

MOUNTAIN SKY CONFERENCE

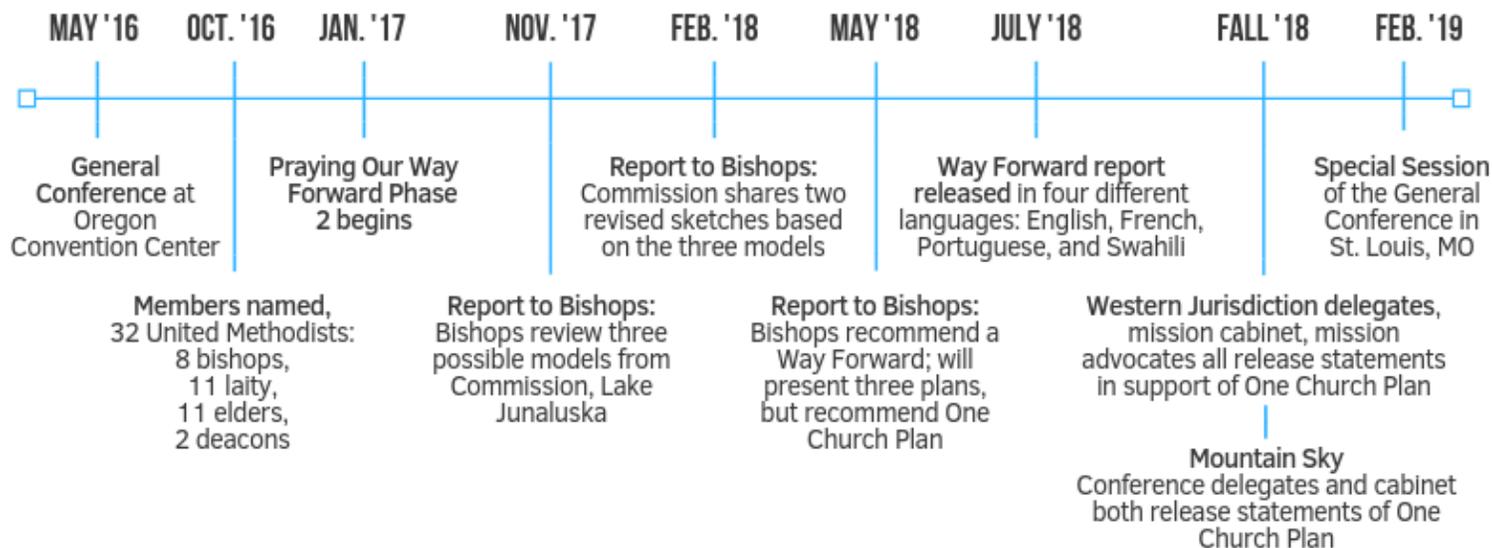
ON THE WAY FORWARD



This packet includes:

- 2019 Special Session FAQ
- Mountain Sky Conference delegates
- Statements in Support of One Church Plan:
 - UMC Council of Bishops
 - Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet
 - Mountain Sky Cabinet and delegates
 - Western Jurisdiction delegates
 - Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet urging prayer

MOUNTAIN SKY CONFERENCE ON THE WAY FORWARD: A TIMELINE



MOUNTAIN SKY CONFERENCE

2019 GENERAL CONFERENCE SPECIAL SESSION FAQ

What and when is the Special Session?

The Council of Bishops has called a Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church (UMC) to be held Feb. 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri. The purpose will be to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops (COB).

What is the Commission on a Way Forward?

The Commission on a Way Forward was created in 2016 at the General Conference by the COB to do a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality. They proposed three plans in their final report to be voted upon at the Special Session.

What are the Three Plans?

One Church Plan: This plan would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline and give conferences, churches and pastors the flexibility to “uniquely reach their missional context in relation to human sexuality without changing the connectional nature of The UMC.”

Traditionalist Plan: This plan would affirm the current language about homosexuality in the Book of Discipline and seek to strengthen enforcement for violations of church law.

Connectional-Conference Plan: This plan would create three connectional conferences based on theology or perspective, each having clearly defined values (accountability, contextualization and justice). The three connectional conferences would function throughout the worldwide church and the five existing U.S. jurisdictions would be abolished. This plan would require multiple amendments to the denomination’s constitution.

What has the Council of Bishops recommended?

The United Methodist COB has recommended the One Church Plan for consideration at the 2019 called session. Per a statement released on May 4, 2018, the COB said the One Church Plan “encourages a generous unity by giving United Methodists the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions.” The Council believes it is the best plan for a “Way Forward” for The UMC on human sexuality and maintaining unity.

Who else has recommended the One Church Plan?

The Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet, composed of the College of Bishops and the directors of connectional ministry, released a statement Sept. 10, 2018 endorsing the One Church Plan. In the release, the WJ Mission Cabinet said, “We believe that this plan has the best potential to maximize the presence of United Methodist witness, allow for contextual differentiation, and balance an approach to different theological understandings of human sexuality with as much unity as possible.” The One Church Plan has been endorsed by your Mountain Sky Conference (MSC) Cabinet and General Conference delegation for reasons consistent with the Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet’s position.

Who gets to vote?

Although we are now the MSC, this special session is an extension of the 2016 General Conference. Therefore, the delegates who will vote on our behalf were elected by each legacy conference. There will be six delegates (three clergy and three laity) from the Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference, and two delegates (one clergy and one laity) from Yellowstone Legacy Conference. The first clergy and laity alternate for each delegation will also attend. If you have questions for our delegates, you may contact them through an online form at mtnskyumc.org/GCDelegatesContact.

How will the decision in February affect the Mountain Sky Conference?

If the One Church Plan is approved by the delegates, the MSC will continue its mission of creating and living into an inclusive and diverse beloved community as we continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ. If the Traditionalist Plan is approved, conference leadership will determine a structure and organizational plan that allows us to live into our unique conference mission. In response to either of these plans, provisions and processes will be determined for congregations to make gracious exits to enable them to move forward in their respective mission fields. If the Connectional Conference Plan is approved, conference leadership would also address a new infrastructure for the conference and local church affinities and alignments with respective theologies/organizational structures.

Where can I find more information about the Commission on a Way Forward and the 2019 conference?

You can find more information about the General Conference of The United Methodist Church online at UMC.org or on the Mountain Sky Conference website, Mountain Sky on the Way Forward.

General and Jurisdictional Delegates

Yellowstone Legacy Conference Delegates

General Conference Laity	General Conference Clergy	Jurisdictional Conference Laity	Jurisdictional Conference Clergy
Don McCammon	Tyler Amundson	Peg Plimpton	Jeremy Scott
Alternate Laity to Jurisdictional Conference		Alternate Clergy to Jurisdictional Conference	
Diane Martin		Dave Andersen	
Alice Swett		Mark Calhoun	
Steve Martin		Kama Hamilton Morton	

Rocky Mountain Legacy Conference Delegates

General Conference Laity	General Conference Clergy	Jurisdictional Conference Laity	Jurisdictional Conference Clergy
Doug Palmer	Kent Ingram - Chair	Margaret Hotze	Cathie Kelsey
Kunle Taiwo	Brad Laurvick	Judy Hill	Jessica Rooks
Harvey Tukutau	Megan Armstrong	Liwliwa Robledo	Eric Smith
		Glenna Brayton	Michael Dent
		Diana Huerta	Sione Tukutau
		Laurie Day	Elizabeth McVicker
Alternate Laity to Jurisdictional Conference		Alternate Clergy to Jurisdictional Conference	
Ruth Wills		Jerry Hershops	
Curtis Gay		Melanie Rosa	

Contact a delegate at bit.ly/Gcdelegatescontact



Mike DuBose, UMNS

(l-r) Outgoing COB President Bishop Bruce Ough, incoming COB President Bishop Ken Carter and COB President-designate Bishop Cynthia Harvey address a press conference at the end of the Council of Bishops meeting on May 4, 2018.

United Methodist Bishops Recommend a Way Forward



For Immediate Release
May 4, 2018

CHICAGO – United Methodist bishops, meeting in Chicago, engaged in a prayerful process to discern a way forward. At the conclusion of the discernment process, the Council of Bishops strongly approved the following motion and rationale:

Having received and considered the extensive work of the Commission on a Way Forward, the Council of Bishops will submit a report to the Special Session of the General Conference in 2019 that includes:

- **All three plans (The Traditionalist Plan, The One Church Plan and the Connectional Conference Plan) for a way forward considered by the Commission and the Council.**
- **The Council's recommendation of the One Church Plan.**
- **An historical narrative of the Council's discernment process regarding all three plans.**

Rationale: In order to invite the church to go deeper into the journey the Council and Commission have been on, the Council will make all the information considered by the Commission and the Council of Bishops available to the delegates of the General Conference and acknowledges there is support for each of the three plans within the Council. The values of our global church are reflected in all three plans. The majority of the Council recommends the One Church Plan as the best way forward for The United Methodist Church.

Guided by the [mission, vision and scope document](#), the bishops agreed to recommend the One Church Plan. This plan provides conferences, churches, and pastors the flexibility to uniquely reach their missional context while retaining the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church.

The One Church Plan allows for contextualization of language about human sexuality in support of the mission; and allows for central conferences, especially those in Africa, to retain their disciplinary authority to adapt the Book of Discipline and continue to include traditional language and values while fulfilling the vision of a global and multicultural church.

This plan also encourages a generous unity by giving United Methodists the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions. The One Church Plan removes the restrictive language of the Book of Discipline and adds assurances to pastors and Conferences who due to their theological convictions cannot perform same-sex weddings or ordain self-avowed practicing homosexuals.

The Council's discernment process was guided by the over-arching desire to strategically help the General Conference do its work and to honor the General Conference's request for the Council to help the church find a way forward.

"With convicted humility, bishops want to be pastors and shepherds of the whole church in order to maximize the presence of a United Methodist witness in as many places in the world as possible and with as much contextual differentiation as possible," said newly installed Council of Bishops President Ken Carter.

The bishops expressed deep appreciation for the diligent work that the 32-member Commission on a Way Forward did in formulating the three plans: the Traditionalist Plan, the One Church Plan and the Connectional Conference Plan.

While the bishops recommended the One Church Plan, they affirmed that the Connectional Conference Plan and the Traditionalist Plan held values that are important to the life and work of the church and will be included in the final report to the Special Session of General Conference that the bishops have called for Feb. 23-26 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

Bishop Carter, who served as one of the moderators of the Commission, said the bishops are adopting a spirit of collaboration with the Commission, and an attitude of respect for the delegations who will take up this work on behalf of the whole church.

"The Council's prayerful deliberation reflected the diversity of the global denomination on the matter of homosexuality and many other matters. The Council affirms the strength of this diversity and our commitment to maintain the unity of the church," Bishop Carter said.

Full details of the plans and accompanying legislative proposals will be released as soon as final editing of the entire report is completed and translated into the official languages of the General Conference. It is estimated this will be no later than July 8.

In a video recorded after the meeting, Bishop Ough explains the Council of Bishops' decision to recommend the One Church Plan as a way forward for The United Methodist Church. Watch the video [here](#).

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Bishops clarify statement on Commission on a Way Forward recommendation



For Immediate Release
May 18, 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Council of Bishops is issuing the following statement, written by the bishops who served on the Commission on a Way Forward, and approved by the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops this week.

The Council of Bishops has voted by an overwhelming majority to share the work done by the Commission on a Way Forward on the three plans and to recommend the One Church Plan.

The One Church Plan will be placed before the 2019 General Conference for legislative action.

To honor the work of the commission, and in service to the delegates to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference, the Council of Bishops will also provide supplemental materials that include a historical narrative with disciplinary implications related to the connectional conference plan and the traditionalist plan. The recommendation adopted by the COB reflects the wide diversity of theological perspectives and the global nature of the UMC as the best way forward for our future as a denomination.

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202-748-5172

Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet endorses One Church Plan

September 10, 2018

The Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops and the Mission Cabinet met at the California-Nevada Conference Center in Sacramento, Calif. from Sept. 4 to 7.

This press release was updated Sept. 12, 2018

Grace and peace in the name of Christ to the people called United Methodist of the Western Jurisdiction. We are the Mission Cabinet of the Western Jurisdiction, composed of your bishops, directors of connectional ministries, and leadership team chair. We speak to you out of a deep love for Christ and Christ's Church, believing that the church should be "a home for all God's people, gathered around a table of reconciliation and transformation."¹

It is after much prayer, study and discernment that we share with you that we believe that the One Church Plan is the best way forward for the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. We stand with the Council of Bishops in their affirmation of this plan. We believe that this plan has the best potential to maximize the presence of United Methodist witness, allow for contextual differentiation, and balance an approach to different theological understandings of human sexuality with as much unity as possible.²

We are informed by Our Theological Task³ which reminds us that such work is critical and constructive, individual and communal, contextual and incarnational, and is essentially practical.

We claim this uniquely United Methodist process which requires us to stay in relationship and dialogue with God and one another every day as a sign of our faithfulness. As children of God, we have travelled together with Jesus Christ, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to a place of full inclusion of all persons in the fellowship and ministry of the church. We are committed to the full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the church now and as we move forward.

At the same time, we recognize that the Annual Conferences, clergy, churches, and other ministry settings we serve are not all of one mind about these matters. We affirm our unity in Christ and commit ourselves to living together as one body, though we do not all understand God's will for the human family in the same way.

We believe this plan provides a vision big enough to hold the diversity that grows out of our theological task, creating generous space for us to live our conscience faithfully as we follow Jesus, holding to a covenant of mission that binds us together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Signed: Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata, Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, Bishop Grant J. Hagiya, Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky, Bishop Karen P. Oliveto, Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, Bishop Roy I. Sano, Bishop Elias G. Galvan, Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Bishop Beverly J. Shamana, Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr., Rev. Donna M. L. Pritchard, Rev. Beth Rambikur, Rev. Jorge Luiz Domingues, Rev. Myron Wingfield, Rev. David Valera, Rev. Lowell Greathouse, Rev. Carlo Rapanut, Rev. Youngsook Kang

1 Western Jurisdiction Vision Statement, adopted 2004. <http://westernjurisdictionumc.org/about/vision-statement/>

2 Commission on a Way Forward Final Report, section on "Vision," page 6: [Way Forward Report - Final - ENGLISH.pdf](#)

3 "Our Theological Task," *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2016, ¶ 105, Section 4, p. 81

Mountain Sky Cabinet and General Conference delegates endorse One Church Plan

October 24, 2018

From the Cabinet and the delegates to General Conference 2019

We write in a time when our denomination and nation feel helplessly divided. In political, social, and religious arenas we've seen mounting problems, and when we've sought leadership we've only found division. In times such as these we need leaders to come together, engage in authentic, grace-filled, challenging dialogue and present a path forward.

It is against this backdrop that we, the Mountain Sky Cabinet and General Conference Delegation, write to express our support for the One Church Model, as presented by the Commission on a Way Forward. We believe that the One Church Model is a reasonable compromise that aligns with our Wesleyan heritage, allowing us to live in unity without requiring uniformity, and allows for the least disruptions of vital ministries throughout the Mountain Sky Conference.

We, the people of the Mountain Sky Conference, know the value of unity even in the midst of disagreement; we've lived into this model for many years. Go to any UMC from Trinidad, CO to Columbia Falls, MT, from Wheatland, WY, to St. George, UT and you're likely to find people living in community despite disagreement about any number of divisive issues. Despite these disagreements, United Methodists have welcomed, supported, and loved each other as they have lived out a shared mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our theological diversity has created increased empathy, conversation, and growth. It has helped us to live in community with each other thus making us better prepared to live in harmony with all of creation.

To be clear, the One Church Model is not perfect. The One Church Model does not completely live into the values of full inclusion for our LGBTQ sisters and brothers; instead, discriminatory practices are allowed to persist within the United Methodist Church. Although we support the One Church Model, we also reaffirm our continued commitment to further the cause of equity and justice for all of those who have been disenfranchised in our Church.

While we acknowledge these imperfections in the plan, we also recognize that the One Church Model provides a significant gift to our conference and the entire denomination: the ability to live in unity without requiring uniformity. The One Church Model invites us to be united across our difference – a difference found in almost every congregation. Unity is difficult but unity teaches us empathy; it challenges us to reconsider the preconceived notions we have about others and ourselves, to grow a deeper understanding of ourselves and others, and to practice loving our neighbor always.

In the interest of unity, we, the Mountain Sky Conference Cabinet and Delegation, offer our prayerful support for the One Church Model as it has been presented by the Commission on the Way Forward. Recognizing its significant challenges, we accept the invitation to live into better community and to increase our love and empathy for each other, and to grow together in the likeness of Christ. Further, as leaders of this conference, we commit ourselves to working diligently to support and serve the conference as it continues to strive to live into God's vision of Beloved Community.

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ,

Doug Palmer, Don McCammon, Kunle Taiwo, Harvey Tukutau, Peg Plimpton, Margaret Hotze, *lay delegates and first alternates*;

Tyler Amundson, Kent Ingram, Jeremy Scott, Brad Laurvick, Megan Armstrong, Cathie Kelsey, *clergy delegates and first alternates*;

Bishop Karen Oliveto, Jeff Rainwater, Youngsook Kang, Margaret Gillikin, Paul Kottke, Marv Vose, Jan Witman, Tezenlo Thong, Deborah Christine, Amy Gearhart, *MSC Cabinet*

Contact:

Mountain Sky Conference Communications
communications@mtnskyumc.org



For Immediate Release | November 14, 2018

We, the delegates of the Western Jurisdiction, have closely followed the work of the Commission on the Way Forward and have had in-depth conversations across the Jurisdiction and the United Methodist connection in preparation for the specially called session of the General Conference.

The Western Jurisdiction comprises an incredible diversity of racial and ethnic heritage, theological tradition, and political affiliation. We live in cities and small towns, in communities on farmlands, mountains, deserts, islands, and prairies. This wealth of experience has enriched our lives together. Additionally, we have built deep relationships across the global United Methodist connection and have learned from the unique and authentic ways that United Methodists share the love of Christ around the world. We value continued engagement with this global community.

This diversity inspires the vision of the body of Christ, unified in many parts. Just like the early Church, we hope to continue to live in community across lines of class, gender, heritage, culture, race, and all other lines that seek to divide us. Now, as it was then, this work is valuable but not easy.

Through our discernment, we have come to support the One Church Plan, as presented by the Commission on a Way Forward. We believe that the One Church Plan is a faithful approach that will allow for unity in diversity and for us to continue to live together in our vital witness and service to God's world.

Although we support the One Church Plan for its possible ability to maintain unity, we recognize that it does not provide full inclusion for faithful LGBTQ Christians in the Church. While supporting the plan, our hearts ache for the LGBTQ community, and we reaffirm our continued commitment to further the cause of equity and justice for all the disenfranchised from our Church.

We, the delegates of the Western Jurisdiction, desire to live into the Apostle Paul's charge to the Church at Ephesus to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). To this end, we commit to support the unity of the Church. We commit ourselves, as leaders in The United Methodist Church, to lead in a way consistent with the ideals of unity. In the months leading up to the General Conference session, and throughout the many turbulent months that may follow, we commit to working in a way that seeks to build bridges, develop greater empathy, and share the love of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet.

Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ,

Doug Palmer, Don McCammon, Kunle Taino, Harvey Tukutau, Kent Ingram, Tyler Amundson,
Megan Armstrong, Brad Laurvick,
Jan Nelson, Donna Pritchard
Emily Allen, Burt Yin, Randall Miller, Jeffrey Kuan, Greg Bergquist, Siosifa Hingano
Jo Anne Hayden, Carlo Rapanut
Marie Kuch-Stanovsky, Mary Kohlstaedt Huycke
Jim Nibbelink, Dan Hurlbert
Rosie Rios, Cedrick Bridgeforth, Patricia Farris, Ken Ellis, Tom Choi, Mele Maka, JoAnn
Fukumoto, Sandra Olewine



For Immediate Release | December 10, 2018

Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet urges prayer and study in preparation for GC2019

Reaffirming its support for the One Church Plan, the Western Jurisdiction's Mission Cabinet is calling United Methodists to prayer and learning in preparation for the upcoming special session of the General Conference.

On the first Sunday of Advent, the leaders gathered in a retreat format – beginning with a holy time for communion, prayer, and deep reflection – to discuss the challenges of navigating the uncertainty presented by General Conference 2019. In conversation, they considered the myriad possible outcomes and how best to provide excellent leadership to the Church in the remaining months prior to, and those directly after, the conference.

Throughout its meeting, the Mission Cabinet continued to affirm its commitment to the full inclusion of LGBTQ persons at all levels in the church today, and a desire to remain at the table with others in the church who see things differently. At its last gathering in September, the Mission Cabinet [endorsed the One Church Plan](#) not as a perfect plan, but as the one having the “best potential to maximize the presence of United Methodist witness, allow for contextual differentiation, and balance an approach to different theological understandings of human sexuality with as much unity as possible.”

During its retreat, members of the Mission Cabinet shared what they are hearing and experiencing in their respective areas. Confusion about the One Church Plan, and lack of specific details regarding its practical impact on annual conferences, local churches and pastoral leadership, was a common thread. Partisan misinterpretations have added to the challenges faced by United Methodists seeking to honestly discern how this plan might help the church to move forward past 50-year-old divisions regarding human sexuality.

Hoping to clarify some of the confusion, the Mission Cabinet is encouraging people to review information available on a new website, onechurchplan.org. The site provides an overview of the plan and a FAQ answering many of the practical questions people have. It also includes testimony from bishops and the reminder that the plan is the only one to merit the support of a majority of United Methodist bishops.

Additionally, the Mission Cabinet calls upon United Methodists in the Western Jurisdiction to continue in prayer for the upcoming work of this special session of the General Conference, even as they continue their most meaningful work of calling and nurturing disciples, and loving God and neighbor more fully.

The Western Jurisdiction Mission Cabinet, is composed of the chair of the Leadership Team, Directors of Connectional Ministries and the College of Bishops serving the Western Jurisdiction. Their time was blessed by hospitality offered by Riviera United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, California.



Addendum

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, which usually meets every four years, but will be gathering for a special session on February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri. The sole purpose of this special session will be to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward. The 32-member Commission was authorized by General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The 2016 Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church.

In May of 2018, the Council of Bishops endorsed the One Church Plan as the best solution to a 50-year-old global debate. Eight hundred and sixty-four elected United Methodist delegates, about 42 percent from outside of the United States, will participate in the decision-making process in February.

MOUNTAIN SKY CONFERENCE

ON THE WAY FORWARD

Information online:

- www.mtnskyumc.org/mountainskyonthewayforward
 - www.umc.org/GC2019
 - www.onechurchplan.org
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Conference news and updates:

- Web: www.mtnskyumc.org
 - Facebook: @MountainSkyUMC
 - Twitter: @MtnSkyUMC
 - Instagram: @MtnSkyUMC
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