

Cd Gv270 Towards the Year 2000

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the urgency and resources for world evangelism as we approach the year 2000, calling for a focus on unreached people groups and collaboration among ministries.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Global Evangelism", "Missions Work"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the need for resources to fulfill Christ's world mission. He references a conference on missions in 1860 where it was observed that those who hold the truth have more than enough means, knowledge, and opportunity to evangelize the globe multiple times over. The speaker emphasizes that the resources available to God's people today are even greater than what was available in the past. He acknowledges that while there may be disagreements or confusion about certain points, there are already projects and initiatives in place that are making progress in spreading the word of God.

Transcript

Father, we commit to you now this time as we consider one of the most important subjects that we could ever think about in regard to your Great Commission. Help us to really understand where we're going in our own fellowship and as part of the Church. We look to you, we ask for help.

Help especially any listening to this tape who may not have English as their first language. Help us to see how this can, through discipline and love and faith, fit into the major thrust toward the year 2000 and beyond. For we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

One of our great burdens in OM is to stay on the cutting edge of what God is doing in the world. This is one of the reasons that we send delegates to all kinds of congresses, including great events like the Lausanne II Congress in the Philippines. We go to many different conferences, even here in UK.

Peter Maiden has been at the Evangelical Missionary Alliance Conference over the last couple days, a conference I was able to speak at about a year ago. My thoughts came together for this burden I want to share with you through this article, the title of which really caught me, my attention. Do we have adequate resources to evangelize the world? I think every year on our team here in Bromley, there's an increase of the percentage of our work that is going toward finding resources for the whole of Operation Mobilization and world evangelism in general.

India is an example. A number of us here were long-term in India. We wanted to be.

God had other plans. Though India still needs some internationals, and they certainly are crying out for short-term people to help, the job in India is going to have to be done by Indians, largely. I was listening to a tape yesterday of the 25th anniversary meeting here in London of OM India, in which Joseph de Souza was the speaker.

I was greatly challenged by that tape, even though I haven't been able to finish it yet. I myself need my vision constantly to be refocused. I need those corrective lenses that William McDonald spoke about many years ago in a message he gave here in this area.

Corrective lenses. I read a lot of missionary literature, a lot of missionary magazines. I often wish I could just grab some of these authors and share my feeble viewpoint on some of these subjects.

There's quite a lot of controversy among missiologists, often between California missiologists and European missiologists. Europeans are still struggling with the term missiology. But we certainly, as a movement, must be willing to take in truth from all quarters, and we must not get stuck.

We must not get bogged down. We are not going to become a maintenance program for long-term missionaries or anybody else. When that happens, I'm going to start something else.

Maybe I can do it better second time around. I've already got quite a few volunteers lined up. But at least for now, I think I'll stay in Operation Mobilization.

As a movement that has just battled so much, more than anyone can know, to find the resources to keep going, articles like this are incredibly relevant. They're quite overwhelming because this article shows that we have the resources. There is so much small thinking among God's people, even in OM.

And articles like this just help to bring the balance. A lot of this information comes from a man named David Barrett, produced a book about that thick. The most unique missionary research in the history of the world.

Some would consider it the most unique research, period. David Barrett believes we have the resources. Manpower, money, technology.

We have enough churches. We have enough Christians. We have enough everything to do the job.

That's the great feeling among many, many people. People who have not studied this find it difficult to understand. Little Joe Blow with his little mission society down on the corner, that all he's been doing in the last few years is cutting back.

He's fired people. He's cut this project and he's cut that project because he doesn't have the resources. And some character comes along and says, we've got all the necessary resources.

You and I know that there's a great difference between resources being available. Like, for example, millions of pounds and Deutsche Marks and dollars in the hands of Christians. David Barrett considers that a resource.

Every dollar in the hands of anyone who professes Christianity is considered a resource. So it gets a little complicated. A lot of the statistics about the church, church growth, how many Christians, those statistics

include often, you have to study them carefully, all Christians.

If it's a statistic about evangelicals, they will often say that. Or some other modifying term. The modifying terms, the footnotes, are incredibly important when you look at statistics.

Some statistics about Christians even include periphery groups, Jehovah Witnesses, Seven-Day Adventists. Some of these groups would be quite offended if they were not included. Much less the whole controversy concerning where Roman Catholics fit into our statistics.

In one big conference in Singapore not long ago, because of the Catholic involvement, the Latin Americans staged a walkout. And that is one of the biggest, most difficult, thorny problems we are facing in the task of unity and world evangelism. In his article, David Barrett quotes from a man named Anthony Ashley Cooper, who in fact became better known as the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.

This was the answer they gave to resources a hundred and thirty years ago. Anthony Ashley Cooper was born in the year of 1801, entering Parliament in Britain at the age of 25. He soon became the leading evangelical social reformer of the 19th century.

He is better known by his title as the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury. In the year of 1860, the Great Liverpool Conference on Missions took place. Shaftesbury observed as they lapsed into procrastination and prevarication, a word I've never seen before on the subject of completing Christ's world mission.

Exasperated, he gave a rousing speech, which contains his most memorable statement. Those who hold the truth have the means enough, knowledge enough, and opportunity enough to evangelize the globe 50 times over. 1860.

Now it speaks a lot more about that, and maybe I can do some photocopies of this article, but it goes on to point out that the resources in the hands of God's people today is just a hundred fold beyond what they were having in those days. Amazing to think. He goes into more detail in one of his graphs, and then he makes a list.

Now you may not agree with all of this. One or two points here, especially 200 million Christian computer specialists, I do not understand that. I will try to write in and find out what in the world that is about.

But let me read the list of resources. First of all, he points out that the globe has 5.1 billion people. It's more than that.

Every day it goes up in an almost out-of-control way. 1.7 billion Christians. I believe that statistic covers everybody who bears that name.

1 billion urban Christians. 1.1 billion practicing Christians. See? He's fine-tuning now.

We just have to find out what he means by practicing Christians. No doubt. They go to church on Sunday morning, they're supposedly practicing.

2.5 million worship centers. 1.1 billion regular radio TV audience. 22,300 denominations, and that would exclude recent-born house streams in England.

98,000 institutions. 20,000 parachurch. 20,400 parachurch or service agencies.

There we are. That makes you really feel big, doesn't it? One of 20,400. Personal income.

I'd love to know how they figure this out. 8,200 billion a year. 8,200 billion a year.

It's pretty good income. Church agency income. 145 billion a year.

Foreign missions. 8 billion a year. 910,000 ordained clergy, ministers, pastors, and priests.

I repeat, I don't think this includes Hindus, so don't get excited. 910,000 ordained clergy, ministers, pastors, and priests. 4.1 million full-time Christian workers.

That includes everybody who's full-time in any way, anywhere, any church in the world. 262,000 foreign missionaries. 21,000 new Christian books a year.

21,000 new Christian books a year. 200 million copies printed each year. 200 million.

10,000 books, articles on missions a year. 13,000 major religious or Christian libraries. 22,000 religious Christian periodicals.

That one completely blows my mind. Must include prayer letters. 47 million Bibles a year.

70 million New Testaments a year. 450 million scripture leaflets a year. 4 billion Christian tracts a year.

42 million Christian computers. 200 million Christian computer specialists. 4,000 Great Commission networks.

56 Great Commission global networks. 9 Great Commission global mega networks. 387 current global plans.

254 current global plans making progress. 78 global mega plans. 33 global giga plans.

And the planned expenditure of 45 billion dollars. Now if that doesn't rev your engine, you're dead. You need an overhaul.

We may not agree with everything or understand everything, and you can feel free to write in because have pages explaining often what they mean. The article then goes into what they consider the greatest need if we are going to see the task done. Of course one of the great needs is to see those resources released.

Some of those resources we referred to are already, that's already happening. Other resources like the money available. A high percentage of that money apart from a miracle of God will never be released into world evangelism.

Let me read this. Here's a quick overview of all these data. Hang on.

Christians as contrasted with non-Christians are the direct and only beneficiaries and users of the following. 94%. We're talking now about how much of the resources that's actually functioning is basically among Christians rather than reaching out to the unreached or to the non-christian.

94% of all full-time workers. 85% of all citywide evangelistic campaigns. 92% of all foreign missionaries.

86% of all foreign mission money. 99% of all Christian-owned computers. 99% of all Christian computer specialists.

That brings the statistic into balance. It's in queues. That's probably therefore referring to every single Christian in the world who has a home computer and so on.

The only resources which are to any degree being properly used to benefit the non-christian world directly are the endeavors of the Bible societies. Even there however Christians consume 62% of all scriptures annually distributed. In other words some two-thirds for their own personal use leaving only one-third for non-Christians.

He then gives a great plea for redeployment. Redeployment. That far more of our money, far more of our efforts will go to the unreached people of the world.

Now this is where a lot of the controversy comes in. I myself believe that a lot of people who are statistically not categorized as reaching the unreached people are reaching unreached people. I believe the statistics that came out of the training evangelist conference that Billy Graham had in Amsterdam sort of writing off very few of those as being as reaching unreached people was a statistic that lacked proper foundation and research, more of a generalization.

Because there are a lot of people who do not have as a major thrust an unreached people's group but who are reaching unreached people. I think most researchers would acknowledge that. Up till some years ago we did not have these ways of categorizing things.

We have brought in new terminology, we have brought in new means of measurement, we have brought in new ways of keeping statistics. That can be overwhelming to us, it's not a problem for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was in the unreached people's movement long before we got the terminology.

This is why there's a great need to highly esteem people that went on before us, who were evangelizing before us, who used different terminology. Maybe they used nations instead of people's groups but that doesn't mean they weren't reaching people's groups. And it's important as we are moving in a new day with new rhetoric and new vocabulary that we always work for balance and we try to understand how the Holy Spirit has generally been way ahead of us, always way ahead of us in anything that really counted.

At the same time that doesn't throw out these strong pleas for redeployment. It doesn't throw out the strong plea that Ralph Winter and others have so so strongly preached that there must be a greater thrust to reach the unreached people and that is what's happening right now. This has been building up for many many years and it's happening.

The greatest thrust in the history of the world to reach the final frontiers, whether you are getting in on it, even as an O.M.er, because to presume presume that every O.M.er has this vision would be the height of the ridiculous. But whether we get in on this or not, it's gonna happen. The momentum building up across the world right now to reach the final frontiers is enormous.

We may not like all the rhetoric. Subtle forms of pride can come in because we may think that in some ways we have already been on some of these final frontiers. We've been battling away in Turkey, one of the greatest pioneer frontier battle zones in the entire world.

We have been battling there for over 25 years. We may read something that we we feel isn't exactly true or accurate. However, if when we read that, we react with pride or arrogance.

That is a greater sin or equal sin to false statistics. And God doesn't want pride or arrogance in His work. The brother who arrives at Turkey tomorrow with new terminology, new training, new rhetoric with his computer in his hand, if he meets that long-termer and that long-termer responds to him in arrogance or pride and lack of love, then the sin of that long-termer makes the sin of that short-termer look mighty small.

And I pray that wherever this tape is heard in OM, we will understand how subtle and how terrible pride is. And that has often brought the division between the long-term man who has been working very hard in that field, who now knows the language, who if he went home would be asked to teach. He would be asked to teach at some of these missiological institutions.

But out on the field, he's picking up different vibrations. He can see through some of the statistics or beyond them or under them, or he may disagree overtly with certain things are said. We can compassionately disagree, and that's a beautiful thing.

But we must always beware of allowing ourselves to get stuck, allowing pride to come in, and therefore being unable to learn new lessons that God wants to teach us. A lot of people react to the concept of redeployment. Are we going to take some missionary in over-evangelized Kenya? Some wouldn't agree with that statement.

That's all right. And redeploy him to southern Sudan or northern Sudan, which is far more reached and has probably far more unreached people, sectors, and groups than southern Sudan. Redeployment seems to be extremely difficult, but I'm sure it will happen to some small degree.

Even many of the missionaries that left China when the door closed, even with China in the mission, some of them were unable to be redeployed. They returned because they felt their call was only for China. Others were redeployed, but only among Chinese-speaking people.

I've often had the theory that at that time, Hudson Taylor or those who were following in his steps should have opened a major work in India, but they never did. How India could have used that kind of missionary movement at that time, but that never happened. Only in the last few years has the China Inland Mission, I was in on the initial discussions about it, made the decision to go into the subcontinent.

Only in the last few years, a small group of them, including some Asians, have gone to Pakistan. I want to just say, in bringing this to a close, after reading many of these articles, talking with many of these people, that I am convinced that by a work of the Holy Spirit, He has given us, as a movement, the privilege of being on the cutting edge of reaching unreached people. This should be a major motivation factor for our movement.

We do not have the same problem that some other fellowships and societies have. We have other problems, so that's not in any way putting us up over them. It's not what we're talking about.

But I think it's incredibly important, even for those of us here in Bromley, to understand we are working day and night in order to stand behind and support our co-workers who are on the cutting edge of frontier missions. And we, by God's grace, are committed to run the race with all the other groups that have, as their burden, reaching the final frontiers. I like the fact that now, in the expression concerning the year 2000, they have added and beyond.

Maybe it was always there. I've only seen it recently. Shows how slow I am on the uptake.

Because I'm convinced that world evangelism is an ongoing, continual process. There will be no let-up. There will be no let-up.

There may be changes in ministry, but there will be no let-up until the end, until the Lord returns. I also feel very strong that those who are working as part of that 5%, that tiny percent of missionaries, who are actually working among unreached people's groups, and unreached people, that I believe they must highly esteem those who have other ministries. In my feeble view, for every man we have planting a church among the Baluch, probably we're going to need 10 or 15 other people somewhere in the process, excluding the people in the home churches.

We will need hundreds there. Hundreds. The way God's people are giving presently, just to support one man financially among the Pushto or the Baluch or the Uyghurs, the Uyghurs or other people's groups.

I feel very strongly that in a lot of our statistics there is not enough emphasis on revival. There's not enough emphasis on quality. This is where perhaps the influence of A.W. Tozer is very great upon us.

I got in trouble for quoting Tozer at Urbana back in the late 60s, because his one quote is looked at as being a little anti-missionary. It's not really. Tozer said, to spread to pagan lands an effete degenerate brand of pagan Christianity is not to fulfill the Great Commission.

Of course, what did Tozer mean by that? It's a tough expression, but what I want to just insert here is that every effort we make as a movement to try to build God's people up, which usually includes trying to give them this vision for the unreached, is also absolutely vital and essential. The great problem is keeping it all in balance. The number of people ministering to believers to try to get them evangelizing the unreached.

This is one of the main purposes of the ship. This is the main purpose of many of our teams. To minister among believers, that they may experience healing, that they may become effective, that they may be able to deal with their own problems and struggles, so that they are emotionally able to do these things.

And some people sense that this is their ministry. And I believe it's valid, because we're discovering an interesting number of people who go out to reach unreached people's groups, do not have emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually what it takes to do the job. So it is not a matter of just throwing mud out on the walls of the mission field and seeing what sticks.

There has to be screening. There has to be training. There has to be a discovering of a person's gifts.

Not everybody has the gift even to live. People may say, well this is just something you learn. I would say perhaps it's a combination.

To use better terminology, some people do not have what it takes to live in some tribe in Maritania to plant the church. And if all of our excitement for reaching the unreached leads us into sort of a running into the trenches as we had during the First World War, it will perhaps end in a similar kind of disaster or casualty. We need desperately the right people in the right place at the right time.

That is going to take renewal. That is going to take study. That's going to take training schools, Bible colleges, OM training programs, a lot of in-depth counseling.

It's going to take a wider use of great books like Calvary Road, Healing for Damaged Emotions. Maybe one of the gifts God has given me, I don't know, is an ability to see how all these things fit together. The dear lady in the local church down the road who still doesn't have her Unreached People's Map, she still hasn't seen Operation World, she doesn't have the same vision that somebody has who's just come back from Lausanne II, but she loves Jesus and she's worshipping Jesus and she's contributing it to her local church and she's touching people's lives and she's growing and as she grows, if our team maybe gets there with the maps and the books and the videos, she's just ready.

She's just ripe and ready. Dear Mrs. Clapp, who died on Sunday, did not have a lot of the terminology and the rhetoric and the research and the facts that we have today. And yet that one woman, in her ignorance, and people could classify her as ignorant compared to those today who have so much information, she is pre Operation World.

How could people function pre-Operation World? You see, the great and first need isn't information. It is not firstly information, because the greatest information we already have, it's the Word of God. It's obedience.

Obedience to the light that we do have. And as dear Mrs. Clapp responded to the light she had, she had prayer letters, she had some missionary books, she had some information. She obeyed.

She obeyed. And what God did through her, only eternity will tell. If we had time, and we don't have it now, we could take a quick survey of some of the fields where OM is right there with their nose in those great pockets of unreached people.

Let me just mention a few countries, because my burden in giving this message is that some who hear this will get motivated to stand with us in prayer and financial support. I've heard recently of people interested in reaching the unreached, but didn't know where they should give their finance. If there's anybody anywhere listening to this tape, you are at the right place at the right time.

Because here is a movement with 1,800 people, plus all their children. And some of them are already reaching people as well. With many, many thousands extras in the summer, and Easter, and Christmas, and other times of the year, and places like the ship, and volunteers, there's extra people all the time.

We can't even count all the extra people that are with us throughout various times of the year. That has, and has had from the beginning, and continually adjusting and changing as its major thrust, together with revival and reality in the life of the individual, to reach the unreached. Maybe we haven't always had the right vocabulary.

We certainly haven't always been able to take what's flowing through our hearts and minds, and get it onto paper, and produce some kind of nice report. Just think of a few places right now before we close. First of all, Turkey.

This was the very heart of OM's vision, Turkey. Dale Roton was headed in one direction, until God, having put this country on my heart in the earliest days, sent me out to Wheaton, and I challenged Dale about Turkey, and Dale, I guess, challenged Roger Malsted, and soon others were involved, and Dale Roton made a 45 degree turn in his life, away from reaching tribes, perhaps in Latin America, with Wycliffe or the Brethren, and rejoined, in a sense, this movement, and pioneered the work in Turkey. And what our brothers and sisters are doing in Turkey is something that we can rejoice over, and yet more than that,

need to pray much more for.

Isn't it sad that one of the problems connected with the Turkish New Testament, that brilliant project, so on the cutting edge of what God wants to do today, battles at times with financing. I'll be giving out the international update at the end, and I've offered three New Testaments to anybody in the world who can find a Turk anywhere in the world, and there are millions of them, and give it to them. There's so much I would like to say about Turkey.

What can we say about Iraq, where we're now trying to do more? What can we say for our work in the Arab world, a high percentage of which is aimed at totally unreached people? Yes, there is the work also among the believers, the training, the building up of believers, the working with the churches, because we as a movement are committed absolutely to work with local churches. We don't believe we can bypass churches. This leads us into some incredibly complex situations, like Bangladesh, where with one foot we're trying to work with existing churches that mainly have their roots back among converted Hindus, and yet we're trying to do something that's unique and pioneer among Muslims.

These things may sound very challenging on paper, but if you're living out there, it's overwhelming. Complexity, the problems, it's overwhelming, and it really hit me this week that I had this long letter from our workers in Bangladesh, once again painting their black financial picture, that they don't have the finance to do what needs to be done. I delegated some money for Bangladesh this week through Philip for literature projects to discover that the next morning I spent most of it for some other need before he could get it in the afternoon, and so we have to find that somewhere else.

It's great to talk about all these resources. Praise the Lord for such charts, but the fact of the matter is money is very hard to find among God's people, and a lot of our time and effort and prayer and work, whether we like it or not, I don't particularly like it, has to be finding finance. We as a movement should be able to do that if what these people are talking about is true, and if we do not need massive redeployment, I'm sure we need some redeployment.

We've already got more people out among the unreached people than we are properly financing, so our problem is not firstly redeployment. Our problem is money. We have got to lay hold of some of these resources, and we are making changes as a movement in order to be more effective, firstly in prayer, secondly in communication.

That's one of the purposes of this tape, to link these people who need literature, who need bicycles, who need support to go one more mile, one more village, one more unreached people's group, one more unreached people's nation. We must link those people. We have hundreds of them out there, hundreds and many hundreds, with these resources.

That is one of the purposes of this team, and every other team in this kind of situation throughout ON, and I would really ask of you to recommit your own heart and your own life to this Vision 2000, that we may unite together with all other Bible believing, God-fearing, Christ-loving individuals to take the gospel to every unreached people's group. Yea, if it be His will, I'd like to believe it is by the year 2000. We know there'll still be an enormous amount of work the year 2001, an enormous amount of work.

We know that some churches that are born among unreached people's groups move into a decadent and backslidden state within a few months or few years. Statistics don't report that, but as people concerned for the quality of the kind of Christian that we are bringing into being, we have to continue to give a strong

amount of effort in that zone of attack as well. I believe God can help us find the balance, these many different burdens and challenges that come upon us, but let's pray especially that we may see the resources released.

I've been so frightened at this India project, and I want to give out the today's India with the project concerning the relocation of our headquarters to Hyderabad. When I discovered the amount of money, I was frightened, Philip can tell you. I was almost opposed to it, and yet when I think of how our brothers and sisters there are on the cutting edge, they are on the cutting edge of what other people are only talking about, and when I think of the money that's been poured in to purchase places like the U.S. Center for World Missions, ten years to get the money, massive propaganda, information, huge gifts, and many thousands and tens of thousands of small gifts, and there are all kinds of projects like that in the Western world, all talking about doing it, and to some degree doing it, all projects linked with the foundation, and we accept that.

We have a similar project in Atlanta. We have another one in a number of other countries, but when I think of our brothers in India, 300 of them and sisters, they're already doing what other people are only talking about, what other people are only laying the foundation for. He talks about five years to redeploy one person.

Five years. These men are already there, and yet we're not. We're not supplying the finance they really need to do the job.

In fact, the number one vocabulary word, as far as I see, when I go to Kathmandu to meet with leaders, often it's cutback. Cutback. Pulling the belt.

That's the main challenge we often have to get from the accountants, because they see the reality, and we need accountants, because the visionaries without accountants fall in deep ditches, and then they move in from the banks and from the bankruptcy agencies. Praise God for this step of faith by our Indian brothers and sisters. This headquarters, though it seems like a lot of money to us, would not even build a medium-sized church in the United States that's used maybe four times a week.

We are very idealistic. In the early years, we wanted our money to support the Nationals, to purchase literature, bicycles, videos, anything we could see that would actually reach an individual. We always found it hard to spend money on things that we didn't see how it absolutely touched the nerve of reaching people, and because of that policy, we got into renting and renting and renting until the whole movement was choked, choked by high rents.

I don't believe purchasing a few small economical properties, whether it's in Peachtree City or in India, is some move away from the original drive of OM. It is necessary adjustment. Tony Sargent all just preached that to us the other day, to take OM into the 21st century.

So let's move with it. Let's fight for it. Let's find that money.

Let's give of our own money, if we have any, and see this become a reality. Let us pray. Lord, we just thank you that you have given us the privilege as a movement of being on the cutting edge of what your Holy Spirit is doing in the world today.

We thank you for the privilege of getting in this Marathon Race 2000, that everybody in the world may receive the gospel in some way or form by the year 2000. We know it's a wild idea. We know unless

there's revival, unless there's a grassroots movement of prayer, unless there's a grassroots movement of people submitting to your Lordship, it will not happen.

We're just in fantasy. But Father, we want to aim high, and by your grace we are going to labor night and day to see that revival, to see renewal, to see greater unity among your people, to see people coming under the Lordship of your Son Jesus Christ, to see your people learning how to live together and function together in brokenness as spelled out in Calvary Road. Father, we realize that our part is small when we put it together with your whole great body in this world, but we thank you for that small part, and we want to do it with all of our heart, with all of our mind, with all of our soul, with all of our strength, and help us to see how the smallest job that we faithfully do, wherever we may be, in our local church or on this team, the smallest job that we do with all of our heart, faithfully unto you, helps contribute to this forward thrust in Bangladesh, in the Arab world, in Pakistan, in Turkey, in the whole Eastern Bloc, where there are still many unreached people's groups and unreached cities and villages that are opening to us in a new way.

We pray together right now, our Father, for the release of resources. We pray especially for people that have perhaps more resources than the average person. So many people we meet seem to need financial help, but we pray for anyone, anywhere that has resources, whether it's a computer or finance or something else, that they would have wisdom and courage and grace to take steps of faith, to take risks, to invest in this great forward thrust to reach the world with the gospel.

Help us to maintain the love and the balance and the biblical perspective in the midst of all we do, for we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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