

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIAN AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 Introduction

Korean society, faced with serious intergenerational conflicts, as described in Chapter 2, is fully aware of the necessity of the recovery of intergenerational relationships through open dialogue. In this chapter, I will sketch the Korean society in history, as associated with the intergenerational relationship, in order to deal with the procedures and circumstances of intergenerational conflicts. Furthermore, following presentation of the results, the possibility of the reconciliation of intergenerational conflicts in Korean society will be discussed.

The patterns of the intergenerational relationships in Korean history will be explored in three categories:

- (1) vertical hierarchy of intergenerational relationships (1392-1962),
- (2) change of intergenerational relationships (1962-2002), and
- (3) deepening intergenerational conflicts (2002-to the present).

Following a historical interpretation of intergenerational relationships, an attempted dialogue between generations in contemporary Korean society will be shown.

Before exploring the history of the relationship and conflict between generations in Korea, a Christian interpretation of intergenerational relationships will be introduced through biblical texts, with particular reference to three stories: Ruth and Naomi, a loving father and his two sons, and Abraham and Isaac. In addition, the thoughts of contemporary Christian thinkers regarding

intergenerational relationships are also briefly examined in this context.

3.2 Christian interpretation

In the biblical texts, I chose three stories for the mutual intergenerational relationship with open dialogue. I believe that the first story, that of Ruth and Naomi, is suitable to show the intimate relationship with free conversation between generations. Secondly, through the story of a loving father and his two sons, I will attempt to illustrate the father's unconditional acceptance of and love for his children in an intergenerational relationship. Lastly, the story of Abraham and Isaac is an effective model of children's complete obedience to their parents.

3.2.1 Biblical foundations for the intergenerational relationships: Three stories

3.2.1.1 Ruth 1:1-3:18: Ruth and Naomi's life-partnership through dialogue

3.2.1.1.1 The trio of women in crisis: 1:1-5

Chronologically, the story of Ruth and Naomi is described as occurring "in the day when the judges ruled" (v. 1). In that time, there was a famine that struck the entire land of Israel (Sasson 1989:18). Although the cause of the famine is not indicated, from a meteorological perspective it can be attributed to a drought that lasted several years. The story of the book begins with a certain man from Bethlehem who had a wife and two sons. In verse 2, their names are given as Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, and Chilion, respectively.

After Elimelech and his family settled in the fields of the Moab, he died and Naomi and their two sons were left there. The two sons, Mahlon and Chilion,

were assimilated into Moabite culture due to their marrying Moabite women: “They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. They had lived there for about ten years” (vv. 3-4). When Naomi’s two sons died, the three women were left alone with no male figure – neither husband nor children (v. 5).

In those times, for three widows to live alone, without even one man, was disastrous. It was the times of the patriarchs when, without a man, a woman not only could not work anywhere, but also did not have any rights. Above all, Naomi and two young daughters-in-law had no children. In a society where women were recognised only as daughters, mothers, and wives, the status of childless widows was nothing. In those times, “to be a widow without sons was to be quasi-dead to the world” (Silber 1999:98-99).

3.2.1.1.2 The first dialogue: 1:6-10

8 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mothers’ homes. May the Lord show kindness to you, as you have shown to the dead and to me.

9 May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband” Then she kissed them and they wept aloud

10 and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.

In verse 6, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law set out for Bethlehem, having heard that the famine had ended at home. The trio of women headed back to the land of Judah (v. 7). Naomi, in verse 8, wants to send Ruth and Orpah back home and begins to address them and tell them to return to their “mothers’ houses” rather than their “fathers’ houses” (Fischer 1999:25).¹⁶ In those times, Naomi’s use of the expression “mother’s house” would have been striking because, traditionally, a widow or woman who fails to fulfil the proper duty as

¹⁶ The term “mother’s house” is unusual in the Old Testament. It occurs elsewhere only in Genesis 24:28 and Song of Songs 3:4; 8:2. Some scholars have speculated that the use of “mother’s house” is an indication that the fathers of the two young women are dead. However, there is no support in the text for the claim that Ruth and Orpah’s fathers are dead (Linafelt 1999:11).

wife is sent back to her father's house as a sign of disgrace (Caspi & Havrelock 1996:143).

Naomi does not take the patriarchal stance which would send them back to their fathers to be treated as possessions, but rather she encourages them to return to their mothers to seek comfort and freedom. Naomi acknowledges, though, that in a patrilineal society, the security and well-being of her two daughters-in-law are dependent upon a link with some male. Through her experience as a widow, she would probably have recognised that the death of a husband may cause a young daughter-in-law economic difficulty and a loss of connection from a kinship structure (Block 1996:634). Thus, Naomi wants them to find new husbands and recover their sense of security or rest in the house of a mother. Nielsen (1997:46) asserts, "Naomi wants the God of Israel to take care of the two women, but immediately the care is defined as married security." From obligations to the memory of her sons, she releases the two daughters-in-law to seek new lives.

Naomi continually supports her daughters-in-law in seeking new ways, as can be seen in verse 9, where she prays that each of them will find rest in the "home of her new husband." Naomi bestows upon them a blessing: that the Lord will deal with them. Then, she kisses them and they lift up their voices, and weep. It is the first mention of grief among the widows in the book of Ruth. In the moment of separation from each other, they express their emotions with loud cries and wailing. This shows the intimate bond, based on love, between Naomi and her two daughters-in-law (Caspi 1996:145).

Although Naomi's sincere advice is accompanied by a blessing, her daughters-in-law do not agree with her statement that they should return to their homeland (v. 10). They respond to her: "We will go back with you to your people." They allow themselves to walk with their mother-in-law into a foreign land and culture. They will not go back to their mothers' houses.

3.2.1.1.3 The second dialogue: 1:11-14

11 But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands?"

12 Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me – even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons, then what?

13 Would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, of course not, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has gone out against me!

14 At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her.

The second dialogue consists of another speech by Naomi (vv. 11-13) and a brief description of nonverbal behaviour from Orpah and Ruth (v. 14). It is Naomi's longest speech to her daughters-in-law in the book. It can be divided into three parts that are each introduced by emphatic words: "Return, my daughters" (v. 11); "Return, my daughters" (v. 12); and "No, my daughters" (v. 13). In this dialogue, Naomi's purpose is to persuade her daughters-in-law to return to their own land in order to guarantee their safety (Block 1996:635).

In verse 11, Naomi challenges Ruth and Orpah to return home by asking them: "Am I going to have any more sons?" This focus runs parallel with verses 12-13, in which more detailed scenarios are introduced: "even if I had a husband tonight and gave birth to sons, then what? Would you wait until they grew up?"

In this argument, Naomi calls upon Ruth and Orpah to be realistic. First of all, Naomi is too old to remarry. If she was married at fifteen years and had her sons by twenty, and they in turn were twenty something when they married, and they died ten years later, she would be at least fifty years old. It might be impossible that she could marry and bear sons. Furthermore, even if she could marry and could bear sons, it would be unimaginable that her daughters-in-law would wait for those young men to be grown up and then marry them.

Yet Naomi's comments in verses 11-13 may raise the question of why she decides not to find new a husband in her husband's brother, where, according to levirate marriage in the Israelite custom, "the nearest unmarried relative of a man, who died without progeny, would marry his widow and preserve the family by fathering a child on his behalf."¹⁷ Naomi's concern for the two young widows is not based upon the preservation of family for the "building up of the brother's house," but rather on their security and welfare (Sakenfeld 1989:28; Block 1996:636).

At the end of verse 13, Naomi answers her own challenging questions with an emphatic word, "No!" She expresses in the following sentence the reason for her rejection of several questions. She speaks of her "bitterness" because God's hand is against her. She is of the view that God has not cared for her. This is why she refuses to remain with her daughters-in-law.

In response to the speeches from Naomi, Ruth and Orpah again weep in verse 14. While in their previous response neither woman agreed with Naomi's advice to go back home, Orpah subsequently abided by Naomi's instruction and kissed her goodbye. However, Ruth remained firm and clung to her.¹⁸

3.2.1.1.4 The third dialogue: 1:15-18

15 "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods, Go back with her."

¹⁷ The practice of levirate marriage appears in two texts of the Old Testament: in a legal prescription of Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and in the story of Tamar of Genesis 38 (Sakenfeld 1989:27).

¹⁸ One of primary contexts of the word, "clung" (Hebrew, *dābaq*), is that of love and marriage. It is the same word used in Genesis 2:24, where we are told, "Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh." (Linafelt 1999:15). Linafelt (1999:15) espouses about using the term "clung": "it is likely that the author is evoking intentionally the language of marriage in an attempt to express the intensification of the relationship between Ruth and Naomi, especially in light of Ruth's taking leave of her "father and mother" to be with Naomi and in light of the oath of commitment that she makes in the following verses (vv. 16-17)."

16 But Ruth replied “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.

17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.”

In the third dialogue, Naomi implores Ruth for the last time not to follow her back to Judah, suggesting that she do as Orpah has done and follow her advice in verse 15. Hearing Naomi’s command to return to Moab for the fourth time and watching her sister-in-law head down the road, Ruth declares her answer in verses 16-17.

Ruth’s promise to Naomi moves through several stages of intensity. Firstly, she chooses to go with her mother-in-law and to live with her. This incorporates the personal relationship and support for her: “where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay” (v. 16). In a patriarchal society, a widow who survives without men’s companionship is discriminated against (Fisher 1999:26). Presumably, Ruth is wise enough to know of the potential difficulties; nonetheless, she sets herself up to live with her mother-in-law.

Ruth’s next promise, that Naomi’s people and Naomi’s God will be hers, is an important additional step (v. 16). Ruth answers Naomi’s last plea, that Ruth follow the example of Orpah to return to her people and gods, with this oath. She pledges to abandon her homeland, her people, her culture, and even her religion (Block 1999:641). It may mean that she should not only learn about the other’s language, culture, food, and tradition, but also accept the other’s faith. This task would probably be difficult for her (Sakenfeld 1989:31).¹⁹

Finally, Ruth swears not to leave her mother-in-law until the her mother-in-law’s

¹⁹ Ruth’s formal commitment to a different religious faith is a very momentous decision. In the Jewish tradition, Ruth is remembered as the paradigmatic example of conversion (Sakenfeld 1989:32).

death, and that she will then be buried with her (v. 17).²⁰ According to her oath, the relationship between Naomi and Ruth can only be broken by death. This pledge before the Lord of Ruth's personal commitment to Naomi is now depicted as complete and irrevocable. Therefore, Ruth's declaration of devotion leaves her mother-in-law speechless (v. 18).

3.2.1.1.5 Partnership in intergenerational relationship

In the absence of male power, Naomi tries to build new relationships with her daughters-in-law. Naomi's and Ruth's decision-making process is dynamic and emotional. Naomi never raises her voice or stance in her status as new family-head based on the hierarchical structure. In the continuing dialogue, they share thoughts, futures, and pledges with each other, thus they can find agreement between themselves.

The intergenerational relationship between Naomi and Ruth is encapsulated within loving-kindness. Naomi always calls Ruth "daughter" and is concerned about her future: "daughter, I must seek a home for you, where you may be happy" (3:1). Even though it is not shown that she calls Naomi "mother" or "mother-in-law," Ruth shows Naomi respect and love throughout several dialogues (Bronner 1999:183).²¹

We can see the intergenerational relationship based on trust throughout the book between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. In the relationship with Boaz, Naomi gave detailed instructions to Ruth on how to behave with him: "Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor" (3:3). In this prescription, Ruth responds: "I will do everything you tell me"

²⁰ In cultures of the ancient Near East, burial in one's ancestral homeland was considered extremely important. The Biblical narrative of the transporting of Joseph's bones back from Egypt to land purchased by his father Jacob (Jos. 24:32; cf. Gen. 20:24:26) illustrates this tradition (Sakenfeld 1989:33).

²¹ Ruth's devotion to Naomi is unconditional from the start of the book where she declares, "where you die I will die, and there I will be buried" (Ruth 1:17).

(3:5). Without absolute trust between the two of them, such dialogues might be impossible. In their intergenerational relationship, the conflicts or differences of values between the youth and their elders are not shown. The intergenerational relationship between two women is united by an unconventional life-partnership based on open dialogue.

3.2.1.2 Luke 15:11-32: The loving father and his two sons

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons.

12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

13 "Not long after that, the younger son gathered all he had and set off for a distant country, and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

This story is the third part of a trilogy in Luke 15, following the stories of the lost sheep and the lost coin. It deals with the themes of lost and found in the relationship between a father and his two sons. According to the difference of focus among the three characters, the story's direction can be different, and can take the form of "the prodigal son," "the good father," or "the two sons" (Lieu 1997:120). In this parable, I will focus on the attitude of the loving father, who is willing to wait, forgive, and reconcile his two sons. The parable consists of two parts. While verses 11-24 are associated with the father and the younger son, verses 25-32 concern the father and the elder son.

3.2.1.2.1 The benevolent father: 15:11-19

At the beginning of this story (v. 11), three main characters are introduced. They

are automatically attributed the following rank, according to Middle Eastern society: father, older son, and younger son. However, in verse 12, a startling request is made by the lowest ranking member of the family, who asks for his share of his father's estate when his father is still alive.²² In Middle Eastern culture, the son's request is tantamount to wishing the father was dead (Lieu 1997:121). The younger son is making an illegitimate and unthinkable request from the perspective of family and community. Furthermore, there was no law or custom among Jews which allowed the son to get a share of the father's property whilst his father was still alive.

Customarily, in this case, a traditional Middle Eastern father is expected to refuse the younger son's deplorable request and drive him out of his house with anger. However, there is no hint of the father's disapproval of his younger son's demand. The father grants his son's wish, that he wants to get a share of his father's inheritance, even though it causes him to experience shame from community (Bailey 1992:114). Like the relationship between the parent and child in a patriarchal society, the father does not treat his sons as "possessions or extensions of himself," but as "free agents" (Holgate 1999:173).

The younger son, without delay, gathers up what he has been given. He then goes to a distant country and there squanders his wealth in wild living. When he has spent everything, severe famines are experienced in that country and it happens that he is starving to death. The son's desperation is further indicated by the job of feeding the pigs (vv. 13-16). After such degrading work and hunger, he decides to go back home. He accepts that he will be treated as a servant, not a son to the father.²³

3.2.1.2.2 The forgiving father: 15:20-24

²² According to Mosaic Law, the first son has the right to a double share of his father's inheritance (Deut 21:17). The younger son would receive a third (Forbes 2000:132).

²³ The son said "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired help"(vv. 17-19).

In verse 20, the younger son leaves the distant country and goes to his father. His returning home in failure would be humiliating after the way he insulted his family and the community at his departure. The younger son seems to lose not only all the property that he had received, but also his family, especially his father, by radically breaking up the relationship. In the story, when the prodigal son returns home, a traditional oriental patriarch would be expected to utterly reject him and refuse to allow him to come back home. Although the son tries to say something in repentance or for forgiveness, the father might not want to hear the son's words and would strike him across his face (Bailey 1998:38).

However, for the second time, following the case of the younger son's request for inheritance, the father does not behave like a traditional patriarch. In verse 20, we can see the process by which the father accepts his son. He waits for the son, has compassion, runs to him, embraces, and kisses him. Firstly, following the son's leaving, the father might have been looking day after day to the road in the distance. Next, the father runs to meet his son. To run in public, wearing a traditional long robe, is humiliating for Oriental nobleman (Bailey 1992:143-144). Furthermore, the father is embracing and kissing his son warmly. There is no condemnation or rebuke at the reunification with the son. The father's actions of kissing his son signify true forgiveness (Winterhalter 1993:199).²⁴ The father is breaking the mould of custom through the rebuilding of his relationship with the prodigal son.

After the father's actions of welcoming him, the younger son confesses to his father as follows: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (v. 21). The younger son losing everything had no choice before his father. He is abandoning any attempt to restore his status of son.

²⁴ For example, as King David kissed Absalom in 2 Samuel 14:33, the kiss symbolises forgiveness.

Following his son's confession, the father orders two things to be done. Firstly, he sends his servant to bring the best robe, a ring, and shoes for his son (v. 22).²⁵ He adds the word "quick" in his instruction to bring the items. This means that the father does not want anyone else to see his son in the rags he is wearing, so he gives orders to dress him quickly. It shows that the son is treated as a son, not as a servant by the father (Green 1997:583). Secondly, the father begins a feast to celebrate the younger son's return with enough guests to consume the fattened calf (v. 23). Beginning to celebrate, he says, "My son was dead and now is alive, he was lost and now is found" (v. 24). He acts with tender compassion and huge pleasure for the resurrection of his badly behaved son.

Acceptance and forgiveness through such orders and a great banquet for the prodigal son is not easy to practice in Middle Eastern society. Bailey (1992:149), says that Oriental patriarchal society espouses the father's manner to solve the problem and reconstruct the broken relationship with the lost son, with the following statements:

Genuine reconciliation can only be achieved by the father's self-emptying, costly love. The father must come *down* from the house and move *out* into the street in self-emptying humiliation (like a servant) if the prodigal is to be reconciled.

Now, the younger son's relationship with his father is restored. There is reconciliation between the prodigal son and the family. It is the father's costly and self-emptying love which makes this possible.

3.2.1.2.3 The reconciling father: 15:25-32

²⁵ According to Bailey (1992:154-155), "the best robe" may indicate the best of the father's own wardrobe and "a ring" may be the signet ring of the house. In addition, "shoes" are deserved to be worn by a free man, not a slave. The son undergoes an unexpected change of circumstances and status.

When the elder son is returning from his day's work, he hears the festivities for his younger brother who returned in failure. The elder son shows his meanness by objecting to the loving welcome that his father gives to his younger brother. He is angry towards his father for the maltreatment which he has received from his father without him ever refusing (Green 1997:585).²⁶ So, the elder son refuses to join in the banquet and the father seeks out the elder son to join the festival of restoration (vv. 25-28).

In response to the father's pleading, the elder son has a heated public shouting match with his father (vv. 29-30).²⁷ The elder son's behaviour makes the father ashamed, and the elder son thereby shatters his relationship with his father.

The father, again, goes beyond what a traditional patriarch would do. The father is expected to ignore the ratings of the elder son and continue with the banquet. The father can deal with him later or may scold him and shame him in front of the guests. However, the father shows the elder son "the same quality of compassionate self-giving love" that he expressed to the younger son (Bailey 1992:177). Compared to a one-sided command from the father based on patriarchal culture, he tries to calm down his elder son by making him aware of the privilege of inheritance and of brotherhood (vv. 31-32).²⁸

Again, he is coming down from the authority of the father and moving alongside the elder son in order to reconcile. The loving father is creating an intimate relationship with the elder son, following from the one he had just created with the younger son.

²⁶ The Hebrew word "shalom" generally signifies peace such as "peace be with you" (Dan. 10:19) and "Go in peace" (Ex. 4:18) (Bailey 1992:168).

²⁷ The elder son is screaming to the father: "Look! All these years I've been salving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him" (Lk. 15:29-30).

²⁸ As noted, the first son can get a double share of the inheritance of father (Deut 21:17). Because the younger son had already received his inheritance, the whole of the father's property is supposed to now belong to the elder son.

3.2.1.3 Genesis 22:1-14: Isaac's trust and obedience to his father, Abraham

1 Some time later God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham." He said, "Here I am."

2 Then God said. "Please take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants,

5 "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,

7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "My father?" "Yes my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

3.2.1.3.1 The interplay between Abraham and God: 22:1-6

This story begins with God's command to Abraham to kill his only son, Isaac, as a sacrificial offering in order to test his faith and obedience. This may lead to confusion because Isaac was born when Abraham was one hundred by God's covenantal promise (vv. 1-2).²⁹ Brueggemann (1982:185) claims that the story is not only among the best known of all biblical stories, but also "notoriously

²⁹ Isaac was born after God gave Abraham a blessing relating to prosperity of descendants as follows: "And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!"(Gen. 17:16).

difficult to interpret.” According to the command of God, Isaac must be killed, which will result in Abraham having no descendants, which is contrary to God’s blessing. Kant (1960:81-82) interprets the way the Word of God clashes with Abraham’s moral obligation in the following ways:

Even though something is represented as commanded by God, through a direct manifestation of Him, yet, if it flatly contradicts morality, it cannot, despite all appearances, be of God (for example, where a father is ordered to kill his son, who is, so far as he knows, perfectly innocent).

Kant’s concern applies to Calvin and Luther who are candid about the contradiction of God. Calvin refers to the death of Isaac as “the destruction of the promises” (Calvin 1989:158). In a similar way, Luther (1955:203-204) recognises the contradiction in the story as follows: “if Isaac must be killed, the promise is void; but if the promise is sure, it is impossible that this is a command of God.”

With conflicting ideas of God’s command in the text, the story leads us to the realisation that God is God, and that God is not only the tester (v. 1), but also the provider (v. 14). It means God’s “free sovereignty” and shows the characteristic of God to test human beings with his gracious faithfulness without restraint. Thus, the problem of this story is to embrace both “the dark command of God and his high promise” (Brueggemann 1982:189). Calvin, too, recognises the harmony between the providence of God and such trials (Parsons 2004:92).³⁰

According to God’s command, Abraham goes to the land of Moriah with his son, Isaac, and two servants in verses 2-3. He promptly acts upon God’s order, “early in the morning.” His silent and unquestioning acceptance of God’s order

³⁰ Calvin (1989:313) resolves the contradiction of God’s command to Abraham in the following ways: “although he did not immediately discover how the contradiction might be removed, he nevertheless, by hope, reconciled the command, with the promise; because, being indubitably persuaded that God was faithful, he left the unknown issue to Divine Providence.”

shows his unhesitating obedience.

In verse 5, Abraham leaves his youthful servants behind at the foot of the mountain. He may not want the servant to see the sacrifice. First of all, he understands that the affair is, above all, associated with himself and Isaac in God, and is about their intergenerational relationship. So he speaks to the lads and tells them to leave, and turns “His trial into a project for both himself and Isaac: “we will go”; “we will worship”; “we will return.” After loading the wood, knife, and the fire, they ascend the mountain together: “and they went both of them *together*” (v. 6). The united intergenerational relationship is shown in the crucial conversation between them in verses 7-8, which reveal the core of the interrelationship between them (Kass 2003:341).³¹

3.2.1.3.2 Isaac’s total obedience to his father: 22:7-10

The short dialogue of verses 7-8 shows the best example of intergenerational relationship in this story. In spite of the scarcity of communicative credit between Abraham and Isaac, this dialogue indicates the communion between them. In this dialogue, the repeated usage of the “my father,” “my son” exchange draws attention to the depth of affection between Abraham and Isaac (Kass 2003:342).³² Sack (1982:76) comments, ensuring the veracity of the son-father conversation, as follows: “the elegant simplicity of the dialogue gives it an aspect of eternity which seems to last the whole of their lives. Very few dialogues in literature bring men so close together.”

The central point of the story of the bonding is the dialogue between father and son when both of them go together up the mountain. In verse 7, Isaac breaks

³¹ The dialogue between Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22:7-8 is the first one of a conversational nature between father and son recorded in the Bible. Adam never spoke with Cain or Abel (or Seth). Noah spoke about but never with his sons; in his only directly quoted remarks, Noah spoke to curse and bless them (Kass 2003:341).

³² On the other hand, Skinner (1976:329-330) describes the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac as the most touching scene as follows: “the pathos of this dialogue is inimitable: the artless curiosity of the child, the irrepressible affection of the father, and the stern ambiguity of his reply can hardly be read without tears.”

the silence with the words, “My father?” He senses that something is wrong, not seeing the lamb for a burnt offering. After Abraham replies, “Yes, my son,” Isaac questions again, “Where is the sheep for the sacrifice” (v. 7).

In response, Abraham says, “God will provide himself a sheep for the burnt offering” (v. 8). It is a statement of unconditional faith and obedience to God. Abraham does not specifically tell Isaac all that he inquired about because Abraham himself does not really know the answers. Abraham does not know whether Isaac is the sacrificial offering that God has already commanded or whether God will provide an alternative offering (Brueggemann 1982:188). The only thing that Abraham knows is that God will accomplish His divine purpose. It shows Abraham’s unquestioning trust that God will find a way.

Then Isaac’s continued silence and the walking on together gives the impression that already Isaac may recognise that he is not only to be taken but also to be offered, through his father’s enigmatic answer (v. 8). If so, his silence and behaviour implies “total obedience” towards his father (Wenham 1994:108).

Even if Isaac does not understand the hidden meaning in Abraham’s answer, namely that he would be the sacrificial offering, and even if he subsequently feels alienated from his father and God at his sacrificial moment, he will never forget his father’s attitude of carrying out, without any uncertainty, God’s will in the event. Probably, in Isaac’s soul, it will be always remembered that his father taught him “to place his trust, not in his father but, in the Lord” (Kass 2003:361). In this succinct and remarkable conversation between father and son, while the father is giving precious lessons to his son regarding radical obedience to God, the son is responding with utter trust and acquiescence to father.

The dialogue between the father and son is over. However, there is no change in the father-son relationship. They continue on together to the mountain as before (v. 8). The story moves toward its climax, which we can imagine is filled with suspense and tension: Abraham built the altar, bound his son, laid him on

the altar, upon the wood, stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son (vv. 9-10).³³

In this situation, the question may be raised: “Is it possible that an elderly man was able to bind the hands and feet of a lively teenager to whom it became known that he was to be the burnt offering in his own sacrifice?” It keenly suggests Isaac’s consent without unwillingness. When Abraham prepares him for the sacrificial offering, Isaac does not show any reluctance. On the surface, there is no apparent break and clash between father and son. Isaac does not oppose being bound, does not struggle, and does not even cry out.

This acceptance confirms his complete obedience, shown through the conversation in verses 7-8 where Isaac was “an unblemished subject for sacrifice who was ready to obey his father, whatever the cost” (Wenham 1994:109). Fretheim (1995:496) spells out Isaac’s consistent attitude of trust in his father with the following statements:

Isaac does not focus on himself. Isaac addresses Abraham as a loving father, mirroring Abraham’s trusting relationship with God... Isaac believes his father’s trust to be well placed. Abraham’s trust in God has become Isaac’s trust.

3.2.1.3.3 God’s providing: 22:11-14

When Abraham takes the knife and lifts it up to kill Isaac as a sacrifice, the angel of the Lord shouts to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” and tells him to cease from killing his son and to leave Isaac untouched (vv. 11-12). In this command, the repetition of Abraham’s name indicates “the angel’s anxiety

³³ Miller states that this story tends to give an atmosphere which makes it possible to justify the abuse of a child. According to him (Miller 1990:139), Isaac “has been turned into an object. He has been dehumanized by being made a sacrifice; he no longer has a right to ask questions and will scarcely even be able to articulate them to himself, for there is no room in him for anything besides fear.”

that he could be too late” (Jacob 1958:499). Thus, the test is over, God recognises Abraham’s faith and obedience: “for I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son from me” (v. 12). “Fear God” is a very common expression in the Old Testament meaning to honour and love God in a decent life (Wenham 1994:110).

After the angel finishes speaking, Abraham “looks up at his eyes” and sees a ram caught by its horns in a bush (v. 13). Abraham takes the ram and offers it as a burnt sacrificial offering in place of his son.

3.2.2 Thoughts of contemporary Christian thinkers regarding intergenerational relationships

3.2.2.1 Don S. Browning and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore: Love as equal-regard through dialogue³⁴

In *From Culture Wars to Common Ground* (2000), Browning and Miller-McLemore try to find the concept of new ethics for families based on theological grounds. They believe that love as equal-regard rather than self-sacrifice is central to a theology of family love, and they express this belief through the following statements: “love as mutuality becomes explicitly Christian when it is grounded on the *imago Dei* in human and renewed by the capacity for sacrificial love, a love that recapitulates the Christic drama and the passion of God” (Browning & Miller-McLemore 2000:273).³⁵

³⁴ Don S. Browning is the Alexander Campbell Professor of Religious Ethics and the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore is professor of pastoral theology and counseling at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. In order to deal with the ideas of Browning and Miller-McLemore, I am using two books, *Globalisation and Difference* and *From Culture Wars to Common Ground*. The latter includes work by other authors, Pamela D. Couture, K. Brynolf Lyon, and Robert M. Franklin.

³⁵ In this model of family love, the *Imago Dei* (image of God) rests upon the passage of Genesis 1:26-27: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (1:27) (Browning & Miller-McLemore 1999:92).

In the discussion of Ephesians 5:21-33, Browning and Miller-McLemore (2000:22-23) see that these phases do not indicate “male headship” moulded after the authority of Christ, but celebrates a servant model between the husband and wife, which helps people by making them equal with regard to ethics.³⁶ In a national survey, they found that: 55 percent of Americans believe that mutuality is an important aspect of a successful marriage, while 38 percent responded that it correlates with love as self-sacrifices and 5 percent answered that a good marriage correlates with an individualistic love (Browning & Miller-McLemore 1999:93).

Browning and Miller-McLemore (1999:97) believe that it is possible to access the love ethic of equal-regard in the relationship of all persons, not only between wives and husbands, but also between parents and children. When love in the form of mutuality is applied to relationships among families, the ethic of equal-regard indicates that each family needs to show respect and take care of other families. According to their view of equal-regard in the family, parents involve themselves in the responsibilities of raising their children. At the same time, children do not have right to neglect to honour their parents and to support them (Browning & Miller-McLemore 2000:303-304).

Then, the question may arise as to: “how children and parents, who stand at different places in the human life cycle, involve themselves in the love ethic with equal-regard.” The answer is through a dialogue between diverse narrative identities. The human life cycle does not consist of the simple processes of birth, growth, and death. It is associated with natural processes throughout historically situated narratives. In the relationship between parents and children, children identify with their parents through the parents’ conflicts about this history, as well as with the narrative history of their parents (Browning & Miller-McLemore 2000:288-289). Browning and Miller-McLemore (2000:288)

³⁶ “And further, you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives must submit to your husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:21-24).

elaborate upon the value of dialogue from the family's past traditions and their narratives. The intergenerational relationship needs critical dialogue with these narratives between parents and children. This dialogue for equal-regard, which takes the form of an open dialogue, entails the natural process of the family relationship.

Browning and Miller-McLemore (2000:275-276) emphasize the meaning of equal-regard as a dialogical concept that serves "to communicate needs and desires, to listen and understand, to empathise with, hold, and accept, and then to live their mutual agreements" as follows:

Describing love as a dialogical phenomenon adds something crucial to the normative understanding of love. Love is not simply a psychological dessert that tops off the main philosophical meal. Either we experience love intersubjectively or we don't experience it at all. Love as equal-regard can be a dead externality, an inauthentic foreign object, a fraud, unless it is experienced dialogically as a felt unity of thought and emotion.

In addition to the assertion of the equal-regard ethic in the family, Browning and Miller-McLemore (1999:96) investigate whether it is possible that the love as equal-regard is valued in all countries, even in East Asia, like Korea, where the authority of fathers as household-heads has influenced the families, and their sons have had a responsibility to respect and serve them in their later age based on the hierarchical culture from Confucianism.

In discussing the application of love as equal-regard in a culture such as that of Korea, Browning and Miller-McLemore arrive at a question: "Would we find a move toward valuing love as mutuality more than self-sacrifice in Korea, as they do in the United States?" (1999:95). According to Confucian ethics regarding unconditional obedience and support to parents, adult children in Korea are expected to show the attitude of self-sacrifice towards their parents. Although the influence of Confucianism has declined in Korean society since it became

an industrial society, it is true that many Korean families still practice love as self-sacrifice as compare to the love as mutuality practiced in Western nations. Therefore, it is not easy to achieve a relationship of love ethic between the elderly and adult children based on equal-regard.

In answering this question, however, Browning and Miller-McLemore (1999:97) assume the potential for the love ethic of equal-regard in Korea. After outlining two strategies which make the ethic of equal-regard possible in the American historical and socio-economic context, they advocate these two strategies in Korea. Firstly, it is the emergence of a new headship that applies equally to both parents and children rather than the headship of either partner over the other. Secondly, under this new headship for the equal-regard ethic, dialogue between parents and children begins with a stronger foundation of equal-regard.

It will probably be tenuous for the genuine practice of equal-regard to be performed as the core of Christian ethic in Korea. However, Browning and Miller-McLemore (1999:96-97) positively attempt to find the meaning of the value of the love ethic in Korea, believing in the possibility of achieving the new headship and dialogue for equal-regard.

3.2.2.2 J. Gordon Harris: Loving reciprocity³⁷

Harris (1987:96) believes that intergenerational relationships between the elderly and their adult children are provided by “an environment of mutuality and loving reciprocity.” According to Harris (1987:90), qualified generational relationships may be accomplished in humbleness towards each other, when the elderly “shepherd willingly” without “exercising lordship” and children “submit” to the authority of elderly parents.

Under these reciprocal relationships, Harris (1987:61) espouses the attitude of

³⁷ J. Gordon Harris is Vice-President for Academic Affairs and professor of Old Testament at North America Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

responsibility in parent-child relationships over others. First of all, on the part of adult children, he suggests that they honour the elderly, exemplifying number five of the list of “Ten Commandments”: “Honor your father and your mother. This is the first of the Ten Commandment that ends with a promise” (Eph. 6:2).

This commandment states that it is the responsibility of children to honour their parents even when they are losing physical and economic ability (Harris 1987:61-62). It incorporates the attitude of pride amongst the adult children towards their parents over that which their parents have achieved in their lives (Deut. 6:7, 20-21; 11:19).

In the light of Harris’ (1987:32; 58) understanding, this fifth commandment for honouring one’s parents is closely related to reverence for God and moral responsibility toward others. The term “honour” comes from the root *kabad* that indicates “giving weight to” important people and which generally refers to glorifying God. Respect and honour for one’s parents is a most important theme in the Bible, and goes beyond their authority. Israel’s laws are associated with the relationship between God and Israel. Biblical passages associate support for the elderly with loyalty to God. Biblical texts from “the Holiness code” relate respect for the elderly with reverence and fear for God in the following way: “You shall rise up before the grey headed, and the face of an old person and you shall revere your God: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:32). For that reason signs of old age, such as grey hair and wrinkled skin, are to be honoured.

Compared to Browning’s mutuality as equal-regard, Harris’ vision of the reciprocity in intergenerational relationships seems to emphasize the respect of parents from adult children, not the concept of interdependence among generations. However, Harris did not disregard the role of parents in managing their power towards their children in Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

The passage claims that is the duty of parents to instruct their children while

considering the feelings of their adult children. Harris (1987:86) comprehends that this verse restricts paternal authority by requiring that fathers do not irritate their children.³⁸ In a Roman society where a father had unlimited authority over his children, this command to teach the children is important in limiting the fathers' power and warning them against abusing their authority. In the early Christian community, there were a number of ways in which parents could exasperate their children with irresponsible or irrational demands.³⁹ Such misuse of parents' power can bring about "timidity, despondency, and a poor self-image (the losing of heart)" in children. Irritation was a representative biblical form of child exploitation with physical abuse in those times. So, toward fathers, Ephesians presents clear admonition not to hurt their children and encourages the giving of instruction by the Lord to their children in order to build a healthy self-image (Harris 1987:86).

Harris (1987:103) emphasises that both parents and children should respect one another as honoured people in order to lessen tensions between the generations:

Christian teachings recognized the validity of filial honor and obedience to parents and submission to the authority of older leaders. These statutes were balanced, however, by equally binding demands that fathers respect the needs of their children and not abuse parental privileges.

Christian families are challenged to respect the elderly and serve the young generations. Both generations need to care for each other and to allow reciprocal responsibilities towards one another. Only when both are eager to

³⁸ Ephesians 6:1-3 as fifth commandment in the Ten Commandments is spoken to people of any age whose parents are living. It is not primarily directed to young children to tell them how to behave towards their parents, but rather to adult children (Mann 1996:76). The promise that follows the fifth commandment, "you will live a long life, full of blessing" (Eph. 6:3) confirms that the passage primarily instructs adults (Harris 1987:85). Therefore, in Ephesians 6:4, "the children" definitely refers to adult children.

³⁹ Yuen (2002:128) espouses numerous examples of parents who provoke their children in today's society: (1) fault-finding, (2) unreasonable demands, (3) double standards, (4) unkept promises, and (5) child abuse.

carry out “this wise instruction” for loving reciprocity, is it possible to achieve a reciprocal intergenerational relationship (Harris 1987:90, 95).

3.3 Historical interpretation of the conflict of intergenerational relationship in the Korean society

3.3.1 Vertical hierarchy of intergenerational relationships (1392-1962)⁴⁰

As indicated in my earlier discussions in chapter 2 (2.2.2.2.1), in the traditional Korean society, the core structure of the traditional intergenerational relationship was characterised by the unilateral hierarchy of the father-son relationship. The father was regarded as the head of the family who had authority and the children had the duty to respect and take care of their aging parents based on the concept of filial piety.

In this hierarchical structure, intergenerational relationships between aging parents and adult children had been brought about not by communication of ideas and consciousness, but by the roles and positions of its members. Thus, communication among the two generations was associated with formal and restricted relations. Unquestionably, there was no open dialogue between generations.

Such hierarchical relationships between aging parents and adult children may cause severe conflict to arise in the relationship. However, there was no problem with the relationship between generations because filial piety was one

⁴⁰ Although there had been the hierarchical relationship between generations based on the moral of filial piety in pre-1400s Korean history, I classify its starting point as 1392 because the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) applied filial piety as the central ideal of government for maintaining the social order (Yoon *et al* 2000:122).

of the most important moral precepts and had a strong influence on the order of an entire society, especially on children.

Filial piety demands unconditional obligation and obedience in the revering of and caring for parents by children. Sung (1995:242) categorises the general ideals by the precepts of filial piety in the Chinese classic, *The Twenty-Four Stories of Filial Piety* (1956) and the stories about Koreans who have exemplified filial piety and been awarded the Filial Piety Prize by government with the following statements (Sung 1990:613):

- Showing respect for parents;
- Providing physical and financial sacrifices for parents;
- Devotion to the care and protection of parents;
- Making parents happy and comfortable;
- Compensating for something undone by caring for parents;
- Saving face for family by entertaining parents' friends and maintaining shrines and graves of ancestors;
- Following religious teaching about parent care;⁴¹ and
- Carrying out difficult or unusual tasks for parents.

Since, during the Yi-dynasty (1392-1910) the traditional Korean society had sustained the clan system in which almost all economic and other activities were decided by the authority of the elderly, the acceptance of the obligation of filial piety came naturally to the younger generations. Furthermore, children learned Confucian morals as the norm from birth, so that, to them, failure to practice filial piety was regarded as a crime against heaven (Liu 1959:84). Such teachings and trends continued into the period of the Japanese rule, the Korean War, and the pre-industrialisation in Korean history.

Under these conditions, the intergenerational relationship between aging

⁴¹ In these categories, "religious teaching" means the teaching of Confucianism.

parents and adult children is characterised as a super-ordinate/subordinate relationship. However, this hierarchical relationship was not only the fundamental trend, but also an important ethical principle among all persons. Even though the children have the burden of the responsibility of filial piety, it was a usual duty to them. Thus, only in unusual situations did the conflict of intergenerational relationship occur in those times, although there was the authoritative order from parent to child.

3.3.2 The changing of intergenerational relationships (1962-2002) ⁴²

The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of Korea since the 1960s has brought about serious cultural differences between generations in relation to the change in society. Inglehart (1997:146) estimates, based on his surveys, that during the past quarter century, Korea has experienced the most rapid process of intergenerational value changes in the world, owing to very rapid economic development.⁴³

According to such a swift cultural transition between generations, huge gaps in the family were created between aging parents and adult children. In particular, the intergenerational gap occurred in the relationship between father and children. This did not happen between mother and children, because it seems that the father-son relationship, which had been based on the hierarchical structure, had changed quickly into a horizontal relationship during the larger social changes of modernisation.

⁴² The beginning of economic development in Korea resulted from “the First Five Year Plan for Economic Development” in 1962 by the Park Chung-hee regime. Because the intergenerational value change had been influenced by swift economic industrialisation, I settled on 1962 as the starting point for differences in values and conflicts between generations.

⁴³ Inglehart (1997:148) examined “strength of linkage between age and values” in the mean rate of economic growth during the past 40 years from more than 40 societies in the world. As his survey demonstrates, societies with fast-growing economies have relatively large differences between the values of young and old in such countries as Korea and China. Nigeria and India show weak or even negative figures in the correlation between age and values because they have experienced much lower rates of economic growth than China and Korea.

In the intergenerational relationship between fathers and children, when the younger generation looked back on the past, their fathers were categorised according to two distinctive features. Firstly, there were very strict fathers who were seen as “the symbol of authority.” Two participants among nine interviewees reflected their fathers as such. The age of the first respondent was 33 years old and that of the second respondent was 42 years old (cited in Han 1997: 37), and they described their fathers in following ways:

“I don’t have any special things to remember about my father. I just got reproached and punished a lot. That’s all. He was quite blunt. He didn’t allow me to do many things all the time.”

“He is really stern and easily flies into a temper. I was beaten quite often. My father is resolute. When I was a child, I once wet my bed on a winter’s day. As soon as he found it, he drove me out of the house at dawn. It was snowing and terribly cold... He was very harsh to his children. He always showed us the same attitude... So I can’t find any other words except to say that he was very strict.”

Secondly, there were fathers “who rarely have conversations with their children.” Two interviewees spoke of their fathers’ attitudes when they were children. The first respondent was 38 years old and the second respondent was 44 years old (cited in Jeong 1998:141), and they described their fathers as follows:

“I don’t have any memories of conversing with my father. He wasn’t meticulous or kind. He seemed to be self-important. Anyhow, he didn’t spare time for himself. He was very engaged in making money, so he was busy all the time. It was the 1970s and... life was hard. It wasn’t easy to make ends meet.”

“My father is a man of few words. When we, his children, fought or did something wrong, he would spank us. Apart from that he was reserved. I never had a heart-to-heart talk with him. He seemed to think that showing affection toward children is a mother’s duty. He never showed his love for us directly.”

In those days of rare conversations with children, fathers were a reflection of the cultural flow of the time, in which expressing emotions or talking a lot was not regarded as being masculine. Also, the influence of patriarchy was so great that people refrained from expressing their love towards their children, especially in front of the elderly.

Although they grew up under “strict or reserved fathers,” the young generation’s consciousness regarding intergenerational relationships changed greatly in the period of Korean industrialisation. The younger generation was deeply affected by the introduction of Western intergenerational relationships based on equality. They began to think of the ideal parents as “being affectionate and friend-like father figures.” In the past, the traditional role of fathers focused more on a breadwinner with patriarchal authority (Kim 1996:341). The younger generation changed to wanting to converse well with their children as caring fathers and to be good role models for their children by having a much closer existence. One respondent who was 35 years old gave his opinion on the role of the current father in the following statements (cited Han 1997:43):

“Today’s desirable father figure is someone on whom his wife and children can depend. The image of a strict or a reserved figure has disappeared, and has been replaced with a friendly and affectionate father figure. Fathers need to maintain the emotional bond with their children through continuous interest in them and through making conversation. So, the role of fathers has evolved to more than that of the former generation.”

However, while the younger generation’s perspective of the role model of the

father had changed from the authoritarian model that their fathers had shown to a democratic attitude, the older generation seemed to still hold on to the traditional image of the father as having authority over his children, despite the new social changes. Such intergenerational value differences in parent-child relationships resulted in conflicts of intergenerational relationships associated with many aspects, including regarding the family support between aging parents and their adult children.

Furthermore, in the period of newly emerging social changes, aging parents and their adult children had not grown accustomed to having conversations with each other. The younger generations who had grown up under strictly hierarchical structures had often ineffectively dealt with communication with their elderly parents because there was a lack of dialogue in the traditionally one-way communication system from parent to child. In the rigidity of communication without mutual agreement or discussion, both parties were struggling with intergenerational conflicts.

3.3.3 The deepening of intergenerational conflicts (2002-to the present)

Korea's rapid social changes and swift economic development over the past few decades have created serious intergenerational value differences. It seems to exist in every part of our society between parents and children at home, between teacher and student at school, and between boss and worker in the workplace. The differences originated from each generation's point of birth. According to the change of Korean society, each generation had the same historical as well as certain other experiences. The difference in their own experiences eventually formed the difference of each generation's values.

According to Yoo (1985:162-163), the older generation, over 60 years old,

experienced the ordeal of modernisation and took the lead in the economic growth of the 1960s and 1970s. They are the so called “industrialization generation.” In their childhood, they went through the colonial period and the Korean War. With extreme poverty, they valued nationalism, authoritarianism, and group consciousness. They advocate Anti-communism, Anti-North Korea, and Pro-America. On the other hand, the 20s to 30s generation, namely the “information-oriented generation,” free themselves from the ideological conflict or poverty of the former generation. They regard consumption as a virtue rather than production. The younger generation with a liberal way of thinking has abundant cultural experiences and they fulfil their various desires in financial opulence.

In the course of rapid economic growth, the differences between generations’ values have reproduced and become deeper and deeper. With the 16th presidential election in 2002, it manifested as a serious conflict. At that time, the election was a competition between two candidates, Haei Chang Lee and Moo Hyun Lee. The core of the difference lay in the political solutions that they proposed. While Roh, who has a radical disposition, was strongly supported by the younger generations, Lee, the candidate who has a conservative disposition, was firmly supported by the older generation. In this situation, and with the development of the Internet, the younger generation used their information and participated in the candidate Roh’s campaign. Their positive action was considerable (Jeong 2002:32-36).

As the 20s to 30s generation eagerly followed candidate Roh, the conflict between generations at home increased significantly. Yeon Ah Kim (23 years old) said, “I don’t boost candidate Lee, but my grandfather and parents forced me to vote for him. On the other hand, I persuaded them to vote for candidate Roh.” Jae Hyun Choi (25 years old) also said, “Currently I don’t keep in touch with my father who lives in the country because he insisted that I should support candidate Lee (Chosun Daily Newspaper, p. 5). Yoon (Donga Daily Newspaper, p. 6) said that this intergenerational conflict over ideological differences

separated parents from children at home.

The following matrix shows each generation's support rate for the two 16th presidential candidates.

Table 6. Each age group's support rate at 16th presidential election for the two candidates (Donga Daily Newspaper, p. 2)

G e n e r a t i o n	Candidate		Total
	Moo Hyun Roh	Haei Chang Lee	
20s generation	59.0%	34.9%	93.9%
30s generation	59.3%	34.2%	93.5%
40s generation	48.1%	47.9%	96.0%
50s generation	40.1%	57.9%	98.0%
Over 60s generation	34.9%	63.5%	98.3%
Total	48.3%	47.7%	95.9%

Roh, who was supported by the 20s to 30s generation, won the presidential election in 2002. After Lee's defeat was announced, the 20s to 30s generation, who had played a leading part in Roh's campaign, shouted and danced for joy. On the other hand, the elderly over 60 years old felt a sense of loss. It was so severe that they did not even turn on their televisions for several days. They were scared and lonely, and could not accept the defeat (Cheong 2004:212). Kim (2003:52) assessed the result of the 16th presidential election as follows:

This election was the electoral revolution led by the 20, 30 generations. They prefer liberalism and individualism to authoritarianism and group consciousness. Following the introduction of the information society and the expansion of globalization, this generation has become a major force in our society and Moo Hyun Roh came at the right time in the right place.

Even though the election was over, the intergenerational confrontation

remained. Lee (Chosun Daily Newspaper, p. 4) predicted, “It is crucial how we are going to deal with the conflict between generations after the election.” In fact, the conflict gets deeper throughout the Korean society. The older generation regards the new president as a threat to the identity of this democratic country because of his advanced and radical policies. While the younger generation keeps supporting his political policies, the older generation feels a sense of crisis. In this regard, it does not seem to be easy to reduce the gap between the two generations’ consciousness.

A major factor in the conflicts between generations is the difference of their consciousness. For instance, the older generation thinks that the American armed forces should remain stationed for security matters and that they cannot negotiate with North Korea, whereas the younger generation see things differently. They think that the stationed American armed force is truly an obstacle to the reconciliation between North and South Korea. On the whole, the young generation suggests that the South Korean government should outgrow America-oriented diplomacy.

Intergenerational conversations can reduce the conflicts and provide a clue to solving problems. However, due to a lack of dialogue, it is difficult for those involved to understand each other, even if a discourse is set up for better understanding. Mutual understanding and a reconciliatory mood is still a long-standing question.

3.3.4 An attempt at dialogue between generations in contemporary Korean society

There was panel discussion aimed at crossing the intergenerational value gap between generations on TV. For the three weeks prior to this episode, each generation – 50s to 60s age group, 30s to 40s, and 10s to 20s – have had their

own conversations about the experiences between generations. This week the participants from each generation get together to talk about conflict and understanding between the younger generation and the older generation. Here the participants from each generation mentioned above, come together to talk about each other, hoping to increase mutual understanding. The following is the summarised script of panel discussion between generations.

2003 report on the generations of Korea

(Chapter4) Conversation, Cross the Intergenerational Value Gap

TV special for the anniversary of 76th Korean Broadcast & 30th Foundation of Public Corporation

■ Participants in the 50s to 60s age group

Yoon Hye Won: I'm glad to see you again.

(The elderly greeted each other, talking about the previous episode, last Thursday's).

Chi Jin Hyun: You have had a lot of feedback from people, haven't you?

Jeon Segi: Yes, I have, exactly.

Bae Byung Hew: Our 50s to 60s' grudge....

(After watching the episode of the 30s to 40s age group and that of the 10s to 20s, participants in the 50s to 60s age group seem to have many things to tell those other generations)

Jeong Chul: Well, as I expected the young people expressed their opinions in a lively manner and talked freely. I don't know how to put it, though. It may be a bit awkward to say, but what they're saying is really against my taste. Surely I can say that the young generation will speak of their perspective without hesitation, bristly. I'd say that's the biggest difference from my generation.

■ Participants in the 30s to 40s age group

(Participants in the 30s to 40s age group, the central axis of our society simultaneously caught between 50s to 60s generation and the 10s to 20s, have are equally expectant and worried).

Park Chung Hyen: Well, I'm very excited. I think this is once-in-a-lifetime experience. ...I'd particularly like to listen to those in the 10 to 20 age group.

Ann Hee Jeong: Um... I don't have anything to worry about with younger generation, but I'm not comfortable with the older generation.

Pi Kyung Il: In which aspect?

Am Hee Jeong: Well... I just can't... feel at ease. It's burdensome.

■ Participants in the 10s to 20s age group

(Grounded young people look most nervous, because the other parties with whom they are having a conversation are older than them by 30 or 40 years).

Han Jong Hee: Frankly speaking, I was terribly scared when I saw the seniors. I crossed my legs, but uncrossed them immediately and have been sitting up straight. I am worried.

Lee Song Huck: I was wondering whether we could have a conversation smoothly in spite of the different experiences, interpretations, or perspectives. For instance, if the other party receives things on the agenda quite differently... will we continue the conversation? I have no idea how to react to that. It makes me nervous.

Kim Myung Nam: As for me, I'm pretty optimistic about the discussion. I'm really looking forward to it. I don't know how the talking will end up. Though I think it's much better to have a conversation than a one-sided monologue. You know, maybe we can reach an agreement to some extent, but I'm a bit scared of being reproached by the older generation.

(All participants from each generation come into the discussion room. The room fills with tension).

■ Participants in the 50s to 60s age group worry about the younger generation.

(Could it be possible for the conversation to cross the value gaps across age groups? Breaking the awkward silence, one of the 50s to 60s age group begins the conversation. With anxiety and expectation, the talk is started).

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): When I was young, I thought I was not going to be old. But the reality is harsh. I'm old, as you can see, and have become cautious and timid. I was bold when I was young, believe it or not. These days, I get scared to death when I listen to what young people are talking about. They are very bold, even reckless.

Jeoung Chul (50 to 60): Actually, my generation welcomes any change in our society. I don't see why anyone hesitates to accept that change. However, what I'm concerned about is how fast we change and where we are headed. Regarding the government's policies or the young generation's attitude, it seems like we are going in the opposite direction from what we used to pursue. I'd say, until now the fate of this country has been prosperous. What I'm worried about is the decline of this country. From my perspective, the young generation should be able to make... good choices by learning from the older generation's experiences and wisdom, so they can lead this country in the right direction, not just sit and criticize other generations. I'm truly worried about the future of this country.

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): To be honest, 10s to 20s are, dare I say it, not ripened fruits. You know, not ripened fruits! They are green hands in our society according to... socialists. That's why we can overlook their mistakes. I regard 30s to 40s as the core and waist of Korea. I'm not sure whether they think they can be at the top, if they drive the 50s to 60s to leave political affairs quickly. You know... kind of creative destruction, to subvert the established political system or order. They seem to find it wonderful and innovative. For me, it's contraction and nonsense.

Can you imagine how cold it can be when your hat is blown away on a winter day?

(The atmosphere chilled as the 50s to 60s scolded the 30s to 40s, complaining and putting their cards on the table about the recent situation)

Ann Hee Jeong (30 to 40): Many seniors said unanimously that you are confused about where this country is going. If you ask me, this country is going in the absolute right direction according to the constitution of Korea. As you know, the constitution protects the right to freedom of speech, religion, free enterprise, and democracy. Nobody can deny it. Let's say there's a large enterprise for generations. The third generation in authority probably had different business policies from first or second generations. I don't think it's right when previous generations ask the present CEO for everyday reports on the difference, what's going on... Even if there's a doubt in your mind, you've got to have... faith in them.

Jeoung Chul (50 to 60): Well, what I'm scared of most is this on-going war that I envision for our future.... North Korea, which is against all our values, is still in full force, up there.

(The 50s to 60s are very discontented with the younger generation. From the beginning of the discussion, they have surely been candid, spoken without reserve. Meanwhile, the 30s to 40s' objections are tough)

Song Tae Ho (30 to 40): From my point, I'm intimidated by the American armed force, not by North Korea.

Jeoung Chul (50 to 60): How come you are intimidated by the American armed force?

Song Tae Ho: I don't know whether it's true or not, but recently when America talked about nuclear weapons, there's a rumour of bombing Young Byun area name; where North Korea's nuclear reactor is located. I'm anxious, because the American force may attack us before North Korea does, like they are doing to Iraq now...

Bae Byung Hye (50 to 60): You know what, if America withdrew the troops here, North Korea would attack us instantly. Have you ever thought why they came here and why they stay? For whom?

Song Tae Ho (30 to 40): I think the reason why they are stationed here is for their own profit.

Choi Jin Hyun (50 to 60): In the first place, the president of our country during the Korean War asked the UN for help. As a part of the UN program, the American armed force came here and they remain to protect us from North Korea. In spite of our "sunshine policy" governmental efforts to get a good relationship with North Korea, North Korea hasn't changed a bit. Some people say that the cold war is over, but we are still at gunpoint in the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone; in the middle part of North & South Korea].

(The conversation flows into the current outstanding questions in Korean society: North Korea and America. The gap between generations is much clearer and the debate gets heated).

Ann Hee Jung (30 to 40): Anyway, the world has changed and keeps changing. The order and secure environment of this world does too. As far as I'm concerned, what the American armed force wants is some adjustment, because they are considering things like their role as defensive power, some reform of their military capacity in the structure of Korean-American Alliance. They also need to sort out

the military expenditure. They implied that if Korea didn't pay more money for the safety of Northeast Asia, they would change their economic policies.... Apart from this, some internal people who have the wrong idea about this matter agitate people to think that our government and my generation have a problem with the current view on... national security. They blame us for what's happening now.

Huh Jin Ho (30 to 40): I believe there are two sides... with regard to the question of North Korea. As you mentioned, North Korea is our major enemy for the time being. Actually we are confronting each other militarily.

Jeong Chul (50 to 60): Major enemy? Are you sure?

Huh Jin Ho (30 to 40): Let me elaborate on that point. On one side, North Korea is our major enemy and on the other side someday we two Koreas will be reunified, then we will be the same nation, and we will live together like Germany. I think we should cope with things according to situations. Like in the civil war at the east sea North Korea was the enemy to be confronted. However, in general, it is important to support North Korea with food and finance. Also we have to manage our reunification policy well for the future. In those cases, we should approach from the same nation concept, but I have no doubt that there's a huge gap between your generation's view and the view of my generation in this regard.

(It is too obscure for the younger generation to understand the 50s to 60s' deep-rooted wartime hunger and memories. There is a certain distance between the two generations when it comes to recognising the present situation).

Jeong Se Gi (50 to 60): Well, I don't know where your idea is coming from. How can you say that you are more scared of America than North Korea? I really don't get it.

Kim Myung Nam (10 to 20): I'd say we should change our relationship with America, rather than that we're more scared of them than North Korea. Previously, we used to say thanks to America for the help, unconditionally. But like somebody said, America is now one of our ententes. In spite of strong objections from other advanced countries, America is at war. I can say that America is not rational nor do they make right decisions all the time.

(On the day the previous discussion took place, America invaded Iraq, despite anti-war sentiment. The 10s to 20s participated in the discussion with difficulty, but their view on America is completely different to that of the 50s to 60s)

Kim Pung (10 to 20): Let me honest. Attacking Iraq is not justifiable. The cause is far-fetched. It is said that Bush has got considerable support from American citizens for their own interests. From my point of view, this is just a villain's misbehaviour.

Han Jong Hee (10 to 20): You have a point there. Speaking of our relationship with America, it seems more like the relationship between master and servant rather than an alliance. You know, when our country was called "Chosun" a long time ago, we had to ask the Chinese Emperor for his permission to appoint the Crown Prince of our country. Now I feel the same way. Look at what happened when we bought the F16 combat plane, that case speaks for itself. America is not a charitable organisation like the YMCA.

Bae Buyng Hew (50 to 60): Basically, like me, the 50s to 60s age group are angry about the result of buying combat planes. Why can't we choose what we want on our own? It's so frustrating. However, that's the way it goes. We have no choice. If we refused the international or American markets, we would choose what we want

right away. If I say we are a subjugated nation of America, it seems too much... But I think that caters for our needs to some extent. No other options. The combat plane market as well.

Huh Jin Ho (30 to 40): You're saying like America is the absolute good and North Korea is the absolute evil. As the 10s to 20s told you, America is not the absolute good. After all, as they look after their own interests, we need to grope for new direction in our relationship.

(In the middle of the offensive and defensive talk, a tense atmosphere prevails in the room. Fundamentally, the 50s to 60s strongly disapprove of the rapid change of the world with younger generation as the central figures in this change).

Song Tae Ho (30 to 40): In my opinion, the senior generation doesn't accept diversity. Like you guys said, the 50s to 60s are too anxious about why the world doesn't go around the way you think it should. I think your generation worries too much. It's not necessary.

Choi Jin Hyun (50 to 60): You know, we have children, so we work very hard to give them a better life.

Song Jae Ho (30 to 40): We are the same, just that there's a difference between your generation and my generation. We have a different manner of solving problems.

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): Well, we do not disapprove of your diversity. I'm worried when your thoughts and behaviour go overboard. I'm anxious that you might trip over something or fall down. Just think of your parents. What do they say when you go out? Even though they know you can cross the road and read the traffic signal, they will tell you, 'watch out,' or 'be careful!' I'm not disapproving of what you're doing, just worried that something might happen to you.

Jo Soo Jeong (30 to 40): I can understand what you're saying, why you are worried. This is a trite remark, anyhow, Columbus found America when he went to the unknown world. If our younger generation went to the unknown, that would lead to... progress.

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): That's right, but the process of experimenting to find new ways is too fast. That is what I worry about.

(A break. As the industrialisation generation, the 50s to 60s worked hard without rest, only thinking of the future. Having painful wartime experiences, they yielded early to the logic of power. Meanwhile, growing up as international citizens, the 10s to 20s are willing to support the Anti-war movement. They separate it from their country's interest. All participants feel irritated at each other's different thoughts. They keep talking, even during the break)

■ The 30s to 40s raise objections

(The discussion looks like a confrontational scene between generations. This time, the 30s to 40s raise questions for the 50s to 60s in a strong and cautions tone)

Song Tae Ho (30 to 40): I'm very conservative. I was taught by your education system, so I know nothing but us Koreans and our country. I'm conditioned to say yes when somebody asks me whether I will go to war when one breaks out. However, your generation taught us... that and you haven't put that into action. Very many government officials' children got exemptions from the Army because of their power and bribery. In addition to that, some even have dual nationality in order to

avoid military duty. That's why there's such strong resistance nationwide. They break the rules but they push us to obey them.

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): Um... it's getting closer to curfew.

(While the 30s to 40s talk about a touchy subject, the 50s to 60s try to make light of it, but the 30s to 40s don't want to stop)

Huh Jin Ho (30 to 40): This country is pervaded by corruption and irrationality. I have to say this, you senior generation created these problems and handed them down to us. We could have lived better.... What I'm mostly sorry about is, I'm not sure though, people in their 40-somethings are already in your system. Also we are going to be a part of the reproduction of irrationality. This makes my heart hurt. This is why I'm not satisfied with the 50s to 60s generation.

■ The 10s to 20s ask the older generation questions.

Han Jae Hee (10 to 20): How can I put it into words... this atmosphere here, for me it seems like I'm in a lecture. We have professors and their assistants, so professors give us a lecture and their assistants raise... questions and students just listen to them. On the one hand, I could understand to some extent what the 30s to 40s are saying and they don't jump to conclusions. On the other hand, I have difficulty accepting what the 50s to 60s are saying because they talk like what they are saying is a "truth" that's never, ever changed. So if there's something against it, then it's not true. I'm anxious. If you open your heart more and listen to what we are saying, we can have better conversation, can't we?

(The so called 'today's youth' 10s to 20s have been overwhelmingly dispirited since the beginning, but they start to talk earnestly from the middle phase, and rebuke the older generation without hesitation).

Han Jong Hee (10 to 20): I'd like to ask the 50s to 60s a question. Thinking of the recent Presidential Election, I thought at least if somebody ran for presidency, he would have to do his duty as a Korean citizen. When it comes to military duty, I think it's a big deal for all the men in this country. It's a really big challenge, because we have to serve the army for 26 months at the golden time of our lives. I'd say military service is beneficial in some ways, but at the same time it is unprofitable as well. Anyhow I served the full 26 months, because I am a man of Korea, and it's my duty as a citizen. Therefore, I can't understand how this very fundamental duty can be a trivial thing for somebody.

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): You mean, Haei Chang Lee the candidate at the 16th Presidential Election? He did his military service. His two sons got exemptions, though it doesn't look good, of course. They should have done their service. But, I'm not... sure whether he committed a felony that could send him to jail in terms of the military service law. I don't think it's such a serious crime on the basis of the judicial judgment. Whether I support him or not, his party chose him to run for president. Doesn't that show you that he's qualified for it?

Kim Pung (10 to 20): I see things differently. Let's say that Lee the candidate became a President. Assume that a minister exempted his son from military service in a similar way to what Lee has done. Can the president say to the minister that he did wrong?

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): I'm not saying that it was good. He did something wrong,

but it didn't seem so bad. If he had broken the law, he would have been disqualified. So you can have a question about his morality, but not his criminality.

Han Jong Hee (10 to 20): A person is not chosen as a president is... only by obeying the law, you know.

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): Anyhow he was not elected as a president, and it's a done deal, isn't it?

(Eventually, what the 10s to 20s ask the older generation is about their morality. Even though the 50s to 60s turned Korea into a developing country with economic growth, they did not mind pulling out all the stops. Therefore, the question seemed touch on a sore point).

Kim Pung (10 to 20): It seems to me that [the] 50s to 60s said what they had in mind at the beginning of this discussion, and then closed their ears. They seemed to [have] finish[ed] their business, so even if we try to say something, they will not listen to us. That's how I feel about the older generation, not only today, this moment, but all the time.

Jeong Chul (50 to 60): This is a bit regrettable.

Kim Pung (10 to 20): I don't mean all the parts of our conversation, it's...

Bae Byung Hew (50 to 60): Hew, it's past 12 o'clock, ha, ha, ha...

Kim Pung (10 to 20): See what? This is why I feel so sorry. You just listen up to what you like to hear, and that's it.

Jeong Chul (50 to 60): Aren't you the one who closed his ears first?

Han Jong Hee (10 to 20): No, I'm not.

Jeong Chul (50 to 60): But I see it that way.

In this panel conversation, each generation formed their consciousness based on the particular experiences they had when they were growing up, which only that same generation could share. These experiences show many differences between generations in terms of consciousness and ideology. Conflicts between generations probably stem from different social experiences and the ways of thinking. By the time the discussion about 'Cross the Intergenerational Value Gap' through conversation finished, its focus had returned to the starting point, 'Intergenerational Value Gap.' In Korean society, it seems to be difficult to conduct a dialogue under any open-minded understanding, which would reduce the generational conflict.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have examined a Christian interpretation and the Korean

historical background for the intergenerational relationship. For a biblical interpretation, I have taken three stories: Ruth and Naomi, a loving father and his two sons, and Abraham and Isaac. Through these three stories, it can be seen that God's word shows the reciprocal relationship between generations with open dialogue. I have explored mutual intergenerational relationships in these stories: partnership between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, unquestioning acceptance of children, and extreme obedience to the father. In addition, I have explored the thoughts of two contemporary Christian schools of thought regarding the intergenerational relationship: Browning and Miller-McLemore, and Harris. These two schools demonstrate that, through open dialogue with equal-regard, loving reciprocity enables us to accomplish a mutual intergenerational relationship.

Through historical interpretation, I attempted to reconstruct the change of the intergenerational relationship in Korean society. These changes indicate the movement of society from a patriarchal relationship in the end of fourteen century to the egalitarian pattern to the present relationship between generations. Such change has resulted in the deepening of intergenerational conflicts without mutual communication, necessitating open dialogue.

Chapter 4 will explore the Church Round Table as communicability according to a systematic practical theology (Browning 1991:51). The Church Round Table's role is to create a fusion of the horizon between the understanding implicit in contemporary practices of intergeneration conflict for family support of the elderly (Chapter 2) and the interpretation implied in the intergenerational relationship in the normative Christian source (Chapter 3). The Church Round Table plays the role of a means of communication between "a grand philosophy of collaboration" (intergenerational reconciliation) and "the reality of problem solving" (the intergenerational conflict) (Pasquero 1991:58).

CHAPTER 4

THE CHURCH'S TASK TO RESOLVE INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT: FOCUSING ON THE CHURCH ROUND TABLE

4.1 Introduction

Over the past decades, Korea has come to experience major cultural gaps between the older generation and the younger generation due to the cultural transition of a society based on swift economic development. Such intergenerational gaps have become a serious issue in contemporary Korean society, such that there have been attempts to bridge these intergenerational gaps through conversation. However, as shown earlier in Chapter 3 (3.3.4), the process for open dialogue in a reciprocal understanding between generations was not easy.

Many intergenerational gaps arise over the different views of each generation within the family regarding family support of the elderly. While for aging parents the traditional wish is to stay with their children in their old age, their adult children are less enthusiastic about the option. The different expectations for the issue between generations have resulted in emotional and relationship conflicts. In addition, as a result of intergenerational conflict, some of the elderly are struggling due to some degree of loneliness.

Thus, there is a need for communicability to alleviate intergenerational conflict for family support. The role of the church in creating intimate intergenerational communication is important, especially when Korean families experience intergenerational conflict. I believe that the church can effectively help to

communicate in the instance of intergenerational conflict between the aging parent and the adult child.

In this chapter, firstly, the functions of the church to create intergenerational communication with open dialogue and the Korean Church's limitations in conflicts will be explored. Secondly, the Round Table, from the story of King Arthur, will be examined as a possible communicative means. Thirdly, the Church Round Table, which is adapted from the Round Table, will be suggested and three key issues of the round table – kenosis, equality, and reconciliation – will be concentrated on for an open conversation in mutual understanding.

4.2 The Church's role in creating intergenerational communication with open dialogue

The word "church" in the New Testament means "a company of people called out." They are called out for a new relationship with God and with one another and to perform a mission (Pazimo 2001:23).⁴⁴ Without a network of relationships for communication, it is not possible for the mission of the church to be accomplished, so the church's role to promote communication for reconciliation is important "for sharing this labor of healing the enmities which separate human beings from God, and from each other" (Adams 1993:291).

In this regard, the process of observing the church's ministry concerns the role of establishing open intergenerational communication in conflict – reconciling work and mutual responsibility between the aging parent and the adult child, which give forth possibilities for creating reconciliation on the basis of a collaborative conversation. Subsequently, it explores the limitations of the

⁴⁴ Browning (1991:8) points out that the mission involves the church disciplines: religious education, pastoral care, preaching, liturgy, and social ministries in order to learn and practice instruction concerning evangelism and social action from God.

Korean Church in creating intimate intergenerational communication in conflict because of conflicting church and the poor relationship between the church and the family.

4.2.1 The church's role in promoting reconciliation

4.2.1.1 Reconciliatory work

Firstly, it is important to keep in mind that reconciliation is directly concerned with the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through whom God is reconciles the world to himself. It is stated in the Bible as follows: "And all this is from God, who through Christ has reconciled us to himself and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:18-21). The ministry of Jesus Christ affects the reconciliation between God and humankind and the harmonising of the relationships between persons or groups, particularly where there is enmity. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians he testifies that by Christ's death on the cross, Jews and Gentiles were brought together in unity (Eph. 2:16) (Ridderbos 1975:183).

Paul says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). Since Calvin says, "Christ will not and cannot be torn from His Church, with which He is joined by an indissoluble knot," the relationship between Christ and the church describe the special bond (Ridderbos 1975:362; Walker 1984:224). In this sense, the church as the body of Christ has the task to exercise a reconciliatory ministry that includes conflict resolution through its pastoral ministry in the world. Torrance (1975:22) espouses the church's reconciling work by Christ as follows:

The Church is sent by Christ into a world that is rent by disharmony and dissension, torn and disrupted by sin, for it belongs to the nature of sin to divide,

destroy unity, to isolate people, to disrupt fellowship, to separate man from God and man from man – that is, the very world which we know today. Reconciliation is a social reality that causes the absence of alienation and the resolution of conflict, so that the church's reconciling role is in the correct relationship not only with God and the world, but also with both parties involved (Grenz 1994:661). In this regard, one of the church's tasks is to create intergenerational communication to provide efficient and productive problem solving between the disagreeing aging parents and their adult children in the issue of supporting the elderly. The church has a responsibility to focus on an intergenerational approach with the relationship of the family. Huber (1995:290) explains that the church becomes a place for "artificial extended families" at a time when many families are involved in intergenerational conflicts, or separated: "The church is virtually the only institution in our society that is consistently intergenerational. School, the workplace, and often residential areas tend to be age-segregated. The quality of life for persons of all ages is enhanced by these intergenerational contacts."

The early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching *and fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and the prayer" (Acts 2:42, italics added). In addition, the author of Hebrews reminds believers, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, *not neglecting to meet together*, as is the drawing near" (Heb. 10:24-25, italics added). In this sense, the church is regarded as valuable means of fellowship with friendship and affection that Jesus' command, "love one another," will be fulfilled (John 15:12). So, if there is something to hinder fellowship between believers and with God, the primary purpose of church discipline is to remove the obstacle and pursue reconciliation (between believers, and with God) (Grudem 1994:894; 958).⁴⁵

It would be healthy for Christians to talk together when they have times of work,

⁴⁵ White and Blue (1985:45-56) note that a failure to keep reconciliation as the primary goal of church discipline has led to many abuses of the process in the history of the church in their book on church discipline, *Church Discipline That Heals*.

enjoying one another's fellowship. Just as wise parents discipline their children (Prov. 13:24: "He who loves his son is diligent to discipline him"), so the church in its discipline is attempting to bring back a brother or sister who is in conflict, restoring the atmosphere of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is an integral aspect of Jesus' purpose on earth. We also find it to be an integral aspect of the church's purpose. Jesus' life and ministry illustrate to us that reconciliation is at the heart of his purpose. Jesus, as the Head of the church, established reconciliation as a characteristic that his followers would manifest as evidence of their relationship with him (John 17:20-23). The New Testament (Acts 11:1-18; Eph. 2:1-22) demonstrates that reconciliation is at the core of the New Testament church's ministry (Peart 2000:119). In this setting, the task of reconciliation is an integral attribute of the church's mission. Peart (2000:122) describes the mission of the church in reconciliation as follows:

The church is to have a universal mission that brings all people into a reconciling relationship with God and with one another (Acts 11:1-18; Eph. 2:1-22).

When persons experience unresolved conflicts, there are several other ways of dealing with these conflicts, such as negotiation, mediation, and litigation through professional mediators or lawyers. When compared to the church's reconciliatory work and other common dispute resolution processes, the primary disadvantage of these other methods is that they may deal with the urgent property or pending problems rather than with the real causes of the participants' conflicts or relationship problems (Sande 2004:270-275). As a result, the goal of these alternative methods in terms of settling conflicts is to reach a compromise in disputes between the parties, which is more likely to increase bitterness between them and further damage any personal relationship.

However, the church is a unique as a mediating institution where reconciliation

exists, “in which we can live and be at peace, and a process” (Schmiechen 1996:249). Schmiechen (1996:139) emphasises recuperation of church’s reconciliation ministry as follows: “The church must recover its priceless treasure, which for our time is the proclamation of reconciliation. In the presence of that gift and promise, the church must be reconstituted.” In the light of his understanding, I believe that reconciliatory work is an essential ministry of the church to promote intergenerational communication between aging parents and their adult children who are struggling with unresolved intergenerational conflicts, not a task to be reserved for professional mediators or lawyers.

4.2.1.2 Mutual responsibility between the church and the family

Another role of the church in facilitating intergenerational communication for resolving conflict is derived from her intimate relationship with the family. There is a strong correlation between the church and the family, which causes each to make the other healthy.

There have been discussions of the conflict between the church and the family as to whether the church or the family has a higher priority. It has been a source of competition between them. Gorman (1988:1) describes the opposite perspectives between them as follows: “Historically, there has often been a tendency to focus on one or the other. Churches outstanding for their large membership and growing Sunday schools are not, by and large, correspondingly known for a strong focus also on the home.” For this argument, Clapp (1993:45) spells out the church’s priority over family in the following statements: “For years it has been popular among evangelicals to list three lifetime priorities, in this order: God, family and church.... In these popular rankings, family usurps the place that the New Testament assigns to the church.”

Clapp (1993:73) argues for the precedence of the church, stating that Jesus refused to acknowledge his family: “whoever does the will of my Father in

heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Mt. 12:48). However, the New Testament’s other texts do not support the view that the church should always be first. For example, regarding maintaining a widow, Paul claims that, first of all, she should be cared for by her own families. Only when her family cannot help a widow, does the responsibility for her fall to the church (1 Tim. 5:14-16) (Sell 2000:280).⁴⁶ Luther was concerned about the emphasis on the church in his day. According to him, many church leaders did not contemplate the glory of the family, owing to the “counter-glory,” which may bring about a competitor to the church (Schreoeder 1970:111).

It goes without saying that there is no preference between the church and the family. The church and the family have a responsibility to establish a mutually co-operative relationship. On the one hand, the families that God creates are the place which is brought up, prospered, and united, and for which the resources of life from God are provided. That is, the family is the living field that is guided by God through worship and education in the church.

On the other hand, the church is virtually identified with the family as a community in the Bible (Eph. 2:19). In addition, the church is the community of faith that takes care of families with the functions of missionary work, social work, and education. The church needs to focus on establishing and strengthening the family with its social work approach.

In this regard, the church and the family are very closely bound together. “The family needs the church, the church needs the family” (Sell 1981:29). If they function separately, one or both of them may die. While the church cannot function without the home in which to play the important role of raising

⁴⁶ “If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need” (1 Tim. 5:16). For those who maintain the priority of the church, there is another important passage that we should place the kingdom of God first: “Seek first the kingdom of God” (Mt. 6:33). There can be no argument against this. However, the kingdom of God is not the same to the local church. The kingdom is also associated with the family (Sell 2000:280). Thus, the Christian who practises the will of God in the world is not only devoted to the church, but also committed to the family.

Christians, the family cannot work if it cannot rely on the church to train the family. Sell (2000:280) espouses that the church and the family have a healthy relationship in the following statements:

As a general rule, we should not put either the family or the church first. Both are created by God and both contain privileges and responsibilities. At times the demands of one will clash with the demands of the other. Whether or not we give priority to one is determined by the circumstances. When there are pressing needs in the body of Christ, a person may sacrifice family for church. Yet, if an ill wife places heavy demands on a Christian's time and attention, his church involvement will be limited.

In conclusion, I suggest that the church is a staging ground to reconcile the intergenerational conflict with regards to family support of the elderly because of the characteristic of such a close relationship between the family and the church. When the church maintains close communication with the family, both can function and grow properly with mutual help, thus building up an intergenerational relationship.

4.2.2 Limitations of the Korean Church in creating open intergenerational communication

4.2.2.1 Conflicting church

The Korean Church, with particular focus on some mega-churches, has shown conflicts and disputes since the 1990s. The main reasons are conflict between retired pastors and senior pastors, problems regarding church inheritance,⁴⁷ and misappropriation of church funds by senior pastors. These incidents have

⁴⁷ It happens occasionally when some pastors reach the retirement age that they want to bequeath the church to their sons, while some members of the church do not want this, and this situation causes conflicts in the church.

resulted in the loss of respect for the Korean Church by society. For example, the recent Kwang-Sung church dispute has attracted public attention, and this has severely damaged the church's image.

The Kwang-Sung church incident has been viewed as one of the typical cases of church disputes. The church has had much influence on Korean religious associations.⁴⁸ However, when Chang In Kim, who had served the church for 38 years, retired in 2003, it brought him into conflict with Sung Gon Lee, the newly appointed senior pastor. While the retired pastor still guided the church, even though he did not provide leadership for the church, the senior pastor disclosed that the retired pastor had misappropriated church funds in the past. This deepened the conflict between them. The church's fame turned sour. Inner conflicts of the church increased daily, and this divided the church into two factions. According to which pastor they supported, there was conflict between fathers and their sons, between brothers, and between friends. Not only did they not greet each other, but they also easily became angry at each other. Outrages have been committed by church members ceaselessly, and scores of lawsuits are proceeding (Yoon 2005:123-124).

Having once been a leading church, the Kwang-Sung church is drifting and losing its self-purification ability. The situation has already passed the phase of telling right from wrong and confronting each other with bearing grudges. Although there is a church system and law, which does not carry any legal binding force, it has not helped to solve the problems of the church dispute. Also, having been followed by serial complaints and indictments, mutual conversations and compromise currently do not work.

The church dispute has caused severe damage to the Korean Church's reputation of playing an important role in reconciliation. The church is supposed to be responsible for arbitration and reconciliation between people who are in

⁴⁸ The Kwang-Sung church, which is located in Seoul and has more than 40,000 members, is one of the biggest churches in Korea.

conflict. Yet, the churches have shown disruption and disputes within themselves, making it difficult for them to be equal to the role of reconciler.

4.2.2.2 The poor relationship between the Korean Church and the family

The second limitation of the Korean Church in creating close intergenerational communication in conflict lies in its unproductive relationship with the family. The relationship between the Korean Church and the family is associated with church growth trends since the 1960s.

Despite its short mission history, the Korean Church is known as one of the fastest growing churches in the world.⁴⁹ In particular, explosive church growth from 1970 to 1990 resulted in the increase of the number of church members (Ro 1995:338).⁵⁰ This example of church growth in Korea raised many questions from Christians around the world.⁵¹

Concerning the great church growth, the Korean Church has had a strong will for “self-reliance,” which seeks individual church-centred growth. Various strategies of missions have been practised in the churches. In general, there are several regular meetings, Bible studies, and worships in the Korean churches.⁵² Such mass evangelical meetings allow the church to be more stable and are especially related to church growth (Cho 1996:349).

⁴⁹ The Protestant Church in Korea began with Allen who arrived on September 20, 1884 (Lee 1995:236).

⁵⁰ For instance, there are some of the largest churches in the world: Yoido Full Gospel Church (706,000 members), Yong-nak Presbyterian Church (60,000 members), and Kwanglim Methodist Church (73, 000 members) (Ro 1995:338).

⁵¹ Ro and Nelson (1983:3) sum up the great concerns of Korean church growth in the world in those times as follows: “‘Why is the Korean church growing so rapidly?’ Many Christians around the world have asked this question. The rapid growth of the church in Korea has been reported in various Christian and secular magazines. Articles such as ‘Six New Churches Everyday,’ ‘Korea: Asia’s First Christian Nation?’ and ‘Church Growth Unlimited’ have excited Christians around the world, particularly those who are involved in church growth studies.”

⁵² There are numerous such meetings, for example pre-dawn prayer meetings every morning, prayer meetings on Wednesday and Friday, and cell group meetings on Friday, as well services on Sunday in the Korean churches.

Although the growth and development of the Korean churches is considered as a success story in terms of the history of contemporary Protestant missions, the church growth movement has also revealed negative effects (Lee 1993:2). One of the negative aspects of the Korean church growth has been the exclusion of family activity due to a church growth-centred thought and attitude: It pays attention to only quantitative extension of the church and disregards the family activities (Ro 1995:349).

The Korean Church has placed the emphasis of the church over the family based on the following passage: “He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern” (Mt. 6:33). The Korean churches have thought that the stress of the family in the church would cause the church to ignore its outreach to the world. Korean pastors have felt that the family activities would disturb church growth, so they have emphasised church activity rather than that of the family to the layperson (Ji 1995:23). This attitude has caused the church to denigrate co-operation between families. It has often resulted in serious clashes between the church and the family. In other words, the church growth movement often results in competition between the church and the family.

It is true that the Korean Church has been an active agent of church growth. However, Korean churches have been particularly slow in helping to create healthy families. The Korean Church needs to be aware of how seriously the focus of church growth, apart from conversion to the Christian faith, threatens the welfare of the family. Along with the economic development that has taken place since the 1960s, Korean society has experienced instability in the family. Many parents fail to spend time relating to their children, so that both parties fail to build intimate relationships. In addition, many adult children neglect the commitment to care for their aging parents, which brings about the intergenerational conflict.

For healthy relationships between the church and the family, I believe the

Korean Church ought to move from being a growth-centred entity to being a family-centred one. Fortunately, since the 1990s there has been a growing sensitivity towards the idea that the church's programs need to work together with the activities of the families. With regards to some mega-churches, several programs for families have appeared and many pastors have become interested in family ministry. However, many churches are still searching for "growth" as the primary goal of their ministries, disregarding family ministry in the church. Korean churches are still not accustomed to doing an adequate job of promoting the family and providing help for the dysfunctional family, and there has been a distinct lack of interest in family ministry on the part of pastors.

4.3 The Round Table as alternative communicability

As has already been discussed (4.2), the church's role in promoting open intergenerational communication can play a role in the resolution of conflicts through open dialogue between conflicting parties. However, the challenge is how the Korean Church can deal with intergenerational conflict with regard to family support of the elderly between the aging parents and the adult children. The Church has lost her credibility and efficiency to produce intimate intergenerational communication. Thus, the Korean Church needs alternative communicability to create the communication with open dialogue.

I suggest that a Round Table, as taken from the story of King Arthur, can build upon the work of resolving intergenerational conflict, as well as play a role in co-operation initiatives, as a vehicle for dialogue between generations. I will deal with the question of how a Round Table functions to form intimate intergenerational communication in conflicts between the aging parents and the adult children. The concept of a Round Table in the story of King Arthur; practices of conflict management through a Round Table in the contemporary society; and adoption of a Round Table into the church – the Church Round

Table – will be further explored.

4.3.1 The concept of a Round Table in the story of King Arthur

The story of King Arthur has been told for fifteen hundred years, and each generation has devised a version for their own times. Currently, it is viewed as providing “perfect examples of courage and humility” (Foulkes 1990:57-58). Thorpe (1966:28) describes the importance of the story: “As romanticized history, as an inspiration for poetry, drama and romantic fiction down the centuries, it has had few if any equals in the whole history of European literature.”

Perhaps the most famous surviving element in the story of King Arthur is the Round Table (Dean 1987:55-56). The Round Table is said to have originated from the legend of King Arthur during medieval times. It was first mentioned in about 1155, in Wace’s *“Roman de Brut,”* a revision of the first popular Arthurian novel – Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *“History of the Knight of Britain.”*

There was turmoil in medieval England because hundreds of feudal lords claimed their domain, insisting on their own importance in comparison to the other lords. King Arthur conceived of the Round Table to solve the great problem of how to draw upon the strengths of the warlords for the benefit of the people he ruled and to prevent quarrels between his barons over seating precedence, as a circular table had no head. Barber (1986:42) accounts for the origin of a Round Table as follows:

At a Christmas feast attended by seven kings’ sons with seven hundred knights, a quarrel over precedence arose, and several of them were slain in the ensuing fights. When Arthur went to Cornwall shortly afterwards, he met a carpenter from foreign lands who had heard about the incident and offered to make him a table which could be carried anywhere, and at

which sixteen hundred men could sit without one being higher than the next. He was provided with materials, and completed the table in four weeks.

In those times, concerning the problem of “political hierarchy” between knights, the Round Table pursued the solution through the idea of equal relationship. The prestige and philosophy of the Round Table at Winchester lies not in its physical appearance, but in its egalitarian idea. In conflict situations between the king and a knight or knights, the Round Table was seen as a basis of the reconciling model.

4.3.2 Practices of a Round Table in contemporary society

The practice of resolving conflict through a Round Table is shown in several areas and situations. Firstly, the use of a Round Table was involved in political relations. For instance, when there was constitutional reform in the German Democratic Republic in 1989-1990, the Round Table played an important role in the discussion for the process of reunification. In the autumn of 1989, the East German regime had collapsed and there was a transition period until a new government took over. At this time the nation and its organisations lost their legitimacy, and a Round Table was organised as a new method by which citizen’s opinions could be collected, discussed, and decided upon. It operated in most of the East German cities and local communities. The Round Table was a general meeting in which both established authorities and all kinds of new groups could participate. Although East German communism failed to reform society, the Round Table became an important and prominent symbol of the new German political culture (Quint 1997:28-29).

The Round Table was an opportunity for people who had different thoughts or belonged to different groups, parties, or organisations to communicate with

each other. There was clear equality and open-hearted conversations among participants. Most of all, people needed the courage to speak out about their opinions. This had been the most difficult thing to do under communism. The Round Table was used in those situations in which bilateral agreements based on mutual trust and non-violence had been concluded. In this way, the term 'Round Table' has been used in political negotiations when compromises are needed. In Korean society, a Round Table was also organised for the first time in the name of "the North-South Korean Round Table Conference" in June 2005 (Chosun Daily Newspaper, p. 4).

Secondly, the Round Table is used to solve complex social problems. For instance, there was the case of environmental protection of forests in Canada in the 1980s (Pasquero 1991:38). Regarding Canadian forestry, there were several parties, including industry members, environmentalists, fur trappers, and the facilitator, who all had different ideas and voices surrounding social and ecological issues related to forestry (Driscoll 1996:162). In the structural conflict owing to various perspectives, the model of a Round Table was discussed. The Forest Round Table comprised 24 members representing numerous organisations. The Round Table's goal was to develop a shared vision and principles, to build an "action plan for their organization in accordance with these principles," and to give recommendations to policy makers. The process constituted nine meetings, which were held over a two-year period (Driscoll 1996:160-161). In the process of the Round Table, communication through dialogue was promoted between members. This case of the Round Table resulted in success, which showed the process of productive conflict management and agreement for complex social issues.

In addition, the Round Table has also been applied to the issue of conflict to develop dialogue and co-operation in educational institutions or in industry activity (Hogan 1982:26-29).

4.3.3 Adoption of a Round Table into the church: The Church Round Table

There has been escalating tension and conflict for family support of the elderly between aging parents and their adult children in the Korean family over the past several decades. It has appeared as an unproductive relationship through miscommunication regarding the intergenerational gap on the issues between the older and younger generations. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Korean Church, which has a role of reconciliation in the conflict, has lost her value to make open intergenerational communication. In this condition, in order to resolve intergenerational conflicts and establish consensus, I am adopting the concept of a Round Table, which has been applied to several areas, such as political, social, and educational issues, into the church: The Church Round Table.

4.3.3.1 Characteristics of the Church Round Table as a communicative medium

What are the essential features of the Church Round Table? There are three characteristics of the Round Table. Firstly, the Church Round Table is based a theological tradition. In this study, the central premise of my approach for the Church Round Table is as an interpersonal religious communication; the Church Round Table should be the suitability of the theory for communicative practice in a Christian congregation. There are many disciplines that study the phenomenon of communication from its own perspectives. Here, my study for intergenerational communication and reconciliation within the Christian congregation (the Church Round Table) is conducted from a theological perspective because the communicative act of the Round Table is rooted in the theological foundation.

The Church Round Table does not only refer to activity within the church, but

can also refer to the participation of a pastor as mediator in any other place as well, because pastors are persons who are acknowledged by the church and they have a special responsibility to lead the people in fulfilling the mandate Christ has given to the Church (Grenz 2004:277). Under the mediation of a pastor, the aging parent and the adult child can meet on a regular basis to converse and solve related conflicts, both in the church and at any other venue.

Secondly, a very important characteristic of the Church Round Table is that it aims at reconciliation, which is perceived as the being the ideal outcome of the Round Table. While the main purpose of Round Tables in politics and social problems is to provide the development of strategies for managing “successful negotiation” where participants focus on mutual interests, the Church Round Table seeks primarily to pursue reconciliation of intergenerational conflict in family support of the elderly between the aging parent and the adult child (Driscoll 1996:156).

Even though the starting point of the Church Round Table is similar to that of other cases of the Round Table, in that it facilitates communication in mutual understanding throughout the open dialogue process between parties, the fundamental conclusion is different. General Round Tables seek to reach a mutually agreeable settlement of participants’ substantive differences. In the event of conflicts, the central concern of these Round Tables lies in mutual compromise through negotiation, which is task-oriented. In contrast, the Church Round Table is person-oriented, and makes a point of preserving relationships through free conversation between conflicting parties and drawing out the underlying focus into reconciliation between them.

Thirdly, the Church Round Table seeks non-authoritarian communication between free subjects on an equal basis. In this manner, Christian communication presupposes the unconditional freedom of the participants. In the realm of the Round Table there can be no coercion. All people are free to

hold and share their own thoughts, for which they are responsible. This means that, in the context of the Church Round Table, the aging parent and the adult child recognise and respect the other's point of view.

It would appear that other Round Tables also pursue a non-authoritarian atmosphere in equal relationship. However, participants in these Round Tables merely attempt to create mutual consensus through strategic concession, without any genuine self-giving attitude for the other, as is the case in the political Round Table. Participants maintain their authority in their organisation even though the central notion of the Round Table is that it represents equality – that there is no head of the table. The Church Round Table, however, seeks to abandon a participant's authority, helping to establish a collaborative culture through open dialogue where members focus on mutual understanding.

4.3.3.2 The Church Round Table in rule-governed interpersonal interaction

4.3.3.2.1 Literary genre as communication covenant

Genre, from the Latin *genus*, means “kind,” that is, a species of literature, like a classification scheme distinguished as poetry, drama, comedy, and epic (Vanhoozer 1997:336). However, the concept of genre is more than a device for literary categorisation. According to Striedter (1978:2), genre is characterised by system: “all factors in a literary work relate intentionally to the entire work as a system.” Genre, then, exists and is effective only as “a system of references” (Thomson 1984:30).

Genre as a system is sustained by implicit rules. The concept of genre acknowledges “a tacit agreement” as to how a text should be written and how it should be read. A genre is like a language game between the author and the reader. When a reader is able to follow the literary game's rules as defined by the author, a text only communicates. In this respect, genre is “a covenant of discourse” in which authors and readers accept implicit rules in a literary genre

with mutual obligation (Vanhoozer 1997:342, 346). According to the covenant dimension, genre facilitates the process of communication by orienting the author and the reader to a shared literary context within the same set of rules (Jauss 1985:77).

When we engage someone in dialogue, we automatically follow a number of rules. For instance, we let a conversation partner finish his or her sentences, or when a person requests clarification, we respond. Grice's (1975:45) "cooperative principle" formulates the implicit rules that typically govern a dialogue. This principle means that a speaker needs to give the proper information within a given context, to be clear in a demanding situation, and to speak truly (Grice 1975:258, 277). Why do speakers need to co-operate in conversation? Because, with non-co-operative behaviour in a dialogue, the dialogue would be unsociable and irrational. If one disobeys the "cooperative principle," communication becomes impossible because meaning is located neither on "the level of the language itself" nor on "the level of the individual," but in the "rule-governed interpersonal interaction" (Vanhoozer 1997:337).

4.3.3.2.2 The Church Round Table as a pastoral counselling genre

Concerning co-operative principles, Vanhoozer (1997:343) claims that generic competence refers to the implicit rules that enable us to perform successful communicative acts:

Genre creates a cooperative context, and generic competence requires that one attend both to the universal rules that govern all discourse as well as to the particular rules that govern particular literary forms.

Such generic competence that is reconstructed by implicitly governing a particular literary form parallels that of the Church Round Table as a pastoral counselling genre that a helping relationship can be established during the course of the pastoral conversation (Louw 1998:6). Just as genre is committed

in implicit rules based on a co-operative context, the Church Round Table as the pastoral counselling genre needs to be committed to rule-governed interpersonal interaction.

Without that commitment, the necessary resources will not be allocated and the aging parents and the adult children will not take the Round Table's concepts seriously. In this context, both parties develop a code of conduct, which delineates the particular rules to be followed in the Church Round Table, governing the conduct of the participants. The following session suggests the implicit rules in which the intergenerational conflict is managed within the Church Round Table's dialogue process.

4.4 Three key issues of the Church Round Table for intergenerational conflict

The Church Round Table is directed toward improving collaborative communication through open dialogue between the aging parents and the adult children regarding the issue of family support of the elderly. On the basis of the work of the Church Round Table there are rule-governed interpersonal interactions based on a "cooperative principle," which comprises three key issues: kenosis, equality, and reconciliation. The three themes are basically formulated and connected as implicit rules in the context of the Church Round Table. At the same time, these notions are conducted from the concepts in the story of the Round Table and some theories of the literature discipline.

Kenosis and equality concepts, as indispensable guidance and rule, can increasingly facilitate open discussion, co-operation, and the finding of common ground, all of which draw on the reconciliation aspect. Three themes in the following sessions will be discussed as implicit rules for collaborative conversation with regard to the features of intergenerational conflict resolution within the Church Round Table.

Firstly, the concept of kenosis concerns the way a speaker (the author) forms a relationship with the other; how can an aging parent or an adult child practise kenotic attitude as an implicit rule in the Church Round Table? It depends on the speaker (the author) abandoning his own authority and returning as a communicative agent with the other.

Secondly, the concept of equality deals with the way the audience (the reader) constructs a relationship with the other; how can the aging parent or the adult child perform this equality concept? In order to make the relationship equal, one needs to unconditionally accept the other even though the other has a different point of view. To practise equality is to follow the basic spirit of the round table in that there is no head, which causes participants to enjoy a climate of free communication.

In the practice of the two concepts, the dialogic roles (i.e. speaker/author and audience/reader) would be interchangeable. The speaker (the author) can become the audience (the reader) and the audience (the reader) can become the speaker (the author) as utterances follow upon utterances, so that in each phase of the process the aging parent or the adult child has an equal chance to act upon the kenosis and equality idea.

Lastly, the reconciliation concept indicates the ideal of the Church Round Table, which seeks to heal the real schism between the aging parent and the adult child with regards to the issue of supporting the elderly. In this sense, a pastor functions as a mediator who is called to intercede on behalf of the aging parent and the adult child who disagree with each other.

4.4.1 Kenosis

For intergenerational reconciliation, the change in the Church Round Table

from a closed dialogue to an open dialogue starts from the question of how the aging parent or the adult child practises the attitude of kenosis. A basic criterion to judge whether the Church Round Table becomes the place of a closed or open dialogue is whether the speaker in the Round Table comes down from their position of power or not. After all, important collaborative communication of the Church Round table is basically a matter of a self-emptying speaker.

In order to actualise the concept of kenosis through the Church Round Table as a communicability, there are three aspects that need to be discharged here. Firstly, it explores the contemporary culture of power-over relationship, for which the idea of kenosis is needed. Secondly, there is the change of the author's (speaker's) role from an omnipotent subject to a communicative agent in the Round Table. In this respect, the author (speaker) refers to the aging parent or the adult child who abandons his own power to converse as a communicative agent. Thirdly, it concerns their self-emptying attitude to limit their authority regarding the other in order to create a freely transactional conversation in the Church Round Table. These three stages will be activated as the procedures of kenosis as a first implicit rule in the round table.

4.4.1.1 Kenosis and power-over culture

King Arthur was sovereign among rulers of the British Isles and Europe. According to Victorian writers, he was an exemplary hero of the modern age (Vale 2001:185). His glorious reign was seen as representative of the greatness and valour of the Britons in medieval history. However, in the Round Table, King Arthur allowed himself to sit at a fundamentally non-hierarchical round table with his knights (Vale 2001:185). Its structure served to put Arthur, who had gained personal prestige from military and diplomatic successes, on equal footing with the knights. The Round Table's crucial image was that there is no hierarchy, not only between knights, but also between the king and the knights. Such

humbleness as Arthur's can be explained as the attitude of kenosis, which caused the knights to observe the implied rule of equality in the Church Round Table.

“Kenosis,” formed from the Greek verb *kenoō*, refers to the Son of God's “emptying” himself for the sake of the human in incarnation, by which he made himself of no reputation: The sovereign becomes a servant (Phil. 2:7)⁵³ (Coakley 2002:5).⁵⁴ Kenosis is Jesus Christ's final surrender of his life, in utter self-giving and sacrifice, on the cross. According to Martin (2000:643), professor of Biblical Studies, “the words ‘he emptied himself’ in the Pauline context says nothing about the abandonment of the divine attributes.” Jesus' “self-emptying” shows us that divinity is humble rather than powerful. Kenosis could be translated as, “he made himself powerless” (Richard 1997:59). Making himself powerless means that he has no rights or privileges, relinquishing God's power in terms of servant-hood and the willingness to suffer for the Kingdom of God.

The concept of kenosis which coincides with that of Christ in incarnation, in my view, is a starting point and a prerequisite to enter into the concept of equality in the Round Table because fundamental disagreements between the Round Table's central philosophy for equality and power-over relationship in families may be revealed as deterrents to understanding and consensus between the aging parent and the adult child. Such a dilemma of unbalanced power can be solved only through the approach of kenosis. In other words, without kenosis on the part of a speaker there would be no equal partnership with the other.

The problem of difference of power underlies one of the biggest debates on the intergenerational conflict in family support of the elderly. In contemporary culture, people tend to exert their authority as dominant in their own organisations

⁵³ It remarks that “He made himself nothing, he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human forms” (Phil. 2:7).

⁵⁴ The meaning of “incarnation,” equivalent of Latin *in carne* (*en sarkī*), is that Jesus Christ came and died ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ as a man for securing human-kinds’ salvation (Col. 1:22; Rom. 2:15. 1 Pet. 3:18; 4:1). In this reading of Phil. 2:7 kenosis is not merely Christ's incarnation, but a symbol of total humbleness.

(Richard 1997:23). In their families, two persons, the aging parent and the adult child, hold different levels of authority. While aging parents keep senior positions and are capable of guaranteeing the actions that they have been representing of their families, adult children, who are manipulating current Korean society and family, could have power with possession of wealth over their aging parents in a technological culture.

In the Korean traditional patriarchal structure, the power-over relationship characterises the power that aging parents employ over their adult children. Even though recently the authority and status of the elderly has become weaker than before, as they lose more and more of the social and economic grounds of their authoritative status, they still command respect and involvement from their adult children. Despite the newly emerging demands of the nuclear family system owing to industrialisation, many elderly still want the extended family system and they claim authority over their children concerning the issue. In this sense, the elderly do not recognise their children as conversational partners in equal relationships. For the elderly, adult children are still regarded as subjects who just receive and obey their aging parents' viewpoint.

Conversely, in terms of the power-over intergenerational relationship, adult children exercise the power towards their aging parents. While aging parents have insisted on their power throughout the hierarchical culture in Korea, the adult children's stronger power over their parents is focused on their social and financial dominance. The rapid development of technology and industrialisation has resulted in the enhancement of the younger generation's productivity, instead of the disability of the elderly in the economy (Hutter 1998:441).⁵⁵ Based on economic wealth, the younger generation could be dominant in Korean society and family. They are considering themselves as the subject of

⁵⁵ In pre-industrial societies, the elderly played an important role in economic productivity because there was a minimal division of labor and low technological development. However, in highly developed societies, while the emergence of new educational, and technological improvement contributed to the younger generation's economic development, the elderly fell behind.

society because of their supremacy in terms of economy and information. In this respect, they look on the elderly as “an economic burden and social nuisance” based on an economy-centred perspective (Kim 2000:240). For younger generations, therefore, the elderly are considered as out-of-date people with their economic disability in the family and society.

Power-over relationships between the aging parents and the adult children reflect cultural conflicts between the traditional attitude on the parents’ part and the emergence of individualism on the children’s part. Thus, those intergenerational conflicts make communication paths for mutual discussion difficult in an unequal intergenerational relationship. In this condition, it is necessary to have a kenotic notion, which is the behaviour of pouring oneself out toward the other, for the aging parents and the adult children in order to create an open dialogue based on mutual understanding and acceptance in the Church Round Table. According to the responsibility to follow the implicit rule of the Round Table, practising a kenotic attitude can pave the way to resolving intergenerational conflict through collaborative conversation.

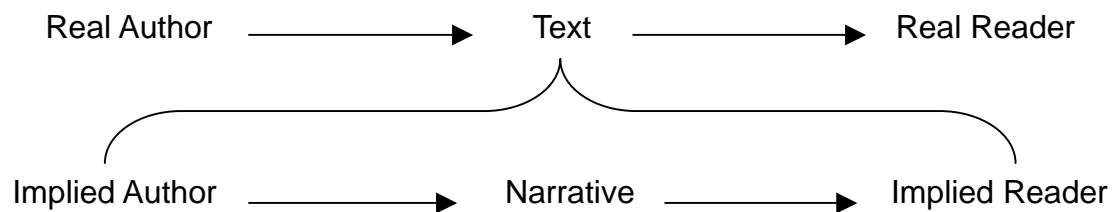
4.4.1.2 The change of the author: From sovereign subject to a communicative agent

4.4.1.2.1 The author as sovereign subject

Narrative criticism is concerned with a particular type of literature. “Narrative” may be defined as any work of literature that tells a story.⁵⁶ Powell (1990:19) illustrates the communication model for narrative criticism as follows:

⁵⁶ Narrative criticism is not known in general literary scholarship. This movement developed within the field of biblical studies without an exact counterpart in the general literary world. If general critics classify, it might be viewed as a variety of the reader-response movement, which, as its name implies, is a pragmatic approach to literature that emphasizes the role of the reader in determining meaning. However, narrative criticism is different from the reader-response approaches in that the former focuses on ways in which the text determines the reader’s response rather than on ways in which the reader determines meaning. In addition, biblical scholars tend to think of narrative criticism as an independent movement in its own right.

Figure 1. The communication model for narrative criticism



In this diagram, the real author and the real reader are lying outside the parameters of the text itself. The implied author, narrative, and implied reader take the place of the text. In this context, the text is described as the message component of a larger communication model. In addition, the text can be portrayed as the entire communication model because it contains all three components – sender, message, and receiver (Powell 1990:19-20).

Today, literary critics speak of an implied author, who is reconstructed by the reader from the narrative. This implied author is distinct from any real, historical author (Chatman 1978:148-150). When a person reads a story, he or she will unavoidably have an impression about the story's author because the story conveys a sense of the author's perspective in the story. However, in the course of reading, what interests the reader is not really the author's point of view, but the meaning of the narrative through the implied author's values and worldview. When hermeneutic preference is given to the implied author over the real author, the focus of interpretation no longer lies in the author, but in the text itself (Powell 1990:5).

This challenges the traditional picture of the author as representing the sovereign subject. In a traditional interpretation, interpreters read for the author's voice. The author's meaning, which is identified as the original meaning, determines the 'actual' meaning of a text. Since the author has proprietary rights over meaning, "it is the author who has authority, author's rights" (Kreeft

1988:30).⁵⁷ In this approach, without the author there would be no adequate principle for judging the validity of an interpretation.

4.4.1.2.2 The author as a communicative agent

With the New Criticism of the 1940s, interest in the author was lost and his/her authority became undone. Instead, the focus turned to the text.⁵⁸ In contrast with the author's sovereign authority, many scholars proclaimed the death of the author: "the author should die so that writing may live" (Derrida 1976:3; Barthes 1986:125-130; Foucault 1979:159). While I agree with their claims that the author is no longer a superior subject, I do not dismiss the author entirely, but reinstate the author as a communicative agent in a communicative action. In this sense, I concur with Vanhoozer (1998:203), who spells out the transition of the author's role from a powerful subject to a communicative agent as follows:

For, with the notion of meaning as a form of action, the action returns, not in his or her Cartesian guise as an all-determining self-conscious subject, but as a communicative agent.

According to Vanhoozer, the author returns not as a mastery subject, but as a communicative agent. Authorship is necessary to understand, not in terms of supreme subjective consciousness, but rather in terms of inter-subjective (namely, communicative) agency. The focus of the matter is this: "communicative agents are not disembodied minds but embodied persons who form part of a language community" (Vanhoozer 1998:231). As God as divine author embodied his message in human flesh in incarnation: "in Christ the truth of God is *spoken, embodied, and lived*," human authors are incarnate in their text, so that they perform communicative acts as a communicative agent

⁵⁷ Taylor (1984:80) acidly comments: "Since He enjoys the privilege of origin, the author is authoritative."

⁵⁸ New Criticism was an American and English movement in the mid-twentieth century that "privileged the autonomy and formal unity of the text rather than the personality or biography of the author" (Vanhoozer 1998:82).

through the body of their work (Thiselton 1992:75). The new feature of the author is not the author's death, but rather the author's re-emergence as a communicative agent from an omnipotent subject who indicates his or her self-emptying attitude in an incarnated work.

Under these conditions, for the aging parent or the adult child, it is necessary to behave as not an all-powerful agent, but as a communicative agent in the Church Round Table.⁵⁹ If they follow the position of author as a supreme subject when communicating with the other, there will not be a mutually open dialogue. As mentioned above, as God's Word became human and created communication here on earth with human beings in a self-emptying action (Jn. 1:14), the aging parent and the adult child should abandon their power-over attitude to stand over the other in their own powerful authority and strength. In order to communicate freely, they need to show a self-emptying action because the unsuccessful communication between them has resulted from an uncoordinated conversation based on a power-over relationship.

4.4.1.3 Self-emptying for the other

As mentioned already, when differences between participants exist in a human community, power-over relationships can be created and it can make a relationship of equality difficult to attain. Differences in status and social and economic resources between the aging parents and the adult children have resulted in power-over relationships in the Korean family, which have prevented them from attaining an equal relationship.

In the position where kenosis is an implicit rule, the aging parent or the adult child has a responsibility to abandon their power-over attitude and be aware of communication with the other, which leads to a mutual understanding and open

⁵⁹ In the storytelling of the Church Round Table, the speaker becomes the audience and the audience becomes the speaker as storytelling revolves. The aging parent and the adult child are displayed as co-speakers in examining the intergenerational conflict through storytelling.

dialogue in the Church Round Table. This kenotic act in the Church Round Table provides participants with the right model as a rule-governed interpersonal interaction to act out of self-limitation (Richard 1997:26). In terms of the co-equal dialogical process, Mickunas (1982:64) asserts that participants need to show the gesture of non-egocentricism to the other as follows:

At the same time the partners are completely de-centred from their own egocentric stances and are intertwined in the field and its communicative process. This is not to say that they are completely subsumed in the field: rather, with their shifts of significations and perceptions, as parts of the field, the field as such is affected, is manifested in its different meaning and horizontal implications.

However, it is not easy for the Korean elderly to limit their authority because, as mentioned already, they are not accustomed to seeing such self-emptying behaviour as persons who have lived in a hierarchical relationship. Nonetheless, it is necessary to have a decisive determination and practice “to come down from the house and move out into the street” in a self-emptying attitude in order to overcome social prejudice like the father of Luke chapter 15 (Bailey 1992:149). Such kenosis of patriarchy means the self-emptying of the agency, domination, and hierarchy that was part of the male code of the ancient world.

If the Church Round Table is the entire communication model, following the role of the aging parent, then the adult child should also perform this kenotic gesture as implicit rule. Self-emptiness presents a clear alternative to contemporary culture in which technological information and economic productivity are estimated as the level of power (Richard 1997:12). The spirit and mind of such a culture seems to be appeared in contradiction to the Christian message which shows self-giving and self-limiting aspects to another person. Nonetheless, in order to share mutual conversation, adult children need to display the attitude of relinquishment. Unless they turn “from mastering to servicing, from grasping to receiving, from independence to

interdependence” any genuine mutual communication will not occur (Schumacher 1973:44).

4.4.2 Equality

The problem of the lack of openhearted conversation has existed between the aging parent and the adult child in the issue of supporting the elderly because Koreans have been accustomed to a hierarchical communication system whereby one governs the other in a dialogue. Thus, the realisation of an equal relationship between them is essential for free communication in the Church Round Table.

This equal relationship comprises three aspects. Firstly, it describes the need for and role of equality in the Church Round Table. Secondly, it deals with the reader’s (aging parent or adult child) perspective in receiving the author’s view in a literary world as the analogy of the Church Round Table as communicability. Thirdly, in order to actualise equality through the Round Table, it suggests the attitude of totally accepting the other despite a dissimilar point of view.

4.4.2.1 Equal partnership in the Church Round Table

As mentioned above, Barber (1986:39), as based on events recounted in Wace’s *“Romans de Brut,”* espouses how King Arthur set up the Round Table such that the barons were prevented from claiming any special status: “For the noble barons he had, of whom each felt that he was superior (to his companions) – each one believed himself to be the best, and no-one could tell the worst – King Arthur, of whom the Britons tell many stories, established the Round Table. There sat the vassals, all of them at the table-head, and all equal.” They were placed at the table as equal. None of them could boast that he was seated higher than his peer.

As a symbol of equality, the Church Round Table's first and foremost role is to contribute a new framework to equalising each party's position. This establishes a conversational climate between the aging parents and their adult children (Tracy & Spradlin 1994:55). This value of equality is an essentially significant point for the Church Round Table. There is no way that a party could have authority or power-over in the Church Round Table. Non-authoritarian communication between free subjects on an equal basis causes participants to have an equal chance to act in an interchangeable relationship. If the person with power claims his/her status, strength, or ability and still regards another as a sub-object, the Church Round Table's concept could not be practised. There is a special value that there is no weakness in such a show of strength, in describing dream for the Round Table.

The central message of the Church Round Table is that, rather than a power-over relationship, there should be a power-with relationship between participants. For any genuine conversation, one of the first values that the aging parents and the adult children accept and then use through the dialogue process is equality, as where all the knights were equal since there was no head of the table.

4.4.2.2 The attitude of the reader: Accepting the author

Narrative critics generally speak of an implied reader who is presupposed by the narrative itself (Chatman 1978:149-150). The implied reader is different from any real and historical reader in the same way that the implied author is different from any real author. This criticism's goal is to read the text as the implied reader. Kingsbury (1988:38) portrays the implied reader as the "imaginary person in whom the intention of the text is to be thought of as always reaching its fulfilment." To read in this way, it is necessary to accept the implied

author's evaluative point of view.⁶⁰

According to narrative criticism, the reader is expected to give up all other thinking that he or she has in order to devote their full attention and understanding through communication with the author. Of course, readers have the freedom to critique the author's view. However, in order to understand the story, it is essential to accept the author's point of view "as preliminary to such criticism" because, first of all, without such acceptance it is impossible to understand the story (Powel 1990:23-24).

According to Lewis (1961:11), the true reader "reads every work seriously in the sense that he reads it whole-heartedly, makes himself as receptive as he can." He (Lewis 1961:88) spells out that the first demand any work of any art makes upon us is "surrender."⁶¹ On the other hand, when Lewis speaks of "reception," he is referring not to a state of passivity or impassivity, but rather to a state of active obedience.

An ethical critic will accept the text as a genuine other, not as a mere reflection or projection of the reader. The first response of a responsible reader would be to respect the text, which serves as a kind of surrogate presence of the author: "acknowledge the text for what it is" (Vanhoozer 1998:402). Thus, the reader stands under "the basic moral imperative of speech, which is to respect an author's intention" (Hirsh 1976:92). "Ethical reading is a struggle to hear a voice that is genuinely other than our own: the voice of another, of an author" (Vanhoozer 1998:187, 375).

⁶⁰ In the traditional account of a literary world, knowledge was derived from the author's intention and the reader was treated as a passive observer of textual codes and conventions (Abrams 1977:426). The reader was not free to derive a meaning for a text. However, since the loss of the author's sovereign power, the focus in contemporary literary comes to rest on the reader. Terry Eagleton (1984:185) describes such a reader-oriented literary trend as the "Reader's Liberation Movement." In this approach, the author's authority is disregarded because meaning is determined from the reader, not from the author. However, in narrative criticism, the text determines meaning, so that the reader does not undo the author's authority. In this criticism, the reader expresses appropriate fear of the author.

⁶¹ Lewis adds in the same passage: "Look, Listen, Receive."

In the same way, acceptance of the author's point of view is very significant in the Church Round Table because, through the initial acceptance of the other's point of view, equality in an intergenerational relationship is practised between the aging parents and their adult children. In other words, the primary reason that the intergenerational communication in Korea has often been unsuccessful is that the aging parent and the adult child each view the other as a trivial and passive spectator, rather than as a respectable partner in an equal relationship.

4.4.2.3 Equality through unconditional acceptance of others

How can we practise equality in the Church Round Table? First of all, for successful communication, the relationship between the self and the other is important. In the relationship between them, the real meaning of communication derives from recognition of the other as a key factor in the communication process. According to Bakhtin (1986:146-147), the other is "a person at the mirror. Not-I (not) in me, that is, existence in me; something larger than me in me." In other words, without the other, there is no self: "To be means to be for another, and through the other for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary: looking inside himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another" (Bakhtin 1984:287).⁶²

In his book, *I and Thou*, Martin Buber, one of the great philosophers of our time, also describes the disappearance of dialogue in modern times. According to Buber (1966:3-4), a true human relationship requires that the *you* occupies a central place in the present life of the *I*. However, in modern society the *you* has disappeared and the *I* no longer reaches out to the *you* in a true encounter because human beings are too often dealt with as objects. The I-you relation is a prerequisite for human existence. If this relation becomes unbalanced, existence ceases to be truly human. The modern world, in which personal

⁶² Conrad (1968:137) expresses the relationship between the other and the self through the description of Marlow about Jim in his novel as follows: "He existed for me, after all it's only through me that he exists for you."

relations become impoverished, needs an emphasis on this I-you relationship. To build the relationship of genuine conversation, the *I* and the *you* need to turn to and become present with each other, resulting in reciprocal participation and involvement.

To begin open conversation, precondition for dialogue is the following: each participant needs to recognise that the other can be superior to them. This is described as “fundamental openness” to the other’s knowledge and claim: “you fellows see more than I could then” (Kogler 1999:146; Conrad 1988:30). In this stance, it is necessary to unconditionally accept the other. Bakhtin (1984:22) emphasises “an understanding of the other” through dialogue. According to him (Bakhtin 1990:53), the best way to experience art is to experience the alien ‘you’ in its otherness and, with that, one’s own ‘I’ is enriched. After all, one (I-for-myself) can see oneself throughout the other (I-for-the-other). “I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another, I must find myself in another by finding another (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance)” (Bakhtin 1984:287). In this way it creates a true dialogical communication between the *I* and the *you*.

Without receiving the other as subject, it is impossible that the other and ourselves become equal in an essential respect. According to Moore (1986:142), successive measures of a collaborative dialogue process depend on respect for the other’s views in equal and trusting relationships. A genuine conversation is one in which each partner in the conversation is concerned entirely with “discovering the real strength of every other participant’s position” (Warnke 1987:100). Gadamer (1989:385) writes:

Conversation is a process of coming to an understanding. Thus it belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of views as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not the particular individual but what he says. What is to be grasped is the substantive rightness of his

opinion, so that we can be at one with each other on the subject.

In Gadamer's model of the hermeneutic dialogue, he also endeavours to work out an understanding of the other. In the light of his understanding, the one needs to adopt the other's posture as an attentive co-subject with respect to the other's meaning: "I must allow tradition's claim to validity, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such a way that it has something to say to me" (Gadamer 1989:361).

Free communication places no rigid imposition of a particular point of view between people. However, in communication in a constantly conflicting situation between opposing ideologies, people often try to impose their view or way of life upon the other. Essentially, the problem of communication is considered to be a problem of "other mind" between participants in a dialogue. There are few attempts to accept different opinions, such that communication has degenerated. This is incompatible with the ideal speech situation.

In the communication between the aging parent and the adult child in Korean families, there is a "master dialogue," which is usually determined by the superiority of the one participant over the other because of the hierarchical relationship between them (Jauss 1985:151). It is said that in the Confucian structure "synergism – complementarity and cooperation among parts of a whole – is emphasized, not equality and interchangeability" (Delooz 1989:19). Despite their weakened social and economic status, the old parents tend to exert their authoritative attitude over their children during conversations on the issue of intergenerational conflict for supporting the elderly. Such aging parents' gesture of progressive dogmatism results in ways of refusing a dialogue with their adult children.

Equality through total reception towards the other is appropriate for solving the aspect of the conflict between the aging parents and their adult children, which is diagnosed as hierarchical positioning in the intergenerational relationship of

the Korean family. According to rule-governed interpersonal interaction in the Church Round Table, the hierarchic aspect of non-equality of synergism that disregards the child's view has must be modified to the demand of equality for accepting the adult child's point of view.

Conversely, on the part of the adult children, older people are considered to be insecure and in a vulnerable position in a world of industrialisation. The adult children perceive that their parents are getting more dependent upon them. In this circumstance, conflicts may occur when parents urge their children to unquestioningly accept their opinion on the issue of supporting the elderly. Thus, an adult child who experiences conflict with an older person may attribute the conflict to their negative stereotypes (e.g., as self-opinionated, dominating, interfering) as well as to their economic disability, and may avoid getting into open dialogue with the older person.

In this respect, the role of the equality concept, with its accent on acceptance of the other, has important implications for a free dialogical climate. From the perspective of the adult children, the equality approach does not regard the aging parent as the passive receiver or end-point of the communicator's message, but as an active and equal partner in the Church Round Table communication process. If the adult child does not view his aging parent as a conversational partner in an equal position, it is impossible to arrive at a free dialogue in mutual understanding. When an equal relationship between the aging parent and the adult child does occur, they can then have the freedom to arrive at insights and mutual understanding for their authentic existence in the Church Round Table communication.

In summary, the essential element for genuine dialogue for equality in the Church Round Table is "seeing the other" or "experiencing the other side" (Friedman 1976:87). Developments of trust and respect for the other's views are considered to be one of the most significant outcomes of the Round Table. In this sense, the aging parent and the adult child, holding different and

conflicting perspectives, meet and need to adhere to this implicit rule, namely equality through unconditional acceptance of others in the Church Round Table.

4.4.3 Reconciliation

As indicated already, one of the biggest problems of intergenerational conflict for supporting the elderly is the lack of open conversation in Korea. If the ideas of kenosis and equality as implicit rules are performed in the Church Round Table, open dialogue in transactional understanding would occur. On the basis of such actualisation of the two concepts, the Round Table seeks reconciliation of intergenerational conflict. In this section, I will deal with reconciliation as a significant value in the Church Round Table, the pastor's role as a mediator in the Round Table, and accountability for reconciliation.

4.4.3.1 From conflict to reconciliation

My belief in the Church Round Table as a communicability for intergenerational conflict is derived from the philosophy that once governed the Round Table. It was Arthur's ideal of "one for all and all for one," for hope of reconciliation and unification. Through the Round Table, King Arthur could allow knights to avoid hierarchical conflicts resulting from them wanting to sit at a higher position at a table, thus accomplishing reconciliation between them. As the Round Table is closely related to Arthur's role as enforcer of reconciliation, the Church Round Table relates to the reconciliation of the aging parent and the adult child, who are struggling with this intergenerational conflict.

Reconciliation is the restoration of the right relationship between two parties in terms of the social-societal sphere (Ridderbos 1975:182). Nixon (1996:1002) defines reconciliation in the *New Bible Dictionary*: "Reconciliation properly applies not to good relations in general but to the doing away of an enmity, the bridging over of a quarrel. It implies that the parties being reconciled were

formerly hostile to one another.” Brueggemann (1976:15) espouses the importance of the idea of reconciliation in the following statements:

The central vision of world history in the Bible is that all creation is one, every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security towards the joy and well being of every other creature.

Concerning intergenerational conflict in the Korean family, the Church Round Table is defined as a collaborative conversational process, which brings conflicting parties to interact. By carrying out the kenosis and equality concepts in a rule-governed interpersonal interaction, genuine conversation between the aging parent and the adult child can be achieved in the Round Table. Then, on the basis of purely interpersonal conversation through two implicit rules, the aging parent and the adult child can endeavour to reach reconciliation.

The concept of reconciliation accentuates this interpersonal dimension. The Korean aging parents, who are experiencing the intergenerational conflict of family support of the elderly, hurt due to loneliness. At the same time, the adult children also struggle with intergenerational conflict between educated modern values of individualism and the traditional parental expectations of parents to live with their children.

In this interpersonal relationship, reconciliation is the purpose of the Church Round Table because this term expresses the holistic nature of healing through the restoration of the relationships of those involved in intergenerational conflict. Although the Church Round Table discussion is not a panacea for everything, nor the utopia that Camelot promised, its adoption can lead to increased conversation and understanding between the aging parent and the adult child who are experiencing conflicts. It also provides reconciliation in the family through increased intimacy among them.

4.4.3.2 The pastor as a mediator in the Church Round Table

4.4.3.2.1 The authoritarian Korean pastor

In the traditional Korean society based on Confucianism, “the king stood at the head of a truly paternal government, and filial piety formed the basis of the State. The ruler was the father-king, the mandarins were parent-officials, and the people were regarded as children” (Palmer 1967:38). This tendency shows that the status of the king or government official was identified with the position of the father, who had strong authority in the family.

The Korean Church cannot be understood without consideration of the circumstances of Korean society because she has been formed through the perspective of social consciousness. Naturally, the traditional-status background for father-king or parent-officials as a symbol of authority has moved into the leadership structure in the Korean churches. In these conditions, the leadership structure in the church is associated with vertical relationships in which the pastor has authority like the position of a father in a traditional family, as illustrated by Lundell (1995:110):

Figure 2. The leadership structure in the Korean churches

Pastor (senior)
Pastor (associate, assistant, youth, children)
Elders (ordained by local church)
Kwonsa (appointed by local church)⁶³
Deacon (ordained by local church)
Deacon (temporary, appointed)
Laity (baptised)

On the basis of such a pastor’s sovereign status, pastoral care in the Korean Church has rested primarily upon pastoral guidance from the authorities.

⁶³ Every Korean church has numerous deacons. In the Korean Church structures, elders are always men, except in the Methodist Church. For women who then go beyond the level of deacon, there exists a position between deacon and elder: the *kwonsa*. The role of *kwonsa* is to pray for the church and visit a patient or the weak in church (Lundell 1995:129).

Pastoral conversation with a layperson has relied heavily on sustaining and guiding by preaching the word of God. The directive style of pastoral care is consistent with the active use of authority in approaching and caring for people, but this greatly restricts the solving of modern people's problems, such as their anxieties, pains, suffering, violence, and relational conflicts. Under this power-over model by pastors, they are pictured as "Compulsive Co-Dependent, dangerously out-of-touch" with their feelings, resulting in certain caricatures of leadership: pastor as guru who characterises the leader who wants to be the only person in the group with the goods. Thus, they may unconsciously disregard others' thinking and try to manipulate them (Stortz 1997:77).

Of course, the authority of the pastor can be used appropriately in guiding people who express their concerns. However, I am concerned that, based on an authoritarian approach, this customary style of pastoral care may not sufficiently deal with the increasing troubles of the families which need healing and reconciliation. Aside from the problems of intergenerational conflict, Korean families have many conflicts and pains that pastors need to listen to carefully and to counsel. In this context, the pastors need to incorporate a two-way conversation in their pastoral guidance, escaping from their authoritarian attitude of ministry.

Nonetheless, the Korean pastors are generally accustomed to speaking intensively, not to listening, in the process of their pastoral care. One of the mistakes made by Korean pastors is assuming that they understand the thoughts and needs of the layman without listening long enough because the cohesion between the pastors and the people has been maintained by strictly hierarchical structures, rather than by free communication. Such rigid and authoritarian attitudes from a pastor cause communication with persons to fail, without open dialogue (Poling and Miller 1985:17).

In a one-sided conversation from a pastor to layman, it is impossible to

effectively care about the many complex issues concerning families. The dialogue as one-way communication from the pastor to layman represents plenty of scope for misunderstanding, misinterpretation, ignoring and the like. True communication, thus, is always two-way, implying open dialogue between the pastor and layman.

4.4.3.2.2 The pastor as a mediator

Through the Church Round Table, the pastor can intercede in intergenerational conflicts and help with the process of reconciliation. Schmiechen (1996:147) spells out a pastor's essential role and duty redefined in terms of the new being of reconciliation in the following statements: "Pastors called to have oversight (an episcopal duty) by means of regional and national offices share in this representation of the reconciliation of Christ. Their office is part of the being of the church, and not simply a function. They are to embody the unity of Christ."

Especially, as a mediator, the Korean pastor needs to endeavour to listen to the others speaking in the Church Round Table. The pastors have a responsibility not only to reflect deeply on the Word of God, but also to listen to persons who are struggling with conflicts. The pastor is the one who walks closely with the people listening to their suffering, washing their wounds, and healing their pain in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the Church Round Table, when the pastors as good listeners work their ministry, the aging parent and the adult child share their relational conflicts in their life with pastors because "intense listening is the most powerful relationship one can have with another human being" (Isenhardt & Spangle 2000:86-87). Swinton (2000:115) points to the fact that:

There is tremendous healing in being able to tell one's story in a safe environment that is free from judgment and condemnation. The power of

telling and listening to stories is an aspect of pastoral care that has gradually been gaining increasing recognition.

The pastor as mediator can play a variety of roles in intergenerational conflict. They may at first facilitate communication by encouraging the aging parents and the adult children to listen more carefully to one another in the intergenerational conflict. They may also help each party by listening carefully themselves and by asking appropriate questions in order to resolve the conflicts (Sande 2004:191).

Another important role of the pastor as a mediator is to delve deeply into the roots of a dispute. Moore (1986:17) defines a mediator's function as follows: "The mediator, on the other hand, works to reconcile the competing interests of the two parties. The mediator's goal is to assist the parties in examining the future and their interest or need, and negotiating an exchange of promises and relationships that will be mutually satisfactory and meet their standards of fairness." When the pastor recognises the reasons for intergenerational conflict and seeks for the aging parent and the adult child to be open to communication with one another, they are assisted in enforcing their agreements (Burton 1987:55). The pastor is an agent that attempts to obtain reconciliation between the aging parent and the adult child who are struggling in conflicts.

4.4.3.3 Accountability for reconciliation

It is never easy to abandon one's own authority and accept the other with whom we disagree for reconciliation in the Church Round Table. It can throw us into such cognitive dissonance that we let go of any obligation for a relationship with a disagreeing aging parent or adult child. It is a strange but hopeful reality. In this regard, the question may arise: can the aging parent and the adult child who hold opposing views be reconciled?

Even though there are obstacles to arriving at reconciliation from time to time, I believe in the possibility of the Church Round Table as a pastoral counselling

genre for reconciliation, as Conrad (1983:348-349) claims creative power to recognise the irreconcilable conflicts in the novel genre in the following statements:

Fiction, at the point of development at which it has arrived, demands from the writer a spirit of scrupulous abnegation. The only legitimate basis for creative work lies in the courageous recognition of **all the irreconcilable antagonisms** that make our life so enigmatic, so burdensome, so fascinating, so dangerous – so full of hope (emphasis mine).

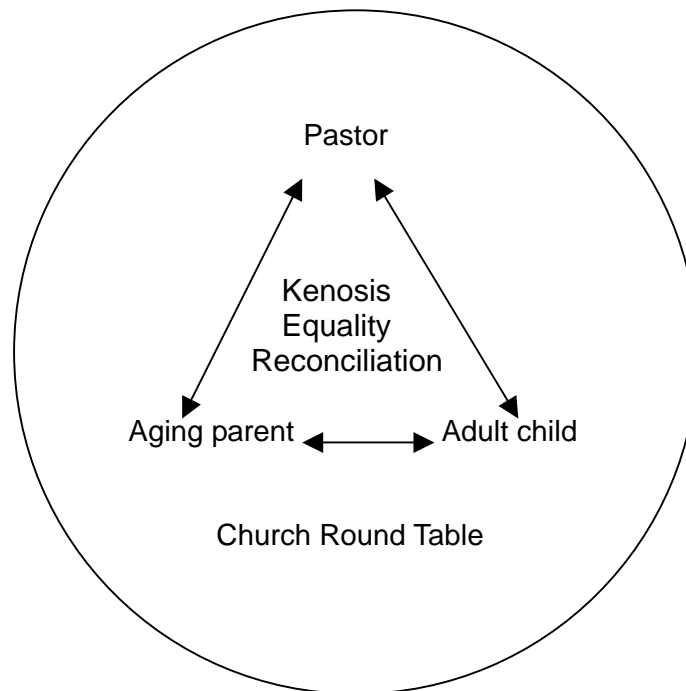
In the light of his understanding, it is possible to courageously recognise the conflict relationship and make it change into one full of hope in fiction. How then can we change the irreconcilable disagreement into hope (reconciliation)? Bakhtin (1990:1) emphasises “answerability” for the answer in the novel: “only the unity of answerability. I have to answer with my own life for what I have experienced and understood in art, so that everything I have experienced and understood would not remain ineffectual in my life.”

In the same way, the three participants – the pastor, the aging parent, and the adult child – carry out their answerabilities for rule-governed interpersonal interaction to bring about reconciliation in the Church Round Table. When each member shows his or her self-emptying attitude for the other and accepts the other as a participative subject in an equal dialogue relationship, reconciliation will be performed in the round table, as the novel is participated in as “a real part of the social reality” (Bakhtin & Medvedev 1985:18). Indeed, once the pastor, the aging parent and the adult child commit to the Round Table’s philosophy, reconciliation will be obtained through the concepts of kenosis and equality.

4.4.4 The Church Round Table’s schema

The diagram below outlines the Church Round Table's schema as it shows the collaborative dialogue process through the kenosis, equality, and reconciliation concepts in intergenerational conflict.

Figure 3. The Church Round Table's schema



The Church Round Table brings conflicting participants and a mediator together to interact in a relatively non-conflictive meeting, which facilitates a co-operative conversation. In the Round Table, there are three interrelated key issues as implicit rules. First of all, the link of kenosis and equality concepts happens simultaneously. When the aging parent or the adult child accepts the outcome of kenosis to abandon his/her power for the other, he/she becomes aware of the equality concept of accepting the other, overcoming a power-over relationship in the Church Round Table. Conversely, if participants endeavour to maintain the equal relationship to communicate mutually with the other, at the same time, they are in the process of self-emptying or surrendering to the other. Thus, as without kenosis there would be no equality, without equality there would be no

kenosis in the Round Table.

In addition, reconciliation is inextricably linked with these two concepts. As implicit rules, the kenosis and equality ideas aim at open conversation in reciprocal understanding, which seeks intergenerational reconciliation. In other words, the reconciliation of the conflict between the aging parent and the adult children can never occur without these two concepts in the Church Round Table.

4.5 Summary and suggestion

This chapter begins by discussing the church's role to create close intergenerational communication in conflicts: her reconciliatory work and relationship with the family. Firstly, the church reconciles those who have been disagreeing: the aging parent and the adult child in the issue of supporting the elderly. The church's work is associated with her position as the body of Jesus Christ who came to the world as a reconciler. Secondly, it suggests that a mutual responsibility between the church and the family can cause the church to act to make intergenerational communication with open dialogue. However, the limitations of the Korean Church's task to produce close intergenerational communication are revealed. It means that the Korean Church no longer copes with intergenerational conflict because of the aspects of a conflicting church and a poor relationship with the family. So, it needs an alternative communicability.

In this regard, this chapter refers to the Round Table as an alternative communicability in intergenerational conflict. The Round Table's concept for pursuing a non-authoritarian communication on an equal basis, borrowing from the story of King Arthur, is actualised for resolution through a collaborative conversation on several issues, such as political discord, social complex problems, and relational conflicts in industrial areas. In this respect, the Round Table's philosophy is adopted into the church: The Church Round Table. The

Church Round Table process as a communicability holds the particular potential to diffuse the fundamental importance of dialogue between aging parents and their adult children who have different views on family support of the elderly. As opinionated persons, such as the aging parent, the adult child, and a pastor in their respective perspectives, they are personally expected to adopt and implement the Church Round Table's implicit rules, which change conflict into reconciliation.

In this chapter, three key concepts as implicit rules in the Church Round Table were introduced, namely, kenosis, equality, and reconciliation. Firstly, kenosis characterises the way that "God does not display omnipotence but omni-compassion: God possesses power precisely in order to pour it out" (Storz 1997:77). Following such a self-emptying spirit, the aging parent and the adult child are required to abandon their own power for the other in the round table communication. Secondly, the Church Round Table has no sides and, as such, has no preferred seating. With no first or last and with room for all, it is a helpful image for a free conversational position in which the aging parent and the adult child participate in full equality. When one unconditionally accepts the other's point of view, intergenerational miscommunication is transformed into an ideal speech situation in an equal relationship. Lastly, the Church Round Table aims at reconciliation to convert dissonance into consonance, so that there would occur healing in restored intergenerational relationships.

The final part of the chapter shows the Church Round Table's scheme, which consists of three participants and three key issues. The kenosis, equality, and reconciliation concepts are closely interrelated for free conversation within the intergenerational conflictive situation.

The next chapter will explore practical guidelines as a part of "a strategic practical theology" out of the four movements by Browning (1991). I will deal with the whole procedure of collaborative communication for intergenerational conflicts in supporting the elderly in the Church Round Table.