

Partnership Covenant
Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA
6/13/2015 Version

Vision: Healing and Hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

Acknowledging our Journey Together

For many years, Mennonites from various groups in the U.S. and Canada have worked closely together in fellowship and ministry. In 1999, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church, and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada reconfigured their church organizations to form Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. As members of these two bodies, we continue to share the statement of vision above. Both of us are committed to become a missional church, joining God's redemptive activity in the world. We also share a common theology and church polity as reflected in two foundational documents: *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* – adopted along with the vision statement by our predecessor church bodies in 1995, and *A Shared Understanding of Church Leadership*, adopted as a working document in 2015.

Although both of our church bodies have full membership in the Mennonite World Conference communion of churches, we intend to maintain intentional partnerships in areas of mutual interest. The Joint Executives Committee (JEC) meets at least once a year to discuss recent developments in our churches, and to review this written agreement, which constitutes the covenant between our two national bodies.

We commit ourselves to keep tending the strands of relationship that bind us together. Some of these strands are based on shared history and experience, others on shared theology and convictions, others on shared values and ethos and still others on shared activity and ministries. We believe that a strong relationship between us can benefit both national bodies, since we have much to learn from each other. We anticipate that as each church continues to develop a separate identity, it will take greater effort to nurture a common vision. To keep our members informed of our relationship and to encourage connections between our national churches on many levels, we will prominently post a copy of this covenant on our respective web pages.

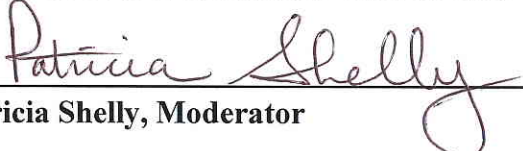
Our Covenant for Partnership

Based on our common identity and commitments, we covenant to move forward in ministry – exploring and defining various ways of relating, sharing and serving – even as each national body continues to grow into its unique identity and mission. As leaders of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada:

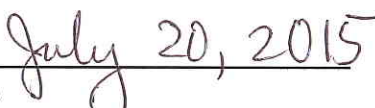
1. We will meet as a Joint Executive Committee (JEC) at least annually as stewards of this covenant to ensure that our partnership activities are serving our two national bodies well.
2. We will give and receive counsel with the intent to nurture a healthy interdependence between us and to learn from each other through discussion of our theological commitments and approach to ministry.
3. We will engage in conversation when either of us is contemplating a change in the status of a shared foundational document such as the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement, *A Shared understanding of Church Leadership* and our visual identity (logo). We will discern together the process that will be used to determine their ongoing life.
4. We will continue to work cooperatively in the process and review of credentialing procedures for persons in ministry, maintaining a common standard for discipline and ministerial ethics, and recognising credentials granted on either side of the national border.
5. We will encourage each other in the pursuit of a missional vision, each within our own context. Since our two nations have distinct secular political climates and cultures, different realities will shape our priorities of witness in our member congregations and national contexts.
6. We will continue to nurture healthy partnerships, including two jointly-governed program ministries – Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and MennoMedia. The respective by-laws of these two entities describe our two denominations' legal articulation with these entities.
7. We will encourage the Executive Director of Mennonite Church Canada and the Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA to find ways of visibly demonstrating the importance of our covenant partnership.

Adopted by:

Executive Board, Mennonite Church USA




Patricia Shelly, Moderator

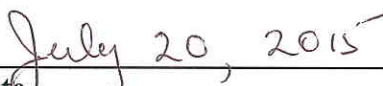


Date

General Board, Mennonite Church Canada



Hilda Hildebrand, Moderator



Date

Partnership Covenant – APPENDIX

Current Partnership Activities

- a. Executive staff of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA communicate with each other and work on various projects together.
- b. MennoMedia produces jointly-used resources where scale of production is important. MennoMedia is governed by a bi-denominational board of directors, with the freedom to call a few board members from other denominations. Such board members will be approved by the JEC before their final appointment.
- c. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary trains church leaders for both countries and is governed by a bi-denominational board of directors.
- d. Denominational Ministry/Ministerial Leadership staff meet and communicate regularly to develop policy and strategy for ministry enhancement. This team facilitates a joint annual retreat for the Area Church Ministers and Mennonite Church Canada and Area Conference Ministers in Mennonite Church USA.
- e. Mennonite Church Canada Witness Council and Mennonite Mission Network stay in touch with each other regarding specific placements and programs, partnering with others around the world.
- f. Various constituent groups strengthen their identity and address common issues that span the Canadian/U.S. border – including Hispanics, Asians, and native North American and aboriginal groups.
- g. Mennonite Men is governed by a board with members from both denominations. Mennonite Women USA and Mennonite Women in Canada have separate boards, but work together across the border.
- h. Both churches affirm involvement in organizations such as the Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Camping Association, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Economic Development Associates and Christian Peacemaker Teams – all of which include a larger Mennonite constituency as well.
- i. Our two denominational periodicals, *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite* (U.S.), are committed to publishing cross-border news of interest to their readerships.

