

# Connections

Virginia Mennonite  
Conference &  
Board of Missions

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## Partnerships point to the future of missions

Nine years ago, Flinn Ranchod was an automobile mechanic in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, when he met Jesus Christ through the ministry of New Zion Christian Church. After a time of personal transformation and training, Flinn joined the pastoral staff at New Zion. Today he is a church planter in Virginia—a missionary sent by an African church to the USA.

In May 2001, Flinn arrived in Chesapeake, Va., with his wife, Karen, and three daughters to plant a church through a partnership between New Zion and Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va. The partnership is supported by Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Mission Network. It envisions additional new churches and youth ministries in both the USA and South Africa.

A year later, on May 11, 2002, representatives of Calvary, New Zion, local Mennonite churches, Virginia Mennonite Conference, and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions gathered to dedicate the new Calvary Community Church Chesapeake. Church planter and Pastor Flinn Ranchod expects that the present building will soon be too small as they reach out to the local community and invite persons to become part of their church family. Flinn envisions a multi-racial church that demonstrates reconciliation and ministers to the needs of the community.

The church plant will be supervised by Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., the fastest growing Mennonite congregation in USA. Calvary is a mission-focused church that takes seriously its calling to be salt and light in the local community. New Zion Christian Church is based in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, with congregations in surrounding areas including Capetown and Johannesburg. It has a strong mission focus, both



Joe Bontrager

in its local community and around the world. The new church in Chesapeake is a product of the missional vision of Calvary and New Zion.

The church plant in Chesapeake is supported by Norfolk and Warwick Districts through “2020 Vision,” a church planting strategy that was approved by the Districts in 1997—a vision to plant at least 20 new churches by the year 2020. Norfolk District provided the building of the former Deep Creek Mennonite Church, and both districts assist with funding. Bishop Leslie Francisco III serves as one-fourth time Urban Ministry Director to consult with congregations and encourage vision for outreach among Mennonites in southeast Virginia.

But this is more than a church plant. It is an international, inter-agency partnership that points to the future of missions—where congregations and agencies from various countries and sometimes denominations are united by a common vision, where resources and personnel are shared, and where the goal is to bring healing and hope to a fragmented world.

• Joe Bontrager  
USA Regional Director

**Left:** Bishop Leslie W. Francisco leads in a prayer of dedication for (kneeling, L-R) Flinn and Karen Ranchod and Brenda and Rallie Jones.

**Below:** Flinn and Karen Ranchod, Pastors of Calvary Community Church Chesapeake.



Ed Bontrager



# It must have been God's idea

I sat in a congregation's worship service on high school graduation day. We sang some ancient songs and some contemporary songs. We prayed. We recognized the graduating high school students. (Can they be this grown up already?) We gave our offerings. We heard the words of the Hebrew scriptures. We heard the exhortation of the pastor applying those scriptures to our situation.



Owen Burkholder  
Conference Minister

There were some prayer requests—a family member with a newly diagnosed malignancy struggling between hope and dread; a family whose poultry operation was shut down because of disease; an e-mail from friends in a troubled international situation.

Meanwhile I, an observer, was wondering at the genius of congregational life. Here was a gathering of people from across the age span and from many different occupations, though not from so many ethnic groups. We made marvelous music, we groaned with

the trials of those who spoke of them, we recognized the witness of those in the cemetery as the pastor called our attention to them.

What a wonderful provision God has made for us! Life that is shared deeply with brothers and sisters, anchored in worship, guided by the scriptures, cared for by pastors of integrity, moved by the needs of the world.

As my wife, Ruth Ann, and I get around the conference, we remain amazed at the ministries of congregations. We rejoice in faithful pastors, bishops, and overseers. We pray that each expression of congregational life may be an oasis of the presence of Jesus, ready to let the inviting love flow out to others in need as an expression of gratitude to God who has given us each other!

And when there is conflict, let us stay together, secure that this is an opportunity for the Spirit of Jesus to make all the difference in the world.



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# How can we keep from singing?

On a pleasant Saturday afternoon in May, approximately 100 people gathered in Washington, D.C. to sing hymns of praise and peace. We came from North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. We came and we sang. We sang songs that praised the One who gave up all power so that we might live. We sang hymns that spoke of the power of peace. We sang that “our boats carry no gold or no weapons.” We sang of a way of life that finds hope, not in money and weapons, but rather in a love that seeks to befriend the enemy. We sang not caring if anyone heard us or even listened to us. We sang because we had a song to sing and we could not keep from singing.

Our song was heard. May 11 was a beautiful sunny day, which meant Washington, D.C. in general and the Mall in particular was filled with tourists and locals alike enjoying the sights, sounds, and sensations of Spring. Those wandering by the Lincoln Monument between 2:00 and 3:30 in the afternoon were perhaps surprised to hear hymns of praise and peace wafting through the air. Many stopped to listen to the music and read the brochure that explained who we were and why we had gathered there. Some even joined in the



Les Horning

singing. We pray the echoes of the songs will linger long in the hearts and minds of those who heard as well as those who sang. We pray the gentle whisper of peace will be heard over the roar of war’s weapons.

Those attending the fourth annual Hymn Sing for Peace were invited to sign a letter that was later mailed to President Bush. It was a letter that urged the leader of this great nation to consider the possibility of alternatives to war and violence in solving the world’s conflicts. Will he read the letter? We don’t know. Will we gather again next year in Washington, D.C. to give witness through song to the Prince of Peace? Yes! And the next year and the next and the next... for how can we keep from singing?

• Les Horning  
First Menn. Church of Richmond

Participants from North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia raise their voices in song at the fourth annual Hymn Sing for Peace in Washington, D.C. on May 11.

## The Jesus way of peace

Since 1997, members of the Warwick District have been asking the question, “How do we teach the Jesus way of peace while at the same time reaching out to those in our community who view the military as a way out?” After several years of investigation, dialogue, and prayer, the answer came in the form of Warwick District’s Alternatives to Military Service Committee. The committee is made up of a diverse group of volunteers from the Warwick District churches. Glen Guyton, a former Air Force Captain who was discharged as a conscientious objector (CO) after joining Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., is the part-time staff person for the committee.

The purpose of the committee is to promote conviction for the Jesus way of peace. People in the Tidewater area are encouraged to choose alternatives to military careers, and we provide resources to implement and support that choice. Resources may come in the form of sensitizing and education; job training and mentoring; scholarships; re-entry programs for COs; and creating a local repository for information. Educating and mentoring are our

primary focus. As more resources become available, we hope to expand our program.

Can we help you or your ministry? Please don’t hesitate to call on us. We are available to speak to congregations and youth groups about military recruiting tactics, becoming a CO, and reaching out to those in the military. The Alternatives Committee is dedicated to making sure our peace theology is being actively taught and demonstrated to the next generation of Mennonites. More and more we are finding that some of our congregations are not discussing the “why” of peace with our youth; a generation is growing up without proper knowledge of our rich Anabaptist history.

Can you help us provide alternatives to military service? Do you know of job training programs that may be available to our graduating high school students? This program needs your help to be effective in spreading the gospel of peace and providing viable alternatives for those who choose peace.

• Glen A. Guyton  
757-825-1133 x207  
glen.guyton@calvarycommunity.org



## Bread and water for the table of the heart

Understanding worship and worship leading as an act of hospitality? That's a new, stretching kind of thought. Considering, however, that our seminar was titled "Bread and Water for the Table of the Heart," the appropriateness of the metaphor becomes clear.

The twenty-some people from the Tidewater area of Virginia who gathered at Warwick River Mennonite Church on the morning of May 18 reminisced about times of special hospitality. Heidi Miller Yoder, part-time faculty at Eastern Mennonite Seminary with training and experience in spiritual formation and worship, led us in thinking about worship as a time of allowing the Bible to speak and move us to a new and different place. Often-told stories from Scripture became fresh again as our small groups projected our senses

onto the printed page. Heidi helped us to see the worship leader as the host as well as a participant. However, the host may sometimes be the hosted, as the worship service takes a turn to embrace that which is spontaneous and unplanned.

Lee Ebersole, a member of the pastoral team at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., led in singing and contributed to the input of the meeting. I've brought away several truths in my little notebook: The truth of God resides in all of us. Humility is needed on the part of all, since worship is not a matter of egos or promoting professionalism. Worship begins and ends with God.

We left with the challenge of making it work for us.

• Twila Y. Brunk

Williamsburg Mennonite Church

## Mennonite Women gather for annual meeting

More than 160 women attended the Mennonite Women's Annual Day on May 2, 2002. The event was graciously hosted by Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Together the speakers chose the theme for the day—"Growing into Wholeness." In the morning, Viola Stahl spoke on "And Are We Yet Alive?," blessing and challenging us as she related experiences following a disabling auto accident. Each of us chooses how we respond to the things in our lives. Viola's husband, Milo, received a standing ovation from the women for his part in caring for Viola. In the afternoon, Wilma Gingerich effectively guided our thoughts about "Spiritual Resources for the Caregiver," speaking from a nurse's perspective of handling difficult situations with grace and care.



Gloria Lehman

family at Salter's Hill Mennonite Church in Jamaica.

The mission needs offering, presented by Janet Martin, is always the highlight of Annual Day. This provides monies and gifts for missionaries—a blessing to them from Mennonite Women. Both offerings were well received.

A special feature of the day was the solo of "He Shall Feed His Flock," sung by Karen Barnes and accompanied by Janis Siemens. Edith Shenk, President of Mennonite Women of Virginia Conference, led in taking an action from our group that Mennonite Women be changed to Mennonite Women USA, and that names for the Board of Directors be accepted. She also led in a time of prayer, recognizing the day as National Day of Prayer.

• Jane Burkholder

**Right:** Viola Stahl emphasizes that each of us has a choice in how we respond to situations in life.

**Top right:** Evelyn Nice assists with the process of choosing and bidding for opportunities to contribute towards various mission needs.



Gloria Lehman



## Immanuel Mennonite: a treasure in jars of clay

April 6-7, 2002—what a weekend! We celebrated, we remembered, we praised God in this very special weekend in the life of Immanuel Mennonite Church. As we began to think about our tenth anniversary at Immanuel, we wondered what should happen. How do we want to celebrate?

We reflected on what a gift Immanuel is and has been to so many people and thought of the many gifts that each person brings to our church life. We recalled the scripture, “For we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” There we had it. 1 Corinthians 4:7 would become the basis for our theme, “This Treasure in Jars of Clay.” As Terry Phibbs Witmer, anniversary celebration co-chair, said, “IMC’s creativity is often displayed in ‘unpolished’ ways, yet beautiful ways.”

We thought of the uniqueness of Immanuel, our diversity, and our music—the talented musicians and yes, our original music written by Jerry Holsopple. And so we planned a homecoming concert for Saturday afternoon and a Sunday morning worship service where we could again worship together with those who returned. We knew it would be like a family reunion and organized a Saturday evening event “IMC Family Reunion: Stories, Songs, and Supper.”

We sent out invitations to as far away as Japan, Africa, Guatemala, and British Columbia. The invitation read, “You are part of our story, come home and celebrate.” And come home they did—not from the far corners of the earth, but from distances that made driving for a weekend possible. Harrisonburg Mayor Carolyn Frank came and worshiped with us. We all worshiped with the music team and the Northeast Gospel Choir. Local church leaders came. Bro. Stan Maclin, one of our church visionaries, was with us and again encouraged us as he had back at the beginning.

We told stories, recalling the hard work and many hours that went into building the church. We welcomed Orv and Ruby Wiebe back and remem-

bered with gratefulness the sacrificial work they and many others invested into our church—both the building and the living stones that make up our church today. We heard from Clayton and Amy Kuepfer, church planters in Ontario, Canada. “Thanks to Immanuel for providing a place where there is sensitivity and encouragement to those who are developing their ministry skills and seeking God’s leading.”

Our stories were told in pictures, in song, and relived in the Biblical story as Lin Stutzman

recounted God’s faithfulness to His people of old. We saw ourselves as Bro. Basil Marin preached from the theme “The treasure is still in the vessel!”

And we celebrated. We enjoyed the food, the fun, and the fellowship. Saturday evening’s supper of Southern fried chicken, Ethiopian spiced chicken, and all the wonderful accompanying dishes was so delicious. Everyone pulled together—putting together the publicity, fixing food, and decorating. Who can ever forget all of those clay pots? Yes, the various pots, their simple beauty, their earthiness symbolized the many diverse and beautiful members of IMC through the years. We came home, we are home, and we will continue to be a home for the extended church family of Immanuel Mennonite Church.

• Janet Stutzman  
anniversary celebration co-chair

**Left:** The anniversary worship team, made up of Immanuel Mennonite Church musicians past and present, leads worship by offering music in a variety of styles including gospel, contemporary, Spanish, folk, and hymnody.

**Below:** Children inspire the church to worship by dancing to a song choreographed and led by Immanuel member and pastoral intern Stephanie Bartsch.



## Southern District unites in song

On April 7, Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va., hosted the second annual Southern District Music Festival and Hymn Sing, with a full house. Participating churches included Waynesboro, Stuarts Draft, Mountain View, Rehoboth, Greenmonte, Staunton, and Springdale. What a blessing it was to worship and fellowship with other district churches and to hear the wonderful four-part congregational singing.

Reflecting the diversity of the congregations, the special music included a wide variety of musical expression—a choral anthem, a gospel duet, favorite hymns by an octet and a quartet, praise and worship groups, and a musical sign language drama. Talking with old and new friends afterwards added to the warmth and fellowship found only in the body of Christ.

• Earl Monroe  
Pastor of Mountain View Mennonite Church

## Leadership Updates

**Kenton Derstine** transferred his credentials from Indiana-Michigan Conference to VMC, April 13, 2002. He will continue his work at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

Retired minister **Richard E. Martin** passed away January 18, 2002.

**Richard Pannell** and **Brent Siegrist** were each licensed for their roles as assistant pastors at Immanuel Menn. Church, October 13, 2001.

**Bonita Stutzman** was ordained for her ministry as a chaplain at Rockingham Memorial Hospital, March 31, 2002.

**Barbara Moyer Lehman** was installed as associate pastor of Park View Menn. Church, October 7, 2001.

## Congregational Resource Center

Summertime—lots of time to spend with your children and grandchildren in creative ways! No homework to compete for their time and attention! Make opportunities to share your love and your faith with them in relaxed times. Plan some fun activities together, such as crafts, games, or videos that make you think! Following are some resources that will help you to spend quality time together:

- **Family Fun Magazine**
- **Fun Excuses to Talk About God: 48 No-Fuss Family Devotions**
- **Parent Trek: Nurturing Creativity and Care in our Children** by Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi
- **Faith Talk for Children**, a non-competitive communication game
- **Bible Baseball: The Bible Knowledge Board Game** for ages 6 and up
- **Fisheyes: On Stage!** with Ted & Lee as Peter & Andrew
- **The Creation Chronicles** with Ted & Lee
- Group's **Blockbuster Movie Illustrations** by Bryan Belknap
- **Videos That Teach: Teachable Moments from 75 Modern Film Classics** from Youth Specialties

Or is summer a good time to sit by the pool or at the campsite and read for some spiritual refreshment? Here are some suggestions:

- **Faith Imagination and the Spirit: Guided Faith Meditations** by Elaine Ward
- **Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation** by M. Robert Mulholland Jr.
- **Active Spirituality: a Guide for Seekers and Ministers** from Alban Institute
- **Prayer for Each Day: Taize**
- **A Prayerbook for Spiritual Friends** by Madeleine L'Engle and Luci Shaw
- **A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey** by Brian McLaren
- **Listening to God: Using Scripture as a Path to God's Presence** by Jan Johnson
- **Guerrillas of Grace** by Ted Loder

Is there some subject you want to delve into, or a book of the Bible you would like to study? The Center is a place to find just what you need to grow spiritually!

The Resource Center is open 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with a key available at the EMU Information Office in the Campus Center for use after 5:00 p.m.

Visit the Resource Center website at [www.emu.edu/mcrc](http://www.emu.edu/mcrc) to browse our catalog.  
Contact the Center at 540-432-4219 or [wengerkw@emu.edu](mailto:wengerkw@emu.edu) with requests or questions.



# July 2002 Prayer Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>7</b> Today Loren Horst is being commissioned as President of Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions. Pray God's anointing on him in this role of taking God's Word across the street and around the world.</p>	<p><b>1</b> Loren Horst begins employment as the new president of VMBM today. Pray for a smooth transition as he assumes the role that David D. Yoder filled for past eleven and a half years.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Pray for Willard and Eva Eberly as they fly back to the States tomorrow. Pray for safety in travel, for quick adjustments, and renewed strength in order to participate in many meetings throughout the months of July and August.</p>	<p><b>3</b> One year 'til Atlanta 2003! Ask that God would grant wisdom to those responsible for planning this gathering of youth, children, and adults from across Mennonite Church USA.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Our freedom to worship is a blessing — let's be sure that we don't take it for granted by being careless with this treasure that others in the world do not have.</p>	<p><b>5</b> On three Saturday afternoons in July, Richard &amp; Margaret Keeler are presenting a parenting seminar at Grace Chapel in St. James, Trinidad. Pray for them as presenters, and also that the attendees will gain new insights.</p>	<p><b>6</b> Tomorrow is Peace Sunday. May God help us understand what true peace is, and strengthen us to demonstrate this in everyday life.</p>
<p><b>8</b> Omar Beiler's medical work brings him into contact with the Ministry of Health officials in Jamaica. Pray that Omar can show Christ's compassion to these government leaders.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Pray for Phil and Marcia Lehman who are on their stateside assignment after a three-year term of missionary service in Italy. Pray for them as they visit many churches and share the vision for church planting in the city of Bari, Italy.</p>	<p><b>10</b> Pray for the staff and committees as they wrap up final details for the Conference Assembly and Missions Festival next week.</p>	<p><b>11</b> Youth from across Virginia Conference will be gathering during Assembly. Pray that they may hear God's voice during the various activities and return home renewed for work and witness.</p>	<p><b>12</b> The Partners in Mission team going to Belize will be in orientation tomorrow. Pray for the team as they prepare to rebuild homes destroyed by the recent hurricane.</p>	<p><b>13</b> Pray for Phil &amp; Marcia Lehman as they plan to speak at Mt. Clinton Menn. Church tomorrow. They will be speaking at Williamsburg Menn. Church next Sunday.</p>	<p><b>14</b> Pastor Robert Henry balances a full schedule of working plus pastoring three congregations in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Pray that he will have health and strength for his many responsibilities.</p>
<p><b>15</b> Pray for Dan and Mary Hess and family as they return from Albania tomorrow. Pray for their initial adjustments and for profitable months of ministry in churches and among family and friends during the summer months.</p>	<p><b>16</b> The youth and youth leaders from Bethel Mennonite Church have formed a PIM team to Academia Menonita Betania in Aibonito, Puerto Rico. Pray for protection during their travel this weekend and in the work that follows.</p>	<p><b>17</b> Conference Council and the Faith &amp; Life Commission will meet tomorrow during Conference Assembly. Pray that God would guide their discussion and decision making.</p>	<p><b>18</b> Thank God that the people of Virginia Mennonite Conference can gather for work, worship, learning, and inspiration! Ask for His guidance of the delegate sessions and His blessing on the worship times.</p>	<p><b>19</b> A workshop on peace will be held tomorrow during Conference Assembly. Pray that it will be well attended and that the speakers will present God's Word clearly.</p>	<p><b>20</b> Dan &amp; Mary Hess will be speaking at Landstown Comm. Church in Chesapeake tomorrow morning. Pray that they would effectively communicate the vision for church planting in Lushnje, Albania.</p>	<p><b>21</b> Congregational nurture is very important in the life of Christians. Pray for pastors, other leaders, and members as they join in worship and church life.</p>
<p><b>22</b> Kenny &amp; Stephanie Stoner and family are settling into the Alice House at the Maranatha School for the Deaf in Jamaica. Pray that they will soon learn to know their neighbors and begin to feel a part of the community in St. Elizabeth.</p>	<p><b>23</b> Pray for the overseas mission personnel whose financial support is dependent on contributions from individuals and congregations. Ask God to provide the necessary funds to continue their work.</p>	<p><b>24</b> Pray for VMBM and EMM staff today as they meet to evaluate their partnership arrangements in Albania and possibly Kosovo. Pray for wisdom in knowing how to respond to the opportunities for service and witness in Kosovo.</p>	<p><b>25</b> Pray for Mark Bartsch as he prepares to speak at the Jr. High Youth Retreat in September. Pray also that God would be at work in the hearts and lives of these young people.</p>	<p><b>26</b> Pray for Lois Maust in her role of assisting the President in planning and guiding relationships and services to strengthen VMBM ministries.</p>	<p><b>27</b> Ask God's blessing on Willard &amp; Eva Eberly as they speak at Zion Hill Menn. Church tomorrow morning.</p>	<p><b>28</b> Martha &amp; Francesco Picone, President of the Italian Menn. Church, will be visiting several of the congregations in Virginia Conference during August. Pray for them as they share the good things that God is doing in Italy.</p>
<p>This month's prayer calendar is sponsored by Levi &amp; June Weber.</p> <p><i>If you would like to sponsor one or more months of the prayer calendar, contact Gloria Lehman at 540-434-9727 or 1-800-707-5535.</i></p>						
<p><b>Give thanks in all circumstances.</b></p> <p><b>1 Thess. 5:18a (NIV)</b></p>						

# Announcements

The VMC Peace Committee awards a **Peace Mug** each year to an individual or church group working for peace. The mug will be presented at Conference Assembly. Do you know of persons or a group of persons in your church that are leading the way in focusing their lives on Peacemaking? We want to especially recognize those persons or activities that focus on peacemaking that emerges from our faith in Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace. To submit nominations, contact Jim Hershberger at 5647 Wengers Mill Road, Linville, VA, 22834, 540-833-8033, [hershberg1@aol.com](mailto:hershberg1@aol.com).

**The 57th Annual Eastern CPS Reunion** will be held August 8, 2002, at Chambersburg Mennonite Church, 1800 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, Pa. This reunion is open to all that served in Civilian Public Service during World War II. For a program and registration form, contact Irvin E. Cordell at 717-328-2746.

The **K. K. Bachew Steel Pan Band** from Trinidad will be presenting an outdoor concert on Friday, August 2 at 7:00 p.m. at Ridgeway Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg. The concert will be in conjunction with the last night of Ridgeway's Vacation Bible School. There will be games and crafts for the children and an ice cream social. Please bring blankets and lawn chairs for this outdoor concert. In case of rain the concert will be held in the Ridgeway sanctuary. An offering will be received to give a gift to the Bachew family. For more information, call 540-434-3476.

**Laura Helmuth** of Harrisonburg, Va., is serving an eight-month assignment with Youth Evangelism Service (YES) in San Salvador, El Salvador. Laura is the daughter of Phil and Loretta Helmuth and is a member of Park View Mennonite Church.



**Stacey Isaac** of Durham, N.C., will serve a six-month term with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Bolivia, working with children. Stacey attends Durham Mennonite Church.

**Amela and Randy Puljek-Shank** of Harrisonburg, Va., will start a five-year MCC assignment in Bosnia, working as regional representatives. Amela and Randy are members of Immanuel Mennonite Church.



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*Don't have a jug? Call 540-434-9727*

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**Virginia Mennonite  
Conference Assembly  
& Missions Festival**

July 18-20, 2002

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