

## CHAPTER 14; LOOKING BACK

At this moment, it is 2004, and we are looking back. That vision of chapter 13 was so correct. The whole picture about how the civil society was functioning: well it proved to be totally correct. So we have been organising and uniting so many artists through the years.....in 1989 we were accepted and recognised as artists-trade-union, so we got access to law-making, the profiles of the art-schools/conservatories, welfare-systems for the artists, many services and help could be organised to support the Christian artists.....Recognition came on so many levels of society, so that today a Christian artist is not discriminated anymore and in most churches you will find great acceptance for all the arts, music, dance, theatre, etc.....But we have not arrived yet.....as a key-part of the plan had not been carried out and could not be carried out. To understand this situation we have to go back till 1986. The vision had two important elements:

- a. to unite the artists and give direction to this movement.....
- b. to work on the quality and skills of these artists, so we needed to organise training, to create a school.....

Well in 1989 we found out that finances were not sufficient to do both at the same time. Especially the second part would cost a fortune, and we were 3 months away to open up our own Academy! We had teachers, students! A lot of research was done, but finances lacked. So was the picture not clear enough? Had we not understood the voice of God?????No, we had carried out the clear orders of the 'Boss', but now we faced an impossible situation. So we started to pray about this dilemma. We wanted to move on, but we needed a lot of money. After two weeks the dilemma became clear. We should concentrate on the first aspect of the vision: unite and strengthen the organisation of Christian artists. And just freeze the Academy till the process of structuring the Christian artists movement was completed. At that time the Academy would come back on the table. And so we did, a letter was sent to all artists, teachers and possible students. But all other forms of training, workshops, seminars should be upgraded out of amateur level to professional level. And here we made a mistake to wait too long to change the Christian Artists Seminar as 1989 was such a success: over 2000 artists, teachers, participants.....BUT to be honest, it lacked a lot in quality. Looking back, we should have made changes that year, to strip the CA-Seminar of all amateur and consumer aspects, so move on with the more professionally orientated participants and artists. We expected that by getting even bigger, we would get more influence and it would unite more..... Well it was a logical thought, but this was not God's way..... So 1990 CA had less visitors..... we did not listen..... so 1991 CA had again less visitors, so CA was getting losses..... we did not listen..... so we planned for CA 1992 to get bigger again, but again losses, and we were still in the same pattern not understanding that time had changed. So God's time for a different approach: He brought upon us 2 summers (1992 and 1993) of such beautiful weather.....3 months of sunshine. Well nice isn't it. But in the summer our Continental Singers groups are travelling. And until that time these summer tours and concerts brought in most of the money needed to keep the whole organization going. As a result of those beautiful summers we lost 50% of our audience, so we had an enormous loss of income. And CA had less participants, so as well a big loss. Those 2 summers gave us a total loss of appr.120.000 Euro and brought us again on the edge of bankruptcy.....Now we HAD to make changes and immediately otherwise the organization would die (more about how we escaped is another chapter). At CA-1993 it suddenly dawned on Leen, that this was the last CA of this kind as there was such a lack of quality, such a lack of professional motivation, such amateurism. If CA wanted to continue, the next CA should be small

in size and only for professionals. This move was financially made possible by the EZA (= European Centre for Workers Questions) with money from the EU, as they believed that our Seminar was so unique and important for the entire cultural sector. So CA-1994 had only 125 artists, teachers and participants. And to break completely with the old patterns, we moved to another centre (so from de Bron to the SBI); it was paid for by the EZA/EU; it was immediately on a professional level and besides having all classes we would discuss in a plenary session every day the key social and cultural and political problems of the EU. And this was tough. After doing this for now many years discussing these difficult issues required, the new CA gave all the needed insights if the day came that the Christian artists movement would have an influence on our culture. So we'd better learn to understand the problems of society. In those days we did not understand completely why this all had to happen, but now it is clear and everyday we reap the blessed harvest of all those years of study and professional contacts at CA. Besides the change on CA every year a lot of other workshops, classes and seminars were done to improve the quality of the artists. And all those efforts have surely benefitted many artists. But of course, it is not the same as a real Academy.....

Well all kept going in this way till the moment got near to celebrate our 30 years of anniversary in 1999. The order of the Academy and that promise was almost forgotten.....In those years of the nineties a lot was invested to professionalise the office-people of the HQ at the Continental Art Centre. The European Ministry of the Continentals was totally upgraded and had become such a special blessing & training for thousands of participants and ten thousands of visitors, so this part of our call had taken as well a lot of time and energy. But in 1999 the last part of the Continental Ministry was launched: a ministry for Kids (8-12 years) and this was immediately a great success. So what would the next step be? Well the next step duly came. Through a short talk (summer 1999) with one of the board members of the visual arts section, the word 'Academy' was triggered in Leen's mind. Hey, what about an Academy? Was it time for OUR Academy????? So the old concept was unfrozen, but that did not fit in modern time anymore....

Leen started studying various new possibilities together with a group of specialists and later with board members and slowly the picture unfolded: The CA-Academy should be a post-academic system, helping every artist with their questions and problems in a system of life long learning, so the Academy is adult education and NOT to replace any existing art-school, conservatory, academy. The CA-Academy starts where the other education systems stop. This was going to be THE great possibility for nurturing to excellence. And this whole concept was ready at the right time....the EU saw the great potential, accepted this proposal and financed the creation of it. In september 2004 the Academy will open up with 500 short modules....and 200 professional teachers.....At CA-2003 and CA-2004 modules were prepared and tested and had an amazing result.

We have been very thankful for this EU subsidy. But this learning by distance academy was so far ahead of its time that only a few used the website-database system, as we could not longer carry the costs, we took it off line in 2009.

BUT all the knowledge of this period is every year used in the annual Christian Artists Seminar