



acornnews

NEWSLETTER × AUTUMN 2021

training youth leaders in Bible-centred youth work



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editorial

Full of joy, full of students and pretty much full of staff.

“Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” JOHN 16:24

It's incredible that Jesus *invites* his disciples to ask the Father for things in prayer in His name. Interestingly the command is to ask, so that their “joy would be full.”

We said goodbye to last year's students, thankful for their joy in and commitment to making Christ known to others (see picture below). Leading up to the summer we were worrying about what to do if we didn't get enough students for the 2021–22 Acorn Bible Training course (*Acorn Bibliai Képzés – ABK*). The team had laboured hard, advertised, produced videos, put on open days in April, and spoken individually with as many people as we could. Many of you joined us in praying for 12 students to sign up. When the deadline passed on 30th June we had seven students. Clearly we were disappointed, but we didn't give up. We extended the deadline by a month, and prayed on. We had done all we could. You can imagine our delight when four students applied in July, bringing the total to 11. This whilst not full – helped us relax heading into our summer holidays. Even more joy came early August when the twelfth student applied, and then another three just to round things off.

↓ A room full of students on ABK



Whilst in the grand scheme of things this may be a small thing, we were so grateful and *full of joy*. We asked. God answered.

The students are energetic, enthusiastic and eager to learn (read more on pages 4–5). The residential first weekend together was a real blessing, and we are grateful that so far Covid isn't preventing real-life training. God has provided a mature group of mentors who work individually with the students (see page 3).

And we are also grateful that **our team is full**. András Szabó started working in October to help set up a Hungarian charity to develop our work and also lead the HR, financial and safeguarding aspect of the work from the Hungarian side (more on team developments on page 6).

And so we want to again say a huge thank you for your prayers, whether they are daily through the PrayerMate feed, or regular on other occasions.

Andy & Zsófi Oatridge
Founding Directors



acornpartnership

Meet the (ABK) mentor!

Every student on Acorn Bible Training – *Acorn Bibliai Képzés (ABK)* – receives a ‘feedback teacher’ – a.k.a. ‘mentor’ – with whom they meet to receive on-the-ground support.

Once a month, following group and individual preparation, the students give their talks in their youth groups. Their mentor then listens in on the teaching, either through a visit or recording, and meets with their student in person where possible (online if not) to reflect together on how it went.

The goal is that the students receive encouragement in how God spoke through and used their talk, objective insight into their teaching, and space to ask questions and grow in how they teach the Bible to teenagers.

This year, 8 Hungarian mentors are joining the Acorn team to help in this work, all with experience of youth work and teaching. Reformed church youth pastor Hunor Koncz connected with Acorn through the Langham preaching movement, and agreed to help in the mentoring of ABK students. We asked Hunor why he decided to get involved with ABK mentoring this September:

Andy approached me, and I was inspired by his enthusiasm, even if it was a bit foreign to me. Practically speaking, taking part through giving students feedback was a good fit for my current situation, with the time and energy I have available.

I am happy to give feedback because I personally received very little, or if I did, it was sometimes quite subjective and not very constructive. Acorn has a clear, objective, biblical evaluation system and framework. They are not driven by a desire to people-please but rather by a desire to teach God's Word faithfully, relevantly and clearly. I want to give good feedback that will strengthen students, support a youth group and help build the kingdom of God.

Another reason for my involvement is not so much to give feedback as to teach me. This role provides the opportunity to apply these principles to my own teaching. It strengthens me in my service, helping me grow in self-reflection and quality of preaching.

As ABK grows, the need for mentors will grow with it. Praise God for men and women like Hunor, who are willing to give of their spare time to support this work. Pray that over the year ahead more youth workers from across Hungary with experience in and a passion for preaching the Bible's message would come forward, so that this mentor team can grow too!



← Hunor Koncz

acorntraining

Learning and growing together on ABK

For the first time in the three year history of Acorn's Bible training course, there were more applicants than course spaces!

It is cause for great praise to God that ABK is full – with 13 students and another youth leader auditing the course!. In fact if others are invited to take a look at what's going on, it's questionable whether there is enough space in our current venue!

The students who gathered together on the first weekend went from being silent and reserved to open and often very vocal! During both sessions and breaks the conversations and questions flowed, points of contact were made and trust deepened. It was remarkable to see the change, and to delight in being brothers and sisters in Christ, learning and growing together.

Joining from...

1. Budapest
2. Székesfehérvár
3. Érd
4. Bátorfő
5. Budaörs
6. Orosháza



The students at a glance

MINISTRIES ALONGSIDE YOUTH WORK

main church leader,
missionary, R.E. teacher

DENOMINATION

Baptist, Lutheran, Reformed,
Free Evangelical, Pentecostal



average

31

years old

18–56

total range



6 women



8 men

RANGE OF EXPERIENCE
TEACHING THE BIBLE

1 to 25 years

The course day has evolved to become one that focuses on giving examples of youth group talks whilst also giving plenty of opportunity and support in preparing a youth group talk.

Valuable input from youth leaders in the UK has helped us see that for anyone writing Bible talks, 'preedback' is as important as 'feedback'. In practice, that means being able to discuss and share thoughts in the preparation stage, before writing and delivering a talk. This helps students hugely not just in the talk-writing but in the process of learning how to approach a Bible text and communicate its message. Therefore strong emphasis is given to group preparation with the ABK teaching team and one another on the Saturday course days. The principle, practice and value of learning from one another shines through.

¹One applicant from the original 15 has deferred by a year

Shaping not just our Bible talks...

Mel Lacy, from *Growing Young Disciples*, delivered a four-day training programme online to the ABK teaching team in June. A further three from the mentor team were also able to join. Each Acorn team member gave a youth talk, was given (pretty ruthless!) feedback and gained invaluable wisdom across a range of areas.

Zsófi Oatridge shared what she appreciated about the training:

The four days' training with Mel Lacy highlighted to me the need to continually be trained as we seek to train others. Her gifting in how to teach people to teach the Bible was inspirational. Her examples and application of how the text impacts young people today underlined for me, and the rest of the team, that we need to work even harder on relevant application. I also learned so much about what it's like to be an ABK student, to be a teenager listening to a Bible talk, and all in the context of fun training together as a team. Thanks Mel!

Not only did the team grow in giving Bible talks, but in their teaching skills



too. It is one thing to prepare and give your own talk, but quite another to help someone else to do the same. This may be particularly the case when you can't assume the same starting point as those you're teaching, for not everyone comes from a 'Bible-centred' context. Szilárd Tam explained his 'takeaway' lesson:

As a teacher, it's important to have an agenda and a direction to what I want the students to learn. It's not enough to just ask questions and wait for good or bad answers to correct. I need to interactively lead the students and pass on what needs explaining.

Alongside the practical lessons, hearts were shaped. For we do not gain our identity through the giving of a good/average Bible talk – although too often we allow that. The freeing truth that God loves us despite how 'relevant' our talk was and that His power is made perfect through our weakness is awe-inspiring. Holding on to these truths, the goal of ABK still stands: to help train youth leaders to correctly handle the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).

A typical ABK Saturday →



8.30	Arrival & coffee	Students prepare & teach in youth group
9.00	Example youth group & observation (e.g. Mk 1:1–15)	
9.45	Break	
10.00	Feedback on youth group & preparation tips	
10.45	Break	Feedback from mentor
11.00	Understanding the Text 1 & 2 (e.g. Mk 2:1–12), Tool for understanding	
12.30	Lunch	
13.30	Communicating the Message 1	
14.45	Break	
15.00	Communicating the Message 2	
15.45	Reflection, prayer, close	
16.00	Finish	

acornteam

Change for the better!

The longer Acorn is in Hungary, the more the organisation's needs evolve and require adapting to.

The time has come for Acorn to set up as a Hungarian charity – and András Szabó has joined the team this autumn to slot into this and other HR roles. It is an answer to a long-standing prayer request for an Operations Manager, for which we praise the Lord!

This is exciting not just because the team is growing, but because it is growing *in Hungarians*! The Acorn team is now made up of four nationals – András, Krisztián, Zsófi and Szilárd – together with Bori Mikola, who has joined the ABK teaching team. We hope this will impact the 'Hungarian' flavour of Acorn's work, enabling it to better reflect what Hungarians think and need.

This dynamic has already impacted the working language in the office (resulting in mixed emotions for the non-Hungarians present!), meaning that the training provided is more culturally relevant, and prayer meetings and Bible-study workshops are more accessible to non-English-speaking Hungarians.



↑ First office 8 years ago! ...the new office



↑ Ifjúságépítő & Acorn teams together

Not only has the team grown, but its base is new. The Acorn office location has now moved 15 minutes closer to Budapest town, where the team work three days in a building owned by Cru (previously Campus Crusade for Christ).

Another day of the week the team meet in the Christian organisation *Ifjúságépítők* – Youth Builders – office in Budapest town centre. Acorn are intentionally building on a long-standing partnership with leader Áron Ablonczy and his team. Áron preached at this summer's commissioning service for Acorn's students and is a mentor with ABK. He told us:

Being together in the same office enables us to serve one another as we ask how we're doing and invest our energy into helping our youth groups be even better. As we see what others focus on, such as how well Acorn does in helping teach the Bible, it also sheds light on what we're doing well as an organisation and what direction we should go in.

Change for change's sake is not always for the best. The prayer is that these changes would have a positive impact on the Acorn team and their work – to the glory of the God they serve.

acorn supporters

How you can pray

acorn partnership

THANK GOD FOR the 8 Hungarian mentors joining ABK this year, and their commitment to growing in their own preaching as well as supporting students in theirs

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Good relationships to form with mentors' students, wisdom in giving feedback & growing in their own preaching ministries
- More to become interested in joining the mentor team, from Hungary or the UK

acorn team

THANK GOD FOR the addition of András to the team and the new office base & its positive impact on the team, together with the partnership with the Ifjúságépítők team

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Wisdom and skill for András as he settles into setting up Acorn as a Hungarian charity

acorn training (ABK)

THANK GOD FOR

- The 9 students commissioned in August from last years' Acorn Bible Training – for their passion for Christ and ongoing commitment to serving him amongst young people
- Mel Lacy's training in June and for lessons learned
- Leading 13 students to commit to the ABK course and one more to audit the course – who are engaged and eager to develop how they teach the Bible to teenagers

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- ABK's new students to be joyful in what they discover in Scripture, diligent in preparation, questioning and seeking answers, and growth in specific ways either personally or in teaching ability
- Teaching staff to settle quickly into the new curriculum, prepare and adapt material well to the students and to watch their lives and doctrine closely as teachers of others

acorn support & opportunities

- **MEETING NEEDS:** praise God for helping to meet Acorn's needs for an Operations Manager, for marketing that clearly communicated what ABK is all about & 20 years of blessing through Acorn camps ministry
- **CONNECT:** pray that any churches interested in sending a short term mission team to Hungary in summer 2022 would find the right church in Hungary to host and reach out with the gospel to teenagers
- **GOVERNANCE:** Trustee vacancies: Pray God would provide two new trustees who can bring wisdom and experience to the board

acornopportunities

save the date!

Acorn Prayer Meeting 2022

Tuesday 25th January 2022
19:00–20:00

Join online to pray for the work of Acorn together with brothers and sisters from the UK and Hungary! Zoom details to follow.

acornconnect

Would your church like to get involved in short-term mission next summer 2022? Could you organise and send a team to run an English camp for teenagers in Hungary? If we hear of a church longing to share the gospel in their local area with your help, Acorn can connect you up! Crosslinks could also help send you out. Contact [Sam Bronsdon](#) for more information!

The Celebration of 20 Years of Acorncamps was a wonderful testimony to God's work through His people in the UK and Hungary over the years.

Celebrating the memories of God's work through Acorn! →



Köszönjük Szépen! Thank You!

...for supporting us, praying for us,
and being a part of this work!



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