

Paper I1

Update on current work

Mission Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	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	Updates on Legacies of Slavery, Partners in Mission, Commitment for Life, URC group visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Greenbelt 2020, engagement with the environmental policy, the review of the National Rural Officer post, and the evaluation of vision2020.
Previous documents	Paper I2 to Mission Council, November 2019.
Consultation has taken place with...	Legacies of Slavery Task Group Environmental Task Group Greenbelt Planning Group Rural Strategy Group and NRO review group.

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)	

1. Legacies of slavery

- 1.1. Mission Committee accepted the action plan from the Legacies of Slavery task group. A follow up paper including the plan is given as Mission Council paper I2.

2. Partners in Mission

- 2.1. Mission Committee noted with gratitude the work of the Revd Yufen Chen, working with the Taiwanese Fellowship in Lumen, London, who is developing this ministry and mission with enthusiasm and vision.

- 2.2. A new Partner in Mission application for Ms So-Young Jung (from the Presbyterian Church of Korea working with the Bridge ministry in Southern Synod) is currently being finalised.
- 2.3. Ms Alison Gibbs, working with the United Church of Zambia, recently moved at their request to a school in Mbereshi where she serves as Head Teacher. Mission Committee approved in principle the extension of Alison's term of service by one year (until December 2021). The extension has already been approved by the UCZ and we are now awaiting formal approval from CWM.

3. Commitment for Life

- 3.1. An end of year update for 2019 was presented and discussed. Commitment for Life's 'look' has been updated in line with the new URC logo and can now be found on the resources, posters, giving boxes and communications. Responses to the new look have been very positive. Bringing Commitment for Life into the sphere of Global and Intercultural Ministries has sharpened its *raison d'être* and has made communicating its purpose easier. The rebranding of Commitment for Life and the very active advocacy undertaken by staff, reference group and advocates have resulted in greater engagement from churches and an increase in funds raised.

4. Ecumenical and Interfaith matters

- 4.1. Mission committee received a report of the visit of a group of 22 people, including representatives of all synods, to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (IOPT) in September 2019. The visit has resulted in an enthusiastic, committed fresh cohort of people who between them have already delivered more than 100 presentations across the denomination. Members of the group also wrote the Advent and Lent materials for *Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today*, and there has been a series of articles in Reform. At General Assembly 2020, there will be a main stage discussion, sharing the experiences of the participants, as well as a special interest meeting. All of this lives out the 2016 General Assembly resolution mandating Mission Committee 'to enable synods, local churches and individuals to become more aware and to respond with informed prayer, grace and solidarity.'

5. Greenbelt 2020

- 5.1. The URC team of 16 members is planning its contribution to this summer's festival, which will take place over the August Bank Holiday. The theme of the URC's programme will be Revolting Christians, linking with Greenbelt's theme 'Wild at Heart'. The planning team is actively seeking to increase the involvement of the wider URC in Greenbelt, through appealing for volunteers, inviting people to make Christian symbols and send them in for display in the URC tent, and by inviting local URC church groups to consider attending Greenbelt for their first time. Help and advice will be available. If you know of a local URC which might be interested, please ask them to contact Samara Andrews on crcw.admin@urc.org.uk

6. Environmental Policy

- 6.1. Following Mission Council's decision in November 2019 to ask 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, questionnaires were designed by the Secretary for Church and Society and sent out.
- 6.2. In response Mission Committee considered various areas of its work: travel (both in the UK and international), meetings, advocacy and resourcing others to act. Mission Committee endorsed the practice that travel in the UK and to the European continent on URC/Mission related business should be by train, unless there was a compelling reason not to do so. The committee also agreed that venues for meetings should be selected based on maximum accessibility by public transport. Mission committee members further agreed to sign up to the Living Lent campaign of the Joint Public Issues Team and to promote it to others (www.livinglent.org). A fuller report will be sent to the Environmental Task Group.

7. Review of the National Rural Officer post

- 7.1. The Mission Committee received an update on the review of the National Rural Officer post. The post, which is shared between the URC and the Methodist Church, is currently held by the Revd Elizabeth Clark, who is due to retire in 2021. The review has taken a different course, in light of the Methodist Church's new strategy for Evangelism and Growth, God for All, which places a stronger emphasis on rural mission and ministry. The adoption of the strategy is likely to result in the employment of a full-time Methodist rural officer when Elizabeth retires. The Mission Committee discussed the implications of this development for the shared post and will bring an update to Mission Council in November 2020 at the latest.

8. Evaluation of Vision2020

- 8.1. Evaluation material has now been collected from local churches (through the Annual Church Returns), Synods and Assembly staff. A full report with recommendations will be brought to General Assembly in July 2020.

9. Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries

- 9.1. Mission Committee expressed its thanks to the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, who moved on in mid-February from his role as Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries after 12 years of service. He has taken up a new post with CWM, as Mission Secretary – Europe, and in that role we shall still see him and benefit from work that he does on or behalf. The post has been advertised, and if there is news in March about a new appointment, we shall of course report this to Mission Council.