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**Christian life narratives of young adults who have
non-Christian family members in the Republic of Korea:
Narratives of keeping faith**

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ABSTRACT

The present research has been undertaken within a narrative approach which is based on social constructionism. For the purposes of fostering more effective communication between science and theology, I also adopt the postfoundationalist way of thinking which was suggested by Van Huyssteen. I made use of the seven movements that were proposed by J C Müller to present the research undertaken with four young adult Christians.

Korea is a multi-religious society in which various religions coexist, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, Christianity and several new religions. In the religious background of Korea, people are free to choose their religion, but sometimes their religious freedom has been limited by the patriarchal family system. In particular, young adult Christians who are in the period of emerging adulthood may face an even more difficult situation when they practise a different religion from that of their family. They are still under the strong influence of their parents emotionally and financially, but they want to be adults with their own independent identity. Moreover, Korean social prejudice against Christianity causes the young adult Christians much difficulty in maintaining their faith life comfortably.

In order to listen to their stories regarding their faith life, I selected four young adult Christians who have non-Christian family members in their household, who are unmarried, and are therefore still dependent on their parents. With the co-researchers, individual interview sessions and group interview sessions were held, and a web-activity devised in which their stories were told and developed in collaboration with



various disciplines that were influencing their discourses within the stories. They were experiencing tensions with their non-Christian family members in maintaining their Christian faith life and were feeling powerless in the relationship with them. Furthermore, in their relationship with other Christians in the church the co-researchers complained about the lack of understanding, regarding their specific family background, shown by those believers who do have Christian relatives in their household.

The narrative research process allowed the co-researchers to interpret their difficult stories and to think through the meanings of these and their effect. In this manner, they could reinterpret their painful stories and uncover new meanings that might assist them to be more satisfied in the future. Having discovered new meanings for their painful stories, the co-researchers are not powerless people any longer; instead, they are active people who are dreaming for, or envisioning, a better future with their non-Christian family.



Key Terms

1. Narrative research
2. Social constructionism
3. Postfoundationalism
4. Practical theology
5. Co-researchers
6. Young adult Christians
7. Korean Christianity
8. Empowering
9. Traditions of interpretation
10. Retelling the story



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