

Shepherding Trips Report

March 2025

The Lord is continuing to bless His move in French-speaking Europe. In addition to the short-term shepherds who continue to care for the saints and new ones, we also welcomed the FTTA/FTTL trainees for a two-week period to join us in our laborD.

Through the fellowship in the Body there is increasing coordination from other countries, including the UK, Spain, Poland, Germany, Canada, and Brazil, who are sending saints to meet the present need. We look to the Lord's continued blessing and anticipate that He will raise up 3 new lampstands by the middle of this year—in Nanterre (a suburb of Paris), Lille, and Toulouse. Many cities in French-speaking Europe are ripe for harvest, and some existing churches also need shepherding and strengthening. Currently, we have 16 full-time serving ones on the team in Paris. Our original goal was to have 20 serving ones, but we now realize that if we had 50, they would all be fully occupied. We need many more saints to migrate in order to meet the long-term need. May the Lord send workers to match His present move.

Prayer Burdens

- Lord, release the visas so the saints can come to shepherd the new ones/ the lambs/the flock
- Lord, call those to serve You on the full-time team in Paris

Paris Region

In the Paris region we are laboring in five different areas. We are blending with all the saints who have been here for many years. The short-term shepherds have been a real supply to these saints, and there has been the sweet flow of life. In a few short months many new ones have been gained and are being added to the church. Each area has new ones participating in group meetings.

Lille

Currently, we have 3 households and 24 new ones. Of the new ones, 14 have completed the 3 volumes of the *Basic Elements of the Christian Life* and are reading *The Economy of God* with us in small home meetings or in appointments with 1 or 2. The next step is to establish them in larger home meetings in a regular way.

Rouen

Every Saturday in Rouen the saints hold 2 group meetings focused on nourishing 8-10 new ones. Four of the new ones also are going to the Lord's table meeting in nearby Dieppe. In Rouen there is a blended effort with saints from the UK, Dieppe, and Paris coming to be a support and to meet the present need here. Three saints have recently migrated here.

Toulouse

The church life in Toulouse is really blossoming. We have 4-7 students in the college meeting, 6-10 saints in the prayer meeting, and 25-30 gathering for the Lord's Day meeting. We have had a total of 18 new baptisms. Especially encouraging is how the new ones are developing a genuine taste for the ministry: our Life-study participation has grown from 3 to 12 attendees, with the new ones eagerly bringing their friends.

Luxemburg

In Luxembourg three families are laboring. We have an apartment next to the university campus, which has been pivotal for the ongoing care of the students. The most recent Lord's Day meeting had 11 whom we met from the OL trips and recent distributions, and they all shared their enjoyment of the Lord with us.

Geneva, Switzerland

In Geneva, Switzerland, 14 saints and 8 new ones are being cared for. The saints truly appreciate the flow in the Body and the supply of the visiting saints.

Shepherding Notes from Luxembourg

Here is a summary of our last few weeks:

We distributed Bibles in Esch. A brother, who does not meet with us but lives near the distribution point invited us to his home for sandwiches and spent a long time sharing his testimony with us.

We traveled to Paris with the trainees for the closing meeting of the gospel trip. It was very encouraging to hear the reports from the 11 teams that were in French-speaking regions. We spent a day with a young man from Brazil who is studying in Paris, and then we attended the meeting together. While there we participated in the Lord's table meeting in the new Paris meeting hall.

We had a Bible study with a Portuguese-speaking young woman from Esch, who was contacted during the previous week of the gospel trip.

We had a prayer time with the local couple via Zoom.

On Lord's Day there were 11 saints in the meeting.

A new one and his girlfriend were baptized. Hallelujah! Thank you for your prayers.

We had our second Bible study with a new one. She seems interested in continuing these sessions. When we asked if the commitment was confirmed, she said, "More than confirmed!" She has been responding well to the Word and the ministry.

A brother gained from the OL gospel trips wanted to take us to Germany before we returned to Brazil, so he arranged a trip to a German town near the Luxembourg border. We had a pleasant afternoon together. Later we had dinner with this same brother and a few of his friends. During the gathering everyone shared portions of the Word they had been enjoying. It was a sweet time of fellowship. One of his friends has a trip planned to Brazil on March 10. He is open to spending time with us during his stay there.

We had dinner at another one's house whom we also met during the OL gospel trips. At this gathering we had 2 couples contacted from the OL trips, one couple we have met since then, some of their friends and one local brother, plus ourselves. The guests were all young adults and seekers. We had a rich time of fellowship. The local brother opened his heart to them and encouraged them to "Gain the Lord and let themselves be gained by Him," which, as young people, is the best thing they can do!

Additionally, a young woman, who was contacted during the gospel trip asked where we met. We gave her the address, and she came! She is from the Philippines and has been in Luxembourg on an exchange program since December. She was very happy to meet the brothers and participate in the meeting and said she wants to attend every Sunday.

This whole week was very special. Since it was our last week here, the new ones and the brothers were full of emotion and made several arrangements for us to spend as much time together as possible. We truly felt the Lord's love through each one of them. One of the new ones we met at the end of January even offered to help with transportation to the airport.

These three months here were truly special. We are grateful to the Lord and for the prayers of the saints. Praise the Lord!

Truth Lessons Series in Paris

The church in Paris began a series of truth lessons on Saturday, March 15, at the new meeting hall in Palaiseau. We covered the assurance and security of salvation, the precious blood of Christ, and baptism. The group times were full of rich fellowship and sharing, and the saints enjoyed spending the day together. We aim to continue these lessons approximately every six weeks so that the saints will be perfected in the truth, and as a way to shepherd new ones into the experience and practice of the church life.

The following are sharings from the ones contacted during gospel trips:

"When we sin, as Christians, once we confess a specific sin, there is no need to confess it again. When we keep thinking about the sin we already confessed and feel bad, this is actually the devil who's coming to bother us. He's the accuser, the one who makes us feel guilty all the time. God, when He forgives us, that's it, there's no need for us to come back again and again with the same thing. Once confessed, once forgiven. When God forgives, He forgets. 1 John 1.9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness!"

"I really liked participating in this Truth Conference. I learned things about the truth that I had never heard before. For example, Jesus is righteousness, and what He says is right, so it gives the Bible the authority to be reliable and full of truth. Also, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross paid the price for the sin that was on us."

"The blood of Christ is for us! This is something so liberating, it is there to wash us and cleanse us and forgive us from our sins! When we sin, we shouldn't be hiding from the face of God, but we should come to Him and let Him expose us, and we should then confess our sin and apply the blood of Christ. His blood has already been shed ("without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" — Heb. 9:22b); we need to realize that and apply His blood daily. We need to understand and believe that we are forgiven, and that when God forgives, He also forgets! Don't remind the Lord what He

has already forgotten! The devil is constantly tormenting us by accusing us day and night, so let's declare to the enemy that by the precious blood of Christ, we have been forgiven and justified by God!"

"I enjoyed the matter of the assurance of salvation. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life." God gave His only begotten Son so that we could be saved. Just believing into the Lord Jesus saves us; we can have the assurance that we have received eternal life. This is a fact; it is true; it is what God says. And also, we may feel that we're a bit far from God. When this happens, it's because of sin; we need to confess our sins to restore our fellowship with Christ and maintain it always uninterrupted."

"Baptism – we can be baptized at any time of our life; there's no need to prepare ourselves beforehand. It represents also a contact with our Father. Even if the event and the fact happen once for all, the reality of this baptism needs to be lived on a daily basis. Every day we need to be immersed in this water, not physically but by experiencing His death, by getting rid of all the negative things, by applying His precious blood. It is a way also to be reconnected to God, to be identified with Him, inwardly. Also, baptism always needs to involve the Holy Spirit; the ritual alone is not enough. We see it also during the Lord Jesus' baptism in the Gospels; we see the Spirit descending upon Him and His Father declaring, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight." Through baptism God can also see us as His sons, not only as His children."

"Once we believe into the Lord and are baptized, we may wonder whether this baptism is physical or spiritual. There are actually two aspects: we are baptized in the water, physically, and in the Holy Spirit, spiritually. We then become a disciple of the Lord. We are baptized into the Triune God, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are also identified with Christ; we are immersed in Him. We were born in the realm of Adam, but through baptism we have been transferred into the realm of Christ. We were baptized into His death, and His death terminates our natural life, our old nature, our self, our flesh, and even all our past. After our baptism we become a new person in resurrection. This is not only a future condition; it is also a process in the present; it happens now. And we can experience this reality every day, at every moment."

"I was touched by the love of Christ for us that caused Him to go through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion and resurrection in order to deal with our sin, to pay the debt for us, and to save us. Now we can enter into this process by entering into the water of baptism. We are baptized into His death. He suffered long hours on the cross. He died, He was buried, and three days later He resurrected. We just need to believe and be immersed in water; it only takes a few minutes. He made things so easy for us; we don't need to suffer anymore. He already accomplished everything. This liberates us; it frees us from a big burden, since the work has already been done by Him."

"I really enjoyed hearing that when we confess our sins and are washed by the blood of Christ, the guilt we feel afterward is the work of Satan. We often hear that guilt is a good thing because it proves that we sincerely regret our sinful deed, but thank the Lord that when He cleanses us, He also cleanses us from our guilt; it has no power anymore on us! We are completely washed."