

Join us for Christmas this year as we unwrap...

BEAVERTON FOURSQUARE | DEC 2007



## THE HIDDEN GIFT

### inside...

What happens when a couple is called to serve by adopting ten children, in addition to their own? God shows up, and they learn what it means to really trust Him. (page 4)

A young man's heart is captured twice, and an unexpected love grows... (page 6)

Does having no legs equal no hope? Not for one man, whose confidence in God's purposes fuels his joyful humility. (page 8)



THE  
HIDDEN  
GIFT

You're invited to discover...

## The Hidden Gift of Christmas

Please plan to join us for our annual Christmas Candlelight Services on Sunday, December 23rd at 6:30 P.M., or Monday, December 24th at 2:00, 4:00, or 6:00 P.M.

Children's Ministries will be available for newborns through kindergarten on Sunday evening, and on Monday at 2:00 and 4:00, with care available only for newborns through two-year-olds at the 6:00 service on Monday, the 24th.

Please plan also to join us for a special Family Christmas Celebration on Wednesday, December 12th. There will be traditional carols and a special presentation by our children. Bring a plate of your favorite cookies or brownies to share afterwards.



Beaverton Foursquare



Dear Beaverton Family and Friends,

Don't you love that God is very open about who He is? The Scriptures tell us that creation continually reveals Him. And when He wanted to communicate His love even more clearly, He came to us as a baby in a manger—giving us the gift of Himself!

Despite this, He still remains hidden from many. It's not that they haven't heard the words. It's just that their hearts haven't yet responded to God's love. For us at Beaverton Foursquare, this poses a key question: How do we better communicate God's love to those who are weary of a broken world?

Jesus once asked if someone who has a light will hide it under a basket. His question encourages us to be both intentional and creative in our testimony of God's Son. When we do that, we get to help others discover the "hidden gift" of God's love. Imagine that if every time one of us shared the Gospel we offered it with the same sense of excitement and joy as a typical Christmas present. That is the heart behind this year's theme: *The Hidden Gift*.

In this magazine, and all during our Christmas celebration, you will hear, and be encouraged by, the stories of God's hidden gifts among us. For example, there's a story of God's love extended by one family to ten adopted children. Another where the Gospel finally grips a young man's heart bringing him to faith. And finally, a story where the mystery of God's good will is revealed in the midst of very difficult circumstances.

You will also have the chance to be a "hidden gift"—to be used by God in unexpected ways—through ministry outreach programs like our *Festival of Trees* (please see the story on page 10).

It is our prayer that God will surprise you this Christmas. That *The Hidden Gift* will become more than a catchy theme for this year's celebration—that it will lead to rich, Spirit-led ministry, where many come to Jesus. Please pray along with our family that Christ will captivate us all in that pursuit.

In His Grip,  
The Remingtons



# the servant



The Bible records an argument among Jesus' disciples. They are fighting over who will be the greatest in His Kingdom. Jesus intervenes, and turns their idea of greatness upside down, teaching them that the greatest in His Kingdom will be the servant of everyone else. Any demonstration of this selfless value remains one of the most compelling ways to communicate the Gospel. We're struck by it when we see it, and blessed by it when we receive it.

This upside down quality of the Kingdom is nowhere more evident than in the Walker home. And anyone who has been a part of the Beaverton Foursquare church family for even a short time has probably seen Chris Walker (pictured above) around the church. He's always willing to help, and always looking for opportunities to serve. Moreover, anyone who knows his family isn't surprised at his desire to serve others.

Chris is one of thirteen Walker children (listed below), three of whom were born to Gary and Elizabeth; the other ten were all adopted. The Walkers started off like most other young couples. They married, had a couple kids and thought it might be good to have a few more. The difference was in their, and God's, understanding of "a few."



*Gary and Elizabeth Walker during their engagement*

Their first adopted daughter, Glenna, came with her own idea of what a family should be like. Gary recalls, "We weren't prepared, and she was determined to make her opinions known. God told us that we needed to change how we saw our family." Gary asked, "What about her?" The Lord said to leave Glenna to Him. The couple initially thought that they'd never adopt again, but a year later, they did. The first of nine more.

They were looking for a boy, to round out the two girls and one boy they already had. The adoption agency called to say they had the perfect match for the growing Walker family: twin girls—the children of a very young teen mother.

After praying about it, the young couple decided to adopt the girls. They said, "Okay Lord, this is your family." In fact, they went even further, deciding that however many children the Lord gave them, they would never adopt a child that anyone else had their heart set on.

When their family was still relatively small, they moved to a five acre farm outside of Ashland, and settled in to raise their clan. By the time their family had grown to seven children, Gary recalls thinking, "We've got our hands full. Seven's plenty. We're done!"

Within a week, God had impressed upon Elizabeth that there was another boy out there who needed them. As it turned out, his name was Joseph, and he'd been found locked in a closet. The young boy had profound medical and developmental problems, including polycystic bilateral kidney disease. The Walkers recalled, "We panicked and told the Lord, 'No!'" They relented when the Lord's Spirit assured them that He would heal Joseph. Though they were prudent in planning for the boy's medical needs, Joey never needed the extensive medications, dialysis, or the kidney transplant doctors said was inevitable.

For this family, the miraculous was almost commonplace. Gary recounts that they were young believers when they began the adoptions. "We thought it was pretty normal for God to do miracles." For the Walkers, it was just all part of trusting God and encouraging others to do the same.

Gary

Aaron

Jennifer

Glenna

Andrea

Michelle

Brian

Tracy





# all



*Chris Walker, adopted son of Gary and Elizabeth, is a living example of Christ's Kingdom values found in Mark, chapter 9.*

“Not everyone is called to do what we’ve done, but everyone can experience the blessings of trusting God, even when you think it isn’t possible to trust him any more.” This lesson doesn’t just come from the Walkers’ lips, it defines their home. That trust was tested during one of their final adoptions, which was also one of their most challenging.

As in a number of others, this one began with Elizabeth walking to their hilltop red barn to speak with Gary about another child God had laid on her heart. After discussing Christopher’s adoption, and the profound medical challenges young Chris faced, Gary agreed to pray about it.

He recalls the Lord asking him to trust. In honest frustration, Gary replied, “Lord, look down there at that home. Look at all of those children you gave us. Look at the way we live. We DO trust You!” As clearly as if He had spoken audibly, Gary heard God’s Spirit reassure his heart, “Then trust Me more.”

That he did, without hesitation. When Elizabeth and Gary called the adoption agency to inquire if Christopher was still available, the response was, “You’re kidding, right?” That morning Chris’ case worker had been turned down by every reputable caregiver, and had no where to place the toddler. In fact, the agency was so thrilled with the Walkers’ decision, they offered them first class accommodations, transportation, and show tickets. They declined, responding, “No thank you. We’re just coming to get our son.”

That son wasn’t supposed to live very long. But miraculously, he did, and now we have the privilege, as a church family, of his presence and ministry—his quiet, kind, and encouraging spirit. The trust that his parents have in God’s goodness and purposes now resides in good

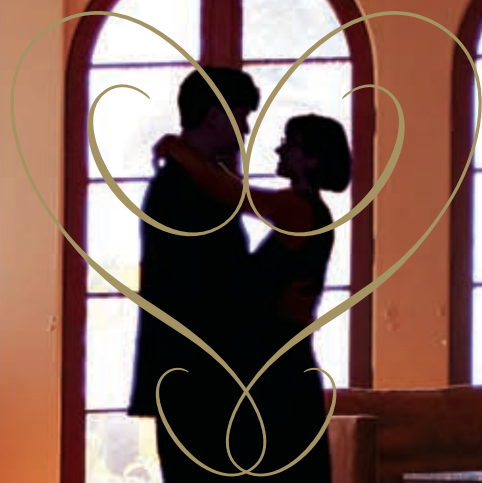
measure with their son Chris. His is a living faith that believes all things, and hopes all things. As many who have served with him will attest, you will never find hands more willing than those belonging to Chris.

So, what’s the “Hidden Gift” in all of this? Perhaps Chris, once a throw-away baby and now such a vibrant part of our church family, says it best in an excerpt from his annual Christmas letter:

“Each and everyone of us have special gifts. We have all been given those “hidden talents” that the Lord has blessed us with each and every single day. And we need to use them to the very best of our abilities so that we can please the Lord. And in that way we will see how blessed we really are when we receive the special blessings that the Lord has for us. As much as we love to give gifts to our family and friends—how much more does the Lord love to give gifts to His children? Are you one of His children? Have you personally accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? Let me urge you that if this is not the case for you, take some time right now and just talk to the Lord. Be honest with Him because He loves you and He cares so very much for you and He will help you as long as you turn yourself over to Him each and every day of your life. And then day by day as you read His Word, pray, and grow in Him, He will help you to come to know the “hidden gifts” that He has placed inside of you each and every day.”

Love God, and trust Him—to heal and redeem people that most would consider a burden? To serve out of simple devotion to God? Is it really all that simple? Sure. Ask Chris, he’ll tell you.





*shall we dance?*



**On the wall of their home** sits a portrait of a young married couple, David and Jennilyn Lim. It shows just their feet—his in polished dress shoes, and hers in a classy pair of modest pumps. It's a fitting metaphor for their life together: a dance they share with one another and the Lord Jesus.

The Lims met the way young couples sometimes do: at a dance, but it wasn't just any dance. The couple belongs to a club that preserves and celebrates West Coast Swing. As they practiced and danced together their friendship grew. Anyone who watched them dance together could see they shared a special partnership.

Their dance floor chemistry soon led David to ask Jennilyn if there was the possibility for a deeper relationship. Gently but firmly, she shut him down. She was a Christian and he wasn't. Not interested in "missionary dating", Jennilyn was polite, but resolved that they should simply remain friends.

Something about this girl, and her principled stance, got David wondering about an authentic Christianity—something that he'd rarely seen before. In response, David began an investigation of the faith. He read *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel, and attended the very first Alpha course at Beaverton Foursquare.

David had started a new job about this time. As a result, he made a daily commute on the MAX. Reluctant to waste time, he used the ride to read Strobel's book. David recalls, "I wasn't overly impressed with the arguments." But there was something else going on with David's engagement of this author's retelling of classic apologetic arguments. David was beginning to meet a captivating person named Jesus.

His reading of the *The Case for Christ* paralleled an invitation by some of his friends, Jennilyn among them, to join them for the Alpha course. At first, David declined. In college, he'd seen "Christian" guys embrace various meetings and even a confession of faith to get a girl. He was determined not to embrace that hypocrisy. But the Holy Spirit was also working in his heart and David eventually agreed to attend the course.

Simply put, Alpha is dinner, a movie, and a discussion. After sharing a meal, the attendees watched a video in which Nicky Gumbel, the Alpha course's winsome teacher, presents various aspects of the Gospel and life in the church. After the video, the participants discuss it in small groups, before ending the evening in prayer.

Challenged by what he was learning, David decided that the claims of Christianity were, in fact, true. He received the Lord a few weeks into the course. "I remember I was at the MAX station, and I was thinking about Strobel's invitation to receive Christ at the end of his book.

I prayed to ask Jesus into my heart, and then looked around to see if anything was going to happen."

Meanwhile, Jennilyn could sense something real was indeed happening and prayed, "Lord, I don't know what You're doing, but keep on doing it!" She stayed on pins and needles for about a week longer, as David kept his decision to himself. He wasn't shy, but was praying that he hadn't made this decision just to impress Jennilyn. Like his namesake did in Psalm 139, David asked God to search his heart. When she finally asked him directly, he was pleased to tell her that he had in fact become a Christian.

The young man who first thought he was pursuing a girl, was invited instead into a relationship with Christ. Responding to the Lord's invitation, he laid aside any thought of "getting the girl" and was captivated by his Savior's love. In the Scriptures, God asks us a question: having given us His Son, will He not also give us all things as well? It's a reflection of God's good desire to restore all things lost in the Fall, and to bless His children, not only because they obey, but also because He simply loves them. God was now pleased to bless David's courtship of Jennilyn.

She was also now free to consider David's overtures, attracted by the character of the man who had just undertaken such a serious consideration of Christ's claims. He wasn't a bad dancer, either. Their friendship blossomed into love, and David finally popped the question, and she said, "Yes!"

They began their courtship with the maturity and honor that marked their friendship. Jennilyn's health, which was fragile to begin with, soon took a turn for the worse and she was faced with a life severely limited in capability and length. David didn't shy from the prognosis, and shared the burden of nursing her along with his future in-laws. The couple married, despite the challenges, and God mercifully healed Jennilyn. Told by doctors that her condition precluded children, the couple chose to believe instead a friend's assurance that God would give them a child.

God has since blessed their union with that beautiful baby—a girl named Kadence (pictured at the left). She is among the many "hidden gifts" in this story. A story that began when a young man was invited into a very different dance than he expected by his Savior.

Some day, Kadence will hear all about that story: how her daddy was looking for a dance partner but found Jesus instead. She'll hear how the Lord, having captured David's heart, was pleased to see him marry the very one who had caught his eye in the first place. And her mommy will tell of a man who loved her well because he first loved Christ.



# disabled by God

*Vail Horton, Founder, Chairman,  
and CEO of Keen Mobility  
and Founder and Chairman  
of the Incight Foundation*



## G.O.K. was the diagnosis:

“God only knows.” It marks the boundary where even the best doctors’ expertise fails. But in the years since that note appeared in Vail Horton’s medical records, God has made the mystery of His ways ever more apparent.

When you meet Vail now, you’re captured by the 30-year-old’s smile. It welcomes you: “It’s okay. I don’t have legs. I’m not like you, and it’s really okay.” Vail’s grandfather Keen, the namesake of his company Keen Mobility, was captivated by that same smile, and by the spirit of the boy who wore it. Keen’s daughter and her husband adopted Vail as an infant. The boy’s biological parents, following conventional medical wisdom, thought he would be better off reared in quiet obscurity and gave him up.

But God had other plans for Vail. And so did Keen, who was tired of hearing “no” when it came to his grandson. He continued to look for ways to give Vail a life with legs. Turned down by major medical institutions on the West Coast, Keen headed east. The Rusk Institute helped in his quest: a pair of artificial legs for Vail. Shortly after getting his legs, the boy and his granddad made a home movie, sending it to UCLA and Stanford, so that they would never again turn away kids like Vail. Four years later, Keen tragically lost his life in a plane crash.

Despite the loss, Vail persevered. He credits his mother, among others, for encouraging the natural industry and leadership God gave him. One morning, ten-year-old Vail asked her if she would hand him a box of cereal from the cupboard. She said “No,” and he had to figure out a way to get it himself. Fashioning a “ladder” out of drawers, Vail made his way up to the counter and retrieved his prize. “Best bowl of cereal I ever had,” he remembers. There were others too, like his middle school janitor, Mr. Jackson, who was always ready to repair a broken crutch. Life wasn’t always easy, but it was good.

Still, something was missing. Vail’s adoptive family, life-long Methodists, had given him

a foundation for faith, but it wasn’t until junior high school that he met Jesus. He attended a friend’s church camp, and his buddy’s youth pastor took him under his wing. Vail recalls, “I thought I was too cool for all of them.” But after suffering a badly infected cut, he saw their love and care for him. Later, he received the Lord in his room by himself, and it changed his life.

At 19, Vail received news that would change his life, again. Doctors told him that years of using crutches had worn his shoulder joints down, and he would have to resign himself to a wheel chair. Vail remembers thinking that maybe his shoulders weren’t the only problem: “They hadn’t updated crutches since the pirate days!”

The budding entrepreneur saw, not just an opportunity, but a calling, and founded his company. When asked about Keen Mobility,

he offers, “We want to revolutionize health care, pure and simple. We think innovation in ambulatory care is the key to better health care, not insurance. *Because* insurance pays for everything, there’s no motivation for innovation.” While building Keen Mobility into one of Portland’s top-rated companies, he navigates the challenges with characteristic optimism, trading off between his crutches and a skateboard to get around.



*Vail and Beth Horton—along with their children, Grace, Logan, Kelvin, and Kate—sit for a family portrait outside of their Portland home.*

Building a business can be all-consuming, but Vail’s vision encompasses more. His Incight Foundation, established in 2003, connects students with disabilities to educational opportunities, and is designed to address a serious problem: only 16% of disabled students go to college. For Vail, that’s an unacceptable statistic, and he attacks the problem with both resources and his characteristic enthusiasm.

The “hidden gift” in all of this? Vail says it best. “God made me this way, because He knew I had a big ego. Left to myself, I’d want to be a stock broker, a school principal, or maybe in the ministry, but THIS is what I GET to do!” His enthusiasm makes it obvious that Vail’s disability doesn’t define him. His relationship with Christ does. And that’s a gift that keeps on giving.



The apartment was cold. She had just returned from purchasing the few groceries her family could afford and had turned off the heat while she was gone. Placing the bags on the kitchen counter, she inched the thermostat up a little. Heat was expensive.

Looking around the small apartment, she sighed. Their belongings were still only half unpacked. The apartment felt empty and slate-cold. Like they all did on the inside. White walls, beige carpet, and wood doors. Quite the change from the vibrant, warm home they had been forced to leave. The timing could not have been worse. It was Christmas.

She went into the living room and dug through one of the boxes that had been shoved in the corner. Shuffling through it she came upon a snow globe with a group of singers caroling under an old street lamp. She shook it and watched as the snow drifted peacefully over the winter scene. Holding back the tears she returned to the kitchen and placed the globe on the counter. It sat alone looking out of place in the barren apartment. It needed garland surrounding the base, and lights to reflect in its circular globe. It sat there staring back at her. She sighed again. If only she had something for the kids. This time, she let the tears fall.

She didn't know that George Stanton sat in a Beaverton Foursquare pew reading the weekly bulletin. God had blessed him. It had been a good year for George. His company had been steadily growing all year and had acquired a new client as recent as the week prior. He had also been able to hire additional staff, giving him more time to spend with his family. He looked down the pew at his two kids. They were growing so fast, and he hoped that he had been a good example for them. He knew his wife was sanding off any rough edges he may have inadvertently passed along. He smiled at this last thought—the Lord knew he wasn't perfect.

Flipping through the bulletin, a headline caught his eye. 'Festival of Trees.' The article detailed the church's goal to give a Christmas tree and presents to families who could not afford anything for the holiday. George nudged his wife and pointed to the article. Her eyebrows rose in interest and she whispered, "Let's do it!" George smiled at her excitement, and felt the same way. A chance to give back, he thought, and what better time than Christmas? Later that Sunday, the Stantons visited the Festival in the church's gym and "adopted" a family. In the next two weeks they shopped for and prepared gifts, decorations and all the trimmings for a traditional Christmas.

On the delivery day, the Beaverton Foursquare lobby was bustling with activity. Presents were being wrapped and ribbons tied. There was joy and excitement throughout the entire area. Families chatted and laughed together, all sharing in eager anticipation of delivering their gifts and spending time with the families they had been praying for since the event began.

George's family was among those busying themselves with preparations for their Christmas

delivery. His youngest had been so excited to pick out gifts for the family they were visiting that she had made it her personal duty to insist that only the best quality toys were purchased—no exceptions. His oldest child had seen to it personally that each of the gifts were wrapped with care and precision. The ribbons she had fashioned had so many loops and curls, George almost forgot there was a present underneath it all. He smiled to himself as he loaded their van with the tree and presents—it was time for the delivery—almost.

Taking the hand of his wife and daughter, the Stanton family circled together to pray. Each member took a turn asking for the Lord's blessing on the evening and saying what was on their heart. It was a moment that George would never forget. He thought it priceless.

They arrived at the apartment building in about five minutes. A young woman and her husband greeted them excitedly at the door. Two small children poked their heads around their parents' legs—one was shy, but his eyes gave away his glee. The other shouted, "Presents!" Bouncing up and down and racing to the living room, she was definitely not as shy as her sibling.

George's kids entered first, each carrying an armful of presents. His wife entered next, hugging the young couple and presenting the Christmas cookies she and the kids had decorated the night before. Tears began welling up in the young woman's eyes, quickly giving way to a broad, genuine smile. She hugged George's wife again. George entered last and between him and the young man, the tree was up in no time. The little boy was so overcome with excitement that he forgot to be shy and ran right up to George with a big hug. There was a pure untainted joy that the two families shared in that small living room.

Shortly after the tree had been adorned with its last bulb, the young lady left the room and returned with a small snow globe. She set it on the table next to the tree, wrapping some leftover garland around its base. She sat there watching it as the light of the tree reflected off its glass surface. Her husband came over and gave the globe a shake. The snow gently swirled inside the tiny winter world—its joyful singers no longer the lone Christmas cheer in the apartment.

The couples' eyes met and both had to wipe away the tears.

*Would you like to be involved in this year's Festival of Trees? Just e-mail Becky Davis at [bdavis@beavertonfoursquare.org](mailto:bdavis@beavertonfoursquare.org), or stop by the church and ask about how to participate.*



#### **Crackers**

**Nothing cheesy about this tradition. If you celebrate Christmas across the pond, you'll undoubtedly run into Christmas crackers. But don't eat 'em. They're brightly colored paper tubes, twisted at both ends. Snap 'em in half and they sound like firecrackers. Inside you'll often find a small gift or treat. How festive!**

#### **Twelfth Night**

**Traditionally, Twelfth Night (January 5th) is when all Christmas decorations should be removed to avoid bad luck. No worries if you miss the night. If decorations aren't removed on Twelfth Night, they should stay up all year and that's just the way we like it.**

#### **Christmas Dinner?**

**Back in the days before the Food Network, somebody decided a boar's head would make a wonderful Christmas dinner. And mince meat pies? Never mind the modern version that sounds suspiciously like fruitcake, the traditional version actually had shredded meat added to the dried fruit. No wonder the Christians outlawed Christmas.**

#### **Christians Outlawed Christmas?**

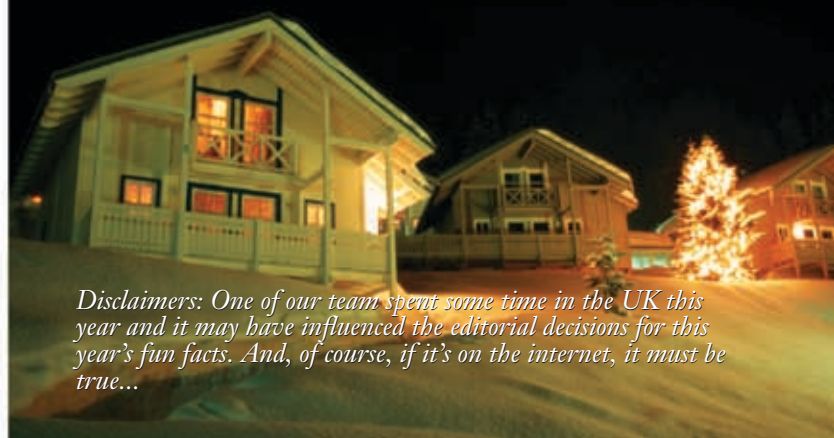
**In the days of boar's head and mince meat, it wasn't the Grinch who canceled Christmas. It was the church. In the mid-17th century, in an effort to rid England of decadent celebrations, Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans actually outlawed Christmas. Pilgrims settling in Boston continued the prohibition for more than twenty years. And Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday in America until 1870.**

#### **How Many Wise Men?**

**Did you know the Bible doesn't really say how many wise men visited Jesus? It is sometimes assumed there were three, perhaps because of the three gifts mentioned in Matthew 2:11. And there's no mention of camels either. For sure they didn't travel on the Orient Express, but maybe they rode on donkeys or elephants. Maybe they walked, which is why Jesus was no longer a baby when they arrived.**

#### **How much chocolate's on your tree?**

**Over in England, they often decorate their Christmas trees with chocolate coins or other festive shapes of chocolate. We don't know ('cause the internet didn't say) how this tradition started and we don't care. Just bring on the chocolate.**



*Disclaimers: One of our team spent some time in the UK this year and it may have influenced the editorial decisions for this year's fun facts. And, of course, if it's on the internet, it must be true...*



THE  
HIDDEN  
GIFT

Christmas season services include:

Dec. 2nd, 9th, and 16th: morning services at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:15 and our Sunday@6 evening service, with a fellowship focus for our 20s and 30s

Dec. 12th: Family Christmas Celebration: A night full of carols, cookies, and family fun!

Dec. 16th: "Festival of Trees" Christmas deliveries

Dec. 23rd: Morning services with special guest Rescue at 9:00 and 11:00  
Christmas Candlelight Service at 6:30 P.M.

Dec. 24th: Christmas Candlelight Services at 2:00, 4:00, and 6:00 P.M.

Dec. 25th: There is no service this morning so that you may spend time blessing family and friends.

Please visit our Web site to download a family devotional prepared for you and yours.

  
Beaverton  
Foursquare  
Church

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