links of any sort such as were suggested by Virtue. Finding none, I asked Virtue just where this link was. He responded, "The website is <http://www.outright.org/>, and apparently the links have just been taken down this morning." Hmmn. "The links were up last night when I looked at that time. I think that the Presiding Bishop must have spanked Gene Robinson and had him remove them overnight." Excuse me: the PB "spanked" him?

At least Virtue's comments revealed that it was some other organization, and not the diocesan site. So the next step was a review of www.outright.org. No link was found there. The site — which many readers of this article will probably have looked at by now — says that the organization's mission is "to create safe, positive, and affirming environments for young gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and questioning people ages 22 and under. OutRight aspires to a youth-driven philosophy in which youth needs and beliefs form decision, and a collaboration of youth and adults provides support, education, advocacy, and social activities." It sounds positive. But there was no evidence of the organization's relationship to Gene Robinson.

Research through the day uncovered that Robinson was involved several years ago in launching an OutRight chapter in Concord, N.H., but according to a statement from the organization this afternoon, he has not been involved with their work in two years. Characterizing this as "Gene Robinson's website" is an obvious Virtue lie. Yet another falsehood was made in the "one-click to porn" allegation. In a World Wide Web where everything is separated by six degrees of separation, it turns out that a link to porn was found deeply embedded in outright.org; ironically enough, it took six clicks from their home page to get to that link.

In the early afternoon, the news broke of allegations of sexual misconduct against Robinson by a man named David Lewis, who lives in Manchester, Vt. In an email to bishops of the Episcopal Church, Lewis claims, "Well, as outstanding as Gene Robinson may have been thus far as a priest, my personal experience of him is that he does not maintain appropriate boundaries with men." He continues, "When I first encountered Gene at a Province I convocation a couple of years ago he put his hands on me inappropriately every time I engaged him in conversation. NO GAY MAN HAS EVER BEHAVED TOWARDS ME THIS WAY."

In mid-afternoon, David Anderson of the conservative American Anglican Council responded to the media feeding frenzy, holding an impromptu press conference in the middle of the 2nd floor News Room. Surrounded by about 50 media representatives, Anderson indicated, "I've been hearing these allegations for several days." He later clarified that he was referring to the website porn issue, saying, "I only learned about the [David Lewis] email this morning." Several reporters asked exactly when Anderson had heard about it, and as he tried to avoid answering, Virtue sought to butt in and change the line of questioning. While he attempted to redirect the attention of the reporters to the porn sites, a visibly frustrated media were more interested in the process, and kept repeating, "When did you know?! How long have you known about this? Why didn't you tell church leaders when you knew?" Later in the day, on CNBC, Anderson said he'd first seen the porn link on Saturday.

This is not the first time that dirty tricks have been used at the last minute in our church. But according to many progressives, there is an ironic change in tactics that has taken place over the past thirty years by those who resist a more inclusive church. Back in 1976, women's activists like Marge Christie and Sally Bucklee report, the mood on the floor of the House of Deputies was "nasty, dirty; some of the statements were ugly."

They were told women weren't capable of being clergy.

Now, conversely, at a time when church leaders like George Werner praise the "demeanor, constraint and discipline" in the House of Deputies, the overall situation might be worse than it was back in that mean-spirited era. Two years ago, David Dixon, husband of Bishop Jane Dixon, was accused of assault by the junior warden of the parish in Accokeek, Md. on the day the infamous legal hearing was to take place. Last year, according to Anglican Communion sources, Archbishop Rowan Williams was demonized by the group "Reform" at the time of his appointment. Both of these efforts were organized by media-savvy right-wing activists. Sound familiar?

With internet-based activists like David Virtue on the prowl, it appears that no one is safe from the instantaneous ability to distribute unfounded rumors, not even in the church. We pray that the House of Bishops will see past these dirty tricks, and move on to truly "engage God's mission" despite the spiteful resistance of fringe hate activists.

Ethan Flad is editor of *The Witness* magazine. His reports from General Convention are appearing regularly in *Issues*, the daily paper of The Consultation, and the *Every Voice News*, a daily publication of the Every Voice Network. This article appears in the August 5 edition of EVN.