Email Newsletter of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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LORD MAYOR PRAISES 'CARING CHURCH' IN BRISTOL
The Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Faruk Choudhury, praised Seventh-day Adventists as a 'caring church' during his first visit to the Bristol Central church on Sunday, 23 February. He was there during the church's participation in the Bristol Multi-Faith Forum 'Diverse Open Doors Day'. The Lord Mayor was given a tour of the church, and met representatives who explained the various ways in which it was reaching out to the community as a practical demonstration of their faith. These included providing food and a barber for the homeless, running free health checks for the local community, and visiting prisoners at Eastwood Park Prison.

A special on-screen presentation was created for the event which gave a summary of the church's core beliefs such as the Sabbath, and its belief in the Second Coming, using photographs, video and music. The Lord Mayor and other visitors learnt what it was like being one of the world's 17 million Adventists, as well as something of the work Adventists do in the community and around the world.

In addition to the local community projects the church runs, Councillor Choudhury was very interested to learn about the worldwide humanitarian work of the Church through ADRA. He particularly commended the way in which the church provided "support for people wherever they are in need". He added, "On behalf of every community in Bristol, a big thank you to your church for what you are doing for our community and outside in the world."

Members were keen to open the church doors to the community, inviting people from any or no faith to come in and find out what Adventists were all about. Wall displays were created for each department in the church, with these 'stations' being manned by church members, keen to explain their faith and what they are doing.

One area which the Lord Mayor found particularly fascinating was the Pathfinder Club. A group of 14 Pathfinders gave a display of a marching drill, and showed the results of the various honours they had done, such as candle making and astronomy. Councillor Choudhury was very pleased to see so many young people engaged in such positive and life developing activities.

The Open Doors Day gave the church a chance to show how it is trying to reach out and show the love of God to the people in its community, and to build links with the Bristol Multi-Faith Forum, with a view to participating on an annual basis. Local pastor, Anand Measapogu, was very pleased with how the day went, stating, "We are planning to have this event every year, so we can let others know what we are doing as a church.
in the community, so we can join hands in accomplishing the purpose for which God has called us."

A number of contacts were made throughout the day, including two community police officers who plan to come back and give a talk to our young people. There is now plenty of enthusiasm for doing even better next year, such as having our own Community Open Days as a way to make contact and build relationships.

[Ian Sabadin]

'THE VOICE' AT WINCHESTER TEENS PRAYER & FAITH CONFERENCE

The biannual Prayer & Faith Conference has been, and continues to be, a life changing experience for many teenagers from around the South England Conference and Europe. 19 - 23 February 2014 saw 100 teens across the SEC forsake their half term plans and attend the Conference at Marwell Outdoor Activity Centre, Winchester. This was a combined event joining a SEC Teens department programme together with a locally run programme.

Under the theme, 'Stand: No Compromises, No Excuses', morning messages from Alvin McQueen combined with those in the evening, by Richard Martin. Richard, originally from Tampa, Florida, is currently studying towards his Master of Divinity at Andrews University, Michigan. Knowing that many of the teens had mentioned their struggle in communicating with God and understanding their purpose, he chose to speak about 'The Voice' and how you can develop an ear for God's voice.

He was able to relate his past experience to what young people in this generation are going through. He spoke on the call of Jeremiah and Samuel to be servants of God and encouraged young people to listen to the voice of God when He speaks so that they can fulfil their destiny. He also looked at Joseph, on how God changed a situation into something great and allowing Joseph to fulfil his potential.

"Richard talked about how God already knew us before we were in the womb. He revealed there's a purpose for us in the world. It's good to have a sense of belonging and to know there is a reason for our existence", commented Antonio Dell, a teen from Swindon Adventist church. "I keep coming back to PFC because it is only twice a year and for 365 days we have to put up with challenges and this brings you back on track to get that connection we need."
Alvin McQueen took time to discuss a variety of topics, allowing the teens to ask questions that they would not feel comfortable asking anywhere else. He took time talking to teens and offering special prayers during the conference. This complemented Nana Bonnie’s skills as an inspirational leader during the prayer sessions. This was the highlight of every morning as the teens prayed together in groups. It was also a special time as they connected with God sharing their fears and needs.

Not to be mistaken with the popular Extreme Teens Camp, comprised of energetic activities and worship, the Prayer & Faith programme consists solely of workshops, prayer, worship and talks. Nana Bonnie, a Youth leader working alongside SEC Teens director, Dejan Stojkovic, led out throughout the week, assisted by counsellors and the speakers.

During the Thursday evening programme, the group looked at careers and some of the ways to help find a career suited to their talents that they can be happy in for the rest of their life, if necessary.

"Normally the people that dominate churches are the older people and when you come to something like this it's for you, the messages are adapted", enthused Rutendo Chingosho, from Slough Adventist church. "It is also beneficial because you get to meet people the same age as you, who are going through similar situations like searching for jobs and figuring out career paths. The bonus is that we get to socialise and make friends in the Church!"

By the end of the Conference, 25 teens had made the decision to continue with further Bible studies in their churches!

"It's common to hear our generation say, 'I know about Him, but I don't know Him', so we have talked about developing an ear for God’s voice", said Richard Martin. "It's been one of the greatest experiences in my life, being here with these young people. You can't rely on the trappings of oratory, you have to interpret these terms in the context of the teens' experiences. They are the Church that is now and is becoming, so you have to ask, what is the life they are living?"

Parents agree. One texted the leadership at the end of the conference saying, "Max is back, said he had the best spiritual experience of his life and got a lot to share with the youth!! He hasn't stopped talking and telling funny stories…Thank you for organising this and sharing young life experiences. May God bless you as you continue in His service!"

To see photos from the Teens Prayer & Faith Conference, visit the Adventist Church picture gallery.
RENEWAL OF RELATIONSHIPS AT SEC MINISTERIAL COUPLES RETREAT

The South England Conference's Ministerial Association put together a thought-provoking and revitalising programme that was applicable to each of the 40 diverse, pastoral couples that had gathered for a special weekend together.

"The practical nature of the weekend meant that we were constantly learning", enthused Pastor Kevin Johns, who attended with his wife Margaret. "It was really positive sharing moments with the other couples there, especially as we all have different backgrounds and are of different ages and cultures. Reminiscing about experiences in our 'early days' was especially refreshing, some things were even humorous looking back now!"

Willie and Elaine Oliver, who have produced resources such as the 'Real Family Talk' DVD, spoke to the couples about their own personal experiences throughout their married life.

Over the weekend, the couples were encouraged to take on practical exercises described in the *Journey to Intimacy* booklet. Steps included simply taking the time out to be with each other, to practicing different ways of communicating in a marriage.

As a further special surprise for the couples, the organisers secretly placed romantic touches, such as sparkling grape juice, in their rooms!

"It was really beautiful to see couples rekindling the spark in their own unique ways", commented Pastor Emmanuel Osei, SEC Ministerial Association director. "Couples were encouraged to go back to the beginning, to remember how it all began,
reminding each other of the romance they have experienced. It was inspiring to see pastors taking off their 'pastoral garb' and seeing the personal person at heart."

To see a selection of photos from the Ministerial Couples' Retreat, please visit the Adventist Church picture gallery.

[Katie Ramharacksingh]

EXPANDED VISION FOR MANCHESTER SOUTH

Manchester South may already have expanded its vision with a renovated church building providing a welcoming environment to both visitors and church members, but a visit by Pastor Victor Hulbert, British Union Conference Communication and Media director, expanded that vision further as he conducted the morning service and led the afternoon programme for communications emphasis day, Sabbath, 22 February.

Victor started with the mission spotlight, sharing his personal testimony of spreading the word of God in the media on Revelation TV, particularly sharing how he was able to share Adventist beliefs in a series of in-depth interviews challenging Adventist belief.

Victor lives and breathes communication. This was clear in the main worship service where the children willingly participated in his interactive children's story. The children really did enjoy his use of pictures and his message that emphasised the power of prayer and trusting in God and how God will deliver for your needs if you trust in Him. He completed the morning by delivering a powerful sermon, 'Empty Tombs, Full Hearts'. This was unlike any traditional sermon. It played out like a story within a sermon, and despite some deep thinking, worked well as even the children listened.

The afternoon theme focused on how to make the church look better visually, showing us examples from our church website. The church members also had a chance to evaluate themselves and how they treat others who come into the church for the first time, and how to be more welcoming. This was an introduction to the Sunday workshops, held at Manchester South church but open to Communication leaders from across Manchester.
The focus was on advertising the church for evangelistic purposes. This included learning how to take a good picture, and studying pictures that were taken badly, and discussing the problem. We analysed pictures that were taken well, and how to take a good picture ourselves, learning new techniques and avoiding common pitfalls.

The group analysed the church website, compared it with other Adventist church websites, and then discussed together what could be done better and how to make it better. Examples were used throughout on how to improve things.

The day concluded with a session on how to write a good article, and the tools needed, and how to make the picture tell a story. Budding photographers are now looking for 'action shots' in the church rather than the standard 'firing squad', while the writers, both for the church website and for Adventist and local news publications, developed their creative skills, and the need for a careful use of language that reaches out from our internal, sometimes clichéd Church language to connect with non-members or even ex-members.

The workshop led to plenty of discussion and unanswered questions answered, many people left feeling inspired to make improvements and changes, and a few journalistic writers were born, already with interesting headlines and articles to add to the *Messenger*.

Throughout the weekend, hearts were changed, action plans were put into place, friendships were strengthened, and memories were sealed, the Sabbath was celebrated and praised from start to finish.

[Sara Francis]

RETRO BANQUET CHEERS MANCHESTER
STUDENTS

Saturday night, 22 February 2014 saw the Sanaam banquet hall in Rusholme, Manchester, packed with Adventist students and youth. It was a retro banquet, run by the Seventh-day Adventist Student Society (SDASS) at Manchester University to celebrate the end of year exams. Joining in the spirit of the occasion, everyone came dressed as people from different eras from the 1920s through to today.
'Vocal Blueprint' serenaded the evening into the night, and a member from the band, Simba, won best dressed as he came as a disco star from the 1970s. A gospel artist 'Rejoice', amazed us with her talent as she sang playing her acoustic guitar. Her style was well appreciated contemporary indie with Christian lyrics. The evening concluded with karaoke, with a few of the females competing to win the main prize of the night, a £50 hair voucher for a top hair salon. The competition was a close call but there was only one winner, Shenice Holness.

With ample food to suit all palates, the student fellowship continued until very late into the night.

Souls were brought together, friendships strengthened and it was a beautiful way to end and celebrate not only the end of exams, but what had been a glorious Sabbath, and the joy of Adventist student support and fellowship.

[Sara Francis]

**TRANSITIONAL CHANGES AT SEC ELDERS RETREAT**

Two hundred and fifty elders heard Pastor Juvénal Balisasa, Chaplain at Valley View University, Ghana, speak on the transitional changes elders experience within the church. They were attending the South England Conference (SEC) Elders Retreat, 7-9 February 2014.
Organised by the SEC Ministerial Association, the weekend at the De Vere Venue, Wokefield Park, Reading, encouraged the elders to reflect on, consider and anticipate the constant changes every church experiences through its life cycle. They were further tasked to learn from and plan for these changes.

Newly elected elders spoke with their long-serving counterparts, exchanging encouragement and advice from their different experiences. Speakers throughout the weekend focused on the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of local church leadership.

"One of our goals is to equip them for their roles as elders, because a number of them were newly elected and had never been before", explained Pastor Emmanuel Osei, director of the Ministerial Association. "Secondly, we wanted to give them something concrete to go back into their churches with, that will help them discharge their duties more effectively as elders, mainly to use the different generations when it comes to worship and I really believe that was accomplished."

Workshops were provided on a variety of topics, including presentations from the Disability Ministries coordinator, Sophia Nicholls, and a talk on 'Intergenerational Worship' from recently retired but still active British Union Conference (BUC) Family Ministries director, Heather Haworth.

When giving feedback at the end of the weekend, one elder wrote, "this elders retreat was the best one yet. I am very grateful to all who put this weekend together. It has been an eye opener, encouraging me to take my spiritual life to the next level and truly be grateful to God for what He is doing in my life and taking me forward to be a better elder."

Pastor Osei presented some of the Biblical Research being undertaken on women's ordination, mentioning that there is nothing biblically that says we shouldn't go that route, and spoke of the great work that the current female pastors are doing throughout the SEC. He discussed the work that the Theology of Ordination Committee are immersed in and how their recommendation will be presented to the World Church, at the General Conference Session, in 2015.

The weekend concluded with a detailed question and answer session, with a panel made up of all the presenters who had spoken throughout the retreat. Questions from the elders, such as 'is prayer a spiritual gift', covered most of the weekend's topics and left the attendees content in knowing that they are not alone!

To view resources from the Elders' Retreat, please visit the SEC Ministerial Association page.
A photo gallery of the event can be accessed through the [Adventist Church's picture gallery](#).

[Katie Ramharacksingh]

**SALT, LIGHT AND SWEAT**

Positive feedback has continued to flood the BUC Ministerial Association following the Ministerial Council, Salt and Light, reported in *BUC News* last week. In addition to the high regard given to both main speakers, Brendon Pratt from Australia, and Garrett Caldwell from the Adventist World Church Communication department, ministers have expressed appreciation for the practical, real nature of the programme, but also for the 'sweat' that went along with the salt and light!

The 'sweat' section involved two afternoon sessions of aerobics organised by BUC Health Ministries director, Sharon Platt-McDonald. "I'm delighted to see the number of ministers that are out walking, running, or taking some exercise" she says. However, she wanted to do something more and so organised, and participated in, the two aerobics sessions. The effects were evident on a number of ministers who looked somewhat stiff and sore when entering the Wednesday evening meetings – so a smaller number appeared on Thursday. Nevertheless, the purpose was clear. While the three days involved spiritual exercise, the physical is just as important.

That holistic approach to life was clearly noted among a number of church leaders, including the BUC President and Treasurer, both of whom could be described as 'half the men they used to be' following changes in diet and exercise. They both confess to now having more vitality.

They are also 'leading from the top' as NEC Health Ministries director, Grace Walsh, noted at the breakfast table, pointing out that there are a number of other ministers who might benefit from a little less on the plate and a little more exercise. BUC Communication director, Victor Hulbert, is another of those who has lost weight over the past 18 months. While he only photographed rather than participated in the aerobics, he now sets a monthly walking goal which he records on his phone, as well as making more healthy dietary choices.

A selection of pictures from the sessions have been added to the [Salt and Light picture gallery](#). Following requests, the transcript from Pastor Ian Sweeney's keynote address has also been posted on the [President's page](#) of the Adventist Church website.

[BUC News with Sharon Platt-McDonald]
FLOOD RESPONSE

Following last week's call for church members to check that friends and neighbours are safe during the recent extreme weather, April Dunnett, a member who herself lives on the Somerset Levels, reports that she has personally been involved as a volunteer in the relief efforts.

She writes that for three weeks she had been trying once a week to see if any volunteers were needed for the flood relief activities on the Somerset Levels. "I live on the Levels near Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station, which has our own streams and rhynes (ditches) dredged yearly, so apart from a couple of hours on a particularly high tide when half the garden goes under water, we don't get flooded."

Nevertheless, while safe herself, she got rather frustrated trying to find ways to help others and drove to Burrowbridge in the centre of that section of the Levels between the Polden Hills ridge and the town of Langport, the tidal end of the River Parrett. She says, "Police and Army were everywhere and I soon found an organizer (the publican) who said, 'Yes, we need help tomorrow – a lorry load of chipped bark (20 tonnes) coming in for the paths. Come and bring a barrow!'"

She found herself working with other volunteers like Ravi the Sikh and his teenage sons from Slough who had travelled down to help shift sandbags, bark etc, and later on, a party of young Muslim men from Ilford in Essex who are also keen to get involved with the restoration of agriculture once the emergency is over. The largest group were local volunteers under the leadership of FLAG (Flooding Local Action Group) and Somerset county council. "We spent the day with the team filling barrows with bark with others collecting extremely heavy sandbags. The volunteers were to line both sides of each path with sandbags and fill the middles with bark. For a lot of locals this is now the only way from their semi-flooded homes to a road with transport, for shops, medical appointments and work." April adds, "even senior citizens and children joined in the barrowing, many for longer than I. I was wearing a step counter and clocked up over 8 miles."

Volunteering? Sometimes you have to push and make the effort. April concludes, "For me, I was glad I did not take no for an answer but turned up on site, as so many continue to do. Most of the immediate emergency actions have taken place – it is now maintenance and odd jobs. I hope to be back there next week."

[BUC news]
MYSTERY WORSHIPPER: SLOUGH

I decided to drop into a Seventh-day Adventist church in Berkshire last Saturday (Sabbath), 22 February. I arrived in Slough early as I expected a service to begin at about 10 am. Imagine my surprise when I opened the front door to find a smart group of teenagers already engaged in Bible study. I walked on into the main church where three large groups of people were also immersed in study. Most seats were taken but I was offered one next to a couple. I later found they were on holiday from Fiji and had discovered the nearest Adventist church while visiting their son.

The Bible study included a discussion about ways of sharing the gospel with poorer people or with the rich and famous. One of the study groups was composed of young people in animated discussion and I later found that a group of children were having their own programme in a room behind the church. I was amazed at the large number of people who could be fitted into a relatively small building!

An interesting DVD about mission work brought that section of church to an end but more was to follow. They seemed to fit in so many things, including thoughtful clips about what it means to be a Christian and how everyone is included, then a lot of lively singing led by a youthful trio. I usually choose to worship where there is more space and the worship is relatively quiet but I was impressed by the quality of the presentations and the music. Everyone was warmly welcomed to the next part of the programme with an impressively sincere 'handshaking session'. Then more singing, an engaging story for the delightful children and a lively sermon by a man who said he had grown up in that church many years ago. And guess what? The children had their very own service in that room behind the church!

Something else made my heart sing. There was a special welcome for David, a tidy and quiet man who was attending for the second time. The Men's Group set to work after church to find him a place to live, as he was sleeping out of doors by day and walking around each night to keep safe. The ladies included him in a meal too. I watched in amazement as delicious food appeared from nowhere, in a confined space with no kitchen, with just a microwave in a corner.

What an amazing time! So much done by so many in such a small space. So much energy and enthusiasm and no complaining about the lack of facilities, just smiles and Christian love for everyone.

Thank you so much to all the lovely people. If I lived nearer I'd drop in again!

[Want to visit Slough Adventist church. You can squeeze in any Sabbath morning at their church on 56 Albert Street, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2BU. Find any Adventist church plus directions using the Adventist Church finder.]

[BUC news]
A LOVER OF LITERATURE AND OF LIFE: ADVENTIST TV THIS WEEK

Enjoy these special selections on Revelation TV and Hope Channel:

Thursday 27 February, 8:30 pm – Revelation TV (repeated Sunday 2 March, 1:00 pm).

Elisabeth Sanguesa. Growing up in a country where her Church was deemed illegal, yet her dad a printer of Christian books, Elisabeth developed both a love for God and for literature. She also loves travel, just as well as today she is Marketing Manager for the Stanborough Press and travels the world promoting Adventist literature. Find out more in 'Adventists In Conversation', Revelation TV (Sky 581, Freesat 692 and Roku).

Thursday 6 March, 8:30 pm – Revelation TV (repeated Sunday 9 March, 1:00 pm).

Llew and Karin Edwards openly share their moving and thoughtful views on living with terminal cancer. Described as 'being in the top 5' of all the 'In Conversation' programmes aired to-date, a mixture of humour, honesty and a deep trust in God makes this compelling viewing.

HOPE CHANNEL. Roku and Internet viewers of Hope TV have been asking about scheduling changes, particularly to their Friday night viewing. Hope Channel Europe stopped transmitting on 31 December 2013 and the Friday night line-up finished with it. Currently the North American channel is airing as the primary channel on Roku and on the web. You can find the full schedule here. (Remember to change the time zone to London.) A Hope Channel upgrade on Roku this last week now also gives an immediate, greater selection of UK based 'on demand' programming. A schedule, and a selection of ways to watch Hope Channel are also available by visiting www.hopetv.org.uk.

[Victor Hulbert]

COMING EVENTS

Continuing to Friday 28 February:

Bible Boot Camp 2014. Every weekday during February. Time: 0500-0530 GMT. The online campaign is an international affair, hosted by Pastor Paul Graham (USA) and is sponsored by the Youth department at Peckham church. Log onto: bootcamp.fullcircleministries.com (do not add www).

Thursday 27 February - Sunday 2 March:

GAIN//Europe: Media & Communication Conference. Conference Price: £100 (includes lunch on Friday, Sabbath & Sunday). Venue: Newbold College, St Mark's Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG42 4AN. For more information about Speakers, Presentations and Accommodation visit: sec.adventist.org.uk/gain

Friday 28 February - Sunday 2 March:

Making God Known – Belfast with David McKibben. Venue: Belfast Seventh-day Adventist Church, 74-84 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6AF. For more information contact: Pastor Adam Keough.

Saturday 1 March: 
Marriage Enrichment Fellowship. Enjoy an evening at a beautiful venue with great fellowship, fine food, and enhance the romance with your spouse. Time: 19:00 - 23:00.

Sunday 2 March:
The Agape Wedding Fair. To book a table or register your interest please contact Michelle Richards, mobile: 07967-483691. Email: belagapeweddings@icloud.com or go to events at www.belagapeweddings.com and register your details today. FREE entry!

Friday 7 - Sunday 9 March:
Making God Known – Derry/Londonderry with David McKibben. Full details at http://www.makinggodknown.org. Venue: Derry/Londonderry Seventh-day Adventist Church, 58 Prehen Road, Londonderry, BT47 2NT. For more information contact: Pastor Weiers Coetser.

Sabbath 8 March:
Deaf Day 2014 – is a unique day where members and visitors can share the day with the deaf community. Time: 11.00 am - 8.00 pm. Venue: Peckham Seventh-day Adventist Church, 149-159 Iveydale Road, Nunhead, Peckham, London, SE15 3DX.

Deaf Awareness Training. Take some time to look at the issues surrounding deafness. Venue: Holloway Seventh-day Adventist Church, 381 Holloway Road, London N7 0RN, 4 - 7 pm.

Saturday 8 March:
The Reason Why We Sing’ Concert. Venue: Advent Centre, 36 Brendon Street, W1H 5HD, at 7.30 pm. The price of tickets are £8.00 in advance and £10.00 at the door. (Children are £5.00 in advance and £6.50 at the door.) Please book your ticket for this event by calling Patsy Reid on 07947158537 or pay by PayPal by contacting justrightpromo@gmail.com.

Sunday 9 March:
Food Safety Course. Time: 10.00 - 17.00. Venue: Advent Centre, 36 Brendon Street, W1H 5HD. A certificate valid for three years is awarded upon completion. Food Safety Application Form. Contact the SEC Health Ministries department for further info: nsimon@secadventist.org.uk.

Children's Health Expo. Time: 10.00 - 17.00. Venue: Advent Centre, 36 Brendon Street, W1H 5HD. Children's Health Expo Application Form. Contact the SEC Health Ministries department for further info: nsimon@secadventist.org.uk.

Friday 14 - Sunday 16 March:
Making God Known – Coleraine with David McKibben. Full details at http://www.makinggodknown.org. Venue: Coleraine Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2 Ratheanne Avenue, Coleraine, BT52 1JH. For more information contact: Pastor Weiers Coetser.


Saturday 15 March:
For a full listing of Coming Events please visit http://adventist.org.uk/events

For more details and a larger selection of events both this weekend and in the future please visit the Coming Events website where events are continuously updated online. Select your region for events nearest to you. You can also share events important to you on your Facebook or social media profile. You can also submit your event at the same location.

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SMALL ADS


ONE ROOM AVAILABLE FOR A STUDENT at Nottingham Trent/Nottingham University for 2014/15 in a house with 4 other Adventist students. Experience student life with the freedom to fellowship in your home away from home. £69.00pw inclusive, free Wi-Fi and close to Nottingham Central Seventh-day Adventist church. For more details please contact Shaun Douglas on 07855301398 or email shaundouglas@btinternet.com.

TWO BEDROOM HOUSE TO RENT in Ilford with its own driveway and two minutes' walk from Ilford station and town centre. Rent: £1,200 per month + bills. Would suit a professional working couple. Contact Corinne Bories on 07956288992.

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THE SMALL PRINT

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