

# Paper I2

Mission Committee  
Commitment for Life

Church 2015  
**United**  
Church **Reformed**  
**Church** Church 2015



# Paper I2

## Mission Committee Commitment for Life

### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Tracey Lewis tracey.a.lewis@btinternet.com
<b>Action required</b>	Decision
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Mission Council accepts the recommendation of the Mission Committee that the percentages for allocating income to Commitment for Life be changed to 75% for Christian Aid, 5% for Global Justice Now (formerly World Development Movement) and 20% for administration, grants and programme expenses, with effect from January 2015.</b>

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Commitment for Life: change in allocation of income in order to meet programme core costs
<b>Main points</b>	A drop in church contributions suggests that the programme may not meet its administration budget for 2015. By changing the percentage to Global Justice Now to 5% and raising the admin percentage to 20%, we should release approximately £18,000 for running costs for 2015.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	None
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Mission Committee, February 2015

### Summary of Impact

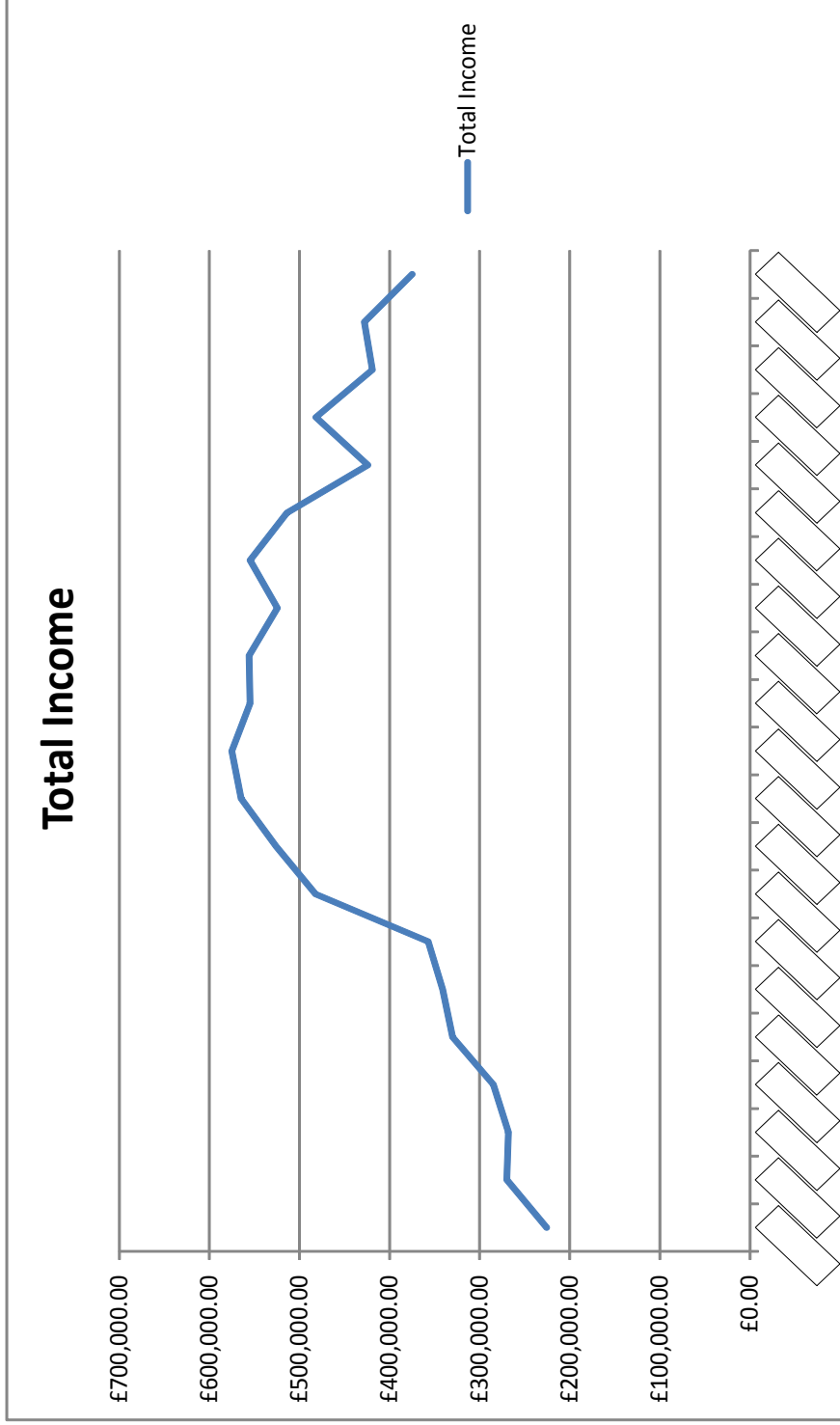
<b>Financial</b>	Releasing in the region of £18,000 for core costs
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Reduction of contribution to Global Justice Now

## Commitment for Life

1. Starting life as the 1% appeal Commitment for Life is the United Reformed Church's main programme through which the Church works for justice globally. It has a biblical imperative to help congregations commit to personal giving, acting and praying for poverty eradication, which includes advocating for structural changes.
2. A church becomes a Commitment for Life church following a decision by the Church Meeting. A link person is appointed and a partner country or region chosen (currently Bangladesh, Central America, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and Zimbabwe). Churches receive three mailings a year with updates on their chosen country as well as campaign information on issues such as tax, debt, Fairtrade and climate change. Resources are also available through the website and the two monthly emails 'Moving Stories' and 'Stories for Change.'
3. In 1992 the percentages for allocating funds raised through Commitment for Life were set as follows: 10% to education and advocacy, 10% to the World Development Movement (WDM) and 80% to Christian Aid for funding overseas partners in India, Zimbabwe and Palestine.
4. By 1998 Commitment for Life had 40 advocates and 485 participating churches. Its annual income was £340,000. In order to employ full and part-time staff the percentages were revised to 75% for Christian Aid for funding overseas partners, 15% for education, grants and administration and 10% to the World Development Movement. This is the current allocation.
5. After over 20 years of Commitment for Life there is much for which to be thankful. There are many church link people who are active and engaged. They access information via the web or directly with the programme administrator or coordinator. The Intern Scheme, which was set up in 2011, has made a real impact and there are great plans to develop this further. There is a growing strategic focus on non-giving congregations and a closer partnership at higher level with Christian Aid.
6. However, there are also concerns. Currently there are nine advocates with 636 churches on the database. Annual income is declining and in 2014 was £375,000. A legacy, given over three years, helped the programme but is not included in the graph below which tracks church contributions.
7. Commitment for Life continually reviews its impact and work. It is being supported in this by the Mission Committee. Christian Aid are preparing terms of reference for a review of the partnership with the URC and specifically Commitment for Life.
8. Following past reviews and continuous reflection, various reasons for the decline in income have been identified. Many of the most loyal and hardworking advocates feel this is the right time to cease being active. The loss of districts has had an adverse effect on their effectiveness in reaching out to local churches and encouraging them to participate in the scheme.
9. Over the years Christian Aid has also expanded its activities into areas that used to be Commitment for Life's unique selling points, such as theological reflections, Christmas, Harvest and Lent appeals.

10. Ageing and smaller congregations with less money, as well as church closures, have also impacted on the programme. The greater number of LEPs that may not want to participate in a denominational programme may also have an impact. In addition to that, several years of recession have led churches to look more closely at their finances and rationalise giving.
11. The 15% share of the annual income of £375,000 means that staff salaries and pensions were covered for 2014, with running expenses coming from funds carried forward from previous years. Grants have not been offered since 2013, except for £5,000 towards the Christian Aid Collective Intern Scheme. Running costs remain tight with little room for cutting back. The projected budget for 2015, agreed by the Commitment for Life Reference Group, means that approximately £18,000 will be needed to break even for 2015. This figure is based on church contributions remaining the same.
12. In light of this, the Commitment for Life Reference Group has recommended that the percentages for allocating income are changed to 75% for Christian Aid, 5% for Global Justice Now (formerly WDM) and 20% for administration, grants and programme expenses from January 2015. This was discussed at the meeting of the Mission Committee in February 2015 and endorsed.

Year	Total Income
1993	£225,786.00
1994	£269,846.00
1995	£267,926.00
1996	£284,965.00
1997	£330,000.00
1998	£341,000.00
1999	£357,000.00
2001	£482,167.00
2002	£526,190.00
2003	£564,970.00
2004	£575,018.00
2005	£555,000.00
2006	£556,000.00
2007	£524,508.00
2008	£554,838.00
2009	£514,000.00
2010	£424,000.00
2011	£482,000.00
2012	£419,000.00
2013	£428,000.00
2014	£375,000.00



### Legacy income not recorded in total income graph figures

2010	£150,000
2011	£75,000
2012	£100,000

