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*A Journal for Seventh-day  
Adventists in Military and  
Public Service*

# For God & Country





# COULD THERE BE MORE IN THIS?

By Ivan H. Omaña, D. Min., BCC

Director/Endorser, World Service Organization—General Conference

When I worked at Florida Hospital (now Advent Health), we had a health program that became the driving force behind almost everything we did. It was called CREATION Health (now CREATION Life). Every letter of the word CREATION represents a principle of health coming directly from Creation.<sup>1</sup> In good Seventh-day Adventist fashion, the program includes the second principle, Rest. We have preached for over 170 years that the Sabbath comes to us as a gift of Creation.

I will not take your time to review what we have preached for all these years. However, I want to share with you what I have discovered in my personal development program. It is no secret that I was recently

elected to a leadership position in our church. In the last few months, I have been thrust into a place where I must be clear in my vision for the future of the World Service Organization, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, and the advancement of the Adventist Chaplaincy Institute. Recognizing this new responsibility requires focused time for leadership development. Therefore, I have started a self-challenge. I will read one leadership development book every two weeks. (Thank goodness for audiobooks!)

One of the first books I picked, upon the recommendation of a chaplain friend, is called, *Hearts Touched with Fire: How Great Leaders are Made* by David Gergen. In the third chapter of the book, there is a small paragraph that would almost go unnoticed by

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I discovered that no longer Sabbath is the one distinguishing factor for we Seventh-day Adventists, or the Jews for that matter, among other religions.

anyone reading the book. But not by the curious mind of an Adventist minister. Gergen commented on the conversion of his daughter from Christianity to Judaism. He claims that her life, as well as his life, were “enormously enriched...by the tradition of Shabbat.”<sup>2</sup>

Seeing this almost casual mention of the Sabbath, I decided to go on a quest. I wanted to see how the concept of Sabbath rest has become mainstream, focusing only on leadership development this time. I discovered that no longer is Sabbath the one distinguishing factor for we Seventh-day Adventists, or the Jews for that matter, among other religions. The idea of Sabbath rest is now slipping into significant areas of the world, including leadership development. A quick search in Google Scholar of the words “Shabbat and leadership” brought back 14,200 scholarly articles, and 442 of those articles were published in 2022, and 1170 were published in 2021. There’s even a study on the effects of the

“*Extended Shabbat of COVID-19.*”<sup>3</sup>

This issue of *For God and Country* will address some connections between the Sabbath and Creation and the importance of having a biblical worldview. We risk fooling ourselves into believing that we know everything there is to know about the benefits of Sabbath rest as a gift of Creation. But if my recent experience with a passing comment in a leadership development book is any indicator, we may be in for a big surprise. Perhaps God is trying to show us that Sabbath and Creation are way more than about days, doctrines, and diets. Maybe Sabbath and Creation are about a Heavenly Father who wants His children to live their lives to the fullest!

<sup>1</sup> Cummings, Des. *Creation Health Discovery*. Orlando, FL: Florida Hospital, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Gergen, David. *Hearts Touched with Fire: How Great Leaders are Made*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Scholar, Google. Scholar.google.com. September 21, 2022. [https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Shabbat+and+leadership&hl=en&as\\_sdt=0,21](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Shabbat+and+leadership&hl=en&as_sdt=0,21) (accessed September 21, 2022).

A stylized, topographic map of the Earth is centered on the page. The landmasses are rendered in various shades of green, indicating elevation, while the oceans are in shades of blue. The globe is set against a background of concentric circles and a grid of squares, creating a technical or architectural feel.

# CREATION and the SABBATH

**By Gary Wagner, D.Min.,**  
Director, Creation Revealed

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he most critical topic for Christians to understand and believe in is the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is almost cliché to say this. We all at least give lip service to it, but it deserves much more than a cursory recognition. As Paul said, “I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

Many aspects of the message of Christ and Him crucified are found throughout Scripture. Among them is the message of the first angel of Revelation 14. Verses 6 and 7 say, “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’”

Each of these verses is good news for those who accept Jesus and His death for us. Only seven verses later, Jesus gathers those who have surrendered to Him. The angel of Revelation 14:7 gives the final reminder to the world to be ready for the coming of Jesus. He points to our need to focus on worshiping God as Creator. Creation was God’s act of setting the stage for Jesus to come, live, die, and rise to everlasting life.

Some might say my premise has already been abandoned—that being a determination to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But Jesus Himself told us that all the Scripture teaches us about Him. “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”

## FOCUS ON CREATION

In 2014, I became acutely focused on Revelation 14:7. My studies on the verse opened new perspectives on Jesus through Creation and the Sabbath. The text points us to both topics as vital for the generation just before the return of Jesus. But unfortunately, we may have allowed our necessary commitment to God’s Holy Sabbath to blind us to the command given here to worship God as the Creator of everything made during all seven days of Creation week. Why is Creation so important?

If our worldview on Creation isn’t biblical, we will allow false conceptions of others to lead us away from a true understanding of God’s purpose and plan for the earth, humanity, and Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. That means His purpose and plan for us. Many do that by adding or subtracting information that changes the intent of the narrative of Genesis 1 and 2. This doesn’t mean we can’t discuss the historical context

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or cultural perspectives of those who lived in countries surrounding Israel. On the contrary, we can certainly benefit from understanding the impact of these environs on the people God called His own.

## SCIENCE AND CREATION

With that, however, we must be cautious that we don't allow sideline issues to distract us from the truth. For example, there is a great deal we don't understand about many things in the Bible. Some of those won't be clear to us until sometime after we get to Heaven. We can learn other information from science that explains what Scripture tells us without changing the meaning or intent.

An example is the discussion of seeds, plants, and other life reproducing after their kind. Science may have been intentionally left out of the text of Genesis 1. But because of science, we know that the processes described here are the function of DNA. The Bible didn't mention today's scientific

understanding, but we can safely discuss it from this perspective. As we do, we must be cautious not to change the intent of God's Word.

We don't judge the Bible by what science says. We judge science by what the Bible says. Here, that would be to say, "God had a clear understanding of the DNA He put within every living thing He created. He couldn't describe it through Moses because their science wasn't ready for it. It took science until the twentieth century to learn what God was talking about. Now that science finally repeats what the Bible says, we can have faith in that science. We verify that scientific concept because it agrees with Scripture.

Another example is the flood. Science has always told us Earth couldn't have been covered by water. There isn't enough water to cover the mountains. Yet, during the past 150 years, some Christians have seemed embarrassed by the Flood narrative. They have accepted scientific opposition and developed ways to explain the global flood away. They accepted science to be more



authoritative than Scripture.

However, in 2014 researchers report evidence of nearly three times the amount of water in our oceans, 400 miles beneath the earth's surface—in the “deep.” They call it evidence for a whole-Earth water cycle. It can and does circulate from 400 miles deep to the surface and back. This is how God reported it when He said, “all the fountains of the great deep were broken up...and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered...and the waters receded continually from the earth.”

Science is catching up with the Bible. Recognizing the scientific aspects of God's act of creation gives a broader picture of natural science. Moreover, we can bring the topic to a generation whose whole public outlook has been orchestrated by the media. Still, we must be cautious about maintaining the unchanging nature of the Bible over the ever-changing nature of science.

For many who call themselves Christians, faith in science seems stronger than our faith in God and His Creation. As a result, such a person may decide to help God out of challenging concepts. They may do this to make God and themselves more acceptable to today's scientific community by interjecting some science into the narrative. Such as Verse 1, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Verse 1a Then He let everything set for 2.5 billion years to allow the evolutionary process to advance without describing it.”

Such an edit may keep us in good standing with certain science-minded people, but it changes the entire intent of Scripture. The implication of a surrender of our belief in the inspiration of the Bible is that Darwin was right. That also means there really is no God. Darwin's science was instrumental in leading to today's belief that life developed through natural selection or chance. If this were true, then there is no such thing as a Saviour or eternal life after death.

Today, science is turning us more and more back to biblical creation. An understanding of genetics shows us that even 2.5 billion years isn't long enough for human life to have evolved. Cornell University Professor Dr. John Sanford used Comprehensive Numeric Simulation to show that considering genetic entropy (mutation), it would take “trillions of years” for humans to develop by natural selection.

Quite rationally, we are back to believing in Creation to determine how we got here. Non-political science is now showing us that faith in the Creator is reasonable. It leads us back to where we should have been before seeing the science. That is, having an unshakable belief in the Word of God.

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## THE SABBATH

Many of us as Adventists have long ago decided that Creation is essential. At the same time, more of us seem to question the value and importance of the Sabbath. It shouldn't be lost on us that Creation and the Sabbath are inextricably joined together in function and purpose. Creation shows us the incredible power, glory, and righteousness of God. Even His invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature can be seen and known by those who have no other avenue of learning about God.

As the memorial of Creation, Sabbath is specifically designed as our weekly reminder of who God is and what He has done. It is also boldly tied to Christ and Him crucified. Genesis 2:1 tells us, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished."

It states that the foundations were complete, and the stage is set for the drama, paving the way for the redemption of humanity.

To be sure we catch the connection, Jesus Himself drew attention to it. He said, "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." This "It is finished!" declaration of Jesus on the cross is the final proclamation of the pronouncement in Genesis 2:1.

In its first use, it declares the task of advancing the mission on Earth to rescue humanity from Lucifer's direct and subliminal attacks. With the beachhead established, the battle would be fought here until it would be completed.

On the cross, Jesus declared three things to us and the universe. The sacrifice had been made. The price





had been paid. The penalty had been satisfied. Salvation was available to all who would receive it. And He rested on the Sabbath! Creation's purpose was accomplished. It was "finished." It wasn't the Romans who determined that the Sabbath would provide such a dramatic exclamation point to the saving work of Jesus on the cross. How can we begin to diminish its importance?

The Bible Sabbath as given by God at Creation and re-issued as the fourth commandment, is integral to the death of Jesus. It was for supposedly breaking the Sabbath that Jesus was condemned. To take it out of this picture would be another step to removing assurance in the inspiration of God through Scripture. These fundamental elements are as much a part of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" as is John 19.

It isn't just Creation and Sabbath that are important for us to make sense of our lives and the rest of the Bible. Every topic, story, and parable is crucial if we wish to draw closer to Jesus. He asks us to dig deeper to see what we may have missed. Everything we understand or think we know affects how we look at every other part of God's revelation of who He is and what He is doing in us and for us today.

## **BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW**

So, how does this affect us daily? Are these concepts written for us to

simply accept and consider them a blast from the past? Are they merely casual reminders that God knew what He was doing from the beginning?

Not at all! These and many other examples are not intended to be like the mug on your grandmother's shelf which brings back memories of visiting the Kansas fair on her beau's arm in her youth. Instead, they form the shining pillars of belief we walk among daily. Upon these, we evaluate everything that happens to us and around us in our world today. Through these concepts we sift every activity and idea to decide what we should think of it and how we are to direct our own life accordingly.

We call this a worldview. But, if we choose to use the scriptural narrative as the foundation of our worldview, it is called a biblical worldview. This becomes the symbolic torchlight we use to search for meaning in our lives and our purpose here on Earth. Such is a task that every generation has occupied itself with.

There are reasons so many wander through life. They may purposely or ignorantly choose to establish their worldview without including the will of a loving and almighty God. They may also determine that they don't like the direction where such a worldview will lead them. Or, they may not have drawn close enough to the Giver of Scripture to recognize His voice to them when He speaks.

The questions, "Who am I?" and

As the memorial of Creation, Sabbath is specifically designed as our weekly reminder of who God is and what He has done.

“What am I here for?” have always plagued young men and women. The answers they found, those they didn’t find, or those ignored played a significant role in the person they became. The same is true for us in our time. The same Holy Spirit, who sought to lead Cain and Abel, leads us today.

## **BUILD YOUR BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW**

What principles should I use in building my biblical worldview that includes Creation, the Sabbath, and every other theme? I like Ariana’s simple perspective. “Every decision and action should be shaped by the Truth that was from the beginning—Jesus Christ.” How does a person develop a biblical worldview?

To have a truly biblical worldview, you must first have a personal relationship with Jesus. A biblical worldview does not simply know what the Bible says. Much more than that, it personally knows the One who inspired it. The Bible is

not merely history or stories. It is a profoundly spiritual guide to life, magnified by knowing its Author.

Second, pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit. Make prayer your constant research approach.

Third, we must know what the Bible says. We need to read it. Speed reading isn’t enough. You can skim it quickly to get the gist of the whole passage but then reread it again and again. Don’t be satisfied with what you know. You will continue building your worldview as you study Scripture for the rest of your life. Ask yourself questions about your understanding.

- Is God’s voice leading me, or is it my own understanding?
- Is it biblical, not denominational?
- Does it serve my interests, or does it direct them?

Fourth, ask yourself, “Have I allowed science or any other informational discipline to lead



my belief?” The more mature you are intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually, the more stringently you must battle with yourself to keep from including other cultural, philosophical, scientific, or any other measure of truth into your worldview. That doesn’t mean you can’t think of those other informational arenas. It means you must know what you believe about what God is saying to you before you consider the implications of different criteria.

Including science as a foundational part of your biblical worldview is dangerous and short-sighted. As I have shown, science changes. Much that we believe about science is untrue. This isn’t a criticism of science. Advanced research methods lead us to understand our physical world better. Also, as we have seen, political manipulation will continue to make science often an unworthy gauge of biblical truth.

Fifth, know the voice of God to you. You have heard it said that He wouldn’t tell you something that contradicts what He has already clarified in the Bible. So, test the ideas that come to you by what the Bible says.

Sixth, when you find dissonance between what you believe in Scripture and in what you believe in any other discipline, study both to find the truth. Be sure to give the

greater authority to Scripture. You will sometimes find that your view on it was wrong. If your chosen worldview is Bible-based and anything else, you can be sure you will go off track.

Be intentional in determining what information will and will not lead your life. Until you have “determined not to know anything ... except Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” you are in great danger of being misled on any of the myriads of forks in the road of life. Being a casual partaker of Scripture is inviting evil to mark your steps. Remember, the voice of the angel to you is loud. He is shouting to you, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth.”

<sup>1</sup> Corinthians 2:2, NKJV.

<sup>2</sup> John 5:39, NKJV.

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2014/06/new-evidence-for-oceans-of-water-deep-in-the-earth.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1253358>

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 7:11,19; 8:3, NKJV.

<sup>6</sup> J.C. Sanford, *Genetic Entropy*. FMS Publications, 2014, page 136.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 19:1; Psalm 50:6, NKJV.

<sup>8</sup> Romans 1:20, NKJV.

<sup>9</sup> John 19:30, NKJV.

<sup>10</sup> Sigve K. Tonstad Andrews University Press, 2009 Berrien Springs, Michigan, page 4.

<sup>11</sup> <https://blog.bjupress.com/blog/2021/07/27/biblical-worldview-in-education/>

<sup>12</sup> Serena Van Fossen in a class discussion. September 3, 2022.

A biblical worldview does not simply know what the Bible says. Much more than that, it personally knows the One who inspired it.



*From the Chaplain's Desk*

# THE CONSCIENTIOUS SABBATH KEEPER and Cooperator

**By J. Michael Hakanson,**  
Captain (CHC) U. S. Navy (Retired)

**I**t is difficult to be a Seventh-day Adventist in the military. No doubt about it. Many Adventist members do not understand the military, and the military is not built for Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Less than one percent of society serves in the military and the number of Seventh-day Adventist who chose to serve post-draft is a small fraction of that.

So, how do we explain our unique perspective on topics like the Sabbath of Creation? Or maybe you don't

consider your perspective unique. We have three options in this matter, in my opinion.

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## THREE OPTIONS

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The first option is to allow our "Sabbath" to happen when it is convenient for the military. The second option is to ask your local pastor outside the gate to try to explain it to your command. This

probably would not go well since most Adventist pastors have never served. From my experience, they often do not understand the unique needs of a 24/7 all-volunteer military. The third option is for you to fully come to grips with what the Sabbath of the Bible and Jesus can be understood to mean, within the context of the unique world of the military and law enforcement. Once you have this personal understanding you will be able to explain it to your command as a deeply held belief.

The first option does not require much understanding. Just take whatever time you are given. But then again, there is not much commitment, or difference between you and the one-in-seven-days-is-good-enough crowd.

The second option is a line in the sand that says, my church has told me I cannot do XY and Z and if forced to, I guess my military career is over. Over one hundred years ago, our world did not operate like it does now. Today's military and law enforcement are a 24/7 interdependent machine full of people whose actions impact each other from hour to hour. This is very different from the 1800s New England where our Sabbath observance ideas have roots. Once I began serving, I could see that a line-in-the-sand just

did not make sense today.

So, what does the third option look like? A personal theological view of the Sabbath that is practiced by Jesus is both defensible and acknowledges the creation and redemption “roots” of the Sabbath. However, this alternative requires personal understanding, the ability and desire to witness, and personal sacrifice to do so. It is truly for the same kind of hardy soul who would think they could serve both God and Country at the same time.

In this third option I have co-opted the use of the term “Conscientious Cooperator” over the term “Objector” from Desmond Doss. I am sure I am using it differently than he did, but I believe it fits here.

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## COOPERATION

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Cooperation is not built on prohibitions (objections), but on what the Sabbath was about to Jesus. By studying His example, we can learn how what is compatible with the ways we should cooperate with Jesus, on the Sabbath to help our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen and law enforcement officers (LEO) as a part of our Sabbath observance.

Rather than a one-in-seven day-off

*A personal theological view of the Sabbath that is practiced by Jesus is both defensible and acknowledges the creation and redemption roots of the Sabbath.*



to rest and worship, Jesus used that day to teach and alleviate the suffering of others and worship the Father with His actions rather than sit idle as the Pharisees taught and practiced.

Read the account of the Man with the Withered Hand (Matt 12:9-14). This is just one perfect example of the “recreative” aspects of the Sabbath. Jesus chose the Sabbath above the other six days, because He wanted to show how much more a man who has suffered for so many years is worth to the Creator-Redeemer God.

It is interesting that I do not hear many calling for us to follow the example of the Great Exemplar (Jesus) in this aspect of Sabbath observance. What does this look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

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### LIFTING UP MM3 JONES.

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A few years ago, I was on the USS Nimitz (CVN68), and we were underway. It was Sabbath and I was reading in the Command Chaplain stateroom. A knock on the door brought the Reactor Officer (RO) sharing his concern about one of

his Sailors—MM3 Jones\* who was standing watch. Unbeknownst to the RO, I was familiar with Sailor Jones. He had come to me for counseling due to his exhibiting stress and anxiety. I had referred him to Medical, but could now tell, he was not better.

I went to another more senior Machinist Mate (Nuclear) Sailor (MM1) for help. MM1 Smith\* was a Seventh-day Adventist who I knew well. In fact, he had referred MM3 Jones to me in the first place. MM1 Smith was enjoying a bit of off time on the Sabbath but laced up his boots and we sought out our mutual friend.

MM3 Jones was about to be tested for his last try to qualify for his main job in the Reactor Department. He had severe test anxiety and if he failed this last try, he was going to be dropped from this rate (job) in the Navy. The fallout from this meant he would probably have to repay the Navy his enlistment bonus of over \$25,000. That money had been used to pay his mom’s cancer treatment bills.

When we found MM3 Jones below, the Chief on watch walked by and



asked, “MM1 Smith, what are you doing here? You made a big fuss about this Sabbath thing, and I gave you the time off.”

I explained to the Chief that we were both Seventh-day Adventists and assured him that what we were about to do was probably what Jesus would do on the Sabbath.

“Chief, I’ve got MM3 Jones’ watch and will keep him with me under instruction,” said MM1 Smith. “CHAPS is going to stay with me, and we are going to make sure this Sailor is ready for his exam/board on Monday.”

Both MM1 Smith and I knew that MM3 Jones was spiraling and needed to have his suffering alleviated. To wait until Sunday would have robbed us of a real opportunity to demonstrate the power of the Sabbath in its recreative aspect.

Smith and I both just happened to have the time right then. The interchange was much more robust, but I can say the Reactor Chief and MM3 Sailor Jones both received a Bible study, and we served as I am sure Jesus would have.

MM3 Sailor Jones passed his exam, and I believe he is still in the Navy. After he passed his exam, he came by my office and told me and the entire Chaplain’s office, just how important that Sabbath morning visit was for him.

For the first time, he saw no way out and had begun thinking maybe

life was not worth living. He had never had thoughts like that before and was afraid. Just then, MM1 Smith and I walked through the hatch. By the end of the day Jones realized how precious his life must be to God. He told us that if this wasn’t the truth, he believed the intervention would have never happened.

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### CALL ME FIRST

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That is the power of the seventh-day Sabbath of Creation and Redemption, and why I could never keep just any one-out-of-seven. How much alleviation of suffering can you do as a military or law enforcement person?

Rather than placing burdens on others because we “can’t” do things on Sabbath, is it more like Jesus to explain to our commands that we wish to have that day to worship and be off the normal schedule. But want no “favors.” Our devotion to others, as God sees them, requires us to do more than carry our own load. We want to carry the load of others, in addition to our own. So, if that means another Soldier, Sailor, Airman or LEO is in crisis, call me first to take that watch, even on Sabbath. People will wonder, and you will have fresh opportunities to explain the Sabbath, Jesus, and what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

\*Names have been changed.

*To wait until Sunday would have robbed us of a real opportunity to demonstrate the power of the Sabbath in its recreative aspect.*

# CARRYING ON THE LEGACY

**By Lemuel Sapien,**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, GLR-MI-015 Wolverine Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, Benton Harbor, Michigan  
with Deena Bartel-Wagner, Editor, World Service Organization—General Conference

**L**emuel Sapien's ancestral heritage intertwines with his spiritual heritage as a Seventh-day Adventist. "My paternal great-grandfather, Gil de Guzman, was a pioneer of the Adventist church in the Philippines. My grandfather, Gilbert Sapien served as a lay leader after his baptism in 1953," says Lemuel. "My mother's parents helped establish the location where Mountain View College in the Philippines was started in 1950 by Andrew N. Nelson and others."

Growing up with this background, Lemuel actively participated as a young person in his church. He joined the local Pathfinder club, participated in Sabbath School, and enthusiastically accepted Jesus when he was 11 years old and was baptized. "Throughout elementary and high school, I was always voted as a class pastor, although I didn't seek that position," says Mike. "I eagerly served but struggled with the idea of ever becoming a pastor. Not only did I feel unworthy to hold that position, but I also thought I wanted to pursue a medical career."

## QUESTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

In college, Lemuel began to question the faith of his childhood. "I wasn't openly rebelling and didn't speak to anyone about my questions," says Lemuel. "Instead, I utilized the online space to connect with people from all over the world who had different belief systems. I met with Buddhists, Hindus, and even Satanists and Wiccans."

Lemuel was curious about how people followed these faith traditions. But he also began to understand that people can be devoted and loyal to their perceptions, and changing their minds isn't always straightforward.

A life-defining moment came during Lemuel's search. "My grandfather died when I was 17 years old. This was the first time I'd experienced losing a family member," says Lemuel. "I realized how precious life is, and soon after, I rededicated my life to God."

Friends, pastors, and teachers began to draw Lemuel back into church activities. He became a youth mentor in his church and found that



2LT Lemuel V. Sapien, Civil Air Patrol, US Air Force Auxiliary



Members of the GLR-MI-015 Wolverine Composite Squadron of Benton Harbor, MI  
(Back from L to R): 2LT Lemuel Sapien, 1LT Amanda Rodgers, 1LT Peter Center, MAJ Constance Cripps, MAJ (CH) Sung Kwon, 1LT Cameron Holt, SSgt Warren Navarro (ANG)

he enjoyed leading out in a spiritual capacity. At the same time, Lemuel's thoughts began returning to ministry. "I knew that I couldn't afford to attend an Adventist university, so I pursued a college degree in computer science," says Lemuel. "I reasoned that if I could work in the technology field, in my free time, I could work as a part-time church leader."

## I COULDN'T RELATE TO THEIR EXPERIENCES

On September 11, 2001, Lemuel, and the rest of the world, watched in horror as attacks on the United States took place. "I'd grown up hearing stories of people who were willing to die for their faith. Now I understood some willingly killed

innocent people for their version of god, too," says Lemuel. "Several of my friends enlisted in the military during the aftermath, and I visited an Army recruiter. I wanted to serve my country but felt God's directing me to something bigger than enlisting."

As the months slipped by, Lemuel followed the War on Terror. He read stories and testimonies of the soldiers returning from the conflict. As he consumed the accounts, he saw that the stories were not glorious. Instead, they were filled with pain and distress. "I felt a consuming desire to help these soldiers in some way," says Lemuel. "I changed my undergraduate major to history, became more involved in church, and worked with the youth. I even

"I wanted to serve my country but felt God's directing me to something bigger than enlisting."



SSgt Warren Navarro of the Air National Guard (Far Left) and 2LT Lemuel Sapien (Far Right) with the cadets of the Wolverine Composite Squadron.



Lemuel Sapien (left) and wife Michelle Sapien (right)

had the opportunity to counsel some soldiers who returned from war. However, I discovered I hadn't experienced what they had and couldn't relate to their experience."

Then a friend encouraged Lemuel to join the United States Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC). The ROTC program allowed for him to learn more about military life. "I appreciated the discipline, training, and camaraderie. I adapted well to this small version of military life," says Lemuel.

"During our marching and drilling practices, I had people ask me how I already knew so much about the commands and movements. I explained about Pathfinders and the marching and drilling we did."

## THERE'S A PLACE FOR ME IN THE MILITARY

During his time in ROTC, Lemuel learned about two opportunities that would redirect his life again—chaplaincy and the Civil Air Patrol. "I learned about the possibility of military chaplaincy, but that I wouldn't be able to pursue that

through ROTC and officers training," says Lemuel. "I decided not to continue pursuing a military career after ROTC. Fourteen years later, the opportunity I dreamed of arrived. My application to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary was accepted. I'm pursuing my Master of Divinity degree with the long-term plan of becoming a military chaplain. In addition, I've taken my oath as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Chaplain Candidate in the U. S. Air Force Reserve."

## SERVING IN THE CAP

Today, along with his studies, Lemuel serves as the Deputy Commander for Seniors, the Safety Officer, and a Moral Leadership Officer in the Civil Air Patrol GLR-MI-015 Wolverine Composite Squadron of Benton Harbor, Michigan.

"The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is an auxiliary component of the United States Air Force," says Lemuel. "I wanted to find a way to serve while I am in my seminary studies. I remembered hearing about CAP and decided to contact the local CAP squadron leader in Benton Harbor to



“Fourteen years later, the opportunity arrived that I’d dreamed of. My application to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary was accepted.”

learn how to apply and get involved.”

The squadron leader invited Lemuel to attend the summer meetings and learn more. “Sitting in on those meetings solidified my desire to become involved,” says Lemuel. “I discovered much more about the Air Force and CAP than I’d previously known.”

CAP cadets range from 12-18 years old. “Character development and leadership skills are the primary focus of training for the cadets,” says Lemuel. “They worked on developing self-discipline through marching and drilling, maintaining their uniforms properly, learning military courtesies, and more.”

As a Safety Officer, Lemuel provides squadron briefings on personal safety, traffic and work safety, and aviation hazard safety. “I have to do my research to present the briefings, gather the materials that will be shared with the cadets, and make sure that everything is engaging and useful,” says Lemuel.

Another responsibility he holds is how the unit looks regarding military courtesies. “This includes how the unit looks in their uniforms, their discipline and morale, and their marching formations and executions of commands,” says Lemuel. This applies to both the cadets and the senior officers.”

The squadron meets once a week for three hours. “We typically have drilling, briefings, and an E training,”

says Lemuel. “The E Training is aerospace education and is a series of lectures instructing the cadets on topics like rocketry, weather, and how flight works. There is a lot of STEM training and materials as well. The squadron also holds a monthly emergency service training that cadets participate in.”

As he works with the cadets, his previous youth leadership ministry and mentoring opportunities are invaluable. “I mold my teaching style towards allowing the cadets to discover things independently,” says Lemuel. “This helps them develop both their leadership and character in positive ways. For instance, when we discuss military courtesy discipline, I put down the parameters and explain how it’s done. Then, I’ll put a cadet in charge and see how he/she leads the unit with the information I’ve supplied. It’s interesting to see how they solve any specific problems they encounter.”

## ONE COMMON THEME

Looking towards the future, Lemuel also remembers the history of his past. He’s humbled that he continues a legacy of service and ministry begun four generations ago with his great-grandfather, Gil. Although Lemuel’s ministry may function differently from Gil’s, the cords of their spiritual leadership intertwine, telling the story of Jesus to a world that needs hope.

# At The End of Hardship *Comes Happiness*

By Mike Yun,  
Veteran, Korean Defense Forces,  
with Deena Bartel-Wagner, Editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference



**T**he Korean proverb Go-saeng Ggeut-eh naki on-da describes Mike Yun's life. In English, it is, "At the end of hardship comes happiness."

"My father was a Korean war orphan, and my mother came from a broken family," says Mike. "They met in a small pencil factory in South Korea and married. When my mother learned she was carrying a child, she began to wonder if there was a God or some spiritual being. When I was born, my parents named me Yeongcheol Yun. To my English-speaking friends, I'm known as Mike."

During this time in her life, Mike's mother thought, *Please guide me toward the right direction to find*



*truth.* So, she continued to search and ask questions. Finally, she met a newly married young woman who introduced her to her church.

"I was seven years old when my mother joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church," says Mike. "This decision brought hope to my mother and me, but it also brought difficulty and sadness into our family. My father began persecuting us, especially my mother, because he didn't like Christians. Mother prayed over me while I was sleeping, and I'd wake up and feel her tears on my cheek and shoulders. I've never forgotten that."

The persecution continued for more than 20 years, but Mike and his mother continued in their faithfulness. "As I continued to grow up, I learned from my mother to pray about the things in life that troubled me," says Mike. "I didn't understand why our family faced so many difficulties. As I struggled with these questions, my grades in school began to decline."

Mike decided to spend more time with God and began getting up at four a.m. to read his Bible and pray. "My true conversion came during these quiet times," says Mike. This decision prepared him for the challenging times that lay ahead.

Mike Yun

Left: Mike with his family in Korea.

*"I didn't understand why our family faced so many difficulties. As I struggled with these questions, my grades in school began to decline."*

## I CANNOT DO THIS TRAINING

After graduating from high school, Mike enrolled as a theology major at Sahmyook University in Seoul, Korea. In South Korea, most able-bodied males are required to serve for 18-21 months of service. Mike knew this lay ahead for him, but he chose to complete his studies as much as possible before he reported for duty.

"I was in my sophomore year and received notice that I had to report for my compulsory military service," says Mike. "Initially, I was assigned to an artillery unit in the northwestern part of South Korea and near the demilitarized zone. On clear days we could see the mountain ranges in North Korea."

Initially, Mike focused on how he could keep Sabbath as his day of worship. Then, on Sabbath morning, he learned he faced an additional challenge. "That day's schedule included training with guns, knives, and bombs," says Mike. "I immediately went to the officers and said, 'I can't get the training today.' They consulted among themselves and then admitted me to a military hospital. They thought I had a psychological condition."

During the following week, psychologists, pastors, counselors,

military chaplains, and doctors attempted to convince Mike to change his mind. Some described how David used weaponry and involved himself in war. They told him how Abraham had his own private military units. Others said the training wasn't dangerous or harmful, especially to Christians.

Through it all, Mike stood firm to his conviction. "Deep within me, there was a compelling, conscious calling that told me this wasn't the right thing for me to do," says Mike. "I would not train on Sabbath to harm another person."

The week ended, and Mike faced the officers once again. They wanted his answer—would he choose to complete the training or go to prison. When he said no, he would not train, the officers sent him to a military jail. "During the next fifty days, they tried to break me and change my conviction," says Mike. "The darkened cell was humid with very little light leaking through eight small windows that were mere slits in the wall."

During those fifty days, Mike's parents, many friends, and Adventist pastors came to visit him. "Their encouragement meant a lot to me," says Mike. "I appreciated

*"Deep within me, there was a compelling, conscious calling that told me this wasn't the right thing for me to do. I would not train on Sabbath to harm another person."*



that they chose to encourage me and support my decision, whatever that would be. They especially stressed I should not feel guilty if I chose to take the training.”

Initially, during those fifty days, confusion filled Mike’s mind. “I didn’t understand why I was here,” says Mike. “I asked for documents and information from the theology department at the university. I studied our history, background, and perspectives on military service.”

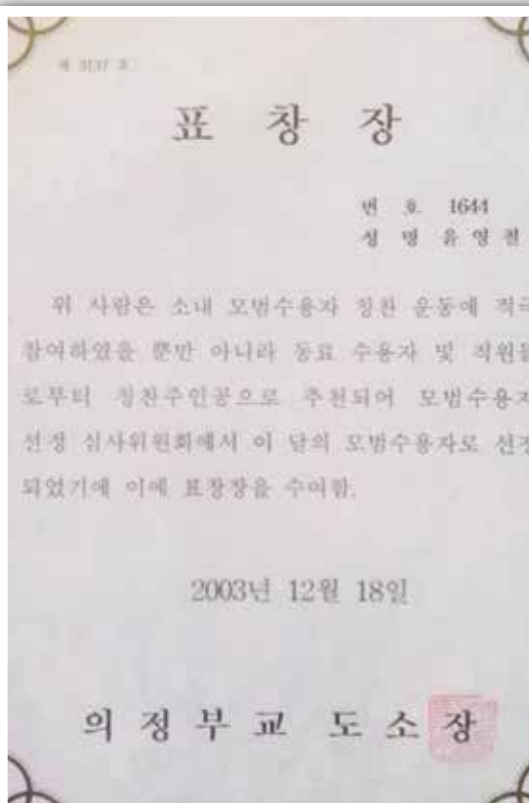
The day of Mike’s military trial arrived, and his stance remained the same. Nevertheless, he prepared himself to accept the judgment if it meant going to prison. “Initially, the court ruled I serve a three-year sentence,” says Mike. “Then while I was in prison, I received an award for good behaviour, reducing my sentence to twenty-three months.”

## AN APPLE TO THE FACE

At the outset, Mike’s sentence began in a military prison. The prison layout was like an army camp, but the barracks had bars on the windows, and there were prison guards. In the first weeks of his imprisonment, Mike focused on surviving his new reality.

This was a lonely time spiritually for Mike since he was the only Adventist in the prison. “During a visit from an Adventist pastor, he asked me if I worshipped on Sabbath by myself,” says Mike. “I said that every week I read my Sabbath School lesson, preached to myself, and worshipped by myself. Then, he encouraged me to visit one of the Sunday church groups for fellowship. I honestly hadn’t thought about it. But I wondered if they would accept me.”

An invitation from a cellmate overcame Mike’s hesitancy, and he attended a service. All seemed to be



While in prison, Mike received an award for good behaviour that led to a reduction in his sentence.

going well until the fellowship meal that the prisoners shared. “We were talking and eating, and suddenly an apple with a bite taken out of it slammed into my face, knocking my glasses off,” says Mike. “Startled by this, I looked around to see who threw it. Suddenly, a broad, muscular man with an angry face stood in front of me, asking, ‘What are you doing here? You’re a Seventh-day Adventist! Go to your own church!’ After that, I decided I wouldn’t return to the group again.”

During an encounter in the laundry room, another prisoner invited Mike to return and provide special music. “He was a drummer in the praise band and saw my



interaction with the other prisoner, says Mike. “He said music doesn’t have any denomination and that I should come.” Mike decided to go the next Sunday, and everything went well, but he thought it would be only that one time.

At the end of the worship service, an astonished Mike listened as one of the prisoners spoke. “This man was a high-ranking officer in the Air Force, and even though he was incarcerated, he still commanded respect from the other men,” says Mike. “He pulled me aside and said he wanted me to come and sing again. I told him some men didn’t want me there. His response to me was it wouldn’t be a problem. Then he escorted me to the pulpit and introduced me officially to the members.”

The officer addressed the group, “This is Yeongcheol Yun. We all know he’s here because he is a Seventh-day Adventist and chose to be in prison rather than fulfill his military service. I am privileged to listen to him sing and want to hear more. So, why don’t we accept him as a praise team member? If anyone has a problem with that, raise your hand.”

“I stood there in shock as not a single person raised their hand,” says Mike. “Then he turned to me and said you are officially a praise team member. So, for the next six months, our praise team led out every week.”

As the group became acquainted with Mike, they learned he’d studied theology at the university. “They asked me to teach the Bible but said I couldn’t preach about the Sabbath,” says Mike. “I said that wouldn’t be a problem, and I focused on the Gospels

and our Christian experiences.”

Those Bible studies changed hearts and minds. One day the group celebrated the parole of one of the prisoners. “This was the man who’d thrown the apple at me and told me I didn’t belong in the church,” says Mike. “He told everyone goodbye, and I was the last one he came to. He opened his arms and said, ‘Come here, my brother.’ As we hugged, he said, ‘I’m sorry I bullied you and threw the apple at your face. I’ve been blessed by your voice and your testimony. You’ve totally changed my point of view about Seventh-day Adventists.’”

As Mike reflected on what happened, he saw God had orchestrated good to come out of an onerous situation. “I told God, ‘I can survive with you, Lord. I see possibilities of what I can do in this prison.’”

Once he settled into the routine, Mike’s world turned over again.



Mike has had opportunities to preach all over the world, but some of the most meaningful moments were in the prisons among the inmates.

His prison sentence was longer than the required military service, which led to his transfer from the military facility to Uijeongbu Prison, a civilian facility.

## HE WALKED AMONG MURDERERS AND THIEVES

This transition brought contrasting hardships. “In the military prison, most guards thought I was a religious fanatic,” says Mike. “If I said I couldn’t work on Sabbath, they just left me alone. It wasn’t the same in the civilian jail. Sabbath observance was more difficult.”

The prison population was more dangerous, too, because it included gangsters, career criminals, and serial killers. “I continually had to explain to the prison officers and the other prisoners why I kept the Sabbath and refused to train with a weapon,” says Mike. “Although this was challenging, the opportunity to reach out to these individuals was unparalleled.”

A physical outlet for the prisoners in the Uijeongbu Prison was basketball. “There were several sports leagues, and I joined a

basketball league,” says Mike. “As the teams played against each other, I met other prisoners. One of the men I met killed several people when he was 17 years old. At the time I met Him-chan,\* he’d served 15 years. His body was covered with scars and tattoos and looked imposing.”

Following a match one day, Mike felt sorry for Him-chan and gave him a juice box. “Him-chan smiled at me but didn’t say anything,” says Mike. “Several days later, he came to me and said he wanted to study the Bible with me. Surprised, I asked him why he chose me, and he told me he’d been watching me for several months and thought he could trust me.”

Wanting to make sure Him-Chan was serious, Mike said there were a set of studies he could complete on his own, and then Mike would study with him personally. Him-chan took the challenge and completed the lessons, and Mike made good on his promise to study with him.

For the next seven months, Mike patiently answered each of Him-chan’s questions. Then, other prisoners began noticing differences.

*As Mike reflected on what happened, he saw God had orchestrated good to come out of an onerous situation. "I told God, 'I can survive with you, Lord. I see possibilities of what I can do in this prison.'"*



During his time in Jordan, Mike took the opportunity to visit the archaeological city of Petra.

He'd started to bathe, keep his cell clean, and even changed his diet.

On the day Him-chan was paroled, he told Mike his story. When he arrived at the prison, he was scared and determined to survive he'd beat everyone up who threatened him. During the day, around the other prisoners, he felt like a winner, but at night in his cell, he feared everyone would gang up on him and kill him. So, Him-chan began praying, "God, if you're alive, please protect me. If you protect me, I'll do something good for you."

He continued this prayer for ten

years and was convinced that God protected him. Him-chan then began to pray a different prayer—that God would send someone trustworthy to the prison who could help him change his life and study the Bible with him.

"Him-chan told me that the smile and juice boxes I shared with him opened his heart," says Mike. "It was a small kindness, but it changed the heart of a murderer."

Those words overcame Mike, and he knew, that once again, God used him. "I admitted to Him-chan that my heart had been opened, also. I was prejudiced against him when we first met, but God changed my attitude towards him."

### SEND ANOTHER ADVENTIST

During the two years of Mike's incarceration, he prayed regularly for a fellow Adventist to join him. "God never answered that prayer," said Mike. "I began to wonder if my prayer was selfish." Finally, the words of fellow prisoners helped him understand that God did answer, but not in the way Mike expected.

"On my final day in prison, the

*"Go out and do the same thing to the world as what you have done in here. People out there who need this message, which can save them from being sent to this building. So, we send you as a missionary to the world."*

other inmates held a celebration in honor of my release. They asked me to make a speech,” says Mike. “I told them that although my prison time was full of trials and difficulties, it was an honor to be with them. I told them I’d never forget them.”

The other prisoners had one message for Mike—“Go out and do the same thing to the world as what you have done in here. People out there need this message, which can save them from being sent to this building. So, we send you as a missionary to the world.”

### MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

His missionary journeys began in northeastern China, close to the North Korean border working at a Chinese-Korean restaurant. Although open evangelism is illegal, Mike used methods that he’d practiced in prison to tell the story of Jesus. “I learned to speak Chinese and how to handle

the materialistic philosophy of the educated persons in this area,” says Mike.” After a year in China, Mike returned to Sahmyook University to finish his theology studies. Following graduation, he remained there to work with the campus ministries program. He also had the joyous opportunity to witness his father accept Jesus and be baptized into the Adventist Church.

“While working in the campus ministries program, a friend told me of an opportunity to serve in the Middle East,” says Mike. “While I worked in Jordan for two years, I learned Arabic and made many Muslim friends.”

Today, Mike supports a Chinese church planting group in Rockville, Maryland. As he continues to carry out the commission his fellow prisoners laid on him, Mike sees the Korean proverb fulfilled in his life. At the end of hardship comes happiness.



Mike and his wife, Se, on their wedding day.



# TELL US YOUR STORY

In the days before digital photos, printed snapshots of people's stories were kept in photo albums. Those photos were the visual evidence of events, emotions, convictions, and legacies.

At the World Service Organization, we believe your story of service is important. We want to tell it in the pages of *For God and Country*.

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To share your story, contact the *For God and Country* editor at [ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org](mailto:ACMEditor@gc.adventist.org).

**YOUR LEGACY NEEDS TO BE SHARED WITH FAMILY,  
FRIENDS, AND THE CHURCH-AT-LARGE.**





# World Service Organization DATABASE LAUNCHED



**T**he World Service Organization (WSO) is part of the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Department. The WSO is the church entity that supports Adventists who serve their communities, militaries, and local, regional, and national governments. In order to support you, we need to know who you are and what you do. We have created a system to collect this information and store it securely. Now, we need you to create your profile.

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There is a special  
rest still waiting for  
the people of God.

Hebrews 4:9, New Living Translation

**Executive Editor:**Ivan Omaña, *D.Min., BCC, BCPC***Managing Editor:**

Deena Bartel-Wagner

acmeditor@gc.adventist.org

**Layout and Design:**

Emily Harding

*Harding Design***World Service Organization**

Ivan Omaña, Director/Endorser

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CONTACT US: Adventist World Headquarters National Service Organization/ACM, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Phone: 301-680-6785; e-mail [acm@gc.adventist.org](mailto:acm@gc.adventist.org); URL: <http://AdventistsInUniform.org>.

The National Service Organization is the official military-relations office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its primary mission is to provide pastoral care and religious resources to support the spiritual well-being of Seventh-day Adventist military-related personnel.

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**CORRESPONDENTS****East-Central Africa Division (ECD)**Samuel Mwebaza, *WSO Director*[mwebazas@ecd.adventist.org](mailto:mwebazas@ecd.adventist.org)**Euro-Asia Division (ESD)**Oleg Goncharov, *WSO Director*[ogoncharov@esd.adventist.org](mailto:ogoncharov@esd.adventist.org)**Inter-European Division (EUD)**Ventsislav Panayotov, *WSO Director*[ventsislav.panayotov@eud.adventist.org](mailto:ventsislav.panayotov@eud.adventist.org)**Inter-American Division (IAD)**Hiram Ruiz, *WSO Director*[ruizh@interamerica.org](mailto:ruizh@interamerica.org)**North American Division (NAD)**Washington Johnson II, *WSO Director*[washingtonjohnson@nadadventist.org](mailto:washingtonjohnson@nadadventist.org)**Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)**Jonas Arrais, *WSO Director*[arrajsj@nsdadventist.org](mailto:arrajsj@nsdadventist.org)**South American Division (SAD)**Lucas Alves *WSO Director*[lucas.alves@adventistas.org](mailto:lucas.alves@adventistas.org)

Josue Espinoza

[josue.espinoza@adventistas.org](mailto:josue.espinoza@adventistas.org)**South Pacific Division (SPD)**Sven Östring *WSO Liaison*[svenoststring@adventist.org.au](mailto:svenoststring@adventist.org.au)**Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)**Irvine Gwatiringa, *WSO Director***Southern Asia Division (SUD)**Ramesh Jadhav, *WSO Director*[rameshjadhav3383@gmail.com](mailto:rameshjadhav3383@gmail.com)**Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)**Rudi Situmorang, *WSO Director*[rsitumorang@ssd.org](mailto:rsitumorang@ssd.org)**Trans-European Division (TED)**Patrick Johnson, *WSO Director*[pjohnson@ted-adventist.org](mailto:pjohnson@ted-adventist.org)**West-Central Africa Division (WAD)**Elems Ugochukwu, *WSO Director*[elems@wad.adventist.org](mailto:elems@wad.adventist.org)

# GOD IS NOT IN THINGS OF SPACE, BUT IN MOMENTS OF TIME.

Abraham Joshua Heschel



World Service Organization  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
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