***Christian Persecution

GV2A***

1 Peter 2:13-17 says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God; that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." Notice that in verse 17 the structure of honoring all men, treating human beings in a proper and respectful way, to have a proper basis of affection for those who are in the brotherhood, in the family of God, rises to the climax of fear in God. And after having fear in God, then comes honor for the king. Lex Rex--law is king, because the supreme law of Scripture is above all of human efforts and human regulations.

**Two World-Views**

We face a very serious issue today, and it is going to come to a climax. Therefore it has come to be of enormous importance. There are two basic world-views, two views about what is real, what is really true. There are two views about how the universe works. There are two views about the nature of man; what man is like; and, where he came from. There are two views about the nature of society and the organization of society. There are two definite views about God and about the issue of the supernatural.

One world-view sees final reality as impersonal matter or energy which has evolved into its present form by impersonal chance--an impersonal force, an impersonal material world evolved by chance to where it is today. This is the basic expression as we have found in eastern mysticism with a variety of its doctrines of demons. This world-view largely dominates American society today. Don't kid yourself. It does. The way Americans look at the world today is through the eyes of Eastern mysticism. Most of them couldn't spell it out that way, but what they think and the way they think is exactly those principles. This view is the expression of secular humanism which means a system which places man at the center of everything and man's reason as the final authority--autonomous man.

The other world-view is the Bible view of a Creator who made a creation, a holy God, and who functions on His revealed absolutes of truth, and they are revealed absolutes of truth. So you have these two world-views: an impersonal material universe that has evolved by chance; and, a personal God who has created a world who has made laws and regulations by which it all is governed in the way it runs. This view about a personal God with absolutes of truth by which He governs this world is largely rejected by American citizens. People still go through the motions of religious activity and of talking about the Bible, but they have what they call double-think. They talk one way, but what they say is not what they mean. They think a totally different way. It's amazing how many Christians, how many people, are still going along, they go to church, they talk about the Bible, and they talk about God, but when it comes to what they believe and how they act, it is the world-view secular humanism that governs them--not the world-view of theistic creation. Today people do not feel compelled therefore to learn and obey the Bible as the final word about man, about life, and about eternity.

Now these two world-views stand in total opposition to one another. They are absolute in conflict, and they inevitably produce two totally different results. Some of you haven't caught on to that yet. Some of you in your own conduct believe that you can relate these two world-views. You believe that you can function on certain principles in our society--political, educational, economic, and religious--which though condemned by the Bible, you somehow are able to slough off that the Bible doesn't really say that and that the Bible doesn't really condemn that because your reason tells you that these are good things and you must pursue them. We have two great political parties in this country which are based on these two world-views. They are diametrically opposed to one another. They are bitter enemies. They will duel each other to the death. They cannot in any way be compatible. These world-views are totally different in their results. And the word to remember is "inevitable." They inevitably produce distinctively different results.

The change from the Christian world-view to the humanist world-view came about because Christians failed to maintain a divine influence in government and in the institutions of society. So we have to recognize that we as Christians got sick and tired of the way the world functions, and we washed our hands of them, and we failed to get out there and influence society with Christian viewpoints. So society drifted to the other world-view. We left a wide open field. Christianity is not merely a series of truths. It is the truth about all that is, and all that God demands, and its application to all human activities. It is the truth. There is nothing else that is true besides Christianity in terms of what God has said. Christianity condemns the secular world-view. It presents only one world-view. In other words, anybody who knows anything about automobile mechanics knows that there is only one way that the thing works. There is only one way that it will function. It was made that way. I don't care how much you want to change it, you can't make it work any other way. It doesn't make any difference that you have a crisis in the supply of gasoline. You cannot decide you're going to use water, and the machine will still work because it wasn't designed that way. It cannot work that way.

Now that's what these two world-views are doing. The secular humanist view and a whole political viewpoint pretends that there is no God out there; He has not told us what His rules are; His rules cannot be understood; the Bible is a confusing book; we can't interpret it; and, therefore we are left to the best of reasoning that the human mind can come up with as our guide. Man becomes his own god. Now liberal theology tried to mix these two world-views, and it ended up on the side of humanism expressed in theological terms. That was the only difference. Liberal theology holds the world-view of secular humanism. The humanist world-view today controls the media, the educational institutions, and the government. That's where we are today. We have come a long way. We perhaps have gone beyond the point of no return. The humanist world-view controls what you hear on television; what you read in publications; what you hear from political commentators; what you learn in your educational institutions; and, what you find functioning in government. The humanist world-view that has substituted for our original Christian world-view is in charge. Americans have been deceived by the powerful consensus that these forces present into abandoning the laws of Scripture.

How many of us are willing to stand up and say, "The news media is wrong? Cronkite doesn't know what he's talking about." How many of you are willing to stand up and say I know a whole lot more than Cronkite does about the facts of life? How many of you are willing to stand up and say that the educated degreed presidents of great universities don't know what they're talking about from a pot of beans? Are you ready to do that? How many of you are ready to stand up and say that the great political forces of our nation are not informed but they are acting in ignorance? These are powerful forces, and they're all lined up against you. And you're going to say that you're right and they're wrong? That's what Noah did. He kept leaning over the railing of his ship as he kept working on it. And these people kept yelling things up at him. Noah would go back and say, "You're wrong. You're wrong. You're wrong. And you better change your mind." And they wouldn't change their mind. Because Noah spoke from God's point of view, he proved he was right.

That's one of the things I love about political discussions and religious discussions. One of these days soon we're going to find out who was right and who was wrong. I discovered that people don't like to hear him say that. I can't tell you how many times I've had a cutting remark directed back to me when I've said, "Well in the near future, it'll all be over and we're going to see who's right and who's wrong. One fellow said, "Well that's an arrogant attitude to take." I was very proud of the position I took. That's one of the things I like about Christianity. I look forward to finding out who's right and who's wrong, but that's because I know what the Bible says. Therefore, I can be very confident about it. But when you have all these powerful forces against you, you're just like Noah. You couldn't stand in the face of the crowd and say, "You birds are all wrong. You don't know what you're talking about. I'll give you the right story. Here's the scoop."

Only when you know what God has said can you dare do that. So there is perhaps hope for us today. Americans have been received by this consensus. Humanism, of course, has no final authority for values and laws and so it always leads to a condition of chaos. That's the problem. When you can't say that abortion is right or wrong, what do you do? You're going to have chaos. When you can't say that homosexuality is right or wrong, what do you do? You're going to have chaos. You've got to let everything happen and let everything go. You've got to permit everything.

That is what the French Revolution operated from. They operated from the fact that everything goes. Man's reason can handle it. It became so chaotic they had to bring in a dictator, Napoleon. Totalitarian controls always come to straighten out the chaos. In England, they went through the same thing at the time of the French Revolution. But by the grace of God, England was swept by the great Methodist Revivals that brought people back to God and brought people back to salvation in Jesus Christ. And the result was that the revivals changed the spiritual condition of the people and it infected society. It influenced their attitudes toward society because they started applying the Bible to the issues of society. So all of the same problems existed in England. Don't forget. All of the harsh living conditions, all of the abuse of people, all of the results of the industrial revolution that made animals out of people, all of that burgeoning type of capitalism brought the same painful effects to English society that it did to the French. But because the French cut themselves off from the orientation of the anchor of the Word of God, they went into chaos. But the British were influenced by the Word of God and they made the transition peacefully into correction, and England became the empire upon which the sun never set. If you don't have an anchor point, you're going to have a dictator.

**The First Amendment**

The United States is going far down the road of the loss of freedom because of its marriage to humanism. Today the First Amendment is being used to silence the attempts of Christians to sound a warning against what is happening. Be well aware of the fact that the First Amendment had two purposes. Our founding fathers made it very clear. Madison wrote one of his federalist papers and said I'm going to tell you exactly what the First Amendment is all about. So we knew exactly what these men intended by the First Amendment. The First Amendment had two purposes: One, it made clear that there would be no established national church for the thirteen United States. That was the first thing the First Amendment says. There can be no national church of the United States like there was the Church of England. They said we're not going to have a church of the United States like they have the Church of England, as people are taxed to finance the operation of the Church of England. We will have no church of the United States.

Now many of the states just had state churches. You should be aware of that. I think something like 9 of the 13 colonies had state churches and they were supported by taxpayers' money. But the Bill of Rights did not apply to the states. They applied to the federal government. That's how they were written. They were written as restraints upon the federal government. That's what they feared. The states were left sovereign to operate within their own authority. But in time all of these states also followed the national pattern and removed state churches so that they were no longer financed by taxpayers' money.

The second thing that the First Amendment did was to establish that government would not hinder or interfere with the free practice of any religion. It would not hinder or interfere with the free practice of any religious expression. One, we would not have a church of the United States; two, we would not interfere with any practice of religion. Interestingly enough, today the First Amendment is being used to silence the church and biblical Christianity. Anytime Christian principles are sought to be brought in to our society and to influence the government, you know what the scream is, don't you? "That's wrong. We have separation of church and state. The first amendment forbids it." And unless you're informed, you're going to fall for that deceit. The First Amendment does not, and never was intended to, forbid Christian influence on the government. It was never designed to separate divine viewpoint items from the actions of government and society. In fact, our founding fathers were very clear that without the guidance of the Word of God, society could not survive. There was no basis for a moral orderly society.

**Pluralism**

So, what we have come to now is the idea of pluralism in this country. Pluralism in religious view is also being used to squelch the influence of Biblical Christianity. The word pluralism is one that you're all acquainted with, and there was a time when pluralism was an expression to recognize that reformation Christianity was no longer the dominant force in the United States. When the United States was founded, when the Constitution was written, biblical Christianity as you and I know it was the dominant force. The country was a fundamentalist country. But in the middle of the 19th century, we had this great influx of immigrants, and they came from non-reformation countries. Suddenly, the Reformation biblical Christianity was no longer the dominant expression of religion in the United States because you had all these others that had come in. So we established the principle of pluralism, that government is going to protect all of these people to express their religious views however they may wish providing they do not violate basic Biblical moral laws.

That's why the Mormons got into trouble. The Mormons could believe and practice anything they wanted to. But once they came along with plural marriages, multiple marriages--polygamy, then the government stepped in and said, "No, the higher law of God forbids that. We cannot permit you to make a human law accordingly." It's a beautiful example of how our government once functioned. And you just swell up with pride to realize that when the Mormons came along, and they said we're going to have a polygamous society where one man has several wives, the government came along and they could make a case, not just on sociological reasons--that this is bad for society, but that it was forbidden by the Word of God. They were told, "You can't do that. That is against the laws of God." And that's the way a government should function. Consequently, our country was protected and favored and blessed by God.

But when all these other viewpoints came in, we said we have pluralism, and we're going to maintain freedom of expression. But now Pluralism means something totally different. Pluralism is now used to mean that all religious views are equally valid, and it's just a matter of preference whichever one you pick. This is what has been happening in the United States. Pluralism now means that any crazy religious kook comes along, and he's just as good as anybody else, and everybody just talks around as if there was no difference. Now this is very serious. If the Bible means anything in what it says, it is very clear that anybody who wants to go to heaven can only go to heaven on the basis of a gift from God of eternal life. It's a grace basis all the way. And if you come along, and I know that you're in a religious system that operates on the concept of getting to heaven by some human work, I'm concerned for you, and I'm not going to meet with you, and associate with you, and pretend, "That's wonderful that you have that kind of a religious viewpoint."

When I look at a Mormon, the thing that I immediately see is a person that unless he changes his views is going to be in the lake of fire forever. I don't look at pluralism as meaning, "Just walk through here. It's all good," like it was some rally day smorgasbord table that we have and you just walk down the line and take a little of this and pick a little of that; it's all good; just take whatever you want; and it's all equally good. It is not equally good. This concept of pluralism is being imposed upon the American mentality. We are no longer horrified at the concept that some people are heathen; that they are pagan; and, that their views have doomed them to the lake of fire.

The result of this attitude toward the First Amendment separating spiritual influence from government, this idea of pluralism that all religious expressions are equally valid, has resulted in our government moving to the world-view of humanism and our courts making sociological law to fit the current tastes of the fallen sin nature--not law based upon what God says, but law based upon what people want and think. In the matter of ethics, we think of the Episcopalian minister Joseph Fletcher who a few years back made history by declaring his concept of situational ethics. He said that the Ten Commandments are valid provided that you add the word "ordinarily" after each commandment. What he came up with was that the situation determines whether you should do any of those things or you should not. You cannot say that you should never do them. Joseph Fletcher is a classic example of where we have come to when we have cut loose from the world-view of a Creator God who has standards that He has informed us of and which we must abide by.

On the part of the legal system, the Supreme Court in its decision on abortion is a classic example there. The abortion law of the Supreme Court came when there was no longer any sense of submission to the higher law of the Bible. It was an arbitrary decision of an elite group of intellectuals who were in a position of power and who considered themselves qualified to decide what is good for society at that point in time, and imposed it on everybody by their will as a force of law. They themselves admitted that there was a great deal of question on the nature of the fetus--medical, theological, sociological, and every other way. Therefore there was no basis for them to make the decision. Had they been men of God, had they been biblical people, they would have said that life is destined to be a human being in the image of God. It is a genuine bonafide human being from the moment of its conception on, and therefore must be treated accordingly.

A Supreme Court has to say to themselves, "If we are wrong about this, and that aborted baby is an act of murder just like killing a newborn baby, then we have imposed on society an evil which will bring divine condemnation upon us. Therefore we must go slowly. Something like 80 percent of Americans at the time said that abortion is wrong. All 50 states had laws against it. But here was an elite group. Because they have a world-view that says there is no authority above us that can tell them what to do, and there is no Bible God that they must be accountable to, they, as an elite group, can make the decision, and they did. And 12 million wonderful little (and now you add the name of the kids you know, because that's what happened) have been slaughtered on sociological law.

There was a time in our history where an act like this would never have been perpetrated. In 1973, when that law was passed by the Supreme Court, that was the high watermark of degeneration that had begun 50 years ago as we began to transition from one world-view to the other. Once you cut yourself off from the God who gives rules, then there's no possible way for you to ascertain what ought to be from what is, and to decide which is right. So here's the Supreme Court acting in a totally secular humanistic way. People today are only distressed about individual things, and this is the problem with us as Christians. We're distressed about pornography. We're distressed about the blatant open flaunting of homosexuality. We're distressed about the lack of responsibility, authority, and performance in a public school setup. We're distressed about family breakdown. We're distressed about violence in the streets. We're distressed about the abortion thing. All of these are little pieces. We don't have it all together. We realize that it's all the product of this world-view. The pieces are the inevitable result of the world-view. "What is truth?" Pilate said. The truth is the world-view that the Bible presents. It is *the* truth.

So you and I as Christians have to fulfill our role of being the preserving salt in society during this era of Satan's dominion over the world. We have done poorly. The only people that have hopefully done any good are the Bible doctrine preaching churches, and thank God we're one of those. But, by and large churches have been zeros because they have not stood up to the issues of our society and to the issues of our socialist party because they have not known the Word of God. Public tax money is permitted to be used now to promote these very views.

**Francis Schaeffer**

I want to read you a paragraph from Francis Schaeffer's Christian Manifesto. He says, "At that same time public television was running a program called 'Hard Choices,' a program totally slanted in favor of abortion. The study guide which accompanied the series 'Hard Choices' speaks clearly for the total view of a materialistic final reality. You paid for this. Here's what the study guide said: The vast majority of people believe there is a design or force in the universe; that it works outside the ordinary mechanics of cause and effect; that it is somehow responsible for both the visible and the moral order of the world. Modern biology has undermined this assumption even though it is often asserted that science is fully compatible with our Judeo-Christian ethical tradition. In fact, it is not. To be sure, even in antiquity, the mechanistic view of life, that chance was responsible for the shape of the world, had a few adherents, but belief in overarching order was dominant. It can be seen as easily in such scientists as Newton, Harvey, and Einstein as in the theologians Augustine, Luther, and Tillich. But beginning with Darwin, biology has undermined that tradition. Darwin in effect asserted that all living organisms had been created by a combination of chance and necessity--natural selection. In the 20th century, this view of life has been reinforced by a whole series of discoveries. Mind is the only remaining frontier, but it would be shortsighted to doubt that it can one day be duplicated in the form of thinking robots, or analyzed in terms of the chemistry and electricity of the brain. The extreme mechanistic view of life, which every new discovery in biology tends to confirm, has certain implications:

"First, God has no role in the physical world. Second, except for the laws of probability and cause and effect, there is no organizing principle in the world and no purpose. Thus there are no moral or ethical laws that belong to the nature of things--no absolute guiding principles for human society. The mechanistic view of life has perhaps only one tangible implication for ethics. We should feel freer to adapt our morality to new social situations but we are already fairly adept at that. As a result, ethical choices are likely to become more difficult--not because people are less moral, but because they will be unable to justify their choices with fairy tales. Here is public tax money being used not only in favor of abortion, but to teach the whole view of materialistic mechanistic universe shaped only by chance with no final purpose and with morals and law purely a matter of social choice. The Judeo-Christian view is pushed into the category of fairy tales."

So here's what we're faced with. The American founding fathers knew exactly what they were doing when they formed the government which was based upon the authority of God's higher law. The fixed guidelines of the American Constitution have now been undermined by non-Christians who seek to subject society to the natural law of the sin nature of man. By the grace of God, in the year of our Lord 1980, a national election stalled out the material energy chance world-view of humanism which has dominated our society and a ruling major socialist political party. The party in power, with its philosophy of socialism over the past 50 years--socialism, of course, presented with euphemisms, words that cover it up--lost control as the dominating party. The other party, which stands for capitalistic free enterprise, suddenly in 1980 came to power and then began the tedious and painful process of dismantling the power of the federal government over the lives of people. Suddenly a window was thrown open and the fresh breeze of freedom and personal enterprise swept across the groggy American society. We hadn't known such freedom and we hadn't known such potential enterprise in decades.

A knowledgeable analyst estimated after the 1980 election, which put President Reagan into power, that 20 percent of the people who put President Reagan into power voted on the basis of conservative beliefs and ideals. But that 80 percent of them put him in power because they were frustrated over economic conditions. Now the painful removal, and there hasn't been much of it done yet, but the painful removal of government from its role of confiscation and redistribution policies, and the end of this compromise with the enemies of human freedom in communist countries has brought on the inevitable pains of withdrawal. Those pains are there. It's coming closer and closer to each of us. Somewhere along the line, the financing of people is drying up and they don't have the money to spare for God's work with all the important things they have to spend on themselves. It is not without reason that we're having all this economic trauma as we get off of the authority, the control, and the humanistic regulations of the government.

There is a great deal at stake. Dr. Francis Schaeffer has written in his book The Christian Manifesto that this window has been opened, and he has observed that the media have centered in to discredit all of the attempts to change the role of government back to the position that the Bible says government has as the umpire who maintains order so that people can exercise their freedom. To suggest that the government should not confiscate from those who have, to distribute to those they think should have it, is in some parts of the world a shocking thought. The concern, the fear, of standing up to government and saying, "You're wrong. You are a thief. We are sick of it, and we're going to stop it."

Dr. Schaeffer in his book, after observing the fact indeed that a window has been opened that holds some hope that there is a possibility of turning this all around, closes with this section: "I hope the window does not close. I hope those with a humanistic world-view who have increasingly controlled our culture for the last 20, 30, 40 years, or something like this cannot close the open window with all of their efforts. But if they do, if they take over with increased power and control, will we be so foolish as to think that religion and the religious institutions will not be even further affected than they have been so far? I wonder how many of us are aware of the cases that the churches have faced in the last 10 years in various places. The things that have been brought into courts of law should make our hair stand on end. Do you think that in such a case as I have portrayed, and may it not happen, that the Christians and the Christian institutions will not be even further affected?"

We haven't talked about resistance yet. That has to come in another section. You may not quite be ready for what the resistance may mean. If this window closes you can bet that Berean Academy, Berean Youth Clubs, Berean tapes and publications: all that Berean Church stands for is going to start facing some resistance like you wouldn't believe. There are a lot of people among us who are going to peel off and say, "Not for me."

**Court Cases against Christians**

Dr. Schaeffer continues: "Robert L. Thompson, Attorney at Law, lists the issues pending this year and which are up for final adjudication during the coming decade before the United States courts, administrative bodies, executive departments, and legislatures." This was 1981. Here is what are in the courts of law now being attacked, and some of these haven't been settled yet.

1. Is a minister of the Gospel liable for malpractice to a counselee for using spiritual guidance rather than psychological or medical techniques? A pastor is now being sued because he was talking to a man in terms of spiritual guidance to solve his personal problem. He went out and committed suicide. The family is suing the pastor because he didn't refer him to a psychiatrist. One of those who-do voodoo witch doctors of Freud's because they believe that he would have solved the problem.
2. Can a Christian resident's house in a college have the same standing as a fraternity and sorority house for purposes of off-campus residency rules?
3. Can Christian high school students assemble on the public school campus for a religious discussion? There a lawsuit against that.
4. Can Christian teachers in public schools meet before class for prayer? A group of teachers are under indictment for doing that.
5. Can Christian college students meet in groups on a state university campus?
6. Can HEW require a Bible college to admit drug addicts and alcoholics as handicapped persons?
7. Can a church build a religious school or a day care center in an area zoned residential?
8. Can parents who send their children to religious schools not approved by a State Board of Education be prosecuted under the truancy laws? Now remember, all of this is in the courts.
9. Is an independent wholly religious school entitled to an exemption from unemployment taxes as our church owned schools?
10. Will the state enforce anti-employment discrimination laws against the church which, in accordance with its stated religious beliefs, fires a practicing homosexual staff member? A Presbyterian Church (I think it's in California) is being sued because they fired an assistant pastor, and another church because they fired an organist whom they discovered to be homosexuals.
11. Can seminary trustees refuse to graduate a practicing homosexual?
12. Can a city continue its 40-year practice of having a nativity seen in front of the city hall?
13. Can zoning laws be used to prevent small group Bible studies from meeting in homes? A group in one state were meeting in homes for Bible study, and suit was brought against them for holding religious meetings in areas zoned for residential gatherings.
14. Can a court decide which doctrinal group in a church split gets the sanctuary?
15. Must a religious school accept as a teacher an otherwise qualified practicing homosexual?
16. Can a church be fined by a court for exuberant noise in worship?
17. Can a state department of health close a church-run juvenile home for policies that include spanking?
18. Can religious solicitation in public places be confined to official booths?
19. Is an unborn fetus a person and entitled to constitutional protection?
20. Can the Ten Commandments be posted in a public classroom?
21. Can students in public education have a period of silent meditation and prayer?
22. Can Christmas carols be sung in a public school?
23. Must an employee who believes he should worship on Saturday be permitted a work holiday on that day in order to worship?
24. Can the graduation ceremony of a public high school be held in a church?
25. Can a state official seize a church on allegations of misconduct by dissident members and run the church through a court-appointed receiver? California did that.
26. Can the state set minimum standards for private religious school curricula?
27. Is religious tax exemption a right or a privilege, and if it is a privilege, are the exemptions an unwarranted support of religion by the state? One of these arrogant newsman (I forget which one it was) commenting on the Bob Jones case very confidently told millions of viewers that because Bob Jones University is tax-exempt, it has received a subsidy from the United States government, and therefore the United States government is entitled to make regulations concerning the policies of Bob Jones University. And I said something to the television screen at the time. I often talk to the television screens. Where did he get off making a declaration like that? The very courts are now deciding whether exemption is a gift from the government.
28. Should churches be taxed like any other part of society?
29. Can federal labor laws be used to enforce collective bargaining rights and unionization in religious enterprises?
30. Can the state require a license before a religious ministry may solicit funds for its work?
31. Are hospitals, schools, counseling groups, halfway houses, famine relief organizations, youth organizations, homes for unwed mothers, orphanages, etc. run with religious motivation, or are they secular and subject to all control that secular organizations are subject to?"

All of those are cases, believe it or not, which are in the courts. You're saying, "That's crazy. How would they have the gall, the nerve, even to bring up some of those things and to think that the government has a right to move in?" You don't have too many Lester Roloffs who stand up and say, "I'll go to jail. I'll stand in the door. I'll fight you to the hilt. You will not move in on my enterprise. And you'll do it, if necessary, over my dead body." The Bible authorizes resistance, as the early apostles demonstrated, to the laws of civil authority when they conflict with the laws of God. Where would we stand if we are faced with that? If the window closes and the Socialist Party is put back into the saddle, just get ready. And those of you who have children, pity them for what is ahead.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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