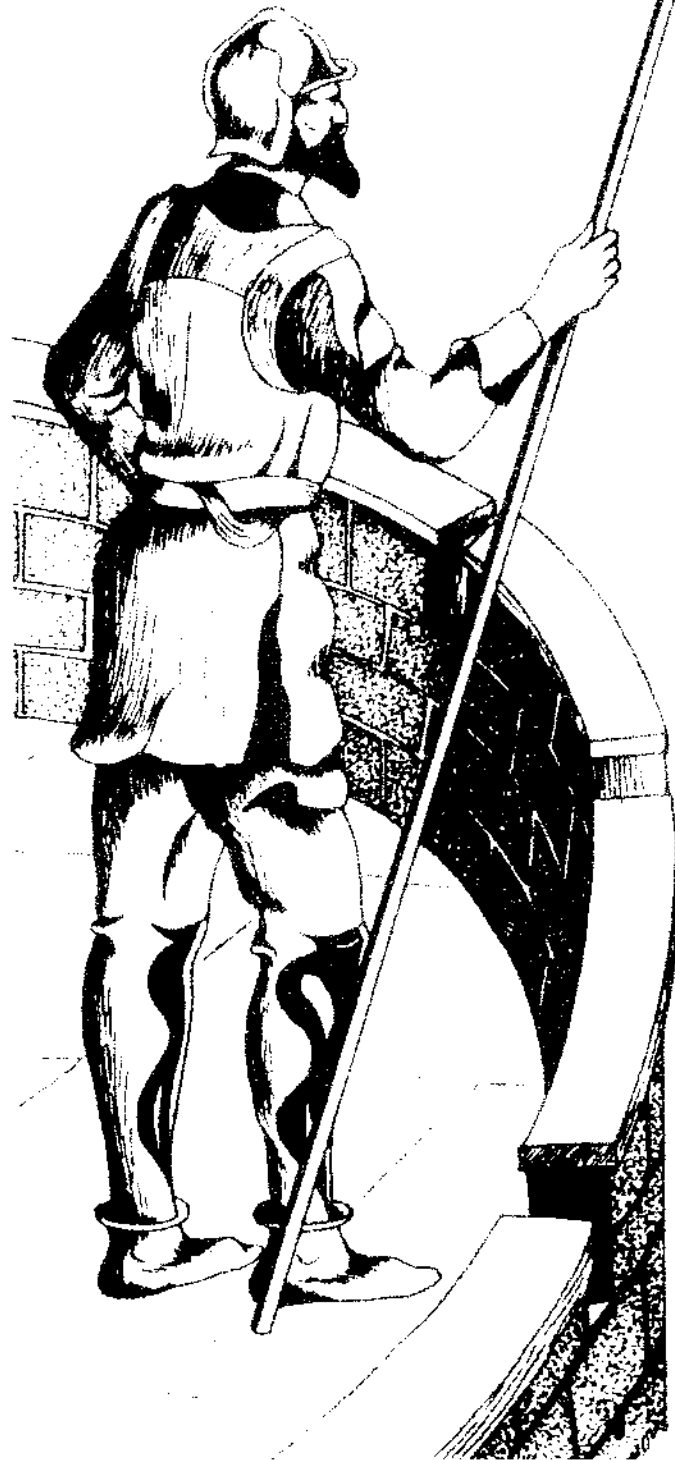


"Watchman, what of the night?"

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"*

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



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Editor's Preface

The New Year promises to be momentous, not only politically, but also religiously. At the time of this writing, all indications point to a new Pope on the world scene. With a new General Secretary at the helm of the WCC calling for a renewed emphasis of the purpose for which the WCC was founded - "a visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship" - final movements could be very "rapid ones." (See page 7).

While we may discuss the meaning and force of *ἄλλος*, in contrast to *ἕτερος*, another Greek word which likewise can be translated, "another," we miss a simple conclusion that Jesus was indicating by using the word, "another." In sending "another" Comforter, He declared plainly, "I will come to you" (John 14:18). Was Jesus only a "power" or an "influence"? Or was He a real Person? If we reject the Gnostic perceptions of the Incarnate Word, then why apply the same concepts to the Holy Spirit? "Another" implies "like." Even as Christ was a real Person, so the Holy Spirit is. Because we cannot explain the "how" of the mystery of the Incarnation, we dare not reject what the Scriptures tell us about God coming in the flesh. The Scriptures teach plainly that in the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit was involved (Luke 1:35), and Paul declares emphatically, that Christ "emptied Himself" (Phil 2:7 ARV). Put these basic concepts together from the pens of two men who worked and traveled together in a lifetime of service, with no record that they differed one from the other in their understandings of truth; they were writing the same truth.

In this issue we discuss the book, The Trinity, authored by a "trinity" of teachers from Andrews University.

Another Comforter

Ἄλλος Παρακλητος

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16-17)

This promise of Jesus was given in the upper room just before departing for the Garden of Gethsemane. Moments before, He had declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life" (v. 6). John, who records this conversation, in his first Epistle declares Jesus Christ to be the Comforter [KJV - "advocate"] (2:1). The Holy Spirit is "another" Comforter. In the same Epistle he links Jesus, the Truth, and the "another Comforter" also as "the Truth." He wrote:

This is He that came by water and blood. . . And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth (5:6 Gr.).

So close is the relationship of the ascended Lord and the Holy Spirit, that Dr. David Smith, writing his commentary on I John for *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, commented:

Jesus called Himself "the Truth," and the Spirit came in His room, His *alter ego*." (Vol. 5, p. 195).

This close relationship is likewise conveyed in the book of Revelation. John beheld "in the midst of the throne . . . a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (5:6). The first vision of the throne revealed the "seven Spirits of God" as distinct and separate - "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" (4:5). In the context of the vision, the Lamb was not yet, nor had He been slain. Two distinct Divine Entities are symbolized in this first vision of the throne to John. In the second vision of the throne, the first Two continue, but a Third appears as the Lamb but now combined as One with "the seven Spirits."

In the messages to the Seven Churches (Chapters 2 and 3), each begins with a "Thus saith the Lord" related to some aspect of the vision of the "Alpha and Omega" which John beheld on "the Lord's day" (1:10-20). Each

message closes with an admonition to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," but what the Spirit says appears not to be given, except to the first three of the seven churches, where it is associated with the phrase "to him that overcometh" (2:7, 11, 17). Is what the Spirit speaks, the same as what the "Alpha and Omega" spoke? The commitment to the overcomer of Ephesus is interesting to observe. It reads:

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (v. 7).

Who is the "I" who will give to eat of the tree of life? The Spirit, or the same "I" that appears in the previous verses? Or is this a further revelation of how closely the two Comforters are associated? Does this amplify the words of Jesus in the upper room, when He said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"? (John 14:18).

The Holy Spirit was deeply involved in the coming of the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. Luke gives the account of the entrance of Jesus into flesh. The angel told Mary:

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee... therefore that Holy (One) which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (1:35).

In the KJV, the word "thing" is supplied. The same word - ἅγιον - is used to characterize the One to be born, as well as the One who impregnated Mary. Paul declares that Christ "emptied Himself" (Phil. 2:7 RV) to take "the form of a servant." While the "how" remains mysterious to both men and angels, who Jesus really was, was not questioned by even the devils. One cried out - "We know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God" (Luke 4:34).

Two other associations remain to be considered. Peter states that OT prophecies came by "holy men of God" who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II, 1:21). Gabriel told Daniel that none held with him "in the scripture of truth" but "Michael your prince" (10:21). According to Peter, it was "the Spirit of Christ" who was declaring the prophecies (I, 1:11) A

simple algebraic formula can be applied. If $a = b$, and $b = c$, then $a = c$ also.

Paul informs us that God "created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9). The record in Genesis states, "And the Spirit of God moved (Heb. – "brooded") upon the face of the waters" (1:2). Thus in the Old Testament, there was a Heavenly Duo: "the counsel of peace shall be between the Two of Them" (Zech. 6:13 Heb.). In the New Testament it is "the Heavenly Trio," One on the Throne, Two (Παρακλητοι) Comforters in the midst of the Throne, one of whom was sent into all the earth.

When "there shall be no more curse," there shall be but one Throne – "the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it" (Rev. 22:3; see also I Cor. 15:24-28; Col. 3:10-11). The final picture in Revelation associates the Spirit with the "bride" (22:17). We do well to contemplate the concept – "Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him" (DA, p. 388).

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A Critique:

THE TRINITY

In 2002, the Review and Herald Publishing Association released a book co-authored by three teachers (a Trio or a Trinity?) at Andrews University on the doctrine of the Trinity. The major portion of the book is a discussion of the theological aspects of the doctrine, with two smaller sections discussing the history of the teachings on the doctrine; one from the second to the sixteenth century, and the second on the teaching in Seventh-day Adventist church history. It could have been published as one book by Dr. Woodrow Whidden, with two appendixes. In this critique, we will focus first on the doctrine itself as set forth by Whidden.

Any presentation of this doctrine requires appeals to both the Greek and Hebrew. Setting as the target audience not only college students but also members of the local church, Dr. Whidden sought to simplify the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words where required. He

did a remarkable job in seeking to meet this objective. In some sections, his presentation at times became rather "folksy," yet remaining scholarly.

One of the core issues in today's controversy over the Godhead within the Adventist community is in regard to the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this point Dr. Whidden came down hard giving incontrovertible evidence that Jesus Christ was not only pre-existent, but was also ever-existent, as well as self-existent, the I AM that I AM (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58). The current antitrinitarian teachings of the Stump-Beachy-Clayton Trio present Jesus as a demigod thus denigrating the Lord Jesus Christ.

However in seeking to establish the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament, Whidden was very weak. Actually it cannot be done. Zechariah clearly states, "the counsel of peace shall be between the Two of Them" (6:13, Heb). The prologue to the Gospel of John which reaches back into eternity presents Two – the Logos and the Theos. This limits the "Us" of Genesis 1 to Two, not Three as Whidden has done (p. 34). In fact, he contradicts himself. In the next paragraph after having declared the "Us" as Three, he indicates that the "image" of the "Us" is reflected in the "plurality of two individuals" in the creation of "humanity in 'Our' image" (p. 35; emphasis mine).

No true doctrine of the Godhead can be set forth without the inclusion of the concepts involved in the Incarnation. While "the painful process" (Ms. 29, 1899), by which the Word became flesh remains a mystery to both angels and men, the facts of the accomplishment are clearly stated. We noted them in the above article. We shall reiterate them again now. Luke quoted Gabriel's revelation to Mary which declared:

The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (1:35).

Place with this Paul's statement in his Philippian letter concerning Christ Jesus,

Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant (2:6-7 ARV).

In the Greek text, the clause, "emptied Himself" is stated in the emphatic form – "Himself He emptied." Put now the key concepts of these verses together:

1. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee."
2. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee."
3. Christ – "Himself He emptied."

Keep in mind that these concepts are from the pens of men who walked together over many miles of the roads of the Roman Empire, and sailed together over the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. There can be no question that in those travels they discussed at length the birth of Jesus. In Luke's researched gospel, what Gabriel said to Mary, we can assume he heard from Mary's own lips. In his judgment, it was not contradictory to what he and Paul had discussed together. It puts the Old and New Testaments together and must be considered in the formulation of a definitive position on the Godhead.

[Careful study of Luke's Gospel also reveals parables not given in the other Gospels which underwrite Paul's teaching on justification by faith and the position of "works" in the Christian experience. For example, Luke 17:7-10; 18:9-14. Paul and Luke were not only companions on the highways of the Roman Empire, they were companions in truth]

We have been given specific instruction as to how we should study the Scriptures so as to arrive at truth. Observe closely the questions that are asked:

How shall we study the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions, or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying. Men entertain errors, when the truth is clearly marked out, and if they would but bring their doctrines to the word of God, and not read the word of God in the light of their doctrines, to prove their ideas right, they would not walk in darkness and blindness, or cherish error. Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions, and they mislead themselves and deceive others by their

misinterpretations of God's word. (R&H, July 26, 1892; emphasis supplied).

While a careful reading of the introductory pages of this book indicates that the co-authors want to believe that they followed this counsel in the writing of the book, it is clear that they did put down "the stake" of contemporary Adventist thinking on the doctrine of the Trinity, and then proceeded to seek to prove the same. Dr. Whidden asked:

Is there sufficient biblical evidence in support of the Trinitarian claims of the vast majority of Christian tradition and contemporary Seventh-day Adventism at least to merit serious consideration of these claims? (p. 21)

Then he invited the reader – "To carefully follow the lines of biblical evidence brought forward in the following pages and then ask yourselves the question: Is the evidence sufficient that we should honestly consider the Trinitarian claims of the majority of Christians in general and contemporary Adventism in particular?" (pp. 21-22). Observe closely his emphasis on "contemporary" Seventh-day Adventism. He well knows that the statement of belief which defines current Adventist thinking regarding the Trinity is of recent origin.

STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

The first statement of beliefs was formulated in 1872. Dr. Moon stated in his section on Adventist historical backgrounds that it was written by Uriah Smith (p. 203). In a special publication by the Pacific Press, *The Living Witness*, the editor indicated that James White, while not the only author, had a large part in the formulation of the 1872 Statement (p. 1). This Statement, Elder White placed in the first edition of the *Signs of the Times*, June 4, 1874.

In regard to the doctrine of God, it read:

There is one God, a personal, spiritual Being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139:7.

There is one Lord Jesus Christ, and Son of the Eternal Father, the One by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist.

This Statement does not detail relationships between the Beings of the Godhead, and if we did not know the personal beliefs of some of the leading Adventists of the time, we would have to say that the Statement taught a "Heavenly Trio." The Statement in this form was maintained until in 1931 a new statement was published in the *Year Book*. The new statement in regard to God read:

That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption.

A close analysis of this Statement, which was officially ratified by the 1946 General Conference session, indicates wording from the 1872 Statement describing God; states a relationship between God and the Lord Jesus Christ; and declares the Holy Spirit to be both a Person of the Godhead and a power. This Godhead was declared to be a Trinity, "one God in three persons."

In 1980, a new Statement of Beliefs was officially adopted with a greatly expanded statement on the Godhead (four paragraphs) and can be found in the current *Church Manual*. It is prefaced by a formula - "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons." Is this formula the result of a clearer understanding of the Bible during the decades from 1872 to 1980? Is it a justifiable conclusion because, that after having purged the creeds of early Christendom from the influence of Greek philosophy, it was found to be Biblical? (Dr. Moon, p. 202). Or had another factor entered the picture?

In 1965 informal talks began between representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a result of contacts made at the second session of

Vatican II. This was followed by formalized meetings with the "blessing," authorization and funding by the employing bodies of the Adventist participants. (*So Much in Common*, p. 98).

In the January 1967 issue of the *Ecumenical Review*, official organ of the WCC, there appeared an article on "The Seventh-day Adventist Church" with the proposal that "'a proper place for [SDA] witness and engagement' is 'precisely within' the WCC 'rather than apart from it.'" (*R&H*, March 30, 1967, p. 12) But there are conditions for membership in the WCC. Its Constitution reads:

Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis upon which the Council is founded... (*So Much in Common*, p. 40)

That "Basis" reads:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*ibid.*)

This "Basis" was written into the 1980 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs. The statement on the Trinity is prefaced with the Formula, and each of the three following paragraphs begin with the word, "God" thus amplifying the formula. But not only is the definitive statement on God amplified, but a new statement never appearing previously in any Statement of Beliefs is added defining the "universal church." It reads:

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. (#11)

Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church now a member of the WCC? The answer is: No. It is, however, an Associate Member, having the privilege to speak at the General Assemblies, but without voting rights. In a letter dated, 15 July 1991, from the WCC to this Editor it was stated - "The churches which send a delegated representative to the assembly are associate member churches of the WCC." This was written in regard to the Seventh Assembly of the

WCC held at Canberra, Australia. The WCC had issued a "Who's Who" of those in attendance at the Assembly, listing Dr. Bert Beach from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as a "Delegated Representative." Further, the Church is represented on the Faith and Order Commission by a Seventh-day Adventist theologian chosen by the Central Committee of the WCC who had received prior approval by the General Conference Committee. (See WWN, Commentary, Vol. V, #2 on the "Documents" page of the adventistlaymen.com Website)

The question is simply this: Was formal fellowship with the WCC since 1967, the real reason for the 1980 Doctrinal changes in regard to the Godhead rather than an evidence of a deeper Biblical insight?

ROMAN TEACHING

The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Edition acclaims the doctrine of the Trinity in these words:

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith." The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin." [Par. 234]

In a *Handbook for Today's Catholic* is to be found the following:

The Catholic Church teaches that the fathomless mystery we call God has revealed himself to humankind as a Trinity of Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (p. 11).

Then the author of this Redemptorist Pastoral Publication, having the Imprimi Potest of the Order, and the Imprimatur of the Vice Chancellor of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, wrote that "the mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic Faith. Upon it is based all the other teachings of the (Roman) Church." (*ibid.*)

We now must confront two questions: 1) What is the difference between what is stated in the new Roman Catholic Catechism, and the 1980 Statements of Beliefs in regard to the Trinity? And 2), If all the Roman doctrines are based on this central doctrine to which the Adventist Church now subscribes, where does that place the Seventh-day Adventist church? Muted in regard to Rome?

THE CREEDAL STATEMENT

The English translation of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, used by both Anglicans and other Protestant liturgies, reads:

I believe in one God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried, and the third day he arose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe (in) one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. (*The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol II, pp. 58-59)

This is the Creed from which the formula – "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," – is derived. The phrase – "a unity of three eternal persons" – was added to the Adventist Church's Statement. This added position is set forth and defended in the book, *The Trinity*. The problem with the Andrews "Trio" is their failure to come face to face with the duality of the Godhead as set forth in the Old Testament (Zech. 6:13; Isa. 44:6); and to recognize the

effect that the Incarnation had on the Godhead, as well as the final picture of God revealed in the book of Revelation (22:3, 17).

The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed also presents some problems for the neo-antitrinitarians in the community of Adventism. They hold that the high water mark in the pioneer Adventist understanding of the Godhead was stated by E. J. Waggoner. He had written of Christ, "He is begotten, not created. ... There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father, but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning" (*Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 21-22). This is a direct echo of the Nicene Creed - The "Lord Jesus Christ, ... begotten before all worlds, ... begotten, not made." In the paragraph following the position of Waggoner quoted above, one would think that he was borrowing the very language of the Creed. Compare:

The Creed: "The only begotten Son of God ... very God of very God, begotten not made, being of the same substance with the Father; ..."

Waggoner: "And since He is the only-begotten Son of God, He is the very substance and nature of God" (p. 22).

While these neo-antitrinitarians reject the position of the Creed in regard to the Holy Spirit, they emphatically embrace the first paragraph of the Creed. However, like the Andrews University "trio" they have not confronted the Old Testament declarations about God, nor the impact which the Incarnation had on the Godhead.

A Change at the WCC

In August of this past year, the central committee of the WCC elected a new general secretary, Dr. Samuel Kobia, who will replace Dr. Konrad Raiser this month. He was born in Kenya, and is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church. In his acceptance speech, he reiterated "that the Council's primary purpose as a fellowship of churches is 'to call one another

to visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, and to advance that unity so that the world may believe.'"

The WCC has charged its Faith and Order Commission which "provides theological support for the efforts the churches are making toward unity. . . to keep always before them their accepted obligation to work towards manifesting more visibly God's gift of Church unity." (Faith & Order Paper #111, p. vii). The By-Laws of the Commission reflect this, the very stated goal to which Dr. Kobia directed the attention of the Central Committee in his acceptance speech. (*ibid.*, p. viii). It is on this Commission that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a representative elected by the Central Committee of the WCC. Think this through carefully: Being an "Associate Member" of the WCC, with a representative on the Commission of the Council charged with "the goal of visible unity (of all churches) in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship." What decision is thus demanded of the individual Adventist?

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