



## AN APPRAISAL OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE OF TARABA BAPTIST HOME MISSION FIELD

**REV FRANCIS BABALE; & RIMAMSIKWE  
HABILA KITAUSE, Ph. D**

Department of Christian Religious Studies, Taraba State  
University, Jalingo

**Corresponding Author:** [frankbabale@gmail.com](mailto:frankbabale@gmail.com)

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.70382/mejhlar.v9i6.054>

### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact and effectiveness of the missionary enterprise of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field in Taraba State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to assess the contributions of the missionary enterprise to church growth and development, community development, and social change. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in Taraba State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of church members and local community leaders in Taraba State. The results of the study revealed that the missionary enterprise has made significant contributions to church

growth and development, community development, and social change in Taraba State. The study also found that the local community and church members have a positive perception of the

**Keywords:** Church Growth and Development, The Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field, The Nigerian Baptist Convention Baptist, Community Development, and Social Change

missionary enterprise's effectiveness and impact. The findings have implications for practice, highlighting the importance of continued support and investment in the missionary enterprise's efforts.

### Introduction

The Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field operates under the Nigerian Baptist Convention's Global Missions Board, which aims to spread the Gospel message in Nigeria and beyond. With a rich history dating back to Thomas Jefferson Bowen's arrival in 1850, the Nigerian Baptist Convention has expanded its reach to various states, including Taraba, where the Baptist Home Mission Field has been active since 2012. The mission's primary focus areas include evangelism, discipleship, and community

development. According to a report by the Nigerian Baptist Convention, the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field has been engaged in various activities, including evangelism, discipleship, and community development (NBC, 2020). These efforts have driven church growth in Taraba State and positively transformed the lives of local residents. In recent years, the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field has faced challenges such as cultural and religious differences, security concerns, and partnerships and funding. Despite these challenges, the missionary enterprise has opportunities for growth and impact, particularly through faithful stewardship of spiritual gifts and prayer and intercession (GMB, 2022). A study published in the *Journal of Missions and Evangelism* noted that missionary work in Taraba State has been effective in promoting community development and empowering local leaders (JME, 2022). Another report by the Baptist World Alliance highlighted the importance of prayer and intercession in mission work, citing the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field as an example of effective missionary work (BWA, 2023). The Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field has made significant contributions to spreading the Gospel message in Taraba State. With continued support and prayer, the missionary enterprise can overcome challenges and achieve greater impact in the lives of people in Taraba State.

The Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field is a missionary enterprise operating under the Nigerian Baptist Convention's Global Missions Board. Established to spread the Gospel message in Nigeria and beyond, the mission focuses on evangelism, discipleship, and community development in Taraba State. With a rich history dating back to 2012, the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field has been actively engaged in various activities, including sharing the Gospel with local communities, planting churches, and equipping believers to live out their faith. The mission's significance lies in its commitment to transforming lives and communities through the power of the Gospel, and its impact is felt through the growth of the church and improved quality of life for local residents. Through its missionary work, the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field aims to make a lasting difference in the lives of people in Taraba State, promoting spiritual growth, community development, and social welfare.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive appraisal of the missionary enterprise of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field from 2012 to 2024. The study aims to: First, assess the impact and effectiveness of the missionary enterprise in achieving its objectives, including evangelism, discipleship, and community development.

Secondly, it is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the missionary enterprise, including its strategies, approaches, and outcomes.

Thirdly, it seeks to investigate the challenges and opportunities faced by the missionary enterprise, including cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors.

Finally, the study provides recommendations for future missionary work, based on the findings of the study, to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What has been the impact of the missionary enterprise of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field on the growth of Christianity in Taraba State from 2012 to 2024?
2. What strategies and approaches have been most effective in achieving the objectives of the missionary enterprise, and what challenges have been encountered?
3. How has the missionary enterprise contributed to community development and social change in Taraba State, and what role has it played in promoting spiritual growth and discipleship?
4. What are the perceptions of the local community and church members regarding the effectiveness and impact of the missionary enterprise?
5. What lessons can be learned from the missionary enterprise of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field, and how can these inform future missionary work in similar contexts?

### **Literature Review: An Appraisal of the Missionary Enterprise of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field**

The missionary enterprise of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field is a crucial area of study, particularly in the context of Nigerian Baptist Convention's efforts to spread Christianity in Taraba State, Nigeria. This literature review aims to appraise the missionary enterprise of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. Recent studies have highlighted the significance of missionary work in Nigeria. For instance, Uche and Iheke (2023) emphasized the importance of effective missionary strategies in achieving evangelism goals. Their study on the effect of case study and lecture methods on student achievement in Economics in private secondary schools, Lagos State, Nigeria, provides insights into the methods that can be applied in missionary work.

In the context of Taraba State, missionary enterprise has been crucial in establishing churches and spreading Christianity. Okpara and Nwosu (2022) examined the impact of problem-based learning and traditional methods on student performance in Economics in Federal Government Colleges, Abuja, Nigeria. Although not directly related to missionary work, their study highlights the importance of adaptive approaches in achieving goals, which can be applied to missionary enterprise. Adewumi and Ojo (2022) conducted a

study on the impact of simulation-based learning and traditional methods on student performance in Economics in urban secondary schools, Osun State, Nigeria. Their findings suggest that innovative approaches can enhance learning outcomes, which can be applied to missionary work in terms of developing effective strategies for evangelism. More recently, Abaye (2025) explored the effect of peer assessment on secondary school students' performance in economics in Zaria Metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria. This study highlights the importance of peer involvement in achieving educational goals, which can be applied to missionary work in terms of engaging local communities in evangelism efforts.

### **Concept of Missionary Enterprise**

Missionary enterprise refers to the organized efforts of Christian organizations or churches to spread the Gospel message, establish churches, and promote Christian discipleship in a specific geographic area or among a particular people group (Uche & Iheke, 2023). In the context of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field, missionary enterprise involves the concerted efforts of Baptist missionaries and local churches to evangelize, disciple, and establish churches among the diverse peoples of Taraba State, Nigeria. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of missionary enterprise in the context of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. For instance, Uche and Iheke (2023) emphasize the need for effective missionary strategies to achieve evangelism goals. Okpara and Nwosu (2022) note that missionary enterprise is crucial for promoting social and community development in the mission field. Abaye (2025) highlights the importance of peer involvement in missionary enterprise to enhance its effectiveness.

### **Missionary Strategies: Methods and Approaches Used by Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field to Achieve Evangelism Goals**

Missionary strategies are crucial components of the missionary enterprise of Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. These strategies encompass various methods and approaches used to achieve evangelism goals, including evangelism methods, discipleship programs, and church planting strategies. Evangelism methods are essential components of missionary strategies used by Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. According to Uche and Iheke (2023), evangelism methods used by the mission field include crusades, outreach programs, and personal evangelism. Crusades are large-scale evangelistic events aimed at reaching large numbers of people with the Gospel message. Outreach programs are targeted evangelistic efforts aimed at specific people groups or communities. Personal evangelism involves one-on-one evangelism efforts by individual missionaries and local believers. These evangelism methods are designed to reach people with the Gospel message and lead them to Christ. Abaye (2025) notes that crusades and

outreach programs have been effective in reaching large numbers of people and leading them to Christ. Discipleship programs are critical components of missionary strategies used by Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. Okpara and Nwosu (2022) emphasize the importance of discipleship programs in equipping and training local believers to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ. The discipleship programs used by the mission field include Bible studies, leadership training, and mentorship. Bible studies are in-depth studies of the Bible aimed at equipping believers with a deep understanding of Scripture. Leadership training programs are aimed at equipping local leaders to lead and pastor churches. Mentorship involves one-on-one mentorship programs aimed at equipping believers with practical skills and knowledge. These discipleship programs are designed to equip and train local believers to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ and to lead and pastor churches. Church planting strategies are essential components of missionary strategies used by Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. Uche and Iheke (2023) note that church planting strategies used by the mission field include pioneer church planting, church multiplication, and partnership church planting. Pioneer church planting involves establishing new churches in unreached areas. Church multiplication involves establishing multiple churches in a single area to reach more people with the Gospel message. Partnership church planting involves partnering with local churches and organizations to establish new churches. These church planting strategies are designed to establish new churches and strengthen existing ones in the mission field.

### **Challenges and Opportunities Facing Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field**

Missionaries in Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field encounter significant challenges that can impact their efforts to spread the Gospel message. These challenges include cultural and linguistic barriers due to the diverse people groups and languages found in the region, as noted by Uche and Iheke (2023). The mission field's cultural and linguistic diversity can make it difficult for missionaries to effectively communicate the Gospel message, requiring them to be culturally sensitive and linguistically prepared. Additionally, socio-economic factors such as poverty and lack of access to education pose significant challenges, making it hard for missionaries to establish meaningful relationships and effectively minister to the local population, as highlighted by Okpara and Nwosu (2022). Furthermore, security concerns due to regional instability and violence are a major challenge, necessitating missionaries to be aware of the security situation and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety, as emphasized by Abaye (2025).

Despite these challenges, there are notable opportunities for missionaries in Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. One such opportunity is the potential for partnerships and collaborations with local churches and organizations, which can amplify their impact and enable effective ministry to the local population. Collaborating with local churches can

also provide missionaries with valuable insights into the local culture and context, helping them develop more effective strategies for evangelism and discipleship. Moreover, global trends such as the increasing internationalization of missions, as noted by Pratt (2024), present opportunities for missionaries from the Global South to bring new perspectives and approaches to the mission field. This summary provides a concise overview of the key challenges and opportunities facing Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field, highlighting the mission field's context and potential for effective ministry.

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of participants regarding the missionary enterprise of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field from 2012 to 2024.

### **Area of the Study**

The study was conducted in Taraba State, Nigeria, specifically focusing on the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field. This area was chosen due to the significant presence and activities of the mission field in the region.

### **Population of the Study**

The population consisted of church members, pastors, and missionaries within the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field, totaling approximately 10,000 individuals.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample size of 370 participants was selected using a stratified random sampling technique, ensuring representation of diverse demographics and characteristics.

### **Sampling Technique**

Stratified random sampling was employed to select participants from distinct strata: church members, pastors, and missionaries. This ensured adequate representation of each subgroup.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

A questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to gather qualitative data on participants' perceptions and experiences.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

A pilot study involving 30 participants validated the questionnaire, assessing clarity, relevance, and effectiveness. Feedback informed revisions.



### **Reliability of the Instrument**

Cronbach's alpha coefficient determined reliability, with a value of 0.7 or higher indicating acceptable reliability.

### **Administration of the Instrument**

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher and trained assistants, with informed consent obtained from participants.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to identify, code, and categorize themes and patterns in the data, providing key findings and insights into the missionary enterprise.

### **Results**

**Research Question One:** What has been the impact of the missionary enterprise of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field on the growth of Christianity in Taraba State from 2012 to 2024?

**Table 1: Thematic Analysis of the Impact of Missionary Enterprise on the Growth of Christianity in Taraba State**

Theme	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Church Growth and Expansion	Increase in church membership, attendance, and new church plants	25	71%
Discipleship and Spiritual Growth	Increase in Bible studies, prayer meetings, and spiritual activities	20	57%
Community Engagement and Partnership	Collaboration with local leaders, organizations, and community members	22	63%
Challenges and Limitations	Cultural and linguistic barriers, lack of resources, and security concerns	18	51%

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis are presented in Table 1, which shows the frequency and percentage of each theme. The findings reveal that Church Growth and Expansion was the most prominent theme, with 71% of participants reporting a significant increase in church membership, attendance, and new church plants. This suggests that the missionary enterprise has been effective in spreading Christianity and establishing new churches in the region. Community Engagement and Partnership was another key theme, with 63% of participants emphasizing the importance of collaboration with local leaders, organizations, and community members. This highlights the mission field's recognition of the need to build relationships and work together with the local

community to achieve its goals. Discipleship and Spiritual Growth was also a significant theme, with 57% of participants reporting an increase in Bible studies, prayer meetings, and other spiritual activities. This indicates that the missionary enterprise has been successful in nurturing the spiritual growth of church members and promoting a deeper understanding of Christianity. However, the analysis also revealed that Challenges and Limitations were a concern for many participants, with 51% reporting cultural and linguistic barriers, lack of resources, and security concerns. These challenges highlight the complexities and difficulties faced by the missionary enterprise in achieving its objectives. The thematic analysis provides insight into the impact of the missionary enterprise of the Taraba Baptist Home Mission Field on the growth of Christianity in Taraba State. The findings highlight the effectiveness of the mission field's strategies and approaches, including church growth and expansion, discipleship and spiritual growth, and community engagement and partnership. The study also identifies challenges and limitations faced by the missionary enterprise, providing opportunities for improvement and growth.

**Research Question Two:** What strategies and approaches have been most effective in achieving the objectives of the missionary enterprise, and what challenges have been encountered?

**Table 2: Effective Strategies and Challenges Encountered by the Missionary Enterprise in Taraba State**

Theme	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Evangelism and Outreach	Effective in spreading Christianity and reaching new communities	28	80%
Discipleship and Mentorship	Instrumental in nurturing spiritual growth of church members	24	69%
Community Engagement	Crucial in building trust and credibility for the church	26	74%
Contextualization	Effective in communicating the gospel message to the local culture	21	60%
Cultural and Linguistic Barriers	Pose significant challenges to the missionary enterprise	19	54%
Lack of Resources	Limited resources hinder effectiveness of mission field's efforts	23	66%
Security Concerns	Pose challenges, particularly in areas of conflict or instability	17	49%

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis are presented in Table 2, which shows the frequency and percentage of each theme. The findings reveal that Evangelism and Outreach was the most prominent theme, with 80% of participants reporting its



effectiveness in spreading Christianity and reaching new communities. This suggests that the missionary enterprise has been successful in its efforts to share the gospel message and expand its reach. Community Engagement was also a key theme, with 74% of participants highlighting its importance in building trust and credibility for the church. This emphasizes the significance of building relationships with the local community and fostering partnerships with local leaders and organizations. Discipleship and Mentorship was another important theme, with 69% of participants reporting its instrumental role in nurturing the spiritual growth of church members. This underscores the importance of providing guidance and support to church members as they grow in their faith. However, the analysis also revealed that Lack of Resources was a significant challenge, with 66% of participants reporting its impact on the mission field's efforts. This highlights the need for the missionary enterprise to address resource constraints in order to achieve its objectives effectively. The thematic analysis provides insight into the effective strategies and approaches used by the missionary enterprise, as well as the challenges encountered. The findings highlight the importance of evangelism and outreach, community engagement, discipleship and mentorship, and contextualization in achieving the objectives of the missionary enterprise.

**Research Question Three:** How has the missionary enterprise contributed to community development and social change in Taraba State, and what role has it played in promoting spiritual growth and discipleship?

**Table 3: Contribution of Missionary Enterprise to Community Development and Spiritual Growth in Taraba State**

Theme	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Community Development	Contribution to education, healthcare, and economic empowerment	30	86%
Social Change	Promotion of values such as forgiveness, love, and compassion	25	71%
Spiritual Growth	Nurturing spiritual growth through Bible studies and prayer meetings	28	80%
Discipleship	Mentorship and guidance for church members	24	69%
Role Modeling	Community Empowerment: Empowerment of local communities through capacity building and skills training	22	63%
	Church leaders and members serving as role models in the community	20	57%

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis are presented in Table 3, which shows the frequency and percentage of each theme. The findings reveal that Community

Development was the most prominent theme, with 86% of participants reporting the missionary enterprise's contribution to education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. This suggests that the missionary enterprise has had a significant impact on the lives of people in Taraba State. Spiritual Growth was also a key theme, with 80% of participants highlighting the missionary enterprise's role in nurturing spiritual growth through Bible studies and prayer meetings. This underscores the importance of spiritual growth and development in the lives of church members. The analysis also revealed that Social Change was an important theme, with 71% of participants reporting the promotion of values such as forgiveness, love, and compassion. This highlights the missionary enterprise's role in promoting positive values and behaviors in the community. Overall, the findings suggest that the missionary enterprise has made a significant contribution to community development and spiritual growth in Taraba State, and has played an important role in promoting social change and discipleship.

**Research Question Four:** What are the perceptions of the local community and church members regarding the effectiveness and impact of the missionary enterprise?

**Table 4: Perceptions of the Local Community and Church Members Regarding the Effectiveness and Impact of the Missionary Enterprise**

Theme	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Positive Impact	Missionary enterprise has had a positive impact on the community	32	91%
Spiritual Growth	Church members have experienced spiritual growth and development	29	83%
Community Transformation	Missionary enterprise has contributed to community transformation	26	74%
Effective Leadership	Missionary enterprise has effective leadership and management	24	69%
Areas for Improvement	Need for improvement in certain areas, such as resource allocation	21	60%
Appreciation	Local community and church members appreciate the missionary enterprise's efforts	28	80%

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis are presented in Table 4, which shows the frequency and percentage of each theme. The findings reveal that the missionary enterprise has had a profoundly positive impact on the community, with 91% of participants reporting this theme. This suggests that the missionary enterprise's efforts have been well-received and effective. The analysis also highlights the importance of spiritual growth, with 83% of participants reporting that church members have experienced spiritual growth and development. Additionally, 80% of participants

expressed appreciation for the missionary enterprise's efforts, indicating a strong sense of gratitude and support. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the missionary enterprise has contributed to community transformation, with 74% of participants reporting this theme. Effective leadership and management were also noted by 69% of participants, while 60% identified areas for improvement, such as resource allocation. Overall, the thematic analysis provides valuable insights into the perceptions of the local community and church members regarding the effectiveness and impact of the missionary enterprise. The findings highlight the positive impact, spiritual growth, appreciation, and community transformation that have resulted from the missionary enterprise's efforts.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the impact and effectiveness of the missionary enterprise in Taraba State. The discussion below highlights the key findings and their implications.

#### **Impact on Church Growth and Development**

The study found that the missionary enterprise has had a significant impact on church growth and development in Taraba State. The thematic analysis revealed that evangelism and outreach, discipleship and mentorship, and community engagement were key strategies that contributed to church growth. These findings suggest that the missionary enterprise's efforts to spread the gospel message and nurture spiritual growth have been effective. The high frequency of themes related to church growth and development indicates that the missionary enterprise's efforts have been successful in promoting the growth of Baptist church in Taraba State.

The findings also highlight the importance of discipleship and mentorship in nurturing spiritual growth. This suggests that the missionary enterprise's efforts to provide guidance and support to church members have been effective in helping them grow in their faith. The emphasis on community engagement also underscores the importance of building relationships with the local community and fostering partnerships with local leaders and organizations.

#### **Contribution to Community Development and Social Change**

The study also found that the missionary enterprise has made significant contributions to community development and social change in Taraba State. The thematic analysis revealed that the missionary enterprise's efforts in education, healthcare, and economic empowerment have had a positive impact on the community. These findings suggest that the missionary enterprise's efforts have gone beyond just spreading the gospel message to also addressing the physical and economic needs of the community.

The promotion of values such as forgiveness, love, and compassion has also contributed to social change. This suggests that the missionary enterprise's efforts have had a positive impact on the social fabric of the community, promoting values that are essential for building a harmonious and cohesive society.

### **Perceptions of the Local Community and Church Members**

The study found that the local community and church members have a positive perception of the missionary enterprise's effectiveness and impact. The thematic analysis revealed that the missionary enterprise's efforts have had a positive impact on the community, and that church members have experienced spiritual growth and development. This suggests that the missionary enterprise's efforts have been well-received and effective in achieving its objectives.

The positive perception of the missionary enterprise's efforts also underscores the importance of building trust and credibility with the local community. The missionary enterprise's efforts to engage with the local community and address their needs have likely contributed to the positive perception of its efforts.

### **Implications for Practice**

The study's findings have implications for practice. The missionary enterprise should continue to prioritize evangelism and outreach, discipleship and mentorship, and community engagement in order to promote church growth and development. Additionally, the missionary enterprise should continue to contribute to community development and social change through its efforts in education, healthcare, and economic empowerment.

The study's findings also highlight the importance of contextualizing the gospel message to the local culture and language. This suggests that the missionary enterprise should continue to prioritize understanding the local context and adapting its efforts to meet the needs of the community.

### **Summary**

This study examined the impact and effectiveness of the missionary enterprise in Taraba State. The findings revealed that the missionary enterprise has had a significant impact on church growth and development, community development, and social change. The study's key findings reveal that the missionary enterprise has made a significant impact in Taraba State. Its efforts in evangelism and outreach, discipleship and mentorship, and community engagement have been effective in promoting church growth and development. Additionally, the missionary enterprise's contributions to education, healthcare, and economic empowerment have had a positive impact on the community,

improving the quality of life for its members. The promotion of values such as forgiveness, love, and compassion has also contributed to social change, fostering a more harmonious and cohesive society. Furthermore, the local community and church members have a positive perception of the missionary enterprise's effectiveness and impact, indicating that its efforts are well-received and valued. Overall, the study's findings highlight the missionary enterprise's crucial role in promoting spiritual growth, community development, and social change in Taraba State. The study's findings have implications for practice, highlighting the importance of continued support and investment in the missionary enterprise's efforts. The study recommends that the missionary enterprise continue to prioritize evangelism and outreach, discipleship and mentorship, community engagement, and community development in order to make a positive impact in Taraba State.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the impact and effectiveness of the missionary enterprise in Taraba State. The missionary enterprise's efforts have had a positive impact on church growth and development, community development, and social change. The findings highlighted the importance of continued support and investment in the missionary enterprise's efforts. By prioritizing evangelism and outreach, discipleship and mentorship, community engagement, and community development, the missionary enterprise can continue to make a positive impact in Taraba State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Continue to prioritize evangelism and outreach: The missionary enterprise should continue to prioritize evangelism and outreach efforts to promote church growth and development.
2. Enhance discipleship and mentorship programs: The missionary enterprise should enhance its discipleship and mentorship programs to nurture spiritual growth and development among church members.
3. Increase community engagement: The missionary enterprise should increase its community engagement efforts to build stronger relationships with the local community and promote social change.
4. Expand community development initiatives: The missionary enterprise should expand its community development initiatives, including education, healthcare, and economic empowerment, to improve the quality of life for community members.
5. Promote values of forgiveness, love, and compassion: The missionary enterprise should continue to promote values of forgiveness, love, and compassion to foster a more harmonious and cohesive society.

6. Monitor and evaluate effectiveness: The missionary enterprise should regularly monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and impact to identify areas for improvement.

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