

4th Lausanne Congress
in Seoul, South Korea (2024)

Report of the Swiss delegation

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«Let the Church declare and display Christ together.»

Report of the Swiss delegation of the 4th Lausanne Congress
in Seoul from 22 to 28 september 2024

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Introduction

«**Let the Church declare and display Christ together.**»

This was the slogan of The Fourth Lausanne Congress. This motto also points the way to the future for the church in Switzerland.

Following Jesus: a world-oriented lifestyle

We are invited to believe the good news, to pass it on and to live it accordingly, in church events and where we move in everyday life: in marriage and family, in the neighbourhood, in the professional environment, in interpersonal encounters.

Followers of Jesus talk about Jesus and commit themselves in the style of Jesus (cf. John 20:21-22). Because of our faith, we care for one another, serve our fellow human beings, preserve God's creation and stand up for justice in this world.

The church: we love it and build it up

The church is not a pious event organisation, but a «discipleship collective»: At the congress, it was emphasised that the church follows the purpose of being a place of encounter with Jesus, inviting people to follow Jesus and supporting them in this. Followers of Jesus are people who are shaped by the gospel in such a way that their lives are permeated by love for God and their fellow human beings (cf. Lk 10:27; Jn 14:15.23-24). We keep this mission of the church in focus, believe in the church and its potential and want to promote it so that it can flourish.

The gospel: a powerful and beautiful message

Through the gospel of Christ's life, death, resurrection and return, God gives us love, dignity, for-

givenness, reconciliation, confidence, effectiveness, his Holy Spirit and eternal life. We are not ashamed to believe in this powerful and beautiful message (cf. Romans 1:16).

It was impressive to meet Christians at the conference who are experiencing tangible persecution in their home countries. They did not question the power of the gospel or the sovereignty of God, but emphasised: «Persecution will not kill the church, a distorted gospel will.»

Making Christ known and visible: both are needed

Making visible is not possible without making known and making known is not possible without making visible. No one-sidedness is helpful. Because the more fruitfully and beautifully we do the one, the more fruitfully and beautifully we will succeed in doing the other. Michael Oh, the leader of the Lausanne Movement, explained pointedly: «We are looking for biblical truth and biblical action.»

More effective together: a sign of humility and passion

At the Lausanne Congress, we were shown anew how strongly humility and passion complement each other. Humility leads us to let God and our fellow believers help us because we realise that we cannot do without this support. Similarly, passion for God's cause also leads us to reach out more strongly for God's work and to stand united resolutely for the sake of the common vision. If we had more humility and passion, it would probably lead us into more fervent prayer and more focused cooperation.

It is a huge opportunity that we in Switzerland, for example within the framework of the Swiss Evangelical Alliance, Freikirchen.ch and the Réseau

évangélique suisse, live together in a very friendly way. If we were to cooperate even more closely, we would make progress in our common mission for Switzerland and the world. True to the motto of the Lausanne Covenant of 1974: «the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world».

We are the ones addressed: a wake-up call and a matter of honour

We feel addressed by the congress motto. We understand «Let the church ...» to mean «Let US AS a church declare and display Christ together». We are ready to be challenged by this. What's more, we see it as an honour and a joy to uphold this cause and, as far as possible, to be good examples of it ourselves.

The congress concluded with an invitation for participants to sign a «Collaborative Action Commitment». This begins with the words: «I believe the global church as the body of Christ is better together and I aspire to build deeper relationships and explore opportunities for synergy and collaboration.»

May the motto of The Fourth Lausanne Congress be a lasting inspiration to us all!

Summary findings of the Swiss delegation to the 4th Lausanne Congress in Seoul, South Korea (2024)

The topics below shaped the discussions and learning experiences recorded in the delegation's daily feedback at the congress.

1. Intensified cooperation for God's mission

In Seoul, we had the opportunity to come into contact with a part of God's global body. We were encouraged by how clearly God is working in the Asian, African and South American majority world: God's mission embraces and moves the whole world. Encouraged by this, we renew the conviction that God's mission is not yet finished with Europe and Switzerland. We seek intensified cooperation so that we can gain new effectiveness for God's mission.

1.1. The importance of cooperation

We emphasise the need for cooperation between churches, Christian organisations and believers. The mission of the church cannot be fulfilled by a single actor. Only through strong relationships and cooperation across denominational and organisational boundaries can we credibly embody and proclaim God in Switzerland and the world. The work on the 25 «gaps» (key issues where there is a need for action in terms of mission) in Seoul was an example of how cooperation can succeed.

1.2. Breaking down silos

One of the biggest challenges is our «silo mentality», which leads to different groups and churches working independently of each other. This mindset limits the effectiveness of our outreach for God's mission. We call for these silos to be broken down and collaboration to be improved. We are resolved to avoid duplication wherever

possible. We act as allies under a common flag (God's mission) without questioning our different, legitimate particular identities. We can achieve this by deepening authentic relationships between the leaders of different churches and organisations. In addition, we want to increasingly seek cooperation and exchange (education, training, ...), especially to mobilise the younger generation for God's holistic mission.

1.3. Mutual mission

We find the concept of «mutual mission», according to which missionary work goes in all directions and is not controlled and dominated by a single group (e.g., the global West), to be gospel-centred and helpful. Mission with a reciprocal dynamic no longer means exclusively that we send people abroad, but also that people come to us and that we engage in God's mission in our own country. In this decentralised understanding of mission, we acknowledge the need for shared leadership. Each actor makes a contribution based on their own context. We want to learn in humility from the majority world. In doing so, we believe that it is not God's intention that we make ourselves small or feel small in relation to our role in Switzerland, in Europe and in the world.

2. Ministry at the workplace

We emphasise the importance of understanding Christians who are active in the secular professional world more strongly as essential actors in God's mission.

2.1. Everyday mission at the workplace

99 percent of Christians are only involved in the church environment in their free time and

work in the secular professional world. We do not see this work as a subordinate activity. It is precisely through and at work that Christians participate in God's mission. We want to show greater appreciation for this essential contribution to God's mission and take it seriously. However, this should not lead to the efforts to find and train capable people for the church professions being devalued. Particularly in view of the shortage of personnel for church professions, we want to encourage and promote young people who see their calling within the church.

2.2. Transforming workplaces

We emphasise viewing the workplace as «holy ground» where one's faith can be expressed through everyday actions and encounters. This ministry does not always require overt evangelisation, but rather living a gospel-oriented lifestyle. In this way, Christians can make a contribution to the salutary transformation of the professional world itself.

2.3. Empowering Christians for their ministry at the workplace

Pastors and church leaders are encouraged to equip employees to embody and proclaim God in their professional lives. They should see their work as a form of missional service. Conversely, as leaders of churches, we want to humbly learn from the diverse faith and life experiences of Christians from the professional world. We see great potential in combining the strengths of church and business leaders.

3. Revival and repentance

We express the hope and necessity of a spiritual renewal in Europe. We do not want to think of Europe as post-Christian, but as «pre-revival».

3.1. Prayer and the Holy Spirit

As the Swiss delegation to The Fourth Lausanne Congress, we emphasise the important role of prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Renewal cannot be brought about by human efforts alone.

3.2. Repentance as a catalyst for revival

The experiences in Seoul have reminded us to see both personal and communal repentance as fundamental to the path of renewal. As churches and Christians, we want to be quick to confess our mistakes. Where necessary, we ask for forgiveness and invest in reconciliation.

3.3. Organic renewal

In Europe, we tend to think institutionally. We need a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up dynamic, from designing overarching organisations to providing dance floors where encounters are possible. We see the need to understand the kingdom of God less as an organisation and more as a growing, living and balancing-out organism. As a continent that has emerged from state-church structures and cultures, we want to avoid dreaming of a narrow-minded evangelical/charismatic free-church «Christianity».

4. Technology and discipleship

Discipleship, i.e. credible followership of Jesus, was a key topic at The Fourth Lausanne Congress, and not just in connection with technology. We are convinced that we can also learn from the majority world in the area of discipleship in the digital space.

4.1. Digital tools for evangelisation

We see the growing importance of using digital tools for discipleship. Online platforms and tools are opening up new opportunities to connect believers, open up learning spaces and facilitate discussions about faith.

4.2. Reaching the digital generation

Worldwide observations confirm that young people in particular spend a lot of time in the digital world. In this context, we would like to point out the gap between the digital presence of non-Christians and the lack of Christian employees in this area. We recognise the need to make efforts to reach people where they are – namely online.

4.3. Discipleship AI

We welcome discussions about the possible development of AI tools that play a supporting role in the process of discipleship. We see the opportunity particularly in scenarios where large numbers of people come to faith and need spiritual guidance. We are aware that AI can never replace the communal learning process, but can only supplement it selectively.

4.4. Potential and risks of using AI

Technology is not neutral. The use of AI will change the way we collaborate, our image of humanity and our theology. As the «Seoul Statement» emphasises, we must therefore be aware of the risks associated with AI and technology. This is not only about the question of how to handle them properly, but also about the deeper questions of what kind of people and disciples we want to be. It is therefore our endeavour to give AI applications the appropriate place in our processes and our work. Making progress in this area requires wisdom and the ability to discern.

5. Christian leadership of integrity

The model of servant leadership exemplified by Jesus was a key theme of The Fourth Lausanne Congress. Boundary violations by church leaders have caused considerable damage to both individuals and the church. For this reason, we want to pay particular attention to the aspect of leadership with integrity.

5.1. Jesus' model of servant leadership

As leaders, we are called to serve others. The pursuit of personal power or status does not reflect the model of Christ. A servant leadership model involves humility, vulnerability and a commitment to the well-being of others.

5.2. The example of Paul

The apostle Paul has an important role as an exemplary servant leader – especially in the way he served the church, the Holy Spirit and those in need. We encourage to reflect on the biblical accounts of Paul and his servant attitude, even in the face of suffering and persecution.

5.3. Intergenerational leadership

Servant leadership can be strengthened especially by fostering relationships between older and younger leaders. By practising mutual respect, collaboration and a willingness to learn, we can maintain and shape wholesome and effective leadership.

6. Intergenerational and cultural dynamics

We recognise the need to be particularly attentive to the cultural and intergenerational dynamics of our pluralistic society.

6.1. Bridging the gap between the generations

As in many places in the West, society in Switzerland is getting older. As a result, tensions between the generations also tend to grow. We encourage churches to get involved in bridging the gap between the generations. We encourage younger leaders to learn from older ones. They in turn are called upon to pass on their wisdom and experience and to create space for the younger generation to flourish. However, we are not only calling for cooperation between the generations, but also for active engagement with the various tense issues associated with an ageing society.

6.2. Intercultural cooperation

We emphasise the enduring need for cultural sensitivity and cooperation across cultural boundaries. The gospel is both multicultural – bringing people from all nations together – and intercultural – fostering a sense of community between different groups. We dream of local and international Christians in Switzerland walking together in mutual respect and with a common mission for Christ.

6.3. Missionary heritage

It is necessary to adapt our missionary activities to the different cultural contexts. We regret that in the past we have used the gospel to impose our Western culture on others. We support post-colonial missionary models in which people from all regions and cultures, from the West and the majority world, are equal partners.

7. Persecution and church growth

In Seoul we met many leaders who belong to the bleeding part of the body of Christ, the persecuted church. We want to strengthen our lasting bond with our suffering brothers and sisters and marvel at how God is growing his persecuted church.

7.1. Christ strengthens the church in times of persecution

On various occasions, delegates in Seoul have reported persecution, particularly from regions such as the Middle East. But often the church was not destroyed by this, but strengthened. The persecuted part of the church is not simply the recipient of our prayers and donations. On the contrary, the encounters with persecuted brothers and sisters, the example of their love for Christ and their commitment to the gospel are an encouragement and strengthening for us.

7.2. Mission in countries with a Muslim majority

It is important for us to support the churches in countries with a Muslim majority and to work together with local Christians so that Muslims can be reached with the whole gospel. Despite the challenges, the brothers and sisters from these regions of the world are optimistic about the growth of the church there.

7.3. Living to be forgotten

«The mission of God is in the hand of ordinary [Greek: Idiotai] people». In Seoul, the power of the unnamed, nameless Christians who spread the gospel in the young church was repeatedly spoken about (cf. e.g., Acts 8). It was said about them: «Their names have been forgotten, but Christ will remember.» We do not want to do missionary work to erect a monument to ourselves, but to make Jesus Christ great.

Mobilising appeal

The Swiss delegation at The Fourth Lausanne Congress felt it was important to take a proactive role and draw up a catalogue of proposals that could be pursued in various areas – from the local to the international level. These are not binding instructions for action, but possible measures based on work already underway or yet to be initiated. Supported by hope and trust in God's work and that He wants to use His Church powerfully. Various topics are addressed at several levels (local, regional, national, etc.) insofar as they are specifically relevant to these areas.

1. Local level

1.1. Christians in the workplace

We see particular potential in local networks that identify the professional world as their mission field. This means that they support Christians in living out their faith in their workplace. In concrete terms, this can also be done through initiatives that collaborate with local churches and communities to establish workplace chaplains (Chief Prayer Officers) in companies.

1.2. Develop a culture of prayer

We believe that thriving local ecosystems of the gospel begin with intense prayer. This includes all levels: Individuals, families, small groups and communities. This culture of prayer can be fostered in particular through local prayer centres (e.g., prayer houses, spaces of silence). We are convinced that this focus on prayer (Up) also promotes community (In) and missionary impact (Out).

1.3. Intergenerational and intercultural discipleship

A discipleship dynamic can be established locally in which older and younger believers, locals and people from other cultures build a culture of honouring each other and sharing

wisdom. This can raise up healthy leaders of integrity.

1.4. Service to the community

We call on local churches and organisations to see service to the people in their region as a collective task and not just to focus on building up their own church. Missionary networks respond to the needs in their environments, be it poverty, mental health or family concerns. Through servant dedication, we can represent Christ in our villages and towns.

1.5. Local unity thrives on Christ-like leaders

We encourage local leaders to serve Christians from other churches and communities, to promote unity and peace, to lead by example, to provide support and guidance where needed and to encourage spiritual growth. Through such vibrant unity, it becomes visible to the local people that God is alive.

2. Regional level

2.1. Training Christians for a secularised society

Christians should be increasingly equipped through targeted programmes in evangelisation and discipleship in a secular world.

2.2. Digital evangelisation and discipleship

We see a great opportunity to use digital platforms to reach the younger generation in particular for the gospel and for discipleship (social media, online seminars, online discussion groups, etc.).

2.3. Intra-church cooperation

It is a great treasure when regional resources and proven tools can be increasingly shared with one another. This is not only a benefit for

the individual regions, but also strengthens cooperation and the networking of the overall church ecosystem.

3. National level

3.1. National prayer movement

As is already happening to some extent, we aspire that leaders of the Christian ecosystem meet once to three times a year for worship, repentance, listening prayer and intercession for our country and beyond. We encourage that persons at prayer in prayer houses as well as local and regional groups also intercede on the same days for the above-mentioned concerns, thus creating a national prayer movement in different geographical and structural areas of responsibility.

3.2. Christian mandate in the social and professional environment

We encourage the churches to sensitise people in their services and training courses to the opportunities, possibilities and dangers of being «salt and light» as Christians in the non-church environment. In doing so, they strengthen the role of the 99 per cent of «non-full-time» Christians as ambassadors of faith in society. We use synergies with organisations such as the «Forum Christlicher Führungskräfte» (Forum of Christian Leaders) and «goUnity» (formerly the «Internationale Vereinigung christlicher Geschäftsleute» – International Association of Christian Business People).

3.3. Empowering and encouraging the younger generation

We commit to encouraging younger people in following Jesus and in topics such as integrity and a Christ-like lifestyle through mentoring and discipleship structures. We use synergies with organisations that focus specifically on this.

3.4. Multicultural national leadership committees

The diversity in an increasingly multicultural Switzerland should also be reflected in national Christian leadership bodies. In this way, we want to anchor the endeavour to reach all population groups with the gospel and to offer them a spiritual home in our churches in key structural positions.

3.5. Seek agreement and cooperation across regional and linguistic borders

As shown, for example, by companies operating across Switzerland in their advertising, political parties and national transport concepts, Switzerland should be understood as a unity alongside its regional characteristics. For the spread of the gospel, the perception of the church ecosystem in society and the spiritual unity, there would be an opportunity to think and act more nationally than just locally, regionally or within the language regions. We encourage nationally active Christian leaders to be able to speak or learn to speak at least two national languages well.

4. Continental level

4.1. European revival efforts

We are addressing the view that Europe is «facing revival» by our investing in transnational efforts to promote prayer, discipleship and unity. This prepares the ground for a new work of the Holy Spirit.

4.2. Mutual mission model

We want to promote a mission model in which European countries complement each other in their strengths and weaknesses, in particular through the exchange of leaders and mission resources.

4.3. Integration of digital tools for evangelisation

We work with platforms such as Creedle to make digital tools for evangelisation generally accessible and to adapt them to the language and culture of the respective region.

4.4. Swiss contribution to Europe

As Christians from a country in the heart of Europe, we feel particularly connected to the people on our continent. Regardless of our history, we want to contribute to the European part of the body of Christ for the glory of God and the good of our neighbours. Always aware that we are the recipients of many gifts and resources from our neighbours. In doing so, we want to give special consideration to the following:

- Switzerland's relationship with Europe is changeable and sometimes tense. We recognise that Switzerland has left traces of blessing, but has also caused suffering and guilt. When we get involved, we do not seek self-interest, but solidarity with one another and the good of our neighbour.
- We are grateful for the stability of our nation in the political, economic and social spheres. We humbly recognise that much of this is a gift. And where desired, we share experiences of how stable social coexistence in diversity can succeed.
- As a country with a central geographical location in Europe, we are aware of our diverse connections and mutual dependencies with Europe. We not only want to maintain and strengthen transport routes and political cooperation, but also the exchange on matters of faith and church cooperation with our brothers and sisters in Europe.
- Different language groups and cultures live together in a small area in Switzerland. We

want to wrestle with our brothers and sisters in Europe over the question of how successful ecclesial and social coexistence, reconciliation and unity can succeed in the face of great plurality. As a non-EU member, Switzerland sometimes maintains a distanced attitude towards Europe. Regardless of all political positions, we believe that the Swiss way of delegating responsibilities to the lowest possible level (subsidiarity) is a valuable contribution to Europe.

- In Switzerland, the ability to compromise is cultivated. We see it as an asset to include the voices of minorities in decision-making processes and to take time for such processes. Together with Christians from all European countries, we resist populist forces that want to enforce the law of the strongest.
- We maintain long-term relationships with our four direct sisters: France, Germany, Italy and Austria. We see great potential in the exchange and cooperation with our siblings via the Swiss language regions.
- As Switzerland, we have been spared war for a long time. We want to strengthen our role as peacemakers and, if desired, fulfil the role of a mediator.
- Many Swiss people are very willing to donate. We want to consciously cultivate a culture of generosity towards our brothers and sisters in Europe.

5. International level

5.1. Persecuted Christians – part of our body

Millions of Christians around the world pay a high price for their faith. We belong to them: Their pain is our pain, their hopes are our hopes. We encourage to pray for them, share their stories, support them politically and provide con-

crete help. Their testimony is an inspiration for our own faithfulness.

5.2. Proclaim the gospel – culturally sensitive and true to life

Switzerland, with its cultural diversity and historical heritage, is particularly called to bring the gospel into the various cultural contexts – in order to reach previously unreached peoples. We want to proclaim Christ: clear in our message, humble in our demeanour and with a deep love for the people we want to reach. In doing so, we strive for forms of expression that serve the local people and place Christ at the centre, rather than exporting cultural forms or imposing foreign patterns. The proclamation of the gospel should be true to life, understandable and yet powerful – supported by spiritual authority and a deep relationship with Jesus.

5.3. Shaping global partnership – in humility and reciprocity

We cultivate global partnerships that are cha-

racterised by genuine humility, mutual appreciation and mutual cross-fertilisation. As Switzerland, we contribute resources, stability and experience. But we also know that we have just as much to receive – in terms of spiritual passion, of power of renewal, of a deep fear of God. Our attitude should be characterised by listening, learning together, hospitality and serving together. Post-colonial missionary work means walking shoulder to shoulder – under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It means recognising the contribution of every nation, large or small, rich or poor, as equal and indispensable. This is how a church grows that is no longer Western or Southern, but global and Christ-centred.

5.4. Inspiring hope – in a torn and searching world

The world of our time, as we perceive it in the West, is characterised by brokenness, loneliness and a deep search for meaning. We believe that in this global context, we have a calling to be bearers of hope. We want to create spaces where



The Swiss delegation: above (from left to right): Andreas Boppart, Remi Tobler, Viviane Krucker-Baud, Gian Walser, Matthieu Schnegg, Kevin Mosimann, Egzon Shala, Christian Haslebacher, Jean-Luc Ziehli, below (from left to right): Boris Eichenberger, Beat Ungricht, Michael Girgis, Olivier Fleury, Thierry Burgeois, Joel Hartmann, Christian Kuhn, Yves Bulundwe, Matthieu Mallefer, Beat Leuthold. Missing from the photo: Andi Bachmann-Roth, Jaël Binggeli, Paul Helmes, Philipp Rüesch, Timothée Joset, Mael Sollberger, Jyoti Gupta.

people can find a new identity in Christ in the midst of disorientation, where broken hearts can experience healing and where reconciliation is possible – be it at work, in society, in art or in the neighbourhood. Through words, deeds and lived relationships, we should show Jesus as the only one who gives real hope – for individuals and for entire nations.

5.5. Promoting justice – as a sign of the coming kingdom of God

The commitment to social justice is an essential part of God's mission. Wherever the gospel comes to life, renewal happens – in hearts, in families, in churches, in social structures and political systems. We are therefore globally committed to local reconciliation, social justice and the preservation of creation. Our vision is not mere improvement, but the revelation of the coming kingdom of God in the midst of this world. In this transformative ministry for justice, we see ourselves as witnesses to what Christ has accomplished and what He will yet accomplish.

5.6. Prayer as the foundation of global mission

All mission begins, grows and matures in prayer. We deeply believe that prayer is a central component of sustainable change. That is why we strive to build and strengthen a worldwide prayer network – supported by individuals, families, small groups, churches and supra-regional movements. Churches and organisations should be places of intense prayer, where God's will for nations is sought and proclaimed in spiritual authority. We trust that God's mission for the whole world will be born anew out of prayer – and that the power to change the nations will flow from the heart of God himself.

Classification and summary of the «Seoul Statement»¹

The statement has always been at the centre of the Lausanne Movement's congresses to date. The Lausanne Covenant was issued at the first congress in 1974, the Manila Manifesto in 1989 and the Cape Town Commitment in 2010. These statements became trend-setting theological writings for the evangelical faith. The Swiss Evangelical Alliance SEA-RES, for example, has declared the Lausanne Covenant and the Cape Town Commitment to be its foundational documents.

The Seoul Statement does not have the same central character as the previous statements. The central proclamation of The Fourth Lausanne Congress was the «Collaborative Action Commitment», in which the participants committed themselves to increased cooperation in favour of the common mission. The Seoul Statement was not created during the congress and is therefore not to be understood as a product of the congress. It builds on the statements of previous congresses and was completed by a theological commission before the congress in Seoul. It aims to consolidate basic Christian truths and speak as a clarifying voice into current challenges of the Church. Seven topics are examined in a total of 97 articles. The topics have the following headings and contents:

1. **The gospel:** the story we live and tell
2. **The bible:** the holy scriptures we read and obey
3. **The church:** the people of God we love and build up
4. **The human person:** the image of God created and restored
5. **Discipleship:** our calling to holiness and mission
6. **The family of nations:** the peoples in conflicts we see and serve for peace
7. **Technology:** the accelerating innovation we discern and steward

What can the Seoul Statement mean for Switzerland:

With regard to the seven points from the congress in Seoul that we as a delegation recognised as important for Switzerland, the Seoul Statement underlines a number of key aspects. It is a recollection of the fundamental themes of the Christian faith: what is the core of the gospel, what is the church, what is the human person? The Seoul Statement underlines the importance of investing in Christian leadership and fostering discipleship, and – as we have defined for Switzerland – also technological possibilities, without ignoring the dangers in this regard. The Seoul Statement lays a theological foundation, but the concrete steps of what this means, for example, for mission in the workplace or for intergenerational and cultural dynamics, need to be concretised and implemented by ourselves.

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¹ cf. <https://lausanne.org/statement/the-seoul-statement>

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