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## Partnership Agreement with the Canadian Mennonite

*(approved by MC Canada Support Services Council, Oct. 17, 2003, represented by Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary, Support Services Council, and the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, Nov 6, 2003, represented by Henry Neufeld, chair)*

The *Canadian Mennonite* is published about 25 times per year. It is directed by the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, which includes representatives of MC Canada and all of its area conferences.

Its mission statement reads: "published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, *Canadian Mennonite* serves primarily the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five area conferences. *Canadian Mennonite* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10: 23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, news and analysis of issues facing the church."

The *Canadian Mennonite* links people in MC Canada congregations, and the wider Anabaptist family. It contributes to Christian nurture, dialogue and discernment of Christ's way. It provides news and stories about MC Canada members across the country.

Some readers perceive that the magazine carries "the official voice" of the denomination. The magazine is better understood as carrying the voices of MC Canada, including the voices of denominational leaders, but as a whole is not the official voice of the denomination.

*Canadian Mennonite* provides a forum for both the mainstream and divergent voices within MC Canada. It carries diverse views, within the constraints of respectful, Christian dialogue. MC Canada encourages the magazine to be constructive and positive in tone, encouraging a spirit of openness in which members of MC Canada may freely express their faith and give voice to their concerns. *Canadian Mennonite* is also a vehicle for promoting "unity in essentials," and in this sense is perceived by some readers to be the voice of MC Canada.

For five decades, a Mennonite publication in Canada (first *The Canadian Mennonite*, then *Mennonite Reporter* and now *Canadian Mennonite*) has helped establish the identity of the denomination. It helps readers say, This is who we are; this magazine is ours. Since 1997, MC Canada has enjoyed a close relationship with *Canadian Mennonite* through board representation and helping to fund an "every home" circulation plan, together with area conferences.

An Associated Church Press report to the 1991 convention in St. Louis, entitled "The Church Press Faces the Future," stated that "a denominational publication must be credible, fair, clear, relevant to the person in the pew, resourceful—tolerated by the power structure.... It is the responsibility of religious journalists to convey an understanding that freedom of the press is not a privilege of journalists but a need of the community, a need shared by its leaders as well as all of its members."

This statement expresses well the significance of the church press for a denomination. MC Canada considers *Canadian Mennonite* a critical piece of the church's communication plan, embraced by leaders and readers alike.

A few additional guiding statements help nurture the partnership MC Canada has with the *Canadian Mennonite*:

*December 11, 2003*

*Page 2*

1. MC Canada affirms *Canadian Mennonite* as carrying the "voices of the MC Canada" rather than a single, institutional voice.
2. Because some readers see *Canadian Mennonite* as the "official voice" of the denomination, MC Canada staff and board members look to the magazine for features and news coverage that reflect the standards that guide MC Canada members.
3. *Canadian Mennonite* is encouraged to continue its cooperation with the MC Canada News Service and to use its reports in the magazine.
4. In regard to potentially controversial subjects, *Canadian Mennonite* is encouraged to consult with MC Canada about what it prints. *Canadian Mennonite* is also encouraged to consult with MC Canada when preparing reader surveys.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pam Peters-Pries, *executive secretary, Support Services Council*

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*Henry Neufeld, chair, Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service*