

AN UPDATE CONCERNING THE FULL-TIME TRAINING IN LONDON
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
DECEMBER 2024 SEMIANNUAL TRAINING

Our last report was presented in December 2023, and we would like to give an update concerning the development of the new training center and accommodation for the Full-time Training in London (FTTL). In this last year, we have not had the funds required to initiate the major construction project of the new FTTL training center. Instead, most of the saints serving on the construction project have needed to find work. Over the summer of 2024, as the team of saints was coming to the end of their service, they prepared the site fully for the Bower House training center project to begin when it can. Underground work for utilities were initiated, offices and facilities for workers were set up, and a construction road and a widening of the Bower Farm entrance were completed.

Despite this reduction in manpower, we have still needed to consider how to accommodate the rapidly growing needs of the Full-time Training in London, especially the housing. We have over 50 trainees at present from all over Europe and also from all over the world, as we have an excellent two-year visa that is ideal for FTTL trainees. We expect many more young people to be gained by the Lord and come to the training, including from the recent gospel and shepherding labor in France during and after the Paris 2024 Olympic Gospel Trips, as well as from the college campuses and the children of the saints.

To meet this need, the remaining serving ones have been focusing initially on our current houses and small projects that would improve the houses and increase our housing capacity for the trainees. We are also working on Bower Farm. This is a historic farm with stables and barns adjacent to Bower House, which we purchased in 2017 and is now fully integrated into the training center campus. By converting these buildings into accommodation for the training, we will provide the FTTL with an additional 94 purpose-made beds. Instead of living a significant distance away from the training center by car, the trainees will be a short walk across the grounds of Bower House. The approval process for this has been slow, complicated, and accompanied by much prayer, but we anticipate this will finally happen in the very near future. The farm buildings can be converted one at a time as funds allow, and the conversion of the lower stable, for example, will be very practical in terms of manpower and expense. This building alone will create an additional 16 beds.

We are still hopeful however that there will be a way in time to start work on the main training center building. We have full planning permission for this building, and the delay to the construction start date has allowed the initial plans to develop into the detailed design and engineering drawings required to press on with construction.

The present facilities at Bower House can receive approximately 100 trainees at a maximum. The FTTL classroom could accommodate up to 150 if we removed the tables we currently use, but we would still be limited in our dining room capacity, study areas, and housing.

With the building of the new training center, we would have a building with a capacity for 1,000 people seated. This would be the first property of its kind in all of Europe. The design of this new training center is with the full-time training in mind, and having an appropriate facility would be an amazing benefit to the trainees as well as for the blending of the saints throughout Europe.

AN UPDATE ON WOODLAND CAMP

Woodland Camp is now fully open and functioning as an event center for the saints in Europe. Although we have not yet built all the facilities that we have permission to construct, the camp is more than capable of receiving and cherishing the saints.

Up to 148 beds are available in 18 cabins, 120 people at a time can eat in the dining hall, and 150 people can meet in the main meeting hall. Moreover, the large tent which for many years sat in the grounds of Bower House has now been moved to the center of Woodland Camp and provides meeting space for over 350 people as well as overflow space for eating and recreation. The tent is truly a delightful addition to the camp with windows looking out on the central lawn to one side and the woodland valley on the other. The roof is canvas, but the walls are solid, and the space is heated. It has been equipped with full audiovisual facilities, and bathrooms have recently been added to the outside as well as an access ramp.

The grounds are also developing. The areas around the cabins are simple but pleasantly filled with grass and trees and shrubs. The valley and the woodlands are slowly being opened up again with pathways and viewing points across the valley. There are several vantage points from which one can see the skyscrapers of central London, reminding us that although Woodland Camp feels peaceful and remote, it is immediately within reach of a major European capital city as well as an airport about a half hour away that has flights all throughout Europe.

The last year at Woodland Camp has seen the site becoming busier and busier. Events have included *Weekend Retreats* for the saints and their gospel friends, *One-week Trainings* for the saints and new ones to spend a week in a training environment, the *Winter School of Truth* for the young people, as well as other young people's conferences, away days and weekends for college students, and the Full-time Training in London graduation.

We have also had a number of other Christian groups rent the facility, and it has been their feedback which has made us realize that Woodland Camp is really exceptional as a venue, not only in London but in the whole of the UK. The quality and care of the construction and furnishing carried out by the saints and the heart of love evidenced by the giving of the recovery has produced something very special for the Lord's move in Europe.

In *Basic Lessons on Service*, Brother Lee says,

The hall becomes like the palanquin mentioned in the Song of Songs, built and prepared through the love of the virgins (3:9-10). The serving saints prepare the meeting hall to be the palanquin on which Christ can be carried. Such a meeting hall will surely be different from any kind of auditorium. When we enter into an auditorium, we have the sense of coldness. But when we come into our meeting hall, which has been prepared, vacuumed, and cleaned by so many virgins, the sense is different. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1979*, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," pp. 94-95)

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

For information regarding participating in this current building project by either praying, giving, or going, please visit lordsmove.org and/or amanatrust.org.uk.

If you would like more information about Europe, including area reports and burdens for migration, you can find it on our website: amanatrust.org.uk/page/reports.