

2015 Chairperson's Report

Tobi Thiessen (Toronto, Ontario)

The Mennonite Church Canada Future Directions Task Force recommendations put an opportunity squarely in front of *Canadian Mennonite*. With a proposed reduction in scope of the national church, and a re-negotiation of the church's regional structures, we can position ourselves more than ever as the best vehicle for cross-country communication. We are a tie that binds. We remind people in each household that they are part of something larger than their own congregations. We are a forum for national discussion. We inspire each other through the stories we share. The church leaders, themselves, will be preoccupied with renegotiating their own roles and responsibilities from now until 2018, so it is incumbent on our board to make sure they see CM as a partner that will help keep up the national church strongly connected.

Our present Publishing Partner Covent (PPC) expires at the end of 2016. We have tacit agreement from the Partners to continue with the PPC status quo to 2018 while the Churches restructure, but we must actively think through and promote CM's role and subscription plan in the new structure.

In November, 2015, the MC Canada Fall Leadership Assembly was held in Abbotsford. They had just received the FDTF final report. Our board was invited to send representation and speak to the recommendation about communication. Henry Krause and I attended. The Faith & Life Commission, which last year sent a letter to our board with specific concerns about CM content and suggestions for more devotional/inspirational material, also attended. It was a rare chance for face-to-face communication with all these people at one time.

To assist the presentation, Dick and Mike Hostettler made a PowerPoint slideshow of CM's history, mission, current efforts, and geographic reach. The slideshow was well-received, which led to its use at the Area Church AGMs this winter and spring. For the purpose of the MC Canada meeting, I focused especially on the financial arrangements of the PPC, and demonstrated how the Partners' communication dollars are very well-spent with the Every Home Plan (EHP). The math is simple. Because CM generates advertising, accesses a federal grant and has subscription sales outside the primary constituency, EHP dollars are multiplied by a factor of 1.5. This multiplier effect means that collectively, through an independent magazine, we are able to produce more stories and articles about the Mennonite church in Canada than the Churches could ever do independently.

The FDTF recommendation on communication calls for streamlining the communications of the church. At our 2016 CM board meetings, we can take time to think of ways CM might best position itself within the recommendation, and even help facilitate the goal. I, personally, have wondered if it would be possible for CMPS to actually have two divisions. One would produce CM, exactly as we now know it. The other would offer communication services for the Church – a home for MC Canada or Area Churches to outsource their communication needs. Their requested content; our writing, production, distribution and delivery. I floated the idea at the November Leadership Assembly as a way to show that CM wants to be helpful to the national church in its' restructuring, but the whole concept is completely untested.

Even without the above, CM has plenty of challenges: ensuring sufficient revenue for the print magazine that is so appreciated by our readers; developing newer and younger audiences; and finding the next Editor/Publisher, which includes possibly re-envisioning that role before we even start searching.

We have our work cut out for us, but it is exciting work with the prospect of new developments that we have not yet even envisioned. Not that it will be easy. I expect it will take a great deal of careful thought, many conversations and then perseverance to ensure we get all the many interest groups to a consensus. I thank you all, in advance, for your contributions.

Henry Krause (Langley, BC)

Mennonite Church Canada representative

I facilitated a luncheon at our annual Mennonite Church BC delegates meeting in February. Thank you to Dick for the telephone conversation we had before the event in order to prepare for the luncheon and to go over the power point that was put together for the area church annual meetings. The PP presentation gave a good overview of the mission, vision history and work that *Canadian Mennonite* does and was well received. Amy Dueckman and Linda Matties were also at the meeting and were able to share from their perspectives as was Willard Metzger. There were about 20 people in attendance, mostly older persons and long-time supporters of CM.

I made it about half way through the presentation before the conversations and questions took over the floor. People were much more interested in sharing their thoughts than in receiving more information! There was a lot of interaction in the group.

- * Concerns were expressed by a number of people about the 'Future Directions Task Force' and how this would impact the CM and its funding and concern that it would not be funded.
- * There were a number of comments stating that CM should not become a promotional magazine for the denomination and a 'voice of Mennonite Church Canada'. One person commented that he didn't want CM to simply print 'propaganda' on behalf of the church.
- * Some commented that they valued CM as a magazine that provided a variety of viewpoints from across the church both nationally and theologically.
- * There was a good exchange about how the magazine could be both an independent voice as well as a conduit or medium for sharing about the work of the national and area churches. One person raised a question about the usefulness of CM being a vehicle for informing constituents about the work of the larger church in BC if very few people in BC actually received or read it.
- * An interesting conversation followed when a person said that he regularly reads the magazine and quite a number of others in his congregation do as well and this provides opportunity for good conversations that begin with '*did you see the article in the last issue of the CM...*' and they will all know what is being talked about. He said that this is not the case when he talks to persons in a sister congregation because that congregation does not receive the magazine and so they have no common ground to speak from. For this person the question was how to make the magazine more attractive to a wider audience because many people he knows in other congregations are not reading it.
- * This was followed by an interesting comment by an older woman at the meeting (in her early 80's) who said that actually she and her friends read the CM from cover to cover and have lively conversations about the articles that appear in it.
- * I had two pastors talk to me just before the luncheon meeting: one, whose congregation has no subscribers to the CM, asked me exactly what CM is about and how it functions. It was quite a generic question and although I did not have time to follow up on what he was getting at I know that comes from a non-Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition and my reading of his question was that he didn't think CM was worth reading. A second pastor asked me how he might get an article in the magazine since he's been thinking about writing one for quite a while. I encouraged him to simply send an email to the editor sharing his idea.

These are a few of the comments received. Overall this group consisted of regular readers and supporters who valued the current vision and direction of CM and who also asked how CM might move to appealing to a larger audience.

In 2015, Henry Krause served as Vice Chair

Linda Matties (Abbotsford, BC)

Mennonite Church British Columbia Representative

Part I

The care group I lead is planning to have a series of discussions on articles in CM. We have not yet started. It would perhaps be more meaningful for me to report on how that works out after the fact -- which probably won't be until the middle of June. The first item we will discuss is the reports about the Future Directions Task Force.

There are two items I can report about now.

I have once again had a dinner meeting with Amy Dueckman to discuss story ideas. I also contact her at other times when I become aware of reportable events.

The CMPS lunch at the MCBC annual meetings was attended by about 20 people. The discussion was frank and revolved around *Canadian Mennonite's* role in relationship to Mennonite Church Canada. I assured everyone present that the board always discusses this and has done its best to articulate its role. I tried to explain that CM provides a discussion platform for Mennonites that extends beyond, but does not exclude, Mennonite Church Canada. I spoke about the value of independence from Mennonite Church Canada in order to provide that kind of platform. I also identified that CM's purpose is not primarily to provide devotional content. I addressed the need for CM to provide not only a window into the wider Mennonite World, but also to be a mirror in which the various members of the Mennonite Church family can see themselves. I also mentioned that CMPS board is acutely aware that if the report of the Future Directions Task Force is accepted and implemented it will mean changes for CM as well.

Part II

On March 30 the Bible Study Group I lead had a discussion of the Future Directions Task Force proposal. As background we used Dick Benner's three editorials and the "Myths" article in three separate issues of *Canadian Mennonite*. The questions I proposed to the group were:

1. What are the reasons for restructuring?
2. What is affected by the proposed changes?
3. What are the complaints about the proposed changes?
4. What are the positives and negatives about the proposed changes?
5. What else do you think needs to happen before the changes are implemented?

In general, the feeling was that Dick Benner's editorials fairly captured the issues around restructuring. One group member shared that in every church she had attended there was bound to be someone who was always pushing something new and someone who always opposed to anything that was new and different. The largest concern was for the loss of shared vision across all of the ministries of Mennonite Church Canada.

To conclude the discussion, I read the following. There was agreement that I had captured the issue well.

Conclusion

Mennonite Church Canada structure has largely been determined by geography. There is a great deal of desire to have good geographical representation. The new proposed structure has also been largely determined by geography with a strong leaning toward regionalization and localization. Both structure ignore the real problem in Mennonite Church Canada. It is theological, rather than geographical. It is about how we arrive at theological understandings.

On the one hand, there are many church members and even whole congregations who feel strongly that all that we need to know about theological understanding is already known. We can find the answers about how we ought to think in the past. We need to keep on thinking the same way we have always thought. Not to continue to think the same way, is to give in to sin and to ruin the church. The church needs to clearly announce sin and it needs to root out those who it thinks are sinning according to the standards of the past. Good leaders are those who staunchly defend the theology of the past.

On the other hand, there are church members and perhaps even whole congregations who feel strongly that our changing society and changing world, demands new theological development. We need to do the hard work of discerning together how to think in the future. Since diversity is a hallmark of our changing society and changing world, we need to focus on understanding diversity and learning to love those who are different. The focus is on practicing love rather than on identifying sin. We need to find a way to include in the church those who now feel excluded. Good leaders are those who are capable of helping us explore and develop a theology for the future.

Is there room for middle ground? Maybe and maybe not. Can one denomination encompass both poles?

Part III

The Bible Study group will be continuing to discuss other articles from *Canadian Mennonite*. Each group member is encouraged to suggest an article.

In 2015, Linda Matties served as Secretary

Lois Epp (Calgary, Alberta)

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Representative

This is my first report to the board. I understand that the reports are to concern the work we are doing and input from the constituency. Please communicate if you have questions or comments about this report.

Finances

Last year the board approved a deficit budget for 2015. The deficit for 2015 was higher than expected.

One contributing factor was received advertising revenue was below budget. Data show that the *Canadian Mennonite* recently performed above newspaper industry experience in attracting advertising. Some data show a 38% decline in newspaper industry ad revenues between the peak in 2007/2008 and 2014. *Canadian Mennonite* advertising revenues in 2015 exceeded revenues in 2013. Advertising revenue declined 11.5% between 2015 and the recent peak in 2014 and was below projected for 2015.

Input from the Constituency

The comments in this section refer to themes from conversations in the past year. Almost all of the comments occurred incidentally in the context of other discussions. Some of the conversations were not with Albertans.

A number of conversations included direct support for the concept of investigative journalism and a questioning attitude, and Dick's stated intention to provide those. However those commenting are dismayed that too often the paper appears to advocate. A lot of people value making up their own minds and prefer to read information with perspective.

I hear support for providing more information from more points of view on more subjects. Many comments relate to fatigue and serious irritation resulting from perceptions that some concerns get a lot of space while others are ignored, and the perception that the day to day work of congregations is too seldom reflected. In my opinion there is not one social issue that people want to hear about all the time, or even in most issues of the paper.

In addition, I hear support for devotional and faith building articles. I hear support for information on what various groups and bodies are doing. People mention reading about births, marriages, baptisms and deaths. The profiles of mission workers and their work are well received.

Some people are interested in challenging topics like comparing the results of votes at assemblies and meetings with subsequent organizational actions, about the themes in pastoral education, and where the support is for some opinions on items like the Future Directions Task Force.

A couple of people noted difficulties printing from the online section and a number go to the online section before the printed paper arrives. The comments tell us that people are adopting the online paper.

Support for the Canadian Mennonite Staff and Board

A number of comments supported the people at work on the paper. A number of commenters expected the Board to lead in constant renewal and in bringing the paper into an era of more information on more topics and continued faith building.

In 2015, Lois Epp served as Treasurer

Kuen Yee (Edmonton, Alberta)

Mennonite Church Alberta Representative

I have solicited comments from every church in our MCA conference. We have 17 churches and I sent out an e-mail to twenty-three people (all pastors except for three). Basically the e-mail told them that the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) Board will be meeting in Rosthern in April to discuss any concerns that people might have regarding the Every Home Plan, the way certain issues are covered, or whatever else is brought to our attention. Then I asked them what kind of concerns they or their congregants might have.

I receive 9 replies, all of which were from pastors only. None of the churches consisting of ethnic minorities read *Canadian Mennonite*. This is primarily due to an inability to deal fluently with documents written in English. Therefore, I am only able to compile a list of suggestions and comments from MCA churches, which do not include any of the ethnic minorities.

1. Most do not have any major concerns. They were very thankful to be asked for their opinion.
2. They do not always agree with the contents but find that it stretches and inspires them.
3. Most feel that on the whole, *Canadian Mennonite* is doing a good job with a good mix of opinions and information.
4. They feel that *Canadian Mennonite* is the most effective forum for our denomination to dialogue.
5. It's important that the denomination has a place of connection and information
6. One suggested that we increase the individual subscription price significantly to decrease the burden on churches and their conferences.
7. Work on reaching out to New Canadians - get more articles by them and about them, and especially get their input on difficult issues like the BFC, FDTF and so on.
8. We need a little bigger diet of inspirational articles - good stories, spiritual inspiration, etc.

9. Keep balancing the articles, reporting on and supporting MC Canada. Recent letters and editorials have been spreading false information, doom and gloom, being political within the MC Canada context, and simply are not helpful. Regardless of how *Canadian Mennonite* wants to say that it is independent, it really is not, since most of the subscriptions are subsidized by the church, individuals and the government.

10. Find out why people are not reading *Canadian Mennonite*.

11. *Canadian Mennonite* has done a fairly good job of creating interest for younger and middle age people. But as with all print media (as with electronic), people tend to read less. Just look at how newspapers and secular magazines are struggling.

12. *Canadian Mennonite* needs to keep working at the mix of being counter cultural, while being culturally adaptable. And I think the magazine is doing ok with this.

13. We are in a bit of a conundrum when it comes to the role of the Paper. Should it be typical journalistic reporting that covers "warts and all" or should it be inspirational? If it is inspirational only, then we have a more "sanitized" view of the Church and do not have the opportunity to air different perspectives on issues. If we go with a more journalistic reporting model we run the risk of "upsetting" the community more. My experience at Bergthol highlighted how much some of the airing of our issues can throw new Christians off balance. I had also heard some feedback that there was editorial bias pushing us toward outcomes, some of which we were not ready to endorse.

14. Some people in our congregation think the magazine has become too politicalized in recent years. I have heard conversations about a perceived "liberal agenda" in how the magazine covers controversial issues, whether of sexuality or indigenous relations or climate change or controversies in the Middle East or whatever. Some people have told me that they rarely read *Canadian Mennonite* any more. Conversely, others in our congregation find that the magazine stimulates good conversation, regardless of whether they agree with this or that article. And some would be in rough agreement with the general direction *Canadian Mennonite* has gone in recent years. So, we would have a wide range of views in our church. I realize that this isn't very helpful, but our church is characterized by a wide range of perspectives. Some would say, "keep it as it is" while others would favour a more "devotional" and less journalistic approach (i.e., more articles to build up personal faith and more biblical themes).

15. I haven't heard a lot of negative comments from people in my church. The responses I have heard regarding *Canadian Mennonite* have been mostly positive. I have heard affirmation for the issues which *Canadian Mennonite* raises, the way it strives for a journalistic approach, and its accessibility. I have heard some frustration expressed about "letters to the editor" that use highly divisive language/tones in their content.

For myself, I am concerned about the negative effect of critiques that have been directed towards *Canadian Mennonite* and Dick Benner by some of MCA and MC Canada's leadership, especially about commentary surrounding the Future Directions Task Force. (eg. At the last MCA Annual Assembly, there was a comment from the front that Dick Benner's editorials "have not been helpful" when it comes to the FDTF.) I feel that *Canadian Mennonite* has been attempting to create a healthy dialogue by trying to focus people's attention on key questions. It has been filling a void in dialogue that the MC Canada leadership does not seem to have picked up in this regard.

In the face of critique, I think the *CMPS* Board needs to first support the magazine and its staff. I believe these are good people, striving to fulfill the mandate given to them. If that mandate needs to be adjusted, it should not be done in a reactionary way as a means to address negative comments. It should be thought through thoroughly and openly.

This report has turned out to be longer than what was requested. However, I felt that it would be helpful for you to see the comments. Some of them I have tried to summarize to keep them brief but most of them are just straight quotes from the e-mail replies that I have received. I also would like to clarify that none of the

above are my own personal comments, despite the frequent usage of the personal pronouns. They are direct quotes from e-mail responses.

Carl DeGurse (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Representative

When I hear Mennonites in Winnipeg discussing church topics, at coffee hour after services for example, Canadian Mennonite magazine is seldom mentioned. Rather, the discussion is more often about topics that are aired and discussed through our pages and website. CM itself is not a pressing issue with most church people I know, and perhaps that's how it should be. Rather, we're a messenger and forum. If we're fulfilling our role with accuracy and fairness, the focus is not on our publications, but on the news and views we present.

When I press people for their opinion of the magazine, it's usually positive, as the recent survey indicates. The main complaint in Winnipeg seems to be the two-week duration it takes Canada Post to deliver an issue. Typically, on the same day in which the latest issue goes up on the website, the print version of the previous issue lands in Winnipeg mailboxes, two weeks stale.

Another observation that could be important during upcoming negotiations about the Every Home Plan is that some (many?) regular readers don't seem to understand, or care about, the payment process that is the Every Home Plan. We of the CM board know this plan is crucial to keeping our circulation numbers high and garnering a healthy federal grant, but the details of the unusual payment scheme are not top-of-mind with readers, who typically think "it's free" or "Mennonite Church Canada pays for it". If we want readers on-side during as the Every Home Plan is negotiated, we might want to explain the plan clearly and repeatedly in the magazine.

There is one more insight I can offer: I have regular, in-depth contact with Mennonite millennials through Canadian Mennonite University, where I teach Journalism, and at my home, where our three sons aged 19 to 25 often fill our house with their Menno friends. I feel comfortable making the following generalization that might be news to our church members who don't have extensive contact with this generation: they support same-sex marriage and they're fine with ordaining LGBTQ pastors. For them, it's a no-brainer. Many of them see our church hierarchy as persecuting the marginalized in our pews, the opposite of what Jesus taught. Yes, they use the word "persecution" and they also use "homophobic". I've heard a few cite this issue as a deal-breaker that has prompted them to stop supporting Mennonite churches. I offer these observations to help inform the current concern about the declining number of young people in Mennonite congregations.

In 2015, Carl DeGurse served on the Board Executive as Member-at-Large

Ken Reddig (Pinawa, Manitoba)

Mennonite Church Manitoba Representative

While not Manitoba Conference business directly, the release of several Canadian Conference employees in fall seemed to affect conference-related business anyway. It was another blow to the conference and church members in general noting a fractured conference and issues that seem unresolvable. The loss of several

large congregations (withdrew) brought budget concerns to the fore. The question remains as to how the conference will stay intact. If the Conferences continue to lose churches and membership, what programs will still need to be cut. The philosophy that has undergirded the conferences that—together we can do more than on our own—is being challenged as untenable.

Josiah Neufeld and I were at the Mennonite Church Manitoba conference on Saturday March 5, 2016, representing Canadian Mennonite.

The business sessions dealt with tying up the loose ends of the Camps With Meaning issue that has taken up a lot of convention time over the past few years. Moose Lake and Camp Koininia are on land leased from the Manitoba government. The assets on the land are the only equity MCM has. Both camps assets have been sold to outside interests that will manage the properties and permit MCM to run camps for approximately 5 weeks each summer. As I was in and out of the sessions I was unable to take notes on all the details.

Over the lunch hour we met with three delegates. Josiah showed the PowerPoint and a good discussion followed. What these delegates seemed to focus on were articles they wished to see in the CM. Josiah took good notes on the ideas and will pass them on to the person replacing him. This conversation went 20 minutes overtime and indicated a strong interest from the people in attendance. Here is what he noted:

- How does/could churches help people grieve miscarriages.
- How does the church address singleness or not having children?

Bryan Moyer Suderman (Stouffville, Ontario)

Mennonite Church Canada Representative

This report completes a trilogy of reflections from my three years as member of the CMPS board. I will resist the temptation to retroactively re-title each of my reports in order to make them fit into a neat narrative sequence, although there is something of the progression of various trilogies (which tend to be adventures involving teamwork in an urgent world-changing mission, with political intrigue, and a certain loss of innocence about the processes involved) that would seem to commend itself. Not to mention suggestive titles including words like “Fellowship,” “Unexpected Journey,” and “Divergent.” In any case, this report will take the form of reflection on my trilogy of years as a member of the CMPS board. I am grateful for the experience, and for the fellowship and dedication of each of you, as board members and staff, in engaging this vital mission.

1. When I was first named to the CMPS board, there was serious question about whether the existing covenant between MC Canada and CM would be renewed. The covenant was renewed, with the explicit acknowledgment that “the next few years will be an especially crucial “hinge” time in the life and future of Mennonite Church Canada, particularly as the “Being a Faithful Church” (BFC) and “Future Directions Task Force” (FD) processes continue to unfold... In affirming the renewal of the covenant for a period of 3 years, **we are calling for a renewed and concerted effort from CM and MC Canada to work together to support the healthy and effective unfolding of these key processes (BFC and FD)**, including the possibility of finding new ways to work together in support of these processes.” (emphasis added)

2. My report for last year's CMPS meetings affirmed the way that CM has followed through with that mandate, particularly with regard to the BFC process. My report gave significant space to my surprise that I did not see the same level of information, analysis, dialogue and discernment with regard to the Future Directions process. I offered some suggestions regarding how I felt CM could and should play such a role in that process as well.

3. For this report, I again express a measure of surprise, but this time directed more at the other side of the CM-MC Canada relationship. I have found the discrepancies between the BFC process and the FD process to be stark and troubling. The BFC process has consistently sought, enabled, and reflected vigorous engagement at the local congregational level, throughout the process and prior to the formulation of its "final" recommendations. The FD process has not.

I am grateful for the way that CM has partnered in the process of dialogue and discernment in the past few years regarding the BFC process. I am baffled as to why the process has been so different with regards to discernment about Future Directions. I am glad to see that CM has recently been active in publishing a series of pieces with more specific information and thoughtful and critical engagement regarding the FDTF recommendations. But I am confused as to why this has been happening only *after* the FDTF "final report" was formulated and submitted for formal votes at area church and national church gatherings.

In conclusion I wish to mention three things that I have found particularly striking about the recent unfolding of the FD process and CM's role. *First*, it seems to me that the letter of concern from the MC Canada Witness Workers, and CM's publication of it, was a significant breakthrough in getting public conversation going about the details and implications of the FDTF recommendations. *Second*, I have been intrigued by the role that the "Emerging Voices Initiative" (EVI) has played in providing analysis, identifying affirmations and questions/critiques, promoting and enabling meaningful dialogue and discernment, and providing an online platform for in-depth and ongoing discussion. *Third*, in my view, the editorials and CM's effective and reflective reporting on the area church gatherings are playing a significant role in the ongoing processes of discernment.

Such are my musings at this point. However we as MC Canada may be reconfigured and reconstituted in years to come, I believe there remains a vital role for CM in helping the church to be the church.

Doreen Martens (Toronto, Ontario)

Mennonite Church Canada Representative

Some blue-sky thoughts on digital

In our discussions regarding a new job description for a publisher/editor, we have frequently returned to the topic of being digital-forward, looking ahead to a time when our most enthusiastic (but older) print readers – the primary participants in our recent survey – must be replaced by younger readers who inhabit a very different world of information, one that is mainly online, in random moments on the bus or on a coffee break, and focused less on sitting in an easy chair reading a lot of text printed on dead trees.

This future requires leadership that is nimble and aware of changing patterns in information gathering and dissemination, and prepared to be continually innovative philosophically and technologically to meet the changing needs and demands of readers, especially the group that will be coming into church leadership in the next decade.

I've said before that CM needs to continually be thinking of new ways to tell stories beyond the old paradigms. I was challenged recently to suggest what that looks like. While I'm certainly no expert — as a newspaper editor on her way out the door I'm a quintessential part of the old paradigm — I do take some clues from the way news operations today are trying to reinvent themselves in an increasingly chaotic marketplace of ideas and information.

[Note: while you could argue that newspapers on paper are dying and their digital products aren't making enough money to stay afloat, that has very little to do with how many people are getting their information from them. Numbers suggest that daily newspapers with decent digital products are being read by more people than ever before — it's just that the advertisers, the old bread-and-butter, have abandoned them for cheaper, more targeted forums to get out their message, so the news operations are not profitable the way they once were. As a nonprofit operation primarily dependent on sponsors rather than advertisers, I believe we can expect to survive as a source of news for Mennonites in Canada as long as we can prove to our sponsors in the church that they are getting their money's worth of eyeball time.]

Anyway, here are some fresh ways of thinking about, planning for and telling stories that could be considered part of CM's news coverage in the future. Just blue-skying!

1. Video: Cover an event in 90 seconds, with a little bit of stand-up from the reporter, a couple of short quotes, a little B-roll of interesting stuff going on. Post it prominently on the website, link to it by Facebook and Twitter. Instagram an interesting shot. Etc. Repeat.
2. Photo essay: Tell a story in pictures with enriched captions. (Can work for print; but terrific online, where it can be shared via social media.)
3. Graphics. Graphics are an essential part of driving engagement on social media. What would it be like to describe a church process using a flow chart? Tell a story in serial comic style? Include little locator maps to show where churches are when we write stories about them? Or bigger maps to talk about demographic or structural changes in the church?
4. Break stories into digestible chunks. Before the reporter starts writing, think of ways to divide the material into bits that can be read in smaller gulps; perhaps take photos to coincide with each part of it. Or think of various ways to tell parts of the story, many of which will work really well in digital formats: A by-the-numbers chart; a bullet list; "top 10"; this vs. that comparison chart; a photo gallery; short stand-alone quotes from various people representing different perspectives; a timeline; brief video clips embedded into the story as it's presented online, etc.
5. Live blog at major events; advertise this copiously through social media and bring tweets from participants into the blog for real interaction.
6. Have fun with bloggers and columnists. Why not have them present their column to a camera as a short video? Seeing them in their native habitat, with all the nuances of body language, would make their thoughts come alive and encourage dialogue. I'd love to see our Young Voices writers try this; it's a natural for the selfie generation.

These are just a few ideas, and obviously there are budgetary and other limitations, but I believe it's worth thinking about working at some of these things — many of which technology has made cheaper and easier to do than ever before.

Tim Reimer (Toronto, Ontario)

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Representative

In this report I describe a challenging situation that arose with respect to the relationship between MCEC and *Canadian Mennonite*, and outline the way three CMPS Board members acted to manage the conflict and arrange for a way forward. The situation concerns MCEC's decision to disclose an allegation of sexual misconduct by the late Vernon Lies. It is noteworthy that as recently as two years ago, we as CMPS Board reviewed policies with respect to handling stories of sexual misconduct. Shaping overall policies is one challenge, but learning from the particulars of each case is quite another. For both, we seek wisdom and grace.

In fall of 2015, MCEC requested that CM publish a statement about sexual misconduct by Vernon Lies, a former pastor who died about twenty-one years ago. After asking many questions of MCEC, CM published the statement. In a subsequent editorial our editor raised serious concerns about the fact that this statement by MCEC contained no information about how the allegations were tested for factuality, nor did it describe the steps taken in responding to the allegations or vetting them, before making them public. In the view of the editor, this sparseness of information actually undermined confidence in MCEC itself.

However, in November 2015, MCEC leadership wrote a letter to Tobi Thiessen, CMPS Board Chair and copied to myself as MCEC rep on CMPS. The letter stated that MCEC felt that our editor/publisher had overstated and inappropriately expressed his misgivings about MCEC's handling of the situation. At MCEC's request, Tobi Thiessen and Doreen Martens and I then made a trip to Kitchener to meet with David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister and Paul Wideman, Chair of MCEC Executive Council. We listened to their concerns about how CM had published editorials and letters regarding this matter. We also reiterated the concern that MCEC had not yet explained the basic process it had used in responding to the original allegation. At that meeting, the MCEC leaders agreed to a further interview by a CM correspondent, and that they would provide information that showed their due diligence.

Tobi and Doreen and I likewise made another trip to Kitchener to meet with Dick Benner, to hear his perspective and listen to his concerns. He outlined some of the complexities of this story as it unfolded, and emphasized that out of sheer concern for journalistic integrity he sought answers to fundamental questions about on what basis MCEC decided to make this disclosure about a man now deceased.

A CM journalist did interview MCEC leaders, but they chose not to provide much further information. When I asked David Martin to explain this, he informed in an email that he had changed his mind after consulting with the MCEC Executive Council. In my email response I named my concern that CM readership might still be left wondering about MCEC process, but I did thank him for clarifying how he had come to this decision.

Editor/Publisher Report For 2015

Significant highlights

An independent reader survey taken in the fall--—the first in 14 years--—gave us some interesting results as to who are our readers, what they read in Canadian Mennonite, how they feel about our “independent standing” in the denomination, what would they like to see that they are not seeing regarding content. Not surprisingly, our most loyal and appreciative readership is in the 66-plus age demographic. Overall, they are happy with the publication and want to see it remain “independent.” On the whole, readers thought CM should reflect the views of Mennonite Church Canada leadership, but they want a balanced view where leaders are just one of the voices, observes our survey analyst. There was a strong consensus that we keep it a print product rather than moving rapidly to a digital magazine. While the younger demographic (26-45) represents the online readers, both age groups see us as a place to challenge and discuss ideas. “CM’s purpose should NOT be to make us feel good,” said one respondent, “but rather to inform and provoke more questions and searching.” The youngest age group was very interested in more Christian and theological teaching in response to issues. While they enjoy the discussion and letters, they wanted some ‘theology’ to go along with it. Online responders were the only ones to suggest talking about the aging church and more Anabaptist perspectives. They were the only group wanting a stronger Anabaptist presence—others suggested that there should be more theological views (some from leaders but not exclusively). The under 45 group was the most interested in theology. Overall people are pleased.”

Editorial highlights

Over the year, of the 1,043 articles carried in our average 37 pages per issue, 246 originated mostly with our eastern Canada correspondent Dave Rogalsky, 183 in Manitoba mostly by Evelyn Rempel Petkau (who retired in March) and Josiah Neufeld, 90 in Saskatchewan by Donna Schulz, 83 in B.C. by Amy Dueckman, 67 in Alberta by Donita Wiebe-Neufeld and 10 from Quebec from various contributors. Some 968 of those 1,043 articles and opinion had Canadian content, including the blogs. In 2015 Canadian Mennonite printed 33 MC Canada releases, most of which also appeared online. An additional 13 stories appeared on the website only. The most frequent topics were, in highest to lowest order: Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite World Conference, Conrad Grebel University College, books, the LGBTQ issue, same-sex marriage and Canadian Mennonite University. What letters and online comments mostly discussed, in top-down order, were: same-sex marriage, LGBTQ, Ron Sider’s feature, homosexuality, biblical interpretation, inclusion/exclusion, the Bible, and human sexuality.

The Digital Canadian Mennonite (reported by Ginny Hostetler, web editor)

In March 2015 we launched the new CM website. The redesign updated the look and made the site more user-friendly and more easily accessible on mobile devices. (Up to that point the Young Voices content was on a separate site, but it became integrated into the main website.) The new site also allowed for better display of online ads. Comparing 2014 and 2015 figures,

the percentage of readers accessing online content on desktop computers decreased (from 71% to 57%), and the percentage of readers on mobile devices and tablets increased (from 29% to 43%).

Throughout the year, staff worked hard to increase traffic to the website. We saw an increase in page views from 187,741 in 2014 to 241,293 views in 2015 (a 28.5% increase). There was a 53 percent increase in the number of returning visitors to the website and an increase of 64 percent in the number of new visitors. Top-viewed online stories dealt with Mennonite identity, sexuality, the appointment of Minister of Health Jane Philpott, and Mennonite World Conference. We carried 29 online stories which originated from the communications office of Mennonite Church Canada.

Our continued active presence on social media drove approximately 35 percent of the online sessions. By the end of 2015, CM has 791 Facebook followers (up 54% from 2014) and 889 Twitter followers (up 74% from 2014). These followers clicked on, liked, and commented on CM content, and they shared it in their own circles.

We worked to promote the option of digital subscriptions to our print subscribers. In March we started carrying print house ads regularly to promote digital subscriptions and to invite engagement with CM's website and social media. In July we expanded the regular "Online Now" content to a one-third page in every print issue, adding photos and blurbs about web-first stories. By the end of 2015, digital subscriptions stood at 702. Plans began for a regular e-newsletter promoting CM content. (This email, called "CM Now," was first sent out in early 2016 and is currently being promoted.)

Circulation

Our circulation, under the Every Home Plan, has decreased over the year by 1,000 subscribers, due mostly to several churches leaving MC Canada and by death of long-time subscribers. It now stands at a little under 12,000. See two documents attached: (1) Reasons for cancelling and (2) a graph tracking circulation since 1993 to the present.

Advertising (reported by Michael Hostetler, ad and marketing rep)

Total 2015 revenues generated through advertising and sponsored spreads came to \$128,212. The 2015 projection of \$150,000 was based on a \$30,000 commitment which was withdrawn at the last minute. Print advertising trends in the industry continue to be on the down swing and therefore it remains challenging to maintain existing accounts and to build new ones. There is a close tie between perceived engagement and advertising potential. Implementing communication and marketing strategies remain a crucial step if there is to be increased advertising.

Display advertising was the hardest hit. There were increases in most of the other categories. Most noticeable is the increase in online advertising (see graph). This has come about in part by selling advertisers on a permanent presence through the CM website. (see attached graph on history of advertising over recent years)

Finances

Regrettably, this is another budget deficit year due to some key factors, like lower support from MC Canada, lower-than-projected advertising sales on the income side and higher-than-projected head office salaries, a full year of higher head office benefits (namely health

insurance) and paying for an unfunded independent survey. All this despite our best efforts to cut in other areas, like page count in publishing, less staff travel (i.e., I didn't go to World Conference). To make up for these losses, this year and the two previous, I, along with Michael, are rolling out a 3-year Strategic Plan having a goal of \$50,000 per year in major giving from large donors after giving them a vision for the future that keeps CM solidly in place as the denomination restructures for the future. CM's role, during this transition, will be needed more than ever to keep the nationwide conversation focused on our Anabaptist identity, our global witness and faith formation. The regional structure will require a common communication vehicle like CM like never before. In CM's Strategic Plan, we are surrounding ourselves with an advisory group, but our fundraising efforts will start immediately upon approval by the board of this plan (see attached). I ask you to approve this plan so we can address this urgent need for adequate funding of our enterprise. At this juncture I would rather take this pro-active, positive approach than start looking at cutting further, beginning with staff cuts, to bring the budget in line. That begins a downward slide, admitting to a slow death rather than an engaging and strong vision that hopefully gets the attention of constituent advocates rather than to pour negative energy into weakening the content of our product which, it is suggested, would start with the three initiatives of my tenure—Young Voices, our senior writer, Will Braun (our most read columnist according to Google Analytics) and broadening the job description of Michael to include marketing/fundraising. I am certain this will engender much discussion when we are looking at the budget on our agenda.

Staff and Home Office

There has been no turnover in staff this year, with the exception of Natasha Krahn filling in for Lisa Jacky as circulation/finance manager, while the latter is on a year's maternity leave. Ross Muir continues as managing editor, assisted by Barb Draper; Ginny Hostetler is web editor, Michael Hostetler as advertising and marketing director, and Dan Johnson, graphic designer. Turnover, during my tenure, has been minimal (except for an ad rep which is difficult because of the low compensation for hard efforts in an industry-wide downturn in print advertising). I have worked hard, during my tenure, to work at a team approach rather than a top-down management style. I have always believed, since managing a 31-member staff in my weekly newspaper chain, that you get the best production from employees when you work at releasing their best potential rather than using negative energy trying to keep everyone in line. I use this approach, also, with the regional correspondents and senior writer, engaging them regularly with story ideas and opinions. As a result we have, I think, very productive and happy employees working at common cause rather than subliminal negative energy, which can chip away subtly at production and job satisfaction. The positive approach leads always in the direction of a better product—in CM's case an interesting and sometimes cutting-edge magazine. Thus, very little turnover in my time with CM.

Farewell, Anyoung, Auf Wiedersehen

This is my last report to CMPS. It will have been a good seven years. I have enjoyed the work and the challenges it has brought. The board, though changing in composition during my editorship, has been supportive and I appreciate that. You have allowed me to use my own brand of edgy journalism as editor and my style of management with the staff, as noted above,

that hopefully gave new energy to this “quasi-independent” publication, as former chair Larry Cornies, dubs it. It’s difficult to be both critic and supporter of the establishment, but I have tried to forge that path. I would have wished for more board engagement between annual meetings, but maybe I can’t have it both ways. While I need to retire and take care of Marlene as she continues to suffer from dementia, I will miss the workplace as a stimulating environment and a supportive staff. You have stood by me in times of emotional stress with the threat of a lawsuit and a near-scrape with the CRA when I was chastised by a previous government for being too political and also last year when I learned of Marlene’s dementia. I wish I could continue but it is time for me to go. I am perceived by some of you as a relic in a new age of digital communication. The publication needs young, new blood and fresh new eyes toward a digital magazine. I wish you wisdom as you find a financial model to support that. Right now, the print publishing industry is struggling mightily to find that model when both readers and advertisers expect content to be delivered free. At this juncture no one has come up with the magic that solves this problem. And, according to our recent survey, we have a very loyal “older” readership who is quite happy, in fact, prefers print. They are not the future of our readership, but their enthusiasm should not to be undervalued as you plan an uncertain future. You will need them to cross the bridge. Thank you for standing with me during this run. I wish you God’s richest blessing and much wisdom as you chart the future in a Canadian Mennonite constituency that is currently undergoing a lot of anxiety as they attempt changes in the shifting sands of congregational formation and denominational stability. CM can be a guiding force if they let it and continue to find ways to sponsor it as an independent publication. I pray that they will.

*--Dick Benner, editor/publisher
April 14, 2016*

**Canadian Mennonite Publishing
Service
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2015**

**Canadian Mennonite Publishing
Service
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2015**

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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2015 and the statements of revenue and expenses and changes in fund balances and cash flows for the year then ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified audit opinion.



Basis for Qualified Opinion

In common with many charitable organizations, the organization derives revenue from donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the organization. We were unable to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to revenue, deficit for the year, current assets and fund balances.

Qualified Opinion

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion paragraph, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service as at December 31, 2015 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Waterloo, Ontario
March 23, 2016

**Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service
Statement of Financial Position**

December 31					2015	2014
	General Fund	Stabilization Fund	Professional Development Fund	Capital Fund	Total	Total
Assets						
Current						
Cash (Note 2)	\$ 128,345	\$ 178,631	\$ 31,510	\$ 15,951	\$ 354,437	\$ 417,919
Short-term investments (Note 3)	-	7,569	-	-	7,569	8,294
Accounts receivable	7,479	-	-	-	7,479	7,513
Prepaid expenses	1,519	-	-	-	1,519	1,181
	<u>137,343</u>	<u>186,200</u>	<u>31,510</u>	<u>15,951</u>	<u>371,004</u>	<u>434,907</u>
Property, plant and equipment (Note 4)	96,609	-	-	-	96,609	107,705
	<u>\$ 233,952</u>	<u>\$ 186,200</u>	<u>\$ 31,510</u>	<u>\$ 15,951</u>	<u>\$ 467,613</u>	<u>\$ 542,612</u>
Liabilities and Fund Balances						
Current						
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 5)	\$ 16,219	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,219	\$ 16,681
Deferred contributions (Note 6)	54,019	-	-	-	54,019	50,317
Deferred revenue	28,814	-	-	-	28,814	30,595
Interfund payables (receivables) (Note 7)	(3,490)	3,051	313	126	-	-
	<u>95,562</u>	<u>3,051</u>	<u>313</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>99,052</u>	<u>97,593</u>
Fund balances						
Internally restricted	96,609	183,149	31,197	15,825	326,780	359,644
Unrestricted	41,781	-	-	-	41,781	85,375
	<u>138,390</u>	<u>183,149</u>	<u>31,197</u>	<u>15,825</u>	<u>368,561</u>	<u>445,019</u>
	<u>\$ 233,952</u>	<u>\$ 186,200</u>	<u>\$ 31,510</u>	<u>\$ 15,951</u>	<u>\$ 467,613</u>	<u>\$ 542,612</u>

On behalf of the Board:

_____, Director

_____, Director

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Statement of Revenue and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances

For the year ended December 31

2015

2014

	Budget (unaudited)	General Fund	Stabilization Fund	Professional Development Fund	Capital Fund	Total	Total
Revenue							
Individual & group subscriptions	\$ 275,045	\$ 274,343	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 274,343	\$ 272,479
Advertising and supplements	155,000	128,548	-	-	-	128,548	145,192
Grants (Note 8)	203,635	212,375	-	-	-	212,375	203,636
Donations - Individual	80,000	78,374	-	-	-	78,374	81,017
Donations - Publishing partners	1,500	1,580	-	-	-	1,580	2,755
Interest	5,000	928	1,175	320	127	2,550	4,980
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	-	-	(725)	-	-	(725)	649
Other	-	(50)	-	-	-	(50)	(10)
	720,180	696,098	450	320	127	696,995	710,698
Expenses (Schedule 1)	768,169	773,453	-	-	-	773,453	767,278
Surplus (deficit) for the year	(47,989)	(77,355)	450	320	127	(76,458)	(56,580)
Fund balances, beginning of year	193,080	193,080	183,875	52,239	15,825	445,019	501,599
Transfer (from) to Professional Development Fund (Note 9)	-	21,362	-	(21,362)	-	-	-
Transfer (from) to Stabilization Fund (Note 9)	-	1,176	(1,176)	-	-	-	-
Transfer (from) to Capital Fund (Note 9)	-	127	-	-	(127)	-	-
Fund balances, end of year	\$ 145,091	\$ 138,390	\$ 183,149	\$ 31,197	\$ 15,825	\$ 368,561	\$ 445,019

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended December 31	2015	2014
Cash flows from operating activities		
Deficit for the year	\$ (76,458)	\$ (56,580)
Items not involving cash		
Amortization of property, plant and equipment	11,409	11,155
Unrealized loss (gain) on short term investment	725	(649)
Gain on disposal of property, plant & equipment	60	-
	<u>(64,264)</u>	<u>(46,074)</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital balances		
Accounts receivable	34	10,936
Prepaid expenses	(338)	501
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(462)	(985)
Deferred contributions	3,702	(2,366)
Deferred revenue	<u>(1,781)</u>	<u>(1,003)</u>
	<u>(63,109)</u>	<u>(38,991)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	<u>(373)</u>	<u>(4,646)</u>
Decrease in cash during the year	(63,482)	(43,637)
Cash, beginning of year	<u>417,919</u>	<u>461,556</u>
Cash, end of year	<u>\$ 354,437</u>	<u>\$ 417,919</u>

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2015

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Nature of Business Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service ("the organization") is incorporated under the laws of Canada as a non-profit organization and is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act. It publishes the bi-weekly periodical "Canadian Mennonite" for the Mennonite community in Canada.

Basis of Accounting The financial statements have been prepared using Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

Fund Accounting The organization follows the restricted fund method of accounting for fund contributions.

The General Fund accounts for the organization's publishing and administrative activities.

The Stabilization Fund was established to protect the organization from operating fluctuations that may occur from time to time. The goal is to accumulate, from surpluses, an amount equal to 25% of annual expenses in the fund for this purpose. Revenue earned by the assets of this fund are to be transferred to the General Fund.

The Professional Development Fund was established to provide a fixed amount out of the annual expenditure budget for the salaries of the individuals replacing a staff member on professional development leave. Revenue earned by the assets of this fund are to be transferred to the General Fund.

The Capital Fund was established to fund future equipment purchases. Revenue earned by the assets of this fund are to be transferred to the General Fund.

Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant & equipment are stated at cost. Amortization based on the estimated useful life of the asset is calculated as follows:

Building	- 25	year straight-line basis
Computer equipment	- 3	year straight-line basis
Computer software	- 3	year straight-line basis
Office equipment	- 5	year straight-line basis

One half of the normal amortization is provided in the year of acquisition and no amortization is provided in the year of disposal.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2015

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Impairment of Long Lived Assets

In the event that facts and circumstances indicate that the organization's long-lived assets may be impaired, an evaluation of recoverability would be performed. Such an evaluation entails comparing the estimated future undiscounted cash flows associated with the asset to the asset's carrying amount to determine if a write down to market value or discounted cash flow value is required. The company considers that no circumstances exist that would require such an evaluation.

Income Taxes

The organization is a registered charity and therefore is not subject to income taxes.

Revenue Recognition

Deferred subscription revenue results from advance payments for subscriptions received from subscribers. Subscription revenue is recognized on a straight-line basis over the term of the subscription.

Periodical advertising revenue is recorded upon release of the periodical to subscribers. Amounts are recorded as revenue of the General Fund. Deferred advertising revenue results from advertising funds received in advance of the periodical releases.

Grant revenue is received annually from the Canadian Periodical Fund, under the Aid to Publishers component. Funds received are to be spent on eligible expenditures. Unexpended amounts received in the year are deferred until the year in which the related expenses are incurred.

All restricted donations are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund.

Unrestricted donations are recognized as revenue of the General Fund in the year received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Investment income earned on the assets of the Stabilization, Professional Development and Capital Funds is recognized as revenue of those funds. Other investment income is recognized as revenue of the General Fund when earned.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2015

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Contributed Services and Materials

Contributed materials which are used in the normal course of the organization's operations and would otherwise have been purchased are recorded at their fair value at the date of contribution if fair value can be reasonably estimated. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with ASNPO requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from management's best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future. Significant estimates are involved with determining the useful lives of property, plant and equipment.

Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are recorded at fair value when acquired or issued. In subsequent periods, equities traded in an active market are reported at fair value, with any unrealized gains and losses reported in operations. All other financial instruments are reported at cost or amortized cost less impairment, if applicable.

2. Cash

The organization's bank accounts are held at one credit union. The bank accounts earn interest of less than 1% per annum.

3. Short-Term Investments

Short-term investments consist of an index fund equity instrument presented at fair value.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2015

4. Property, Plant and Equipment

	2015		2014	
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Land	\$ 18,530	\$ -	\$ 18,530	\$ -
Building	166,771	94,506	166,771	87,835
Computer equipment	23,749	21,836	23,376	20,369
Computer software	5,489	4,515	5,489	3,538
Office equipment	22,084	19,157	22,684	17,403
	\$ 236,623	\$ 140,014	\$ 236,850	\$ 129,145
Net book value		\$ 96,609		\$ 107,705

5. Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities

Government remittances payable at the year end totaled \$7,127 (2014 - \$6,393).

6. Deferred Contributions

	2015	2014
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 50,317	\$ 52,683
Contributions received	216,076	201,269
Amortized into revenue	(212,374)	(203,635)
Balance, end of year	\$ 54,019	\$ 50,317

7. Interfund Payables (Receivables)

The interfund balances are interest free and have no fixed terms of repayment.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2015

8. Government Assistance and Economic Dependence

The organization receives funding from government ministries. During the year, the organization received \$216,076 as a grant under the Canadian Periodical Fund. Of this amount, \$212,374 was recognized as revenue in the year. The organization is economically dependent on this funding to continue its operations.

9. Interfund Transfers

During the year, the Board of Directors authorized a transfer of \$21,043 from the Professional Development Fund to the General Fund.

Investment income earned in the Stabilization Fund of \$1,176, Professional Development Fund of \$319 and Capital Fund of \$127 were transferred to the General Fund.

10. Endowment Funds

Contributions made for endowment purposes are forwarded to the Mennonite Foundation of Canada ("Foundation") which acts as trustee on behalf of the Organization for these funds. Under the terms of an agreement dated January 21, 1991, all donations to the Endowment Fund belong to the Foundation. Only interest earned is forwarded to the organization for use in the operations of the periodical. The balance on deposit in the fund at December 31, 2015 was \$16,252 (2014 - \$16,107) and interest earned during the year amounted to \$362 (2014 - \$403).

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2015

11. Financial Instrument Risks

Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the organization encounters difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of operational liquidity requirements, the organization will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction on the due date; will be forced to sell financial assets at a value which is less than what they are worth; or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset. Liquidity risk arises from accounts payable.

Equity Risk

The organization is exposed to fluctuations in equity markets on its short-term investments.

Credit Risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The organization is exposed to credit risk resulting from the possibility that a customer or counterparty to a financial instrument defaults on their financial obligations; if there is a concentration of transactions carried out with the same counterparty; or of financial obligations which have similar economic characteristics such that they could be similarly affected by changes in economic conditions. The organization's financial instruments that are exposed to concentrations of credit risk relate primarily to its accounts receivable from companies that operate in the same industry. The organization provides credit to its clients in the normal course of its operations.

The above risks are unchanged from the prior year.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Schedule 1 - Expenses

For the year ended December 31

2015

2014

	Budget (unaudited)	General Fund	Stabilization Fund	Professional Development Fund	Capital Fund	Total	Total
Postage	\$ 175,000	\$ 170,122	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 170,122	\$ 170,552
Head office - salaries	237,025	256,935	-	-	-	256,935	240,968
Printing and production	80,400	86,028	-	-	-	86,028	97,626
Regional correspondents	107,089	103,652	-	-	-	103,652	107,660
Head office - benefits	45,000	45,025	-	-	-	45,025	34,342
Advertising representative	21,368	17,188	-	-	-	17,188	22,289
Amortization	16,037	11,409	-	-	-	11,409	11,155
News service	7,500	8,989	-	-	-	8,989	14,744
Facility costs	12,000	12,048	-	-	-	12,048	11,936
Professional fees	8,500	10,869	-	-	-	10,869	8,464
Staff travel	8,500	7,200	-	-	-	7,200	11,145
Board travel and insurance	10,000	5,934	-	-	-	5,934	10,060
Fundraising	5,000	4,901	-	-	-	4,901	5,287
Office	7,500	6,198	-	-	-	6,198	7,702
Telephone	1,800	2,644	-	-	-	2,644	1,889
Insurance	1,850	1,847	-	-	-	1,847	1,797
Equipment maintenance	4,300	3,881	-	-	-	3,881	5,389
Special projects	19,300	18,583	-	-	-	18,583	4,273
	\$ 768,169	\$ 773,453	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 773,453	\$ 767,278

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board of Directors as of Dec. 31, 2015

Representing	Term
Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service	
• Carl DeGurse, Winnipeg, MB	2014-2017, second term
Lois Epp, Calgary, AB	2015-2018, first term
• Tobi Thiessen, Toronto, ON	2013-2016, third term
Mennonite Church Canada	
• Henry Krause, Langley, BC	2014-2017, first term
Doreen Martens, Oakville, ON	2013-2016, second term
Bryan Moyer Suderman, Stouffville, ON	2013-2016, first term
<i>vacancy</i>	<i>2015-2018</i>
Mennonite Church British Columbia	
• Linda Matties, Abbotsford, BC	2015-2018, third term
Mennonite Church Alberta	
• Kuen Yee, Edmonton, AB	2014-2017, first term
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan	
Bryce Miller, Drake, SK	2015-2016, first term
Mennonite Church Manitoba	
Ken Reddig, Pinawa, MB	2014-2017, first term
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada	
Tim Reimer, Toronto, ON	2014-2016, second term
• indicates Executive Committee of the Board	

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Staff as of Dec. 31, 2015

Head office	Started	Time
Dick Benner, Editor and Publisher	2009	100%
Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant	2001	53%
Michael Hostettler, Advertising Representative	2013	40%
Virginia Hostettler, Web Editor	2013	50%
Natasha Krahn, Circulation/Finance	2005	100%
Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer	2008	55%
Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor	2005	<u>100%</u>
		4.98 FTE
Regional Correspondents/editors		
Will Braun, Senior Writer, Winnipeg	2011	40%
Aaron Epp, Young Voices Editor, Winnipeg	2013	40%
B.C. Amy Dueckman, Abbotsford	2005	20%
Alberta: Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Edmonton	2000	20%
Saskatchewan: Donna Schulz, Rosthern	2014	20%
Manitoba: Josiah Neufeld, Winnipeg	2015	20%
Eastern Canada: David Rogalsky, Kitchener	2006	<u>26%</u>
		2.06 FTE
	Total FTE	7.04

**Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) Pastors' Lunch Notes
Saturday, April, 23, 2016 at Rosthern Mennonite Church**

Members Present: CMPS Board directors, Dick Benner (staff), pastors of Saskatchewan Mennonite churches, Donna Schulz (Saskatchewan correspondent)

The discussion followed in response to these questions:

1. How can *Canadian Mennonite* serve your congregations?
2. How can congregations help *Canadian Mennonite*?

There was affirmation for the writing by Donna Schulz. It was mentioned that her stories received the most online hits.

There was affirmation for the coverage of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

There was discussion about the online availability of *Canadian Mennonite*. This is a particular help for those in other countries. Prior to online availability Christmas articles were not available until Easter. There was some concern that online formatting was cumbersome. Individuals at the meeting helped each other with technology settings to achieve better access

Pictures are particularly helpful for those who don't read English well.

In Saskatchewan the language in congregations is English with the exception of a Colombian Spanish group.

Appreciation was expressed for articles about biblical interpretation.

A suggested topic was the experience of interim pastors.

A comment about providing space for discussion about issues suggested that it was much better to focus discussion on an article than on people.

There was affirmation for editorials that challenge various aspects of issues.

There was affirmation for *Canadian Mennonite's* independent status.

There was discussion about how to distinguish the various voices that appear. A logo may not be enough. It may be necessary to articulate a policy. Several suggestions were made re: banners like the one for Young Voices, borders around edges of pages, etc.

There is still enough memory of the *Mennonite Reporter* that the name is sometimes used interchangeably.

There was appreciation for OpEd that pushes beyond the safety line.

The challenge of reading about an issue from more than one side was enjoyed.

Subscription data includes 150 to the USA and 50 overseas.

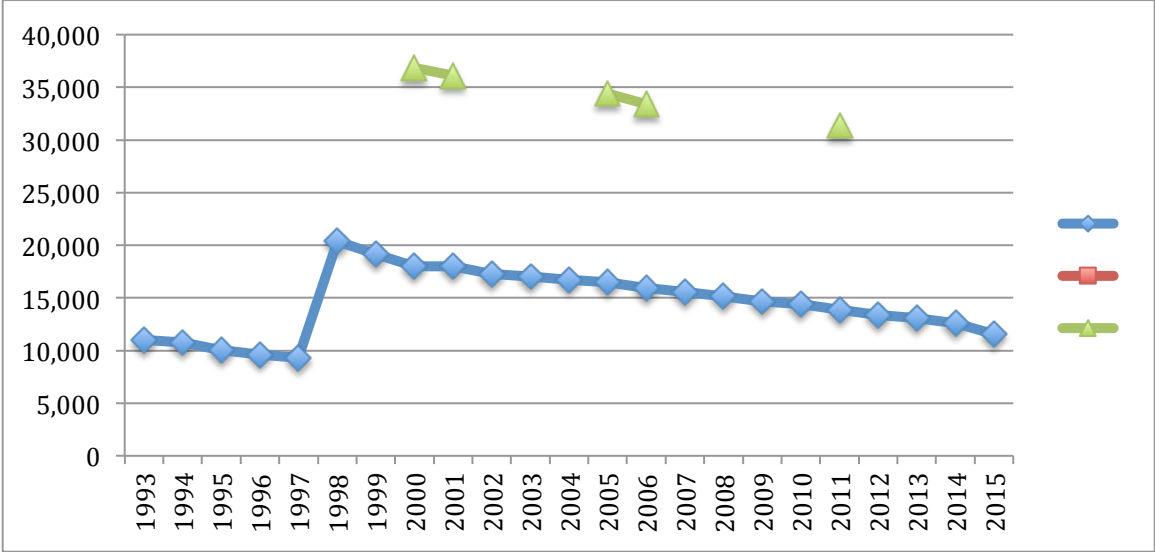
Incomplete Attendance List:

Harry Harder, Pleasant _____
Bruce Janzen, Laird
Walter Janzen
Russ Friesen, Tiefengrund
Florence Driediger, Regina
Garry Peters, Hanley
Otto Driediger, Regina
Murray Logan, Grace
Josh Williams, Warman
Craig Neufeld, Rosthern
Ben Pauls, Zoar
Ken Warkentin, Moderator of MC Saskatchewan
Anita _____, Nutana Park
Claire Ewert Fisher, Grace Mennonite, Prince Albert
Alish Williams, London
Stuart Murray, London
Rod Suderman, 1st Mennonite
Carol _____, Zoar, Langham
_____, Carrot River
Daniel Janzen, Carrot River
Emily Toews, Drake
Margaret Ewen Peters, Fiske, Hershel
Ryan Siemens, MC Saskatchewan area conference minister
Luke Miller, _____
Elijah _____, _____

CANADIAN MENNONITE
Circulation Report April 15, 2016

		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC & East	Very North	US	Overseas	Totals	Previous Report Totals	Change Since 15-10-01
Individual	Individual	45	62	53	59	78	0	1	40	5	343	369	-26
	Gift	9	7	6	6	15	2	1	3	1	50	52	-2
Group Plans	Small Groups	0	11	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	17	29	-12
Every Home Plans	MC – BC	511	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	517	586	-69
	MC – AB	2	560	1	4	7	0	0	2	0	576	586	-10
	MC – SK	6	17	1148	18	5	2	0	7	4	1207	1278	-71
	MC- MB	17	14	4	3361	31	3	0	5	11	3446	3542	-96
	Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada	19	11	2	12	5265	85	1	19	21	5435	5494	-59
	Other	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	5	-1
	Bulk (churches)	47	19	0	40	61	0	0	0	0	167	159	8
	Bulk (schools, etc.)	26	0	0	72	48	0	0	0	0	146	138	8
	Complimentary	5	3	1	10	12	0	0	16	2	49	38	11
	Exchange	0	0	2	9	5	0	0	9	6	31	31	0
Totals		687	706	1219	3597	5528	94	3	101	53	11988	12307	-319

Canadian Mennonite circulation 1993-2015



- The top line (triangles) represents membership numbers for MC Canada.
- The bottom line (squares) shows the circulation numbers for *Canadian Mennonite* in print; it does not include digital subscriptions.
- The doubling of numbers in 1997 was the move from *Mennonite Reporter* to *Canadian Mennonite* with an across-Canada every-home plan.

Digital CM- 2015

For Dick's report to CM board

In March 2015 we launched the **new CM website**. The redesign updated the look and made the site more user-friendly and more easily accessible on mobile devices. (Up to that point the Young Voices content was on a separate site, but it became integrated into the main website.) The new site also allowed for better display of online ads. Comparing 2014 and 2015 figures, the percentage of readers accessing online content on desktop computers decreased (from 71% to 57%), and the percentage of readers on mobile devices and tablets increased (from 29% to 43%).

Throughout the year, staff worked hard to increase **traffic to the website**. We saw an increase in page views from 187,741 in 2014 to 241,293 views in 2015 (a 28.5% increase). There was a 53 percent increase in the number of returning visitors to the website and an increase of 64 percent in the number of new visitors. Top-viewed online stories dealt with Mennonite identity, sexuality, the appointment of Minister of Health Jane Philpott, and Mennonite World Conference. We carried 29 online stories which originated from the communications office of Mennonite Church Canada.

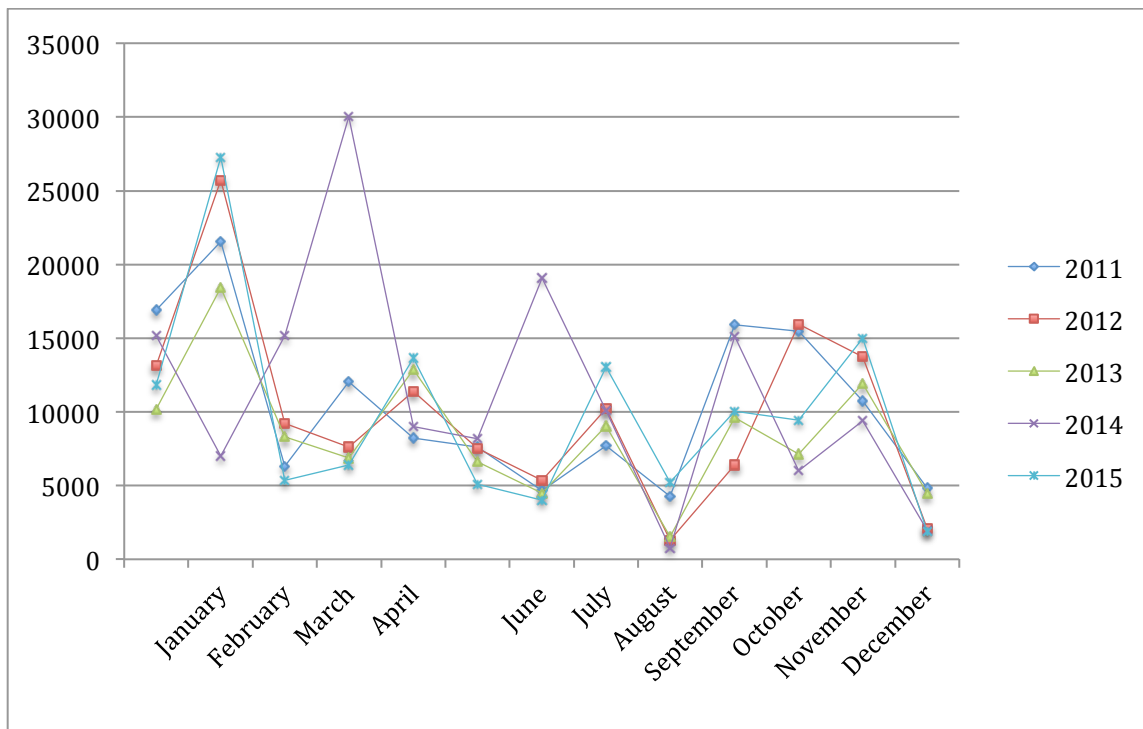
Our continued active presence on **social media** drove approximately 35 percent of the online sessions. By the end of 2015, CM has 791 Facebook followers (up 54% from 2014) and 889 Twitter followers (up 74% from 2014). These followers clicked on, liked, and commented on CM content, and they shared it in their own circles.

We worked to promote the option of **digital subscriptions** to our print subscribers. In March we started carrying print house ads regularly to promote digital subscriptions and to invite engagement with CM's website and social media. In July we expanded the regular "Online Now" content to a one-third page in every print issue, adding photos and blurbs about web-first stories. By the end of 2015, digital subscriptions stood at 702. Plans began for a regular e-newsletter promoting CM content. (This email, called "CM Now," was first sent out in early 2016 and is currently being promoted.)

Submitted by Ginny Hostetler, April 13, 2016

Canadian Mennonite advertising revenue patterns 2011 – 2015

Month	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Jan Deferred	16,892	13,131	10,153	15,175	11,816
January	21,539	25,714	18,403	7,014	27,261
February	6,316	9,208	8,299	15,152	5,364
March	12,052	7,615	6,875	30,012	6,378
April	8,235	11,406	12,884	9,010	13,639
May	7,610	7,544	6,623	8,168	5,104
June	4,641	5,372	4,486	19,065	4,016
July	7,682	10,205	9,065	10,074	13,060
August	4,250	1,296	1,527	775	5,214
September	15,921	6,381	9,608	15,132	10,031
October	15,471	15,966	7,125	5,991	9,448
November	10,735	13,743	11,928	9,389	15,010
December	4,822	2,102	4,466	1,970	1,871
Total:	136,165	129,682	111,443	146,927	128,212



CM web advertising patterns

