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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Geo. Papers  
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Missions Bond Baptists,  
Parks Tells Georgians

By Jack U. Harwell

ATLANTA (BP)--R. Keith Parks is not a fighter by nature and as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, he doesn't see his role as one of creating controversy.

He is a man of deep convictions, however, and has grave concerns about trends in Southern Baptist life. He feels compelled to voice those concerns, even at the risk of provoking ripples on Baptist waters.

In the April meeting of the Foreign Mission Board in Biloxi, Miss., Parks spoke of Baptists getting "sidetracked" from their historic basic principles.

"If we lose our historic perspective," he said, "and unintentionally or unknowingly allow a substitute for missions to be defined as our distinguishing characteristic, we will have changed the basic nature of our Southern Baptist Convention. This will distort our past, change our present and jeopardize our future."

A few days later, in Atlanta for a meeting concerning the new Missions Learning Center near Richmond, Va., Parks picked up the theme.

"God is smiling on Southern Baptists for special reasons that we need to understand," he said. "Our world is changing, with more radical swings than ever before.... In the midst of these world changes, God is pouring out his blessings on Southern Baptist foreign missions efforts as never before. We don't need to dilute those blessings by forgetting our purposes and our directions."

In an interview with the Christian Index (the Georgia state Baptist newsjournal), Parks elaborated on the dangers he sees.

"I travel all over America and all over the world," he said. "I hear many Baptists say many things. And I watch what is happening in churches, in pulpits and in institutions. I fear a subtle shift is taking place in what holds Baptists together. Many people don't know this shift is taking place; others seem determined to hasten it by their preaching and actions.

"I am truly frightened at the lack of awareness of what makes a Southern Baptist a Baptist. Historically and theologically, we have been distinguished by our commitment to missions, worldwide missions, as the hallmark of Baptist belief and practice.

"We have believed in the local church, but we have always taught that these local churches had a global mandate to share the gospel everywhere.

"But in recent years a growing number of voices within our fellowship have begun to say that missions is not the Southern Baptist distinctive. Their voices would tell us local evangelism and biblical orthodoxy are our vital Baptist distinctives.

"This sounds good on the surface and is popular in the current national mood. But it is simply not true to historic Baptist principles. Our denomination has never been a doctrine-making body. We always have believed in evangelism, but we have given a global vision to that belief. That commitment is now in jeopardy across our Southern Baptist fellowship."

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Parks, who has been FMB president four years, added: "I guess I can be expected to voice a concern for foreign missions commitment. I have been a missionary all of my adult life.

"I am not just speaking out of administrative or professional concern. I am speaking out of my heart, as a loyal member of my Southern Baptist family. We simply must be more vocal and more courageous in articulating our basic Southern Baptist commitment to the Great Commission around the world."

The Texas native added: "I believe the Bible with all my heart. I don't know a Southern Baptist missionary who doesn't. But, because of the Bible, I believe in global missions. To be truly biblical, a church must have a global ministry with a local base, but I hear fewer and fewer pastors and denominational board members voicing that belief."

Parks said the new emphasis on local evangelism and biblical orthodoxy "manifests itself by leading churches down two distinct tracks."

He described one of these tracks as "churches supporting any kind of missions effort that comes along, whether it is Southern Baptist or not. These churches see no conflict with giving lukewarm support to missions programs of their convention; they give equal support to every other missions project which seems 'evangelistic' or 'orthodox.'"

He added: "These same pastors would be scandalized if their church members followed suit; that is, if they supported every other church that seemed to be 'evangelistic' and 'orthodox.'"

"There is a dichotomy here that needs to be analyzed and articulated. It might not be intentional or deliberate, but it is just as deadly and self-defacing as if it were."

The second track Parks mentioned is "the track of doing their own missions program, like our independent Baptist brethren, without full support of their denominational missions ministries."

He said this growing trend to do "Long Range" missions projects is not limited to any one region of the country.

He did relate it to current theological tensions in the SBC. "Controversy tends to push people to extremes," he explained. "When that happens, we tend to twist our basic nature."

"In that context, I have a grave concern that our convention must--I repeat--must elect officers and board members who are mainline, centrist types of Southern Baptists. Extreme people tend to hasten this erosion from historic convictions.

"Unless we elect those who have a true concept of supporting who we are as Baptists, they will inevitably lead us away from our basic principles of global missions and evangelism."

Voicing again his commitment to local churches, Parks cautioned: "Sometimes we have been so committed to local church autonomy, we have emphasized localism out of balance to biblical teachings about worldwide responsibility.

"This extreme localism is conducted by culture--the 'Me generation,' permissiveness, anti-establishment mentality, etc. And it often produces one-issue leaders who champion one cause and one church to exclusion of all else in the Christian enterprise.

"Southern Baptists need to embrace the entire world spectrum of the Christian gospel and we need to choose officers and board members who understand, articulate and preserve that commitment."

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(Harwell is editor of The Christian Index, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention.)

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Golden Gate Trustee  
Name Cate Academic Dean

By Mark Smith

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--A key administrative post was created, a new academic dean named and a record budget approved by Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary trustees during their spring meeting.

Trustees approved the position of vice-president of the southern California center as part of their commitment to expand the operation of the seminary branch located in Garden Grove in metropolitan Los Angeles. J. Thurmond George, pastor of First Baptist Church of Gilroy, Calif., is Golden Gate's choice for filling of this post. However, no response from him is expected until around July 1.

Robert L. Cate, 51, was elected dean of academic affairs to replace W. Morgan Patterson who left the school in April to become president of Georgetown (Ky.) College.

Trustees also approved a record budget of \$3,974,609 for 1984-85 fiscal year representing an increase of \$450,000 in 1983-84 budget.

Cate, a native of Nashville, Tenn., joined Golden Gate in 1975 as associate professor of Old Testament interpretation after serving more than 10 years as pastor of First Baptist Church of Aiken, S.C. In 1980, he became full professor.

He holds a bachelor of engineering degree from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, and bachelor of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. In addition, he has done doctoral studies at Princeton University and Oxford University.

In addition to the South Carolina church, he also has been pastor of churches in Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Michael Martin was employed as assistant professor of biblical interpretation. Martin has been on the religion faculty at California Baptist College, Riverside, since 1981. In addition, Beth Singleton was hired as instructor of church music after having served in various church music teaching capacities at the seminary since 1980.

Clayton K. Harrop, professor of Old Testament interpretation, was appointed director of the doctor of philosophy program, replacing William L. Hendricks who has accepted a position on the faculty of Southern Seminary.

Jerry M. Stubblefield, who has been at Golden Gate since 1977, was appointed director of the seminary's northwest center in Portland, Ore., for 1984-85. C. Brownlow Hastings served as the center director for the past two years.

The board authorized the seminary to employ engineers to prepare plot plans for the 36-unit condominium complex and 24 single family dwellings provided for in the master plan recently approved for the use and development of seminary property. It also appointed a building and development committee consisting of board members to oversee the further development of the 148 acre campus.

In addition, the trustees authorized seminary executives to get preliminary architectural renderings of the proposed chapel-world mission center and to request tentative approval of the structure from county authorities.

The board authorizes the administration in its discretion to refinance the debt on Garden Apartments, a 32-unit student housing complex in nearby Corte Madera and to retain housing funds now on hand for the building of additional units.

Reelected chairman was Carlos McLeod, Dallas, director of evangelism for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. O.Q. "Dick" Quick, Baton Rouge, La., president of the national chain of Picadilly Cafeterias, was reelected vice chairman; Gordon Fercho, vice president of business affairs at California State University in Chico, was elected secretary.

Trustees voted to hold the fall meeting each year in addition to their traditional spring assembly. It was their concensus that a second meeting would pay larger dividends by keeping the board better informed so they could be more involved in the achievement of the goals of the seminary.

In his address to the trustees, Franklin D. Pollard, seminary president, reviewed events of the past year and offered a glimpse of the challenges facing Golden Gate in the months ahead.

"We are enjoying growth and growing pains," Pollard said. "Both our opportunities and our challenges are due to our location. We have fewer Southern Baptist resources here than places other seminaries are located. It is difficult to get people interested in an opportunity that is so far away.

"Yet, our location is also our opportunity," he explained. "It is our basic reason for existence. We exist for the purpose of equipping God-called leaders to fill dynamic and growing churches in the most unchurched section of our land.

"God has put us here for this purpose. As we are true to his purpose, he will provide for us our needs. It is up to us to seek his way and follow it."

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Southern Baptists  
Called To 'Bold Doing'

Baptist Press  
5/4/84

ROANOKE, Va. (BP)--In the face of increasing boldness from the "new morality crowd," Southern Baptists need to inject a healthy dose of "bold doing" into their Bold Mission Thrust emphasis, a Christian Life Commission executive says.

Harry Hollis, associate executive director and director of family and special moral concerns for the social action agency, noted that today's "forces of evil are incredibly bold in their doing. Pornographers, the new racists, neo-narcissistic heretics, pop sociologists and religious hucksters have turned values upside down."

"The question," he said, "is this: Will the people of Jesus Christ be bold doers for good?"

Hollis was the opening speaker at Virginia Baptists' annual Christian Life Conference sponsored by the state convention's department of Christian life concerns.

He urged Southern Baptists to be involved in working for solutions to a variety of issues which challenge church and society, including world hunger, peace, economic justice, racial prejudice, violence, pornography and abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

In the process, he added, they should follow the example of Jesus who "was concerned about the total life of human beings."

Another speaker from the Christian Life Commission, W. David Lockard, claimed "bold doing" calls for concrete, compassionate action on behalf of the world's hungry people. "Because hunger is avoidable and unnecessary, it is morally unacceptable," he claimed.

Lockard pointed out hunger is integrally related to other social issues such as world peace. "Lack of food and basic needs is one of the greatest threats to peace and stability in the world," he noted. "We dare not pursue hunger and peace as separate concerns. Both are tied to the biblical concept of justice."

Hollis and Lockard emphasized the level of Southern Baptists' response to such issues will affect the credibility of their global witness.

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"It makes no sense for us to pray to a just God for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven and then do nothing whatsoever about furthering the cause of justice on earth," said Lockard.

Such action, Hollis added, will give authenticity to programs such as Bold Mission Thrust.

"Let us make certain we practice the right kind of doing," he said. "Let us move beyond make-work religion that is showy but shallow to a bold doing of the Word that brings about change for good."

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Students Find No Justification  
For Nuclear War, Deterrence

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press  
5/4/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Nuclear war, or even threatening war through policies of deterrence, can never be justified by Christians, according to the research of doctoral students at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Nineteen doctoral of philosophy students from the two Baptist schools met May 3 on the Southwestern campus for a Colloquium on War and Peace in a Nuclear Age. Four scholarly papers and responses to each were presented during the meeting, which was suggested and arranged by the students.

The research traced the history of war in the Bible and Christian thought and examined modern Christian positions on nuclear war and defense. The students concluded most attempts to justify war in a nuclear age are based on misinterpretations of Scripture.

"To use Old Testament passages to justify modern warfare is faulty exegesis," said Robert Prince, a Southwestern student who presented a paper on The Bible and War. "The commands for holy war applied only to the theocracy of Israel. While they are instructive, they cannot be taken as normative for the Christians' view of warfare.

"The New Testament offers no simplistic answers to the problem of war," Prince said. "Christ came to establish a new order...that would be one of peace. In the final analysis, Christians are called to be peacemakers."

Christians have a checkered history of involvement in war, according to Ron Bracy, a Vietnam veteran and Southwestern student who presented a paper on The History of a Christian Ethic of War.

"During the first two-and-a-half centuries since its birth, Christianity held a basically pacifistic attitude toward war," Bracy said. "From its early pacifistic, non-violent position, the church traveled a long road--first justifying war and finally using war for its own purposes.

"Yet, the true face of war has never changed," Bracy said. "Death and destruction are forever etched across its countenance. It cannot be argued that war is ever the will of God. Why have Christians continued to justify war?"

Bracy, who flew reconnaissance missions in Vietnam before becoming a Christian, said his opinions of war were formed more by experience than theory. "There is no justified or justifiable war," he said. "It is always wrong."

Paul Sadler from Baylor researched the "just war" theory, the idea that some wars are permissible if they accomplish an ultimate good and are conducted according to certain guidelines. Although this theory has been the most popular among Christians, Sadler said it arose more as an attempt to rationalize Christian involvement in war than as a true Christian ethic.

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"In the early period of its history the Christian church was pacifistic," he said. The accession of Constantine (as Roman emperor) terminated this pacifist period. The practice of early Christianity was so far reversed that by the fifth century only Christians were allowed to serve in the army. A system of belief was required to justify Christian participation in war."

The "just war" theory that resulted, Sadler said, prohibited excessive violence and violence against non-combatants. But the nature of nuclear war excludes it from "just war" justification, Sadler said.

"Nuclear weapons are indiscriminate in the extreme," he said. "Their destructive power cannot be limited to legitimate targets. In addition to the military targets it destroys, millions of innocent and non-combatant members of the world's population would be killed. Can such destruction be considered discriminate use of weapons?"

"Just war principles faithfully applied can in no way vindicate the use of nuclear weapons," Sadler said. "A just nuclear war may be conceived theoretically, but in the real world is an impossibility."

But even to threaten the use of nuclear weapons in order to discourage their use by an enemy is immoral, said Curtis Freeman, the Baylor student who researched The Policy of Deterrence.

"The policy of deterrence itself necessitates the intention to use nuclear weapons," Freeman said. Quoting government materials that state the United States must be "able and prepared" to use nuclear weapons in order for deterrence to work, Freeman added, "It cannot be said that nuclear weapons are built today so that they will never have to be used."

If it is immoral to use nuclear weapons, it is immoral to intend to use them, Freeman said.

"The Reagan Administration has persistently maintained that deterrence is and must remain the cornerstone of U.S. nuclear policy," Freeman said. "The church must ascertain whether or not conscious participation in a national policy which intends to exterminate millions of human beings is morally acceptable as representative of Christian character."

"As long as there is dependence upon the strength of deterrence, there is no need for God," Freeman said. "Christians must turn Jesus' teachings on peacemaking and conflict resolution into creative alternatives to current nuclear policy by changing the way we and others think and act."

Dan McGee, professor of religion at Baylor who observed the meeting, said the colloquium reflected a "growing seriousness in Baptist life" toward the issue of nuclear arms. "We must get past hand-wringing or self-justification to understand how you make peace in the nuclear age."

"The Christian ethic of peacemaking needed today moves beyond the tired, unhelpful debate between pacifists and just war advocates," said Robert Parham, another Baylor student. "We are Christians who are struggling to find practical and theological handles for how to be peacemakers."

T.B. Maston, retired professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern, also observed the meeting. "These men are struggling with the most serious issue we face right now," he said.

"This started out as a very small meeting of ethics students on an informal level," said Bobby E. Adams, professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern, who moderated. "This was student initiated. The students themselves would like to see closer ties between the two institutions. This has been a good first meeting."

McGee said he hoped the colloquium would further the discussion of nuclear issues among Southern Baptists and provide a model for dialogue between the students on other issues."

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Betting Push Benefits  
Kentucky: Braidfoot

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In the wake of the celebrated Kentucky Derby, an expert on gambling has pointed to the Bluegrass state as a common beneficiary in the state-by-state push for legalization of pari-mutuel betting on horse racing.

Larry Braidfoot of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission said Kentucky's thoroughbred industry is "licking its chops" at the prospects of legalized pari-mutuel betting in Southern states such as Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Tennessee.

Pro-gambling forces have actively lobbied legislators in each of those states this year, although legislation currently is active only in Alabama and Tennessee.

"Wherever pari-mutuel gambling on thoroughbred racing is legalized, it will mean an infusion of 'new money' into the thoroughbred market" which is dominated by Kentucky, Braidfoot pointed out.

In 1983 Kentucky auctions sold 8,133 thoroughbreds for a total of \$542 million. Yet, Braidfoot said, "not one dime" of sales tax was paid on the sales, thanks to a tax-free status "that helps the Kentucky thoroughbred industry stay at the top of the breeding business."

Despite its lock on the lucrative breeding industry, however, Kentucky is not on top of the racing world.

Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, had dramatic declines in attendance and average amounts wagered during both of its racing sessions in 1983. Attendance was off 22 percent for the fall racing meet and 28 percent for the spring and summer meet.

The figures coincide with a national trend. Attendance last year was down at 23 of the 39 top meets in the country. A number of race tracks ended the year in the red.

Kentucky's average "daily purse" ranked only ninth nationally. In 1982 thoroughbred racing produced just .27 of one percent of the tax-generated revenue for the state.

Braidfoot also cited developments in Oklahoma where pari-mutuel gambling on thoroughbreds was approved in 1982 based on legislation that would allocate to the state six percent of the amount wagered. A few months later, however, racing supporters said they had miscalculated and that a track could not break even if it paid more than two percent in pari-mutuel taxes.

As a result of such trends, Braidfoot said, pro-gambling lobbyists "have junked their lofty claims about direct tax revenue for racing states in favor of general talk about 'economic impact.'"

But economic impact studies done recently for several state legislatures "tend to inflate the potential financial benefits while ignoring the negative effects of pari-mutuel gambling," Braidfoot claimed.

Despite the situation in Kentucky and Oklahoma, he pointed out, an economic impact study done for Tennessee predicted a probable direct pari-mutuel tax revenue of about \$15 million. That figure, based on a tax of six or seven percent of pari-mutuel bets, is almost \$5 million more than Kentucky received from its thoroughbred tracks in 1982.

"There is no doubt that thoroughbred racing has an economic impact," Braidfoot concluded. "The question is, 'What will the real impact be?'"

Equal Access Chances  
Clouded By Opposition

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Late-developing opposition to "equal access" legislation in the House of Representatives has clouded, for the moment, the future of proposals pending in Congress.

In the House, a bill sponsored by Rep. Don Bonker, D-Wash., and Carl D. Perkins, D-Ky., has cleared the Education and Labor Committee but a quick floor vote sought by its backers may have been temporarily sidetracked when opponents, led by Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., forced a debate on the issue, scheduled for May 9 by the House Democratic Caucus.

Perkins, chairman of the Education and Labor Committee which overwhelmingly approved the measure last month, had planned to bring the bill to the House floor under suspension of the rules either May 7 or May 14. The latter date remains a possibility but depends on the outcome of the Democratic Caucus debate.

The House frequently deals with noncontroversial or mildly controversial measures under "suspension of the rules" on Mondays it is in session. Under that procedure, debate is limited to 40 minutes, generally, no amendments are in order and passage requires a two-thirds vote.

In the Senate, meanwhile, Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., and Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., have worked out compromise language to their competing equal access proposals, enhancing the likelihood of passage in that chamber.

Hatfield, Denton and Judiciary Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., have been working with majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., on a plan to bring the legislation to the floor, but no specific time or procedure has been settled. A Denton aide told Baptist Press, however, he expects the measure to be debated on the floor sometime in May.

As part of efforts to derail the Bonker-Perkins bill, Edwards introduced his own equal access proposal (H.R. 5439) and held two days of hearings on it before the Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights he chairs.

Edwards' bill, broader than the Bonker-Perkins measure, would make it unlawful "for any public authority to discriminate in violation of the first or fourteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States against any group of students seeking to meet together in a public secondary school, on the grounds of the content of speech which occurs or may occur at such a meeting."

The Bonker-Perkins proposal would forbid public secondary schools which receive federal funds and that permit "groups which are initiated by and composed of students to meet during non-instructional periods, to discriminate on the basis of the religious content of the speech at such meetings."

At his opening hearing, Edwards charged the Bonker-Perkins bill is a "subterfuge."

"Having lost the prayer amendment in the Senate--and lost badly--its proponents are attempting to come in through the back door, using the soothing, ostensibly neutral language of 'equal access,'" he said.

Edwards said the Bonker-Perkins bill is "not equal access, but at the very least preferential treatment for religious groups. At worst, it is religion in the public schools--something the Establishment Clause clearly prohibits."

Edwards' view was echoed by American Civil Liberties Union legislative counsel Barry W. Lynn, who called the Bonker-Perkins measure "a wolf in sheep's clothing: special privilege masquerading as equality. It will rob public schools of their freedom to keep religious zealotry and sectarian divisiveness out of public education."

In written testimony submitted to Edwards' panel, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs joined with the National Council of Churches to underscore support for the Bonker-Perkins bill while disagreeing with Edwards' approach.

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The BJCPA-NCC statement said Edwards' proposal, unlike Bonker-Perkins, takes away from the school boards "the power to determine whether or not it will create a limited open forum in a public secondary school."

The joint statement also criticized the Edwards bill for failing to provide "that any non-curriculum-related student groups, including religious groups, be non-school-sponsored," a safeguard contained in the Bonker-Perkins proposal.

In other testimony, Christian Legal Society counsel Samuel E. Ericsson disputed charges that Bonker-Perkins would provide preferential treatment to religious speech.

"Students who want to meet for religious expression are not seeking preferential or favored treatment," he said, "but simply equal accommodation with those students who meet for non-religious discussion. Public school students in the secondary schools are quite aware that free speech is in. What they need to hear from Congress is that religious speech is not 'out.'"

Also expressing preference for the Bonker-Perkins approach, National Association of Evangelicals legal counsel Forest D. Montgomery said, "In failing to focus on religious speech, which suffers from a sort of Establishment Clause paranoia among public school officials, H.R. 5439 would perpetuate the current subordination of religious speech in our public schools."

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NBC Special Describes Making Of ACTS Network

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Baptist Press 5/4/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The National Broadcasting Company network will feature a one-hour documentary on the American Christian Television System (ACTS) which the producer describes as "almost awesome" in its plans for satellite communications.

The system is sponsored by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. The NBC program is scheduled for May 20 (1 p.m., EDT) but time broadcast may vary in local areas.

Stan Lozack, producer and director of the program entitled, "ACTS: A TV Partnership," said the documentary will show what "goes into the making of a TV network." He describes the system as "the most ambitious telecommunications effort ever attempted by a private group." He said there was nothing special about such basics as satellite, cable, low-power stations, "but it's the scope of this thing that is almost awesome."

Jimmy R. Allen, president of both the Radio and Television Commission and the American Christian Television System, was among several executives interviewed for the program.

The documentary will be telecast on Radio and Television Commission Sunday as designated by the denominational calendar committee.

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