

AN UPDATE CONCERNING A TRAINING CENTER FOR ALL OF EUROPE

DECEMBER 2023 SEMIANNUAL TRAINING

The Need for Training

The way of training is a great principle in the New Testament and a great factor of blessing in the Lord's recovery.

In 1992 Brother Lee said:

Another thing I want to make clear is our burden to have trainings to train the saints. Brother Nee conducted regular trainings for the saints in mainland China. I came out of mainland China to Taiwan in 1949. We started a formal training there for four months in 1953. From that year on, I set aside a few months nearly every year for the training of the saints.

If you ask me to stop the training work and stop the publications, I cannot do it. I must obey my Lord who sent me, who charged me, and who gave me this commission to help His recovery, who gave me this burden of the ministry of His word to release His word. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988, vol. 3, "A Timely Word," pp. 73-74*)

Brother Lee shared in the first graduation of the Full-time Training in Anaheim:

A training in the Lord's recovery is very crucial, and we must bear the burden to pray for it. Without a training the church cannot be prevailing. Because of the training, a number of saints who have been in the church life for only a short time have been growing quickly. Without a training, however, we may all be common Christians, simply attending the meetings year after year. To be trained makes a great difference in our Christian life. After a few months of training we will never be the same. The regular church meetings help us only in a general way. The training, however, helps us in particular ways. To be trained is to become more useful in the Lord's hands. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988, vol. 3, "The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way," p. 479*)

In 1977 Brother Lee shared his impression after a visit to Europe:

I believe that at the end time, before Antichrist comes, the Lord will shame His enemy by establishing a strong testimony in Europe. I am burdened that we would go to every country in Europe. I now see that the Lord sent His recovery to the United States to gain a number of young people to send to Europe. The greatest need for our labor in the Lord's recovery today is in Europe. We need to send a good number of young brothers and sisters there.

The Lord's second coming cannot be brought about by religion. The burden is upon us. I believe that one day through His recovery the Lord will gain a living testimony in every major city.

I believe that the Lord will prepare a good number of saints to send out to Europe and Israel to raise up churches. He will come back when He can tell the

enemy, “You have set up many religious things, but look at My church, My bride. They all live by Me and are one with Me. They are no longer religious and have no tradition, superstition, or falsehood. They have only Christ. They are a group of people who are fully Christ-conscious, and they are My testimony.” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977*, vol. 1, “The Recovery of Christ in the Present Evil Age,” pp. 431, 435-436)

Not only is there a need for young saints to emigrate to Europe, but young people from Europe also need to be trained in order to establish the strong testimony in Europe that Brother Lee spoke of.

A Training Center for All of Europe

In 1991 Brother Lee said, “We may first strengthen the ministry in England because eventually England will be crucial for all of Europe” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992*, vol. 1, “Elders’ Training, Book 11: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (3),” p. 197).

In line with Brother Lee’s fellowship, the Full-time Training in London (FTTL) began in the United Kingdom in 1997 and serves the entire continent of Europe with an approximate population of 600 million. The training was initially carried out in a small facility in West London, followed by a larger facility to the southwest of London but eventually, it settled at Bower House in Northeast London in August 2005, when it was purchased through the giving of the saints from all over the earth. To date, just over 350 saints have completed the two-year training, with an additional 166 participating in at least one term. These represent at least 54 countries, including 26 European countries.

At present, the Bower House property and nearby housing can accommodate approximately 100 trainees at the maximum. The United Kingdom has an excellent two-year visa for FTTL trainees, not only from Europe but also from almost every country on earth. However, there is the growing need for enlarged training facilities as the Lord’s move in Europe advances. Country by country and city by city, the Lord is gaining this continent and raising up young people from among the children of the saints and from the college campuses.

Bower House is also the home office of Bibles for Europe. The free Recovery Versions are being sown throughout the continent, and the world situation is softening the hearts of the people and turning them to the Lord. The fields are white, and the need is greater than ever for a group of trained saints, constituted with the riches in the Word and in the ministry to be raised up and thrust out.

Any gathering at Bower House larger than 150 saints is conducted in a marquee (tent), which has been in constant use for the past 15 years for conferences, blending events, seminars, meetings for the church in London, and FTTL graduations. Bible packing and shipping for the UK and many parts of Europe also takes place in the marquee, and hundreds of Bibles are sent out each week. However, the marquee is reaching the end of its capacity as well as its lifespan. The other rooms at Bower House are insufficient for the growing full-time training, as well as for events for the increasing number of new seeking ones generated from the Bible requests and the *Life-study of the Bible* radio broadcast, in addition to the visiting and shepherding by the trainees, serving ones, and local saints.

Construction for the FTTL Training Center

Permission was fully granted to build a new training facility on the grounds of Bower House. This new building will include classrooms, a kitchen, dining space, AV rooms, restroom facilities, and a lobby and will have the capacity of holding at least 400 full-time trainees. The main room will have space for almost 1,000 saints and can be used for meetings by the church in London as well as the FTTL. With removable classroom wall partitions, the main room can be quickly converted into three separate rooms, each with the capacity of holding 250 to 300. Using tables and chairs, training style, the main room can hold at least 500 at a time.

With a small team of planners and construction workers, we have currently begun this work on the new training center. However, we can only go at the speed of the available funds. Our hope is to complete this training center in a little over two years in order to meet the need of the growing full-time training.

Underground work for utilities and cables has commenced. This winter we will begin preparations for the new building by taking down the marquee, which has served as the largest meeting place in the United Kingdom for the past 15 years. Demolition of the classroom buildings will follow. We are still awaiting a decision from the local council regarding the planning application at Bower Farm for additional training housing. Please pray that we would find favor and that permissions would be granted without unnecessary delay.

An Invitation to Participate

We are inviting volunteers from among the churches to join us for the completion of the training center in London, which is for the benefit of all of Europe. Saints participating in this building work will develop skills that will be useful for other building projects, including the meeting halls of cities throughout Europe. Housing and food will be provided for all volunteers, and we have appropriate visas as needed for those wishing to participate. If funds and workers are forthcoming, we expect to complete the FTTL training center in a little over two years.

In *The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move*, Brother Lee says:

Of the three influential factors in today's world, the Far East and the United States have been occupied and taken by the Lord's recovery. Europe still remains as a region in which the Lord's recovery needs to be rooted and grow. I hope that we would bring this fellowship to the Lord and pray. We should tell the Lord, "Lord, these days are the consummation of the age. Lord, in these days rekindle my love toward You." (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992*, vol. 1, "The World Situation and the Direction of the Lord's Move," p. 277)

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/reports.

WORKS CITED

Lee, Witness. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977*, vol. 1, "The Recovery of Christ in the Present Evil Age." Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 2021.

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