

Refocusing *God for All* in the light of COVID-19

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Resolutions	<p>73/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>73/2. The Council recommends to the Conference that resolution 2 in the <i>God for All</i> report be not put and that the Conference adopt the revised budget for 2020/2021.</p> <p>73/3. The Council directs the Strategy and Resources Committee to bring a new budget proposal for 2021/2022 and following to the January 2021 Council for recommendation to the 2021 Conference.</p>

Summary of content

Subject and aims	Proposed amendments to the <i>God For All</i> strategy, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, a revised first-year budget.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and continued commitment • Refocused planning • New spending • Proposed costings and funding • Preparation for District Projects: <i>Church at the Margins</i> and <i>New Places for New People</i> • Diligent planning for Years 2021/2022 and following • Unexpected Conditions, Same Direction of Travel, Same God
Background documents	MC/20/38 <i>God For All</i> : The Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth

Introduction and Continued Commitment

1. This short paper accompanies *God for All: The Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth*, which the Methodist Council in its March 2020 meeting adopted and recommended for presentation to the 2020 Methodist Conference.
2. *God for All* describes the “foundational orientations and key programmes” that “...by God’s grace, will help the Methodist Church deepen our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, inclusive church of gospel people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of God – so that new people become disciples of Jesus Christ and committed Methodists experience a deepening of faith”. The March 2020 paper detailed a proposed *God For All* funding package totaling £20 million in new spending over the first five years (2020/2021 – 2024/2025) of the strategy to support the significant shifts required to begin to embed the strategy.
3. The pandemic crisis is now the context in which the Church lives out its bold missional commitments. The proposed strategic elements were named as crucial before the crisis – they came from an extensive consultation across the Connexion – and they will be even more throughout and beyond this crisis.

Refocused Planning

4. That said, taking into consideration the unprecedented global uncertainty and the unexpected loss of a very significant amount of money from the Methodist funds that had originally been figured as primary funding sources, it has been necessary to refocus the work and redraw the funding expectations for the connexional year 2020/2021.
5. This paper therefore proposes a shift from £3,581,278 – the original proposed costs for 2020/2021 – to £959,468 for the first year of the strategy (a 73% decrease in spending), and provides some background on the rationale for and process of determining the recommended shift.
6. It is important to note that approximately 50% of this revised costings' figure is made up from the current salaries, oncosts, and basic team budget of the current Evangelism and Growth staff; approximately 20% of this figure is the continuing existing costs for other teams' joined-up programmes and/or budgets that have been in part redesigned with an evangelism orientation (eg, Young Adult Internships); and approximately 30% of this figure is the proposed new spending in the first year of the strategy.
7. The cut in overall proposed spending for 2020/2021 was accomplished generally by (1) transitioning most planned physical gatherings for key programmes and pathways into virtual meetings and (2) reworking the *New Places for New People* (NPNP) and *Church at the Margins* (CaM) funding process¹.

New Spending

8. The proposed new spending, even in unexpected and uncertain times, is important to inaugurate the strategy and to signal the Methodist Church's affirmation of it as an imperative way forward for vibrant mission and ministry in the 21st century.
9. This new spending for 2020/2021 is sourced from drawing down existing reserves, not from ceasing existing programmes in other areas of the Connexion nor from relying on assessments.
10. The new spending seeks to starting rooting the core areas of the *God for All* strategy, even more important in the wake of the pandemic, to:
 - Offer *A Methodist Way of Life* as rhythm of prayer and action, especially during prolonged physical distancing;
 - Increase the "missional readiness" of Methodist churches, circuits, districts, and leaders;
 - Expand key equipping pathways for Pioneers and Church Planters, Transformational Leaders, and Evangelists, all of whom will be even more crucial in the emerging "new normal";
 - Commit to be a Church at – and from – the margins (almost 40% of all new spending will be on CaM projects);
 - Help prepare districts and circuits for increased commitments to *Church at the Margins* (CaM) new Christian communities and *New Places for New People* (NPNP) projects in the seasons emerging from the pandemic;
 - Strengthen digital evangelism and testimony.

Proposed Costings and Funding

11. The new total proposed costings for the *God For All* strategy are displayed in figure 1 below. The new total proposed funding is displayed in figure 2 below. A breakdown of proposed costings by programme for Connexional Year 2020/2021 is displayed in appendix 1.

¹ See SRC/20/22

Figure 1: Costings

Area	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total cost
Centred in God	17000	94000	42000	45000	30000	228000
Everyone an Evangelist	15000	115000	170000	225000	260000	785000
Transformational Leadership	19000	180000	180000	180000	180000	739000
New Places for New People	160494	984834	1221000	1286000	1654000	5306328
Church at the Margins	110000	1329000	1637000	1637000	2023000	6736000
Every Church a Growing Church	21475	166000	186000	206000	206000	785475
Young Evangelists, Pioneers and Leaders	90000	110000	110000	110000	110000	530000
Digital Presence: Digital Age Mission	25000	150000	150000	150000	150000	625000
Strategy Events	0	50000	0	100000	0	150000
Current staffing and programme costs	501499	542581	551686	560955	570285	2727006
Total	959468	3721415	4247686	4499955	5183285	18611809

Figure 2: Funding

Funding Source	Original proposal 2020/21 £	Revised proposal 2020/21 £	Comments
Mission in Britain	1,500,000	0	Reflects the longer lead time for making grants.
One interns/OPPS	400,000	85,000	Matches the reduced level of interns directed to the strategy.
Current budgets	528,784	528,784	
Legacy income	1,082,494	0	Recognises this funding has been committed against ongoing work.
Reserves		345,684	Slightly earlier draw down from reserves than planned.
Cliff college grant	70,000	0	
Total	3,581,278	959,468	

Preparation for District Projects: Church at the Margins and New Places for New People

12. In the original costings for *God For All*, £15.2 million had been prioritised for starting new Christian communities through *Church at the Margins* and *New Places for New People* – more than 75% of the overall new spending of the first five years of the strategy. As detailed in *God For All*, the overwhelming majority of these funds are for funding NPNP and CaM work with Districts.
13. Nearly £1.6m had been earmarked in the original 2020/2021 costings for the first tranche of match-funded district CaM and NPNP projects that were to be awarded *no earlier* than spring 2021.
14. In the wake of the pandemic, the following re-working for the first cycle of district projects preparation and funding is proposed:
 - The Evangelism and Growth team in 2020/2021 will (1) support District Leadership Teams to enable increased missional readiness for CaM and NPNP and (2) consult intensively with those

Districts which have indicated a preference to join the “first tranche” of CaM and NPDP district projects as they prepare their robust project plans and associated funding claims.

- The current “Preparation” stage of the draft NPDP/CaM funding process asks Districts to experiment with their proposed district project idea by spending a season casting vision, gathering initial stakeholders and leaders, and testing their missional assumptions on the ground.
- “First tranche” Districts will be invited to engage that testing season in the first half of calendar year 2021. The proposed shifted 2020/2021 costing for GFA provides £10,000 for these 11 “first tranche” Districts to experiment in concrete, meaningful, and relational ways.
- The full project plans for these first-tranche Districts will be due in June 2021 and will incorporate learnings from the testing season, note missional shifts and include more realistic and robust metrics for the high-impact projects. These funds would be awarded in Connexional Year 2021/2022, reflecting a stabilizing market/funding source and enabling the Church to complete sensible planning for future funding.
- In summation, the funding of NPDP/CaM projects would start, as planned, in the connexional year 2020/2021 and build in a slightly longer (four to six months) experimentation phase, with starter funding of £10,000 per first tranche District, towards anticipated fuller funding in 2021/2022.
- Districts in tranches 2 and 3 would begin their project plans in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 for anticipated fuller funding in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 respectively.

Diligent planning for Years 2021/2022 and following

15. With a few exceptions, the proposed costings for Years 2 and beyond have not changed, on the understanding that it is more prudent to wait until the future financial position of the Church is clear before making any further decisions. This is in order not to preclude any elements of this bold and expansive strategy to deepen our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, inclusive, justice-seeking Church of Gospel people.
16. If the strategy is approved by the 2020 Conference, it is understood that the related funding approval would only apply to the (reduced) 2020/2021 budget and not the full five years.
17. If the 2020 Conference is so minded, then a reworked costings plan for years 2-5 of *God for All* could be brought to the 2021 Conference, based on a more solid financial analysis (which is simply not possible right now) and not merely market speculation.

Unexpected Conditions, Same Direction of Travel, Same God

18. The conclusion of *God for All* states: “[T]his [strategy] is long-term, life-long work. [It] is not built on any quick fixes, magic resources, or short initiatives: it signals a direction of travel for deep Gospel transformation not only for the next three to five years, but also for the long-term future of our mission and whole life together. This expansive strategy will require much soul-searching, courageous decision-making, and significant structural change in the years ahead. Left to our own power, this work will be exhausting and impossible. Dependent on the power of God, it might just be life and joy for the Church and the world alike. We pray that it will be gift and blessing for all people who love God and want others to know the love of God, too.”
19. That truth has not changed in the wake of the pandemic. If anything, it has become clearer and more urgent.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

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Appendix 1 – Proposed costings by programme for Connexional Year 2020/2021

Stream/programme	Cost (£)
Centred in God	
Rooted in Prayer	2000
Developing Pathways for Growth	3000
A Methodist Way of Life	8000
Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship within the Gathered Community of Faith	0
Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship in Everyday Life	0
Theological Depth: Theological Reflection	0
Theological Depth: Theological Learning	4000
Everyone an Evangelist	
Embedding a Culture of Testimony	0
Equipping the Whole Church for Evangelism	2500
Training and Releasing Dedicated Evangelists	12500
Methodist National Evangelistic Witness	0
Transformational Leadership	
Transformational Leadership Learning Community	19000
Coaching for Transformation	0
Ministerial Training for Transformational Leadership and Evangelism	0
New Places for New People	
Partnerships with Districts and Circuits to Plant New Churches	50000
Expanding the Methodist Pioneering Pathway	41000
Multiplying Fresh Expressions	69494
Church at the Margins	
Church at the Margins	110000
Staffing	0
Every Church a Growing Church	
Mission Hubs	20000
Mission Planning Training and Grants	0
Partnership with Leading Your Church into Growth	1475
Core practices of growing churches	0
Young Evangelists, Pioneers and Leaders	
Young Evangelist Movement Training	5000
Internships in Evangelism, Pioneering, and Leadership	85000
Digital Presence: Digital Age Mission	
Basic Social Media and Website Training	0
Digital Evangelism Campaigns	15000
Digital Pioneering and Innovation Initiative	10000
Strategy Events	
Launch Gathering: Festival of Mission 2022	0
Midpoint Gathering 2024	0
Transition Gathering 2026	0
Current staffing and programme costs	
Continued employment of current staff	392,499

National Rural Officer becoming full-time	0
Current funds allocated to E&G	109,000
Total	959,468