

Paper I4

Mission Committee
Update

Church 2015
United
Church **Reformed**
Church 2015

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Mission Committee Update

Basic Information

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Action required	For information.	
Draft resolution(s)	None.	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	This paper provides an update on the work of the Mission Committee.
Main points	Mission Committee received an update on the monitoring of Nestlé. Mission Committee agreed that the URC apply for membership in the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). Mission Committee agreed that the Church of Scotland become a member of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) on a trial basis. Mission Committee agreed to make a grant of £4,000 to the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine/Israel (EAPPI). Mission Committee decided to set up of an Ecumenical Reference Group and agreed its terms of reference.
Previous relevant documents	Nestlé: papers B4 and B5 to Mission Council November 2011; Mission Council minutes November 2011 and November 2014.
Consultation has taken place with...	Investment Committee on Nestlé; Synod of Scotland on Church of Scotland membership in JPIT; Commitment for Life Reference Group on EAPPI grant.

Summary of Impact

Financial	The membership fee for CCME, the grant to EAPPI and the costs of Ecumenical Reference Group meetings can be met from the current Mission Committee budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Mission Committee

1. This paper provides a brief overview of the main discussions and decisions of the Mission Committee at its meeting in February 2015. This overview does not include the Nuclear Ban Treaty, the Memorandum of Understanding with the Presbyterian Church of Korea and Commitment for Life, as these are the subject of other Mission Council papers.
2. Following the Nestlé resolution accepted by Mission Council in November 2011, Mission Council in November 2014 asked the Mission Committee to confirm that the monitoring of Nestlé's response to the issues raised in the Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) Assessment Report and its compliance with the FTSE's BMS (breast-milk substitutes) criteria in higher risk countries has been ongoing. If so, it requested to know the outcome of that monitoring. Responsibility for monitoring now rests with the Investment Committee and the Mission Committee received a paper addressing the question about monitoring Nestlé. The report noted that to date three inspections covering six countries have been carried out by PWC as independent auditors. The findings showed that Nestlé had sound policies, which were understood by all its employees and enforced to a high degree of satisfaction to PWC. The URC participated in meetings to discuss the audit reports, which are now available on Nestlé's website with comments from FTSE4Good, PWC and the company. Nestlé have actively supported everything so far (since 2010), despite having taken over Wyeth, another BMS manufacturer who had a high level of exposure to China. China has high levels of regulation covering BMS businesses but low levels of enforcement, which means marketing standards are low. Nestlé have shown great commitment to integrate Wyeth into its own culture at the expense of market share in China. Nestlé continues to engage actively with the faith community and at the highest level attaches great value to its inclusion in FTSE4Good. The Investment Committee were encouraged by the open way in which Nestlé is embracing the challenges and noted they were content to hold their equity in the Ministers' Pension Fund portfolio.
3. The Mission Committee agreed to apply for membership in the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). CCME is an ecumenical organisation that serves the churches in their commitment to promote the vision of an inclusive community through advocating for an adequate policy for migrants, refugees and minority groups at European and national level. The organisation comprises 28 members (churches and ecumenical councils) from 18 European countries and provides a space for churches and Christian agencies to share their experiences in the ministry among migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people. CCME is part of a wider ecumenical network of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches. Within its general mandate, CCME focuses its activities on a number of strategic areas, e.g. Europe's role in refugee protection; human dignity in the process of labour migration; countering contemporary forms of slavery (in particular human trafficking); migration as an opportunity and challenge for the unity of the church; churches as witnesses to inclusive communities in Europe; migration and development. The URC will benefit much from CCME in the areas of resources and resourcing, ecumenical collaboration, research and training, visits, advocacy and sharing of good practice. In return we hope to bring a much needed British presence and input, a particular ecclesial approach to our work, the local collaborative work across our churches and an intercultural approach to the way churches can respond to the opportunities and challenges of migration.

4. In February 2014, Commitment for Life requested the Mission Committee to provide the annual grant of £4,000 to the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine/Israel from Mission Committee funds. Until then this grant had been given from Commitment for Life funds. However, due to a decline in income Commitment for Life was no longer able to make grants to other organisations. Mission Committee agreed to make the grant and £4,000 was allocated from the World Church and Mission Fund. The Committee reviewed this at its meeting in February 2015 and in light of the 2004 General Assembly on the Separation Barrier, which includes a pledge “to support the work of peace groups within Israel and the Occupied Territories and UK based advocacy groups, such as Christian Aid and EAPPI” agreed to make a grant of £4,000 again in 2015.
5. The Mission Committee agreed in principle that the Church of Scotland join the Joint Public Issues Team on a trial basis for one year, from 1 March 2015. The Church of Scotland has had a good relationship with JPIT, engaging on several pieces of work in parallel or in partnership – a recent example being the 2013 report, The lies we tell ourselves. Staff members from the Church of Scotland and JPIT have also been meeting regularly to share information, discuss current projects and plan future work. While there are differences in the scale of the denominations involved there are similarities on the kind of issues worked on and the theological and policy lines taken. The broadly common approach to issues and working may open up new possibilities for the Church of Scotland, the JPIT churches’ presence in Scotland and the work of JPIT at the UK level. The committee considered the background to the proposal that the Church of Scotland join JPIT, how the new partnership will work in practice, the potential risks, cost implications and expected benefits of the new arrangements. If the trial is successful, a recommendation will be brought to Mission Council that the Church of Scotland become a permanent member of JPIT.
6. Following the review of Ecumenical Relations in 2010 and the postholder review of the secretary for ecumenical relations in 2014 it was recommended that an Ecumenical Reference Group be established to support the secretary for ecumenical relations and the Welsh and Scottish Synod ecumenical officers in their work and to provide advice on ecumenical matters to the Mission Committee and the church. At its February meeting the Mission Committee agreed the membership, remit, accountability structure and budget for the group. The group’s primary remit will be to provide a forum within which current ecumenical issues and trends can be considered by a group with ecumenical experience in both domestic, European and wider international settings. The group will comprise a convener, the secretary for ecumenical and interfaith relations, the national ecumenical officers for Scotland and Wales, a member of the synod ecumenical officers’ network, a member with international ecumenical experience, a member with experience in an LEP and a minute taker. The group will meet twice per year or as necessary in exceptional circumstances. It will report to the Mission Committee in the first instance. Mission Committee agreed that there should be a monitoring period of 12 months and a review will take place in February 2016.