

## Partnership Covenant among

Mennonite Church Canada  
Mennonite Church Alberta  
Mennonite Church British Columbia  
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada  
Mennonite Church Manitoba  
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

(Hereafter referred to as “the partners”)

### Preamble

Mennonite Church Canada is a community of disciples of Jesus, part of the body of Christ, covenanted together as constituent congregations<sup>1</sup>, area churches and a national church. The partners to this covenant commit themselves to the principles outlined below as our common understanding of how this covenant community functions.

### Principles of Partnership

1. We agree to honour our covenant relationship by committing ourselves to:
  - a. cherish our relationships with each other
  - b. believe the best about each other
  - c. bless and support each other's ministries as though they are our own
  - d. work together in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition
  - e. discern, implement and evaluate our ministries with the health of the entire covenant community in mind
  - f. give and receive counsel in a spirit of mutual accountability.
2. As partners, we commit ourselves to collaborate around a common national vision and mission that finds regional expression in the mission and ministry of the area church. The area church vision and ministry objectives will be implemented within the context of the national church and seek to support and complement the overall mission of the denomination.
3. As a leading partner, the national church will seek the spiritual, fiscal, and missional health of the whole. The national church will play a role in connecting the area churches to the vision and ministries we hold in common. Specifically, it will play a leadership role in resourcing the area churches for ministry by acting as a convener of area church leaders and facilitating cross-regional relationships. In addition, national resources for congregational ministry will complement and extend those provided by the area church.
4. We affirm that constituent congregations are members of both an area church and the national church. As such, the area church and the national church, both have a direct relationship to the constituent congregations in a given area church. Since area churches only have a direct relationship with their own constituent

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<sup>1</sup> A “constituent congregation” is defined in the Mennonite Church Canada General Bylaws Part I.1(e) as “a congregation which is a member of an area church and of Mennonite Church Canada.”

congregations, matters of congregational concern between area churches will be dealt with at the national church level and/or at the area church to area church level.

5. Partners commit to represent themselves to constituent congregations in a manner that reflects a collaborative and complementary approach to the mission and vision of both the area church and the national church.
6. We affirm that partners may offer and promote their ministries beyond their constituent congregations. Partners commit to referencing with each other when new initiatives are proposed and promotion will reflect the collaborative mission of the wider church.
7. We affirm that criteria of and processes for membership in the area churches are determined by the area churches.
8. The national and area churches will both provide rituals and ceremonies of receiving or releasing of constituent congregations in order to fully and publicly acknowledge that constituent congregations are becoming or ceasing to be members of both the area church and the national church.
9. The area churches and the national church collaborate in resourcing constituent congregations by:
  - a. consulting with each other
  - b. sharing information
  - c. discerning ministries and resources together.
10. The partners commit themselves to periodic dialogue and discernment:
  - a. Venues will include:
    - i. Annual MC Canada initiated Leadership Assemblies
    - ii. Periodic dialogue between national and area church staff initiated by either partner
    - iii. Visitation between staff in the course of their work
  - b. The focus of dialogue will include:
    - i. Discernment related to issues that face the denomination and area church
    - ii. Review of joint ministries
    - iii. Development of new ministry initiatives
    - iv. Review and evaluation of how partner services are delivered so as to maximize complementarity and efficiency
11. We affirm that the national church is the preferred vehicle for our common international ministry. In keeping with the regulations of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the national church is accountable for all of the ministries it engages. Therefore, the national church will evaluate all such international ministry initiatives, and will only approve those that align with its priorities.
12. As the bylaws of the national church restrict membership to those area churches which accept the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, support the mission statement of the national church, and accept its bylaws, all shared initiatives of the partners shall be guided by these statements.

13. We affirm that a variety of partnership relationships are necessary to promote cooperation and sharing of resources. Partners are free to develop operating agreements with other partners provided that those are developed within the principles and processes articulated here.

### Review and Changes

Any partner may call for a review of all or part of this covenant at any meeting of the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers (MSCM) or at another meeting specifically called for this purpose with at least one representative of each partner present. The partner calling for the review should give at least six months advance written notice indicating the portions of the partnership covenant it wishes to review and the changes it desires.

In addition, this covenant will be reviewed in its entirety three years after it is first signed and every three years thereafter at the annual MSCM meeting or at another meeting specifically called for this purpose with at least one representative of each partner present.

At any review meeting, a consensus model will be used to process proposed changes.

Proposed changes on which there is consensus at a review meeting will be circulated to the General Board or equivalent of each partner for approval and signature. If the General Board or equivalent of any partner requests additional changes before they will approve the covenant, those changes must be circulated for approval and signature by the General Boards or equivalents of all partners.

Dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2008.

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