

The Town



The town looked like a typical French scene located in an area of beauty and surrounded by vineyards. I could see trees, farms, attractive buildings and people working with, and living off the incredible produce from the land. The town itself was

idyllic and the inhabitants were very happy and contented to live there. It was not unusual for people to gather in the town square during the evenings in order to drink wine, eat cheese and other produce, and to share lives together in an atmosphere of fun and laughter. Some said life could not be better.

Oppressor

One day an oppressor came into the town. A foreign army occupied the town and in so doing brought significant destruction to the beautiful architecture and the surrounding landscape. Vineyards were trashed and community life was replaced by fear and intimidation. All that was previously good became horrible and people lived in fear rather than freedom and fruitfulness. The oppressor took everything he wanted and more. Families lost loved ones as some rose up and sought to bring resistance to what increasingly felt inevitable. Peace, tranquillity, life and a sense of wholeness were replaced with growing despair and isolation. Would the town ever experience the incredible life they had once known?



After three or four years a different life became the norm. There was little expectation for change and the mind-sets of the town's residents changed, adapting to the daily rigour of survival.



Liberator

And then a liberator came.

An unlikely army moved through the town and pushed the oppressor away, defeated.

The town's communities rose in celebration and joy, shouting joyously because of the sudden emergence of a new found freedom and deliverance from the curse of oppression and destruction. Then the liberating army, having completed its freedom exercise, moved on to the next town some distance away.

Reality

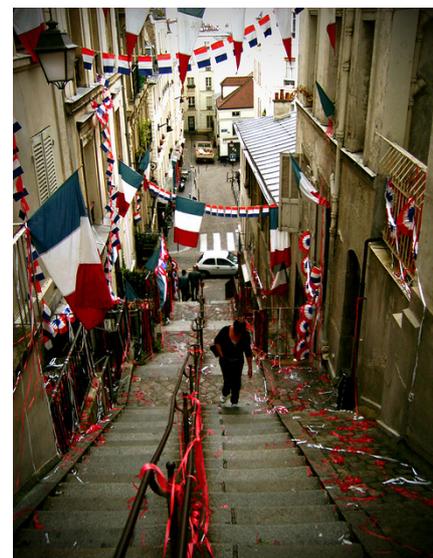
After the exuberance and celebrations faded, reality settled in the minds and hearts of the people. As they looked around, all they could see was broken buildings, vineyards overgrown and broken support systems, farms and dairy productions in disrepair. Although the oppressor had gone, his work was evident everywhere. Even the attitudes, hearts and minds of the people were broken but this was more difficult to see. Heads dropped and shoulders grew hunched. A growing sense of hopelessness consumed the will of the people.

Dream

The more difficult challenge was to deal with the culture of mistrust that had somehow taken control in the minds of the people who had once enjoyed remarkable community. Then a few brave souls arose among the people and they painted a different picture. They talked of possibility and dreams. They described how the town was once such an incredible and fruitful place and how the architecture itself somehow inspired life, work and rest. They spoke of how the town was now free to choose to live differently and how through hard work and positive choices, the town could again prosper and even surpass its history and past productivity. Surely deliverance came to enable more than this? The enthusiasm and passion was both infectious inspiring, and the residents were motivated to work and give their lives for the common good.

History Surpassed

Over a period of time the town began to radiate something of its former glory and beauty. Some who had lived there all their lives began to emerge from internal oppression and disappointment and started to comment on how the town had not only regained its heart but that it looked better than ever before. The vineyards started growing incredible grapes and the wine began flowing again. The farms hit new levels of production and the goods produced became desirable to communities far and wide, even in different lands.



The town itself expressed something of healing and restoration. Although the oppressor had been defeated and removed, it was only when the town's residents fully grasped the implications of their newly won freedom, and when they listened carefully to the voices that conflicted with their inner thoughts and feelings, they actually chose to rise up and to work together, becoming the dream that had been shared and imagined.

The evening celebrations and partying started again. No one wanted to miss out because there was an even greater cause for euphoria and gratitude. An environment had been established where people belonged and were inspired to live and work, to give their lives to one another and to protect what was theirs because it had been lost . . . but won back again.



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Isaiah 58:12

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called repairer of Broken Walls.”

Let's do it!