



Welcome to the third and final edition of Light of Life for 2016.

I have mentioned in earlier editions that we often meet home schoolers who are the home schooled children of the previous generation, which makes Light Educational Ministries a generational ministry! That is significant for at least two reasons. Firstly, we have been doing this work for so long that our original team members are now well past retirement age. We are still going strong although our aging will mean a change in the focus and direction of the ministry in the years to come. Secondly, the ethical and spiritual climate of our nation has changed so dramatically in that generation that our ministry is relevant to a declining support base.

Although we are older, our enthusiasm for godly education is not dimmed nor diminished. But we do note that the time of pioneering in Christian education seems to have passed and the fruit is not what we expected. Our nation has been overrun with humanism and its fruits are not to be commended.

Unfortunately, much of what passes as Christian education today seems to have more in common with humanism than Christianity. Step by step, governments have tightened educational requirements to reflect their own faith of humanism – and it has become increasingly difficult for both Christians in schools and home educators to be faithful to a vision for Christian education.

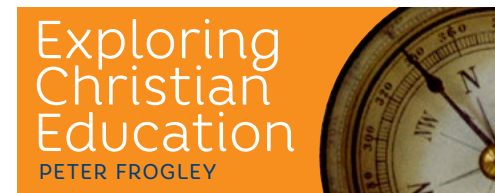
That is not to discourage Christian educators but to encourage them to redouble their efforts to retain their uniquely Christian expression in education. If Australia does not take a different direction quite quickly there is not much hope for a free

and godly future. It is thus more important than ever that Christian educators provide a biblical alternative to the world system that is leading us as a nation to judgment. All that stands in its path is the Christian church and its faithful members who are living their faith day by day. We at LEM are committed to assist where we are able, to see godly parents raise godly offspring for the glory of God.

This Issue

In *Exploring Christian Education* I explore the principles that should govern the training of our children. In *Health* we reproduce an article from Hallelujah Acres on defying aging. We present the final article from Wendy Hill in her series on the elements of music, and in the bookshop we have several new Bob Jones editions, plus an age-graded selection of library books for Christmas.

With a prayer that this issue will be a blessing as you seek to serve the Lord in education,



No. 101: The Life of the Christian

Very few Christians have a problem with the fundamental tenets of Christian faith and of the sanctification of our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christians happily accept and understand that the Holy Spirit is given to direct our lives toward the formation of the character of Christ.

Understanding something of the nature of sin and its corrupting of our lives, we personally appreciate the importance of discipleship to Christ – of training in godly manners, of being obedient to God, of seeking to please Him, of obeying parents, of speaking nicely, of dressing modestly, of serving the Lord, of attending church, of praying, and of course, reading the Bible. Yet somehow when it comes to our children we have been influenced by the world that emphasises freedom, self-esteem (selfishness), children's rights and a fear of restricting our children's sinful nature.

Confusion sets in

Christians have an innate sense of what is right and wrong according to God's standard — the Bible. This action of our conscience (which is our most precious gift) seems to be waning in much of the Christian community and this leads such believers to be open to values other than those found in the Bible.

Thus, when it comes to raising our children we are too often influenced by the world's system as to how to go about this task. When this happens we are led inevitably to the world of psychology — man's understanding of our psyche — the how and why of human behaviour.

Too many Christians seldom, if ever, stop to think that what we have found to be true in our private Christian lives will also be true in the forming of our children's Christian character. It seems many are trapped in a dualistic world view that believes there are two exclusive compartments to our lives: the spiritual (which is our private relationship with God in Christ) and the secular (where we live our lives in our vocation and public life). Too many live in a world where on the one hand in our private Christian lives we practice the biblical faith, but on the other in our secular life (all that is other than our private faith) we embrace the world's system. Somehow many folk believe this is in part submitting to the government, which we have been taught is the Christian's responsibility.

This dualism, which marked my life for many years, makes many Christians the victims of the world's system, genuinely believing that dualism is in fact the way in which a Christian exercises the faith!

The Gap Theory

The Gap Theory is not only the theory which flows from Genesis 1 and gives rise to the old age of the earth, but it is also the theory which gives rise to the great gap that exists between a biblical and a secular (humanist) world view. It is an unfortunate truth that school teachers are taught humanist psychology (the secular) in their training — certainly this author was and that was fifty-odd years ago. But between humanist psychology and biblical discipleship a great gulf (or gap) is fixed.

A humanist approach will enhance a child's sin and galvanise them in selfishness.

A biblical approach will bring the saving grace of God close to the child, to break the power of sin and enable the development of a godly young person fit for service in the selfless kingdom of God.

It seems our education system specialises in helping children find and make their own decisions in life — even extending to the children deciding *what* they will learn and perhaps *when* or even *if*. It has been suggested that modern education trains children to sin more efficiently!

Just one example of the world's system is that it insists that a teacher 'requiring a child to do something they don't want to'

is exceedingly damaging to the child's psyche. Thus over the past generation or two we have seen the advent of 'child-centred' (certainly not teacher-centred) education. Biblical Christian teachers will still be of the antiquated view that teachers are called of God to teach (which includes enforcing obedience), rather than being a 'learning clinician'.

Christians obey God, humanists obey themselves

Finding a biblical pathway

Now there seems to be a problem with all this psychology. It does not often, if ever, find itself in accord with our biblical faith. I don't recall Jesus ever instructing us to make our own decisions. Rather He says 'follow me' — the very opposite to the teaching of the humanist. The following scripture from Matthew carries with it the idea of imitating the one they are following!

Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'

Matthew 16:24

Jesus' teaching is quite clear, being based in not only the Lordship of Christ but also our need to conform (by the power of the Holy Spirit) to the expressed will of God found in the Bible. That is, Christians are to deny self and follow Christ's selflessness.

For the humanist (who by definition worships himself) the priority is and must be... self. This self is the essence of ugliness and sin and is the reason Jesus so strongly directs us far from it.

Jesus's teaching and directions make the nature of our relationship with Him clear and thus provides a foundation for building our educational philosophy. Here are some pertinent words from Jesus from John's Gospel that are helpful in building a Christian philosophy of education:

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. *John 14:21*

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. *John 15:14*

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. *John 15:5-6*

Here is the contrast: Christians obey God, humanists obey themselves! What are we training our children to do?

If we yearn for godly children who will make a mark for the Lord in this troubled world, we must train them in God's principles. The world's system of humanism will simply hasten the demise of our nation and indeed western culture. ■



Notation

In this final article in the series on elements of music, we look at the very basic building block of notation.

Notation is a thread woven through all the thirteen elements previously discussed – rhythm/beat, melody, dynamics, harmony, tempo, tonality, form, soundwaves, timbre, touch, body, soul and spirit. The most noticeable difference between notation and all other elements (except the body) is the fact that it is visible. All the other music elements combine in a huge aural tapestry, and notation gives it a visible representation.

Definition

Notation, from the Latin *notatio*, means ‘a marking’. Notation is a system of descriptive, graphic symbols set down in writing. My simple definition for students is this:

Notation is music ideas and instructions written down on paper.

It uses the alphabet, along with many different shapes, lines and ovals. To a non-musician, the music symbols are not easy to understand. They are a different

type of written language which takes time and practice to convert into sounds – like learning phonics.

God message

Notation teaches us many things about God’s character. Firstly, just as a composer writes his name on his music as creator, God has placed His signature on all His creation, because He wants to be remembered as the Creator. Psalm 119:52 tells us:

I remembered Thy judgements of old,
O Lord, and have comforted myself.

Secondly, just as notation is a tangible manifestation and a preservable record of all the invisible music elements, God had His Word notated as a preservable record in the Bible of God’s invisible qualities.

This shall be written for the generation to come and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.
Psalm 102:18

Thirdly, just as a composer’s notation is very specific because he cares greatly about his musical ideas and wants his instructions to be carefully followed, God is also very specific about His instructions for our lives because He cares enormously for us.

...He cares for you. *1 Peter 5:7*

Lastly, just as a composer obviously loves writing music and wants to share this love and passion with others, God wants to share His love with His children and the Bible is His series of love letters to us.

We can see how music notation is a reflection of God’s loving character. It is a visible

record of music, just as the Bible records the Creator’s love for us. Romans 1:20 tells us:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse.

We have no reason to doubt who creates music when the composer puts their name to it. Likewise, we know that God is the Creator of us and the world, because His signature is obvious everywhere.

History

A very brief history of notation shows us how it has changed over the centuries. In Ancient Times, most music was taught aurally and memorised. Priests had basic notation symbols written on the Scriptures to assist chanting. Conductors called *chironomers* used hand signals to direct the players. In the Middle Ages, small black markings called *neumes* were invented to indicate the rise and fall in melodies.

In about 1000 AD an Italian monk, Guido D’Arezzo, introduced the *line* to show how high or low the singers should go. Gradually more lines were added to become the standard five lines used today. In the Renaissance, clefs and notes indicated specific numbers of beats. Rhythm became more defined with barlines and time signatures. Composers of the Baroque and Classical periods became more specific in notating their ideas. In the Romantic period and late

Nineteenth Century, more signs and terms arose to describe tempo and dynamics. In the late 1900s and Twentieth Century even more symbols came into use with the invention of electronic instruments.

Learning by reading vs learning by ear

The development of notation was excellent for preserving composers’ works. However, there has been a downside to it. In the late 1880s and 1900s, there was a move to learning music by reading rather than by ear. The twentieth century heralded a flood of teaching methods and beginners’ books. Ideas became fixed and bound by the written symbols, so improvisation and creativity diminished. Musicians became specialists in performance, composing, teaching, instrument making and many other areas of the music industry, rather than becoming well-rounded musicians. Many students received an unbalanced music education compared with those of earlier centuries, where a player was expected to do everything – compose, perform, improvise and write their own notation. Today’s students can become excellent performers at the expense of other important related areas, especially sight reading (playing a piece from music the musician has never seen before). Despite the multitudes of exam systems now available, the focus on notation does not necessarily guarantee competent music readers.

Having said all that, in the last fifty years the pendulum has swung back a little

they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves

towards learning more by ear in some teaching methods. But for many the printed page remains a type of 'security blanket'. There is a lost art of listening as so many are trained to depend on eyes, have difficulty memorising and lose much creativity and confidence. Sadly, this was my experience along with many others I've spoken to who were music students in the late 1900s.

This stifled situation does not seem to be new. What the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates said about the invention of the alphabet might equally apply to the development of music notation:

This discovery... will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. This specific you have discovered is an aid — not to memory but to recollection — and gives...only the semblance of truth; they will hear much and learn nothing; they will appear to know much and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company for they will seem wise without being wise.

*Andrew Wilson-Dickson,
The Story of Christian Music, page 48*

Conclusion

In summary, we have seen how important music notation is in:

- recording and preserving music
- acknowledging the creator of a piece of music
- showing evidence of someone who loves and cares about details and wants to share their ideas with others.

Notation reflects the same qualities about our Creator-God. I am very thankful for all the inspired writers of the Bible books so God's love message could be preserved for thousands of years. Our current human minds have become so dulled to spiritual things, and having the Author's written Word is essential to our lives. Music styles and their notation have changed over the centuries but the message of God to His children has not. 'God is love' has been the constant theme throughout the ages — and all events in the Bible are evidence that God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

I trust this series of articles on the music elements has been useful and of interest. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated. I can be contacted via email at wendy@thegiftofmusic.com.au.

All articles and much more can be found on my website at www.thegiftofmusic.com.au (click below).

Click here for more information and music articles by Wendy Hill



Since many of our readers are within the Baby Boomer generation, we thought it beneficial to provide some well-researched information from Hallelujah acres on how to retain your cognitive skills well into your future.

How to save your aging brain

Something as easy as adding more spinach, kale, collards, chard and mustard greens to your diet could help slow cognitive decline, according to new research.

The study also examined the nutrients responsible for the effect, linking vitamin K consumption to slower cognitive decline for the first time.

The researchers tracked the diets and cognitive abilities of more than 950 older adults for an average of five years and saw a significant decrease in the rate of cognitive decline for study participants who consumed greater amounts of green leafy vegetables. People who ate one to two servings per day had the cognitive ability of a person 11 years younger than those who consumed none.

When the researchers examined individual nutrients linked with slowing cognitive decline, they found that vitamin K, lutein, folate and beta-carotene were most likely helping to keep the brain healthy.

'Our study identified some very novel associations,' said Morris, who presented the research at the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) Annual Meeting. 'No other studies have looked at vitamin K in relation to change in cognitive abilities over time, and only a limited number of studies have found some association with lutein.' Other studies have linked folate and beta-carotene intake with slower cognitive decline.

'With baby boomers approaching old age, there is huge public demand for lifestyle behaviors that can ward off loss of memory and other cognitive abilities with age,' said Morris. 'Our study provides evidence that eating green leafy vegetables and other foods rich in vitamin K, lutein and beta-carotene can help to keep the brain healthy to preserve functioning.'

In addition to green leafy vegetables, other good sources of vitamin K, lutein, folate and beta-carotene include brightly colored fruits and vegetables. A diet rich in vitamins E and C also may help prevent oxidative damage to neurons. One study found that vitamin E and vitamin C supplements taken together reduced the risk of Alzheimer's disease by 78%. Omega-3s and vitamin D also may have protective effects due to their anti-inflammatory properties.

Eight Habits that Improve Cognitive Function

1 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Researchers at Boston University School of Medicine discovered more evidence that physical activity is beneficial for brain health and cognition. The study found that certain hormones, which are increased during exercise, may help improve memory. The researchers were able to correlate blood hormone levels from aerobic fitness, and identify positive effects on memory function linked to exercise.

Researchers at Dana-Farber and Harvard Medical School released a different study showing a specific molecule released during endurance exercise that improves cognition and protects the brain against degeneration.

2 OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE

A study from October 2013 titled *The Impact of Sustained Engagement on Cognitive Function in Older Adults: The Synapse Project* found that learning new and demanding skills while maintaining an engaged social network are key to staying sharp as we age.

The findings reveal that less demanding activities, such as listening to classical music or simply completing word puzzles, probably don't provide noticeable benefits to an aging mind and brain. Older adults have long been encouraged to stay active and to flex their memory and learning like any muscle that you have to 'use it or lose it.'

However, this new research indicates that not all mind-engaging activities improve cognitive function. Lead researcher Denise Park of the University of Texas at Dallas says, 'It seems it is not enough just to get out and do something — it is important to get out and do something that is unfamiliar and mentally challenging, and provides broad stimulation mentally and socially. When you are inside your comfort zone you may be outside of the enhancement zone.'

Another study found that a training program designed to boost cognition in older adults also increased their openness to new experiences, demonstrating for the first time that a non-drug intervention in older adults can change a personality trait once thought to be fixed throughout a person's lifespan.

3 CURIOSITY AND CREATIVITY

A study published in July 2013 found that reading books, writing and participating in brain-stimulating activities at any age may preserve memory. Neuroscientists discovered that reading a novel can improve brain function on a variety of levels. This study on the brain benefits of reading fiction was conducted at Emory University. The study was titled *Short- and Long-Term Effects of a Novel on Connectivity in the Brain* and was published in the journal *Brain Connectivity*.

The researchers found that becoming engrossed in a novel enhances connectivity in the brain and improves brain function. Interestingly, reading fiction was found to

improve the reader's ability to put themselves in another person's shoes and flex the imagination in a way that is similar to the visualisation an athlete would do while mentally rehearsing a motion in sports.

'Our study suggests that exercising your brain by taking part in activities such as these across a person's lifetime, from childhood through old age, is important for brain health in old age,' concluded co-author Robert S. Wilson, PhD.

4 SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

John Cacioppo, Professor of Psychology from University of Chicago, presented findings in February 2014 which identified that the health consequences of feeling lonely can trigger psychological and cognitive decline.

Cacioppo's research found that feeling isolated from others can disrupt sleep, elevate blood pressure, increase morning rises in the stress hormone cortisol, alter gene expression in immune cells, increase depression, and lower overall subjective well-being. All these factors conspire to disrupt optimal brain function and connectivity, and reduce cognitive function.

5 MINDFULNESS/PRAYER/MEDITATION

A 2013 pilot study by researchers at Harvard's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center identified that the brain changes associated with meditation, and the subsequent stress reduction, may play an important role in slowing the progression of age-related cognitive disorders like

new research indicates that not all mind-engaging activities improve cognitive function

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Rebecca Erwin Wells MD MPH explained, 'We were particularly interested in looking at the default mode network (the brain system that is engaged when people remember past events or envision the future, for example) and the hippocampus (the part of the brain responsible for emotions, learning and memory) — because the hippocampus is known to atrophy as people progress toward mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease. We also know that as people age, there's a high correlation between perceived stress and Alzheimer's disease, so we wanted to know if stress reduction through meditation might improve cognitive reserve.'

Some religious affiliations practice meditating through prayer, singing, chanting, rosary, etc. — which all emulate our need to meditate on God's Holy Word.

6 BRAIN-TRAINING GAMES

Researchers at University of California in San Francisco have created a specialised video game that may help older people boost mental skills like handling multiple tasks at once. Dr. Adam Gazzaley of UCSF and colleagues published their findings in the September 2013 journal *Nature*.

In January of 2014, researchers at Johns Hopkins University reported that as few as ten sessions of cognitive training improved an older person's reasoning ability and speed-of-processing for up to a decade after the intervention. If someone received additional 'booster' sessions over the next three years, the improvements were even more dramatic.

7 GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Scientists have known for decades that the brain requires sleep to consolidate learning and memory. Sleep researchers from Brown University presented groundbreaking new research that helps explain the specifics of how the sleeping brain masters a new task.

'It's an intensive activity for the brain to consolidate learning – so the brain may benefit from sleep, perhaps because more energy is available, or because distractions and new inputs are fewer,' said study author Yuka Sasaki, a research associate professor in Brown University's Department of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences.

'Sleep is not just a waste of time,' Yuka Sasaki concludes. The extent of reorganisation that the brain accomplishes during sleep is suggested by the distinct roles the two brainwave oscillations appear to play.

A February 2014 study from the University of California in San Francisco found an association between poor sleep quality and reduced gray matter volume in the brain's frontal lobe, which helps control important

processes such as working memory and executive function. 'Previous imaging studies have suggested that sleep disturbances may be associated with structural brain changes in certain regions of the frontal lobe,' said lead author Linda Chao. 'The surprising thing about this study is that it suggests poor sleep quality is associated with reduced gray matter volume throughout the entire frontal lobe and also globally in the brain.'

8 REDUCE CHRONIC STRESS

Neuroscientists have discovered that chronic stress and high levels of cortisol can damage the brain. A wide range of recent studies have affirmed the importance of maintaining healthy brain structure and connectivity by reducing chronic stress, which lowers cortisol.

Neuroscientists found that chronic stress triggers long-term changes in brain structure and function which can lead to cognitive decline. Their findings might explain why young people who are exposed to chronic stress early in life are prone to mental problems such as anxiety and mood disorders later in life, as well as learning difficulties.

The 'stress hormone' cortisol is believed to create a domino effect that hard-wires pathways between the hippocampus and amygdala in a way that might create a vicious cycle by creating a brain that becomes predisposed to be in a constant state of fight-or-flight.

The researchers found that hardening wires may be at the heart of the hyper-connected circuits associated with prolonged stress. This results in an excess of white matter in some areas of the brain. Ideally, the brain likes to trim the fat of excess wiring through neural pruning in order to maintain efficiency and streamlined communication within the brain.

Chronic stress has the ability to flip a switch in stem cells that turns them into a type of cell that inhibits connections to the prefrontal cortex, which would improve learning and memory, but lays down durable scaffolding linked to anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

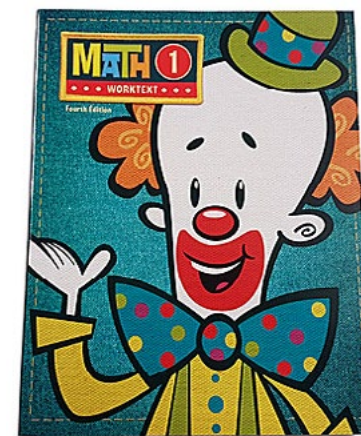
So – whilst those of us who are older may already be feeling the effects of an aging brain, it's never too late to start treating our bodies better. And of course people of any age can benefit from these pointers to keep themselves well-prepared for later life.



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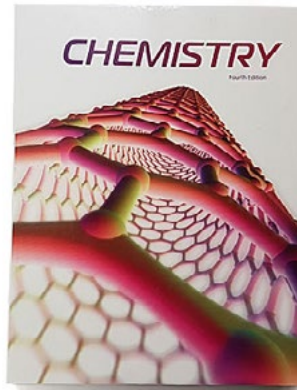
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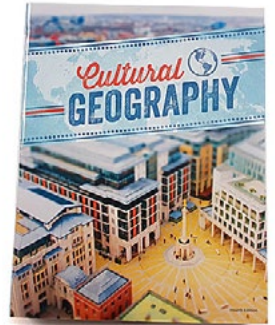
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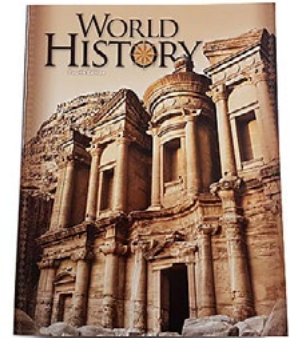
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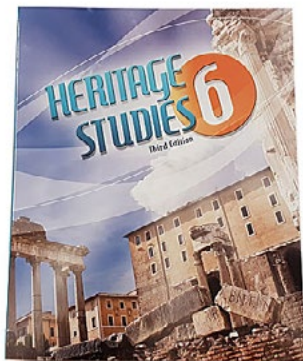
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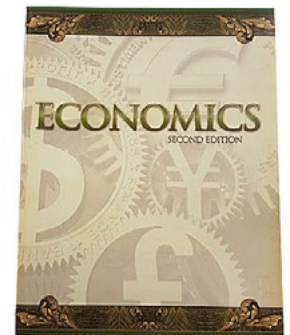


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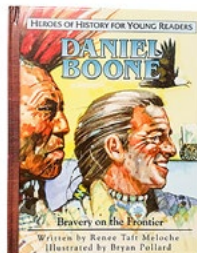
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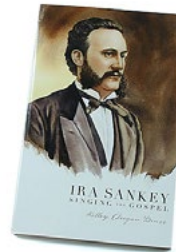
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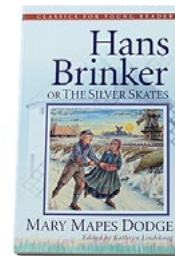
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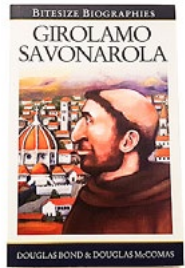
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