Connect Europe

Chris Staples 25 February 2019





For a week in February, leaders from churches across Europe gathered in Switzerland for a Four12 Connect.[1] Nations represented covered Switzerland, Isle of Man, UK, Poland, Spain and Romania. In addition, we were joined by Andrew Selley and Lukas Nakos from Joshua Generation Church in South Africa, and Bal Krishnan from India. Churches represented are at different points in their journey with Four12, from “looking in” to full partnership.

It was a powerful and rich time of teaching, fellowship, worship, prayer and prophecy. Perhaps the deepest reflection from the retreat was God’s reminder to us that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.

‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.’ (John 15:5, NIV)

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As leaders, we carry responsibility as under-shepherds of Christ for the church, and this can make us driven and super busy. It was so powerful to focus on the love and kindness of God, and on our own relationships with the Lord as our primary fuel for ministry. This is something critical to leaders and the churches they lead.

It is exciting to see what God is doing in the European churches as opportunities for the gospel are potentially opening in other countries. It was very encouraging to see such a hunger and humility in every leader to seek God, learn from others, and apply New Testament church-building principles.

There are challenges in almost every context, with opposition to Christianity growing in European culture. Professor Bullivant from St Mary’s University, London, published a report in 2018 based on a survey of the views of 16-29 year olds across Europe, and concluded that ‘Christianity as a default…is probably gone for good…the new default setting is “no religion”…in 20 or 30 years, mainstream churches will be smaller, but the few people left will be highly committed’.[2]

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This means that there is a great opportunity for Four12, and there is undoubtedly an urgency to raise up healthy churches that can become base churches for the mission of the gospel. We learned from Ezekiel’s prophecy (Ezekiel 37:1-14) how we must develop Bones, Bonds and Breath for the Battle! We all left with a deeper level of relationship, refreshed spirits and an awareness and expectation for the great work ahead. Thank you to **All4Jesus** in Switzerland for their great love and hospitality.

‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.’ (Romans 16:1, NIV)

[1] **Source:** "'Christianity as default is gone': the rise of non-Christian Europe" – Survey of 16-29 Year Olds in The Guardian 20 March 2018)