

Confessions of a Church Planter Notes  
FIEC Summit 2016  
David Buckley - Budapest, Hungary

- I. My story:
  - A. Came to Hungary in 1999
  - B. Worked with university students for 8 years
  - C. Came back to itinerate to the USA
  - D. Was asked to help the Europe Office of the AGWM
  - E. Stayed for 2 years
  - F. Hun Church ask to come back to help small church Pastors
  - G. Then the Hun Church asked to plant a english speaking
    1. We have no training in church planting
    2. We have no money to start a plant
    3. But we had a call to Hungary
    4. Started in Spring of 2014
      - a) Bible Study
      - b) Every other week
      - c) On Sunday Afternoon
      - d) This is what the Hungarian Church wanted
      - e) Not the results we wanted
    5. Started Sept 21 2014
      - a) Had our first service
      - b) Sunday morning at 10:30
      - c) Held in a local community center
      - d) had 24 people, next week 12, then 7, then the #'s went up slowly
  - H. Riverside Church Budapest:
    1. 2 years old
    2. We have about 10 nations represented
    3. Highest 76 people
    4. Avg 65 per week
    5. Just revamped and old office complex to a new worship center
    6. Dedicated it 3 weeks ago
    7. We have another AG family who have been a BIG help
      - a) Chris and Lenee' Oakley with their 5 kids
      - b) Join us early on
      - c) They help with the preaching, advice, youth and building
    8. Everything is done in English
      - a) Preaching, worship Kids service but translation can be provided

## II. Universal Truths

- A. I am not a professional
  1. I have never planted a church before
  2. I never senior pastored before
  3. I am not telling you what to do
  4. Not a sorry, not an excuse
  5. but if God can use me then He can use you
- B. Not every Church plant is the same
- C. Not every group of people are the same

## III. Who are you reaching?

- A. The international community?
- B. The local English community?
- C. 2 International church models to follow
  1. English based congregation (Brussels Church)
  2. Multi Language congregations (VCC)
  3. Ours was: whatever God leads to us
  4. We have been challenged to rethink our approach
    - a) not to reach for the low fruit but the high fruit
    - b) translation of the service will happen when we find a good translator
- D. Other input

## IV. Where would you be most effective?

- A. Is there a more international spot in the city?
- B. Is the area safe and well known?
- C. Is there public transportation
  1. For us, it was not the metro which is greatly desired, but a tram & bus stop
  2. For Hun it has to be a 10 min walk (ours is 5)
- D. Will you rent in a community center?
  1. no clean up
  2. no maintenance
  3. meet and walk away
  4. Hard to do other activities
- E. Will you rent your own place?
  1. Plan any activities
    - a) First Wed Prayer
    - b) Youth Group on Friday
    - c) University Meetings on Thursday

- d) English Class on Friday
    - 2. Free access
    - 3. But maintenance and bills to pay
  - F. We had a hard time finding our own place
    - 1. Hungarians concept of a church was only in a church building
    - 2. Angry Neighbors meeting before service
    - 3. Some owners would just say No
    - 4. We were a “cult”
- V. When is a good time?
- A. To plant a church
  - B. Fall or Spring?
  - C. Fall has advantages for
    - 1. Christmas
    - 2. Easter
  - D. Attendance is low at major holidays
    - 1. Hungarians leave to visit family
    - 2. So do the internationals
    - 3. We try to do something the Sundays before
  - E. When as in time?
    - 1. 10:30 was good for us
    - 2. The 3 other International churches started at 10:00
  - F. Other input?
- VI. Why plant an International Church?
- A. Because God called me to do so.
  - B. Is that true?
    - 1. Of course that is
    - 2. That is why you are here in this room
  - C. If God has called you to do this will He not walk with you
  - D. God plants the church
    - 1. Perspective: It is not my power, talent, or right
    - 2. God has the power and the ability
    - 3. “Picture of a chair” Remember the place where you first received your call to plant a church. It will help during painful times to know that God has called you.
    - 4. Painful when a family leaves
      - a) “Too hard to plant a church”
      - b) Family of 5 leaves
      - c) Rough

5. Another painful which turned into a good thing:
  - a) Family said “Didn’t responded “
  - b) Family of 5
  - c) Apologized
  - d) Staying
6. I go back to the picture of the chair
- E. Early times were hard
- F. Where did God call you to do this?

## VII. How?

- A. Understand where you live
  1. Know the culture
  2. Know the customs
  3. Know the language
  4. Know your city
  5. Be a life time student
    - a) Know the reason why things happen the way they do
    - b) Christmas 2015
      - (1) Wanted someone who can play a Christmas song
      - (2) Asked everyone to help, no Hungarian would
      - (3) because Christmas day is a family day
        - (a) there is no excuse to not spend time with your family
        - (b) if you don’t then you should have a very good reason like your in the hospital, sick, dead or prison.
  6. Not only you have to know the local people, but the different nationalities in your church
    - a) The Korean couple joined our church because they want to be more international and practice their english
    - b) From what I understand this is a bold move to switch from a Korean church to a non-Korean church
- B. Church planting in the USA is not the same as planting in Europe
  1. Most books are based on the USA audience
  2. Most assume that you are not a paid missionary
    - a) Books say do not expect a salary until you are more stable
    - b) Missionaries already have that covered
- C. Media- Promo
  1. Facebook & Google Ads
    - a) Low cost

- b) great results
  - c) For us:
    - (1) We spend \$2 per day
    - (2) targeting city and county of Budapest
    - (3) targeting English speakers
2. Websites - Needs to be current and modern
  3. Newspaper - did not work
  4. fliers in the mail - did not work
  5. Street evangelism
- D. Volunteers
1. Can be had to raise
    - a) Music: Worship leaders style, knowledge
    - b) Kid workers: trusted
  2. Just don't take anyone
    - a) Example of Drummer:
      - (1) stayed around for 4 weeks
      - (2) then disappeared
        - (a) Changed phone number
        - (b) blocked on Facebook
    - b) Asked advice from Larry and Melinda - gave good reply
  3. Ask for help
- E. Ask other International church planters
1. However, your situation is not the same as theirs
  2. Don't compare your situation or church to another
    - a) Another Budapest church plant
      - (1) started the same time
      - (2) the other side of town
      - (3) joined the same denomination in Hungary
      - (4) Always comparing themselves to us
        - (a) How many did you have?
        - (b) How did you do this or that?
    - b) Other plants in Budapest
      - (1) Wide variety
      - (2) Hillsong church- Baptist Charismatic - Reformed- Chinese
      - (3) We have a prayer group and help one another
      - (4) Many times certain people are there and then disappear because it was too much for them and they closed their church

3. Ask your supporters for help
  - a) Money for a project
  - b) Prayer for wisdom
  - c) Sharing of resources
  - d) Campus Church
    - (1) I have seen USA churches try to open a campus church in Europe
      - (a) I believe they do it for many reasons
      - (b) I also believe they have a missionary on this side convincing them
    - (2) I have seen 2 open up in Greater Europe (Non-AGWM Europe)
    - (3) In my personal opinion, there is not much success in Europe
    - (4) I am not sure if the American ideas can be transfer into the host nation

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