

Finding the Way Home

One of the perils of my long distance running overseas is the threat of getting lost. No idle threat: I have been thoroughly disoriented in the great capitols of Europe (and beyond)--without map, address, or language with which to find a way 'home'. I now recall amusedly what was then 'panic in the streets' of Helsinki, Rotterdam, Milan, Bergen, Munich, Copenhagen, and Brussels, to name a few.

Yet nothing compared to the panic I experienced in the forests of Fountainbleu—the hunting grounds of the French kings outside of Paris.

A little background: I had been invited to speak at the Exodus Europe conference there. I was particularly excited as Desert Stream had received a strong prophesy from a reliable source that 'Living Waters' would find its richest expression in the French-speaking world. This was my first ministry trip to France, and so I saw this opportunity as significant.

Before my first address, I became hopelessly lost—clueless—while running in a maze of forests. Quelle Horreur! There were no markers and worst yet, no people--the further I ran, the lonelier the landscape became.

I was terrified. Then I came upon an elderly French couple who were camping in a clearing amid a thick wood. They were startled by me, and I them. But fear gave way to joy as I realized that they might help me. I spoke broken French, they no English. He was a war vet with a wooden leg, she was arthritic and moved very slowly. They were as sweet as could be and volunteered to drive me to my destination whose name I did not know. (We were in a conference site somewhere in the forest...)

Wearing almost nothing, I sat in the back of a tiny, two-seat Citroen as my benefactors patiently traversed road after road with me. No luck. We ended up at a YMCA crammed with Ethiopians. No help. Time was running out for me—I was scheduled to speak in 30 minutes. Yet my friends were patient as could be—genuinely at ease.

Just then a woman walked by the YMCA whom I recognized from our conference. I asked her where it was: she beckoned us to follow here there. I hugged my new French guides as they dropped me off.

My talk that night reflected what God had taught me: we wander far from our spiritual home, so far that we lose peace, hope and even the language that might lead us back. We need guides. These elderly ones represented to me faithful guides in France, those in the church who love Jesus and who will go the distance with prodigals. They just need keys—tools of equipping that might help them help those like me who had been rendered homeless by sin, confusion and rebellion.

France needed 'Living Waters'. God poured Himself out beautifully upon us in the forests of Fountainsbleu. He gave us keys to be better guides for the lost; He gave us wisdom, language, mercy, and patience to help them find their way back home in Christ's body.

A couple years later, God identified two amazing leaders in Paris for Living Waters: Werner and Charlotte Loertscher, who sponsored a large conference there. Most significant about that initial gathering (at the Church of St. Joan of Arc, no less!) were the dozens of pastors who wanted to know how to best guide the sexually broken in their churches. We gave them 'Living Waters.'

Through His shepherds, God was answering the cries of the poor and needy for mercy. He was helping them to find the way home.

'As You have shown us mercy, O God, in the desert places of our lives, would You show mercy to the beleaguered state of marriage in the USA? As the Perry vs. Schw. case wends its way to the National Supreme Court, prepare for Yourself a victory. We shall render to Caesar what is Caesar's but we shall prayerfully fight that what is Yours, O God. Prepare the hearts of each justice, especially Justice Anthony Kennedy, to uphold marriage according to Your merciful design. Remember mercy, O God.'