

Canadian Mennonite Partnership Covenant Renewal March 2014

Preamble

Canadian Mennonite (CM) is published by the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, Inc. (CMPS), which has representatives from six partners on its Board: Mennonite Church Alberta (one representative), Mennonite Church British Columbia (one representative), Mennonite Church Canada (four representatives), Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (one representative), Mennonite Church Manitoba (one representative), Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (one representative).

Each of the partners has a distinct relationship to the publication. This covenant provides a common understanding for the governance, ministry, editorial direction, operation, funding and procedure for amendments to this covenant. It is an extension of the covenant developed at a meeting in Waterloo, Ontario of the seven partners in November 2005 and renewed in 2009.

The area churches and national church are collectively referred to below as the “Church” or “Churches.” The collective body of individual members of the Churches is referred to as the “church.”

The appendices attached are informational but are not part of the Covenant itself.

Covenant

1. Ownership and governance

CMPS, a Canadian charitable corporation, employs staff and owns property and equipment. The CMPS Board has the power to set policies, define budgets, and hire and dismiss staff. By appointing 75% of the CMPS board members, the Churches are integrally involved in carrying out the mission of CMPS.

2. Shared ministry

CMPS works in partnership with the Churches to serve and to build the missional church. *CM* is a ministry of, and for, the church. (See Appendix C for more detail.)

3. Editorial direction

3.1 Overall editorial direction for *CM* is set by CMPS in consideration of its mission statement (Appendix A), editorial policy (Appendix B) and its editorial and spiritual goals (Appendix C).

3.2 The partners are welcome to provide feedback and counsel on editorial direction, mission and policy through their representatives on the CMPS board.

3.2 In potentially controversial subjects or in exceptions to normal editorial policy, CMPS consults with its partners.

4. Circulation

4.1 *CM* is mailed and/or emailed directly to the homes of all members and adherents of member congregations of each area church, unless individuals or congregations specifically ask not to receive it (the Every Home subscription plan). This includes individuals affiliated with a congregation but living in another province or country. In some cases, congregations may elect to have Every Home plan issues sent as a bulk mailing, though this is less desirable than home delivery. Virtually all *CM* subscriptions are Every Home

plan subscriptions. A congregation must be a member of an area church (including area church only member congregations) or otherwise be endorsed by an area church for its attendees to be eligible for the Every Home subscription plan.

4.2 Subscriptions are also sold directly to any individual or to groups of subscribers, purchased as gifts and ordered by various institutions.

4.3 The CMPS website (www.canadianmennonite.org) makes publicly available past issues of CM, plus current blogs and news articles not always contained within the print publication. The mission, values and editorial policy of the website are the same as for the print publication.

5. Funding formula

5.1 The ministry of *Canadian Mennonite* is funded through the Every Home Plan (EHP) (see Item 4. Circulation). The EHP offers subscriptions at a discounted rate, a cost shared between Mennonite Church Canada and each area church. Invoices are sent to the partners monthly.

5.2 Using EHP revenue as the Publishing Partners' contribution, the ministry of *Canadian Mennonite* is funded as follows:

- a) 60% from CMPS
- b) 20% from MC Canada
- c) 20% from the five area churches, apportioned according to their size (number of members).

5.3 The calculation of such apportionments in 5.2, plus calculation of overall inflationary increases required for the coming fiscal year, is the responsibility of CMPS, which will notify the partners by Sept. 30 of each year.

5.4 We gratefully acknowledge the spirit of commitment to the mission of *CM* shown by every partner since the first partnership covenant took effect in 2005. Prior to this renewal agreement taking effect, each of the partners will outline its minimum commitment to the funding formula.

5.5 CMPS is authorized to raise its allotment by whatever means it deems appropriate, including, for example, subscription sales outside the primary constituency and advertising sales. Fundraising within the primary constituency will be done in cooperation with the partners. CMPS solicits annual government grants, as available.

5.6 Given that the health of the enterprise hinges on advance planning and long-term stability, and that mutual trust among the partners is paramount, the partners covenant to demonstrate transparency, good faith and clear communication, especially in those instances where a departure from the formula or overall budget projections becomes necessary.

5.7 If circumstances dictate that one of the partners needs to change its funding commitment or other aspects of this covenant, that partner shall notify the other partners of its situation at least six months prior to CMPS's budget year ending Dec. 31. The CMPS chair will initiate consultation among all partners to address the situation. If CMPS has significantly changed circumstances itself, it will likewise consult with its partners.

6. Partner consultation

CMPS will take the lead in nurturing the publication's vision. CMPS will regularly consult with each partner to maintain close communication on the overall direction and vision for the publication.

7. Duration of covenant

This covenant is in effect from Jan. 1, 2014 to Dec. 31, 2016. The CMPS Board will initiate the process of developing a new partnership covenant no later than Jan. 1, 2016.

APPENDIX A:
Canadian Mennonite mission statement

To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through a regular publication and other media, working with our church partners.

Guiding values:

- Hebrews 10:23-25
- Accuracy, fairness, balance
- Editorial freedom
- Seeking and speaking the truth in love
- Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will
- Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

(Adopted by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services Board, March 16, 2013)

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:23-25).

APPENDIX B:
Canadian Mennonite editorial policy

Canadian Mennonite understands the church to be a covenanted community of believers-the body of Christ. A "covenant" is an agreement that establishes a relationship (1995 *Confession of Faith*, p. 33), and implies a commitment to: extend trust to each other; dialogue with each other; know and understand each other better; discern God's will together; encourage the full use of our gifts to edify and build up the church; search for truth together; mutual encouragement and exhortation.

The fundamental purpose of a church press is to function as a communications instrument that promotes covenantal relationships (Hebrews 10:23-25). Therefore, *CM* will: establish and maintain channels through which accurate and fair information can be shared; provide spiritual direction and encouragement to obedience through faith profiles and inspirational/educational material; provide opportunities for discernment and analysis of the complex issues facing the life of the church in society; provide opportunities for dialogue, exhortation and exchange of diverse views for the readers. In the above ways, *CM* is one vehicle through which the principle of mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers.

Canadian Mennonite is guided by the church's confession of faith, and thereby seeks the welfare and vitality of the church with the practice of editorial freedom. Editorial freedom is expressed through truth-seeking and openness to discernment, and by providing a balance of perspectives. Editorial freedom is conferred by the covenantal relationship and accountable to it. "Speaking the truth in love in the Christian community shows our commitment to right relationships as well as to accurate speech" (*Confession of Faith*, pp. 75-76).

Adopted by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board, February 6, 1998.
Reaffirmed by the CMPS Board, March 16, 2013.

APPENDIX C:
Expressions of our shared *Canadian Mennonite* ministry

“CMPS works in partnership with the Churches to serve and to build the missional church. CM is a ministry of and for the church.”

- from the “Shared ministry” section of the Covenant

C1. Partnership contributions from *Canadian Mennonite*.

CM seeks to support the Churches in their work in a number of ways:

C1.1 *CM* employs correspondents in each geographic part of the church to ensure readers receive regular news reports and features from these areas, specifically including reports on the work of the Churches.

C1.2 Through its own fundraising, *CM* provides the Churches with subscription rates at about half of actual cost to enable the Church Every Home subscription plan to reach as many as possible while costing the Churches as little as possible.

C1.3 *CM* highlights the work of the Churches by publishing many of the news releases and other articles they submit.

C1.4 The Churches are provided with the opportunity to use *CM*'s resources and infrastructure to directly communicate with their constituencies about their work or related ministries. Some examples: publish a two to three page special report up to twice a year containing editorial material created by a Church or under their direction; include as a regional insert an editorially oriented publication such as a newsletter or bulletin insert already produced by a Church (and so avoid all mailing costs); publish a free display ad once per year to promote a delegate session or other Church program.

CM will provide staff and/or funding to assist the Churches to communicate with their constituencies in this way. This is in addition to ongoing news coverage and regular mention of church events in other parts of *CM*.

C1.5 *CM* provides at least two columns per year to each Church for their leaders or designates to address their constituency directly.

C1.6 *CM* regularly highlights and promotes the work of church-related agencies (such as camps, schools, and mission and service agencies) through news and feature stories.

C1.7 *CM* consults with its partners through the CMPS Board when preparing reader surveys.

C1.8 *CM* supports our local congregations: by seeking out articles on spiritual teaching from our pastors, by assigning staff or freelancers to cover local church events, by giving priority to publishing articles submitted by churches, by publicizing a calendar of local church events and by publishing announcements on births, baptisms, marriages and deaths.

Tim Miller Dyck, *CM* Editor/Publisher, October 2007.
Reaffirmed by the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services Board
and Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, March 16, 2013.

APPENDIX C:

Expressions of our shared *Canadian Mennonite* ministry (cont.)

C2. Partnership contributions from Church partners.

CM is a ministry of, and for, each of the publishing partners. Given its reach and high profile, *CM* provides a strategic opportunity for witness and service to the homes of almost all church members.

Church partners agree that:

C2.1 We believe *CM* is good for the church and we encourage its reading.

C2.2 Delivering *CM* directly to every home is the most desirable distribution model.

C2.3 *CM* needs to continue being pastoral and prophetic.

C2.4 *CM* is a significant missional partner for each Church.

C2.5 We need to intentionally foster our CMPS relationship through our board appointees.

C2.6 We believe a seven-way partnership is desirable.

Specifically, Church partners support *CM* as one of their own programs and act to foster its ministry by:

C2.7 Publicly affirming *CM*'s ministry by encouraging their constituency to receive and read it.

C2.8 Using *CM* to communicate with, call to service, encourage, exhort and otherwise minister to their constituency.

C2.9 Linking partners' websites to appropriate *CM* articles, editorials, viewpoints, videos, essays and photo galleries.

C2.10 Proposing that their delegates support budgets adequate to buy *CM* subscriptions for each of their member households through the Every Home plan, consistent with the understanding described in the "Funding formula" section of the Covenant.

C2.11 Respecting the professional journalistic and editorial judgment of *CM* staff.

C2.12 Helping *CM* in its ministry through affirmations and suggestions for improvement.

C2.13 Authorizing *CM* to collect and maintain their church subscription list address information, within the terms of the partner's own privacy policy, *CM*'s privacy policy and applicable legislation.

Based on discussions at the Nov. 2005 *CM* Publishing Partner meeting
Revised through partner discussions, October 2012 to March 2013

APPENDIX D:

***Canadian Mennonite's* editorial and spiritual goals**

Canadian Mennonite provides a way for those in our churches to be the body of Christ together with each other and with the wider church. The following are ways *CM* helps readers to live out this calling.

D1. *CM* helps individual readers be informed, relevant and well-equipped followers of Christ in order to act as agents of God's healing and hope in the world ("Vision, Healing and Hope" statement of the Mennonite Church).

D2. By delivering news, reports, teaching and analysis about our lives of faith and many church ministries, *CM* allows the knowledge, spiritual discernment and creativity of our entire body to be shared for our collective benefit.

D3. *CM* conveys the good news of God's word and the theological beliefs of the Mennonite Church through biblical exposition and spiritual instruction for salvation, witness, and discipleship.

D4. *CM* reveals the work of God in us and in our church for mutual encouragement and inspiration. "*Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds... encouraging one another*" (Heb. 10:24-25b).

D5. *CM* lets us learn of each other's joys, sorrows and significant personal events so we can better know and care for one another. By deliberately choosing to share in each other's lives through *CM*, we practice a form of hospitality with each other, "*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some*" (Heb. 10:25a).

D6. *CM* is one of the main ways the broader church can be informed of the decisions and actions of the Churches and church-related organizations. This information is critical so that church delegates and the wider constituency can both encourage and hold church leaders accountable in what they do on behalf of the wider constituency. *CM* provides accurate information to support good decision making at all levels.

D7. *CM* provides a forum both for the official voices of the church and for those not in church leadership or those that disagree with the decisions of the majority, in a similar spirit to how delegate discussion sessions operate. *CM* provides a place for all church members to communicate with the hope that this communication happens constructively and positively, and, together with the Holy Spirit, that all gain wisdom and discernment on how the church should act.

D8. As the church's magazine, created by and for our church, *CM*, taken as a whole, will be guided by and reflect the agreed upon teachings of the church. *CM* will seek to be a vehicle for promoting "unity in essentials."

D9. Mennonite theology also emphasizes the ability of each believer, guided by the Holy Spirit, to interpret and apply Scripture for themselves and to exercise their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the church (the priesthood of all believers). "We [all] participate in the church's task of interpreting the Bible and of discerning what God is saying in our time by examining all things in the light of Scripture." At the same time, "insights and understandings which we bring to the interpretation of the Scripture are to be tested in the faith community" (both from Article 4, *Confession of Faith*). Accordingly, letters, opinion columns and other expressions of personal views will have wider latitude in their contents than other types of articles, but may also include notice to make clear these pieces do not necessarily reflect the agreed upon positions of the wider faith community and/or state what these positions are.

Tim Miller Dyck, *CM* Editor/Publisher, January 2008
Reaffirmed by the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services Board
and Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, March 16, 2013