

ARE WE LETTING A PERFECTLY GOOD CRISIS GO TO WASTE?

NUMBER 149

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It is generally acknowledged that the most likely time for a person or family to consider a new church is during a time of crisis or high stress. Conventional times of crisis or high stress are marriage, divorce, birth, death, and loss of your job.

Pandemics don't come along that often (fortunately) to make the list, but Covid-19 certainly represents crisis and high stress for a lot of people. That being the case, how is your congregation going to deal with this situation. Are you going to be smaller in attendance after this is over and blame the crisis, or are you going to act positively and take advantage of the crisis?

In most times of personal crisis, you can go visit with someone and comfort them. That "face time" can be of benefit to your congregation as it creates personal awareness. This crisis is the opposite in that you cannot visit with someone and comfort them. As a practical matter they are not in grief, they are frequently just dealing with being alone just like you are.

As the objective of the church is the Great Commission or in other words taking the Gospel to others, taking advantage of this crisis should relate to that. But, how do you take the Gospel to others when you can't go see them?

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THANKFUL IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

"Give thanks in all circumstances," (1 Thes. 5:18a)

One might protest, that's a pretty tall order. In the middle of searing pain, incredible losses, overwhelming grief and along with all the other irritating, inconvenient and limiting experiences we have a hard time being thankful. It's simply not possible to be thankful for everything that happens in this life. But notice that it doesn't say "for" all circumstances, it says, "in" all circumstances.

God is in the character business. Above and beyond all else, he will use every circumstance

IT IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE MOST LIKELY TIME FOR A PERSON OR FAMILY TO CONSIDER A NEW CHURCH IS IN A TIME OF CRISIS.

to increase our faith, build courage and endurance and provide lessons for life. He is building spiritual muscle, mental and moral clarity and strength that will sustain our souls to the end.

"I walked a mile with pleasure,
She chatted all the way
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with sorrow
And never a word said she.
But Oh! The things I learned from her
When sorrow walked with me."

Gertrude Robinson Ross

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ARE WE LETTING A PERFECTLY GOOD CRISIS GO TO WASTE?, P. 2

The Great Commission is actually both taking the Gospel to others and bringing people to hear the Gospel. The result is the same. We are basically not going to do either of those until the current crisis is at least mostly over.

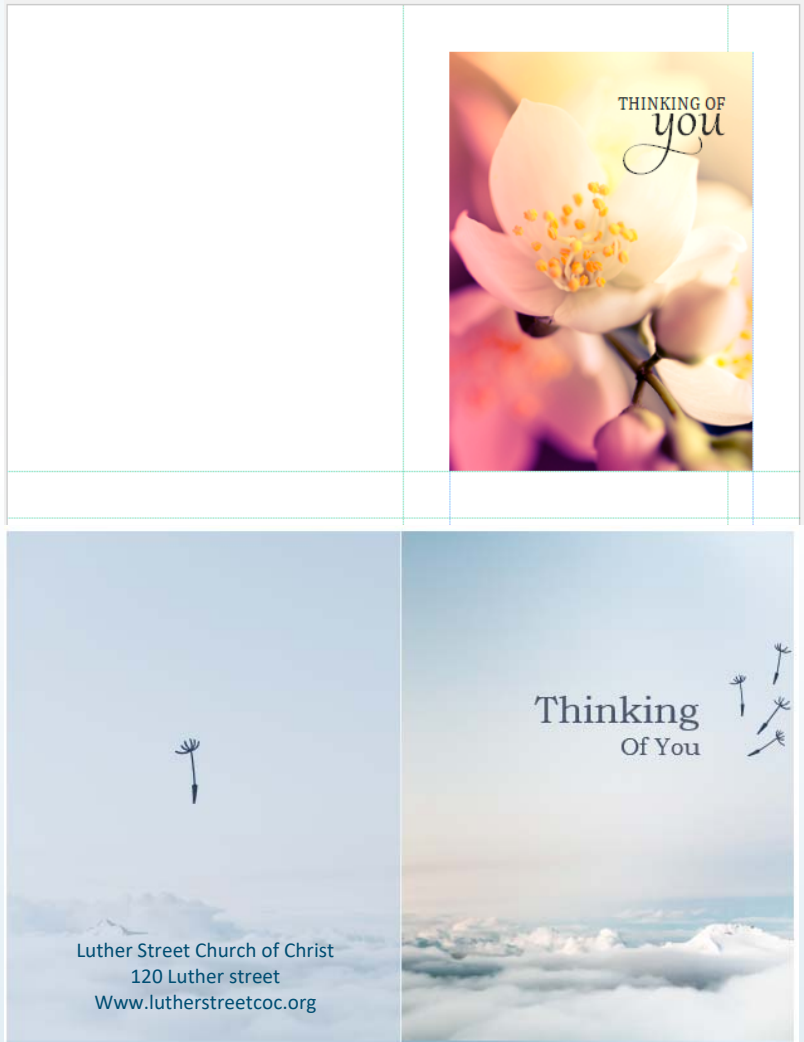
A better question might be what resources or advantages does this crisis provide us?

A first thing it provides us is freedom from many of our current religious activities and in many cases our current secular activities also. This means we have time to plan what we are going to do when the crisis is over. The Bible class teacher who spends most of his available time preparing for the next lesson suddenly has free time. Instead of hosting three worship services a week plus a number of events, a few members are involved in an online service. You can spend your time reviewing how effective your long time programs have been and study how to make them more effective, or replace them.

Secondly you have a lot of members who suddenly have a lot of time on their hands. If you simply use the time they are not spending getting prepared for, driving to, and attending multiple services doing something effective you have a lot of man or woman hours available. What you might be able to do with those hours will vary depending on the congregation and their service area, but consider the following as an option.

Imagine you use your member's available resources of time to send out personal notes to invite prospects to events after the church is open again. The two graphics on this page are free "thinking of you" templates, the upper from Microsoft Publisher and the lower from Microsoft Word. This would not be a mass

mailout to be discarded with the other mass mailouts, but a personally handwritten note, in a personally addressed envelope, with a personally attached postage stamp. Anyone who receives one of those is going to read it.



The lower card above shows your congregational name on the back of the card, but not too large or too bold to detract from the fact that this is a personal note. These can be quickly printed and distributed to your members.

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HOW DO I KNOW?

How do I know, how do I show what I do not see that is at work in me?

When I fix the eyes of my heart on the unseen One who sets me apart,

He opens the ears of my mind to speak to me.

His words of instruction guide me through this world of destruction,

His words of comfort stream into my mind and out through my hand

That I may share what He cares for man,

So new, different and wise before my eyes that I dare not doubt,

I want to stand up and shout! Look up! Look within! Look for Him!

Seek and you may find that He is waiting to renew your mind,

Learn what may be known, that He wills to be sown,

the Truth to share – if you dare.

Brothers, discover, learn and uncover the light that will forever shine.

Come together, gather His nets and go, bring in the fruit of His vine

all that He calls Mine!

Let your light so shine before men that all may see

themselves as they are meant to be,

disciples one and all, since the Fall, now stand tall.

That is His call.

Larry Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

THANKFUL IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, P. 2

“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” (Romans 5:3-5)

Circumstances come and go. With an attitude of gratitude we learn to make the best of the challenges before us. With God’s gift of courage, strength and wisdom, we can overcome every circumstance of life with thanksgiving. What are you thankful for today?

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

PERFECTLY GOOD CRISIS, P. 3

If you plan a Vacation Bible School in late July, there is a reasonably good chance we will be clear by that time. Your members can invite children to the event, or you can have your children invite children. Make sure you close out with an event in which all the children participate and the parents come to watch. When the parents come, make sure you are organized to discretely collect names and try to establish ongoing contacts.

Any other future event you might have can be an opportunity to send a personal note regarding your youth fall activities, a congregational Fall Festival, a singing, a luncheon after church, or a special speaker series. You can conduct your children’s Bible classes online now and invite others to watch, some moms might really appreciate that.

You might tell others that they are added to your prayer list and are being prayed for weekly or daily.

Sending out personal notes to prospects is one thing which you can do. You are in a unique congregation in a unique service area. You need to do what works for you and make the most of this present situation.

The one thing you cannot do is to send this to a committee to decide in a few months. This is now or never.

REFOCUS WEEKEND



OC CHURCH
GROWTH
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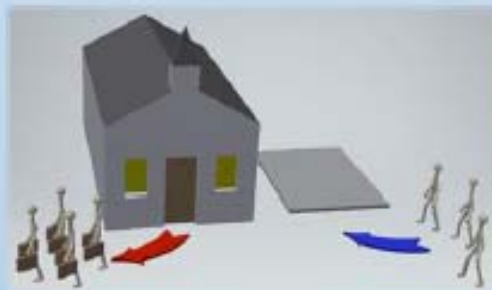
PURPOSE: To assist in returning Churches of Christ to a Great Commission growth pattern by providing information, discussions, analysis and systems relating to the scriptural growth of your congregation.

SAMPLE WEEKEND PACKAGE:

1. **AREA WIDE YOUTH EVENT ON FRIDAY NIGHT AT YOUR FACILITY**
 1. Topic will be Impossible for Evolution or a similar subject with an Institute speaker
 2. The Institute will sponsor Pizza and cokes (or the equivalent)
2. **SATURDAY CHURCH GROWTH SEMINAR**

The presentation can be area wide, the entire congregation, the leadership, or specific individuals.

 1. Breakfast optional
 2. Presentations and discussion until noon.
 3. Lunch paid for by Institute
 4. Discussions from lunch until 2:00, or as long as discussions last.
3. **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES**
 1. Lessons can be provided on the church growth theme in Bible Class, morning worship and evening worship.
 2. Discussion meetings with leadership Sunday afternoon.



We do not charge for our services.
For more information, contact us at
info@occg.institute

One or more of the following OC Church Growth Institute members will make the presentation at your congregation:



Kent Allen
V.P. Advancement
Oklahoma Christian U.



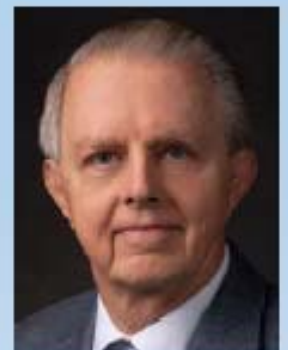
Dr. David Duncan
Pulpit Minister
Memorial Church of Christ



Gary Smith
Pulpit Minister
Fifth Ward Church of Christ



Philip Bailey
Elder
Memorial Church of Christ



Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D.
Director, OC Church
Growth Institute

GUARANTEED CHURCH GROWTH!

If we provide a **REFOCUS WEEKEND** we will guarantee that **if your congregation does not grow 5% in 2 years, we will donate \$5000 to the Church of Christ related children's home of your choice in your name.**

A REFOCUS WEEKEND IS:

- (1) Friday night: Area wide youth rally at your facility, we provide the pizza & cokes
- (2) Saturday 8:00 - 2:00: Church growth consultation
- (3) Saturday or Sunday Afternoon: Congregational Dream Session
- (4) Sunday Bible Class: A church growth lesson
- (5) Sunday morning worship: A church growth sermon

See <https://occg.institute/refresh/> for more specific information.



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See website for cell phone shortcut!

Hello, this is Maxine -- I have questions!



Is it true that you never really learn to swear until you learn to drive?

If a cow laughed, would milk come out of her nose?

Whatever happened to Preparations A through G?



Foster's Home for Children

In an effort to meet a growing demand for children needing out of home placement, Foster's Home for Children is expanding by three additional group homes in the summer of 2019. We will be interviewing and hiring caregivers for these three homes. If you are interested in being considered, it is not too early to submit your application. Consider serving with us as we provide sanctuary and healing to children of trauma. Applications can be found on our website at www.fostershome.org, and submitted to glenn@fostershome.org.

For more information, contact Glenn Newberry, President, at 214 536-6172.



NORTH FORT BEND
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Meeting at Tom Wilson Elementary
5200 Falcon Landing Blvd.
Katy Texas, 77494.

Bible class at 9:00 am
Worship at 10:00 am.

Please plan to attend and tell your friends and neighbors. Most importantly, please pray for this mission effort.

www.nfbcoc.org

For more information, contact:

Visitors

As you travel, you can be of assistance in local congregations in helping them to understand how they are seen by potential visitors and prospects.

On the ocginstitute.org website, Project Papers tab is a paper titled:

MYSTERY GUEST PROGRAM

This paper and the forms included will help you anonymously communicate with the congregation and improve their "curb appeal."

A project of the OC Church Growth Think Tank

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION – BLUE ROSES

We would not normally assert that a change in color was impossible for evolution to do as colors are a variable which can be adjusted or evolved so to speak. However, roses may be a special category in which a color change is impossible or at least demonstrates how difficult some things are to do.

Changing color in anything is normally changing the intensity of red, green, and blue pigments in the thing. In normal computer coloring, red, green, blue intensities of 256, 256, 256 is actually bright white and 0, 0, 0 is black. The color of this type face is 0, 0, 165 which means it is a medium blue with no portions of red or green.

About 8 basic species of roses were created without any blue pigment in any of them. For centuries man has attempted to modify, cross breed, or whatever they could do to develop blue roses with no success. Blue roses were the “impossible dream” The blue rose graphic by Noumenon is actually a white rose which is artificially colored.

Scientists or anyone else have yet to produce a truly blue colored rose. However, after thirteen years of collaborative research by an Australian company, Florigene, and a Japanese company, Suntory, costing \$25 million, a rose containing the blue pigment delphinidin was created in 2004 by genetic engineering of a white rose. The company has described it as a blue rose, but it is lavender or pale mauve in color as seen in the image to the right by Blue Rose Man.

The process involved taking Petunias with a blue coloring and isolating the relevant genes from the 30,000 kinds of genes, and introducing them into white roses using a “gene gun”. To date the closest they have come to blue is the mauve color seen.

So it would seem that the change to a blue color in roses is not simply a change in the color

variables in roses. It is the creation of the pigments for blue, or in this case the genetically modifying the DNA of a rose by the switching to a gene which had the blue pigments.

We would suggest that centuries of cross-



Image By Noumenon



Image By Blue Rose Man

breeding by horticulturist could not create the blue pigment in roses. We would further suggest that the DNA manipulation only recently available to man in multimillion dollar laboratories was simply not available to any accidental evolutionary processes.

Clearly this is another example that everything around us was designed by an intelligent designer.

Benton F. Baugh

This information is from a 2019 Creation Magazine article title The Blue Rose, and Wikipedia.

DEITY

HISTORICAL FACT OF THE RESURRECTION



SUMMARY: We must accept the fact of Jesus' resurrection by faith. It is far more documented and reasonable to believe than many of the atheistic theories currently taught as "facts". The immediate switch to a Sunday worship by a Jewish population certainly reinforces that a significant event happened.

INTRODUCTION:

From approximately 7:10 to 8:00 A.M. on Thursday, April 6, of 33 A.D. after being up all night Jesus Christ was tried for the second time by Pilate. He was accused of blaspheming (1), deceiving the nations, forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and inciting the people to rebellion (2) which He did not do. He was also accused of claiming to be King of the Jews (3) which He acknowledged. At approximately 8:00 A.M. He was condemned to die by crucifixion on a cross. He was nailed to the cross at approximately 9:00 A.M., and His spirit departed from His body at approximately 3:00 P.M. and He was dead. His death was surgically confirmed by a soldier piercing His side with a spear and observing blood and water flowing out separately (an accepted sign of death).

Sometime before 7:00 A.M. on Sunday morning of April 9, A.D. 33, His spirit reentered the body and He was resurrected.

WHAT MEN CONSIDER AS HISTORICAL FACTS:

This lesson will discuss the historical fact of Jesus and His resurrection, however, as a basis for comparison we will first look at what some scientists who deny Jesus' resurrection consider as a requirement to be a fact.

On May 21, 1987 the Houston Chronicle presented the story that earliest true human remains were found in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge in east Africa. The skeleton included an upper jaw, teeth, fragments of a skull and facial bones, a relatively complete arm, a partial thighbone, and a fragment of a shinbone.

From this, the scientists learned, believe, and/or have faith that a complete civilization:

1. Was more like apes than man,
2. Still climbed in trees regularly, and
3. Lived from 1.8 to 1.6 million years ago.

Further, this confirmed their abiding belief that life was created by an accidental spark in a primordial brew, as this was a step in the evolutionary process to life as we know it today.

Can you imagine that? They can't believe that the Son of God who was alive could be resurrected from the dead, but they believe that life can be created by accident. They can find some old bones and tell you that the person climbed trees frequently and lived 1.6-1.8 million years ago. They will calmly tell you that this is scientific fact.

Mind you, this is the same collective group of scientists that declared the fact of the Piltdown Man in 1911 as a prehistoric ancestor when it was a fake (4), the fact of the Nebraska Man

when the only evidence turned out to be a pig's tooth, and the Neanderthal Man (Neander Valley, Germany) who was believed to be a prehuman ancestor but was finally determined to be just a human (5).

In this age of declaring ancient races of people from finding a tooth and a part of a leg bone, let's look at the comparative historical proof about the resurrection of Christ.

SUMMARY OF PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT:

1. The #1 proof of the resurrection was that all the Apostles and early followers were Jewish, and had been faithful to the Jewish religion. That meant that the primary worship day was on Saturday. It was ingrained in them and customary. Without any apparent debate or fanfare, they switched to worshipping on the first day of the week. Something dramatic had to have happened to make that switch. The dramatic event was the resurrection.
2. Read Acts 1:1-3 and I Cor. 15:3-8
3. What do these verses and the remainder of the New Testament tell us of the resurrection:
 - A. Quantity of witnesses: 500+
 - B. Quality of witnesses: All types from doctors, members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, fishermen, & tax collectors
 - C. Written Documentation by:
 - Matthew, a tax collector
 - Mark
 - Luke, a physician
 - John, a fisherman
 - Paul, a lawyer and former member of the Jewish Sanhedrin
 - Peter, a fisherman
 - James, brother of the Lord
 - Jude, brother to John (Did not believe until after the resurrection)(6)

This is no less than 8 independent witnesses who wrote to document the facts about the resurrection.

4. Special Proofs: Some believers were endowed with miraculous powers to perform miracles to confirm that what they were saying was the truth.
5. Consistency of proof: To the best of our knowledge, none of the witnesses ever recanted the story, but rather many died because they believed it.
6. Could it have been just another fanatical religion? Not likely as many of the 500+ witnesses who saw Jesus after the resurrection, died for that belief. If there was an earthly instigation of this plot, the witnesses would have been the instigators. You might expect a trusting convert to a religion to die for the religion, but not an instigator. The instigators would have known that it was not true, and would not have died

individual deaths of crucifixion for it. Many of the 500+ witnesses died individually horrible deaths for this belief.

SUMMARY OF PROOFS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Psalms 22:16-18 predicts the method of death as by crucifixion by the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet.
2. Psalms 16:10, 30:3, 41:10, & 118:17 predicts the resurrection of Jesus 1000 years before Jesus was born.
3. This is clearly an extra ordinary proof for an extra ordinary event.

RESPONSE BY ATHEIST TO BIBLICAL PROOFS

The typical answer by an atheist for this is that the Bible is a single book by insiders and so it is therefore no proof at all. Responses to this are:

1. That many of the witnesses were insiders who would tend to make witnesses suspect, but would not necessarily invalidate the reports. Most historical facts on many subjects have been recorded by "insiders". Mind you, all of the believers in creation of life by accident are believers in the religion of atheism.
2. It was not a single book. The New Testament is a collection of 27 independent letters by several different authors at different times. The books of the New Testament were not collected into a standard form (the Canon) during the lifetime of the authors. Historical reference is made to the fact that approximately A.D. 140-150 a collections of the writings existed in Rome which were virtually identical to our New Testament (7).
3. Old testament writers prophesying about the life and resurrection of Christ were clearly of a different group of people.
4. Paul was probably the most learned of the witnesses to Christ after the resurrection and was clearly an enemy and unbeliever before he saw Jesus after the resurrection. He was having the believers thrown in prison and killed. He clearly was not an insider.

NON-BIBLICAL PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION

To the best of my knowledge, no nonbeliever historians observed and wrote about the resurrection of Jesus. Actually, non-believer documentation of the resurrection is unlikely, as anyone who saw it and recognized it to write about it would become a believer.

We shall instead discuss non-Biblical historical documentation of the existence of Christ to provide insight to the actual existence of Christ.

1. Flavius Josephus: Eminent non-Jewish historian of the first century, born A.D. 37, was with Titus at the destruction of Jerusalem and said: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man...."
2. The following 8 men wrote of Christ or gave proof of Christ in discussing Christians during the first century:

1. Flavius Josephus
2. Cornelius Tactitus
3. Suetonius
4. Pliny Secundus (Pliny the Younger)
5. Thallus
6. Letter of Mara Bar-Serapion
7. Polycarp
8. Ignatius

For detailed description of the writings of these men and others in the second and third centuries, see **CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS AND CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES**, by Bert Thompson, pp. 142-153. (We have a copy.)

THEREFORE: The documentation that Jesus actually lived on the earth and was resurrected from the dead greatly exceeds the things which demonstrate the theory of atheistic creation of life, creation of species by evolution, and a lot of our other things as presented in our accepted history by a wide margin. Whereas one might expect spectacular proof that a person claims to be "God", one would expect the same level of proof that we appeared by accident from nothing. There is proof that Jesus was resurrected, there is none that we appeared from nothing. It is certainly reasonable to believe that the God who could create life in the first place could resurrect a person back to life.

We must accept the fact of Jesus' resurrection by faith. It is far more historically documented and reasonable to believe than many of the atheistic theories currently taught as "scientific facts".

It is our hope that you will believe in Jesus not only from the negative side because it is more logical than other things such as atheistic evolution, but also from the positive side because you can look all around you and see the wonderful proofs God has put all around us that could not possibly have happened without a guiding hand.

- (1) Matthew 26:65
- (2) Luke 23:2-14
- (3) Luke 23:3
- (4) World Book, Volume P, 1973, page 417
- (5) IMPACT NO. 171: STARTLING DISCOVERIES SUPPORT CREATION, Duane T. Gish, Ph.D
- (6) John 7:5 & Acts 1:13-14
- (7) Pictorial Bible Dictionary, Page 145

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AREA WIDE ACTIVITIES

Each Wed. NE Houston Preacher's Meeting, Location varies
11:00—1:00, Contact cell (713) 201-2417, marcusbarnum@gmail.com

2nd Tues. NW Houston Preacher's Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Rancho King Buffet, 5900 N. Frwy., Hou, confirm with Gerald Fruzia fruzia70@sbcglobal.net

THE TWO ABOVE ACTIVITIES ARE IN HOUSTON, TEXAS AND ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

All past copies of this newsletter can be found on the website "occg.institute" under the E-MAGAZINE tab.

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3. The row of options just above the "Cancel" button, scroll to the right to the 6th button "Add to Home Screen", and press it
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For Android

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