

# Friday Church News Notes

## VISION FORUM

**Friday Church News Notes, March 6, 2009, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)**

Another avenue whereby Calvinism is entering fundamentalist and independent Baptist churches and homes is Vision Forum. This organization has a worthy goal of building godly families and exhorting fathers to take the headship of their homes, and many of their materials are helpful. But Vision Forum is founded upon and permeated with Reformed Calvinistic theology. Its statement of faith includes the following: "All who were chosen in Christ from eternity past are born again by the Holy Spirit, respond from their new hearts with repentance and faith in Jesus, are justified on the basis of the shed blood of Christ, become children of God, and are indwelt, sanctified, and sealed by the Holy Spirit until they are glorified at Christ's return." Vision Forum books include the following: *John Calvin: Man of the Millennium*, *The Story of the English Puritans*, *The World's Greatest Reformation History Library*, *The Geneva Bible Calvin Legacy Edition*, *Children's Stories of the Reformation*, *Stories of the Covenanters in Scotland*, *Reformation Heroes*, *Famous Women of the Reformed Church*, *Puritan Fathers Classics Library*, and *Gill's Body of Doctrinal Divinity* (hyper, hyper Calvinism). They even sell a statue of John Calvin. Vision Forum is not dispensational and rejects the imminent, pre-tribulational return of Jesus Christ. They have no emphasis upon preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. This is not even mentioned in their mission statement, though it is THE thing that Jesus Christ emphasized after He rose from the dead (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) and is THE emphasis of the book of Acts.

## GEORGE WASHINGTON, THE MASONS, AND AMERICA

President Harry Truman oversaw the complete rebuilding of the White House in the early 1950s. They gutted it, leaving only the outer shell, and put in new basements and rebuilt the entire thing. When they found the original stones, they bore Masonic symbols. The biographer says, "Truman was also pleased to learn that on the Saturday in October 1792 when the Free Masons of Georgetown had laid the first stone, in the presence of President George Washington and the architect of the house, James Hoban, they had afterward paraded back to Georgetown, to 'Mr. Sutter's Fountain,' where toasts were raised to the fifteen United States, the President, and 'masonic brethren throughout the universe'" (David McCullough, *Truman*, pp. 878, 879). This reminds me that America has always been half-pagan, half-Christian. It has a unique and wonderful heritage among modern nations, our liberties have been unprecedented, and Washington was a great man, but America has never been anything like a consistent "Christian nation," whatever that would be.



## VIRGINIA BANNING PRAYERS IN JESUS' NAME



On February 23, a Virginia Senate committee killed legislation that would have restored the rights of state police chaplains to pray in Jesus' name at public events (*Christian Post*, Feb. 24, 2009). The measure would have reversed the sorry policy of State Police Col. Steven Flaherty that forbids state troopers to pray in Jesus' name. The misnamed American Civil Liberties Union threatened a lawsuit if the legislation had been enacted. The city of Fredericksburg, Virginia, also bans such prayers, and the ban was upheld by a federal appeals court. Six chaplains resigned last year over the police chaplaincy censorship. In 2006, James Klingenschmitt was court-martialed and fired by the U.S. Navy for praying publicly in uniform in Jesus' name outside a chapel. Though Congress sided with him and rebuked the Navy, he has yet to be reinstated. Christian young people who are thinking about joining the military should understand that it has changed dramatically in recent times toward liberal "political correctness" and will doubtless change even more dramatically under the new commander-in-chief Barack Hussein Obama.

## BACK ON UNCLE SAM'S PLANTATION

The following is excerpted from "Back on Uncle Sam's Plantation" by Star Parker, a syndicated columnist for Scripps Howard News, Feb. 9, 2009: "Six years ago I wrote a book called 'Uncle Sam's Plantation.' I wrote the book to tell my own story of what I saw living inside the welfare state and my own transformation out of it. I said in that book that indeed there are two Americas--a poor America on socialism and a wealthy America on capitalism. I talked about ... a vast sea of perhaps well-intentioned government programs, all initially set into motion in the 1960s, that were going to lift the nation's poor out of poverty. A benevolent Uncle Sam welcomed mostly poor black Americans onto the government plantation. Those who accepted the invitation switched mindsets from 'How do I take care of myself?' to 'What do I have to do to stay on the plantation?' Instead of solving economic problems, government welfare socialism created monstrous moral and spiritual problems--the kind of problems that are inevitable when individuals turn responsibility for their lives over to others. The legacy of American socialism is our blighted inner cities, dysfunctional inner city schools, and broken black families. Trillions of dollars later, black poverty is the same. But black families are not, with triple the incidence of single-parent homes and out-of-wedlock births. Through God's grace, I found my way out. It was then that I understood what freedom meant and how great this country is. ... [Now] Uncle Sam has welcomed our banks onto the plantation and they have said, 'Thank you, Suh.' Now, instead of thinking about what creative things need to be done to serve

customers, they are thinking about what they have to tell Massah in order to get their cash. There is some kind of irony that this is all happening under our first black president on the 200th anniversary of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln."



## WASHINGTON STATE TO ALLOW ASSISTED SUICIDE

Washington has joined Oregon to become the second U.S. state to allow assisted suicide. The new law, which was approved by 60% of voters last November, requires that the patient be at least 18, declared competent, and be determined by two physicians to have a terminal disease and be expected to die within six months (*USA Today*, March 1, 2009). It is only "suggested" and not required that the next of kin be notified of this drastic action. At this present time, doctors are not required to participate, but that will eventually change once we go down this slippery slope. At this very moment Barack Obama, the pro-abortion president *par excellence*, is on the verge of removing legal protection from doctors and other health care workers who refuse to perform abortions. A nation that

requires doctors and nurses to murder babies will doubtless require them to murder "terminally ill" people. The new law is called "Death with Dignity," but there is nothing dignified about death. It is the wages of sin (Romans 6:23). According to the Bible, the individual that dies without regenerating faith in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in torment for his or her sin against the Law of a thrice-holy God, and there is no second chance beyond the grave. There is no dignity in hell. Men do not have the "right to die" any more than they have the right to kill. Only God has the right to take human life. (For more on this see "Do We Have the Right to Die" at the Way of Life website.)

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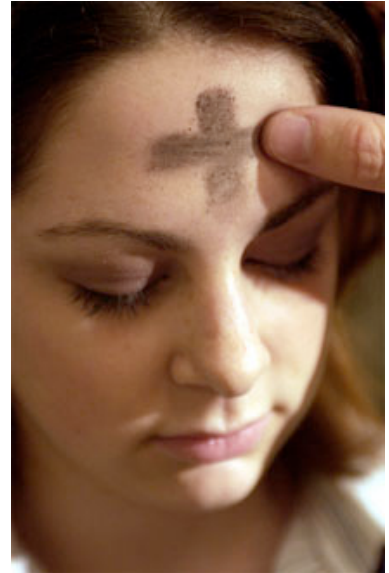
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## BAPTISTS ADOPTING ADVENT AND LENT

“Baptists Turning to the Observation of Lent” is the title of an Associated Baptist Press report for February 26. The article says: “Though traditionally viewed as a Catholic rite, increasing numbers of Baptists are discovering the discipline of Lent. Belmont University, until recently affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, marked Feb. 25 with an Ash Wednesday service co-officiated by a Catholic bishop. ... That began to break down in recent decades as more Baptist (and other Protestant) churches began observing the season of Advent. Some of those congregations also began to incorporate other parts of the liturgical calendar into their worship planning ... Bo Prosser, coordinator for congregational life with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, said he sees interest in Lent growing in Baptist churches every year. ... Passport, Inc., a student-ministry organization and partner of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, produces a web-based Lenten devotional called d365.org. The Baptist Center for Ethics, another CBF partner, sells an online group study for Lent in PDF format that was produced in partnership with the Baptist World Alliance.”

**CONCLUDING NOTE:** Lent and Advent are Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox sacramental practices that have no biblical authority. For Baptists to adopt these things is further evidence of the encroachment of the ecumenical movement, the blending of doctrinal distinctives, and the unifying of the denominations. Doubtless one of the impetuses for the adoption of Advent and Lent among Baptists is the spread of contemplative mysticism through the influence of men like Richard Foster and Dallas Willard. Contemplative practices such as centering prayer, visualization prayer, *lectio divina*, the Jesus prayer, and breath prayers are adapted from the darkness of Catholic monasticism. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).



## DESIGNER BABIES

The following is excerpted from “Sex-Selection and Hair, Skin and Eye Color in High Demand,” Lifesitenews.com, Feb. 27, 2009: “Demand for sex-selection for in vitro fertilization is ‘rapidly growing’ according to many private



IVF facilities in the US. a CNN report on sex-selection and other genetic screening tests ... focused on the success of the Fertility Institutes, a private artificial reproduction facility in Los Angeles that advertises ‘gender selection’ by pre-implantation genetic diagnosis of already created embryos, and claims a nearly 100 per cent ‘success rate.’ The facility also claims to be the first to offer the ‘pending availability’ of genetic tests to pre-determine the eye color, skin and hair color, and ‘cancer tendency’ of embryos created in the lab. ... The specter of “designer babies” has held the public imagination since the technologies were being developed in the late 1970s. ... [T]he commercial world of artificial reproduction has embraced the highly lucrative practices of genetic screening wherever the law

allows it, including in the US. ... Dr. Jeff Steinberg, director of the Fertility Institutes, claims that his company is performing approximately 10 gender selection procedures every week, at a fee of (US) \$18,400 each. ... Dr. Jeffrey Nisker, an ethicist and IVF specialist at the University of Western Ontario, told a House of Commons Committee that after his team had developed the technologies, requests came flooding in from all over Canada, but, ‘The number one genetic disease they requested this for was that of being a woman.’”

## ANTS THAT GARDEN

The following is excerpted from Creation Moments, <http://www.creationmoments.net/radio/transcript.php?t=2283>: “Farming and gardening are said by evolutionists to be very advanced activities. They say that primitive humans did not do these things, and that gardening developed only recently in human history. But if there is a Creator, we would expect that He would have taught many kinds of creatures to care for plants or even trees. Guess what? There are even ants who garden. There is a particular type of fierce ant that cares for the South American bull’s horn acacia tree. While the ants don’t need the tree for their survival, they do eat portions of it. But they never eat enough to cause damage to the tree. In fact, the ants protect their tree—they snip off vines or other growth that comes too close to the tree, maintaining plenty of growing room for their tree. The ants are aggressive enough to keep other insects or even birds or larger animals away from their tree. In studying this amazing relationship, researchers have removed the ants from some of these trees. Within two to fifteen months the tree is dead. Without the ants’ care, animals eat off all the leaves and surrounding plants overrun it. Who taught these ants to be gardeners? How could two so very different kinds of life develop such a close relationship? This results in a great mystery for evolution. Without ants you couldn’t evolve the tree, and without the tree, the ants couldn’t learn to care for it. You can’t get around it. Both were created fully formed, and the Creator taught the ants how to care for the tree.”

**THE RETURN OF CHRIST IS IMMINENT** (Friday Church News Notes, March 6, 2009, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org) [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The Lord Jesus and the New Testament apostles and prophets taught that the return of Christ is to be expected at any time and that the child of God must wait in holy expectation. “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:44). “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13). “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand” (Philippians 4:5). “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:5-6). “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8). “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7).

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature’s Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God’s will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service list. To SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE or CHANGE ADDRESSES go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbis/subscribe.html>. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org).