

Changes by school education and mobility

Confused by changes

by Bert Kisjes

I am born in a region where the children at their twelfth after the primary school started to work. Mostly they were going to do the same work as their parents. Their professional school was practice. Their parents were also their teachers in profession. I am speaking about the beginning of the fifties in the eastern part of the Netherlands.

I was predestined to go to the Mulo. That school was similar to my father's education. When I was at that school I came to the conclusion that I wanted to become an evangelical priest. My father was looking for the type of school that was required. So I became a pupil on the gymnasium.

This school was a completely other world than where I came from. I came from the protected atmosphere of a protestant community. The gymnasium however where I went was a public school with people from all kinds of opinions and with children from the more wealthy families. It was also a small school that meant that there was an intensive contact with fellow pupils and teachers. They knew your name. Especially the teachers of greek and latin were important for us. Seven times in a week we had lessons from them and the classes were small. Sometimes even not more than ten pupils.

The teacher for latin was Roman Catholic and the teacher of greek was an atheistic philosopher. On behalf of the small classes the different world views were under discussion. Some opinions that I knew from home about catholics and atheists I had to give up. There were other truths and values than those I knew from my home.

The discovery tour for other worlds continued after the gymnasium. In the beginning of the sixties I came in touch with the reform movements on the universities. With the socialist tendencies that accompanied the development of the social sciences. I became in 1965 president of the first democratically chosen student board in Utrecht for the representation of the students.

I got the opportunity in the sixties to see a new peace of the world. With a big student delegation we went to the Indonesia of Soekarno. We just finished a war about Irian Barat with him. We thought we had to find a new relation after the colonial relation. Soekarno was a prominent representative of those countries that wanted an independent power next to the two blocks, the western and the eastern block.

During my studies I got the opportunity to study for one year in Czechoslovakia. For one year I went to Prague. That brought not only another world. My

political concepts that had grown in the meantime were shaking. The reality I saw between friends in Prague did not match with the reality in my native home, it also did not match with the student world in Utrecht. Moreover I acquainted in Prague an artistic atmosphere. People who lived with drawings and paintings. Many, many hours I was sitting in their ateliers. They were for me another world as well.

When i finished my studies I got a job in a national church organization with 600 subsections. So I learned the functioning of a big organization. Our section was fantastic with fantastic people. But after five years there was a conflict of the whole section with the bosses. The whole section gave up.

In that situation I went into the province. I got the disposal of an old tower with a public destination .The tower was situated in a small old town with 13 000 inhabitants and really many different churches with as many different truths. How to get people from so many directions under one roof? At the end that was the challenge.

After a while I saw the charm of such an open place. People were used to come together with people with the same worldview. I started to value the different worldviews as colourful and diversity. The diversity for me was not p[oornees but richness.

The discovery of other worlds happened in me in all cases through people. They were real people who showed me another world. In the beginning the parents, later the teachers and fellow pupils and their parents and later people I casual met.

That brought me on the track that people that people may be the biggest certainty in life. It was my case for sure. Between all uncertainty what should be valued and what is worthless I found the individuals, the friends the people you meet. You always and everywhere can start this contact. People are everywhere.

My answer on the question how to maintain yourself in a changing world is: another person.