

CHAPTER 9: RIA'S CHANGE

Mention has already been made of the very narrow-minded background of Ria's family and how such education and family-experiences had quite an effect on people, so it had on Ria. She had in those early days quite a poor opinion of Americans. She thought they were superficial, you could never really count on them, etc, etc. Several times during the seventies she had had invitations to come to Continentals USA or to visit the American Christian Artists Seminar. But she had always refused. In 1980 two Americans stayed for a short while in our apartment and as result it slowly dawned on Ria that not all Americans are superficial. This period marked the needed change in Ria's attitude and she learned to love Americans. The following year the European Christian Artists Seminar started and we all had to deal with a lot of Americans. But Ria could now embrace them all and her insights and sensitivity with the staff helped to get a lot of frictions out of the way. In 1983 Ria visited finally the American Seminar and being there with all her friends was another breakthrough. But Ria had still to take another major stumbling block.

As mentioned earlier, she worshipped her family. 'They were always right and everybody else was always wrong.....' (Can you imagine how irritating this must have been for Leen?). Anyway Ria had to learn to see their parents, brother and brother-in-law in the real light.

Slowly the tension was growing in the church, that had been started by Leen and Ria and where Ria's brother was now the pastor. Ria's brother was becoming more extreme every month. The Christian Artists Seminars of 1981 and 1982 were the beginning of the division and brought the real frictions to light. Up until 1980 most of Ria's work in the ministry had been behind the scenes. At CA-1981 she discovered that she had her own unique leadership-position among the artists, speakers, staff and participants. With great joy she told 'the family' about this call. They reacted with rejection. And all of this ended in the incredible situation that Ria's brother wanted total submission and Leen and Ria to stop their whole European ministry. As Ria had discovered her new call and position she did not allow manipulation to happen any longer. And so 'the family' was not longer on the throne of her life, now finally God could take His place in her heart. Sometimes Leen and Ria feel sad, that for Ria to come to this understanding took 15 years of marriage.....But on the other hand those 15 years have not been in vain and were a great period of learning. Amazing was too, that new hidden gifts started to come to the surface, like writing. Soon she had her own column in the magazine Music & Art; her columns are the most widely read parts of the magazine and she got 5 books out. And later she took up fashion again and when the European Continentals started she has done since the styling/fashion of all those groups.

And in 2006 Ria opened her own fashion and art shop in Rotterdam, see www.chezmaria.nl