CHAPTER 5
THE CHURCH ROUND TABLE'S
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR
RESOLVING INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 focused on the necessity of free communication for resolving intergenerational conflict concerning family support for the elderly between the aging parent and the adult child in the Church Round Table, proposing three key issues: kenosis, equality, and reconciliation. Chapter 5 will deal with how to activate the Church Round Table communication between participants such as a pastor, the aging parent, and the adult child, suggesting several strategies to improve the possibility of open dialogic praxis, which leads to intergenerational reconciliation.

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part concerns the six stages of open dialogic praxis in the Church Round Table. The second part deals with a case study involving a pastor, the aging parent, and the adult child who have experienced several stages of open dialogic practice.

5.2 The six stages of open dialogic praxis in the Church Round Table

The six stages of open dialogic praxis of the Church Round Table are set up to effectively actualise the Round Table communication based on free

conversation in collaborative understanding.**64** These six stages, which seek growth and productivity for reconciliation in intergenerational conflict, will be discussed according to James Fowler's structural descriptions of the six stages for faith (1978:42-95; 1981:117-213). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Church Round Table has three key issues: equality, kenosis, and reconciliation. These issues are reflected in the procedure of these six stages.

5.2.1 Stage 1 – A culture of conflict: Intuitive-projective

The first stage of open dialogue praxis in the Church Round Table is intuitive-projective faith in which participants are not coordinated with one other. As intuitive-projective children exhibit "the cognitive egocentrism" which allows them to "simply assume without question that the experiences and perceptions they have of a phenomenon represent the only available perspective," this stage is characterised by the participants' limitation to their own perspective on and feelings towards the other (Fowler 1981:56, 123). Fowler (1981:133) calls this stage "the stage of first self-awareness" that is egocentric as regards the perspectives of the other. It has the character of a monologue in which "one perspective reigns and reality becomes closed" (Goolishian & Anderson 1987:532). In other words, there is no openness to the other in conversation. They each do not consider or relate other's interest and point of view.

The aging parents and the adult children in Korean society have a history of miscommunication. The fast economic development of the 1960s created significant differences in values and lifestyle between parents and children, obstructing communication between them. In addition, there is a great deal of

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[64] Don Browning (1983:124), professor of the University of Chicago, shows his review of James Fowler's *Stages of Faith* as follows*: "*Although James Fowler's *Stages of Faith* is not actually a book on theology in any sense of the world, it does have enormous relevance to practical theology and through it to the entire body of theological reflection. Its immediate relevance is to the practical theological disciplines of pastoral care and religious education. It is work that should be of equal interest to the professional theologian and the secular inquirer into the structure and dynamics of human nature."

complexity surrounding family support of the elderly in the Korean society.

In general, the elderly have experienced a considerable loss of support from the extended family system, as well as material power over the younger generations. The Korean aging parents who have lived in the traditional mindset concerning belief in respect and support for the elderly are finding themselves in an insecure and vulnerable position. Thus, in level 1 of the Church Round Table, the aging parents largely feel that they have been betrayed by their children regarding the issue of supporting the elderly. The aging parents' way of thinking and valuing brings about an egocentric attitude in dialogue with their adult children in the round table.

Conversely, for the adult children, such negative perspectives of the aging parent may present as a dominating and interfering attitude and can be resulted in the cliché of the "disagreeable old geezer" (Williams & Nussabum 2001:233). Then, such perceptions may predispose intergenerational conflict, making open dialogue orientation less likely and making avoidance or competition or both more likely. Therefore, at stage 1, the adult child's the capacity for seeing the perspective of their aging parent is severely limited.

In terms of a conflict situation, it is often difficult to hear and accept the other's point of view. The aging parents and the adult children lack practical training in resolving intergenerational conflict and doubt that the Church Round Table can do much to help them resolve their difference.

5.2.2 Stage 2 – A culture of entrance into the world of the Church Round Table: Mythic-literal

While in stage 1 egocentrism restricts the ability to see the perspective of other persons, participants in stage 2 construct the perspectives of others. They take

account of other's needs and demands and aim at creating collaborative aims and goals (Fowler 1978:51). This stage is marked by the ability to enter into the perspectives of others in role-taking (Folwer 1991:25). The aging parent and the adult child in stage 2 spontaneously make "allowance for the fact that from another person's vantage point an object he or she is viewing will appear different" (Fowler 1978:50).

In this stage, two participants practice the concrete level of equality and reciprocity. Kohlberg describes the form of this stage as follows: "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" (Fowler 1978:51). Stage 2 gives a way to an increased accuracy in seeing the perspective of other person, as compared to stage 1. During stage 2, trust begins to develop – trust between the aging parent and the adult child, and trust between them and the pastor. Acceptance of self and others, a growing connectedness between the aging parent and adult child, and cohesion of participants are central features of a successful round table process.

In stage 1 of the Church Round Table, much of the intergenerational conflict surrounding family support of the elderly would be shown to be problematic. Then, in stage 2, the pastor, in particular, can facilitate the aging parent and the adult child to consider the other's perspectives in conversation. As a result, the aging parent and the adult child can start collaborative conversation at this stage. The pastor as a mediator can act to help the aging parent and the adult child make the decisions to follow the philosophy of the Church Round Table.

Just as King Arthur and his knights were committed to the Round Table, the aging parent and the adult child need to be committed to a Church Round Table for intergenerational conflicts. Without that commitment to the implied rules of the round table, the possibility of free conversation and reconciliation between them cannot be achieved in the circumstances of the Korean society.

However, there is unfamiliarity with the process of the Church Round Table, so

a pastor as the mediator may need to educate participants before obtaining a commitment to mediate. While the Korean younger generation has become accustomed to the concept of a Round Table through movies and books about King Arthur, the older generations do not know about the Round Table. Thus, the Round Table's origin, idea, and application need to be explained to them. The following guidelines (cf. Seikkula & Olson 2003:410-411) are criteria for entering stage 2, as a starting point for practice of the round table's spirit. According to the guidance of the mediator, participants must follow these rules:

The Church Round Table allows every person to enter the conversation in his or her own way. Everyone present has the right to comment in the round table.

The questions or reflections of the participants should not interrupt the ongoing dialogue unless what they say fits in with the ongoing theme.

When differences arise, the hope is to give all voices room to exist and thus encourage listening and exchange, rather than polarized, right-or-wrong thinking.

The Church Round Table is a less structured and more spontaneous kind of discussion.

However, more mutual understanding of the perspectives of the intergenerational relationship is necessary for the next stage of the Church Round Table.

5.2.3 Stage 3 – A culture of equality: Synthetic-Conventional

5.2.3.1 Mutual interpersonal perspective taking

Stage 3 shows a major gain in respect of role-taking ability. Fowler (1978:61) describes this stage as a "conformist" stage, referring to the way that participants tune in to significant other's perspectives. Fowler (1981:153)

describes this level's mutual role-taking with the following couplet:

You see you according to me:
You see the you you think I see.

This relational situation between you and I is called "mutual interpersonal perspective taking" ("I see you seeing me; I see me as you see me; I see you seeing me seeing you") (Fowler 1981:172). In developing the possibilities of mutual perspective taking, this stage represents the ability of the one to unite in "emotional solidarity with others" (Fowler 1991:25). For role-taking abilities, the transition from stage 2 to stage 3 can be explained as moving from "simple perspective-taking" to "third person" perspective-taking (Fowler 1978:97).

Fulfilling the expectations of significant others is of crucial importance in providing a way of reconciliation between the aging parent and the adult child. According to Gadamer, the following are strategies in the Church Round Table that can contribute to building acceptance of others to allow for genuine conversation (cf. Warnke 1987:100):

Recognise our own fallibility, that we are finite and historical creatures and thus we do not have absolute knowledge in Hegel's sense.

Be open to the possible truth of other views.

Be concerned with discovering the real strength of every other participant's position.

Take the other seriously as an equal dialogue partner, as someone who, despite status, power or the like, is equally capable of illuminating the subject-matter.

Taking account of the other's expectation and perspectives is one of the most important aspects for resolving intergenerational conflict in the Church Round Table. In this stage, role-play will be able to perform a significant role in helping the participants to accept the other's perspective. Role-play can be encouraging

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for people who are experiencing intergenerational conflicts for family support of the elderly within a Christian community.

5.2.3.2 Role-play

Role-play is a highly flexible communicative activity that has wide scope for variation and imagination. Meldrum (1994:75), when defining role-playing, says that that "the individual's personality is made up of a number of different roles, which he or she plays in different contexts and with various groups of individual. Being in one role may give rise to a different set of behaviours and, perhaps, attitudes from playing another role." Role-playing is seen as being essential to the dialogue process. It is used as a mode of communication in interpersonal relationships that is also associated with "an individualized form of expression" (Kipper 1986:4).

Role-play gives participants an opportunity to practise communicating in different social contexts and social roles. Role-playing allows people to understand others through the process of playing. In role-playing, a person is able to name and transform various internal roles that seemed to control too much of their behaviour. After the experience of role-playing, participants can better identify and understand the other's thinking and character. When the participant is able to wholly accept the fictional reality of drama, the role-play brings about a most successful effect (Landy 1993:49). Through such an understanding of others' personal perspectives, role-play allows participants to experience "a sense of hope for change (Emunah 1994:41). According to Landy (1993:46-55), role-play involves eight steps:

1. Invoking the role.
2. Naming the role.
3. Playing out/working through the role.
4. Exploring alternative qualities in sub-roles.
5. Reflecting upon the role-play: discovering role qualities, functions, and

styles inherent in the role.

6. Relating the fictional role to everyday life.

7. Integrating the roles to create a functional role system.

8. Social modelling: discovering ways that clients' behaviour in role affects others in their social environments.

In role-play, the most significant technique is that of role-reversal. The technique itself is very simple: two involved parties switch their physical positions with each other in role-playing and assume each other's posture and mental and psychological states. However, despite role-reversal's simplicity, it shows incredible efficiency. It produces the basis of any mutual understanding, which promotes more agreement between disputing parties (Kipper 1986:161-163). The experiencing of the role of the other gives rise to a remarkable opportunity to understand the other's life and thinking, which in turn creates a foundation for interaction.

Participants play not only themselves, but other people in their lives. For example, the adult child can take on the role of the aging parent as the breadwinner in a dinner table scene in which other participants, such as the parent and other persons, take on the roles of members of a fictional family. In playing the breadwinner during the period of poverty in the 1960s, the adult child can begin to discover the extremely difficult circumstances and thoughts that their parents had experienced. The adult child can gain perspective and understanding that they had never had before concerning their parents.

Conversely, in playing their children's role, the aging parents are able to realise the ways in which their children are overpowered by them through authority and to consider how the children have struggled with that. Through taking on the role of their children in their life relating to themselves, the responses and perspectives of their children are better understood.

There is an effective way that intergenerational conflict for family support of the

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elderly is managed at the Church Round Table, namely by sharing experiences on role-playing. This acts to break down barriers and facilitate productive conflict management between the aging parents and the adult children.

5.2.4 Stage 4 – A culture of self-emptiness: Individuative-reflective

5.2.4.1 Self-emptying

In stage 4, the individualistic aspect brings about certain unavoidable tension between "self-fulfilment of self-actualisation as a primary concern" and "service to and being for others." Even though this level is concerned with allowing participants to see and judge their own perspective in the light of the other's perspective as discovered in stage 3, such individualistic quality results in conflict with the relationship of the other because conversation can remain fixed in an individualistic outlook (Fowler 1981:182). When fixedness of conversation does occur, we can be said to have entered the realm of closed dialogue.

In order to solve the tension between self-actualisation and accepting the other, an "interruption of reliance on external sources of authority" must occur in this stage (Fowler 1981:179). This means that the authority of the participants must be undermined.

In these six stages of the open dialogic praxis of the Church Round Table, the locus of authority changes. In stage 1, it is constituted by "dependent relationships to parents or parentlike adults" with the child, describing the power-relation between the participants. Such a power-relation between generations is getting weak in stage 2 and 3. The essential change of authority occurs, distancing the participants from their previous powerful authority within the self in stage 4 (Fowler 1981:179).

As mentioned already in Chapter 4, the power-over relationship between the

aging parent and the adult child is one of the most critical issues in intergenerational conflict for family support of the elderly. There has been escalating tension and conflict for intergenerational relationship between the aging parent with "status power," based on an hierarchical relationship, and the adult child with "economic power" in modern society. Unproductive relationships created through such assertion of power from each party have resulted in misunderstanding and miscommunication regarding the issue between them within the intergenerational view-gap. It does not seem to appear the culture of reconciliation through a true open so long as the weaker is defined from the standpoint of the stronger. For a dialogue to occur, at least two differing powers must be engaged in the Church Round Table.[65]

The following are guidelines for power-relations of the two participants in this stage of the round table in terms of the activity of self-emptying (cf. Richard 1997:165-171; Polkinghorne 1992:109).

Do not dominate others or place them in subjection.

Avoid the idea of a self-positing ego and the error of the radically autonomous subject.

Focus on the constitutive nature of self-emptying love for the other.

Enter into community with "the other" or a surrendering to "the other."

5.2.4.2 The story of Jesus' birth and death on a cross

In stage 4, the story of Jesus Christ seems to fit very well with kenotic philosophy in the Church Round Table, showing effective modelling for self-emptiness through the Christian story. During this stage, the story of Jesus' birth in human likeness and death on a cross attempts to develop the theme of

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[65] In this stage, a pastor as a mediator needs to function to control the power of participants in the Church Round Table. Wall (1981:164) argues that the mediator's most important task is as follows: "To strike the balance, the mediator provides the necessary power underpinning to the weaker negotiator – information, advice, friendship – or reduces those of the stronger." The pastor as a mediator is also the person who needs to follow kenotic concept.

kenosis regarding self-emptiness and bring participants into mutual open dialogue.

The participants in the Church Round Table need to read the Scripture verses and interpret the situations of those days, reflecting on why Jesus followed the way to crucifixion, how Jesus obeyed the command of God, and in what respects Christ's work delineates reconciliation between Jesus and people. The story of Jesus' death is as follows:

Matthew 2: Who, being in very nature God, made himself nothing and being made in human likeness (18-25)

Matthew 27: Jesus is mocked by the governor's solders and the people (11-31)

Jesus became obedient to death – even death on a cross (45-56)

Matthew 28: Jesus has risen from the dead (1-10).

The Christian story is related with "a matter of concern and a point of view commonly held today" (Lee 2005:177). The aging parents and the adult children can recognise the modelling of self-emptiness through the story of Jesus. In this way, the Church Round Table enters into a kenotic concept for limiting authority in the process of accessing the story of Scripture. In the context of making the Christian story and its praxis, stage 4 gives an account of a specific and central theme for self-emptiness as the calling to be partners for reconciliation.

5.2.5 Stage 5 – A culture of transformation: Conjunctive

Stage 5 performs the role as the culture of transformation from intergenerational conflict to reconciliation.[66] Fowler (1981:185) describes stage 5's dialogical role

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[66] Fowler (1981:184-185) expresses an image of the character of the change from level 4 to

and importance as follows: "Stage 5's dialogical knowing requires a knower capable of dialogue. Epistemologically, there must be sufficient self-certainty to grant the known the initiative… Stage 5's willingness to give reality the initiative in the act of knowing, however, is not merely a function of the knower's self-certainty. It also has to do with the trustworthiness of the known" (Fowler 1981:185).

Stage 5 sees "both (or the many) sides of an issue simultaneously." This stage assumes that things are related to each other, which causes "dialogical knowing." In dialogical knowing "the known is invited to speak its own word in its own language… In a mutual "speaking" and "hearing," knower and known converse in an I-Thou relationship." Thus, in this regard, this stage represents "a kind of complementarity or mutuality" in relation (Fowler 1981:185).

If open dialogue with mutual understanding, exchanging, and discussing of ideas occurs in the Round Table, the aging parent and the adult child can form the basis of reconciliation. In this regard, mutuality is characteristic of open dialogue. In this conversational arrangement, "people coordinate their activity in with the activities of others and 'respond' to them in what they do" (Shotter 1993:39).

Stage 5 establishes a landmark of transformation from closed dialogue to open dialogic praxis in the Church Round Table, that is "a readiness to risk the kind of openness that could lead to the altering of one's own perspectives, values, and/or material conditions, to seeing one's own position or that of one's group from the standpoint of others" (Fowler 1978:81).

5.2.6 Stage 6 – A culture of reconciliation: Universalising

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level 5 as follows: "Looking at a field of flowers simultaneously a microscope and a wide-angle lens" and "discovering that a guest, if invited to do so, will generously reveal the treasured wisdom of a lifetime of experience."

The Church Round Table can lead the aging parents and the adult children to the ground of reconciliation in their communities. In this sense, through the process from stage 1 to stage 5 in the Church Round Table, the open dialogical praxis can establish the foundation of intergenerational reconciliation.

In the context of approaching the reconciliation, the universalising faith of stage 6 seeks oneness beyond schism (Fowler 1991:25). In this stage, many persons may become martyr to the visions they incarnate. [67] This means that the relinquishment of oneself for the sake of love and reconciliation is the ultimate characteristic of this stage (Fowler 1981:201). However, reaching stage 6 does not imply "perfection." Stage 6 is not the purpose of the dialogic praxis in the Church Round Table, but rather a "new starting point" for open dialogue for reconciliation (Fowler 1981:202; Lee 2005:179).

Reconciliation of the Church Round Table is an attitude expressed through action. However, these attitudes and actions for reconciliation do not come naturally to people. In fact, people's instincts usually take them in the opposite direction. Nonetheless, on the basis of the open dialogic development of stages 1 to 5, stage 6 focuses on a culture of reconciliation, in which the pastor, the aging parent, and the adult child are eager to resolve conflict and reconcile relationships in a way that clearly reflects the philosophy of the Church Round Table.

5.3 Case study

5.3.1 Organisation

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[67] Fowler (1978:89) refers to the persons, who best described by stage 6 and frequently become martyrs to the visions they incarnate, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Abraham Lincoln.

In this case study, my co-researchers were the aging parents, the adult children, and a pastor in Korea. First of all, I chose the elderly man with a wife out of the five participants whom I had interviewed before (Chapter 2). Two criteria were used for the selection of the co-researcher. First, the participant should have experience of financial and emotional alienation and conflict with their children. Secondly, the co-researcher should be happy to speak with me as the interviewer. I experienced suffering for some of the co-researchers during the meeting with the five elderly people above since they were hesitant to speak of the conflict with their children in spite of my persuasion. It is for this reason that I decided upon this particular individual as the co-researcher for the aging parent.

The selection of my co-researcher for the adult children was easier because it was natural that I choose the children of the aging parent who had already been selected as co-researcher. However, the co-researcher should also feel the intergenerational conflict for family support with their parents.

For the pastor co-researcher, I decided on Sung Woo Kim, a senior pastor of the Sung Lin Presbyterian Church. He had studied, and had experience in, counselling some problems of conflict among people during more 20 years in his ministry. I had obtained great help for my problems in my life several times from him. In my opinion, he was a suitable person to perform as a mediator for the problem of intergenerational conflict.

The interviews with the co-researchers took place during a three month period from April to June 2006, with each meeting lasting two hours, in Incheon, Korea. The time frame and place for meetings were discussed at their own convenience.

5.3.2 Observation

Interviewing gives the researcher access to the observations of the co-researcher. The researcher can learn through the stories of the interviewee what they perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions (Weiss 1994: 1). Merriam (1998:97-98) points out what to observe in several checklists as follows:

(1) The physical setting: What is the physical environment like? What is the context?

(2) The participants: Describe who is in the scene, how many people, and their roles.

(3) Activities and interaction: What is going on? Is there a definable sequence of activities?

(4) Conversation: What is the content of conversations in this setting: Who speaks to whom? Who listens?

(5) Subtle factors: Less obvious but perhaps as important to the observation are informal and unplanned activities

(6) Symbolic and connotative meanings of words.

(7) Your own behavior: You are as much a part of the scene as participants. What do you say and do?

Observation is an important means of accumulating information in qualitative interviews (Merriam 1998:111). In terms of the format of this observation, I seek to observe certain events and particular behaviours of my co-researchers in the Church Round Table.

5.3.3 Reflection with my co-researchers

When I had a case study with a pastor, the aging parent, and the adult child, there was some feedback at the time of a dialogue. When people tell me their stories they need to be interrupted at intervals so that I can summarise and confirm whether I understand their stories correctly. The process of

conversation can continually change according to the situation (Freedman & Combs 1996:47).

Critical reflection includes "different disciplines expressing different and often conflicting views" from participants (Mishler 1986:147). In order to facilitate a critical reflection, I had conversations and discussions with my co-researchers. I would accept the "different and conflicting views" from them, think about these views, and have another discussion with them. The reflection, even it was negative, proved to be a significant resource for my research.

I am convinced that the reflection from my co-researchers provided the opportunity for me to rethink my understanding, and that it is necessary for the true researcher to wait patiently for the story to develop. I tried to have an intimate relationship with my co-researchers so that I could get effective feedback from them. It would allow me as a researcher to give participants as co-researchers more space to reflect upon this research (Freedman & Combs 1996:191).

5.3.4 Hearing the story

5.3.4.1 An interview with a pastor

The interviewee is now 58 years old. He has been a senior pastor in the Sung Lin Presbyterian Church for about 14 years and it has been 28 years since he first devoted himself to the ministry. I met this interviewee 5 times and we had conversations about intergenerational conflict for family support of the elderly, the philosophy of 'The Church Round Table,' and the six stages of open dialogue praxis of the Church Round Table as a solution for the conflict.

Question: How did you begin a meeting with the participants?

Answer: First of all, I listened to their thoughts, anxieties, and dissatisfactions. Then I realised that opposite conditions between aging parents and their adult children causes conflict of generations. On the parents' side, they wanted to live with their children but their children didn't want to live with their parents. As a mediator, I tried to help participants understand that they needed to have conversations in order to solve the conflict between the two generations. Then, as a way to have conversations with open hearts, I introduced 'The Church Round Table' to them. All participants were unfamiliar with this concept. It was not easy to get the aging parents to understand this concept, although their grown up sons and daughters got used to it easily. Therefore, I gave a full explanation for the origin and the spirit of 'The Church Round Table' to the aging parents.

Q: Would you mind telling me about the conflicts between participants?

A: All participants admitted that they needed conversation to solve the intergenerational conflict, but they still doubted whether open dialogue could really happen. The adult children complained about the authoritarianism of their parents and their parent's lack of consideration of their thoughts and current circumstances. On the other hand, the aging parents felt that their children were disregarding them. In this situation, distrusting each other, it was very difficult to make them realise that they really needed an open dialogue and how it would be processed.

The interviewee said that, especially for the aging parent, it was difficult to get him to understand a new concept and to carry on the procedure in the six stages for open dialogue of the Church Round Table.

Q: How did you feel about the way to reach to free conversation between the aging parent and the adult child?

A: In the conflict between two generations, both generations have their own opinions. When the adult children think about the love and the efforts of their parents in raising them, they partially understand their parents and think that it is fair that they ask to live with their children. However, considering the troubles in living, it is hard for the adult children to accept their parents' demand. On the contrary, it is no wonder that the aging parents have a negative opinion of their children. Moreover, the problem is not just about a gap between the two groups, but, more seriously, about the fact that they do not have make any… effort, or have the right attitude to solve the conflicts with conversation. That is because they never had a chance to do so throughout their lifetimes. Unless each generation accepts the perspective of the counterparts, it is impossible to carry out an open dialogue. At a moment like this, role-play was the best way to put one's self into the other person's shoes. While the son sees, thinks, talks, and acts like his parents, he uses many senses in his body and it is more effective than just understanding his parents' opinion with his brain, and *vice versa*. In addition, this role-play has brought a new experience of sharing each other's feeling through conversation which they've never had.

Q: Could you tell me about the experience through the role-play? I mean, something that would explain your experience of role-play to me?

A: 'Understanding the counterpart's position through role play' was successful. Of course, in the beginning, they seemed so awkward about the role-play since they were doing it for the first time in their lives. Also, during the play, they couldn't concentrate on it and hesitated to act. However, by helping them continuously to understand the role-play, they gradually came to understand and comprehend each other's position. Personally, I think it was more effective for the adult children than the aging parents. The adult children were moved and shed tears while experiencing their parents' position in which they had a hard time raising their kids and now the feeling that they are being disregarded by their children.

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The adult children were really into their parents' position. I think the fact that the adult children were now the parents… helped them to accept the position more easily. Also, the aging parents started to understand their children's troubles and the difficulties in their lives. Although the aging parents' degree of understanding of others in the play was not as great as that of the grown-up children's, I felt that the parents were trying to accept their child's position rather than keep blaming them. If I had carried out all the six stages for open dialogues without the role-play, this culture of acceptance could not have been achieved. Although three sessions of role-play could not completely solve the problem, I think it established a solid foundation for open dialogue.

The adult children had a clear understanding of the Church Round Table. Also, during the role-play, they adjusted easily and accepted their parents' position positively. On the other hand, the aging parents had difficulty getting the concept and, naturally, the role-play was less effective for them than for their children.

Q: If the role-play established a foundation of equality for accepting others then could you explain how the concept of kenosis for self-emptiness is explained to the participants?

A: I spent a lot of time thinking about how I could explain the concept of self-emptiness well to participants. It was not easy. To help participants have an idea about kenosis, I told them a story of Jesus lowering himself and carrying his cross as a human being. I tried to let them know what self-emptiness really is through this story, and I told them to follow what Jesus had shown us in solving conflict between generations. It was a great time to help them know and accept the concept of self-emptiness easily. Just like in the third stage, it was much more effective for the adult children than the aging parents.

Q: It's about a culture of understanding being established between the two

generations.

A: As they started to accept each other and learned to empty themselves, I saw them having an open dialogue and making a compromise. Seeing that, I became so inspired and excited. There were lots of things to overcome, but from counselling I think they gained a strong foothold in solving conflicts between them.

Q: I really appreciate what you've done. Thank you so much for your time.

5.3.4.2 An interview with the aging parent

An aging man, who is 73 years old, has three sons and a daughter. He is currently living with his wife, and is retired and suffering from financial problem. The interviewee wanted himself and his wife to live with their grown up children, but the children did not want this. From the beginning, the interviewee was not pleased at the idea of having a conversation with a pastor about his family matters, even if he had problems to work out. However, through continuous persuasion, he accepted the involvement of a pastor and my suggestion to have meeting and interview.

Q: How is the relationship going with your children?

A: Nothing special. We don't have anything in common. They think they're grown up by themselves.

Q : Could you please tell me about the relationship in detail?

A: Well, it's just that they refuse to live with us. My wife and I devoted our lives to parenting and raising them. Now, we are old and how dare they neglect us? They wouldn't be in this world without us. Who supported them while they studied? Who paid the bills? I understand that they are busy and having a

hard time managing their lives. But if they have any love left towards their parents, they can't just leave us alone like this. What matters is their minds.

As we saw in the interview in Chapter 2 regarding the matter of conflict between aging parents and their children when it comes to supporting the parents, this interviewee also had serious resentment towards his children. The main reason for conflict, and the deepest cut in the heart of an aging man, is the feeling that his children have betrayed him. He thinks that they disrespect him and that they have ignored his efforts in raising them. In order to solve such intergenerational communication difficulties, role-play is shown in stage 3 of the Church Round Table.

Q: I heard that you had time to put yourself in your son's shoes through role play. How was it?

A: I had no idea what to do at first. I felt like I was being a clown or something. He said I would be my son and my son would be me. Well, I just gave it a try as the pastor told me. When my son yelled at me to do this or that, I felt quite bad about it. I thought, 'that's how I treated my son?' and I regretted what I've done to him. Also, being my son, I thought it'd not be easy for them to raise their kids and to support us at the same time. I felt sorry for him that I've been only insisting my side.

Q: It seems like you came to understand your son during the role play. Could you tell me more in detail?

A: After the role-play, I came to understand more about my son's current situation and way of thinking. I just kept blaming him before, but after being the son in the play, I felt he must be having a hard time in many ways. I was a father who's always telling him to do this and that. I didn't know those orders had really distorted my son's feelings.

It seems the role-play was successful in helping an aging man understand his son. He understood that his son had a wound in his heart that was caused by a never-satisfied, strictly ordering father. The role-play in stage 3 was a good chance for the interviewee to understand his son. In stage 4, there was story about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross to help participants get to know what 'self-emptiness' means.

Q: How did you feel about the story of Jesus, the son of God, who came to earth in flesh?

A: It was a heartbreaking to see Jesus in flesh lowering himself and being insulted. I thank Jesus that our sins are washed away and we all are saved by him because of his sacrifice. But Jesus is God and I'm only a weak human being. What I mean is that everyone says aging people in our generation seek authority. I know that, but it's not easy to change ourselves. That is a part of our lives. I'm not sure what authoritarianism is, but that's how our parents lived and we were taught and raised by them. It's a natural habit and a custom of our generation. It's impossible for us to change a whole way of our life. That's just like telling us to die.

Q: I don't think it means that you should change the whole style of your life, but that you should lower yourself a little bit so that you and your children can have an open dialogue, am I right?

A: I do try, but it's not as easy as it sounds. Although I try hard to understand the heavy burdens my son has in his life, sometimes I get angry and interrupt while he's talking and yell at him. Then I regret it right after that. But I can't help it; that's me.

Q: Thank you so much for your answers, they were very helpful. I really appreciate the time you've spent sharing your story with me.

The interviewee performed quite well in accepting others, but even after several attempts, it was not easy for him to empty himself and have an open dialogue. I think it was because of his old habits that had been formed throughout his life and could not be changed in a short time.

5.3.4.3 Interview with the adult child

The interviewee is 41 years old and married. He lives with his wife and two daughters. He grew up as the eldest of three brothers and a sister. He does not live with his parents at present, because he is in financial difficulty.

Q: Would you tell me what kind of relationship you have with your parents?

A: Well... I must say it's not that good. The relationship is definitely not a loving one. In addition, I can't give them much financial support.

Q: Would you tell me the relationship with your parents in detail?

A: Well, the relationship with my parents…. The biggest problem is that I'm out of tune with my parents, especially my father. It's not easy to settle my differences with my father. My parents want to live with us, but we can't. Under present conditions, it's impossible. I know for sure that my parents had lots of hardship when they raised us, four children. As their child, I know how difficult it was, and I really appreciate it. I'm thinking of living with my parents when the time comes. However, particularly my father just asks us to do what he wants. He doesn't care how my situation is or what I think. He never values other people's opinions. That's the way he has lived all his life.

Q: Have you ever made any effort to solve the conflict with your parents?

A: …I haven't done anything. In fact, I haven't even wanted to do anything. I'm sure I need to have open dialogues with my parents, but I'm quite negative

about the process and the result of it.

Q: What makes you think that way? What can be the reason that makes it difficult for you to have an open dialogue with your parents?

A: I have few memories of pep talks or praise from my father. He used to say, "Study hard so you get good grades!" "Why did you do this?" "Do this and that." and so on. Most of the time, they were either one-sided instructions or rebukes. I have had scarcely any conversations with him in which one could feel the other's inner thoughts or mind. I guess that's why we don't talk much when we have meals or get together. Even when I have a conversation with him, it doesn't go smoothly. My father always talks like he is right no matter what; he doesn't pay attention to my story. There is a huge difference between his thoughts and mine in many ways. It's very difficult for me to narrow the gap. Naturally, we haven't had a serious talk about the conflict centring on 'family support for the elderly.' I'm not saying that we've never tried to talk about the issue. Actually we did and the issue was brought up necessarily, but it just didn't go well. My father doesn't consider or try to understand my situation. He has no intention of doing so. He just tells his own stories and pushes me to follow his way of life. He has always done this.

When I saw the adult child, he seemed to have a strong antipathy to his father's authoritarian attitude. He strongly disapproved of his father's nagging and rebukes during his childhood. It seems that the children who are brought up with 'one way conversation' have difficulty making 'mutual conversation' with their parents. Therefore, it does not seem easy to resolve the adult children's conflict with their parents centring on 'family support for the elderly' through open dialogues in mutual trust.

Another interview with the interviewee took place after two counselling sessions with the pastor. He looked upbeat compared to the last time I saw him, and he answered the questions seriously. In stage 2, the aging parent has heard that

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the Church Round Table performs as a means of solving the conflicts between the generations.

Q: As you know, the concept of the Church Round Table was introduced as a communicability to resolve the conflict centring around family support for the elderly. Could you tell me how you feel about these concepts?

A: Actually, as one of the philosophies of the Church Round Table, accepting the other's perspective is the most difficult part in my relationship with my father. My problem in the relationship was my father's inflexibility. He never wanted to reflect on my perspective and situation. Under the circumstances, I thought it was no use accepting his perspective only. However, the pastor kept talking and explaining to me the concept of the Church Round Table, and I started to recognise the need to admit it at some point. Later on I found that I had problems too, apart from my father's problem. I realised that I didn't put any effort into understanding him. I also got to know that it is impossible to resolve the conflict between generations without understanding the other's perspective.

Q: Then, how much do you accept the spirit of the Church Round Table, which tells you to admit others' perspectives?

A: Of course, I can understand the concerns and problems of my father's generation and its patriarchal culture rationally. But when it became my reality it wasn't that easy to accept my parents' perspective and situation with a welcome heart. Even when I tried to understand them, I felt my patience and the effort to understand them disappear as soon as we started our conversations. However, while I was listening to the spirit of the Church Round Table, I started to think about trying to understand him. Most of all, he sacrificed himself to raise me in a difficult time.

The interviewee revealed his true heart regarding the difficulty of the conflict

between generations centring on family support of the elderly. However, I could see he was making a progress. He realised that he had not tried to understand his father and started to do something about it. His attitude shows that there is potential to cope with the conflict little by little. Role-play is put to practical use to allow them to understand each other better and solve the conflict.

Q: How effective do you find the role-play for gaining better understanding or as a method of conversation?

A: The role-play was the turning point for me in understanding my father better. At the beginning, I was told what the concept of the role-play was and then I was put in a role-play. It was very awkward for me, because I hadn't done it before. I couldn't keep going on. It went on and off continuously. I took my father's role, and he did mine. From my father's perspective, I watched myself. Putting myself in his shoes, I was such a bastard, and not only didn't know my parents' grace, but also disregarded my parents in spite of their sacrifice. I could gradually remember lots of things that I had done wrong towards him. I just cried a lot.

Q: You seem to know your parents better through the role-play. Could you tell me what was the next process after that?

A: Once I had an intellectual understanding of my father, I could settle a large part of the conflict. No wonder I felt pity for my parents' generation, who ignored their own interests and worked hard for their family. With their effort and love, we can enjoy the abundance of the economy and the security of living that I hadn't even thought about before. Now I try to listen harder to my father than ever. I don't do much negative talkback, which I used to do a lot. Can I say that I become more tolerant of my father?

Q: Thanks for sharing your valuable time. I hope you can make more progress with your parents through open dialogues.

Through the Church Round Table, the adult child accepted and adopted one of the roundtable spirits, which is admitting the other's mind and situation, far better than his father. One reason is that the interviewee himself is in a position of raising his children, which allows him to identify with his parents through the role-play easily.

Simultaneously, he was receptive to empty his will and heart at stage 4, 'Jesus Christ's death on the cross.' The interviewee was able to lower himself to his father's level from having the economic superiority to his father.

The results of these interviews make it clear that conflict centring on family support for the elderly can be concluded with a good atmosphere of thoughtful consideration and understanding on both sides. I do not think the Round Table using role-play is the only solution to curing the conflict between generations, but it can be a good start for resolving those problems.

5.3.5 Interpretations

The interpretation through three case studies based on the Church Round Table can be categorised into four areas. Below is a thematic interpretation of the co-researchers' sentiments:

1. *The intergenerational conflict was not easy to resolve*. These interviews have examined some of the solutions of the conflict through the Church Round Table from a caregiver, the elderly parent, and a mediator. While the case study with the adult child showed some effectiveness in resolving the conflict with their parents through the Church Round Table, the interview with the aging parent showed that open dialogue between generations was difficult to perform in the Round Table. In addition to these two interviews, another case study with a pastor also illustrated that the process of mediating reconciliation between the

two generations is difficult.

2. *The efficiency of the Church Round Table was illustrated*. Even though some of the intergenerational conflict remained, the Church Round Table showed the possibility for reconciliation between the aging parent and the adult child. Following the mediation of a pastor, they abided by the spirit and principles of the Round Table, such as kenosis, equality, and reconciliation, and then conducted open dialogue with mutual understanding in some part.

3. *The function of role-play was useful*. The concept of role-play was new to the co-researchers. However, in spite of it being an unfamiliar idea, the role-play had a beneficial effect on the intergenerational relationship between the elderly parent and his children. I believe that without the role-play, the atmosphere of understanding of the other's perspective would not occur through the Church Round Table. Through role-play, the adult child was more successful than his parent in closing the gap between generations by accepting the situation and perspective of his parents' generation.

4. *The story of Jesus was valuable to the co-researchers*. Because the aging parents and their children were Christian, the story of Jesus' birth and death allowed them to accept the perception of kenosis through self-emptying. The story was seen as a strong motive for emptying the self in the Church Round Table, which was particular help concerning the authoritarian attitude of the elderly in the process of intergenerational relationship for family support. Practically, the adult child acquired more effectiveness from the story than his parent.

5.4 A culture of multiplication of the Church Round Table

The Church Round Table lays the foundation for open dialogic praxis as an important step for the reconciliation of intergenerational conflict between the

aging parent and the adult child. However, the Church Round Table is not only useful for the reconciliation of intergenerational conflict. It can also be used as a model for managing other complex conflict issues such as those between husband and wife, and parent and adolescent in the family, and between persons in general communities.

How, then, can the Church Round Table produce the maximum harvest and the reconciliation talent? The most effective way for a culture of multiplication of the Church Round Table is to train capable persons for reconciliation in the involved conflict situations in which they are involved.

There are too many conflicting circumstances in both modern society and the church, all of which need a lot of work. However, pastors, in particular, as mediators do not have time to resolve everybody's conflicts in and outside the church. Of course, one of the pastors' important ministries in the Church Round Table is to help to resolve conflict relationship between participants, and they should work towards this end.

However, in order to actualise the role of the Church Round Table to the utmost, pastors need to follow the counsel Moses received when he became weary from serving as the sole judge for Israel in following ways:

> This Job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself… You should tell them God's decision, teach them God's laws and instructions, and show them how to conduct their lives… Have them serve as judge for the people all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied (Ex. 18:18-23).

Like Moses, pastors are responsible before God for making sure that His people have the teaching and assistance they need to respond to conflict. It is

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necessary that a pastor entrust most of the educational and reconciliation activities of the Church Round Table to capable leaders and other gifted people in the congregation. The following are several activities that can help to multiply a culture of reconciliation and train capable persons for resolving conflict situations (cf. Sande 2004:294-296):

Equip and encourage members to carry reconciliation into every life.

Educate the entire congregation in reconciliation.

Train gifted people within your congregation to become mediators.

Develop a church-based reconciliation ministry.

Upgrade your church's organisational documents to support reconciliation and reduce legal liability.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter I have attempted to relate the six stages of dialogical praxis for intergenerational conflict concerning family support of the elderly between the aging parent and the adult child in the Church Round Table as practical disciplines. The characteristics of the six stages of open dialogic praxis have been summarised as follows:

1) Stage 1: Intuitive-projective

Participants in a culture of intergenerational conflict for family support for the elderly.

2) Stage 2: Mythic-literal

Explaining the theme of the Church Round Table to participants.

Creating a culture for entering into the world of open dialogic praxis.

3) Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional

Encouraging acceptance of the other's perspectives, working towards a

culture of equality.

Using the experience of role-playing for understanding others.

4) Stage 4: Individuative-reflective

Focusing on self-emptiness for the other.

Interpreting the Christian story in relation to the selected theme of self-emptying.

5) Stage 5: Conjunctive

Encountering a culture of transformation for intergenerational reconciliation.

6) Stage 6: Universalising

A culture of reconciliation from intergenerational disbelief to open dialogic community in the Church Round Table.

The second part of this chapter has covered a case a study with a pastor, the aging parent, and the adult child as participants, for the six stages of dialogic praxis in the Church Round Table. Chapter 6 will contain reflection, conclusion, and recommendation for further study.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary and reflection

This thesis was initiated in view of the need for research on the intergenerational conflict for family support of the elderly between Korean aging parents and their adult children. Chapter 1 presented the theme, positioning, methodology, and delimitations of the research.

Chapter 2 provided descriptive circumstances of the conflict between two generations. Korea has been traditionally operated in accordance with the norm that the adult children provide the fundamental support for parents. However, Korea has experienced several social changes, such as a high rate of population mobility, the advent of Western culture based on individualism, and rapid industrialisation and urbanisation during the last four decades. Because of this, while the number of adult children caring for their parents is increasing, a large number of young people have moved into cities, leaving their aging parents behind. Therefore, the prevalence of co-residence of adult children and their aging parents has declined.

In Korea, filial responsibility has created a standard for the adult children in relating to elderly parents. One of the most important filial responsibilities for adult children is co-residence with their parents. Problems arise if the adult child does not provide support for their aging parents. Some elderly parents, when they do not have support through co-residence from their children, have experienced loneliness and emotional alienation with physical difficulty. To identify the loneliness of the elderly, interviews with the aging parents were conducted in order to determine the following: 1) the image and status of the elderly, 2) family support for the elderly, and 3) the conflict of the elderly in terms of family support from their adult children, and their loneliness. At the same time, the adult children are vulnerable to feelings of shame and guilt if they do

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not carry out their filial duty for co-residence as expected, even though the primacy of the trend of co-residence appears to be weakening among younger generations.

For intergenerational conflict, in addition to the differences of traditional family trends of Korea between generations, there has been the bigger problem of a lack of openhearted conversation, to which neither the aging parents nor the adult children are accustomed because of hierarchical communication based on Confucianism. This tendency is related to the Korean family, to which the older generations adhere more strongly than the younger generations under the hierarchical relationship. These vertical relationships have brought class-consciousness rather than harmony in the Korean family (Lee 1995:239). In this way, the basic and central solution to solve conflicts between families is open dialogue with mutual understanding between generations.

To show models for the Christian themes of intergenerational relationships with open dialogue, Chapter 3 offered a Christian interpretation of the relationship between generations, which was illustrated through the use of biblical texts, focusing on three stories in particular: 1) Ruth and Naomi, 2) A loving father and his two sons, and 3) Abraham and Isaac. In addition, the views of the following contemporary Christian thinkers regarding intergenerational relationships were examined: 1) Don S. Browning and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore: love as equal-regard through dialogue, and 2) J. Gordon Harris: loving reciprocity.

In Chapter 4, the role of the church in intergenerational conflict was introduced, including reconciliatory work and mutual responsibility between the church and the family. The Korean church's limitations for these roles were also explored, such as conflicting features and a poor relationship with the family. This study then progressed to suggesting a possible communicability, a Round Table, this image having been drawn from the story of King Arthur's round table and adapted to form the Church Round Table, which has potential as a communicative mean for a dialogue process to facilitate the intergenerational

conflict for family support. As indicated in earlier discussions (2.5.3), intergenerational conflict has been one of the biggest problems in the Korean family. To solve this problem, I have extracted three of the main concepts of the Church Round Table: kenosis, equality, and reconciliation.

Firstly, the idea of kenosis, which refers to the Son of God's "emptying" himself for the sake of the human in incarnation, came from King Arthur's non-authoritarian attitude that allowed them to sit equally at the round table with his knights. A spirit of kenosis regarding self-emptying for the other in the Church Round Table is sincerely necessary in the traditionally hierarchical relationship between the aging parents and the adult children in Korea. Without kenosis, there cannot be an atmosphere of open dialogue between generations in the Round Table.

Secondly, in the climate of hierarchical communication, the Church Round Table's first and foremost role is to contribute a new framework for equalising each party's position. In the story of King Arthur, there was no one place at the round table that was higher than any other, and the Church Round Table adopts equality for unconditional acceptance of the other. As one of the most significant outcomes of the Round Table, the development of trust and respect for the other's views should be cultivated.

Thirdly, by achieving kenosis and equality, open dialogue in the intergenerational conflicts between generations can be achieved in the Church Round Table. Then, based on two-way communication through two concepts, the aging parent and the adult child can reach reconciliation, which is the main purpose of the Church Round Table. It may minimise or solve the intergenerational conflict by reformulating or reinforcing the relationship between parents and children. In this way, the Church Round Table shows how intergenerational communicative interactions help to provide a constructive conflict management process. Thus, the Church Round Table's mandate is to resolve conflict, to catalyse collaborative discussion, and to develop co-

operative partnership between diverse opinions.

Chapter 5 consisted of two parts: six stages for open dialogue and three case studies as a strategic practical theology (Browning 1991:58). The six stages examined contemporary practices by James Fowler (1981) for free conversation for reconciliation. In addition, three case studies with my co-researchers, a pastor, an aged man, and an adult child, showed practical experiences and guidelines for the intergenerational conflict. For practical strategies of the Church Round Table, we are now in a position to begin to focus on the three members of the Round Table in order to resolve the intergenerational conflict within rule-governed interpersonal interaction. The three participants can learn to trust each other enough to open themselves up to learning and better understanding through the Round Table. Through the six stages of the Church Round Table, most of the talk regarding the intergenerational familial relationships became positive and practical. In addition, the case studies provided practical application and reflection for reconstruction of the intergenerational conflict through the Church Round Table.

It is my sincere hope that this study will encourage Korean society to have healthy relationships within the family, which will lead to good relationships with open dialogue between aging parents and adult children. The strength of relations between parents and adult children has become weaker than ever before. A conflict of intergenerational relations is likely to affect the social, economic, and psychological well-being of the elderly. The loneliness and poverty of the elderly, as well as the filial burden of children, are thought to be related to weakened solidarity among intergenerational relations in recent years. In this way, I hope that the Church Round Table, which enables the development, regulation, and facilitation of the open dialogue processes, can be used as communicability for relational conflicts between two generations.

My expectation is that this thesis will challenge Korean churches to have concern about the intergenerational conflicts among children and the elderly. I

particularly hope that many Korean pastors can become mediators for reconciliation in the intergenerational conflict for family support. My hope is that this thesis will inspire Korean pastors to accept a role as a participant in the Church Round Table along with the children and the elderly. In doing this, the Korean Church would minimise or solve some of these problems for intergenerational conflict by seeking reconciliation in the relationship between parents and children.

6.2. Recommendations for further study

I believe that the following issues would be good areas for further study:

On the multi-disciplined aspect of the Church Round Table:

As I mentioned above (5.4), there are many conflicting circumstances in modern society and the church. Besides the intergenerational conflict for family support, the Korean family has many other relational problems, such as between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law, and between adolescents and parents. Thus, there is an opportunity for the Church Round Table to provide help to many persons who are experiencing relational ills. Although this thesis is limited to the aging parents and the adult children who are suffering within the intergenerational conflict for family support of the elderly, the Church Round Table's concept and role cannot be restrict to only one aspect of its culture of multiplication, leaving room for further study.

On the issue of the relationships with non-co-residing parents:

I have attempted to examine the nature of intergenerational relationships between the adult children and the elderly parents regarding co-residence. It appears that traditional family system of Korea is weakening. However,

although traditional relationships between children and elderly parents in the form of co-residence have changed, it is difficult to conclude that mere co-residence signifies a sound parent-offspring relationship in Korea.

Adult children may be living apart from their parents for various social or economic reasons. But if there are close economic and emotional relations between children and their parents, we can say that a strong relationship between them is still dominant. Thus, the research for issue of the relationship with non-co-residing parents deserves further research for a better understanding of intergenerational relationships in comparison to traditional Korean society.

On the efficient performance of a mutual communication through the Church Round Table:

This thesis is concerned with open dialogue based on the Church Round Table. For practical accomplishment, it adopts certain methods, such as role-play and the Christian story of Jesus' birth and death on a cross, in six stages. In addition, it needs more practically efficient and useful strategies for two-way communication based on the Church Round Table.

On various media for free communication regarding the intergenerational conflict:

In addition to the Church Round Table, it is necessary to research other media that can be used to facilitate open dialogue in the case of the relational conflict concerning co-residence between the aging parents and the adult children.