



January 1, 2016

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

A Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountain Region

The New Year in Christ...

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. --2 Corinthians 5:17

The old year is passed. It was not the best of years on the national front: mass shootings and terrorism world-wide, a growing crisis of refugees fleeing the wars in the Middle East, multiple incidents of police brutality coming to light, civil unrest, and the dawn of presidential election cycle that speaks not so much of hope for the future but the fear in which many of us currently live. Oh, there have been some good things too: gas costing less than \$2 a gallon, low unemployment numbers and the release of a new "Star Wars" movie to name a few. But by and large- the thing that strikes me is that 2015 overall was a year to survive...not a year to celebrate on the "national" or "world-wide" front.



But now comes the New Year: a time of hope, of promise, of new life. Can it be a year unlike this one that has passed? Can it be a year in which lives are transformed, a year in which we take real strides to curb gun violence in our country, a year in which our leaders talk about our promise and our possibility as a nation and not just about protecting us from our fears, a year in which we begin to take hold of our responsibility for the planet and make real differences in how we live? Can this be a year lived in Christ?

The answer of course is "Yes it can, if..." It can be that kind of year if we turn from our in-grained values and actions and begin to walk in the light of Christ. It can be if we will walk by faith... faith first in Christ, faith also in the good will of others, faith in the possibility of the future and faith in ourselves. It can be if we seek to love others as ourselves. It can be if we seek first Christ's kingdom—a kingdom where all are welcomed at the table, a kingdom in which the value of a poor man is the same as the value of a billionaire, a kingdom in which the needs of the other are always foremost in our thought. Yes, this year can be lived if Christ if God's people will simply humble themselves and pray, if we will seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14)... then new life will spring forth. But...

Can we allow the old to pass away? Can we admit that the paths we are walking and the fears that are guiding us are leading us in the wrong direction? Or is our cultural attraction to the "undead" so deep, that we will keep bringing up the old again, and again, and again? Will we continue to do what we have always done and get what we have always gotten?

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Would you like to receive our monthly newsletter?

Find out how on page 11.

My prayer for you, the church leaders and churches of ABC of the Rocky Mountains is that 2016 will be a year lived “in Christ”... that the old will pass away and the new will come. For it is only in this way, that the world will also be able to claim this promise, this hope...this Great Salvation.

*In the Name of Christ who Saves Us,
Steve Van O
Executive Minister*

Going Forward By Faith

Read: Heb. 10:35-11:39; Jn. 17:9-11;
and Matt. 28:20

As we go forward into a New Year, in many ways it will be like New Years in days gone by. Some will approach the New Year with the excitement, hopes and possibilities of what the New Year may bring!! Others will approach the New Year with fears, doubts, anxiety and concerns. Yes, this New Year too will come with promise, uncertainties and trials. These possibilities are a constant part of life's uneven journey. However, for all who claim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our lives there is yet good news as we go forward in faith as this journey unfolds. The word of God declares, *“He will continue to make real His power and presence in our lives and in every circumstance as we have need as this journey unfolds.”* (Matt. 28:20) God's word invites, encourages, and even commands that Believers go forward by faith if we are to know and experience His power and presence during the unfolding of this journey.

Hebrews chapter 11, is commonly referred to as, “The Roll Call of Faith.” The names of those that appear in Hebrews 11, never saw their faith realized in their life time, but they trusted in the power of God's word for that which God had promised to deliver. The promises of God declared through His word, were enough for them to hold fast to their faith as they encountered the challenges of life and faith as they lived into the promises of God!

As we go forward into a New Year, the God that Moses declares is, *“From everlasting to everlasting”* (Ps. 90:1), is still our God!! And even more, Jesus Christ has issued an “eternal promissory note” with power and presence to all who trust Him for time and eternity!! It reads, *“.....And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (Matt. 28:20) And, even more, He will continue to have communion with every Believer on a continual basis until time becomes eternity!! The Sovereign God of heaven and earth, who made real His love for us through His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, will constantly guide us through the challenges of life and faith, meet us at the depths and point of our needs, and give us



strength and courage for all we shall encounter as we strive to live into our faith!! What a “Mighty God” we serve!!! Ain't that “Good News”!!! As we go forward in faith and trust God for all things, we like the ancients of the Holy Scriptures, will experience His power and presence in our live!!! (Amen.)

Let us pray: **Father God, as we dare to trust You for time and eternity, help to draw near unto you every day that you grant us grace. Help every Believer who claims the name of Jesus Christ to dare to**

live into Your Holy Word that we might realize the fruit of our faith!! Thank you Father for all that You have already done in each of our lives and the hope that we have in Jesus Christ!!! In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we pray!! Amen.!!

*Rev. Larron D. Jackson, DMin
Denver Cluster-Ministry and Mission Coach*



A Christian Response to the News

Like most, I'm puzzled by how to respond to the complexities of today's terrorist and refugee news. Answers in these times should not come easy, however, because so much is at stake. The challenge is to keep the big picture in mind.

A couple things to remember: The people of Israel were refugees. A quick read of the exodus story reveals how history so easily repeats itself.

The newly founded nation didn't have many friends, either, as they made their way to the promise land. In addition, Jesus was a refugee. He fled with his family to Egypt to avoid Herod's wrath. During the Christmas season, we celebrate God's protection of a refugee family. By the way, Jesus was also a refugee from heaven, wandering through created streets in human flesh.

What's more, Paul, writer of a majority of the New Testament, was a terrorist. He persecuted the early believers in Jesus. Look what God did with *that* story. God took a religious zealot and changed him into Christianity's most vocal advocate. What's more, his conversion took place on a road to Damascus. And speaking of Syria, we often forget that when early Christianity was moving west it was also moving east. Syrian Christianity is one of the great hidden secrets of most church histories, both ancient and modern.

Being Christian forces us to remember certain truths. Fundamentally, God is a God of love, a reality made not so obvious from some of his current adherents. The story of Jesus, which we Christians call good news, is still relevant today and as good as it has ever been. To forget the power of God's love, even in today's environment, is to compromise its ability to move us into godly action.

Let me suggest a few assumptions to bring to the current public square conversation. First, pity doesn't help but compassion, as messy as it is, never fails. Mercy can be ugly and grace unpredictable. Nevertheless, these are means of both Jesus *and* his followers.

Second, Christian values cannot be forced into political solutions because they cannot be separated from Christian living. We live under a false assumption if we believe that the best we can accomplish as American Christians is to get political policies that fit well within the belief system of Christianity. This reduces Christianity to a legalism that ignores grace.



Third, it's not so much the answers one comes up with but the questions one asks. When it comes to terrorism and refugees, are we asking the right questions? Maybe instead of asking, "How can we remain safe?" we should be asking, "How can we remain faithful?"

Fourth, the media is not always the best source for fully understanding an issue. Wisdom demands more than the media can provide. In fact, prayerful consideration of all sources of information should be consulted. I am overjoyed by the reports such as: Christian conversions in Berlin, Germany; the front-line work of Samaritan's Purse as they welcome refugees out of water-logged rafts; the World Refugee Relief organization as they coordinate efforts to respond nationally and internationally.

Finally, a response we have heard before: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Anxiety does funky things with human disposition, but as the Bible reminds us, fear is neutralized by love.

Our Christian response can vary as much as our individual personality, gifts and talents. But if we keep some of these big-picture parameters in mind we will be in a better position to speak as instruments of peace in a peace-hungry world.

Dave DeMott
Pastor
FBC, Grand Junction



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Camp Wyoba

Dear Wyoba Family & Friends,

I just finished closing up camp after another great year on the mountain. It is hard to believe that we have already started planning for the 2nd Annual WyobaFest. I am pleased to announce that it will be held centrally at **First Baptist Church of Casper on January 15, 2016 at 5:30pm**. I am writing to share the WyobaFest vision for this event and to let you know the ways that you can be a part of it.



Extra, Extra Read All About It...

The WyobaFest Committee is trying to get the community involved in this event. One way we are doing that is to have a program for the event where we are asking local businesses, individuals, and churches to buy an ad in the program. If you or your church would like to purchase an ad, please contact Jenita at mjmjpack@vcn.com.

What will we eat?

This year we are asking churches to host a food table. Some of your churches have already volunteered for a food table. Each church will be responsible for bringing food enough for 125 people, keeping the table stocked, and clean-up. There is a kitchen where the food can be prepped beforehand and Casper also has great restaurants that can cater the food you are responsible for. Also, each church that brings food will get a free ad in the program.

This year we are going to have pies for dessert. We need all of the amazing pie bakers out there to bust out their secret recipes and whip up their masterpieces...chocolate, pumpkin, blackberry...oh, those are my favorites.

Will there be a silent auction again?

Yes! We will be having a silent auction again, since it was a great success last year. Churches and individuals are invited to bring items for this. The more creative the item the better. Items last year ranged from quilts to church signs, from compost to a wild horse tour.

So what are we raising money for this year?

We raised approximately \$10,000 at the 2015 WyobaFest. This money will be put toward the foundation and septic of the new Snack Shack. We are planning to break ground on this project this spring. At WyobaFest 2016 we are raising money for Phase 2 of the Snack Shack which is the actual building itself. Our goal is to raise another \$10,000 at this event! It is going to take a lot of dedication and people to make it happen, but I believe that all things are possible with God.

Will it be fun?

Of course! Do you remember "potty time" last year? Well, you are going to want to make sure you bring some cash and checks...perhaps brainstorm about who needs some extra special treatment...that's all that I can say about that.

Want church bragging rights?

This year we are going to start the **1st Annual Camp Cash Crusade** between churches. Bring as many coins or bills as you can to help your church win a special prize! Winning this competition will give your church bragging rights for a whole year!

What is the theme?

The theme this year is "Mountaintop Testimonies". We will be hearing from various campers, board members, and guests of Wyoba and how God has worked in their lives through this ministry. Also, we will be celebrating my ordination. It has been my honor and privilege to serve Wyoba for the past four years. First Baptist Church of Lander believes in my calling and has graciously ordained me into the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Would you come be a part of celebrating God's calling on my life and the amazing ministry of Camp Wyoba?

The Hotel for overnight accommodations is the Ramkota Hotel, located at 800 N. Poplar St., Casper, WY 82601. Phone number is 307-266-6000. Cost is \$79.99 per night. Please tell the desk that you are with Camp Wyoba to receive this special room rate.

Serving Him,

*Rev. Amber J. Shearer
Camp Wyoba Administrator*

ABCRM Disaster Relief Ministry Report

As many of you know, ABCRM now has a fully equipped disaster relief trailer. Thank you to those who have donated tools, money, and gift cards to have the trailer outfitted. The trailer is prepared to respond to floods, fires, and tornados. The next thing we need is people to volunteer to be second responders to disasters in our region and surrounding states. If you have already signed-up online, then we have your information and will be in contact soon.

After we receive your information, we will send you some training information. We are offering online safety training. In the future we will schedule various training events or short local mission trips to practice and get familiar with the equipment. This is a great ministry for those who enjoy serving others with their hands and do not mind getting down and dirty!

Please keep this ministry in your prayers as we continue to develop and recruit volunteers. I would also be happy to answer any of your questions.

Sign-up to be a volunteer here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/abcrmrelief>

Serving Him,

*Rev. Amber J. Shearer
Disaster Relief Coordinator*

An Invitation to Pastor Bill and Carol Wolfe's Retirement Open House

**Sunday, January 17, 2016
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Highland Park Baptist Church
2315 N. Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO**

719-633-6479

highlandpark@pcisys.net

www.highlandparkbaptistchurch.net



Europe Study Tour 2015

This picture of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was on the wall of one of the schools we visited in Europe.

I sit pondering, at the end of 2015, on all the fortunate events that I have shared and been part of. However, the one that presents itself in every conversation I take part in is my adventures with the Europe Study Tour 2015. I continue to be astounded at how the trip expanded my knowledge on not only my two favorite preachers, Rev. Charles Spurgeon and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but on the History of ABC and the life of Jesus, along with motivating me to listen to God's voice as I go through my spiritual journey.

During this journey I encountered individuals whom had obtained a faith so powerful that I had to reevaluate my own. I was simply amazed at how much pride was taken in the education system despite the low enrollment at the local schools. As I experienced different cultures, beliefs, history and hotels my awareness grew; I was able to understand the different faces that life contains. I was genuinely proud of all the American Baptist missionaries, they showed true passion for their work, compassion for those whom which they interacted, a love for those with a saturated soul.

In the words of Dr. King, "The breath of life is that dimension of life in which we are concerned about others." ABCRM thanks.



*Rev. Katherine Farley, Co-Pastor
Faith Community Baptist Church*

10 Facts You Should Know About American Baptists

The 1.3-million members and 5,500 congregations of American Baptist Churches USA share with more than 42 million Baptists around the world a common tradition begun in the early 17th century. That tradition has emphasized the Lordship and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believers' baptism, the competency of all believers to be in direct relationship with God and to interpret Scripture, the importance of the local church, the assurance of freedom in worship and opinion, and the need to be Christ's witnesses within society.



The following facts are representative of the tradition and practice of American Baptists.

1. *American Baptists believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God that serves as the final written authority for living out the Christian faith.*

American Baptists celebrate the fact that belief in Jesus Christ assures salvation and eternal fellowship with a loving God. The events of the first Easter week are the cornerstones of our faith: the death of Christ, in which He took upon Himself the sin of the world, and the Resurrection, which gave proof of His triumph over sin and death. Holy Scripture always has been for American Baptists the authoritative and trustworthy guide for knowing and serving the God who is revealed as Creator, Savior and Advocate.

2. *For American Baptists the local church is the fundamental unit of mission in denominational life.*

Baptist roots date back four centuries to a people seeking the opportunity to worship God as individual members of freely organized and freely functioning local churches. Baptists always have maintained the need for autonomous congregations, responsible for articulating their own doctrine, style of worship and mission.

3. *American Baptists partake of two ordinances: believers' baptism and The Lord's Supper.*

Baptism, an act of full immersion following Christ's example, is undertaken by those spiritually mature enough to understand its profound, symbolic significance: resurrection to new life in Christ. Through The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, the bread and cup that symbolize the broken body and shed blood offered by Christ recall God's great love for us—just as they did for the disciples on the eve of Christ's crucifixion.

baptism

4. *American Baptists believe that the committed individual Christian can and should approach God directly, and that individual gifts of ministry should be shared.*



American Baptists hold that all who truly seek God are both competent and called to develop in that relationship. They have rejected creeds or other statements that might compromise each believer's obligation to interpret Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and within the community of faith. American Baptists also celebrate the special gifts of all believers, testifying that God can use each of us in ministry.



5. *American Baptists take seriously the call to evangelism and missionary work.*

American Baptist worldwide mission work is a response to Christ's call to "make disciples of all nations." Through the efforts of our missionaries in partnership with others, ministries of evangelism, healing, education and development have made Christ's love known in the U.S. and around the world.

6. *American Baptists support religious freedom and respect the expressions of faith of others.*

As a people whose forbears came together in response to intolerance, American Baptists have cherished freedom and pursued it for millions around the world. Manifestations of that ideal include supporting separation of church and state, advocating for people everywhere to be guaranteed the right to worship free from discrimination, and lifting up respectful dialog as a healthy means to understanding.

7. *American Baptists acknowledge that God's family extends beyond our local churches, and that God calls us to cooperative ministries.*

Early Baptists saw that the effectiveness of their ministries would be greater through cooperation with other believers. Today within our American Baptist regions, churches work with each other and with denominational staff and in local and regional ecumenical arenas to increase the vitality and scope of their ministries. That outreach extends worldwide through our relationships with the Baptist World Alliance, the National Council of the Churches of Christ, the World Council of Churches and other groups.

8. *American Baptists have been called to be Christ's witnesses for justice and wholeness within a broken society.*

American Baptists have been led by the Gospel mandates to promote holistic change within society, as witnessed by their advocacy of freed African Americans following the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, women in church and societal leadership, ecological responsibility, and many other issues. While not all of one mind as to how to deal with challenges, American Baptists do affirm the need to follow Christ's example by being actively involved in changing society.

9. *American Baptist Churches USA celebrates the racial, cultural and theological diversity witnessed within its membership.*

American Baptist Churches USA today is the most racially inclusive Protestant body. Represented in our churches are equally diverse worship styles, cultural mores and approaches to Scriptural interpretation. The resulting challenges and opportunities have made us stronger — through fellowship, respect, mutual support and dialog, all based on a belief that unity in Christ involves growth and understanding.

10. *American Baptists heed the biblical call to renewal and the need for a vital witness in a new millennium.*

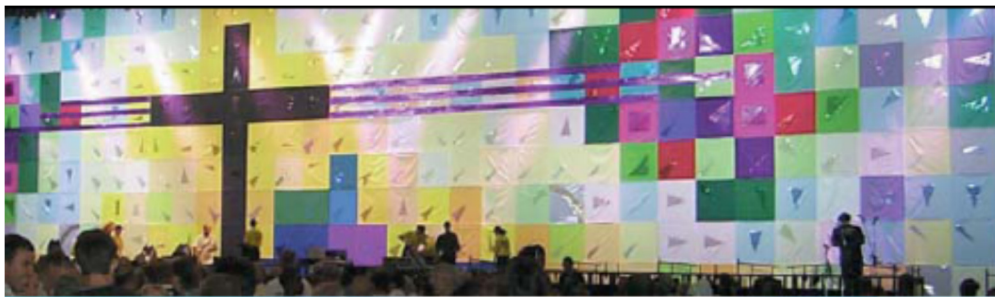
As people of faith, American Baptists seek renewal and revitalization. Informed by their history and tradition, motivated by contemporary needs and challenges, and strengthened by God's leading and the example and sacrifice of their Savior, American Baptists seek to bring a transforming witness to an uncharted future.

Additional information on American Baptist Churches USA resources, tradition and mission is available on the American Baptist Churches USA Website — www.abc-usa.org — or by calling the American Baptist Churches Mission Center at 1-800-ABC-3USA.

The brochure, produced by the Office of Communication/General Ministries, is made possible through United Mission

The 10 Facts You Should Know About American Baptists brochure can be found at the following link:

<http://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ABC10FactsBrochure2.pdf>



PO Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

Church Personas: Fat Ones. Fit Ones. New Ones.

Awhile back, after almost a decade of going regularly to the gym, I took 6 months off. Fortunately, I returned after realizing my clothes were strangely shrinking. I was drifting away from being fit.

During my break, I discovered if I didn't work out daily and continued to eat what I'm accustomed to, I would change (FYI: *physical growth is not the same as spiritual growth*).

When I returned to the gym, I noticed the same people there; and it hit me that there are 3 distinct groups at the gym:



1. **The fat ones.** The overweight; they go regularly trying to lose pounds but they eat what they want moments after they leave. It just doesn't work.
2. **The fit ones.** They understand it's a lifestyle thing (inside and outside of the gym). They get it and it shows.
3. **The new ones.** They'll stop soon once they don't see results. They simply give up (it's hard to get in shape)! January is full of these people.

The church is like the gym. Like physical change at the gym, people realize they need something different in their spiritual lives. Church has a solution to offer! People start attending and want [benefits](#). You have three similar groups:

1. **The spiritually fat ones.** They try to get their act into gear but think that simply going to church is enough; while living like the world after they leave.
2. **The spiritually fit ones.** They actually live the lifestyle all the time and reap the rewards. It's an "inside" and "outside" thing.
3. **The new ones.** People "trying" church for a while but not seeing any rewards. It's hard to get into spiritual shape! They'll leave soon unless you intervene.

It's so critical to identify these groups. At the gym, you can imagine how differently you need to talk to each of the groups to motivate them and keep them attending regularly. Your church also needs to identify the groups so you can [communicate](#) differently to them.

And when they choose to leave? Be sure to keep the communication relationship intact. They'll eventually realize they're getting spiritually flabby — and they'll respond to your [invitation](#) to return.

It's good to get back into shape. Physically AND spiritually. [Let's do it. Together.](#)

Mark MacDonald
Senior Brand Strategist, Creative Director, Blogger
BeKnownForSomething PinPointCreative

Originally published at BeKnownForSomething.com (who holds the copyright); an organization dedicated to effective church communications while helping individuals and ministries become known for something influential; so they'll point to Christ. Printed with Permission.

Opening the Door to Better Lives Shepherd's Gate Counseling Center

At Shepherds Gate, our mission is to meet the diverse needs of the front-range community. To that end, we provide individual, couple and family counseling in areas such as:

- Adolescent Issues
- Anxiety and Stress
- Depression
- Grief and Loss
- Marriage and Family
- Men's Issues
- Parenting
- Premarital
- Women's Issues



SHEPHERD'S GATE
COUNSELING CENTER

Costs: our services are available on a sliding scale ranging from \$5 to \$40 per 50-minute session, based on household income.

Counselors: clients receive professional expertise and personal attention from our qualified staff of graduate counseling students. Our counselors have dual training in counseling and theology and are educated in the most current therapy techniques. They are selected for their Christian commitment; however, our counselors are able to work with people no matter where they are on their spiritual journey. All counselors are supervised by counseling faculty, licensed professional counselors or licensed psychologists.

For details or to make an appointment call 303-762-6987.

Shepherd's Gate Counseling Center
6399 S. Santa Fe Dr.
Littleton, CO 80120
303-762-6987
www.ShepherdsGateCounseling.org

DENVER SEMINARY

IRS Year-End Giving Guidelines	Report for 2015	Report for 2016
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in church offering in December 2015	X	
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in church offering in January 2016		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in January 2016 but "backdated" to December 2015		X
Checks written and deposited in church offering in December 2015 but "postdated" to January 2016		X
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in the mail and postmarked in December 2015, but not received by the church until January 2016	X	
Checks written in December 2015 and deposited in the mail in December 2015 but not postmarked until January 2016, and not received by the church until January 2016		X

ABC-USA Mission Giving Guidelines		
Monthly cut off is the 8th of each month (except for weekends, holidays, and December year-end). Checks received prior to the 8th of each month are posted to the prior month. For example; checks received October 9 through November 8 are posted to October.		
	Report for 2015	Report for 2016
Checks received in Region office through January 12, 2016, but dated 2014	X	
Checks received in Region office through January 12, 2016, but dated 2015		X



ABC-USA 2016 Directory/Planning Calendar

Please note that the ABC-USA 2016 ABC Directory/Planning Calendar is available online. The Directory/Planning Calendar helps to connect American Baptist local churches with the larger denominational family, and provides churches with dates important to American Baptist Churches from October 2015 through April 2017.

The calendar is located here: <http://www.abc-usa.org/2015/10/15/free-download-2016-2017-abc-planning-calendar-directory/>



Calendar

January

- 1** New Year's Day *Region office will be closed*
- 9-17** Chiapas Mission Trip
- 15** Wyoba Fest @ FBC, Casper
- 17** Bill Wolfe's Retirement Open House
- 18** MLK Holiday *Region office will be closed*
- 21** CrossWalking Movie Night
Central Baptist Church
- 22-23** MLC Meeting
- 29-30** ABWM Colorado State Board Meeting

February

- 15** Presidents Day *Region office will be closed*
- 16** Mission Committee



The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

Animal Sacrifices.. blood .. burnt offerings.. don't eat buzzards, or bats... don't touch dead bodies, and don't eat rats badgers.. or bugs.. no moles no mice no.. POPTARTS?



Janice starts out every year like so many intending to read thru the Bible.. BUT.. becomes bogged down around the time Leviticus shows up on her schedule.

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Send submissions to
akeys@abcrm.org*

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