

April 2011

LINKS



**Newsletter and Magazine of the
Abergavenny Group of Methodist Churches
in the Hills and Vales Circuit**



Give us Wales for the Gospel



From the Manse . . .

Jesus was alone so we don't have to be alone.

Mark 15:33-41

As I think about it, it still fills me with a sense of wonder and awe; the shocking reality that for the first time ever Jesus was alone on the Cross.

At that moment all the sin of the world was laid upon Jesus and the Father who was in perfect love and relationship with the Son could not look at His Son. I caused – you caused, that fracture in relationship. What a cost for each one of us.

However, I want to suggest that at this point our salvation was begun. Eternal life began for all those who trust in God as their Saviour, who know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. At this moment of darkness – a hugely significant event took place.

Isn't it joy and comfort that you and I do not have to be alone because Christ was alone on the cross? So if you ever feel lonely, talk to God your Father because He is always there as He will never leave you nor forsake you because of the loneliness of His Son.

Peace

Andrew Williams

The Purpose Of Our Worship Of God

The purpose of our worship is to glorify, honour, praise, exalt, and please God. Our worship must show our adoration and loyalty to God for His grace in providing us with the way to escape the bondage of sin, so we can have the salvation He so much wants to give us. The nature of the worship God demands is the prostration of our souls before Him in humble and contrite submission. James 4:6, 10 tells us, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. **Humble yourselves** in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up". Our worship to God is a very humble and reverent action.

Jesus says in John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and now is, **when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth**, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and they that worship Him **must worship Him in spirit and in truth**." It doesn't say we can worship God anyway we want, but we "**must worship Him in spirit and in truth**". The word "must" makes it absolute. There is no other way we can worship God and be acceptable to Him. The word "must", according to Webster, expresses "an obligation, a requirement, a necessity, a certainty, and something that must be done". When "must" is used it means that it is not optional. Here the word "must" is expressing that in spirit and in truth is the only way to acceptably worship God.

God seeks true worshippers, and He identifies them as those who "worship Him in spirit and in truth". Worshipping God in spirit means that it must be done from the heart. Worshipping God in truth means that it must be done according as God has specified in the Bible. Worshipping God in spirit and in truth is a serious matter which must not be taken lightly. If we have any regard for our own souls, we will want to make sure we are worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Since God is the object of our worship, He and He alone has the right to determine how we are to worship Him. We read in Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." We are not granted the option of directing our own ways in religion. God is the One who we look to for guidance and direction in our lives.

Our very best in worship is due God and is prescribed by Him in the Bible. The worship God has prescribed is the only way we can be pleasing to Him in

this life and finally attain everlasting life with Him in eternity. The Christian's worship is of the greatest importance.

Worship is a time when we pay deep, sincere, awesome respect, love, and fear to the one who created us. Acts 17:24-25 says, "God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives life, breath, and all things."

God is the one who holds our eternal destiny in His hands. Philippians 2:12 tells us to, "work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling.**" Our salvation is a very serious matter and will not happen by accident. We must work it out "with fear and trembling". On the Day of Judgment it will be too late to make any corrections.

Worship should cause us to reflect on the majesty and graciousness of God and Christ, contrasted to our own unworthiness. God does not have to have our worship, but we must worship Him to please Him. Our singing, praying, studying His word, giving, and communion are designed by God to bring us closer to Him and to cause us to think more like He thinks, thus becoming more like Him. James 4:8 tells us to, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Our worship not only honours and magnifies God, but it is also for our own edification and strength. Worship helps us develop a God-like and Christ-like character. We become like unto those we admire and worship. When we worship God we tend to value what God values and gradually take on the characteristics and qualities of God, but never to His level. As Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ." How do we take on the mind of Christ? In Romans 12:2 we read, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." We renew our mind as we study and meditate on God's word and worship Him.

When we worship God we develop such traits as forgiveness, tenderness, justice, righteousness, purity, kindness, and love. All of this is preparing us for eternal life in heaven with God and Christ. As we are told in Colossians 3:2 to, "Set your mind on things above, and not on things on the earth."

Apparently the paper below belonged to a young pastor in Zimbabwe, and was found among his papers after he had been martyred.

My commitment as a Christian

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of Jesus. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be afraid. I'm finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living and dwarfed goals. I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, promotions, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognised, praised or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer and labour by power. My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow. my way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, and let up until I have stored up, paid up and prayed up the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till he comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till he stops me. And then when he comes he will have no trouble recognising me - my banner will be clear.

What faith!



PRAYERS AT NOON Castle Street

Starting on April 5th and on following Tuesdays at midday there will be a short reflective service (max. 30 mins) in the church following the coffee mornings, as discussed in the Church Council and by the group set up to plan for it.

During this time we shall also remember those who have asked for our prayers via the prayer board in the hall, (also discussed in the Church Council.) This will be for members and friends from our churches but hopefully will be accessible also to those who are not regular worshippers but would value a quiet space from time to time - maybe the occasional holiday maker or person from the wider circuit who may have come into Abergavenny for Market Day.

There is no expectation that anyone will be able to come every time, and no one should feel it a burden! Come whenever you can and encourage others who might find it helpful.

Visiting Pastor

A pastor went out one Saturday to visit his church members. At one house, it was obvious that someone was home, but nobody came to the door even though the preacher knocked several times. Finally, the preacher took out his card, wrote out "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it, and stuck it in the door.

*‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me’. -
Revelation 3:20*

The next day, the card turned up in the collection plate. Below the preacher's message was written the following notation:

*I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked;
and I hid myself. - Genesis 3:10*

Snippets

Global Church responds to Japan disasters

Church leaders and Christian aid organisations across the world have offered prayers and sent help to Japan. In the nation itself, devastated by the earthquake, tsunamis and radiation leaks, churches and charities have responded with prayer, donations, appeals and relief efforts, including Caritas Japan, the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), the YWCA, the Russian Orthodox Church, Evangelical Lutherans, Baptists, Anglicans and the Japan Evangelical Alliance. The interdenominational Earthquake Christian Disaster Centre met for the first time in Sendai. Christian charities working in Japan include World Vision, Church World Service, the Salvation Army and Baptist World Aid Rescue24. The ACT Alliance of Christian development agencies said the need for aid was increasing. The British Methodist Church and OMF Japan have both launched appeals.

Sources: Methodist Recorder (17/3); Baptist Times (16/3).

British foreign policy criticised as 'anti-Christian'

Britain's most senior Catholic has accused Foreign Secretary William Hague of failing to protect Christian minorities around the world. Calling his policies tantamount to anti-Christian', Cardinal Keith O'Brien pointed out that Britain has doubled its aid to Pakistan, despite the country's deadly blasphemy laws that discriminate against Christians and other religious believers. O'Brien, speaking at the launch of a report on global persecution of Christians, said: 'I urge William Hague to obtain guarantees from foreign governments before they are given aid ... the provision of aid must require a commitment to human rights.' The leader of the Catholic Church in Scotland said there had been a 'huge surge' in the number of Christians fleeing persecution and that 75 per cent of all religious persecution is against Christians.

Source: The Telegraph (15/3).

Widdecombe enters battle to defend persecuted Christians

Once labelled a political battleaxe, the indomitable Ann Widdecombe will now employ her formidable skills to protect Christians across the world from persecution. As Christian minorities' champion for Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), the former MP will advise and raise awareness of the issue. The appointment marks the launch of ACN's Persecuted and Forgotten report which says persecution against Christians is increasing. Meanwhile, Pakistani Christian Qamar David, locked up since 2002 on a charge of blasphemy against Islam, has died in jail, before his appeal could come to court. Prison authorities say there were no suspicious circumstances but his lawyer says he was healthy, and had received death threats.

Source: Church Times (18/3)

Jesus Loves Us All So Much

Jesus loves us all so much
That He would bleed and die
He took upon His beaten back
The cross that saw Him crucified

Yes He loved us all so much
That He was scorned and scoffed
He took it all upon Himself
For it was the will of God

God knew it was the only way
The final sacrifice
Jesus Christ a sinless man
Would need to give His life

And even in the gift He gave
We still have not yet known
The fullness of His mighty love
And the grace so freely shown

All He asks is that we all
Repent and follow Him
For He has made the way for us
Free from hurt and sin

Yes God loved us all so much
And yes He loves us still
He longs for us to trust in Him
And do the Father's will

© *By M.S.Lowndes*

Special Services at Easter

CLYDACH

Maundy Thursday 21 April

7.00 pm Agape Supper Seating limited to thirty places so please let Andy or Carol (01873 831694) know as soon as possible if you wish to attend. *See details on page 15.*

CASTLE STREET

Palm Sunday 17 April

10.30 am All Age Worship - Sunday School will lead this service.

Good Friday 22 April

10.15 am Walk of Witness - Meet at entrance to market, Cross Street. Process with other churches to St Michael's Church for service of "Stations of the Cross". [Please make every effort to attend].

7.00 pm Service at Castle Street

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Easter Sunday 24 April

6.00 am Sunrise Service on the Sugar Loaf!
Meet at the Sugar Loaf car park.

9.00 am Breakfast at Castle Street.

**10.30 am CSI Resurrection Service at
Castle Street.**

HARCOURT TERRACE

Good Friday 22 April

10.00 am Service.

VALE TERRACE

Holy Week Service 19 April

7.00 pm Tuesday Holy Week Service

LLANELLY HILL

Easter Sunday 24 April

6.30 pm Easter Celebration Service.

Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!
He is risen indeed!

ABERGAVENNY FOOD FESTIVAL **CASTLE STREET HARVEST FESTIVAL**

17th 18th September 2011



This will be our Harvest Festival weekend during the town's Food Festival.

To simplify the organization this year, the decorating of the church will take a different format. It would be much appreciated if anyone who

would like to contribute a flower arrangement could provide their own flowers & accessories on a harvest theme.

Beryl Williams, Diane Cooke & Margaret Pipe will be co-ordinating the displays, so please let them know if you are able to help.

Contributions of fruit, vegetables, greenery will also be gratefully received.



We shall continue to provide refreshments similar to last year so helpers will be needed to:

- * bake cakes, quiches & scones
- * prepare rolls, & sandwiches
- * serve teas, wash up & collect dirty plates.

Hilary Gregg will be glad for volunteers to help in this way.

Stewards will also be needed to welcome visitors into the church.

Please put the dates in your diary & think how you will be able to help.

Many visitors look forward to the beauty & quietness of our flower filled church & the hospitality we offer with our refreshments.

The proceeds will go to Maua Methodist Hospital in Kenya which we continue to support.

Hilary

News From 7Corners March 2011

Hello again! Well the chill room is now finished complete with sofas, chairs, table and, of course, cushions! It looks really smart and the advice agencies that use our premises for their Abergavenny clients are fighting over booking it!

Plans for our performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are progressing apace. Valley and Vale Community Arts are working with us, as are the Covenant Players, and we are hoping to be supported by the Town Council. We are also involving Communities First, Monmouthshire Youth Service and local youth clubs. Ange is currently drawing all the groups together to commence auditioning for parts and the Castle Green is booked for 21st June! **[Please note this date and pray for a fine evening! P.M.]**

In May we will be taking part in the Border Prayer Project which is linked with the 24/7 prayer movement and will run from 14th to 28th May. We will be taking part on 24th and 25th May linked with Ross on Wye, but our prayer room will be open all that week. Please take a look at the website www.borderprayer.co.uk if you are interested in finding out more about this and contact Ange at 7Corners if you would like to book a slot in the prayer room.

Well that's all for now.

See you next month.

Judith E.

The Power of Praise

By Skip Heitzig

There are a lot of activities that we do now that we won't do in heaven. You will never evangelise anyone in heaven. You will never share the gospel or give out a tract in heaven. You will not pray in heaven; there will be no need for prayer as we know it now. There'll be no need for discipleship in heaven. What's the one activity we do now that we will do in heaven? Worship. We will be doing that forever. In fact, you can sort of look at the present as a time of practice!

The English word "worship" means to ascribe worth to something. We worship God for who He is, because He is worthy. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:8).

We worship God not only based on His character but His conduct, not only his attributes but his activity. "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created" (v. 11). He is worthy because he did what no one else could ever do; He created everything. But more than that, He also redeemed us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Look at Revelation 5:9. "You are worthy... for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood." That's what He did.

Worship involves the physical and the emotional, and it involves music and our voices, but fundamentally, it's an acknowledgment of who God is and what He has done. It is an intelligent response to God that involves the mind. Worship is not working ourselves up into some frenzy. Jesus said the Father was looking for those who would worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

God's action prompts my reaction of praise. Jesus said we are to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). Worship should fully engage us as we dwell on the greatness of God.

One final point. There is never a time in a person's life, or any experience, where God can't be worshipped. There is no valley, there is no depth, there is no darkness where God is not worthy of all praise and all glory. Read the stories of Job or David or Paul in prison, and you'll see that sometimes their praise was the sweetest and most genuine in those dark times.

God is worthy to be praised!

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." - John 4:24

Thinking of buying Easter Eggs?

As published in last month's edition of LINKS Christian themed Easter Eggs really are on sale this year in some supermarkets. These are Fair Trade Easter Eggs, which donates 30p per egg sold to Traidcraft and 10% of the profits will go to Baby Lifeline. Even better, on the packaging is a whole side telling the real meaning of Easter and explaining that billions of people all over the world believe that Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday and then rose again three days later on Easter Sunday.

There is a website for more information about Easter. When I bought mine the lady on the checkout noticed and said "Wow! An Easter egg that mentions Jesus, that's a first!" and we had quite a conversation.

This is good news in the midst of all the commercialism of present day Easter and deserves to be supported. Look out for them.

Brenda Woodier

Morrisons, Waitrose, The Co-op and Booths Supermarkets have agreed to sell these eggs produced by the Meaningful Chocolate Company.

Tesco, Sainsbury and Asda declined to stock them.

NAP

ADVANCE NOTICE

House group Leaders and Pastoral Visitors Castle Street

We will be having a meeting on Thursday May 12 at 7:30 p.m. Please make every effort to attend. We will be looking at listening skills, developments in the house groups and how we organise pastoral visitors. Please bring a favourite book or item. *A.W.*

BORDER PRAYER

There is a prayer initiative called Border Prayer starting in Chester on May 13th and ending with a Celebration in Chepstow on Saturday 28th May.

During this time twin towns across the Welsh/English border will be praying for 24 hours on designated days maintaining two solid weeks of prayer covering the borders of our countries. At the same time there will be a prayer walk down the length of Offa's Dyke. Abergavenny is one of the designated border towns. We are twinned with Ross on Wye and **our prayer dates are May 24th/25th.**

There will be a 24/7 prayer room covering the week around those dates at Seven Corners. Ange will be giving us more details of the prayer room and asking us to put our names down for periods of prayer during that week so that every slot is covered. Look out for information about this powerful initiative and call to prayer and be praying now for the arrangements.

Check out the website, www.borderprayer.co.uk for up to date information.

Brenda Woodier

(See also 7Corners news page 12).

MAUNDY THURSDAY AGAPE SUPPER **At Clydach 7.00pm**

Our Friends at Clydach will provide the meat, but we are asked to bring salads etc and puddings.

We gather to remember the last meal our lord shared with His disciples on this the Eve of Easter. If you have a hymn that you would like to sing we can sing it, or if you have a story that is fitting or a poem, bring it with you. This has always proved to be a worthwhile occasion, sometimes solemn, sometimes with an element of light heartedness but always worth coming. Don't delay, there are only thirty places so please let Andy, or Carol (01873 831694), know as soon as possible that you would like to attend.

Cribbed from a Cornish Medical Dictionary

Artery	The study of paintings
Bacteria	Back door to cafeteria
Barium	What doctors do when patients die
Benign	What you are after you be eight
Caesarean Section	A neighbourhood in Rome
Catscan	Searching for kitty
Cauterise	Made eye contact with her
Colic	A sheep dog
Coma	A punctuation mark
Dilate	To live long
Enema	Not a friend
Fester	Slower than someone else
Fibula	A small lie
Impotent	Distinguished, well known
Labour pain	Getting hurt at work

Sad but True

Unfortunately many homes, yes even so-called Christian homes, are like the one in which the little girl pointed to the Bible on the mantle that was never opened, and said to her mother, "Whose book is that?" Her mother quite startled by her daughters question replied, "Why honey, don't you know? That is God's book!" The child demonstrating that she had a very practical turn to her mind said, "Don't you think that we had better give it back to him? No one around here ever reads it."

A Mothers Love

There are times when only a Mother's love
Can understand our tears,
Can soothe our disappoints
And calm all of our fears.

There are times when only a Mother's love
Can share the joy we feel
When something we've dreamed about
Quite suddenly is real.

There are times when only a Mother's faith
Can help us on life's way
And inspire in us the confidence
We need from day to day.

For a Mother's heart and a Mother's faith
And a Mother's steadfast love
Were fashioned by the Angels
And sent from God above.

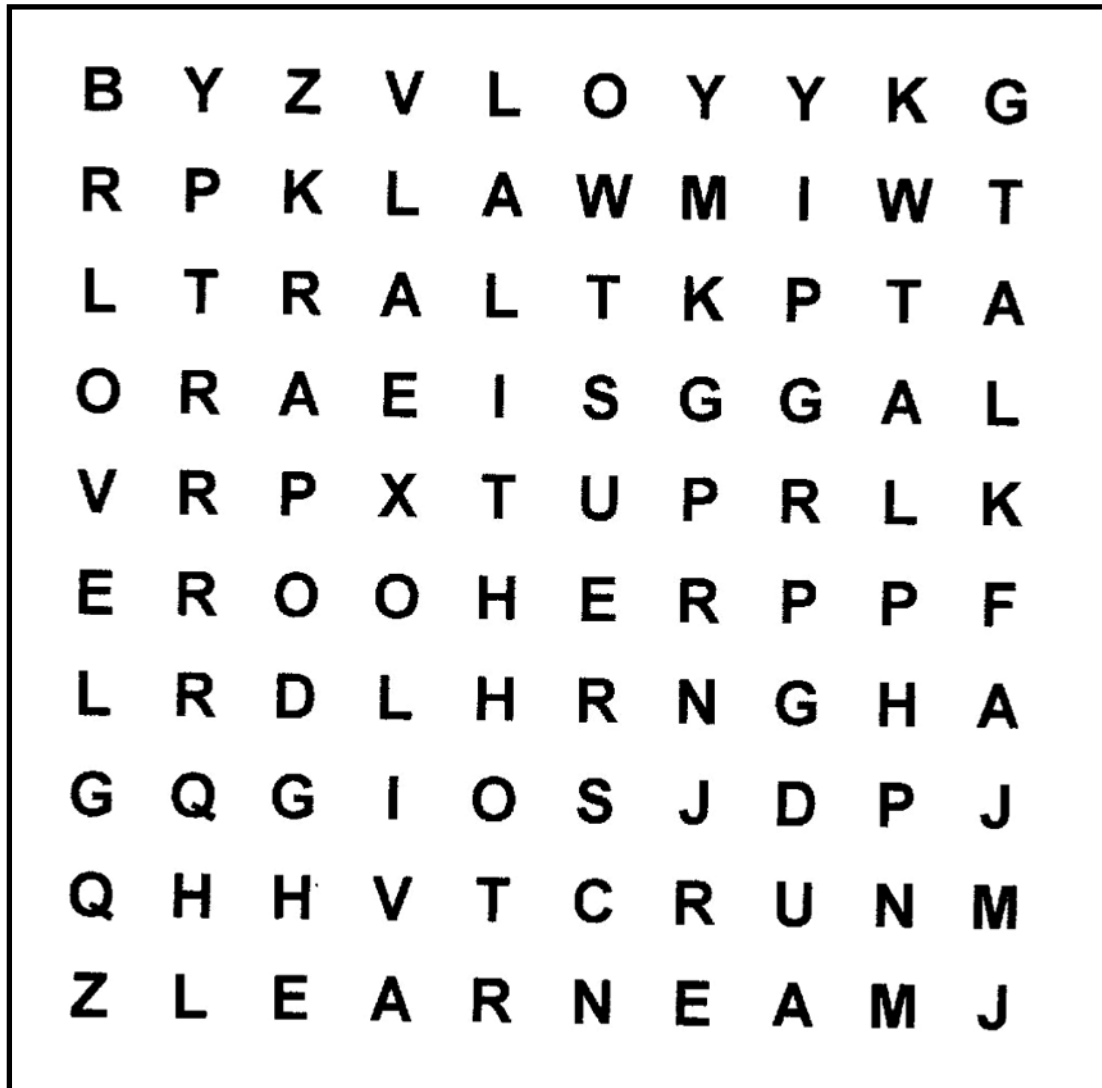
~ Author Unknown

CHILDREN'S WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

for Mother's Day - 3rd April

Below are some action words associated with Mother's Day - things you can do with Mum.

See if you can find the words in this word search block:



bake, chuckle, clean, cook, cuddle, dance, draw, garden, hug, laugh, learn, love, paint, play, pretend, read, ride, run, share, shop, sing, skate, ski, skip, snuggle, swim, talk, travel, walk.

Dates for your Diary



Circuit

**Come Back to Church training session Saturday 9 April 2- 4 p.m.
at Llanyrafyon - (Further details from Rev Andy Williams)**

12 April Tuesday 7:30 p.m. Circuit Leadership Team at Nantyglo

Castle Street

(All meetings at the church unless specified)

Weekly on a Tuesday 12 Noon Service for prayer and reflection

March

30 Wednesday 11:30a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Ministerial Synod

31 Thursday 7:30 p.m. Housegroup Leaders

April

5 Tuesday 12 noon Prayers at Noon

6 Wednesday 7:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting

7 Thursday 7:30 p.m. Leadership Team

20 Wednesday 7.30 pm Prayer Meeting

May

4 Wednesday 7.30 pm Prayer Meeting

5 Thursday 7.30 pm Leadership Team

12 Thursday 7.30 pm Housegroup Leaders and Pastoral Visitors
Meeting.

Vale and Harcourt Terrace

5 April Tuesday 7.30 pm Joint Church Council at Harcourt Terrace

Llanelly Hill

5 April Tuesday 2.00 pm Fellowship Meeting

19 April Tuesday 2.00 pm Fellowship Meeting

**FOR SPECIAL EASTER SERVICES
SEE CENTRE PAGES**

Items for LINKS please to the editor not later than the last but one Sunday of the preceding month of issue. Next issue will be on 29 May 2011. Editor: Nigel Pipe, 1 Llanwenarth View, Govilon, Abergavenny. NP7 9PL. Tel: 01873 830984
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