

Doorway to Hope

The Newsletter of Hope Church, P.C.A.

Our Vision: Training People for L.I.F.E

April 2019 · Vol. 22, No. 1

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Weakness is the Way

A familiar refrain comes to us from a *Peanuts* cartoon. The 'ever-kind' Lucy comes upon a distressed Charlie Brown and asks what he is worrying about. Charlie: "I feel inferior." "Oh," Lucy replies, "You shouldn't worry about that. Lots of people have that feeling." Charlie asks, "What, that they are inferior?" "No," Lucy responds, "That you are inferior."

Ouch. Nothing like kicking a man when he's down. Yet I wonder, what do you hear when the Bible diagnoses you and me as weak? What pricks your ears when we come to our weekly time of confession on Sunday mornings? Do you rejoice in the reminder of Judges that we, like Israel, "again did what is evil in the sight of the Lord." Then the pastor in the sermon stands up and proclaims the Bible's description of us: "We are sinners!" And in case you had any shred of pride still standing, listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians, "God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."

Is Paul's God just another Lucy? "Christian, you are inferior." Why is *weakness* gloried in? Celebrated? Encouraged? And made a regular reminder, as a necessity for the Christian life?

Fresh off a hospital stay, I hear the word weakness differently. Being driven in our van to the Emergency Room, physically unable to stand up straight, and at times barely able to lift my arms, I am positive that I do not like weakness! And if you are human, neither do you. We've been trained from childhood to grow up to be big and strong, to be world changers, to demand that life move us from strength to strength. It all depends on me. Listen to the anti-gospel lyrics of Whitney Houston, in her song "Greatest Love of All":

Everybody searching for a hero People need someone to look up to I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs

A lonely place to be And so I learned to depend on

And so I learned to depend me...

I decided long ago Never to walk in anyone's shadow If I fail, if I succeed At least I'll live as I believe No matter what they take from me They can't take away my dignity...

We hate weakness. Because when we are weak we are dependent.

And dependence is for children, failures and fools. Where is the dignity in dependence?

Jesus' disciples despised weakness. James and John come to Jesus and demand a place of strength (Matthew 20:20-28). "Jesus, when you are sitting on your throne, let us sit on your left and on your right!" The request was another way of saying, "We want to be in charge with you. We want power and strength." The other ten disciples were not thrilled at being left at the bottom of the disciple bin. They were ticked. Jesus rebuked James and John first, "You do not know what you are asking." And then all of them together saying, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

On the night that Jesus died, God's King was asked, "Tell us, Jesus, are (Continued on page 2)

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you the Son of the Living God? Are you the Christ?" Behind the question lies these Old Testament expectations of strength: Are you the King who will put all of God's enemies under your feet? Will you be wearing the royal robe, dipped in the blood of your enemies, marching in the greatness of your strength (Isaiah 63:1)? Will you be executing judgment on the nations, shattering kings in your wrath (Psalm 110:6)? The very idea of a Messiah, a Savior, and a King ruling and reigning demands the dignity of strength.

Where do you see the Son of Man ruling and reigning from on Good Friday? Nailed to a tree. Weakness is the way. Jesus does not sit on a throne above human weakness and misery. He bore it. On his left and on his right were not James and John but two thieves, one repentant and one indignant. The throne of power and authority prepared for Jesus before the foundation of the world was the weakness of the cross (Revelation 13:8). Christ crucified.

See, weakness is the way God builds his church and gathers to himself an army of soldiers who are strong when they are weak in Christ. Welcome to the church, my friends. We storm the gates of hell with a limp (Matthew 16:18), armed with our inability, the power of the gospel and the aid of the Holy Spirit.

My friends, don't be ashamed of weakness. For there is dignity and honor and glory and power in admitting our need of help. It is the Jesus way. Even God's Son, who had the power to raise the dead and calm the storm said, "I can do nothing on my own." (John 5:30) Confession of our inability is the place where the Spirit of Christ enters in and lifts us higher than we could ever imagine: resurrection, and a seat with Jesus in the heavenly places, sitting on a throne we don't deserve.

What kind of community would Hope Church be if we



leaned into our weakness? We'd be a community of friends living the Jesus way: living by faith in God's grace. This is risky. Christian counselor Dan Allender points out, "To admit we are foolish, weak, and in need of repentance gives the vindictive and self-righteous camp plenty of ammunition to turn against us and to turn others against our leadership. But the alternatives to living in and living out truth are far worse: we either hide from truth or we choose to spin our sin and our story." We either pretend to be strong and suffer alone or be honest about our weakness in community with Jesus and the communion of saints. The power of God's gospel is unleashed when we are honest with Jesus and one another about our sin and weakness and need of help.

Let's reflect together on these questions together as we follow Jesus by faith. Are you able to admit weakness and ask for help? Do you have another Christian in your life to confess and pray your weakness with? Do you talk about your weakness with your non-Christian neighbors? Often we assume that the best witness for our neighbors is one of profanity- free strength, where we show the power of the gospel to make me nicer than the grumpy pagan. There is some truth in that. Jesus commanded us and empowers us to be salt and light and to love our enemies. But what if we tried talking about Jesus with our neighbors about our weaknesses and the assurance we have of God's power and love in the midst of it? Blessed are those who mourn...

I do not feel blessed in a hospital gown, yet Christ is greater than my feelings.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:35-39)

Follow Jesus with the triumphant limp He bought for you with His weakness. His grace is sufficient, even when you are groaning together with all of creation for the redemption of our bodies.

¹Quoted in J. I. Packer, Weakness is the Way Dan Allender, Leading with a Limp

Interact in Worship

Colossians 3:16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

For centuries it has been realized that words, melodically tied to music, serve as an aid to verse memorization. It has also been long apparent that the type of music a given individual embraces can shape their personal contentment and long-term outlook on life. Tied to every piece of music and the verbal harmonic phrases the composition may contain is an important story that surrounds its creation. This article is written to briefly focus on some biblical aspects of music, while providing in more detail one example of how historic events, resulting story lines and the power of music expression shaped one of our most beloved hymns.

Within the pages of the Old and New Testament are many verses that substantiate the power of music. Whether the music occurred in the form of singing or was rendered as notes emerging from an instrument, God's word proclaimed both the reason and result.

In the Old Testament both Moses and David used spiritual songs and Psalms to bring scriptural learning and personal joy to the LORD'S people. Listed are a few of these verses: Exod. 15:1-21; Judg. 5:1-31; 1 Sam. 18:6-7; Deut. 32:1-43; 2 Chron. 29:25-28; and the 150 verse hymnbook of Psalms, with Ps. 22:22, Ps. 33; 1-22 as biblical examples.

In the New Testament the singing of spiritual songs was a part of the early Christian church, with some of those same songs still employed for liturgical Christian worship: Luke 1:46-55; Luke 1:68-79; Luke 2:29-32; Luke 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:15-16; Rev. 4:8; Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Eph.5:19; Col. 3:16; Acts 16:25 and Heb. 2:12.

Throughout history the spiritual nature of Christian music has been the most meaningful when the story behind the given lyrical piece was known. The delivery of such music has also been the most uplifting when the lives of the given writers and artists clearly reflected their personal love for God and the unmerited grace they had embraced through Jesus Christ.

Each of you have your favorite hymns and gospel songs. This writer too has many. In this article our focus is on the beautiful number found on page 691 of our Trinity Hymnal: "It Is Well With My Soul". The words to this precious work were penned by Horatio G. Spafford in 1873 while the musical score, entitled **Ville Uu Havre**, was written by Philip P. Bliss in 1876.

Our hymnal carries only four of the original six verses which over time experienced some minor modifications. As national announcer Paul Harvey would have exclaimed, "Now for the rest of the story."

"It is Well with My foul" Original lyrics

"But God will redeem my soul from the power of death, for He will receive me." -Psalm 49:15

Vs 1 When peace like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to **know**, * It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Refrain

It is well, (it is well), With my soul, (with my soul), It is well, it is well, with my soul.

*V*² Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, and hath shed His own blood for my soul.

*v*₃ My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole,

Interact in Worship

Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

*v*₄ For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live; If Jordan above me shall roll,No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life, Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

*V*₅ But Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait, The sky, not the grave, is our goal; Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord! Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul.

V6 **A**nd Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll; The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, **A song in the night, oh my soul.****

Mr. Horatio Gates Spafford was born in Lansingburgh, Rensselaer County, New York on October 20, 1828. He reportedly was the son of *Gazetteer* author Horatio Gates Spafford and Elizabeth Clark Hewitt Spafford. The senior Spafford had gained some prominence in federal government and was said to have been a correspondent of President Thomas Jefferson.

Young Horatio trained as a lawyer, specializing in medical jurisprudence. Following his years of study he traveled west and settled in Chicago, Illinois to practice law. After a period of time he became the senior partner in the firm of Spafford, McDaid and Wilson. Their offices were located in the Republic Life Building on LaSalle Street in Chicago and from all reports were thriving by the 1860's.

H. G. Spafford also became well known as a business man investing in a large amount of real estate much of which was located in the center of the city. During this period Spafford was listed as an elder in the Fullerton Avenue Presbyterian Church. In Chicago he became well-known for his clear Christian testimony. On September 5, 1861 he married Norwegian-born Anna Tuben Larssen (1842-1923), who had been born in Stavanger on 16 March 1842. She had immigrated to America with her parents at the age of four. He and his wife Anna were active in their church, and their home was always open to visitors.

The Spafford home was established in Lake View, a north-side suburb of Chicago. At their home the Spafford's hosted and sometimes financially supported many guests. Horatio had been active in the abolitionist crusade

and the cottage was a meeting place for activists in the reform movements of the time such as Frances E. Willard, president of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union. Horatio became a very close friend of evangelist Dwight L. Moody, who had centered his world-wide activities in Chicago and was conducting religious revivals in America and Europe.

Records indicate that tragedy struck the Spafford's happy home in February of 1870 when their 4year-old son Horatio G. Spafford. Jr. died suddenly of pneumonia. The Spafford family appeared in

the 1870 US Census for Lake View, Cook
County, Illinois (page
17/279). At that time
the document indicated they had 3 children:
Annie, Maggie & Bessie. They were viewed
as well-to-do, with a
Governess, and real
estate valued at
\$38,000 US dollars.
After the census, a

fourth daughter, Tanetta, was born.

Not unlike the Old Testament

^{* &}quot;know" (at the end of the third line) was changed to "say".

^{** &}quot;A song in the night, oh my soul" (last line) was changed to "Even so, it is well with my soul"

servant Job, tragedy continued to beset the Spafford's. On October 8 thru 10, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire swept through downtown Chicago, devastating the city. Properties lost included many owned by Horatio (including his law office). That day, 220 people lost their lives, and around 90,000 were left homeless. Despite their own substantial financial loss, the Spafford's sought to demonstrate the love of Christ, by assisting those who were griefstricken and in great need. Horatio and Anna Spafford worked tirelessly for two years to help the victims of the conflagration put their lives back together. His finances took another hit during the Panic of 1873 financial crisis.

In 1873, Spafford decided his family should take a holiday somewhere in Europe, and chose England knowing that his friend D. L. Moody would be preaching there in the fall. Lastminute business obligations caused him to postpone his own sailing, so he sent his family ahead to New York City to board their ship. This included his wife, the children's Governess and their four daughters (eleven -year-old Anna "Annie", nineyear-old Margaret Lee "Maggie", five-year-old Elizabeth "Bessie", and two-year-old Tanetta).

At 2:00 am on November 22, 1873, while crossing the Atlantic on the French steamship *Ville du Havre*, their ship collided with the British iron clipper Loch Earn. Suddenly, all of those on board were in grave danger. Anna hurriedly brought her four children to the deck. She knelt there with Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie and Tanetta and prayed that God would spare them if that could be His will, or to make them willing to endure whatever awaited them. The Ville du Ha*vre* sank in the north Atlantic in just 12 minutes. Of the 315 passengers on board 226 people lost their lives, including all four of Spafford's daughters. Among the survivors was his, wife, Anna Spafford, and the Governess, Emma Lorriaux. A sailor, rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down, spotted a woman floating on a piece of the wreckage. It was Anna, still alive. He pulled her into the boat and they were picked up by another large vessel. Another of the ship's survivors by the name of Pastor Nathaniel Weiss, later recalled Anna saying, "God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

The next day the US ship *Tremontain* reached the scene and rescued passengers and transported them to Wales 9 days later. Upon arrival in Cardiff, Wales on December 1, 1873, Anna sent a cable to her husband with the devastating message: "Saved alone, what shall I do?" Spafford then sailed to

England to join his grieving wife.

Following the sinking of the Ville du Havre, Anna gave birth to three more children. On February 11, 1880, their son, Horatio Goertner Spafford, died at the age of three, of scarlet fever. Their daughters were Bertha Hedges Spafford (born March 24, 1878) and Grace Spafford (born January 18, 1881). Bertha Spafford, would later recount that during her father's voyage, the captain of the ship had called him to the bridge. "A careful reckoning has been made", he said, "and I believe we are now passing the place where the Ville du Havre was wrecked." That night in his cabin Horatio G. Spafford drafted "It is Well with My Soul".

Those who knew him said that during this tragic period in his life Horatio's faith in God never faltered. He later wrote to Anna's half-sister, "On Thursday last, we passed over the spot where she went down, in midocean, the waters three miles deep. But I do not think of our dear ones there. They are safe..... Dear lambs." His lyrics may well have been inspired by II Kings 4:26. That manuscript in Spafford's own handwriting can be viewed at the Library of Congress.

(To be continued in the next edition of Doorway to Hope.)

Interact in Worship

Good Friday is the day when you can do nothing. Bewailing and lamenting your manifold sins does not in itself make up for them. Scouring your soul in a frenzy of spring cleaning only sterilizes it; it does not give it life. On Good Friday, finally, we are all, mourners and mockers alike, reduced to the same impotence. Someone else is doing the terrible work that gives life to the world.

Virginia Stem Owens, quoted in Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter

Christianity begins not with a big do, but with a big done. We begin our Christian life by depending not upon our own doing but upon what Christ has done. Until you realize this you are no Christian; for to say "I can do nothing to save myself; but by His grace God has done everything for me in Christ," is to take the first step of faith.

From "It Is Done," by Watchman Nee, quoted in **Bread and Wine**

Christ the Shepherd

"after a trip through the Elan Valley, Wales" By Jane Tyson Clement

O Shepherd on the hills of light, in the far pastures where we stray may thy voice lead the flock aright through perilous and stony way.

May all the lone and scattered sheep who wander far and heedless roam through valley dark and hillside steep hear thy voice calling, and come home.

And may we to one fold be turned, all at thy bidding gathered in, and where of old thy watch fires burned may new fires leap and flare again.

O Shepherd on the hills of light, may we acknowledge thee alone who holds us through the bitterest night and always, always calls us home.

August 16, 1972



Foster Loving Relationships



Snapshot on Children's Ministry By Melanie Combs





Things are progressing well for Sunday School and Children's Church so far this year. Thank you to all our teachers. **We are so happy for Hannah** but also sad to be saying goodbye to her as she gets married and moves to Florida in May. If you feel you'd like teach a Sunday School class, we could use your help for the Kindergartners Hannah has been teaching. May God bless you and your future husband, Hannah!

Here are a few others things to be thinking about:

- Camp Hope: Wild About Reading will be taking place August 5-9, 2019.
- If you would love to be a part of Camp Hope this year, please talk to Melanie Combs.
- If you have ideas for or would love to volunteer to work with our older students, please talk to Melanie.
- The mirror you see is to symbolize seeing **you** right on this page!:) We need **YOU** to be able to continue the children and youth ministries we desire to provide for our children. We are small but we are mighty when we stick together to do the work that needs to be done. Please be prayerfully considering how you could be involved.

Easter Word Search

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APOSTLES
CHRIST
CROSS
CROWN
CRUCIFIXION
HOLY
JESUS
KING
LAMB
LOVE



MARY
REDEMPTION
RESURRECTION
RISEN
ROMANS
ROOSTER
SACRIFICE
SALVATION
SAVIOR
THORNS

Foster Loving Relationships



May 10-11th

Friday Evening (for those who want to sleep over and spend time chatting around a campfire)

Saturday's Theme

Following in His Steps

What are some of the attributes in Jesus that we should be emulating?

Love Forgiveness Prayer Servanthood Suffering Overcoming And More...

Guest Speaker: Marilyn Merry of Redeemer Reformed Church

A dear woman, retired from teaching and special education, mother, 56 years a faithful wife, breast cancer survivor...

Ladies— Come and worship and learn with us. Cost is minimal since we meet at the Cornick Home in Queensbury.

Brochures will be out soon and registration will begin on April 15th.

What Is God Up To?

By Rae Whitehead

That is a question we've automatically asked after years in Jim Wever's Sunday School class. And his next question quickly follows: "What are you here for?" When life goes awry, we usually ask, Why? And then we realize that God is up to something. But what? We don't know the answer; but sometimes God gives us glimpses.

So, when we traveled to New Zealand to visit our daughter and her family, and David ended up in the hospital with bladder and back spasms, we were flummoxed (though so thankful for our daughter's care and competence, and good medical provision). David had already given out all the Gideon Bibles we'd brought with us. We contacted some fellow Gideons there, who provided us with more of the little testaments. And David gave them out: to caretakers, hospital roommates. He prayed with many in the hospital-- fellow-sufferers who were so open, so hungry.

After more hard times, more pain and some painful goodbyes, we were back in the States, and in the hospital again, this time in Saratoga. And the pattern continued: prayers with roommates, Bibles given out. We've been amazed at how many fellow-believers there are everywhere, Christians who are eager to talk about their faith, to tell us their stories. And we're amazed (why should we be?) by the openness of others to accept Bibles, to be prayed for, to share their lives.

And now we're back home, with more pain, more challenges—and patience hard to come by! But we know that there's a reason for it all. There's a Plan. Perhaps the only way we can learn to trust is to be put in situations where we HAVE to trust! (Of course, we have to trust for each day, each breath, but we tend to take those gifts for granted.) We are more aware of the Cloud of Witnesses, of the prayers of the saints which surround and up-hold us all the time.

And we are so thankful for you, our brothers and sisters in Christ at Hope, who have been praying for us throughout our ordeal, and who continue to support us with meals and visits—and love! Thank you!

Extend God's Hope

Gretchen Skye Herrick Serves with the Peace Corps in Benin, Africa

Dear prayer warriors,

My apologies for many months without being in touch. I appreciate all your love and support and prayers despite my own lack of communication. The pause in updates was partly due to transitioning from training to life in the village where I will live and work for the next two years (and



where I have no internet/data connection).

Praise God, I am settling into life in my village very well. I have been there nearly 2 and a half months, and it already feels like home. Thank you so much for your prayers regarding my transition. My first days were certainly difficult, with mixed feelings of excitement to explore and meet people and at the same time gripping fear of venturing out of my house where everything was unfamiliar and uncomfortable. However, the sense of anxiety and second-guessing my every move subsided much more quickly than I expected.

My day-to-day life is so joyful. I am appreciating having limited interaction with technology (I have no data coverage and am only able to charge my phone and power bank once a week when I go to town for market day). Instead of turning to Netflix when I want to relax, I read a book. Because my village is on the

smaller end of Peace Corps placements, it has been easy to quickly feel a part of the community. The primary school for our village has 150 students, so that gives you an idea of the size of the community. Even if I don't know someone's name, I recognize all the women and kiddos who get water from the pump in the middle of our village. I spend a lot of time on my

bike, regularly biking an hour each way to the nearest town with a big weekly market where I buy vegetables. While learning the local language is still frustrating, it is also rewarding because my neighbors are so supportive and my progress is so apparent.

My first couple weeks I struggled to have consistent time with the Lord, often falling into the trap of "It's late, I need to get going...I'll just pray later", and then of course "later" never

comes. However I turned a new leaf with the New Year. I had been thinking for a while about reading through the whole Bible this year (something I have never done before). It is so easy to use the excuse of being too "busy" to spend consistent, dedicated time with the Lord and his word. I realized that, of any time in my life, now is when that excuse will be least valid. Peace Corps volunteers talk all the

time about having loads of free time in their villages, particular volunteers working in agriculture like myself because our work is so unstructured. So with the help of the Bible Project's videos and reading guide, I have been praying through a Psalm and working through the Old Testament every morning (I am just starting Judges). I feel like I have learned so much already about God's greater story

and purpose in creation, and how truly all of scripture points to the gospel of Jesus.

Also feel free to look at my blog (if you haven't already) to read more generally about life in my village and see some pictures: https://whereisskye.blogspot.com

Prayer points:

- Praise God for a relatively easy and fast transition period into life in my village.
- Thank God for a strong sense of peace and joy in the Lord regarding my time with this community.
- Pray for continued revelation from the Holy Spirit as I journey through the Old Testament every morning.
- Pray for wisdom and direction from the Lord as I consider starting some kind of Bible study with some teenage girls from my village's church. These girls speak French well enough for me to communicate with easily but do not own their own Bibles or know how to read well or at all.
- Pray for grace in learning the local language of my community, Konteni.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,

Skye



Extend God's Hope



Congratulations, Eben and Colin!

You are Invited to Spa Christian School's Special Events

Family Night of Worship and Prayer

at Hope on Saturday, April 13th from 7:00-8:30

Children's Spring Concert

Friday, May 17th 6:30-7:30 Saratoga Abundant Life Church



Next Doorway to Hope Deadline is May 15th.

CONDOLENCES

Our love and prayers go out to Leona Digges as her dear husband, William Digges went to be with the Lord on January 20th. Please continue to uphold Leona and her family before the Lord.

RETIREMENT

Congratulations to Ray Gibbins who retired from the United States Post Office after 24 years of faithful work.



BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Paul Miller
- 4 Miriam Emerson
- 9 Ryan Bowman
- 10 Steve Brumagin
- 12 Anders Trestick
- 17 Katherine Childs
- 20 Steve Turner
- 23 Maureen O'Leary-Laskey

ANNIVERSARIES

- 19 John and Sharon Milne
- Fred and Ruth Richards

ENGAGEMENT

Congratulations to Hannah Mailloux in her recent engagement to Christian MacPherson. Hannah will be moving to Florida in early May in preparation for her May 18th beach wedding.

DOORWAY TO HOPE STAFF

Sally Jenkins, Nate Thompson, and Rae Whitehead

Hope Church Presbyterian Church in America 206 Greenfield Avenue Ballston Spa, NY 12020



Palm Sunday Worship April 14th, 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday At Hope with Redeemer Reformed April 18th, 6:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday April 21st Pancake Breakfast, 9:00 Morning Worship 10:00 a.m. He Is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!