

Pre-Olympic Trips in Lille (and Brussels)

Before the start of the official TR and OL trips, the Russian-speaking trainees from FTTM-XW were sent from Warsaw, Poland, to Lille, northern France, to join 3 different trips, since this region also has a number of Russian-speaking saints. The goal of these trips was to till the soil, preparing the ground for the next stage, to strengthen the testimony there and also to encourage and refresh the local saints.

○ First trip: 8th–15th April

A group of six FTTM trainees, in their 3rd year, and a serving one came from Warsaw and stayed in Tournai, a Belgian city on the French border. They were joined by the local saints as well as saints from Brussels and Paris. Every day, after their morning class online, we drove from Tournai to the warehouse in Tourcoing where we had prayer and coordination for a while and then we either packed Bibles or went out to distribute in Lille (3 times). In the evenings, we were at the saints' place, either in Lille or Tournai, for dinner, fellowship and meetings. There was a lot of blending during this week; we had a big barbecue on Saturday in Tournai to which all the saints (from Brussels, Lille and nearby cities) were invited. We ended up having 65 people in total, and on Lord's day, we joined the table meeting in Brussels and had a big love feast all together again.

Our concept about French people being very closed was completely broken. We were so impressed by their openness, especially the young people, some were literally running to the table. Even 13- and 14-year-olds came to us including one boy, to whom we told we needed his parents' consent because he was underage, waited for more than 15 minutes next to us looking at his phone for his mother reply in order to take a Bible. We felt that people were really thirsty, and that this new generation is much more open and interested in the Lord. Also, a few times, people said that by meeting us and getting a Bible, they experienced that the Lord answered their prayers.

One day, at the end of the distribution, as we were waiting for the cars to go back home and singing hymns, a man passing by came back and watched us for a while. He told some saints there that he felt a particular atmosphere, that "he smelled a fragrance of Christ." The Lord really showed us that when we are one with Him and one with one another, there is really an expression of Christ being manifested and visible to people around us.

We also all felt that it was a Body matter. This is not just the work of the French-speaking saints but of the universal Body coming together and laboring in the same direction. Despite the outward circumstances, the Lord really blesses when we are in one accord. In addition to the Ukrainian trainees, several groups of British saints made the trip to the warehouse in Tourcoing in order to pack thousands of Bibles for all the gospel trips planned over the coming months. While they stayed in packing Bibles, we went out preaching the gospel in the city. It was really the whole Body laboring together.



○ Second trip: 11th–18th May

For the second trip, all the training center came from Warsaw, a total of 18 saints. We split up into 2 groups: 9 of them went to Brussels, Belgium, and 9 went to Lille and Tournai again.



The team in Brussels – 329 Bibles distributed



The team in Lille – 678 Bibles distributed

In Lille, we mainly packed Bibles, joined once by the Brussels team, but went out also a few times and this time once again, many young people came to us. In the course of a few hours, one young sister got more than 20 personal contacts, all of whom were French girls aged between 18 and 20. Many were touched, one even was in tears because she was praying that same morning that the Lord would put someone on her path who could encourage her in her faith and help her talk about the Lord to her father, who was more open now because of his family situation. We also went to an appointment with one girl who brought her friend along, because he had questions. And at the end, the friend was even more open than her. It was a really sweet time and we plan to meet up again next time.

We also used this time to visit a family of believers with four young children. The children were amazed to see that many people in their home, talking about the Lord, singing, praying, and they were really curious about the church life. We had a sweet and lovely time together and we came back the next day for coffee again.



○ Third trip: 1st–8th June

For the third trip, 14 saints came in total, the 7 regulars from FTTM-XW and 7 serving ones from Krakow and Warsaw. This time, all of them stayed in Lille and Tournai.

This trip, we had a distribution every day. Due to practical situation this time, we decided to not use any table or banners but to go straight to people to offer them Bibles. In a sense we had to exercise our spirit even more to go talk directly to people instead of waiting for them to come to us, but at the end the Lord blessed us so much and we had the same number of Bibles distributed than when we had tables and big banners.

On Tuesday, we split up into two different homes in Lille for dinner. One girl, already a believer, had met the saints during the distribution the day before and she joined us for the home meeting that night, and brought her older sister with her. Then another student, that we had met during the previous trip, came also that night. We had a lovely time together, sharing our testimonies, singing hymns and enjoying that the Bible is a divine romance and that God fell in love with man.

On Wednesday, the student who was with us on Tuesday at the home meeting wanted to see us again and joined the prayer meeting. She appreciated being with us so much she wanted to come back every day but sadly she finished work too late. We also met up with a girl who had brought her friend along, because he wanted a Bible also. He was so open, he asked questions and marveled at the gospel. He told us at the end that even if his friend didn't want to come to small meetings, he would!

On Thursday, a brother met a young man during the distribution who was so open and happy to meet us; he stayed there with us and helped us distribute Bibles, then when the brothers told him about a gathering and dinner that night, he was so glad to join us, so we brought him with us back to Tournai for dinner and fellowship.



On Friday, a young man, that we had met the day before, came back and asked to join the saints playing guitar and singing with his saxophone. We also prayed together and he said he wanted to get baptized but the priest told him he had to wait, so we read Acts 8 together, about the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip, he was very touched and is open to be baptized sooner. He exchanged numbers with one of the trainee brothers. Many young people prayed that day to receive the Lord, including two very young girls with tears in their eyes; the Lord really wants to gain this generation of French people!

Twice, contacts that we had met during the previous trips came back to the distribution point to greet us again; one of them was so happy to see us and she told the sister who had given her a Bible last time that her life had changed since she started reading it. She saw light that she had never seen before and a way she would have never imagined. She was full of life and joy! Thank You Lord, You are so living and Your words are spirit and are life!

Finally, we gathered for the last day at the saints' place for dinner and overflow time (around 40 people). The family we had visited during the previous trip came and we had a lovely time all together, sharing about our experiences and our highlights of the three trips. It was such a family atmosphere.



○ Prayer burdens:

- For a lampstand in Lille and a strong testimony in this city!
- For the French authorities, that there would be no hindrances for the Lord to move.
- For the follow-up and for more shepherds: we already have a lot of contacts and there are a very few local saints who can take care of them.
- For the next trips here in Lille, TR and OL.
- For migration.

○ Rough statistics for Lille only

	8 th – 15 th of April	11 th – 18 th of May	1 st – 8 th of June	Total
Time of labor (in min)	510	975	560	2045
NT distributed	282	678	1442	2402
Personal contact	29	40	55	124
Prayed to receive the Lord	2	15	52	69
Appointments	3	3	6	12
Came to the saints' home	0	0	4	4