

# Paper 12

## Update on current work

### Mission committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Bernie Collins, convenor of mission committee <a href="mailto:bernie.collins@thecrocker.net">bernie.collins@thecrocker.net</a> Francis Brienen, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) <a href="mailto:francis.brienen@urc.org.uk">francis.brienen@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	For information
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<p><b>1. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, agrees that the size of the environmental task group be increased from four to six members, and that the Revd David Coleman and Alison Greaves be appointed to the vacancies.</b></p> <p><b>2. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, asks all synods and Assembly committees to report back to the environmental task group about their progress in implementing the Environmental Policy by 29 February 2020 with a view to a full report being made at the 2020 General Assembly and annually thereafter.</b></p>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Update on the work of the mission committee.
<b>Main points</b>	Update on Legacies of Slavery Expanding the membership of the environmental task group and reporting back on the Environmental Policy New mission partner from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan Supporting the mission of churches in rural locations Greenbelt 2019 Evaluation of Vision2020.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper 11 to Mission Council, May 2019.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Legacies of Slavery task group Environmental task group Nominations committee Rural strategy group Greenbelt planning group.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Costs to Assembly of the various items in the paper are covered by the mission committee budget.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

# Mission update

## 1. Legacies of slavery

- 1.1. Mission committee received the report from the Legacies of Slavery task group, which focused on three areas: apology, reparation and white privilege. The report is now offered to Mission Council for further discussion. See paper I1.

## 2. Environmental task group and Environmental Policy

- 2.1. Over the last 18 months, the environmental task group has co-opted two people to the group who have particular expertise or who enable connections to significant constituencies of the church: the Revd David Coleman, a URC Special Category Minister working for Eco-Congregation Scotland, and Alison Greaves who acts as a link into the Youth Executive. Mission committee agreed that this change should be formalised. It therefore agreed to propose to Mission Council that the size of the environmental task group be increased from four to six, and that David Coleman and Alison Greaves be appointed to the vacancies.
- 2.2. The URC Assembly adopted the current Environmental Policy in 2016 (amended in 2019) and encouraged all committees, synods and local churches to implement it. It also established an environmental task group to serve until July 2022 initially. It did not, however, put in place a timeline for reporting back to Assembly how local churches, synods and committees are engaging with the policy. Mission Committee therefore proposed that all synods and Assembly committees be asked to report back to the environmental task group about their progress in implementing the Environmental Policy by 29 February 2020 with a view to a full report being made at General Assembly in 2020 and annually thereafter.

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

- 3.1. Mission committee is pleased to report that the Revd Yu Fen Chen, mission partner from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, received her visa and arrived in the UK in May. She has now started her ministry with the Taiwanese and Mandarin Fellowship at Lumen URC in London. A service of welcome and thanksgiving was held at Lumen in September and was attended by a delegation from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

## 4. The United Reformed Church in Rural Areas

- 4.1. Mission committee discussed a report from the National Rural Officer and the URC Chair of the URC/Methodist Rural Strategy Group on the United Reformed Church in Rural Areas. It is thought that around 25% of United Reformed churches are in rural locations and the report highlights the specific issues that affect them and the communities in which they minister. The report notes that churches in rural locations have opportunities to engage with their communities in ways not possible in

larger urban centres. Resourcing these churches for ministry and mission is therefore crucial. The report offers various ways in which this can be done, such as linking rural churches more deliberately with the resources of the Arthur Rank Centre and ensuring that there is a network of advocates in the synods. A review of the National Rural Officer post is about to start and the mission committee agreed that the paper should be sent to the review group for further consideration and action.

### **5. Greenbelt 2019**

- 5.1. The Greenbelt planning group reported to the mission committee that the URC had made a very successful contribution to Greenbelt 2019. Under the theme of 'Walking the Way with Wit and Wisdom', the URC offered a takeaway tent with a daily programme of activities for all ages; as in previous years this space provided a hub for the URC's presence throughout the festival and helped the team to meet and interact with Greenbelters of all ages. The URC programme further included Cake and Debate at the Engine youth venue, a pilgrimage around the Greenbelt site, a panel discussion, roaming liturgies and a Youth Ambassador scheme which enabled nine young people to come along and be part of the team. Next year Greenbelt's theme will be 'Wild at Heart' and the planning group has started thinking how they might link to this. Mission committee expressed its thanks to project co-ordinator Anne Sardeson, who is stepping down from this role, and affirmed Philip Brooks as the new co-ordinator.

### **6. Evaluation of Vision2020**

- 6.1. In 2010 General Assembly accepted vision2020 as the ten-year framework for mission for the URC. Mission committee is now in the process of evaluating what has been done in the past ten years. Information is being gathered on how local churches and synods have used vision2020 for setting mission priorities, in making local mission pledges, in the LMMR process or for assessing mission grants. The first evaluation information was discussed at the meeting and further evidence will now be gathered so that a full report can be brought to the Assembly in 2020. One of the positive findings so far is that lots of churches have used vision2020 grants for their local mission work.