

AN UPDATE CONCERNING THE FULL-TIME TRAINING IN LONDON CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

In *The Kernel of the Bible*, Brother Lee says,

Now I want to say strongly that the Lord must build His church in the territory of Antichrist. Before Antichrist appears, the Lord Jesus must build His churches in Western Europe. Although many Christians are waiting for the Lord to come back, He is waiting for the building up of His churches. Praise the Lord that our eyes have been opened to see the need of the building of the local churches! In Italy, France, Switzerland, England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway there is such a need. How I long that you all would be burdened to go to the major cities in Europe so that the Lord might have a church in each of them! (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977, vol. 1, ch. 18, pp. 334-335*)

In the history of the Lord's recovery, training the young people has always been crucial for the Lord's move, and this training requires the proper facilities.

The Full-time Training in London (FTTL) began in 1997. After occupying two previous training facilities, the FTTL moved in 2005 to its current location at Bower House in north-east London. The Bower House estate included an 18th-century manor house as well as classroom facilities and accommodation built in the 1970s. In 2017 we further acquired an adjacent property that was previously part of the original Bower House estate. This property, known as Bower Farm, consists of old barns and stables. Having recombined these two properties together, the training center has now become one 17-acre campus.

By the Lord's sovereign arrangement, this campus is situated in a strategic location for the Lord's move in Europe. It sits within the London metropolitan area, one of the largest in Western Europe, with 15 million inhabitants, and is within a commutable distance for over 20 million people, from Oxford in the west to Cambridge in the east. The nearest airport, Stansted, is about a 30-minute drive away and is used by many affordable airlines as the gateway to the major cities in Europe, which are between one and three hours away by air. Heathrow airport in the west of London is the busiest airport in Europe and has recently been linked by a modern, direct train ride to the Bower House area.

In all our years at Bower House, we have been working to develop plans and gain permission for a modern and upgraded training facility for the sake of the Lord's move in Europe. We began this process by seeking permission to build a facility to replace the current classrooms. The new training center would comfortably provide the classrooms, kitchen, study areas, and dining facilities for at least 200 trainees. The space can also be opened up into a single meeting room that can seat close to 1,000 saints. This will be the first meeting space of that size in Europe and will be a great support for the blending of the saints in Europe and a strengthening to the church in London. In recent years this permission was granted, and we moved on to seek permission to redevelop the barns and stables at Bower Farm into FTTL accommodation. Combined with the existing on-site facilities, this would provide a total accommodation capacity across the campus for at least 200 trainees. At present the trainees live in various houses, which are often a significant distance away from the training center by car. With the new training center campus, it is possible that all the trainees could be living on site.

Our last report on the construction of the new training center given in December 2024 mentioned that the construction process had come to an end due to insufficient funds, and the majority of

the serving ones returned to work or other areas of service. What had already been accomplished up to that point is as follows:

- Planning permission for the training center had been granted;
- The architectural and engineering drawings had been largely completed;
- Preparations of the construction site had commenced, including setting up offices and facilities for workers and completing a construction road leading up to the site;
- We continued to pursue planning permission to convert barns and stables on the Bower Farm property. Permission was granted in January of this year.

During the recent months, the prayer and fellowship continued about how to proceed, and we are thankful to the Lord that adequate funds have since been received to commence the first phase of construction on the new training center, and we have already begun. Most significantly, the first phase includes the demolition of the former classrooms and laying the foundation and underground utilities for the new training center.

During the recent interim we moved the FTTL classrooms into the former dining room in the manor house. Dining rooms have moved to former study and fellowship areas. We have approximately 50 trainees at present from all over Europe and other locations around the world. In this new situation, our classroom and dining capacity is adequate for approximately 60 trainees. While we have a temporary arrangement to carry out the training, the space is greatly condensed, and the need for a proper training center, especially one that can facilitate the growing number of young people that will come to be trained, is even more urgent. This spring term we will have many students and young adults coming to visit as short-term trainees, which will bring the temporary training center to its maximum capacity. We expect many more young people to be gained by the Lord and to come to the training. This would include those gained from the gospel and shepherding labor in France (during and after the Paris 2024 Olympic Gospel Trips), the recent FTT gospel trips throughout Europe, as well as from the college campuses and the children of the saints. All of these ones can access the training in London through a two-year visa designed for Christian communities of this nature. We pray that the new training center would be finished in a timely way to accommodate this growing need.

The demolition work also affects the current storage and distribution of ministry books as well as the Bibles for Europe (BfE) UK distribution center. The BfE operation at Bower House distributes Bibles throughout the UK and Ireland as well as France and other French-speaking countries in Europe, German-speaking countries outside of Germany, and Iceland. The storage and operations for the books and BfE will move into temporary containers, but like the FTTL, these functions need a proper facility to accommodate the growing hunger in Europe for the Bible and for the interpreted Word. The new buildings will meet this need.

Please continue to pray that the Lord will provide the necessary funds and serving ones to carry out the construction to complete this project for the going on of the training. May the Lord gain this facility for the young people in Europe to be trained for His move on the earth.

A corresponding video can be found at: amanatrust.org.uk/page/reports

Full information about how to donate and designate gifts for the construction project can be found at: amanatrust.org.uk/page/donations

For more information about the construction project and how to volunteer, please email: buildingprojects@amanatrust.org.uk

WORKS CITED

Lee, Witness. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977*, vol. 1, "The Kernel of the Bible." Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 2014.