



The Chronicle

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction

Philip C. Bennett

Fear in this sense is not to dread or be afraid, but rather - to reverence.

Knowledge: *The facts, feelings or experience known by a person. The state of knowing or the accumulation of facts.*

Wisdom: *is the correct application of knowledge, understanding, experience, common sense and insight.*

Instruction: *The act of giving directions, orders or recommended rules for guidance, use etc.*

Some people feel that they are wise and know everything. A wise man however, is not one who feels he knows everything but someone who understands that he does not know everything.

None of us are truly wise, so none of us know everything. We can all learn from one another. Those who feel that they know it all will not make it. We must take instruction.

It is said that experience is a hard school to learn at but fools refuse to go to no other. The wise person will learn from the experience of others.

Sometimes, someone who has experienced hardship will advise another - especially someone younger not to go in a certain direction. Often, people feel that they have to experience things for themselves. Some lose their lives in so doing, while others end up with regrets and scars that they carry for the rest of their lives.

There are many examples in the Bible showing the consequences for those who refuse to take instruction. Let us go right back to the beginning: *“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”* (Genesis 4:3-7)

God is no respecter of persons. There must have been a reason why God accepted Abel’s offering and rejected Cain’s. I believe that Cain did not have any respect, or reverence for the things of God.

In describing His people, God declared: *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”* (St. Matthew 15:8)

Cain had the opportunity to make amendments so that God would be pleased with him, but he failed to take the correction: *“And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened*

her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” (Genesis 4:8-12)

This was the consequence of not receiving instructions. God placed a mark on him which he carried for the rest of his life. On top of it all, he lost his communion with God: *“And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.”* (Genesis 4:16)

After the children of Israel left Egypt, God gave them specific instructions as to how they were to serve Him and conduct His work. It was so important, that half of the book of Exodus - right through to the book of Deuteronomy is dedicated to giving them instructions, yet many of them failed to take heed. Perhaps they thought that some things were not important: *“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest*

ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled."

(Leviticus 10:1-6)

Although they were Aaron's children, he was forbidden from mourning them. Sometimes, people feel that the way we do things is old fashioned and they want to bring things up to date. Someone - not from our Church said to me a while back that they were a 21st century Christian and did not want anyone calling them "Sister." I join with the writer of the well-known song that states: 'Give me the old time religion; it's good enough for me.'

"Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them." (1 Samuel 2: 22-25)

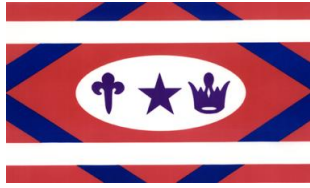
Eli the High Priest raised his two sons as best as he could, but because they failed to take instructions they were both slain in one day. Right now, we may all be in the Church and going on together, but one day there will be a separation of the wheat and tares: *"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."* (Proverbs 29:1)

God has given the ministry for our perfection, but we must take heed. We cannot just do as we like without consequences. We do not want to see anyone leave, especially as we are already few in numbers. However only those who are obedient are going to remain in the Church and make it to the end. **God has not finished His perfection programme yet:** *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* (Ephesians 5:25-27)

All the wrinkles will be ironed out and all the spots will be blotted out. God help us not to be spots or wrinkles in His House.

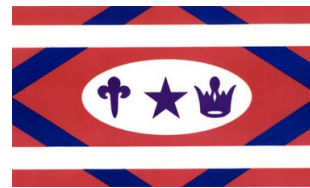


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From the Overseer's Desk

I was privileged to be able to once again attend our National Family Camp in February, after a two year absence. The Camp was well attended and we were blessed with a number of first time attendees. As usual, the workshops, worship, activities and fellowship were a great blessing to all in attendance. I was personally blessed by the testimonies of Brother and Sister Wilson who told us about the miracle that God wrought to enable them to attend.

In March we gathered with mixed emotions to say goodbye to two National workers, Brother Jason and Sister Brenda Prince, who with their children were immigrating to the USA. Our prayers are with this wonderful family, that God will bless and keep them in every way.

Our National Youth Convention was a time of refreshing and rejoicing as God showered down His blessings on His children. The messages were timely and edifying and the National Co-ordinator delivered a wonderful message based on the topic "Walls."

We thank God for Sister Rhiannon and Sister Novlet, who in obedience to our Lord and Saviour took their water baptism. Sister Rhiannon took her covenant to become a member of The Church of God during the National Youth Convention.

Let us continue to pray for them that they will be a great blessing to Christ and the Church. Let us also pray for the upcoming National Men's and Ladies Retreats, as well as our National Convention that they will all be a blessing.

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

Amen."

(1 Timothy 1:17)

Upcoming Events:

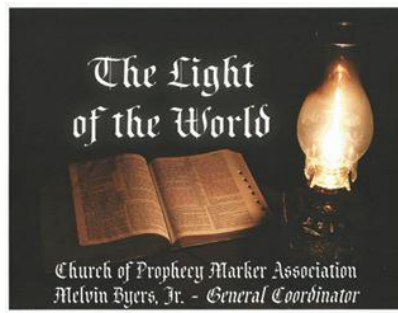
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| National Men's Retreat | - Friday 16 th to Sunday 18 th June 2017 |
| National Convention | - Friday 7 th July to Sunday 9 th July 2017 |
| International Youth Camp | - Friday 18 th to Monday 21 st August 2017 |
| General Assembly | - Tuesday 22 nd to Sunday 27 th August 2017 |



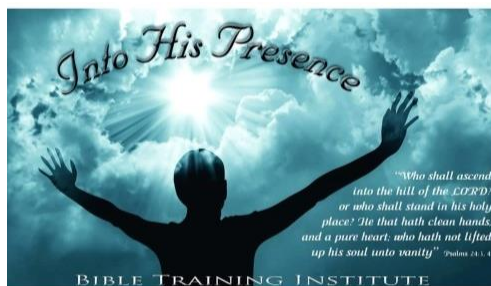
CPMA/BTI BOOST

Stuart Brown - National CPMA/BTI Co-ordinator

The general Church of Prophecy Marker Association theme for the assembly year 2016-2017 is:
'The Light of the World'
 (St. John 8:12)



The general Bible Training Institute theme for the assembly year 2016-2017 is:
'Into His Presence'
 (Psalm 24:3-4)



SEASONING!

Greetings in the mighty name of Jesus from the BTI and CPMA departments. I pray that we are all doing well and moving in the right direction in God's will for a perfected Church. Time is moving swiftly on to the return of Christ and we not only need to be ready, but must **"Occupy till I (Jesus) come"** (St. Luke 19:13).

We have had a blessed National Youth Convention, wonderful services and fellowship, baptisms, and the list can go on. We thank the Lord for all of this and it has reminded me of how important our fellowship relationship is with one another. After all, our relationship with each other will be an indicator to everyone else as to who we are - if we are Christ's or not!

Our actions have a huge impact upon our ministry. Our effectiveness pivots on our strengths, or weaknesses, our diligence or negligence, our good or bad works. With this in mind, I would like to revisit an old article. God bless you as you reflect on yourself while you read this!

As living markers we are to represent truth, the truth of God's Word, the fellowship that we have with Him and the divine nature to which we are partakers of. This is evidenced in the things we say, how we say them, the way we act towards others and the way we react to things. Are the right fruits following us in these areas?

As a food expert myself, I know the profound difference the right seasoning makes when eating food. I am sure we can all identify with the negative effect of eating food which is bland and unseasoned, making it unpleasant to the palate! When hungry, food that has been well seasoned with care, knowledge of what works and wisdom to put it together is not only a pleasure to eat, but to smell and look at! There is also a nice aftertaste, which is pleasant and leaves the person wanting more. (If they're full, then next time!)

The Scripture tells us in Colossians 4:6:

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

This deals with the correct style of our speech and communication! When people interact with us, they must experience that good seasoning and we should have the effect of good food to them. God knows exactly what people need to hear and what is best to say. We must build up a heavy reliance on the leading of the Holy Ghost to direct us when communicating with others.

I am talking about evangelism. Whether talking to family, friends or neighbours, grace must be our evident in our speech. There are those out there - even in the denominational world who just need some grace and truth to steer them in the right direction (Romans 10:14). I am also talking about us as we interact with each other as brethren. We will all benefit greatly if we are well seasoned in our communication with each other. Let us not leave any bitter taste from our styles of communication, actions and reactions with anybody. Let it be that if someone does not like what we have to offer in what we say, it is because they do not like the message and not that we were not seasoned correctly!

God bless you.



VICTORY LEADERS BAND BOOST

Claudine Brown - National Victory Leaders Band Co-ordinator

The general Victory Leaders Band theme for the assembly year 2016-2017 is:

'All as One'
(St. John 17:21)



Victory Leader's Band 2016 - 2017

Greetings all in the precious name of Jesus. Our general VLB theme this year, **"All as One"** has unity at its centre. We see that word and may think, I have heard it all before! It seems that 'unity' is one of those topics that just cannot be put down and it will be preached right up until the return of Christ. Jesus prayed in our key verse (St. John 17:21) **"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."**

Jesus knew that His Kingdom would be divided by denominationalism and that divisions would also arise within His Church - but He prayed for us ahead of time and His assurance that **"there shall be one fold"** (St. John 10:16) lets us know that His prayer will be answered. The answer lies in us all being united with God, united in purpose standing fast in **"one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"** (Philippians 1:27).

There are several references in the Scriptures above to "one". "One" will take a forsaking of ourselves and perfect submission to the will of God until we are all walking in perfect step with Him. I think of Enoch and Elijah – neither of whom saw death because they were in perfect unity with God and eligible for Heaven, pre-rapture! Let us continually work out our salvation with fear and trembling as encouraged by Scripture. I would encourage our youth to seek hungrily to be sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost. Those who have already had these experiences, check that you still have the Holy Ghost and seek hungrily to get Him back if you haven't. Through these experiences, we will have the tools we need to be victorious in walking with God and when we are all doing that, we will automatically be in unity with each other. There is great power in oneness. I pray that we will all catch the vision Jesus had when He prayed for us on that day.

Our local unity is also strengthened when we fellowship together! To that end, here are a few dates for your diary:

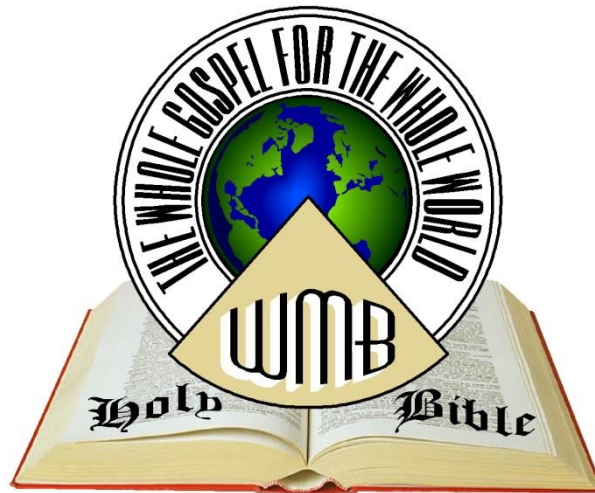
2nd June 2017 – Youth Revival at Long Lane Church, 7.30pm

24th June 2017 – Youth Fun Day (details to follow)

Please also take a look at the international church website (www.thechurchofgod.org) and on the VLB page you will find a link to 'Greater Things'. Greater Things is a monthly video series which addresses relevant and challenging topics facing today's youth. <https://www.thechurchofgod.org/vlb/index.php?pid=90>

Leaders – keep working! Your wages are secure with the master that we will have to answer to one day. VLBs hold tight and work! Tell others about Christ and live an exemplary life. If you need me, I am here for you.

God bless you all.



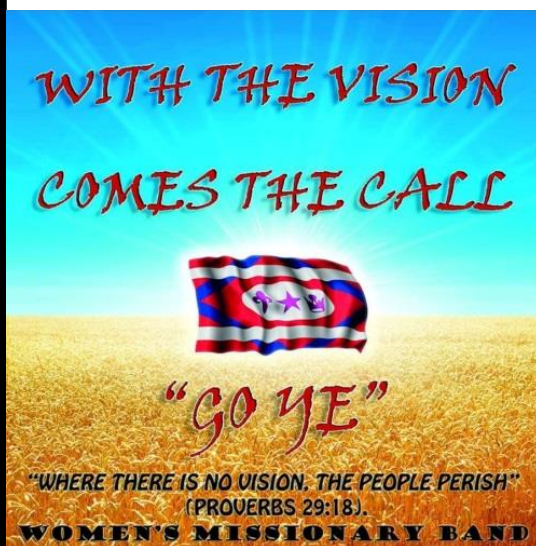
WMB BOOST

Beverley Anderson - National Women's Missionary Band Co-ordinator

The general Women's Missionary Band theme for the assembly year 2016-2017 is:

'With the Vision comes the Call: Go ye'

(Proverbs 29:18)



PRAYER

What is Prayer?

Prayer is an old man, as universal as religion and as instinctive as breathing. It is practiced in some form by all men of all faiths. It springs from the heart with a need that is greater than man's ability to encounter. It is man's acknowledgement of a being higher than himself.

Why Pray?

Because Jesus said, **'Men ought always to pray'**, prayer is imperative. You are commanded to pray.

How to Pray

Jesus said, **'After this manner therefore pray ye'** St. Matthew 6:9-13, is the model prayer given to us by Jesus, after His disciples said unto Him, 'Lord teach us to pray'.

Where to Pray

The most important place to pray is any place where you can be with God. Jesus told the disciples to **'...enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret'** (St. Matthew.6:6).

Hindrances to Prayer

When prayers are not answered, you should examine yourself in the light of God's Word. If you find anything not pleasing to God, confess it, believing God for forgiveness that your prayers may be answered.

NATIONAL MEN'S RETREAT 2016

Our National Men's Retreat was held on 30th September to 2nd October 2016. The theme of was **"A Man after God's own Heart."**

Our first session on Friday commenced with an introduction from the National Men's Retreat Co-ordinator, Brother Justin Clarke. This was followed by a prayer and encouragement from the National Overseer, Brother Philip Bennett.

Brother Jason Prince conducted a workshop on **"Answering the Call of God."** Areas looked at were:

*What is the call of God?
How do we recognise the call of God?
What can hinder our obedience to the call?*

On Saturday, we began with a devotion based on **"Deliverance"** which focused on God delivering the Three Hebrew Children from the fiery furnace, Daniel from the lion's den and Stephen through death.

Brother Stuart Brown did a presentation on the incident between **"David and Bathsheba."** He emphasised that David's downfall was partly due to complacency and referred to 1 Corinthians 10:11-13. David succumbed to the lust of the eyes, but if we do what God has called us to do, He will protect us (Titus 2:11-13).

Brother George Wilson's presentation was on **"David and his Repentance"**. He gave us a definition of sin and repentance and then outlined the early training that David went through as a shepherd and his calling by God. He also mentioned some of the hindrances to repentance such as peer pressure and people feeling that they have gone too far in sin for God to forgive them.

Brother Bennett did a presentation entitled **"A Man after Mine own Heart."** He looked at the differences between king Saul and king David. David would always humble himself and depend on God, while Saul was more self-willed, which resulted in his downfall.

On Sunday morning, we had an excellent devotion by Brother Joshua Anderson. We even had Sunday School with Brother Patrick Clarke teaching the lesson.

Before dismissal, each person was asked to say what they would take away with them.

Brother Justin Clarke did an excellent job in putting the retreat together and moderating throughout.

Brother Philip Bennett
Reporter

National Family Camp 2017

This year's National Family Camp was held on 20th to 23rd February 2017 at Whitemoor Lakes Leisure Centre. Our theme was '*... for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*' (Exodus 3:5). Our days were filled with wonderful worship, presentations and leisure activities.

The first presentation was delivered by Brother Justin Clarke, and this was on the heart. Various heart conditions were highlighted, from a spiritual perspective. We learnt it is necessary to work on our hearts and make them presentable to the Lord. This is so He can use us on His programme.

Sister Beverley Wilson led the devotion. The theme was on God's awesomeness. Sister Beverley also testified of the battle her family faced to attend Camp this year. Brother George Wilson preached a sermon and this was entitled '*The Presence of the Lord*'. Two themes were explored; one was how men tend to take things into their own hands, instead of allowing God to work. Examples of Moses killing the Egyptian and Jacob tricking Esau out of his birth-right were used. The other theme was our need to "put off our shoes," likening that to the self-examination we are required to do before God can use us.

On the second day, we enjoyed canoeing on the lake and archery. It was noted that there were some lessons learnt for those rowing on the lake. If we did not work together, we would never reach our destination! All had a great time and we were blessed even further with a presentation from Sister Claudine Brown entitled '*At the burning bush*' (Parts 1 and 2). We examined and discussed the factors of Moses' experience at the burning bush: 1. The location. 2. Vocation, 3. Fire, into the presence of the Lord. 4. Turning aside to see. 5. Shoes. Moses was in the wilderness for a reason, God led him there so that there were no distractions. God did not want anything to take Moses' focus away from Him. The day ended with a worship service led by Brother Justin Clarke. It was a time of prayer and reflection. What is it that we need to take off to enable us to reach Him?

After a keep fit and games session on the third morning, Sister Claudine continued her presentation from the previous day. The group discussed the points as follows: 1. God reveals his plan to man. 2. The call. 3. Excuses, excuses. 4. Signs. 5. Feeling of inadequacy. This session helped us to reflect on ourselves. Do we have any of the characteristics of Moses on his first encounter with God? Do we have a calling and maybe make excuses as to why we cannot fulfil it? Do we say that is better for the task? Isn't more eloquent? Send him/her. Our evening ended with a Camp fire and Bible knowledge quiz.

The teenagers and children also had their own separate sessions based around our theme. The children were able to present sketches of Moses at the burning bush and Moses and Aaron performing miracles.

I'm confident in saying that all attendees enjoyed their time with the Lord and with each other. The National Family Camp was blessed with 6 new campers and I would encourage all our brethren to make plans to attend Camp next year. Total attendance was 53.

Sister Beverley Wilson - Reporter



National Family Camp 2017

Testimony

Firstly, I'd like to thank Almighty God that my family and I could attend National Family Camp this year. We have loved attending Camp for the past 7 or 8 years. When the date for Camp 2017 was announced at National Ministers' Convention and it did not coincide with London schools half term date, my heart sank.

I work in a primary school and I know attendance is a necessity during term time - it would be near impossible to get leave for the children, and myself. Also, Rebekah who is currently revising for her GCSEs needed to have 100% attendance. Mock exams are usually scheduled after half term. It would literally take a miracle, but I was still determined not to miss Camp. I began to pray and fast. To attend, it required one week to merge into another. I began to recall the story of Joshua when he told the sun and the moon to stand still and God granted his request (Joshua 10:12-14).

As the months rolled on and Camp arrangements were discussed on the Camp WhatsApp chat, I felt an ache in my heart. I'll mention why, hoping that this will encourage others to attend National Family Camp. When I began to attend Church again, it was at Camp that I really got to know the brethren through discussion in workshops as we shared the Scriptures together. All questions were discussed with honesty and love. The brethren I spoke to were not afraid to share a testimony of their struggles, as they strived to become workers for Christ. For me, a backslider attempting to come back home, this was refreshing and I could not imagine not being with my brethren this year. Proverbs 27:17 says '*iron sharpeneth iron...*' So I took action.

On the first day of term in January 2017, I requested special leave in February 2017. I explained the reason for the time off, but it was declined. There was hope – I was told if I was unhappy with the decision, I could put my request in writing to the school governor. I thanked the Head teacher and left his office, letting him know that I would pray about it. That day, it was confirmed that Rebekah would be sitting mock exams at the time Camp was scheduled.

In the following weeks, Sister Cheryl placed a petition on the Camp chat group for the brethren to fast and pray on our behalf, for our attendance at Camp. This boosted the family. I want to tell you that God who sees our hearts desire is able to answer prayer. Praise His holy name! On Wednesday of that week, George rang Rebekah and Lydia's school, explained that we desired to take them out during term time and asked about the process. I was told that I needed to write, explaining what Camp meant to us and its purpose. It could then be discussed in a meeting on the Friday. We did so and prayed over them.

We had no idea what to expect on the Friday afternoon. When we spoke to the Head of House, the school could not do enough to ensure that our children attended Camp. The fact that the leave was granted was not the main concern. A giant slayed! It was all I prayed for, but God was not finished. The children's 100% record would also be protected - as long as they completed the work they provided. I wondered, did she not realise that Rebekah has mock exams that week? The school stated it was fine. Permission had still been granted for Rebekah and she would not miss her mocks either. They allowed her to complete them at Camp. Can you believe it brethren, how God worked it out?! The trust the school has bestowed upon us - it is only God. I sat in that meeting area and witnessed God in action. I was in awe that all the obstacles evaporated, and the bonus blessings that were added. It's so hard to express in words what it's like to watch God work in front of you. We praised God with tears of joy as we drove away. We haven't stopped praising God and this joy cannot be suppressed. It took three weeks for me to get my answer - right until the very last day of term, but God did it again and my leave was granted. I had to share this testimony with you all to let you know that God still works miracles today.

'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us' (Ephesians 3:20).

Sister Beverley Wilson – London Church

National Family Camp 2017

Testimony

When I first found out about Camp and was asked "are you going to Camp?" the chances of attending were slim to impossible. This was due to work and not being able to get time off during the busy months (January and February). It had been explained that Camp was an opportunity for the Church to come together for fellowship, take part in activities, share experiences with each other and worship the Lord. I really wanted to go.

I asked my workplace for the four days off in February, but being as we were short staffed during that time it could not get approved. I was disappointed and annoyed but I took it to the Lord and prayed for Him to find a way for me to go. When the time was right, I approached my manager and asked if instead of having the time off, I could re-arrange my days at work, have the two main days of Camp off and work the weekend. This was allowed. As soon as I heard the words 'yeah that's fine' I got excited and just thanked the Lord.

I didn't really know what to expect going to Camp, but I had an idea. It was beautiful just being surrounded by people who not only loved and lived to serve the Lord, but also had my best interest in their hearts. I had only been saved for a few months, so all of it was still quite new to me.

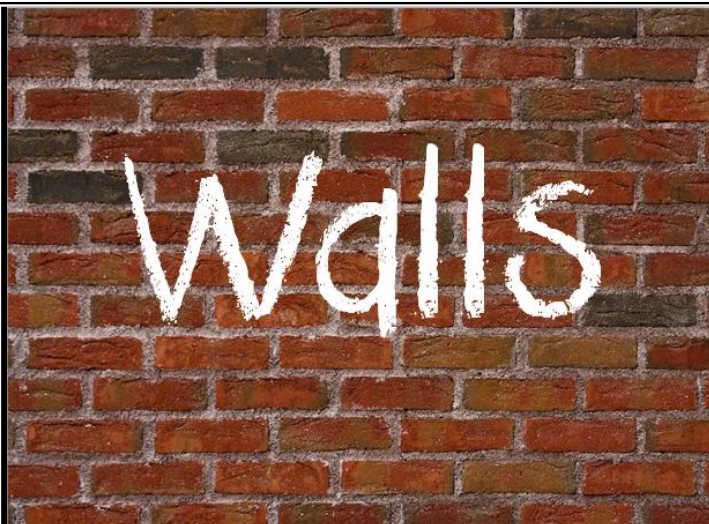
The theme for Camp was '**... for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground**' (Exodus 3:5). For me personally, it made me realise that it's okay to come to God as I am, with all my flaws and sin. I learned that God wants all of me rather than bits and pieces. God is aware of all things and He sees all things. By me coming to him with "shoes" on, is me being guarded and trying to hide things from Him. If I am going to the Lord, then I need to be honest and open about who I am.

In Exodus 3, the Bible speaks about God calling Moses at the burning bush. At Camp, I received such a clear message from this chapter, to the point where I had to reflect on my own life and journey. Fire is both hot and bright. A person out in the cold and dark who is freezing and cannot see, would be drawn to that fire in order to keep warm and see what/who is around them. I was that person before I got saved. I was a frozen soul surrounded by nothing but darkness. Through surrendering to Christ, I found that fire. I found the light to see where I was and the next steps to take. That ice for me had turned into a burning fire within my soul. Camp put this into perspective and made me realise the amount of lost, frozen souls that the world has. These souls need saving! It has made me understand and appreciate exactly what Christ has done and is continuing to do for me. I appreciate the guidance from the Holy Ghost in going through all of this and the unconditional love that Father has for me.

The four days at Camp felt like it was just one day; the time flew. I learned so much about myself in those days there and it just made me want more of the Lord. I got to know my brothers and sisters more through the activities we took part in. The daily devotions gave me things to think about – good spiritual food and I was able to just pour out during services. Camp fell at the perfect time for me as part of my journey in growing in Christ and it was something that I really needed to experience. I did not want to leave.

God willing, I will be a part of many more to come.

Sister Rhiannon Harris - London Church
Submitted by Sister Brenda Prince - National Reporter



A wall is:

- **A continuous structure that encloses or divides an area of land**
- **A thing regarded as a protective or restrictive barrier**

A wall can be a good thing - provided it is in the right place. A wall built where it should not be is problematic.

Around the world historically and even now, some cities have walls around them. It was also true in Bible days. They were built for a number of reasons; for defence, protection, privacy, to enclose and to divide people.

The Guardian newspaper ran a special investigation in November 2013 into the walls around the world today. The article stated that "mankind is building separation barriers at a rate perhaps unequalled in history". They found that at least 6000 miles worth of wall (or 'separation barriers') have been built in the last decade alone. Some walls are to block illegal immigrants, some walls mark religious divide and some divide the rich and the poor, amongst other reasons. These physical walls preach spiritual messages.

A lady from a rich gated community in Brazil was interviewed during the investigation and said of those on the other side of the gate: "They don't come here: we don't go there. We're just neighbours. That's all." So through a simple wall, you can divide two people who live near to each other and make them total strangers... Doesn't this sound like an ideal tool for the enemy of our souls?

In Belfast, Northern Ireland, there are 99 separate walls dividing working class Protestant and Catholic communities. Some of the walls are as high as 18ft tall.

A resident was interviewed and asked: "Will this wall come down? No, definitely not in my lifetime. I think it will still be up here in this street when I am in my 60s or even 70s. It makes us all feel a bit safer." Now imagine if those words were said by a young Gleaner in the Church...



"Will these walls that divide us come down?"

No, definitely not in my lifetime. I think they will still be up when I am in my 60s or even 70s."

Those words now come with great weight. When we build divisive walls, they have an impact on the generation to follow. Our children get used to seeing the walls and they treat those beyond as strangers because of what they have learnt from their example-setters. We are to be so careful what we say, and how we talk in front of our children. They are sponges and should not be party to their example-setters speaking ill of Brother or Sister So-and-So. A child will adopt your beef and hold on to it long after you have moved on. And in so doing, another foot will be added to the divisive walls. Nobody in Belfast has to teach the children how to feel about the people on the other side – they see the wall, see how those over them behave and learn accordingly.

How damaging this is in a spiritual sense, in a church setting! What a difference it would make for the children of the Church to see her operating in its fullness with her members moving, speaking, thinking as one - loving one another with the love of the Lord, seeking His will, demolishing the walls and knocking out the enemy!

How wonderful it is when they hear us praying in earnest for our brothers and sisters beyond our family, beyond our local churches, beyond our country, and the other sheep beyond the Church who Christ is soon to bring in! These prayers and these movements will help to bring UNITY.

This is the Korean DMZ – a demilitarized Zone which splits North and South Korea.



North and South Korea are in great conflict with each other and there is a 155 mile wide zone separating the two. Talk about keeping each other at arm's length! That's another message in itself. North and South Korea are the SAME country and yet they keep each other at arm's length. Anyone who tries to cross the DMZ would most likely be arrested, or at worst, shot. It is interesting that walls are often a place of great conflict and a site of death. Those who have tried to cross the walls, dig beneath them or challenge their existence have been killed and seen as a threat.

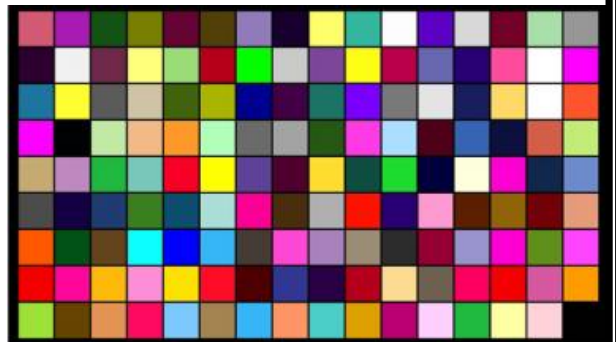
You often find that those who try to cross divides, those who seek peace, restoration and reconciliation can be seen as suspect and an enemy to anyone who wishes to keep the wall up! But if you want UNITY it is worth the risk! Jesus prayed that we would be one (St. John 17:21), and so it is not His will that the walls of division are there in the first place.

Another quote from the article in the Guardian mentioned earlier is so true: *"In the short term, walls may appear worthwhile investments, but they never address the underlying causes of the conflicts they seek to mitigate. At best, walls create an illusion of security..."*

This is also applicable in a spiritual sense. The walls that divide God's people do nothing to address the reason for the divide. And some of us have become so used to the walls of division that we accept them, work around them and 'get on with things' even though those walls are a hindrance to God's programme and the Church's purpose here on earth!

Right now, the kingdom of God looks something like this:

There are miles and miles of wall throughout the kingdom of God because there are thousands of denominations. It was never in the will of God that there would be so many Christians with such different beliefs. And surely this can look confusing to the non-Christian.



But in the worldwide Church also - divisions exist. Let us not pretend they are not there. Our unity is not yet perfected. We are divided in beliefs, opinions and interpretation of Scripture. We are divided due to self-defence, self-preservation, bitterness, resentment and pride... to name a few. Walls have been built that should not have been - rather than working out differences, we build separation barriers. BUT!! Be encouraged!! Every wall built to divide us will have to come down for perfection to take place. The walls that we see shall not remain forevermore. Christ prayed that we shall all be ONE, and ONE we shall be. I believe that with all my heart.

The question is though, at that time, "Will you be among the Bride or will you not?" Let us strive to be ONE with GOD - to walk in perfect step with Him. Unity will be inevitable when we do this.

The walls we should build, and keep up, are the ones that protect us as a body from the enemy. Like Jerusalem in the Bible, these are the walls that surround the **whole** city, enclosing us all! We build these walls through prayer - walking in the light and maintaining the favour of God.

But we have failed to discern the enemy's tactics. We tear down the walls that protect us...and build walls around ourselves, our groups, those who believe the same as us and think the same as us. So Satan has free reign amongst us, while we think we are protecting ourselves and our friends.

We now need to unite together to build the walls to keep the enemy out and to break down the walls that divide us.

Beliefs and Opinions

God has a perfect will in every area. It is for us to seek it out, and to work out our differences in the fear of God and in love. There are no private interpretations (2 Peter 1:20). God will make His will known to one and all. But what happens in the meantime? Do we keep malice with those who do not agree with us?

Or do we search the Scriptures, reason and pray together to find the perfect will of God? Do we, alongside prayer, use the mechanisms within the Church to help settle our questions, do we seek godly counsel, or do we get our tools out and start building a wall which we remain behind? Generally, once a wall is up, groups will form on either side.

1 Corinthians 3:3: ***“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”***

1 Corinthians 1:10: ***“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”***

The enemy wants nothing more than to divide us. Why? Walls will block our evangelism - Jesus prayed that we may all be one so that the world would see that the Father had sent Him! Walls will also block our much needed revival! But one day, every wall of division that exists in the Church will be blown down before she makes her final voyage home.

GOD is the Chief Architect! Abraham looked for a city whose Builder and Maker is GOD!! We have no place putting up walls where they should not be. If the Ark was built with extra walls within it, surplus to God's will, it would have sank in that flood.

Groups

It is not the will of God that there be separate groups within His Church.

Let's look at the Gentiles and Jews. The gospel was first preached to the Jews and the first Christians were Jews. They maintained much of the Mosaic law, continuing in ordinances like circumcision and maintaining the dietary laws. The Jews stayed very separate from the Gentiles and did not fellowship with them. But there came a time when God revealed to Peter that it was time to take the gospel to the Gentiles. God told him ***“What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”*** (Acts 10:15)

Peter demonstrated that he understood this: Acts 10:34-35: ***“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”***

Ephesians 2:14: ***“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;”***

Ephesians 2:18: ***“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”***

God did not want separate groupings within the Church. The divide was reconciled through the cross. The same is to be said of now. **We are on the same side.**

Paul preaches in Colossians 3:11: ***“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”***

However, there came a time where Peter (who was saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost, but still fallible) had to be rebuked to his face by Paul. Peter had believed God's plan for the Gentiles and had started fellowshiping with them - but, there was an occasion when some staunch Jews from Jerusalem came to visit him at Antioch.

Galatians 2:11-14: ***“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”***

A split was caused in the Church as the walls between the Jews and Gentiles were going back up again. Peter did not want to be seen to be fellowshiping with the Gentiles in front of this group of Jews and Paul had to call out the hypocrisy in front of all. Peter 'withdrew and separated himself' as he had clearly been intimidated by those 'of the circumcision'. GOD FORBID that any of us withdraw or separate ourselves from our fellow brethren due to any such intimidation! In fact, the Bible tells us to mark and avoid those who **cause** divisions contrary to the doctrine we have learned (Romans 16:17) - and even this, we do in love - in a spirit of restoration.

Do not be intimidated into maintaining division. Division is against the will of God, yet there are people who are happy to build and maintain walls around the place.

We do not want groups and cliques within the Church - they do nothing to strengthen our unity. In fact, they work directly against it. The Spirit of God will not flow freely - moving in this group, jumping over the wall and then moving in that group. Also, we are deceived if we only feel the presence of God when our group is present. When we are filled with the Holy Ghost, He dwells within us - that means, we carry Him with us. If He is moving, and you have Him, you will feel Him no matter who is around. It is the power of the Holy Ghost that is going to do the work among us if we get out of the way and let Him.

When you are behind the wall, because you cannot see over it, and because the people on the other side are strangers, it can result in distrust, suspicion and even fear of them. Ask yourself today, how do you feel about those on the other side of the walls that divide us? When is the last time you prayed for them or made any attempt towards pulling the wall down?

I remember being in secondary school and having a desire to be liked by everybody. I was friends with the bad girls, I was friends with the good girls, I was friends with those that others might consider a little different, and I was teacher's pet at the same time. I tried hard to please them all every day. This was a very tiring exercise. You will find that if you try and please all the people, you will get very tired indeed. That is not how biblical unity will come - pleasing all the people. You will get exhausted and lost this way. I have learnt a valuable lesson in this life; not everyone will like you. And that's ok. So then, why not just work hard to please the Lord? God does not expect us to run around sweating, trying to please everyone. He only wants us to please HIM. Glory to God. And in so doing - when we all work hard on this wise, we will naturally become unified one with another.

Back to school - and this is true of today. You will often find there's a crew. There are those who want to be in the crew so bad that they are willing to even compromise who they are in order to get in, dying to impress the crew members. Once in, they lose their identity. What the crew likes, they like. What the crew dislikes, they dislike. Who the crew withdraws from, they withdraw from. When they are with the crew, they change until soon, the person bears no resemblance of their former selves - LOST.

Church should have NO CREWS!! So if you are not 'in the crew' rejoice! If you are not in the clique rejoice! You are exactly where you are supposed to be! In fact, we should all be members of God's crew! What He likes, we should like, what He dislikes, we should dislike, what He separates Himself from, we should separate ourselves from. We trade our nature for HIS nature. Now that is a good trade! I do not mind losing Claudine and who she is, and exchanging her for the divine nature! That is the only crew I wish to be a part of.

The Early Church Example

Acts 2:44-47: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

It is worth noting that God considered it safe to add His precious people to the Church, once there was unity. Daily you know. Praise the Lord for those that God is adding to the flock today - I believe that there are so many more to come, once the Lord considers it safe to do so.

Unity is not only the responsibility of the leadership. It is the responsibility of us all. It is so easy to blame someone else. As we all strive to be more like Christ, we can encourage one another; we can reach out to one another; many of us have access to a phone, some of us have our own transport and we can all pray for one another. The early Church continued daily with one accord.

We are in local churches for organisational purposes. Here in England, we currently have four churches. It does not mean that I speak 'Long Lane-ese' because I worship at Long Lane, or that my fellow brethren speak 'Handsworthese', Druids Heathese or Londonese!!! We are all ONE and should speak the same language. Any attitude that exhibits "I stick to my own" is going to be at odds with God's unified plan for His worldwide Church.

The Church is blessed with National and International events all throughout the year - go! They are not for someone else - they are for you too! National Minsters' Convention, National Youth Convention, National Convention, National Family Camp, National Men's Retreat, National Ladies' Retreat, National WMB Fasting, National VLB events, BTI, the General Assembly...the list goes on. And we do not attend just so that "someone can see that I was there" - let us attend to build and strengthen one another. Attendance at these gatherings strengthens our unity. Yes they cost - but make the sacrifice. The money will come - if we have a heart that says "Lord I want to get to know my brethren, to fellowship with them, for us to edify one another, to bring You glory and for unity to be strengthened." Do we think the Lord will ignore that prayer? In fact it is when you attend that you will often hear the testimonies of how God has provided the money!

It is also amazing how God will stretch the remainder when we give towards His programme. We preach about faith from the pulpit and then forget how to apply it when it comes to ourselves. Jesus took notice of the poor widow who threw two mites into the treasury (St. Mark 12:42) - her offering was considered more than the rich who cast in much because she gave all she had.

An Individual Challenge

I cannot share this message without testifying as the message challenged me first and caused me to face a few things. Since my youth, I have had an inner mentality that, 'If you hurt me, or offend me, I am going to immediately construct a wall so that you never do that to me again'. Behind such walls there is safety and protection - or so I thought. It is possible to be living for God - and to be wrong in your approach. God had to show me through this message that this is the **wrong** approach as a child of God. It is very hard to truly love through a wall. Plus, God is to be my protection and my defence:

Psalm 7:10: "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart."

Psalm 59:9: "Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence."

Psalm 62:2: "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved."

Nowhere in the Bible am I instructed to build a wall of protection around myself from anyone. Nowhere am I told to stand behind walls that I have built in order to keep me safe. The song writer said "Jesus, be a fence, all around me every day. Lord I want you to protect me as I travel along the way. Lord I know you can, Lord I know you WILL, fight my battles if I just keep still. Be a fence all around me every day." When Jesus builds the fence, we can still love through it. We can still have compassion through it... So when we build walls and resolve "I ain't saying anything..." we have the whole thing back to front.

It's Demolition Time!

As one fold, let us unite against the walls that divide us. There was a wall that stood in the way between the children of Israel and the first city of the Promised Land - the wall of Jericho. They ALL had their part to play in it coming down. Men of war had to march and the people had to shout when instructed. Sure enough, the wall came down and the children of Israel were able to take the city. We need to demolish the walls in the face of Satan. We have work to do.

I refer again to Jesus' prayer that we may all be one. Imagine what we will be able to accomplish when unity is in perfect operation. In Ephesians 2:19 Paul describes us as being "of the household of God". To live in one house with family, and to never come out of your bedroom would cause tension.

Some parents do not like it when their child closes their bedroom door on themselves for hours on end - it's divisive and can make for an uncomfortable environment. When behind the door, they can be heard talking and laughing with their friends, but then when they come down to the living room for dinner, they are vexed and moody, anxious to get back upstairs. Does this sound familiar? Can this not also happen in the Church household?

In the literal household, we live close and sometimes we fall out but for peace sake, and because of love, we reconcile one with another. In some families, grudges are held that last for years and years, all the way to the grave, making the funeral a very awkward affair. Let this not be so in The Church of God.

Paul encourages us in Ephesians 4:31-32: "**Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**"


Finally, a quote from the BTI correspondence course puts things into perspective:

"UNITY and PERFECTION are both cardinal doctrines of the Bible...

The Church of God holds them forth as STANDARDS and GOALS to be reached.

Unity and perfection are dependent one upon the other.

Bible perfection cannot be attained without unity..."

So what can **we** do to bring unity in our local church, the Church nationally or internationally? At the very least we can pray like Jesus did - that we all may be ONE. Let's start today. 

Submitted by Sister Claudine Brown
Long Lane Church

National Youth Convention 2017

Testimonies

Joshua Anderson

The National Youth Convention for 2017 was a great blessing to me. The theme **“All as One”** served as a ringing reminder of what seems to be a recurring message from the Holy Ghost - “Unity” within our nation.

At one specific time, the Holy Ghost absolutely rocked me - I was reminded of the sheer importance of unity. Without unity among us, we cannot be the force that God intends us to be as beacons in our communities. The world is full of disunity and opposition. If we fail to be a unified Body, the lost will not be drawn to us as The Church of God. We will not appear as a holy nation or a peculiar people led by Jesus. We will simply appear as confused or dysfunctional, when we should be the refuge the lost seek. The love of Christ covers it all and is the glue which makes us the UNIFIED Bride of Christ. Let the love of Jesus be found in us and unity amongst us will be the inevitable by-product.

Bria Anderson

Youth Convention for me was a revival of spirit and a renewal of strength from God. As a VLB, I am so thankful to spend time in the house of the Lord because my goal is to be more like Christ. I thank Him for the members He has placed in The Church of God, who He inspires to preach in ways that are so clear and so convicting. I thank the Lord for the messages on unity and breaking down walls. The Lord always knows what it is we need to hear and He's never failed us and never will. Praise the Lord!

Kathleen Hamilton

National Youth Convention this year was sweeter than the year before. What a way God moved! I really enjoyed being able to take part in song leading throughout the day. I could really feel God using the song leaders' voices for His glory. **“Walls”** (a message preached by my Sister Claudine Brown) really touched my heart. God does not want us in the Church to create our own little groups and put up barriers between our brethren. He would prefer for us to tell each other if one has been offended, so that barriers (in person or spiritually) will not be built.

Jacob Anders

Last month I had the privilege to attend the National Youth Convention of The Church of God in Birmingham, England. The Spirit of God was present from the opening of the Convention until its ending. The messages were timely, and very much needed for me. Sister Claudine Brown preached a powerful message to the youth of the nation entitled **“Walls.”** This message's intent was to identify walls that we had perhaps built up between one another, or maybe that we had unknowingly allowed the devil to build up between us. Regardless of who built the wall, any divider of the brethren must be torn down for us to work together in unity.

Another powerful section of the Convention was found in Brother Rikki Prince's presentation. He presented three young men who had differences of opinions about an unknown matter; what was known and evident though, was that there was division between these three. They were approached by two older, and more experienced brethren who encouraged them in and through the Word of God to reconcile their differences and come together in unity! There was a powerful spirit of unity felt throughout this demonstration.

The devil would certainly love to divide us in any way that he can. There are many things that to the world might be divisive between myself and my fellow brethren here in England. In the world, my nationality, my skin colour, my accent, my difference of culture would cause me to be ostracized by those I come in contact with. But I am so thankful that during my time here, I have felt nothing but the love of Jesus Christ and His Church of which I am so glad to be a part of, whether in America or in England. I have made more friendships here than I ever imagined, and would not trade this experience for all the money in the world. Thank you to each one that has made me feel loved, accepted, and a part of the English family! See you all at Assembly!

Submitted by Sister Brenda Prince
National Reporter

What's happening in London Church?

The start of this year, we have been blessed by visits from our National Co-ordinators for ABM, Evangelism, VLB and CPMA/BTI. We were able to have Lord's Supper and Feet Washing with our Evangelism Co-ordinator, Brother Jason Prince. We also had a wonderful fellowship weekend which consisted of prayer meeting and a meal with our VLB & CPMA/BTI Co-ordinators.

On 20th February 2017, we are pleased to say that 99% of the London brethren were able to attend National Family Camp in Lichfield. The theme: "**...for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground**" (Exodus 3:5) encouraged us to reflect on God's Word and enjoy fellowship with our brethren in Birmingham.

Please remember London in your prayers.

Sister Rebekah Wilson
Reporter

Special Note:

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