

## CHAPTER 1: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When you look now at the size of the Christian Artists organization, it's hard not to be impressed.....and it is impressive: A Centre (the Continental Art Centre with training-facilities, a little chapel, a studio, offices, storage, exhibition, ..... ) for dedicated and professional workers.....it is the home of the International Christian Artists Association (appr.100 member-organizations around Europe, representing over 25.000 professional artists).....home of Christian Artists Netherlands (=CNV-Kunstenbond with the sections visual arts, performing arts, music, media, writing,...) that even became recognised in 1989 as an official trade-union that has a say in the social, economic, political and educational profiles of the nation.....home of Continental Sound, foundation for fund raising for mission, evangelistic and educational projects in Eastern and Southern Europe.....home of a publishing house.....home of the annual International Christian Artists Seminar (since 1981 thousands have studied here and received inspiration; the seminar is the cream of the European creative crop).....home of the new European Academy for Culture and the Arts (offering 500 modules for post-academic training by highly skilled and motivated teachers & artists).....home of the European coordination of Continental Ministries, having 28 groups (each group having appr. 30 persons=840 persons selected, trained and commissioned) on the road (the Continentals=16-33 years, Continental Encores=25-55 years, Young Continentals=13-16 years, Continental Kids=8-12 years; satellite offices in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Italy) doing 450 concerts a year, attendance appr.150.000 people a year.....representatives in almost every European nation.....several exhibitions per year.....a long list of special workshops, small seminars, consultations.....many cultural studies of society and even politics.....consultations and information for churches, youth, leadership.....home of the Music Council of the Netherlands.....a fine arts collection.....It all started in 1969 by Leen and Ria La Riviere, who are still its motivated and inspirational leaders after all these years. If you ask them is this a success story? They will look at you and will say NO. What people see now is the result of the work of many professional people, the boardmembers and thousands of volunteers over 40 years.....But are you not both rewarded by the Queen...Leen even being knighted? Yes, but all that has been achieved was done together with many others and we should not forget that the purpose is to shape the culture to glorify God....So, was it easy, God guiding, overcoming problems???NO, it has been NOT easy, we almost went bankrupt 3 times; we still exist and that is a miracle. So it all makes you humble and dependant on God.....