

**ONTARIO CONFERENCE OF MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCHES**  
**91<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention**  
**Hosted via Zoom**

**February 25-26, 2022**

Theme: **‘The Road Ahead....’**

Attendance: 74 delegates, representing 20 of our 27 Member churches, plus additional guests and 1 of our 4 Associate Member churches.

**Friday Night Virtual Celebration Service 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm**

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:** Jeff MacLeod welcomed everyone to the 2022 Annual Convention and explained the Zoom elements for the evening. He opened with prayer asking for protection and peace for those in harms way in Ukraine and Russia.
2. **WORSHIP IN MUSIC:** The worship team from Meadow Brook Church led in the singing of “*Oh God, You Have Done Great Things*”.
3. **VISION & PRAYER - THE ROAD AHEAD...:** Ed Willms introduced the theme for the 91<sup>st</sup> Convention of the Ontario Mennonite Brethren Conference. The road ahead is uncharted, uncertain and complex, but it is a journey that we can choose to navigate together. He shared some of his road trip experiences and how he is still captured by the beauty of God’s creation he has witnessed during his many drives. He read Psalms 121:1. God wants to be our guide and lead us forward. Tonight we will share stories and Ed encouraged us to lift our eyes to the mountains.
4. **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:** Ed introduced Tamille Richardson, Interim Pastor at Evergreen Heights Christian Fellowship. Tamille reflected that, as we go through long seasons of turmoil, it’s normal to want things to just go back to normal, the safe and familiar, where we have been comfortable. Yet seasons of upset can show us new ways to grow and live better lives. She shared her experience on a mission trip to Guatemala in her youth, and her struggle to pack appropriately. As we move through seasons of our life, we have an opportunity to reevaluate what to keep, what to let go of and what will be useful moving forward. Let’s start the road ahead by reflecting on what He is calling us to hold on to, and to let go and be open to new things. Tamille led a guided spiritual practice of reflection, gratitude, evaluation, release, preparation, invitation and excitement. She read from Psalm 25, asking Him to point out the road for us to follow.
5. **STORIES TO INSPIRE US FORWARD:** Ryan Jantzi, ONMB Ministry Director, welcomed everyone and looked forward to a day when we can meet together again in person. He shared his own experience of a significant road trip in his life, driving to school in small town Saskatchewan. While daunting at first, he came to love the vast prairies. Life is full of uncertain territory. Our futures are unknown and with all of the turmoil in the world today, it is easy to worry about what is around the next corner. Yet God is often on the move during uncertain times. Ryan referred to the ministry of Philip. When the early Church faced an uncertain future, the Holy Spirit led Philip to strange places where he had the opportunity to evangelize people who were not familiar or safe. Ryan introduced three stories to inspire us forward.

**FEATURE #1 – DAVID HOOD of Southeast City Church.** David shared the early days of ministering in his community as a new church. Covid shut down much of the programming and they worried about losing touch with the neighbors and friendships they had worked hard to develop. To answer a need, they began to deliver food bank items within the community. More and more people began accessing the food bank and, through this work, they were made aware of a need in their community that they had not perceived before. Last October, the Food Bank asked if they would host a weekly food bank on site in Russell Gardens which has allowed them to maintain the connections they worried they would lose. They were able to form new relationships through their food bank work. Covid has provided them with a trust-based presence in the community, where they continue to grow relationally among the marginalized people they serve.

Ryan announced that a new Podcast is coming that will allow us to follow the work at Southeast City. Ryan compared this experience to how Philip engaged with a new person in a new place and how the Spirit led him to disciple in an unfamiliar community.

**FEATURE #2 – K. in Parkdale:** K. shared how her group has been given the opportunity to minister to a 0.01% Christian community in downtown Toronto. As followers of Jesus, we need to be good neighbors and share the gospel to unreached people in Canada. Through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will have opportunities to share the gospel. She recounted a recent story of an unexpected conversation that led to prayer with a person God led to her. She prayed for God to open these opportunities to us, to create a desire within us to pray for these communities and to be brave to share the gospel.

Ryan asked why we are led down unknown roads? We are resurrection people and Jesus loudly proclaimed that the Kingdom of God will win. Chaos will never overcome God.

**FEATURE #3 - THE JESUS NETWORK - OBED ROD:** Obed shared his extremist past and how he escaped from Afghanistan to eventually be in Canada, working to plant churches in Toronto, Waterloo and Kitchener. When the Taliban took over, many people were displaced and contacted the Jesus Network seeking help to escape Afghanistan. Well over 275 Christians have been rescued but 300-400 people are still trapped inside and the Jesus Network continues to work to free them. He described the system of safe houses and refugee camps to shelter refugees, and the assistance his group is able to offer to expedite the process of moving them to other countries. Many partner groups from other countries are assisting and financing some of this work. Miracles are happening and Obed shared how we can assist, through prayer, raising awareness in our communities and through sponsorships, volunteering and financial support.

Ryan provided contact information for The Jesus Network. We in Ontario need to be aware and open to discipleship opportunities. He told the story of the work of a very small church in his community that has made significant efforts to reach out to others and the great work they have been able to do. Uncertain times call for courageous and hope filled responses.

Ryan invited those who are willing to donate to the Jesus Network through ONMB to support the work among Afghanistan refugees in Canada. He explained that, for the next three days, donations may be made through the ONMB office for this ministry. He asked us to be prayful and listen earnestly for the calling of the Holy Spirit to lead our lives. Ryan prayed for these featured diaspora ministries who shared their stories tonight.

6. **WORSHIP IN MUSIC:** The worship team from WMB Church led in the singing of “*Resurrected King*”.
7. **COMMUNION AND PRAYER:** Connie Maier of Glencairn MB read from I Cor. 11. Jesus repeats, ‘Do this in remembrance of me’. She led us in prayer for the gift of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. He is the source of our joy and our hope. Connie prayed for the fulfillment of the New Covenant.
8. **CLOSING COMMENTS:** Kristi Lee, ONMB Executive Assistant, thanked everyone who contributed to making this event possible and to the delegates and guests participating tonight. She invited registered participants to join the Zoom meeting tomorrow morning starting at 8:45 am and provided link instructions. The service was closed with prayer at 8:25 pm.

**Saturday, February 26, 2022 9:00 am – 10:00 am**

9. **WORSHIP SONG AND WELCOME:** As attendees entered the meeting, the WMB worship team sang “*Hallelujah for the Cross*”. Jeff MacLeod welcomed everyone to the Business Session of the 91<sup>st</sup> ONMB Convention. He reviewed Zoom etiquette and highlighted features of Zoom to be used at various times during the program. Jeff prayed for the meeting today.
10. **OPENING VISION & PRAYER:** Ed Willms welcomed everyone and spoke to the theme for this year, ‘The Road Ahead...’ The world is complicated and full of pain at this time. This morning, prayer was focused around 4 themes; the invasion of Ukraine (Mandy Kasper), the people of Afghanistan, refugees and workers (Ryan Jantzi), for our divided country Canada (Andrew Plett) and for our Convention and delegates, still separated by pandemic (Doug Valerio).
11. **HOUSEKEEPING – PRACTICE MOTIONS:** Jeff MacLeod explained the format for the meeting. He referred to the Convention yearbook that contains many of the reports for the meeting. Jeff introduced Karen West, Vice-Chair of the ONMB Board. She explained the process for asking questions throughout the day. Refugee relief donations may be made through the ONMB website. Jeff explained the electronic voting process and presented the first practice motion. Karen thanked those serving as tech support that will assist throughout the day. Two practice motions were presented to learn the new voting process for registered delegates.
12. **ONMB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Ed Willms referred to his written report on pages 5-6 of the Convention booklet. Ed shared that he has found this year to be very challenging. Year two of the pandemic has created polarization and unease, with mental and physical health concerns on the rise. As a country and a people, we are faced with our own inherent racism. Our provincial and national Faith and Life teams have been navigating many heavy themes this year. On the other hand, Ed feels privileged to witness God moving in our Province. He expressed his gratitude for Kristi, Ryan, Christine Hamm, J.P. Hayashida, and the ONMB Board. A highlight this year was the in-person Pastor’s credentialing event held in St. Catharines, with three indigenous leaders participating. Looking ahead, we will be hosting an in-person Posture Shift event later this year at Cornerstone Community Church. We want to develop four teams to focus on different areas of ministry.

13. **ONMB MINISTRY DIRECTOR REPORT:** Ryan Jantzi introduced himself and explained his role which will develop into 50% church extension, 35% faith and life and 15% resource oversight. He is working to explore and develop opportunities for ‘missional expressions’ and a team is being organized province-wide to share the good news and to multiply disciples. He explained the nature of missional expressions, which are diverse and must be approached in non-traditional ways. He encouraged everyone to watch for more information as we partner broadly to develop a multiplication culture plan. There will be many opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in community. These undertakings must be financially sustainable, as the days of big-budget church-planting seem to be over. Ryan is available to speak to Churches on the topic of church extension and missional expressions. Podcasts will be available soon with interviews and stories to inspire.
14. **ONMB BOARD CHAIR REPORT:** Jeff McLeod reported on the work of the Board this year. By-law changes have been required to maintain ONCA compliance and many of our incorporated churches will need to do likewise. We have developed a new Ministry Misconduct Policy that will be presented for vote today, and Jeff explained the importance of such a document. We celebrate the hiring of Ryan, our Ministry Director - the future looks bright. We are working toward the ‘Bless and Release’ of Radiant Care. The past year has held many challenges, but God has given us much to celebrate. Church engagement as indicated through participation and financial support is encouraging and Jeff thanked all of the churches. Credentialing our first indigenous leader is a blessing and we need to hold up this work in prayer. Jeff thanked Karen West for her support and assistance during his first year as Chair. He thanked Pat Goertzen and Mike Meinema, who are transitioning off the Board this year. He thanked the Board and staff for the past year.

BREAK 10 minutes

#### **BUSINESS SESSION PART 1:**

**CALL TO ORDER/QUORUM:** Parliamentarians for this convention are J.P. Hayashida and Michelle Knowles. Jeff MacLeod explained the decision-making procedure we strive for as a Conference and explained the process and discussion rules for the following motions.

Quorum bylaw 7.4 requires 50 voting representatives present, in person (virtual), representing at least 50% of member churches. We have 20 of 27 member churches represented with 74 delegates present at the beginning of this session, plus guests. One of our 4 associate member churches is also represented. The quorum requirements have been met.

Jeff MacLeod reviewed the current details of the agenda for the Convention.

**MOTION C22-1 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the agenda be accepted as presented.

**MOTION C22-2 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that we receive the Committee and Board Reports as distributed in advance in the convention yearbook.

**MOTION C22-3 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the minutes from Convention 2021, as sent out electronically, be approved.

15. **CAMP CROSSROADS UPDATE:** Andrew Hiebert, Executive Direct of Camp Crossroads, highlighted the Camp report in the Convention booklet. He thanked everyone for their support of Camp over the past year. He celebrated the Winter Blast programs for this winter, which are being

hosted at half-capacity. Discipleship is provided with contributions by three new staff members supported through government grants. It is hoped that the Leadership Program will be hosted again this year, equipping young people to better serve in their local churches. The Bridge discipleship track worked well last year and we have a number of applicants already for this summer. God has generously blessed us with donors and we are blessed to be able to continue refurbishing Camp facilities. We look forward to the loosening of capacity limits as most of our camp events are wait-listed. Christine Hiebert has been stepping into more of a discipling development role. A work weekend is planned for April and Andrew thanked everyone for their help.

16. **MULTIPLY UPDATE:** Erin Coffey brought the Multiply report on behalf of herself and Robin Serez of the Eastern Canada Multiply team. Robin chose the scripture Ps. 24:1 Erin invited everyone to read the full report in the Convention booklet. She highlighted the events planned for the coming months, to equip and resource youth leaders. SOAR and TREK opportunities should resume in 2022. Jeff thanked Erin for her report.

17. **ONMB NOMINATIONS REPORT:** Jeff Martens (Cornerstone) Chaired the Nominating Committee and reported via Zoom from Burundi. He introduced the other members of the committee - Bill Stubbs, Tabitha VandenEnden and Terry Shuh. Jeff reminded us of the role and responsibilities of the NC and their process for discerning candidates.

**MOTION C22-4 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that Michelle Knowles be acclaimed for the position of Vice-Chair of the ONMB Board of Directors.

**MOTION C22-5 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that all candidates for Member-at-large positions on the ONMB Board be acclaimed.

Note: Members at large elected are Andrew Plett, Jeff Martens (Southridge), Darrell Gillespie, Noah Grossman, Meghan Plett and Brent Kipfer.

**MOTION C22-6 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that all candidates for the Nominating Committee be acclaimed.

Note: Nominating Committee members for 2022 are Jeff Martens (Cornerstone), Bill Stubbs, Tabitha VandenEnden and Terry Shuh.

18. **CCMBC – Legacy Video:** A brief video was shown, explaining the purpose, services offered and the benefits of the Legacy Fund.

19. **ONMB FINANCIAL REPORT:** Jeff Martens (Southridge), Treasurer of the ONMB Board, presented and highlighted pages 20-23 of the Convention booklet. He spoke to some of the key themes that were discussed at the break-out session hosted earlier this week. We find ourselves in a deep state of gratitude for 2021 as our expectations have been exceeded in a difficult season. 2021 marked seven straight years of financial growth and we celebrate hiring Ryan Jantzi as Ministry Director this year. We have a 6% increase in church contributions and 5% increase in revenue. Expenses finished 12% below budget, thanks to reduced programming and travel and a later start for the new Ministry Director. The bottom line is a surplus of \$77,000+. The audited financial statement is available in draft form in the booklet. Jeff explained that the Northend Church is still on our budget for this year, but will be separate and autonomous by 2023. The approach to the 2022 budget focuses on re-investing our resources into ministries and churches. While budgeted income is similar to last year (\$463,000), our expenses will be slightly higher (\$490,000) as we increase our commitment to CCMBC to realign to 35% of church commitments, have a full year of

Ministry Director salary, and implement proposed plans for special programming to support our churches and pastors. We have a small, intentional deficit (\$27,000) to mobilize the reserves to better invest in ministry. Jeff referred to page 23 and explained the transfer to reserve funds proposed: to top up the Emergency Fund for churches and pastors in crisis, and the new Special Project fund for new missional opportunities that arise. The Family Covenant encourages a commitment of 5% of church budget to support this one-stream funding formula. Ryan explained the change to the Multiply line in the budget, as new church initiatives are re-aligned.

**MOTION C22-7 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2021 be accepted as published.

**MOTION C22-8 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that Bridgman and Durksen be appointed as auditors for 2022 and that the Board of Directors be authorized to set the remuneration for these auditing services.

**MOTION C22-9 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the operating budget for 2022 be approved as presented.

**MOTION C22-10 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** to transfer \$15,323.09 from Operating Reserves to the Special Project Fund to establish a balance of \$20,000, in anticipation of special projects supporting pastors and churches emerging from the pandemic.

18. **NATIONAL DIRECTOR REPORT:** Karen introduced the National staff and committee members joining us today. A brief video prepared by CCMBC was presented highlighting the services, structure and planned events of the National Conference. The plans were explained for CUSP going forward and the Collaborative model by which decisions will be made and information distributed. A new website launch is planned for June 2022.

Elton DaSilva, CCMBC National Director, thanked the ONMB Conference for engaging in the strategic plan and also for the people we have sent to participate on the National Board and teams. Elton thanked Karen West for her years of service and welcomed the participation of Michelle Knowles. He reiterated the challenges Ed Willms experienced this past year. This highlights the need for conversation and working together to resource the church for what is needed in the future. CCMBC is just coming out of a difficult financial season. They are full of hope and encouragement for continued partnerships and look forward to what God has in store for us all.

BREAK – 30 minutes.

## **BUSINESS SESSION PART 2:**

19. **ONMB GOVERNANCE REPORT:** Michelle Knowles explained the three-year process that has led to the by-law decisions we will approve today. ONCA has specific compliance requirements for updated and resubmitted documents. Incorporated local churches will also be required to make similar changes. A Webinar is planned for the spring to assist with this process. The Board has grandfathered our four existing Associate Churches however, going forward, Associate Churches will be approved by the Conference at Convention each year. Michelle explained the need for and purpose of the three following motions.

**MOTION C22-11 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** to approve the ONMB General Operating Bylaw Draft 2a (“ONMB GOB 2022 revisions for ONCA draft2a”) as presented with an amendment to Section 6.2.2 (Rights of a Convention member) to add the sentence, “As a Voting Representative, a Convention Member shall

have one (1) vote on all matters coming before the Members' Meeting that require a vote to which such individual was appointed as a delegate”.

**MOTION C22-12 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the amended ONMB Articles of Incorporation to support the bylaw changes and ONCA transition be approved in its entirety as presented.

The motion to approve the ONMB Ministerial Misconduct Policy was opened to discussion.

- It was suggested that the definition of ‘complaint’ should be expanded to include sins of omission as well as commission. Guidelines of preventative measures may also be considered. Michelle noted these suggestions for future reviews, and while the document does mention ‘omission’, it could be more clearly identified.
- A question arose concerning how the Family Covenant informs misconduct under 1.9 – Interpretation. This could lead to the misuse of the policy. In response, while the Covenant does not outline any specific issues of misconduct, it is one of our foundational documents. This policy is intended to apply specifically to Conference church pastors and the process should eliminate any inappropriate use of complaint. This concern will be noted and the Governance Committee will give the issue consideration when future revisions occur.
- It was also suggested that the Family Covenant should be presented for formal consideration and approval at Convention, as with other policy documents. Also, the document states that the ‘ONMB will...’ but the ONMB is defined as the Conference of churches. J.P. Hayashida explained that this legal language is common and not inappropriate. However, in unique cases, when a group within the body is referenced, details should be clearly identified. He thanked Michael VandenEnden for his close reading of the document, which has led to stronger policy in the past and present.
- The purpose of the policy might be better clarified in the preamble. Karen explained how this wording had been developed and the clarity it provides.

Jeff MacLeod thanked Michelle, Doug and J.P. for all of the work they have completed this year to bring these motions to Convention.

**MOTION C22-13 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the ONMB Ministerial Misconduct Policy be approved as presented.

**MOTION C22-14 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that, at the AGM’s of the various incorporated boards, we authorize the chair of the ONMB Board, or his/her designate, to vote in favour of the motions presented at those respective meetings.

20. **CCMNC/MCC – What will happen...:** A video was presented. Elton DaSilva, Carson Samson and Kara Friesen spoke on the crisis of displacement of Afghan Christian families. Elton remembered the story of Joseph and Mary who also fled their home, going into Egypt to save their young family. MCC is working to support refugee families in Canada. Sponsoring a refugee family is a big commitment and details are on the MCC website for congregations willing to commit to sponsorship. Opportunities are available through mid-March.

21. **RADIANT CARE UPDATE:** Ed and Jeff Martens (Southridge) have given leadership to the ‘bless and release’ of Radiant Care. Ed described the process that other Conference ministries have completed, including Bethesda, Camp Crossroads and Eden. Radiant Care and Valleyview Manor are the last incorporated groups to complete the transition to self-autonomy. Ed highlighted the discussions over the past few years that have led to the presentation of these motions today. As a Board, we are now comfortable that we have come to a satisfactory conclusion that includes the MB Confession of Faith as the basis for Radiant Care’s covenant moving forward. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed which establishes our mutual understanding of the spiritual future of the organization. The motions were opened to discussion.

- Release will protect the ONMB Conference from any legal liability for the ongoing operations of Radiant Care and protect Radiant Care from any liability relating to ONMB oversight.
- Glen Unruh responded to a question and explained the strength of the Radiant Care documentation and governance and the rigorous process of vetting board members. The care provided to seniors is an expression of our Anabaptist faith now and in future. The intention is not to separate from the local churches, which continue to be valued and necessary to the future of the five corporations.
- It was acknowledged that Radiant Care is a regional organization and not Provincial in focus.
- Michael Dyck, a Radiant Care chaplain, provided comment on the ongoing spiritual care required at the senior's facilities. He encouraged anyone wishing to volunteer to contact him, as the relational ministerial connections can continue to grow under the new structure.

**MOTION C22-15 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the proposed changes to the bylaws for governing the Radiant Care Tabor Manor corporations be approved provided that the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Radiant Care Tabor Manor Corporations.

**MOTION C22-16 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the proposed changes in the Articles of Amendment for governing the Radiant Care Tabor Manor corporations be approved provided that the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Radiant Care Tabor Manor corporations.

**MOTION C22-17 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the 2022 proposed nomination slate of directors for Radiant Care be approved as presented.

Note: The Radiant Care Board Members are Glen Unruh (Southridge Community Church – Glenridge), John Krause (New Hope Church Niagara), Dorothea Enns (Niagara United Mennonite Church), John Dyck (Cornerstone Community Church), John Hay (Southridge Community Church – Glenridge), Christa Krause (Southridge Community Church – Glenridge), Nathan Braun (New Hope Church Niagara) and Richard Wall (Niagara United Mennonite Church).

**MOTION C22-18 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the persons elected to the Radiant Care Tabor Manor Board of Directors be the Board of Directors for;

- Pleasant Manor Retirement Village (O/A Radiant Care Pleasant Manor)
- Mennonite Brethren Seniors Citizens Home Inc. (O/A Radiant Care Tabor Manor)
- The Pleasant Manor and Tabor Manor Foundation (O/A Radiant Care Foundation)
- The Pleasant Manor and Tabor Manor Support Association (O/A Radiant Care Support Association)

**MOTION C22-19 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the auditing firm Crawford, Smith and Swallow be assigned to Radiant Care for the fiscal year 2022-2023.

Jeff Martens offered a prayer of blessing for Radiant Care Tabor Manor as it is released into mature self-autonomy.



- 22. **MB SEMINARY UPDATE:** Mark Wessner referred to the MB Seminary report in the Convention booklet. Two years ago, the seminary launched a financial restructuring that has led to greater sustainable today. He thanked those who made this possible through their gifts. In BC, we now have two partnering ‘teaching churches’ and similar models are being considered for Ontario very soon. He provided links for any churches looking into this opportunity. He announced an upcoming New Testament Teaching Tour of Turkey.
- 23. **NFLT UPDATE:** Ken Esau is Interim Director of the 17 member National Faith and Life Team. Ken introduced the members of the team and thanked them for their participation. He encouraged us to pray for a return to health for Ingrid Reichardt. He described the large mandate of NFLT in credentialing, hosting events, educating, seminary, engaging with other conferences and responding to demands and questions of the congregations. A posture of humility, paired with gospel integrity, is their guiding principle. He prayed for the Conference.
- 24. **FINAL RESULTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS:** Ed Willms thanked everyone for engaging and participating in this Convention. He encouraged the Faith and Life teams in this heavy time and reminded everyone of the Posture Shift event planned for March in Niagara. He thanks Jeff, Karen, Michelle and everyone who made this event possible. He thanked the National team, Carson and Kara, working in the background – we are better together!

**MOTION C22-20 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the ballots be destroyed upon the approval of the minutes by the Board Secretary.

**MOTION C22-21 MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED** that the Ontario Mennonite Brethren Convention 2022 be adjourned

Tamille Richardson closed the meeting in prayer at 1:30 pm.

*We do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the minutes of the 91<sup>st</sup> annual Convention of the ONMB Board of Directors held on February 25-26, 2022.*

x \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff MacLeod, Chair

x \_\_\_\_\_  
Pat Goertzen, Secretary

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date