

Paper I1

Update on current work

Mission committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Bernie Collins, Convenor of Mission Committee bernie.collins@thecrocker.net Francis Brienen, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) francis.brienen@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of the mission committee.
Main points	Update on Legacies of Slavery, the New International Financial and Economic Architecture, partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Work on the environmental policy, the remit of the environmental task group and a carbon offsetting project. Discussions on Brexit and combatting Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Endorsement of membership application to Churches Together in England. Information on a special celebration in the Church of the Palatinate. Update on the new structure of Fresh Expressions Ltd.
Previous relevant documents	Paper I1 to Mission Council, November 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	Council for World Mission partners (Legacies of Slavery and NIFEA) Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Taiwan Ecumenical Forum and new mission partner) Environmental task group Joint Public Issues Team (Brexit) Interfaith Enabling Group (Islamophobia and anti-Semitism) Churches Together in England Church of the Palatinate Fresh Expressions Ltd board.

Summary of impact

Financial	Costs to Assembly of the various items in the paper are covered by the mission committee budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	All of the items in this paper are about increasing awareness, understanding and partnership to help our members and partners to participate more effectively in Christ's mission in the world.

Mission update

1. Legacies of slavery

Mission committee received a further report on how to respond to CWM's work on Legacies of Slavery, which focused on four areas: apology, reparation, conversations on whiteness, exceptionalism and privilege, and the economic motive. The committee agreed to establish a small working group to take this work forward, with a view to working with local churches and synods, and to bringing recommendations to the Assembly in 2020. The group was asked to bring a progress report to the mission committee meeting in June 2019.

2. New international financial and economic architecture (NIFEA)

Mission committee received a report on the NIFEA following a series of consultations on this topic organised by the Council for World Mission. It commended a proposed conference on debt being organised by the mission team at Church House to be held in December 2019. It also encouraged the team to oversee the production and collation of learning resources relating to a New Economy of Life to be used contextually across the URC.

3. Partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT)

John Proctor attended a meeting of the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum in November 2018. This Forum is a structured consultation with international partners to provide the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan with advice and support as it sustains its witness around a number of difficult public and justice issues. The forum highlighted four broad justice issues: indigenous land rights, the need for truth and reconciliation work, the need for women's perspectives and gender justice, and Taiwan's concern to exercise its own democratic choices in the face of increasing pressure from China. The committee received the report and also heard how much the PCT values its partnership with the URC.

Work to welcome a new CWM mission partner for the Taiwanese Fellowship in Lumen URC, London was held up because of a visa problem for the Revd Yufen Chen. However, we hear recently that this has been resolved, and we now expect to welcome Yufen very shortly. The St Peter's House Chaplaincy (University of Manchester) has appointed Ms Selena Tai as a Taiwanese Chaplain Assistant. This post is supported by the URC and the PCT.

4. Environmental work

It was agreed to recommend to Mission Council that the remit for the environmental task group which was established by General Assembly in 2016 be revised in the light of the

task group's work in the past two years. The committee also agreed to recommend to Mission Council that the 2016 Environmental Policy, as adopted by General Assembly, be updated to reflect the recognition that in light of the most recent science around climate change, our ambitions to reduce carbon emissions must be accelerated. A proposal to develop a **carbon offsetting project** for the URC's global partnership programme was also approved. This will include a feasibility study and trial implementation of a carbon offsetting programme.

5. Brexit

The Mission committee discussed a report on responding to Brexit, following a consultation in December 2018, and highlighted various ways in which the Church can play a positive role. These include being welcoming communities, truth telling (speaking up and speaking out for those who will be hit the hardest by Brexit), looking beyond our borders and by reanimating a vision for the UK. Assembly 2016 resolution 50 is still very relevant to guide church members, local churches and synods as well as assembly committees and staff.

6. Combating Islamophobia and anti-Semitism

A report on combating Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, prepared by Philip Brooks, was also discussed. The committee agreed to encourage the development of some educational work around this and to engage with the work proposed in this area by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland with the Council of Christians and Jews and the Christian Muslim Forum.

7. Applications to join Churches Together in England (CTE)

The mission committee endorsed the application from the Wesleyan Reform Union to become a member of Churches Together in England and is in the process of supporting the Presbyterian Church of Ghana – UK in its application to join CTE. The PCG co-sponsor is the Church of Scotland.

8. Church of the Palatinate

This year it will be 30 years since the Berlin Wall came down. To mark this fact there will be a major celebration in the Church of the Palatinate in November 2019, to which a party of up to 20 people from the URC has been invited. If you are interested in more details, please email carole.sired@urc.org.uk.

9. New structure of Fresh Expressions

The structure and future of Fresh Expressions were considered as the initiative enters its fourth quinquennium. From being a centralised and denominationally-led initiative, dedicated to teaching, training and communicating the vision for a mission-shaped Church, Fresh Expressions has evolved into a dispersed movement of interconnecting

networks, all committed to pioneering new worshipping communities. A new organisational structure will come into being from March 2019 onwards to reflect the changing nature of the initiative.

10. Presbyterian Church of Ghana

Mission Council agreed two years ago a Memorandum of Understanding with the Europe Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. We have now made plans for signing the MoU, on Monday 24 June.