

CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT STORY

1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the traditions of interpretation that emerged from the collaboration with my co-researchers were as follows:

- MK/Christian boarding school
 - ⇒ separation from parents
 - ⇒ atmosphere at school
- Relationships with parents and friends
- University education and reentry
- Financial situation of Korean missionary family
- Language learning, cultural adjustment and identity
- Young adult issues

For the next stage, I tried to investigate my co-researchers' experiences more deeply in order to seek a better understanding of their interpretations. To do this, I used deconstructive conversations to assist my co-researchers to develop the deeper meaning of their experiences. Demasure and Müller (2006:5) aver that deconstruction deals with text analysis and that meanings are not inherent, but, rather emerges only as the reader converses with a text. Using deconstructive conversations, the co-researchers' stories were effectively listened to from "listening to experiences" to "describing the experiences" (Müller 2004:1). In this sense, the development of the stories of the co-researchers was identified through deconstruction. They were helped to 'unpack' the dominant stories of their lives to view them from a different perspective (Morgan 2000:50). Within this new perspective of possible stances available within their traditions, the processes of reconstruction of their problem were realized (Monk et al. 1997:208). As reconstruction developed, my co-researchers' expectations of themselves changed. This different positioning brought them very different life experiences. They gained

courage and found a new sense of strength in order to seek a new future. Alternative stories of my co-researchers would then emerge through the plot development.

2 CHILDREN'S STORIES RETOLD

From among the traditions of interpretation, in this section I will classify the retold stories of my co-researchers according to the different concepts.

2.1 MK/Christian boarding schools

The traditions of interpretation on the matter of MK/Christian boarding schools were identified in various ways from the collaboration with my co-researchers, and this was developed by Hope and Dreamer as follows:

2.1.1 Separation from parents

During the interview sessions Hope mainly described her emotional difficulties as feelings of tiredness, depression, loneliness and anger. She expressed frustration at not being able to show her real thoughts, feelings and emotions to others. She said, "My own real person is repressed and hidden". Using the narrative to help people to develop the meaning of their stories, I asked Hope why she feels that her real person is hidden. In response to my question she said, "... because I don't know how to deal with my emotions... I have been afraid to show my real feelings to others since I was a little girl. I think my parents don't understand me, and I have no one with whom to honestly share my feelings about myself... So my own real person is repressed and hidden..."

Using the externalization of Freedman and Combs (2002:32), I tried to examine the reason why her real person is hidden in order to understand her view of it. Morgan (2000:17) demonstrates that externalizing conversation can assist people to separate their identity from the problem. It requires a particular shift in the use of language,

making an important distinction between people and the problem. Therefore, we can reveal dominant discourses with externalizing questions about contextual influences on the problem. Moreover, I tried to name her problem in order to help her to separate her identity from the problem. Freedman and Combs (2002:29) insist that “Naming a problem can also be a way of examining a problem and thinking differently about it. It can be poetic and compelling.”

I asked Hope if she could give a name to her real person. She thought carefully for a while, then said, “Well... unstable girl?” By giving a name to the problem, ‘unstable girl’ appeared. Hence, in order to examine the cause of her instability and to externalize it, I asked the following questions. “When can you see the ‘unstable girl’?” “What made her become unstable?” “What kind of effect does ‘unstable girl’ have on your life?” “Is the ‘unstable girl’ always with you?”

She was wary of giving answers to the above questions. She said that she had been alone ever since she was a little girl, and she always felt isolated. She had experienced that people, her parents, friends and teachers, always left her unexpectedly, and this made her very fearful. Indeed, she really needs stability in her life, but she has no confidence, because of being left by special people so many times in the past. Thus, instead of showing her real feelings, emotions, and thoughts, she built a wall around herself to protect herself. She said, “I lost confidence, and am often depressed... recently I am always depressed and tired... I am unstable... Maybe it’s my personality?...”

By using externalizing conversation, we discovered that the cause of these feelings is based on separation from people through her lifelong experiences, originating in the separation from her parents from a young age. It is an undeniable fact that early years of separation from her parents caused Hope’s deep emotions of insecurity, instability and loneliness. She rarely saw her parents during her school years, so she had no chance to communicate with them honestly about school life, her thoughts and her feelings. Instead, she simply told her parents that everything was fine. She presumed that her parents were so busy with their mission work that they had no time and no interest in their children. While she was speaking about her childhood, she was almost crying as she told of her desperate need of her parents’ genuine love,

care and support during her school years, but she was always so far from them. Because Hope was not able to share her difficulties and problems, even her interests, with her parents while she was growing up, this lifelong experience still causes her to hide her real person.

After 'unstable girl' surfaced, she wanted to express more about her real thoughts. She said, "I want 'unstable girl' to come out from her hiding place, and be stable, but I did not know how to do it... but now, I'm thinking... I talked to my friend about our last conversation, and we (Hope and her friend) were thinking that my problems could be over and gone... They will not punish me anymore. I'm thinking now... I have found some possibilities in me since our last conversation..." It was a 'sparkling moment' when she became aware of her desire and was able to speak about it to others. She wanted 'unstable girl' to come out from the hidden place and she wanted to be stable. She also realized that she has the possibility to bring unstable girl out into the open. So I attempted to reconstruct the problems with the following questions. "Can you explain more about the possibilities you mentioned?" "When can you see your possibilities?" She said thoughtfully, "Well... I am now thinking of things in a different way... I have gained courage to talk to you honestly since our first conversation... now I know that I have someone to talk to about myself honestly... so I think my problems could be over... I have been praying for a long time to find someone to talk to about my problems, and I think you are an answer to my prayer." She identified her abilities which brought a different view on her problems. Finding someone to whom she could talk honestly was the first step to solving her problem. Monk et al. (1997:7) describe that many people adapted to their problems and did not see the extent to which it influenced them. People are also unaware of their own resourcefulness to minimize the extent of their problems. By drawing my co-researchers' attention to subtle changes which may accompany the escalation and reduction of their problems, they may develop new insights into their abilities, and this helps them to develop a clearer perspective on how to address their concerns. When the dominant ideas and beliefs that support the problem are exposed and discussed, and my co-researchers have stood up to the problem that disturbed or challenged them, it becomes clear. If this is significant to the person, it is a unique outcome (Müller 1999:45).

By externalizing conversations, Hope could attempt to focus attention on the problem rather than on her inadequacies. Thus, I was deeply impressed with her new insight for her future. She is now aware of her power and potential, and wants to give new meaning to her life. According to Gergen (2001:173), the externalization of the problem begins to reveal unique outcomes. And this became the basis to creating a new story which proved successful in solving the problem.

Dreamer's pain related to the fact that his parents did not understand him and were not concerned about him. He needed to share his interests and difficulties with his parents, but often found that his parents seemed so busy and had no time to care for their children. He said that even though he has grown up, he still faces many difficulties in his life and his studies at university, and still needs the emotional and financial support of his parents, but he has no confidence to share his thoughts with his parents. I asked him what made him hesitate to communicate with his parents, and he responded that since he was at primary school he could not express his feelings to his parents. He felt that his parents were always busy doing missionary work and seemed not to have enough time to be concerned about their children. I also asked him if he ever talked to his parents about his thoughts and feelings and he said that he complained about this matter when he was a little child, but his parents did not understand his emotions, they always said that they were very busy doing God's work. The attitude of his parents hurt him emotionally and he thought that mission work is more important to his parents than their children. This experience so influenced him that he was not able to open his heart to his parents even up to the present time. I was aware that he was prejudiced towards his parents in some ways and I tried to deconstruct his prejudice by deconstructive conversation to question and challenge the ideas that assist in the sustaining of the problem (Freedman & Combs 2002:206).

I asked him if there were times when he experienced any positive reactions when he was communicating with his parents about his difficulties. He looked thoughtful in response for a while and said that his mother liked to read the Bible every day and wanted him to share the meaning of the Bible with her by internet phone, and he knew that this was a chance to share his thoughts with her. Yet, he did not want to

open his real thoughts to her honestly, he rather tried to interpret the meaning of the Bible as he understood it. I asked him again what it was that prevented him from opening his heart honestly to her, and he answered that he was influenced by his past experiences. He had no confidence to share his difficulties honestly with his parents. Because they supported him financially for his university education, he was afraid to cause any trouble. In fact, he had financial problems, but could not share these with his parents. He felt that they were so far from the country he stayed in, that they would not understand his situation. So, he often thought that his needs were disregarded by his parents and also by God, and he became angry toward them. I was able to understand his feelings toward his parents and God due to his very difficult situation. It was difficult for him to solve the problems and manage his life without emotional support from his parents. However, he was upset about his relationship with his parents, and felt that they were drifting apart from each other and said that he wanted to develop a closer relationship with them. I suggested that he share his difficulties with his mother when she wanted to share with him the meaning of the Bible. I explained that in sharing its meaning it is important try to apply the meaning of the Bible to his real life situation. He agreed with my suggestion as he recognized that interpretation of the Bible has no meaning without its application in our real world, and so, he was courage by our discussion. Morgan (2000:45) describes that a narrative approach is interested in discovering, acknowledging and “taking apart” (deconstructing) the beliefs, ideas and practices of the broader culture in which a person lives and which are assisting the problem to develop. When the time of sharing the meaning of the Bible came, he tried to open his heart and was able to talk about his problems more openly to his mother. In spite of his effort, he still felt uncomfortable to open his heart fully to his mother, but he was happy with his ability to take the first step to rebuild his relationship with his parents. He found that his mother was willing to listen to his stories and expressed her feeling of pity for him to some extent. He was aware that his mother could not open her heart fully to him. But, he was encouraged by the opportunity, as he thought that this communication may become the first step to rebuild a better relationship between himself and his parents in future. I asked him if he experienced God’s help during his difficult times at university and he responded that God showed His love to him when he asked for His help and expressed that his personal

experiences of God's existence inspired him with a vital power. God's love has given him courage, not only in the past, but also in the present. We talked about spiritual experiences more deeply and I found that he was convinced that when he faces problems, and people cannot help, God will help him. Carlson and Erickson (2002:217,232) state that spiritual experiences have the potential to offer people a wealth of hope in their life. As God is invisible, the people's experience of God's presence is subjective. By deconstructive conversation, he recognized that the time of separation did not only have painful stories, but also had the power to motivate him to be independent and to help him manage his life.

The retelling of Dreamer's story was meaningful and promoted a new perspective toward a better future. Müller (2004:8) states that the aim of narrative research is to empower the powerless. A unique outcome is anything that defies the problem or that contravenes the problem. If they start thinking differently and see the significance of the dominant story, it can be considered a unique outcome. When unique outcomes are identified, they are openings to alternative stories (Morgan 2000:50).

2.1.2 Atmosphere at MK/Christian schools

The atmosphere at MK/Christian schools seriously influenced children's feelings in negative ways. The stories of Challenger and Hope's development will be represented in this regard.

Challenger was sensitive when she looked back on her childhood at MK school. Her self-esteem was damaged by teachers and staff because she was labeled as a naughty child, lacking quiet and well behavior to qualify her as a good Christian to them. Challenger was confused about finding the real meaning of Christianity, because the teachers and staff were narrow minded Christians in their discipline of children. Children suffered from their narrow-minded thinking and really struggled to find the real meaning of faith. Thus, she became very critical towards Christianity and Christians. She is still struggling with it. So, we spent much time discussing the meaning of Christianity. I suggested that we read some books that teach the

essential qualities of Christianity and the way it can be applied in this world. She agreed with my suggestion and we recommended some books to each other.

Through the research process, she became encouraged to find new meaning in the stories of her past. She said that bringing the painful stories to the surface and interpreting them were an effective way to gain new insight. In order to develop new stories, she resolved that she would no longer avoid thinking and/or telling the stories of her past experiences, instead she wanted to try to give new meaning to them. Monk et al. (1997:24) define that narrative conversation is a process of unearthing dormant competencies, talents, abilities, and resources that tends to produce numerous moments of excitement and vivacity.

Another negative influence that she experienced at that school was its western environment. She was ashamed of being different among western people. She worried about being perceived as different by her western peers. Some teachers and staff showed racial discrimination against Korean children, and some of the western children teased the Korean children because of their differences. In this atmosphere she did not like the fact that she was Korean. She now realizes that these feelings were caused by the western attitudes that permeated the school. She did not really want to change her nationality, but was influenced by the atmosphere at the school.

Since she returned to Korea and was working with western people she became aware that she was recovering from her low self-esteem about being Korean. She now recognizes that Korea is a developed country where many people from the west want to come to find good jobs. She also recognizes that people in Korea have adjusted to western ways, since there is a different social atmosphere these days. Western people now look familiar in that country as so many of them are coming to Korea as tourists, or are looking for employment, or are immigrating. A great number of Koreans go overseas for similar reasons. She now feels more comfortable with her Korean identity among her western colleagues in Korea.

Hope explained that the atmosphere at primary school was very strict in order to discipline the children that it affected her negatively in many ways. These effects

lasted until her young adult years. Because she was afraid and felt insecure in the very strict environment at school, she felt that she had to be a perfect child as children were caned when they made mistakes. This caused tension. However, as the rules at the school were too strict, she always felt that she was not good enough. She became tired and discouraged because of these strict rules and by the excessively religious atmosphere at school. These negative feelings still cause her to avoid similar environments. Hence, she struggled to decide about the offer to become a part time teacher at a Christian school. She did not look forward to be involved in a Christian school. Her parents urged her to work there as a good step in her career, to earn a salary and especially because of the principal of the school. The school has very good environment and education level, and the principal has a good understanding of Korean missionary children, but she hesitated in making a decision. When she brought this issue to me, she had only one week left before giving her final answer to the school. She was fretful and confused.

In order to discover Hope's real feelings toward that school, I attempted to use deconstructive questions, "Can you tell me more in detail why you are hesitating to make a decision?" "What makes you feel afraid to work at a Christian school?" She responded thoughtfully, "Well... it is too religious; it would be so tiring to work in that religious atmosphere. If I work there, I will be hurt, my head knows it." "I just feel... I will be confined to certain religious boundaries if I work there. That's not what I want, that's not me. I want to be free from religious boundaries." She felt afraid to work at a Christian school as she felt it would be like going back to boarding school. Indeed, she was afraid to think about her childhood experiences which were stained by pain. As Challenger told her feelings about that Christian school, she felt so much pain. She worried that if she was involved in religious duties, she would be afraid to take part. I asked her if she would be required to take part in these activities, and she responded that she would not be compelled by the school, but she seemed sensitive and really worried about the atmosphere at that school.

I realized that her fear was a reality, so I asked her if she would feel differently about the situation at the Christian school if she worked as a part time teacher, she thought carefully and then said, "Well, I think that I will not be involved in religious activities if

I don't want to be. The principal understands the situation of Korean missionary children, so he won't expect me to take part in religious duties if I don't want to." By deconstructive conversation, she recognized that her fear about that Christian school was not based on the real situation, rather, it was underpinned by her experiences at boarding school and by her preconceived idea of the religious atmosphere. Moreover her lack of communication with her parents caused her to be uncomfortable in showing her weakness to her parents, and they could not understand why she was struggling to make a decision.

By talking of her real thoughts and feelings about that school and its religious atmosphere, she became aware of her sensitiveness in this matter. She seemed encouraged to discover the meaning of her fears. She gained confidence to consider working at that school and decided to meet with the principal again in order to honestly share her fears about the atmosphere. Afterwards she decided to work as a part-time teacher before taking up the position full-time. She could understand the basis of her worries which explained her anxiety and her hidden thoughts and feelings, and had the desire to solve the problem. In the time between the interviews, Hope's interpretations of this specific issue changed gradually. Freedman and Combs (1996:46) say, "When we listen 'deconstructively' to people's stories, our listening is guided by the belief that those stories have many possible meanings... We seek to capitalize on this by looking for gaps in our understanding and asking people to fill in details, or by listening for ambiguities in meaning and then asking people how they are resolving or dealing with those ambiguities." People cannot be helped by our questions and comments, but they can examine their own stories in new ways. Thus, this work – in finding meaning and realizing its effects can open up a space for people, whose stories are being investigated, to think about the possibilities of a better future and of a new reality (Freedman & Combs 1996: 46,47).

2.2 Relationships with parents and friends

The traditions of interpretation on relationship were exposed by all of my co-researchers as they realized its importance. Faithful described his relationship with

local friends and Dreamer and Hope emphasized their relationship with their parents. Their retold stories are the following:

Dreamer had a grudge against his parents while he was growing up because he was thinking that his parents put greater value on their ministry than on their own children. Therefore he was angry with his parents and felt enmity towards them for many years. He realized that there was a big gap between his parents and him. Actually, he was dissatisfied with the financial situation of his family, and this distressed him. He faced extreme financial difficulties when he was applying to a university in America. This provoked his feeling of antipathy toward his parents because they did not have the means to solve the situation.

“My parents were so far from me and were always busy with their ministries, I was aware that they couldn’t help me as there was a big distance between us. I also knew that they had paid such a big amount of money for my education. So I was afraid that my parents are burdened by my needs. But I am not sure how they will think if I share my problems with them.” In saying these things, he seemed to regret his attitude toward his parents, and continued to say that his feelings of anger and instability might be underpinned by the insufficiency of communication with his parents and their lack of understanding. He did not know whether it was good to share his difficulties with his parents honestly or not. I suggested that he should take a chance and share his difficulties more openly with his parents during his visit. He looked thoughtful for a while and then told me that he would try this in order to get their spiritual and emotional support, but was hesitant to do it.

He visited Botswana for three months during the university holiday in order to spend time with his parents and to help in their ministry. He did not actually want to go there because he could not find anything of interest there. However, he had a good time with his parents while he was staying with them. When I first interviewed him, he felt uncomfortable to discuss his difficulties with his parents, but now his attitude toward his parents had changed. He told me that during his last few days he was trained by his mother each day to meditate on the Bible, and he felt assured that his life will be successful through prayer and meditating on the Bible as he believed that this is the

way to depend on God. His new experiences in Botswana of being involved in the ministry of orphaned children gave him new insight into the missionary work of his parents. Before this experience, he would not look back at the past experiences of his childhood as he thought that they were filled with hurtful memories. But now he found a different meaning to his family's life by joining in the mission work and spending time with his parents. His view of his parents and the life as a missionary family was renewed in this time.

Even though Hope was a young adult, her relationship with her parents did not develop in a natural way. She often felt tension between herself and her parents when they talked about special issues. She knew that her mother became sensitive and felt guilty toward her children because of their boarding school experiences. Because her mother was upset about this matter, Hope also felt angry with her parents for the same reasons. They became sensitive emotionally and argued with each other. Her boarding school experiences caused her feelings of anger toward her parents and as a young adult, she still feels lonely. She wished to be close to her family, wanted her parents to understand her better, and to be fully accepted by them. She recognized that it would be best to come to Korea and reconnect with her parents. She tried to take advantage of being close to her parents in order to build a new relationship with them.

Hope realized that she was expecting too much from her parents, but she did not know how to deal with it. She was still angry and struggling in her relationship with her parents. In order to clear up her understanding of her expectation of her parents, I asked her what sort of issues she wanted to share with her parents. She said she wanted to share about herself, her feelings, her thoughts, and the normal things of her life. I asked again if she could open her mind to her parents and genuinely try to share her real thoughts and feelings to them. She said, "No... I think my father somehow cared more about the mission than for me." Because of this, she had no confidence in herself to be close to her parents. However, during the research process, she indicated different thoughts toward her parents. She realized that the expectations she had had of her parents were unrealistic, and she was aware that these high expectations would affected her attitude toward her parents. Taking this

into account, she wanted to stop blaming her parents, and instead, she looked for positive things in their relationships. She tried to have a better understanding of her father and the fact that he was so busy doing mission work. She wanted to thank her mother for her support in various ways. With her different perspective, she was now able to see how much support and love she had been receiving from her parents while she was settling in Korea. She felt sorry about her critical attitude toward her parents. Yet, she still thinks that she and her parents need to talk more openly about the issues in the family and that they should do this on a regular basis.

Faithful regretted that he had not built up relationships with local friends. He felt sorry that during his high school years he put all his time and effort in his studies, because he worried about his academic ability to enter university. During his high school years he did not think that making close friendships with the local children was important. At university he was able to have good relationship with some of the Korean children. However his relationships with the local children did not develop. He realizes now that building relationships with them was vital as he was living in their country. In spite of this awareness, he could not change his attitude toward the local people because of the differences between him and his local friends. Furthermore he recognized that he had limited knowledge about the country and its people. I suggested that he read books on the sociology and culture of that country. We both agreed that it was a good idea to read those books to understand the country and its people. We also expected it to provide some ideas of how to develop communication skills with the local people. He hoped that it would help him to understand the local people, their culture and society. He also recognized that without a genuine effort on his part, relationships with the local people would not develop, so he was determined to make an effort to develop his relationships with the local people in future to enrich his life. Morgan (2000:50) observe that the unique outcome may seem very small (no need to be large or spectacular) and what will become significant is if the person determines that it is indeed a unique outcome. Narrative approach might focus on building a fuller picture of the plot development (Monk et al. 1997:6).

2.3 University education and reentry

Because of the situation on mission field, Korean missionary children in general have many difficulties to start at university. In many cases, it is difficult to collect enough and/or right information about universities in Korea and in other countries, and making preparation for an entrance examination is not easy on the mission field. Missionary children need to take into account the financial situation of their family before choosing a university.

Faithful entered university on the mission field because of his concern for his family's situation. He was happy with the academic standard and attitude of the professors at the local university. However, he struggled with his studies since the education system differed so much from Korea and his limited English was a drawback. In spite of his hard work, he failed some subjects every year. Sometimes he felt to give up because he experienced stress in his study. He was discouraged when he compared his results with those of the local children.

He failed to qualify for graduation at university while this research was progressing. He could not believe it and was very upset by it. On account of these results he was devastated and changed his plans for the future. He had an extremely difficult time coping with it. The following year I interviewed him twice in order to encourage him in this difficult situation, and focused our conversation on his problems. He said that he fell into despair. He complained about the people who had been in charge of making the decision about his graduation and felt anger toward the university. He initially thought that it was unfair and a kind of racism. During the first interview session in that year he found it hard to control his negative feelings over the situation. He especially worried about his future. I asked him how he would go about to explore possibilities for further studies, but he was not sure about other possibilities. What discouraged him most was that he did not understand God's will for him in this situation. He could not understand why God allowed this situation while He knew his plans for the future. He questioned God many times and prayed a lot. I tried to encourage him from God's word in the Bible and we prayed together for His guidance.

At our next interview six months later I was amazed at his changed attitude. He seemed so different from the previous interview, so I asked him why his attitude had changed. He smiled and explained that he had significant experiences during his extended year of study and because he was able to clearly understand some specific principles of mathematics. He said that he would have missed these important opportunities if he had not taken this extend study. Hence, he was able to calm down, control his anxiety and depression, and will try to complete the course successfully. He was still praying to find God's plan for his future that was uncertain since his study time had to be extended. Morgan (2000:50) explains that when a person reconstructs the dominant stories, the times that person has stood against problems may become visible, if it is significant to the person, it is a unique outcome.

Dreamer reentered Korea for high school, and faced many difficulties with adjustment without his parents. He entered university after graduating from high school, but, was exceedingly confused at university. He fell into despair through his culture shock at the university and with the Korean society. He realized that children at university pursue very different goals from what he expected. He was deeply distressed with the environment at the university and left the university after six months because of many problems.

Dreamer wandered aimlessly after he left university and ran away from God for a year. During that time, he did not want to go to church and did not meet with Christians. Instead he tried to make a big money and was lead into temptation. Through his wandering he lost his purpose for life. He had a lot of painful memories and was afraid to share these experiences with his parents. He was burdened by his mistakes and worried that his parents or other Christians would find out about his failure. He felt ashamed and guilty before God. He said that he was extremely lonely as he had no one who could share his difficulties during that year, and also felt isolated since he had left God. He continued to say that he had sinned before God and this spoilt his relationship with Him. He felt that there was a big wall between God and himself. He no longer had the confidence to seek God's help and grace.

His expression of these feelings made me empathize with him. I tried to encourage him by telling him that all human beings have weaknesses. I told him that we can easily fall into temptation in the world, and explained about Jesus who is able to understand our weaknesses because he had experienced being a human. I carefully listened to the stories of his mistakes in order to understand its meaning, and deconstructed his feelings of guilt and doubt in God, in order to help him to give new meaning to his past. He opened his heart and said that he was too young to cope with the difficult situations in Korea without parental support. When he looked back on his mistakes he realized that they were caused by his resistance to his parents and to God as he felt so bitter towards them. I asked him again why he felt bitter against them and he answered that he was so tired of suffering financially and needed to blame someone on which to vent his anger. Dreamer realized that this was not the right way to solve his problems. He wanted God to forgive him for his mistakes. I felt sad for him and wanted him to be freed from his distress.

I asked him what kind of relationship he wanted with God. He said that he wanted God to forgive his sins, and become closer to God, but was not confident that he would be able to have a good relationship with God because of all his sins.

I tried to remind him of God's love and forgiveness by reading the Bible and discussing what we read. We read some of the Bible verses³⁶ that reveal the forgiveness of God for our sins. We spent meaningful time discussing this topic, and he was encouraged by it. God's love has given him courage and he wanted to seek His help continually until his feeling of doubt would disappear.

Visionary had different experiences from Dreamer about university education in Korea. She was satisfied with the academic standard and environment at university because that university is one of the top universities in Korea with a very high academic level. Yet, she had many difficulties with her studies on account of the high academic standard at that university. Students worked very hard and she felt oppressed among them. She had to put all of her energy into her studies, while also struggling with cultural and social adjustment to everything new in Korea.

I asked her if she found, even for a short time, a way to dissolve the tension of her study. She said that she had to work hard even though she had tension. Otherwise,

³⁶ For examples, Isaiah 1:18, 1 John 1:9, 1 Peter 1:18,19 and Colossians 1:13,14.

she would not achieve the goal she had planned. I asked what she did during her spare time, and she said that she liked swimming when she had time because she felt refreshed by it. She also explained that most of other students at that university worked very hard in order to accomplish their goals. Therefore, she had to work harder than they did, due to her academic deficiency. She was challenged by the atmosphere at that university. Her view of Korean students and the atmosphere at the university changed as time passed. During the first year in Korea, she could not understand the busy lifestyle of the Koreans that tired her by just watching them. But she gained a positive view of this social phenomenon and she thinks that it is the vital power of Korea. She was challenged by this kind of social atmosphere in Korea as she said, "In Korea people work very hard, they even work at night. Students at university also study very hard. So I mustn't complain about my situation. Rather, I must also work hard in order to accomplish my purpose. I know that time management is the key to doing all things." By telling and retelling the stories of the university studies and the atmosphere in Korea, she came to realize her situation, and that she was fortunate to be a student at that university. When she looked back at the previous year, she remembered her effort to enter that university. Due to this, she was able to change her mind and to enjoy studying at that university although she still has lots of stress in her studies.

Challenger discussed the development of her story of reentry to Korea. She stayed in Korea twice since her family became missionaries. The first time was for high school during a year of her parents' furlough. During this time she was hurt by Korean adult Christians who were prejudiced against missionary children, who judged her on her attitude and her misunderstanding of Korean culture. She was also teased and excluded by her peer group for similar reasons. This gave her a negative concept of Koreans and Korean society. She felt uncomfortable with Koreans.

At the time of our first interview she was staying in Korea in order to make specific preparations with a hospital for further study. She still found many Christians in the Korean church to be prejudiced missionary children. The people at the church she attended were especially critical of her westernized attitude, often pointed to her makeup, and reacted unkindly, because they saw differences in her. The attitude of these people hurt her deeply and she did not want to go to that church. She said that

people at that church seemed to be observing her closely at all times. She realized that nowadays the Korean community has become more tolerant toward foreigners and Koreans who have grown up overseas. The social atmosphere toward them has been changing rapidly in Korea. She was more comfortable in this situation and was freer in the society. Unfortunately the attitude of people in that church has still not changed.

Another advantage she enjoyed in Korea was the opportunity to earn money. She worked at an educational institute as an English teacher, while she was waiting to take up an opportunity of voluntary work at the hospital, and she received a good salary with which she was satisfied. However, she often experienced a culture shock with her parents, who disagreed with the things she did. She said that Korean parents interfered too much with their children's education and were too sensitive about the results of examinations. She was struggling to find volunteer work at the hospital.

2.4 The financial situation of Korean missionary families

The financial issues were mostly referred to Dreamer, Faithful and Visionary as presented in chapter four. Dreamer mainly showed deep suffering through this issue. In this section, I will focus on the development of Dreamer's stories.

During primary and middle school years Dreamer struggled with an inconsistent education system. The move from private school to local school fostered in him a low self-esteem due to the different environments. The financial situation of his family was the main reason for the frequent changes of school and his life at college. This provoked antipathy towards his parents and God, because he could not understand why missionary children should face such difficulties with finances, while God has power over everything. He had been struggling with this problem for most of his life, and I was saddened by his situation.

Dreamer expected to take up a position as a chairperson at his residence when he

went back to college. As a chairperson he would get a full scholarship for boarding expenses. He was really eager for this opportunity to help cover his financial needs. Two months back in America I received an email message that he was appointed chairperson at his residence. His finances are now more stable, but he is very busy at college, and needs to manage his time to strike a balance between his duties and his studies.

Dreamer was encouraged by one of his friends who said, “Poverty is a blessing, because only a person who has experienced suffering in poverty can understand the needs of the poor.” The new insight from his friend impacted on him because he never thought that poverty could be a blessing. He said that he and his friend had a long discussion on this issue. Dreamer felt more comfortable with his family’s financial situation and was able to change his perspective on this matter. Before he had never thought positively about poverty, but now he was able to thank God for his situation. He now sees his experiences of poverty as a good lesson which might become his strong point in life. He is convinced that a person who has faith in God has confidence in life, and is able to work hard to accomplish his/her goal. He expressed his conviction saying, “In the Bible, God said that He will lift the poor and the humble³⁷, I am encouraged by this word. I have confidence in Him since I found my dream. I will do my best if God raises me up.” He earnestly desired that Korean churches and their members, and/or Christian organizations in Korea might have more understanding of the financial situation of missionary families so as to have some support system for the education of missionary children.

2.5 Language learning, cultural adjustment and identity

The traditions of interpretation on these matters were exposed by all of my co-researchers. They faced many difficulties in different situations, both in countries on the mission field and in Korea. The development stories of this topic overlapped with the stories of ‘university education and reentry’, and will not be repeated. Yet,

³⁷ Luke 1:52, “He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.”

different aspects emerged on the issue of language learning among my co-researchers. While Hope, Challenger and Visionary found no difficulties in learning English, Dreamer and Faithful found many difficulties both in conversation and studying. The experiences of these two groups differed from one another according to the age at which they arrived on the mission field. During the research, we recognized that children who move to the mission field while they are young. Acquire the new language much easier than children who moved to the mission field during their teenage years. Dreamer and Faithful had lots of stress with language learning from the time they arrived on the mission field. This was especially true in the case of Faithful. He often felt discouraged because of his lack in English competency compared to the local students. He could not understand why his capacity in English did not improve as he would have liked. But, through the research process, by telling the problematic stories and listening to the interpretations of the co-researchers, he felt encouraged. He came to a better understanding of his struggle, and felt freer to accept the situation. The development stories of Faithful emerged as a 'sparkling event' (Morgan 2000:55). According to him (2000:55), unique outcome is anything that does not fit the dominant story and this "can be a doorway to alternative stories". Freedman and Combs (2002:210) also aver that the new ideas embodied in the emerging story can support new perceptions and behaviors.

2.6 Young adult issues

The theme of young adults was discussed with all of my co-researchers taking into account their ages. Through the research process, the co-researchers' stories concerning further studies, careers, marriage and future prospects were developed in collaboration with them. Regarding this, special care of young adult children of Korean missionaries was required in practical ways in order to help them.

According to Dreamer, the most important thing young adult Korean missionary children need is to discover their strong points and strengths in order to develop their competency for the future. He agreed with the general concept that in many cases missionary children are suffering with mental and emotional problems, and the

healing of these feelings is important to them. Yet, he emphasized that they face more difficulties in real life beyond their emotional problems when they become young adults. He said that a person who has experienced healing from the past would be empowered to renew the past stories, and thus the painful stories about the past become refreshing. Therefore, making the connection between the past, the present and the future helps to go forward toward the future. He emphasized that young adult children are more aware of their careers, marriages and the future instead of thinking about the past. Thus, they need motivation and guidance in order to find their potential capacities and to develop them. Sometimes Dreamer felt some misgivings about the future and was looking for someone with more wisdom than he had, who could provide guidelines, but they are hard to find. He has suggested that mission agencies and/or the Korean church should be aware of the importance of this matter and make an effort to help young adult missionary children by providing guidelines. He said that he had been learning how to depend on God and to seek His help since his renewal by the grace of God.

Challenger's experiences of the past were becoming faint. Since she was restored she focused more on the present and the future. She was seriously concerned about the career she would choose. Since she found a new purpose she put all her energy into preparing for the future. During the interview sessions she emphasized that at present preparing for a career was the most important matter for her. Currently, she focuses all her efforts on preparing for her future career.

Faithful worried more seriously about his future than my other co-researchers as his future plans have been altered completely through his failure to graduate from university. He worried more about possible conscription for military service, because in Korea it is obligatory for young men. By law young adult males have to join the military for over two years as soon as they graduate from university. There are only two exceptions: children who have a resident permit in other countries are free from this obligation, and children who continued their master's studies can reserve this obligation up to the age of twenty-eight.³⁸ This caused his tension. His parents

³⁸ Military Manpower Administration in Korea; <http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/indexhtm/>

suggested that he do his master's studies in Korea, but he felt uncomfortable with it, because he worries about the different education system and culture in Korea. He is praying to seek God's help and guidance for the future. During his extended year at university he gained new knowledge of the principles of mathematics, which he did not understand before. But, he had more free time for things he could not do in the past years. He was satisfied with the result thereof.

2.7 Reflection

In this section, the traditions of interpretation of my co-researchers' events were developed. Müller (2001:11) avers that "The research process is not only about storytelling, but also about story development". Thus, I tried to stimulate discussion regarding the influences of their education problems. While speaking about these influences, my co-researchers began to understand their problems and tried to focus on deconstructing their problem-saturated stories. They attempted to understand their situation and to search for other interpretations that could lead to unique outcomes. According to Morgan (2000:52-57), "a unique outcome can be anything that the problem would not like; anything that does not fit with the dominant story". It is a doorway to new and different stories. So, as more and more unique outcomes are traced, grounded and given meaning, a new plot emerges and alternative stories are created (Morgan 2000:59).

In order to assist the co-researchers in creating a new and preferred story for a better future, I will explore their alternative stories in detail in the next section with the reflections of other voices and the interaction with interdisciplinary conversations.

3 INTERDISCIPLINARY CONVERSATIONS

My position within the postfoundationalist and social constructionist paradigm which underpin the narrative approach expects me to cooperate with other disciplines and find a new paradigm in theology. Within my postfoundationalist practical theologian

world view, I avoid asserting my own rights, and instead, try to open up myself to and appropriate other theoretical positions. Extensive attention to interdisciplinary work is an important part of the new approach to practical theology (Osmer 1990:330). Van Huyssteen (1997:4) says that the postfoundationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection points beyond the confines of the local community or culture towards interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 1997:4). “The interdisciplinary movement is part and parcel of practical theology. It includes the conversation with other theological disciplines and with all the other sciences” (Müller 2005:11). In postfoundationalist practical theology, the theological reflection can be integrated with various scientific disciplines as a cognitive scientific form. A description of experience thickened through my interdisciplinary investigation. I think that this interdisciplinary conversation helps me “...to develop into a new story of understanding that points beyond the local community” (Müller 2003:10). Thus, for the interaction with interdisciplinary conversation, I engaged with other disciplines such as Missiology, Christian Education and Child Psychology, in order to find new patterns that are consistent with the Christian paradigm through critical theological reflection.

From a narrative social constructionist view, the traditions of interpretation of my co-researchers were based on their unique experiences in specific circumstances (Freedman & Combs 1996:16). Hence, I consulted with Korean missionary parents in order to gain deeper understanding of my co-researchers’ particular situation as Korean missionary children. These voices were helpful in supporting my co-researchers’ voices and offering new perspectives (Smith & Nylund 1997:43).

After I listened to other voices I summarized the substance of the themes on my computer and emailed it to my co-researchers. Thereafter I contacted them by email, internet phone and/or face-to-face meeting in order to discuss these external voices in an alternative manner, through deconstructive methods. Our discussions are presented below.

3.1 Reflections from missionary parents

The interviews with missionary parents were held twice in 2009. At the time they travelled to South Africa for a conference for Korean missionaries. I planned to have interviews with one missionary father and two missionary mothers, but the voice of father will not be described in this section because the substance of his reflection overlapped with his wife's. The voices of the mothers are described here to protect them. I will use pseudonyms which are commonly used as nicknames for these mothers. The following are their reflections.

Prayer Warrior (a pseudonym of the first mother) is the mother of Honest, serving on the mission field the past sixteen years. She has two children and both are abroad for studies. She lives in Botswana with her husband ministering to orphan children and developing church leadership.

When her children went to boarding school she and her husband realized that they had a lot of time available without the children, so that they were able to focus on their ministries, and as a result, their ministries grew. They enjoyed the advantage of being able to move around according to God's calling and people's needs. For the above reasons, she was sure that her choice of the boarding school option for her children's education was the correct one. Being human she really worried about her children while they were at boarding school. But, instead of being anxious over her children, she prayed at all times with her whole heart. She trusted God to take care of her children and to guide their life according to His will. I agreed with her opinion of God's care over missionary children, yet, I realized that she did not completely understand her children's difficulties. I asked her if she understood the situation of her children. She said that she was aware of some but not of all the implications. She was confident that children whose parents pray hard for them could not go to ruin. She emphasized that her children were really satisfied at boarding school. She was convinced that boarding school is a good option for Korean missionary children for the sake of their parents' ministries for world mission.

Trust (a pseudonym for the second mother) had a different view from Prayer Warrior on this matter because her son had many difficult experiences at boarding school. Her older son went to boarding school from the time he was very young, because there was no other choice for their son's education as they were living in a remote area. He unexpectedly developed serious emotional problems at school as he felt extreme lonely, lost and insecure. Trust said, "The school was in an isolated area, and this was difficult for my son. He had such a difficult time that he is still struggling in life. It was our mistake to send him there. I am very sorry for him." Before she realized the problems that her son was experiencing, she believed that genuine parental love and a good attitude toward their son is vital for life at boarding school. But, she regrets her hasty decision. Through this experience, Trust and her husband did not send their other children to boarding school. They homeschooled their children instead. Her younger children adjusted well to homeschooling and grew up with feelings of stability and security. Through her experiences with her elder son, she argued that missionary parents must seriously consider all the implications of the boarding school option for their children's schooling. She emphasized that children's personality, preference and school environment are very important considerations when considering boarding school. Yet, she thought that the situations of different missionary parents differ. But some parents cannot do homeschooling for their children and cannot find any school in their home area that will suit their children, what sort of schooling option would be suitable? She was wondering what the best option for a Korean missionary family would be in different situations.

Prayer Warier talked about financial issues concerning their children's education. Actually she was upset because she realized that the financial situation of her family made it difficult to support her son adequately. In fact, she regretted that her son had not had consistent schooling because the financial situation of her family necessitated the frequent changing of schools. She did not realize that this matter had essentially influenced his studies. She also knew that her son wanted to go to another university if the financial situation of their family had improved, but he could not go to his preferred university due to their financial situation. This made her feel sorry for her son. However, her family was able to acquire a loan from their mission agency to send their son to America for a better education for his future. The family

thanked God for this provision. She worried about the high cost of education and boarding expenses for her two younger children. She would have felt better if her eldest son was able to focus more on his studies, instead of doing other things to earn money. Yet, she placed her hope on the fact that her son will mature through his suffering, and she trusted God's grace with him. Her way to support her children is through prayer, as she believed that God is the source of all supply.

3.2 Reflection from literature

In the previous section, the voices of missionary mothers were heard in terms of MK/Christian boarding issues and the financial condition of the Korean missionary family. This was important in order to understand my co-researchers' particular situations in an alternative manner. Through the deconstructive method, young adult issues were discussed in the interdisciplinary framework of the MK/Christian boarding school, relationships with parents, university education and reentry to Korea, the financial situation of Korean missionary families, language learning, cultural adjustment and identity.

3.2.1 Deconstruction of the stories of MK/Christian boarding school

According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001:232), many adult missionary children face difficulties to come to terms with early separation from their parents for education. Children experienced emotional, mental, physical and spiritual abuse at boarding school, and these caused problems with their relationship with their parents. Children are seriously hurt and their feelings of anger often come out in depression and anxiety, which they cannot share until they become adults. Separation from parents can promote children's independence in a positive way, but it can also negatively shape feelings of insecurity, instability and loneliness (Kim 2006:214). Winnicott (1986) quoted by Fahlberg (1994:133) states that separation from parents of a young child means that his/her whole world collapses and everything is lost. The trauma of loss could be so huge that the child feels helpless in the face of it, and may lead to depression. Separation interferes with the development of a healthy

balance between dependency and autonomy. A child spends his or her energies coping with feelings about separation and loss, and this could interfere with his or her ability to accomplish the primary developmental tasks of this age, which include learning in school, developing friendships, and internalizing values and conscience. In fact, a child cannot handle separation or loss without supportive help. Therefore, it is important to help a child to cope with parental separation (Fahlberg 1994:136). Van Reken (1988:1,4) observed that normally young children cannot share the difficulties they face at boarding school with their parents for various reasons. For instance, children are afraid to disobey God's will for their family, because they know that the Bible says that God requires them to give up family rights that they would normally choose to keep, for His sake and the Gospel. Children also feel unsure of their parents' reaction and whether they will believe their children or believe the teachers and/or staff's justification. There are many other reasons why young children cannot share their problems fully with their parents. Thus, parents need to observe their children's behavior carefully when they display any unusual behavior. If parents find their children seriously upset they need to help them in various ways. It is most important to show genuine care for the child by the warmth and sincerity of the parents' behavior toward him or her. The child needs to develop confidence in the parents' reliability to cope with his or her feelings and behavior. Parents need to be seriously concerned about the environment at the school and see if the children feel safe, respected and valued by teachers and staff, and can gain confidence and develop a positive self-esteem (Gilmours 1988:145).

Above all, as Christians we can help children through God's word, because in the Bible God showed his great love for his children and promised to heal their pain. In his book 'Healing for Damaged Emotions' (Seamands 1986:22), Seamands explains that the consequence of damaged emotions is that people cannot acknowledge their self value. They continually worry, treat themselves as unimportant and have a low self-esteem. People who struggle with damaged emotions have no confidence in God's love and forgiveness. Hope and Dreamer had no conviction about their relationship with God since their emotions were damaged. Reading the Bible and Christian books did not effectively help them to be free from the past and the emotional difficulties they continually experienced. I studied the role of the Holy Spirit

from the book by Seamands (1986:22) in order to understand how Christians may conquer their emotional problems. According to Seamands (1986:22), God our father heals people whose spirit has suffered. The Bible says, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness”³⁹, He is our companion and counselor in order to join in helping in our weakness. In Hebrews, Jesus Christ is described as a high priest and a wonderful counselor.⁴⁰ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to God⁴¹ because he realized the pain of cross. He was abandoned, was mocked by man and was separated from God at the cross. Thus, he can understand our weakness, feelings of pain and fear that come from separation because he experienced it. He is able to understand the problems that affect our emotions. Therefore he does not blame us for our painful emotions, rather, he understands our inner sorrow. He promised that he would send the Holy Spirit⁴² in order to help his people to the very end of the age. As Jesus promised, the Spirit stays with us and helps us also in our painful experiences.⁴³ Therefore, since we recognize God’s plan for us we need to be encouraged by His word. In the Bible, Jeremiah (29:11) reports: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

Since Hope went to a boarding school she had many painful experiences. She believed in her heart and was sure in her mind that she had been forsaken by her parents for their missionary work. Her self-esteem was damaged by the situation and she experienced so much pain and sorrow and anger toward her parents and God through her whole life. Even as a young adult she was controlled by these feelings. She worried that she would not overcome her emotional problems, and that they would affect her for the rest of her life. The input of the missionary mothers of the reflection group on the matter of boarding school helped her to be able to understand the situation of her parents in choosing her schooling option, and to consider her parents’ pain about it. She wanted to forgive her parents and said, “As I think about where all this anger and sorrow of mine came from, the most obvious

³⁹ Psalms 89:21

⁴⁰ Isaiah 9:6

⁴¹ Matthew 26:42

⁴² Matthew 28:20, Acts 1:8

⁴³ Seamands, D A 1999. *Healing of memories*.

source is separation. The key may have something to do with forgiveness. I have to go back and do a good bit of forgiving, especially in the areas where I felt pain, even when it was never intended by those who caused it". A new awareness helped her to stop blaming, made her willing to forgive her parents, and to develop her story towards a better future. She realized that the emotional difficulties from separation described by the missionary mothers were similar to her stories, that she was not such a problem child. In discussions about ideas from Fahlberg, her feelings of self-reproach that came from emotional difficulties, were eased.

Above all, she was strongly impressed by the discussion of the principles of Seamands and the word of God and gained new insight in her emotional difficulties. Before she had listened to these voices, she had no confidence in her own value, worried about her life, and struggled with a low self-esteem. However, in discussions with them she was able to regain hope in Jesus our Lord, and was convinced that her past was forgiven. She was glad to know that God wants to give his grace and forgiveness to her and bore all of her sins in his body on the cross⁴⁴. She was greatly impressed by the life of Jesus and that He had experienced the same feelings of pain, shame, anger and loneliness as she experienced, since He was separated from God, so she knew that she could trust him and that he is able to understand all of her feelings and pain, and will be able to change her life by helping her overcome her suffering. She was surprised to be reminded of the story of Jesus and that He suffered from being separated from His father, God, and how hard He prayed about his pain; she said that she had not thought about this story in a personal way before. Her new awakening to the existence of the Holy Spirit and His influence on His people was a great encouragement to her and strengthened her positive view of her life. She now has hope that she will be released from her emotional problems.

In spite of the knowledge that God wants to give him his grace and forgiveness Dreamer often felt doubt about God's promise of forgiveness and his sense of guilt often caused his relationship to God to waver. However, the suggestion of Seamands (1986:23) that we must forgive ourselves by the grace of God and

⁴⁴ 1 Peter 2:24

accept His forgiveness helped him to gain a better understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. Before he recognized this he was struggling with his doubt about God's forgiveness, but now he was sure that the Holy Spirit would help him to trust God's forgiveness of his sins whenever he doubted God's promise. Instead of doubt he tried to depend on the Holy Spirit. This new self consciousness strengthened his faith in God. His mother taught him that missionary children whose parents pray for them cannot be ruined. Because he knew that his mother was praying for her children, he felt confidence the same confidence his mother had in God.

Challenger could not accept the fact that Jesus required her to forgive people who had caused her unhappiness all her life. She showed feelings of anger against this theory and would not accept it. She could not forget how much unhappiness people had caused her at MK school on the mission field and in the churches and Christian communities in Korea, and how she had suffered tremendously at their hands. She felt that she is not able to forget these painful memories. Why should those wicked people need to be forgiven without any punishment? In her mind, it was unfair to forgive them, even though this is what Jesus wants. I could understand her feelings of anger in her situation and felt sorry for her. Thus, with deep empathy I attempted to ask some questions in order to help her to deconstruct her strong feelings on this matter. I asked her what kind of feelings she had toward those people and what her alternative plan was if she was suffering over these feelings. Moreover, we discussed the fact that a person who cannot forgive others may suffer guilt and anger, and this would cause deep anguish in their soul. This is why Jesus wants us to be set free to love one another and to forgive others their sins. After a while, she told me that she was thinking about what Jesus said, and then made a decision to try to forgive her enemies (people who had hurt her), but was not ready for it yet. It was because she felt so much pain when she thought about them, and she wanted to be free from her painful feelings. Thus, she tried to depend on God who promised her new life. But, it was not easy to forgive all the people. She still finds it difficult to forgive some of the people.

Hope and Challenger had different opinions on the feelings of the first mother, Prayer Warrior, who felt that 'boarding school was a good option for Korean missionary

children for the sake of their parents' ministries'. They questioned the priority of these parents, since God had given them their children. They felt that the first priority of parents is to take care of their children. They also felt that missionary children should not be marginalized for the sake of their parents' ministry. Furthermore, they suggested that before boarding school was chosen, parents must take into account the child's age and temperament, the personality and reputation of the school, how often they will be able to see the child, and whether their child's communication with them will be unhindered.

In my opinion, the first mother, Prayer Warrior, had limited knowledge and understanding of the situation of the Korean missionary children and their negative experiences at boarding school. So, I sent an email to her to ask if she knew of any serious problems of Korean missionary children at boarding school. She was surprised at this question. We discussed this matter more thoroughly and she became more sensitive in her understanding of her children's situation, and arrived at a new insight in the problems many children face at boarding school.

We carefully listened to the opinion of the second mother, Trust, as she explained her child's difficult experiences at boarding school. Then we discussed the schooling option of Korean missionary children. We asked what sort of schooling option would be suitable. Is homeschooling better than boarding school for all the children? We also asked: if there are parents who are unable to homeschool their children and cannot find any school available in their home area that will be suitable for their children, which other options do they have?

3.2.2 Deconstruction of the stories of relationships with parents

Because of their painful experiences at MK/Christian school, my co-researchers had experienced many years of unhappiness. For this they blamed their parents, and it influenced their relationship with their parents in a negative way. My co-researchers often had problems communicating with their parents. They could not understand the attitude of their parents who did not respect their opinions and thoughts, and always wanted to control them in any situation in order to show their authority. My co-

researchers asked why their parents could not understand them fully, and why they were discouraged and hesitant to communicate openly with their parents. One of the main reasons was that my co-researchers and their parents have different views and values on family life.

I studied various publications on the cultural background of the concept of family, in order to gain a better understanding of the influence of family conflict on my co-researchers, and of the characteristics of a healthy functioning missionary family.

3.2.2.1 The cultural background of the family concept in Korean society

According to Olson (1989) quoted by Yoo (2004:28), the western family tends to respect independence of the individual with a view to their personal development. The communication between family members is essential in order to understand each one's interest, and to respect it. For this, free communication, individualism and respect are primary factors among western families.

Korean families place greater value on the family than on the individual, which is different from western families (Kwan 2008:160). The family and its traditions are very important to Korean families, and they value family stability more than change (Yoo 2004:38). According to Shin (1998:128,139), the Korean idea of the family has been influenced by Confucian traditions that place an emphasis on patrilineage, respect of elders, filial piety, and the continuity of the patrilineal family. Shin (1998:146) said that the influence of patrilineage has strong requirements that demand that children obey their parents. As mutual relationships are more important than individualism in Confucianism, the existence of the outside world is categorically different than the sense of self. That is, each person should be concerned about others, and making decisions is a family responsibility. Confucianism also influences the communication between family members. Communication, gratitude and/or the expression of affection is not practiced among family members (Yoo 2004:38).

3.2.2.2 The co-researchers' new perspective of their parents

Because the individual is more respected and valued in western society and the

value of the family is more important than the individual in Korean society (Kwan 2008:160), my co-researchers were able to understand the attitude of their parents and of other Korean elders. They recognized that their parents were strongly influenced by Korean traditions and culture that were formed by Confucian teachings (Kim 2004:61), and their westernized thinking and behaviour could not be accepted by their parents. Hence, the differences between my co-researchers and their parents brought about complications in their relationships. Korean parents often forget that the cultural values and behaviour of their children's teachers and peers have influenced their children far more and in different ways than they expected. "Educating Korean students in a school based on the American values of independence, free speech, and individualism had deeply affected the family's cultural heritage" (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:221).

For a long time, Hope and Dreamer bore a grudge against their parents because of their separation. They had conflicts with their parents due to their parents' attitude of strong authority and narrow mindedness towards their children. During the research sessions, Challenger and Hope repeatedly complained about the fact that their parents did not respect their differences of opinion and their individual inclinations. They demanded obedience of their children to the decisions they made. They often felt angry about this and argued with their parents over specific issues. They judged their parents to be egoistic and narrow minded people. But, by reading other books, my co-researchers acquired a new insight and began to understand the attitude and/or mindset of their parents. They recognized that their parents were not as wrong as their children thought, instead, they understood that their parents' thoughts and values had been shaped by Korean society and culture as they were growing up until they reached middle age. Because of the cultural influence upon them, the parents felt constrained to control their children, and they concentrated on the needs of the family and their benefit rather than the individual desires of family members. Their parents' inability to express love toward their children was influenced by Confucian doctrine. Since the parents were aged between forty and fifty, they found it difficult to express their true feelings towards their children. They were steeped in Korean tradition. My co-researchers have different values and mindsets from their parents, as they grew up on the mission field where they were living in a western

environment. From our discussions, my co-researchers were more able to understand their parents, and they agreed that the differences are not wrong. But that it is important to understand each other's specific views and values, and to accept them, in order to develop a closer relationship.

However, my co-researchers argued that their parents are not followers of Confucian traditions as they are Christians and pastors. They should therefore behave differently, to follow their religious beliefs. They argued that their parents should try to get rid of the influence of Confucian traditions, and need to follow the principles of the Bible faithfully. Their parents should concentrate on understanding their child's values rather than demanding obedience at all times. In this regard, I suggested to them that they share this matter with their parents in order to help their parents to realize the importance of a Christian upbringing rather than following Confucian traditions. My co-researchers agreed with my suggestion and were willing to try it.

Furthermore, my co-researchers and I discussed ways a missionary family can build healthy relationships and a strong family bond. Howing et al. (1993:5) emphasize that a positive and intimate relationship between parents and child is vital to the child's social adjustment and positive sense of self (Mueller 1999:53). I studied various publications on the characteristics of healthy functioning of a missionary family in order to help Korean missionary families to gain a better understanding of this matter and build an intimate relationship with their family members.

3.2.2.3 Building a strong family bond

The following elements are essential to building a strong family bond as adapted from the ideas of Morris (1998:182-189), and Pollock and Van Reken (2001:189-197).

1) Relationship between parents and missionary children

Kim (1999:55) stresses that missionary families are expected to be committed and dedicated to their mission. Missionary children may inherit their parents' sense of mission, yet they often experience deep loneliness and rejection by their parents' dedication to God and their mission. Whether parents were too busy for them, or were physically or emotionally absent, the child has been left with a chronic feeling of

emptiness. Nothing and no one else seems to be able to fill this need (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:147). Many of the missionary children often feel that they are less important than the people of their parents' mission, which is confirmed by the dedication of the parents to the needy people around them. Thus, the relationship between parents and children in a cross-cultural living setup is the most significant factor in determining how the missionary children accept their situation (Andrews 1995:418). According to Pollock and Reken (2001:190), one of the special challenges for parents in a cross-cultural setup is that their children are growing up in a different world compared to the home country where their parents themselves have grown up. The way in which children may feel differently from their parents about the mission field should be taken into consideration. On the mission field they are foreigners, a different race from the local people, speaking a different language that others may not understand. Often this places them under stress, making it difficult to maintain their identity, causing misunderstanding in their school work and miscommunication with peers and teachers. Thus, missionary children need confidence that their family accept them as they are. It is very important that parents notice and understand their children's needs in order to properly and effectively care and continually pray for them (Mathes 2000). People are centered in Korean culture and thus many Korean missionaries are suffering from the dilemma of how to properly manage their time and bring about a proper balance between other missionaries and their own families. The children often have no hope of getting their parents' attention regarding their emotional and physical needs. Hence, Korean missionary parents need to set aside specific times for their family to spend together.

2) Relationship between the missionary father and his children

According to the research of ICHED, "the absent father is one of the biggest issues in the missionary family" (Purnell 2005). In many cases, a father often leaves home for ministry and this causes problems with the children. The absent father in foreign countries causes families to feel insecure and unstable. I know a Korean missionary family who has experienced several robberies at their home since they came to the mission field. Their experiences were terrifying. Crime is very high in that country, so the family has experienced tension in this social situation and always feels afraid. But, the father in that family travels to other countries for ministry and is not often at

home. He rarely comes home and when he is at home, he is too busy to spend enough time with his children. His children have the conception that their father does not want to take care of them, and they feel insecure. Dobson (2001:72) stresses that the role of the father is essential for dealing with the children's emotions in difficult situations. Cunningham and Rogers (1992:30) argue that a father's attitude toward his children is so important, even if he absent often because of his work. If children know their father loves them, affirms this love to his children, and is attentive to his children's needs, then to be always with them is not the only answer. Hence, missionary parents need to think about their priorities are and develop a balance between their ministry and their children. Only then children may feel stability and security in foreign countries (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:193-194).

Providing strong protection

Back (1988:1) discovered that many missionaries go overseas when their children are still very young. In any new place, the parents are often so busy trying to settle in and adapt to the new culture, being so involved and busy that the children may not receive the attention they need from their parents. This is not only applicable to young children, but also applicable to all other age groups. For this reason, many missionary children are separated from their parents from the very beginning of their settling in process, which is also very often not understood by others. Often, most of the parents do not realize how vulnerable their children may feel or be in these situations. Parents need to keep clear open lines of communication with their children, and need to teach their children concepts of personal safety. Pollock and Reken (2001:193) stress these important facts saying, "Children need to know beyond all doubt that their parents love them enough to protect them from unnecessary hurt or harm and that Mom and Dad will be available to comfort and console them when painful times are unavoidable".

Therefore, parents need to understand their children well enough and be sensitive to their children's feelings, to provide physical and psychological safety and security, as it is a basic parental task to care for the young child. The importance of this gradually diminishes as the young person becomes more capable and self-reliant. Parents need to build a strong protective base for their children (Fahlberg 1994:17,145). The concept of protection applies to a much wider range of aspects of the child's health,

well-being, growth and development (Kay 2001:84).

A child's view of the parents' ministry and its spiritual value

Many missionary children say that they feel proud of their parents' ministries, which can be beneficial to people on mission fields. In this way, children may feel a sense of ownership and of significance themselves. Pollock and Van Reken (2001:196) emphasize that parents who feel and act positively toward their situation and the people of the host country with whom they are working, communicate that attitude to their children. It is important for missionary children to have a deep personal faith and a stable set of values. If the children are aware of the fact that there is a stable spiritual core of faith in their parents' lives and in the life of the family as a whole, children will usually have a strong spiritual foundation in their own lives (Pollock & Reken 2001:197). According to Dobson (2001:303), most children make a decision to believe in Christ, prior to the age of twelve years. Thus, missionary parents need to help their children to have a truly positive spiritual core of faith and to grow spiritually from a very young age.

The above evaluations are described as the basic guidelines for the healthy functioning of a missionary family to create a strong family bond on the mission field. Hope, Dreamer and Challenger were deeply impressed by the new insight which they gained during the discussions and felt sorry that they had not received this kind of caring from their parents while they were growing up on the mission field where they felt insecure, and struggled. They were wondering how different their lives would have been if they had received real care and understanding of their suffering. As a result of their experiences, they suggested that there should be an orientation course for Korean missionary children to give information about the field, and/or to provide them with counseling.

Jeon (2006:57) emphasizes that a strong family bond would provide stability among family members and this will be a strong base to enhance their self-confidence. It will enable children to become leaders who can overcome difficulties in a dignified manner.

3.2.3 Deconstruction of the stories of university education and reentry

In this section, I will discuss the co-researchers' experiences of university education at universities in Korea and western countries, and issues of reentry.

3.2.3.1 University education

1) The influence on the Korean missionary family by the social atmosphere on the education in Korea.

Most Korean missionary parents have high expectations for their children's education because the social demands concerning education takes high priority in the thinking of the Korean people. They consider a high standard of education to be the way to success in the life of their children. Thus, Korean parents put all their efforts into educating their children to send them to top universities. The social atmosphere in Korea also influences Korean missionary parents and thus they tend to follow this tendency for their children's education on the mission field. This causes Korean missionary families to use a lot of energy for their children's education (Park 2002:38).

2) The difficult choice: to take advantages in Korea or in a western country

According to Back (2007:1), a tendency has arisen among Korean missionary children to change from Western to Korean universities. The following are reasons why Korean missionary parents prefer to send their children to universities in Korea. Since 1997 special admission allowances have been made and this opened more possibilities for children to enter universities in Korea. With worldwide economic depression growing, Korean missionary children have to consider university education in Korea instead of in a western country. Missionary parents consider it an advantage for their children to gain a better understanding of Korean society and culture by studying at a Korean university. They may build good relationships with Koreans that may be useful in future. The children's Korean identity will be established during their time at university in Korea, and this may lead to the possibility of the children's future settling in Korea (Jung 1999:32).

However, most of my co-researchers argued against the above opinion. Hope, Dreamer and Challenger, who had studied at a university in America, realized that the educational expenses between universities in Korea and those in America where they had studied were not so different. Dreamer received a scholarship at the college and knew that there are more possibilities for missionary children to obtain scholarships at Christian colleges in America than in Korea. Hope, Dreamer and Challenger had different opinions on the ideas of shaping their identities as Koreans. They argued that at present, Korean missionary children have various possibilities to experience Korean culture and society and to choose an occupation or work in Korea, and this will help them to gain a better understanding of Korea.

Visionary was satisfied with her past two years at university in Korea and agreed with Jung that there are many advantages to studying at a university in Korea. She thought that with these advantages she was able to accomplish her first purpose during the second year. But recently she discovered serious differences between herself and the other university students. She felt more stressed in Korea in spite of her satisfaction with her studies. She realized that missionary children whose Korean is insufficient may suffer in their studies because the lectures are mostly offered in Korean. She is able to take a specific course in English at the university, but this is unusual. The other co-researchers argued that studying in America have more advantages to develop broader thinking and a globalized perspective, to experience western culture and customs, and to get to know the people. They could also make contact with Korean churches in America that offer support to missionary children. They suggested that personal character and preference of university options must be seriously considered, as they see the idea of 'one-size-fits' is not appropriate for all.

A large number of Korean people criticize the special admission allowance. They feel this to be preferential treatment. The system of special admission allowance for university entrance has recently been complicated and this system may be more stringent in future (<http://www.k.daum.net/qna/view>). This new attitude towards the special admission for university entrance will influence Korean missionary children in future.

In order to take into consideration these diverse cases, Korean missionary parents

and/or mission agencies need to be open minded instead of persisting in preconceived ideas concerning university education. Alternative options are needed.

Challenger and Hope wanted to do further study in America in future, but their parents did not agree with their plans on account of their financial situation and the advantages that children may have in Korea. The children struggled to present their plans and to persuade their parents. The view of their parents influenced them and made them uncertain about whether to study further or to find employment. But by comparing the advantages of further study in Korea or America, they chose America, and found reasonable reasons to persuade their parents.

3.2.3.2 Reentry

A missionary family may return to their home country for various reasons such as furlough, family functions, health problems and their children's education and military service. A culture shock often strikes once the children go back to their country of origin. Going home for missionary children is not the same as going home for their parents (Bowers 1998:47). Children experience stress during this transition to their home culture. Parents must not forget that their children may have a shock when they return to their home country, and to give them extra attention and care (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:245).

1) The reasons why reentry is so hard.

There are various reasons that missionary children face difficulties at the period of reentry to Korea. The children and the people of the home culture have unconscious expectations. The people expect the same from missionary children and the children at home, because they have the same racial, ethnic and national background as those that are at home. The children are often expected to be the same, but finally, they realize they are "different" (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:245). Missionary children expect so much when they go back to their home country, but the country may look very different from what they think. The missionary children and their peers at home do no longer share a common worldview, because their life experiences have been totally different. People in the Christian community (church and/or mission agency)

have high expectations of missionary children's Christian faith. In general, these children are seen by church members in Korea as "little missionaries" and are expected to be a good example to other children. This places too much pressure on the missionary children. For some missionary children this period of reentry is a dangerous time, as they might be negatively influenced by their peers. They may still find that for all their external adaptation, something still does not fit and they believe this something will never change. They are really struggling to fit in at initial reentry (2001:246-248). In this regard, the missionary children need special 'pre-departure reentry preparation' while they are still on the mission field (Park 1999:114-115). Parents need to give special care to the children and to help them towards successful adjustment during the time of reentry. Pollock and Reken (2001:188) emphasize that missionary "parents must never sacrifice their children" in making a cross-cultural move for reentry. Parents need to consider their children's level of education, especially the grade they completed and its importance (2001:188). At least the last two years of high school should not be disrupted. Most of the missionary children want to spend their last year with their friends, in order to graduate with them. They also need their parents' support during the first year of college to help them to settle (Anon 2005).

2) Effective ways to help missionary children with reentry

Park (1999:113) suggests some of the following guidelines towards helping missionary children at reentry to the country of their new residence: (a) Take time to discuss certain information about the new home country's culture, social, political issues, mass media, sports and fashion of peer groups. (b) Inform them and help them to get to know how to engage in proper relationships with elders, families and peers. (c) Teach them about different school systems and school culture. (d) Develop practical skills to adapt to the new home country's transport, currency, shopping, and geography.

Powell (1998:110) says that good reentry adjustment is not an event, but it is a process encompassing the life of the cross-cultural sojourner. The inputs of family, school and Christian community have structured the missionary children's perspective regarding God, as well as keys towards adjustment regarding him- or herself. If care is to be made available to all the missionary children, there must be a

certain concentrated effort by parents to take initiative to prepare the way and encourage their children to take advantage of available services (1998:110). Pollock and Reken (2001: 254) emphasize that “it is the parents’ responsibility to make sure their children are protected under their supervision” (2001:255).

In general, it is culturally difficult for Korean missionaries going back to Korea to support their children during their time of reentry to adjust to high school and/or university education, due to the fact that most of the churches and mission agencies in Korea do not have a good understanding of the missionary children’s need of their parents’ support during this time (Park 1999:63). Recently MKNEST⁴⁵ and the Han Dong Global University⁴⁶ have started regular meetings⁴⁷ for Korean young adult missionary children to help each other (Park 1999:44). There are few hostels⁴⁸ that offer accommodation to reentry children, although there are not enough for everyone. For this reason, some of churches and mission agencies in Korea are concerned to establish more hostels for Korean young adult missionary children (Kidok Shinmun 2008.8.13).

3) The co-researchers’ new perspective

Challenger could not understand why people in the Christian community were prejudiced against her and criticized her. Through our conversation, she understood people’s expectations of missionary children, and that people in the Christian community may be disappointed with the children’s different attitude from what they expected. Yet, she strongly felt that people were too narrow minded to understand missionary children. They were quick to judge the children by their standards instead of considering the children’s specific situation. She said that she could not understand why children were called “little missionaries”. It is an unacceptable title for young children. She said that most missionary children a great burden to be called that. How can children show their faith to people while they are young? However, in spite of her feelings against this attitude, she was glad to know people’s

⁴⁵ MKNEST is established based on the vision of Helping Korean missionary children through Networking, Educating, Supporting and Training ministry. (<http://www.mknest.org>)

⁴⁶ Hang Dong Global University was established in Korea in 1995 with a vision of world change, global education of 21 century leaders for Korea and the world. (<http://www.han.ac.kr>)

⁴⁷ There are regular meetings for Korean missionary children at Han Dong Global University and in Seoul.

⁴⁸ For the past few years, some Korean churches and mission agencies have established hostels for Korean young adult missionary children who reenter Korea for education.

thoughts and expectations of missionary children. She felt a bit more at ease with the fact she was not the only one to be criticized, but that other children experienced the same. She agreed with the guidelines towards helping Korean missionary children at the reentry stage. Dreamer showed great interest in this matter and emphasized the need for careful handling of children who were reentering a culture, as it is vital for them to adjust in Korea. In his opinion children will not succeed in adjusting to their home country without careful attention, without which they will get into trouble the same way as he did. He thought that the MK hostel was a good option to care for children, as long as there is a special program in place to help children cope with their emotional difficulties and proper adjustment to Korea.

3.2.4 Deconstruction of the stories about the financial concerns of Korean missionary families

Many Korean missionary parents face difficulties to finance their children's education. They need financial support not only for their salaries and work funds, but also for their children's education (Oh 2008:167). Their financial concerns were the main issue among the Korean missionaries in Southern Africa as shown in the results of Oh's questionnaire (2008:169). According to his statistics the most important personal problems among Korean missionaries in Southern Africa were financial concerns. They had financial difficulties to support their children for university education in Western countries, for example, America and Britain (Jae 2002:16). Recently it escalated with the stronger UK Pound and the US Dollar against the Korean Won. It affects the life of missionary families and their ministry who have to use a large percentage of their available funds for their children's education (Interviewed Huh 2008.7.10).

Korean churches and mission agencies need to allow support to be raised for the education of Korean missionary children. Some mission agencies in Korea have a good support system for the educational expenses of their member's children. The

Paul Mission International⁴⁹ has a good support system for the education of their member's children to help with educational expenses by providing a loan up to university level. SIM International provided subsidy for SIM missionary children for educational expenses for many years, but could not provide any tuition costs for SIM missionary children in 2010 because of the shortage of funds (www.sim.org). In spite it, it is SIM's priority that their member's children receive as good a quality of education as possible, because they value their children and wants them to succeed to wherever God calls them in life. A good long term goal for Korean churches and mission agencies will be to raise funds for an education subsidy to support the education of Korean missionary children.

Dreamer struggled financially, but took on a part time work to supplement his funds. By listening to his mother he came to a better understanding that the financial situation of his family was not his concern. He realized that his parents wanted him to focus on his studies to secure his future, instead of being involved in many things. He was impressed by his mother's concern, and she convinced him that God is the source of all supply. With this new perspective he was able to depend more on God for His help in all aspects of his life. He was encouraged to seek God's help in every situation. Yet, he decided to refund his educational expenses to his parents when he starts earning after graduation, because he was aware that missionary parents are suffering financially most of the time.

Despite her hard work at her studies, Visionary often felt ostracized by other students who came from a rich family background. This led to her low self-esteem and feelings of loneliness. She felt that her life in Korea was becoming too difficult. In order to help her in her emotional difficulty I emailed her encouraging words from a Christian book and a summary of the other co-researchers' interpretations of their financial issues. She realized that most Korean missionary children have similar problems and felt affiliated to them. She was especially encouraged by Dreamer's mother's assurance that God is the source of all supply. This comforted her and she was encouraged to patiently accomplish her purpose at university.

Moreover, she was challenged by the other co-researchers as she learned that the

⁴⁹ The Paul Mission International: www.bauri.org

academic level and educational environment in America is better than in Korea, and that educational expenses at a university in America is similar to that in Korea. Thus, she decided to attend university in America for further studies for a better future, even though it may be financially difficult.

3.2.5 Deconstruction of the stories about language learning, cultural adjustment and Identity

3.2.5.1 Language learning

Haag (2005:2) indicates that learning another language and culture overseas during childhood is a great benefit to open up many career opportunities for the future. Speaking two or more different languages brings many positive cognitive benefits. To learn another language and culture is often not sufficient to develop high-level language skills, but parents and teachers can motivate and provide a structure that will help children benefit more fully. On the other hand there is today a universal recognition of the importance of mother tongue education as well as multilingualism. The children who are fluent in their mother tongue are able to return to their home countries for further education and settle down more easily (Pollock & Van Reken 2001:222). On the other hand, learning a national/local language promote intimate relationships with the local people and their culture. In this regard, missionary children are challenged to be conversant in both their mother tongue and the national/local language in view of its many benefits.

In spite of the great advantages children often experience difficulties learning a language. Older children struggle more than younger children in this regard. Because of mistakes and limited language ability they often feel stupid in the new culture (Hiebert 1987:81). According to William Smalley (1978:698) quoted by Hiebert (1987:82), people who are learning a new language feel insecure and discouraged when others mock them. To master a new language needs patience until the goal is reached.

Faithful tried to learn English from the time he arrived on the mission field at the age of sixteen. In spite of his effort he still has difficulty with the English in academic study. Hope and Challenger are conversant in English as they entered to the mission field at the age of six. Visionary studied hard to learn the local official language which was used at the school as well as learning English, but she did not manage the local language, except for some simple sentences even though she understood the grammar and vocabulary. Dreamer struggled with language learning while he was growing up on the mission field, and he had no desire to learn the complicated language. He found it stressful to learn Korean, English, French and the nation/local language at the same time. It affected his self-esteem as he could not speak any of the languages fluently even though he became a university student. As I discovered the different attitudes and results of language learning among the co-researchers I recognized that children's age should be taken into consideration. In order to gain a better understanding of language learning I cite the description of Haag and the data of ICHED.

Haag (2005:2) described that in language learning certain ages are better for certain things than others. Younger children pick up a language without a foreign accent. College-level students learn vocabulary more easily. Adults understand the grammar. ICHED provides the following data concerning the speed children acquire a second language according to their academic level (Haag 1999:1):

A child can sound like a native speaker of his or her second language yet not be able to function cognitively at the same level. This is a caution for those considering using a second language as the main vehicle for education. It takes one to two years for a 5 or 6 years old child to reach the speaking level of a native speaker. But, it takes five to seven years to reach the native speakers' cognitive, academic, learning-proficiency level or ability to function cognitively like native-speaking peers. The older a child is when he starts learning the second language, the longer it takes to reach those levels of competency.

By reading the data and through discussion with other disciplines, I was beginning to understand the situation of my co-researchers more clearly. The results of the process of language learning were universal. The situations of Dreamer and Faithful were not unique. My co-researchers' reaction to this work was interesting.

Faithful said that he felt happier since he read the data as he recognized that his struggle with English was natural, due to the age at which he moved to the mission field, he was able to understand why his academic standard of English did not improve to the level of the local children. Instead of being stressed, he decided to make an effort to learn English progressively. Hope has been challenged to learn Korean as she recognizes the importance of her mother tongue for her future. Dreamer made up his mind to concentrate on learning English and French, since those are valuable for his studies at university and for further studies. He realized that he had been lazy in this matter. My co-researchers were challenged to new aspirations to overcome their problems of language learning. They were motivated to learn languages even though they realized that learning a new language is not easy at their age.

3.2.5.2 Cultural adjustment

According to Hiebert (1987:76), people create various cultures and each culture is unique in its specific context. People eat different foods, build different kinds of houses, speak different languages and greet in different ways. People understand the world through their own culture and this often causes trouble between cultures. Missionaries have to learn to adjust to other cultures. Usually all missionaries experience stress as they settle down on the mission field. They are often confused about their value when they enter a new culture. Cultural adjustment to the new society and culture on the mission field is one of the requirements from the missionary family in order to be successful in their ministry and family life. Missionary parents and children need to accept that they are human and expect cultural troubles to pass with time. Hiebert (1987:95) suggests that positive thinking and attitude is essential in terms of adjusting to the new culture. Lingenfelter and Mayers (1986:81) challenge missionary families to set it as their goal to build up the unity and fellowship of the body of Christ. To achieve that goal, they have to consider other cultures better than theirs and learn to think as they do.

Korean children experience more difficulties than western children with cultural adjustment on the mission field. Sung (2006:33) states the following reasons:

western people are familiar with multicultural environments because they have more readily contact with other cultures in their countries. Korean people are unfamiliar with such a situation. They are used to a single culture and a single language, and are proud of it. Therefore Korean missionaries find it difficult to overcome cultural prejudice on the mission field, and this has an influence on their children (Vlemincks & Smeeding 2001:151).

As well as their problems in terms of adjustment to the local culture, most of my co-researchers were confused how to cope with differences between Korean culture and Western culture. They often have problems to communicate with the local people because of misunderstanding western culture. They sometimes feel uncomfortable to express their opinions freely to older people because it is not acceptable in Korean culture where they come from. On the other hand, they are rebuked by their parents for their western attitudes. This causes confusion in their behaviour among different cultures and they often feel angry with their parents and the local people who do not understand their confusion. However, through our discussions they were able to understand that the complication was common among Korean children. Positive thinking and attitude is essential to adjust to the new culture. The suggestion by Lingenfelter and Mayers (1986:81) that missionary families should consider the local culture better than the Korean culture and learn to think as the local people do, in order to build good relationships with them, motivated my co-researchers to reconsider their attitude to the local culture. It prompted them to have a more positive view of the local culture. However, the prejudice that my co-researchers experienced on the mission field from the local people and the western people had a bad influence upon them, and negatively affected their self-esteem. The social environment influences the way children are treated in different societies, and it affects the quality of children's lives (Rust 1989:7). According to Rust (1989:7), "racism interferes with the normal development of children subjected to it. It hampers their ability to function at their full potential as children, and later as adults." It aggravates their social problems, diminishes their human resources, and impedes intergroup relationships. It promotes harmful assumptions which interfere with the development and functioning of the minority-group children. Racism cumburs child development (Rust 1989:16). Children who have experienced racism fail to

recognize their worth as human beings equal to others. They are especially disadvantaged in racist societies which label them as unequal in every respect and discriminate against those with different nationalities. As Rust (1989:16) says, the co-researchers could not recognize their worth as equals of the western children. Even when they became young adults this still affected some of them. With low self-esteem and the struggle with their identity, they had no confidence in being Korean. Thus, in order to address their feelings of confusion and to help them build a positive self-esteem, we discussed the identity issues as follows.

3.2.5.3 Identity issues

What is the meaning of identity? Kim (1999:77) explains that self-identity is formed by connecting the past, the present, the environment one lives in and what will happen in the future, to identify oneself as a 'unique self'. In general, missionary children are known as rootless, in pain, and that they struggle with their identity. My co-researchers said that they were unstable for most of their lives. Challenger was not sure to which country she belonged, whether to Africa, Korea or America. She felt that Korea is the home of her parents, but not hers. She agreed that missionary children are rootless. According to Olson (1984:27), they have "To develop a sense of personal identity that consistently establishes who he or she is as an integrated individual throughout each life role." Hence, it is important for Korean missionary children to establish their identities and understand who they are. With this knowledge they will be able to adjust to Korea and other countries (Park 1992:93). Actually, the Korea KWMA (1993) defined the purpose of education for Korean missionary children to be citizens of God, citizens of the world, and citizens of Korea. Since the definition was proclaimed by mission agencies and missionaries in Korea, they have tried to help Korean missionary children to establish these identities. In order to gain a better understanding of how Korean missionary children identify themselves, I will cite various definitions of identity from a book⁵⁰ written by Korean missionary children:

⁵⁰ Korean Missionary Children, 2007.

- It is like torture to go back to Korea every four years. It is true that there are more possibilities in Korea to do many things, eat delicious food and have more freedom. However, I don't like to live there, it's hard for me... When I return to Russia and lie down in my bed, I feel comfortable and happy, and recognize that my home is here in this country.
- I am 30 % Korean, 30 % Philipino and 30 % American. Korea is my passport country, but I am not the same as Koreans. The inner part of me is very different from Koreans even though my outward appearance is the same as they are. "Who am I?"
- I am more familiar with Chinese culture and customs because I have been living in China for fifteen years. People recognize me as Chinese because my language, the color of skin and outward appearance may be the same as Chinese. Yet, I like to be known as "Korean".
- It is true that our identity is important for MKs, but it is more important to be spiritually mature than to acknowledge our uniqueness... I am no longer bound by the question of 'who am I?' I am happy the way I am, confused at times, but still certain of my own unique identity. I am a MK. I may never feel that I belong to any country or culture, but I am sure of myself and what helps me to have this mindset is that there are others who have very similar lives.

As the children expressed themselves above, Korean missionary children in many cases do not identify themselves as either Korean or citizens of the mission country in which they grew up, but rather as of both. Some agonize about this issue and some have overcome it. The last child said that he has lost his identity as he may never feel that he belongs to any country or culture, but he is certain of his own unique identity as an MK. But instead of his unique identity as an MK, he emphasized the importance of being spiritually mature.

Dreamer identified himself as a Christian and was satisfied with this position. He said that it is not very important whether he belongs to Korea or any other country. In his opinion, to establish their identity as Koreans is not very important to Korean missionary children. He rather emphasized that personal experience of God's existence is vital for missionary children to find a dream for life. With their vision of God his children can find the meaning of life, and put in all their efforts to accomplish their life purpose. He emphasized that Korean missionary children need to have a broad mind, beyond their limited thoughts as Koreans in order to accomplish their vision in the world.

Challenger and Hope were confused about their identity since they moved to the mission field. Neither of them was comfortable with their Korean identity as a result of their experiences of racism and its social atmosphere. They sometimes wished they were western. But from reading other books they were helped to have a new consciousness of their identity. Challenger ultimately identified herself by saying, “I am neither Korean nor American. I am a citizen of heaven”. Since she was able to identify herself as ‘a citizen of heaven’, she no longer struggles with her identity, but in this knowledge she developed a sense of security.

The social atmosphere in Korea influenced Visionary in such a way that she was able to change her view of Korean society. She recognized that Korean people are in eager pursuit of their goals and liked to see people work hard. These days there are lots of foreigners in Korea and they are fascinated by Korean culture, social stability, and economic development. She became proud of Korea when she found many positives in the country, and enjoys its environment. Yet, sometimes she struggled in Korea and missed South Africa. Even though she had suffered racial discrimination in that country she missed its slow going atmosphere. After reading publications and discussions with other Korean missionary children, she recognized that she was more comfortable with her identity as a Christian than as a Korean or South African. Nationality did not matter to her anymore.

Most of the co-researchers recognized their identity as “Christian” and/or “citizens of heaven”. They said where they belong is not really important since they found their existence in God. They were comfortable with the fact that their home is in heaven. This new perspective gave them confidence no matter which culture or cultures they may have to live in. They felt secure with this new position. Müller (2005:6) said that the narrative approach might focus on building a fuller picture of the plot development. However, I was aware that something was missing in terms of describing the identity of my co-researchers. Since they feel secure with their identity as “Citizens of God” and/or “Children of God”, the idea of being “citizens of Korea” and “citizens of the World” that are emphasized by missionaries and mission agencies in Korea still need to be discussed. Arnett (2000:473) explains that most identity exploration takes place at the time of young adulthood. In this sense, there is

a possibility that my co-researchers may build their identity as “citizens of Korea” in the future. However, they were not concerned about this matter since they had found security in their position as “children of God”.

In order to gain a better understanding young adulthood, I will describe its features.

3.2.6 Deconstruction of the stories about young adult issues

The co-researchers are between 20 and 23 of age, the period of young adulthood. It was obvious that they were concerned with the issues of university education, careers, occupations, marriage and the future. Challenger put all of her energy into preparing for the future, so she worked hard to build up her career. She said that her career was the most important issue at that moment, but finding possibilities for volunteer work were difficult. In the same way, most of my co-researchers were concerned about their careers and marriage, so they worked hard to prepare for the future. Yet, they still need to make the decision of which career to choose, which country they should go to in future, and whom they should marry. Furthermore, the obligatory military service in Korea is of great concern to the young men.

Arnett (2000:469) focused on people between the ages of 18 and 25 and identified it as an ‘emerging adulthood’. This period is neither adolescence nor adulthood but is theoretically and empirically distinguished by relative independence from social roles and from normative expectations. Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, they have not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood. Chisholm and Hurrelmann (1995) citing Arnett (2000:469) state that for most young people the years from the late teens through the twenties are years of profound change and importance. A key feature of emerging adulthood is that it is the period of life that offers the most opportunities for identity explorations in the areas of love, work and worldviews. Most identity exploration takes place during this period, and identity formation involves trying out various life possibilities and gradually moving toward making enduring decisions (Arnett 2000:472-473). Emerging adults are still in the process of obtaining education and training for a long-term adult occupation. This period is the age of possibilities, many different potential

futures remain possible, and personal freedom and exploration are higher valued than at any other time by most people. For most people, this period is the most volitional years of life.

My co-researchers suggested that young adult missionary children need motivation and guidance in order to find their potential capacities and to develop them for the future. I recognized that young adult missionary children desperately need guidelines in order to prepare for their future. They lack information concerning careers and opportunities. They do not have enough information to choose a career because their knowledge was limited by living in under developed countries. Their struggle is common to that of other children in this period. Most of them find particularly difficult to handle the requirements of this period. Some of the problems my co-researchers faced were related to the age of emerging adulthood. Hence, the situations may change when they achieve a more stable social position. There are possibilities for them to be English teachers at English institutes and/or at government schools in Korea. Since the Korean government strengthened the English education system for Korean children of school age, numbers of English teachers are needed, especially from overseas where English is spoken as an official language. Korean missionary children who are educated in English and speak it fluently are welcomed as English teachers. This is an opportunity for Korean missionary children to starting a career until they find a career that suits them. They can use this opportunity to save money for further studies. Besides English, fluency in Chinese, French and Spanish, as well as Korean is a great advantage for job opportunities and university admission. Korean young adult missionary children have many opportunities for a better future. In considering this, my co-researchers were able to change their view of their position from uncertainly struggling to a period of potential. Morgan (2000:52) insists that the dominant ideas and beliefs that support the problem become visible when they are exposed and discussed, and people have been challenged to stand up problem. If this becomes significant to the person, it is a unique outcome, and this is a doorway to open possibilities for the discovery of alternative stories (Morgan 2000:52). The new meanings of the stories were discovered on young adult issues through discussion of literature related to the problems. Thus, the co-researchers remained curious about their own progress.

Müller (2001:11) avers that “The research process is not only about storytelling, but also about story development”. “We relate to our world epistemically only through the mediation of interpreted experience, and in this sense it may be said that theology and the sciences offer alternative interpretations of our experience... the rational agent’s self-conception and self-awareness is indeed an indispensable starting point for any account of the values that shape human rationality.” In the notion of the postfoundationalist theory of practical theology, it is important that each individual person interpret their experience in meaningful constructions (LeRon Shults 2006: 89).

4 SUMMARY

In this chapter the influences of traditions of interpretation on my co-researchers were discussed from the collaboration with them, and alternative interpretations on their traditions emerged through interdisciplinary conversation.

The following are the issues that were discussed with other disciplines on the traditions of interpretation: For the MK/Christian boarding school issues, the guidelines for healthy family relationships and strong family bonds were discussed in connection to separation difficulties and relationships. The important role of the missionary father emerged. In the case of University education and reentry, I first studied the social atmosphere of education in Korea and its influence on the Korean missionary families, and then the tendency of universities in recent years to make comparisons between Korea and western countries. The difficulties that arose from reentry into Korea were discussed as well as guidelines for taking care of Korean missionary children. I looked at the financial difficulties that the Korean missionaries were experiencing in connection with their children’s education, and used Paul Mission International and SIM International’s educational policies as examples of how the Korean churches and mission agencies should assist these missionaries. On language learning, cultural adjustment and identity, the importance of learning the languages used on the mission field, as well as cultural adjustments, the missionaries’ attitudes towards these things, as well as the importance of

bilingualism and multiculturalism was discussed. When it came to young adult issues, I used articles on ‘emerging adulthood’ by Arnett (2000:469) as a foundation for my research on the features of young adults. I also looked at the employment issues of missionary children resulting from Korea’s recent tendency to study English, with the need for more English teachers. The reflection of my co-researchers upon the discussion was included in the previous sections.

The co-researchers were able to gain a better understanding of their stories from different perspectives through alternative discussions with various disciplines and could attempt to reconstruct their stories toward a better future. According to Müller (2005:11), this new understanding of narrative should be different from the outdated generalization. “It is rather a case of doing contextual research with such integrity that it will have possibilities for broader application.”

In the next chapter, the reflections of the co-researchers upon the alternative interpretations that emerged will be described.

CHAPTER 6

DREAMING THE FUTURE STORY

1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, I studied the definition and characteristics of missionary children, the state of the education of Korean missionary children from the historical background to the present condition, and discussed the research problem. In chapter two the research paradigm and methodology were examined. In chapter three the educational issues of Korean missionary children were studied from various publications. In chapter four my co-researchers' narratives were presented from the collaboration with them. In chapter five the co-researchers' retelling of their stories were described by deconstructive conversation and the alternative interpretations emerged through the interdisciplinary discussion.

At the beginning of this research, I was aware that the co-researchers were discouraged by their problems and were anxious about the uncertainty of their future. They seemed hopeless. Thus, I tried to concentrate listening to their unheard stories. Through the research process their marginalized stories were told, and by telling and retelling their stories the co-researchers were empowered to understand and to give meaning to their situation. According to Demasure and Müller (2006:8), "Marginalized voices can then be given a chance and shed a light on alternative stories." Narrative intervention is an integral part of the research process. "The aim is, through this research process, to empower the powerless." (Müller & Schoeman 2004:8). Through this narrative research process my co-researchers were lead to understanding and empowerment, and they developed new meanings for their preferred stories for the future. Morgan (2000) avers that "The role of researcher is to assist people to break from thin conclusions and to re-author new and preferred stories for their lives."

In this chapter, the reflections of the co-researchers on the alternative interpretations that emerged will be described in the form of their development of their individual stories.

2 THE ALTERNATIVE STORIES OF CHILDREN

2.1 The preferred stories of Hope

2.1.1 Renewed identity as God's new creation

Hope suffered from emotional difficulties during her whole life, especially with feelings of instability and isolation, which caused her not to be concerned about her present occupation or her future. They caused her to wander. Since the hidden existence of Hope emerged as an 'unstable girl' through deconstructive conversation, she identified her hidden power of hope, which brought a different view on her problems. From this new view, she was able to find new self dignity. Müller (1999) states that the narrative approach does not come with pretence of powerful possibilities; rather, narrative researchers continuously search for the hidden potential of a solution.

Moreover, she was stimulated by reading and discussing ideas from Seamands (1986:22) that God heals people whose spirit is suffering in pain. She was also enlightened to the Spirit and Jesus Christ's understanding of our weakness, feelings of pain and fear from separation, because Jesus had experienced it Himself. The fact that Jesus understands the problems that cause our emotions, encouraged her greatly. Before she recognized this truth, she had no hope that her emotional difficulties would vanish. She worried about her problematic life. With new hope, she tried to find ways to cope with the problems. She wrote letters to the people who had caused her life-long unhappiness. She asked why she had been the object of their abuse, and expressed her anger against them. She was weeping and crying while she read these letters. She drew meaningful pictures to express her unresolved grief. She spent several days expressing her painful memories and emotions toward those people and obtained relief and freedom from the past restrictions. Morgan (2000:98) explains that drawing pictures can assist people to stay connected to an emerging alternative story. I agree that Hope's specific experiences of drawing pictures and writing letters made a significant contribution towards expressing her lifelong hidden feelings and thoughts, and she has

sustained the positive developments through these discussions, letters and pictures to make meaningful breakthroughs a better future. A new perspective was gained through this work and she held on to God's promises to solve her problems. She felt more stable with God's comfort and came to love this verse from the Bible, "Perfect love casts out fear"⁵¹. White and Epston (1990:16) explain that people can be invited to ascribe meaning to themselves when unique outcomes are identified. This new meaning will, quite obviously, be different from the previous meaning, and from this new meaning, an alternative story develops, which we can be used to create a better future.

Hope was encouraged by God's words in Isaiah 61:1-4, while she was reading the Bible. In her mind, she believed that God gave her those verses to help her to think about her existence in a different way. So, I asked her if she could interpret the meaning of those verses in her present situation, and she explained that God wanted to rebuild and renew her ruined self that had been devastated. Through these words, she was extremely encouraged that God really wanted her restored and renewed from past and present wounds to become a new creature. Instead of being bound by the past experiences, and struggling in the present, she saw herself from God's point of view through Isaiah 61:1-4. She could have hope in God's promise for her in spite of feelings of depression and instability.

However, she often struggled with negative feelings that caused her to lose her positive perspective toward her future. The past experiences often caused her to lose confidence in her thinking. She said, "When I read the Bible it reminds me of His promises so I feel free from my past and worry goes away. But when I only think of myself as a human being I become worried." However, she realized that the pictures of her past were getting faint since she had opened her mind to share her problems with me and had written the letters to those who distressed her in the past and by drawing the pictures she recognized that the problems were not as strong as before. Yet, she often forgot those verses and fell back into her feelings of depression in spite of realizing that God's promise to her from the Bible gave her power. Thus, we made the decision that she would read those verses daily in order to keep God's promise continually in her mind. She recognized that this helped her to remember

⁵¹ 1John 4:18

God's encouragement. Furthermore, we tried to read those verses together at each of our interview sessions. She seemed more comfortable and was encouraged by doing it. Thus, Hope tended to read those verses before each session ended and I was aware that her voice was wavering while she was reading them. After reading the Bible, I suggested that we pray together to seek God's help to give His real comfort and peace to her. She had confidence in God's word as it reminded her of His promise to her. This continued until the last interview. At this stage, she was able continually to keep God's promise in her mind and found the significance and meaning of her existence. According to Müller (1999:28), Christian hope can be dealt with by emphasizing the promises of God for a better future. People are challenged on the basis of these promises. Carlson and Erickson (2002:220) insist that our spiritual lives and our professional lives are inextricably interconnected. They (2002:220) state that spirituality is often a tremendous source of help, strength, comfort, peace, security, serenity and hope for most people. I considered the relational implications of my spiritual beliefs, spiritual self and relationship with Hope (Carlson & Erickson 2002:232). Thus, I invited her to tell and retell me about her experiences of God's love, compassion or mercy at each interview session. I also participated in the conversation by sharing my own experience of God's existence in my life. God's grace was poured out on her in order to rebuild the crumbled part of her experiences and renewed the inner part of her mind (Freedman & Combs 2002:141). She felt free, had peace by trusting God's word and became stronger than before. She now has hope that she will be released from her emotional difficulties, and looks forward to her bright future as she trusts God's promise.

2.1.2 Endeavour stronger than self limitation

Even though Hope had a new hope in finding herself to be God's new creation, nothing changed on the surface. But the difference was that by this time she could acknowledge her weakness and was able to express her difficulties to God with an open heart. She also tried to keep God's promise firmly in her mind.

As Hope was continually aware of her possibilities, she tried to conquer her struggles and tried to think about herself in a positive way. She realized that she was too

sensitive about the matter of the religious atmosphere at the Christian school, but now she seemed more encouraged. With this new awareness, she decided to work at the Christian school as a part time teacher. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear”, even though she still worried about her new position, she trusted that God’s love will take care of her fear (1John 4:18a). Müller and Schoeman (2004:8,9) aver that in narrative research, co-researchers should be voiced and formulated through the research process, and it creates a sense of hope. It therefore entails positive intervention. “This is a powerful, but a fragile intervention.”

Actually, Hope had planned to go back to America for further study, but her goal had been changed after she went on a mission trip with her church. She had compassion for the poor children whom she encountered on the mission field, because they reminded her of her boarding school experience. She was deeply impressed and remembered her childhood. In tears she gave testimony about her boarding school experience before the children. Through this trip, she became aware of what to do with her life, and was motivated to overcome her problems. Now her eyes were opened to see a goal for her life, and a desire to accomplish it. She is sincerely seeking God’s guidance in this. Freedman and Combs (1996:16) state that “the narrative researcher is interested in working with people to bring forth and thicken stories that did not support or sustain problems. As people begin to inhabit and live out the alternative stories, the results are beyond solving problems. Within the new stories, people live out new self images, new possibilities for relationships and new futures.”

2.1.3 Rebuilding relationships with parents

Since she has returned to Korea Hope’s new priority is to develop her relationship with her parents. Hence, she has tried to spend more time with her family, and is trying to stop blaming her parents, since she has realized that her expectation of her parents was too demanding. She was aware that this kind of high expectation could influence her attitude toward her parents. Thus, in a different way, she is trying to think positively about her parents. In fact, both of her parents showed their great love

and concern for her at the time of her settling in Korea and they are continually helping her in various ways.

Moreover, she tried to understand the gap between her parents and herself, since she had a new consciousness through interdisciplinary work that they have been influenced by Korean tradition and culture. She now recognized that the difference of mindset between herself and her parents caused the breakdown in their relationship, and they need to understand each other's differences. With this new insight she is attempting to understand her parents' mindset and attitude instead of blaming them, and she also expects her parents to understand her as well. But she still has a conflict with her parents on a decision that will have consequences upon the family and herself. She sometimes feels upset and argues with her parents about that decision. But, she realizes that they both need more time to understand and accept each other better, and that they all need to strive towards it.

The mission trip motivated her to understand the passion of her parents for missions. She no longer falls into despair or self-pity since she has acknowledged her new identity as God's new creation. She does not want to look back on her past experiences that caused her depression. She is determined to focus on hope for the future. So she is able to understand the situation of her parents, and this new insight has been vital to building a good relationship with her parents.

2.1.4 Reflections on the preferred stories of Hope

Interviews with Hope carried on for two years, and I was aware that Hope's problems were difficult to be resolved. I also took quite a long time to carry out this research, but I felt assured that the time was essential to arrive at the alternative stories of Hope. Müller (1999:23) says, "Pastoral intervention is always concerned with change. The gospel is concerned with change. No matter how strong our identification is with the core stories of our own group, we must always hold on to the possibility of change that result in being freed from damaging interpretations."

During the first interview sessions Hope was overwhelmed by her problems and was very depressed. She seemed hopeless and was really angry because her problems

had not improved with time. I was aware that she expected some “magic thing” to lead her to solve her problems quickly. She did not comprehend that a long-term commitment would be needed. In this situation she was often depressed about the difficulties, and struggled with feelings of instability. When I made contact with her, it was amazing that she could genuinely open her heart to me, and I felt sympathy for her. We were both aware that our minds were in tune with one another. It was a great privilege that she genuinely trusted me and easily opened up to share all her particular stories, which had not been told before. By her attitude of expectation toward this research project and of her faithful heart, she had the determination to conquer her negative feelings. The word of God, especially Isaiah 61:1-4 and 1Corinthians 5:17 was powerful to renew, restore, and rebuild her damaged existence to become God’s new creation. This new position gave her a positive view of herself, and she was motivated to work toward a great future. As I mentioned earlier, she started to work at the Christian school as a part time teacher and was satisfied with the new position even though worries sometimes still disturb her. As she remembers God’s promise, she is more able to cope with situations when she feels a sense of oppression in the religious environment at school.

She was grateful to me, and said, “thank you for your encouragement and love. Now I have hope ... You are a big answer to my prayer, I have been praying for a long time to find someone who I could trust to talk about myself, and now... I have found you. I can honestly talk about myself to you.” She was laughing when she mentioned our honest talking. She also used a metaphor said that I am like an oak tree in terms of her being. It was a significant moment when she could change from being a person with no confidence and feelings of depression, to being a rebuilt, restored and renewed creature through God’s love. I sincerely thank God for helping us to open our hearts honestly to each other, and for using me as his tool on the way to help Hope.

I will conclude the preferred stories of Hope by presenting Isaiah 61:1-4, 10 which was the meaningful and powerful promise of God to her.

Isaiah 61:1-4, 10

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations... I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

2.2 The preferred stories of Dreamer

2.2.1 Affirming identity as a child of God

In the case of Dreamer, shaping a new identity as a child of God was the most important matter to resolve, for him to find self-fulfillment and a purpose for his life. He insisted on the importance of it and said, "Many people say that Korean missionary children can shape their identity as Koreans by living in Korea for certain period. I have a different opinion about it. In my opinion, it is not a precondition to live in Korea in terms of forming an identity. Children are more influenced by the consciousness of their parents. If parents are sure their Korean identity, it influences the children to shape their identity as Koreans. Identity can also be formed through relationships with Korean friends, and by watching Korean news and drama. The most important thing is the family environment. The consciousness of parents, their attitude and life style are essential in order to shape an identity as a Korean." His identity as a Korean was already shaped in Botswana under the influence of his

parents. But he was able to establish his identity as a Christian when he experienced God's presence and had the confidence that his sins were forgiven by God's grace. He was stable in this new position as a child of God and was able to have a positive self-image. He found his dream in God. He challenges people who are involved in the ministry with Korean missionary children saying, "I think that by this time we need to be concerned about the importance of helping Korean missionary children. I am opposed to people who only tell Korean children that they should shape their identity as Koreans. Children need to detect their self-esteem in God and be convinced that they are aware children of God. Moreover, they need to find their purpose for life in God."

Above all, he was glad to have been released from the bondage of guiltiness before God through his reading of Seamands (1986:23) and the Bible. Dreamer was deeply impressed by the Bible verses that promise God's forgiveness of sinful man such as Romans 3:10, 23-26, 28, 5:1-2, 6-11, 6:11-14, 17-23, 8:1-2, 35-39. As we read those verses together, he was deeply impressed and confessed his sins that separated him from God. He was deeply touched by God's grace. Through this experience Dreamer was able to have confidence in himself as he built a new relationship with God, and was determined that he would never doubt His promise to him.

2.2.2 Rebuilding relationships with parents

He did not want to go to Botswana when his parents asked him to visit them, because he had negative memories about Botswana. He did not want to think back on his painful childhood in that country. However, he went since his parents had requested him to.

Unexpectedly he had good experiences while he was visiting there. He held a vision camp for Korean teenagers in Botswana, and found it worthwhile, as he was able to challenge them to accept that they are valuable. He was involved in his parents' ministry to help orphan children, and was impressed by this work. In his childhood he had no understanding of their ministry, but he became aware that his parents were devoted to their ministry to the orphan children and to God. This changed his mind

toward his parents, and caused him to respect them. As a child he disliked it that his parents were doing mission work among poor people, while they suffered financially. He complained about it to himself. But now he had a different perspective, understood the life of his parents as missionaries, and could see their reasons for helping orphan children in such a sad situation. He felt proud of his parents' ministry and their devotion to missions. Yet, he honestly said that he would not want to visit Botswana again as he still thinks that the country is boring.

2.2.3 Seize future dreams beyond financial problems

Since Dreamer knew that his parents had taken a loan to support his educational and boarding expenses, he felt sorry for his parents' difficult financial situation. He planned to pay back those expenses to his parents once he find a job after graduating from university. His mother sympathized with him and felt sorry that he accepted such a financial burden. She wanted Dreamer only to focus on his studies during his university years, in order to accomplish his dream, rather than doing other things to earn money. Yet she had confidence that God is the solution of all needs and that He will help her family in this situation. She prayed seeking God's help for her children, and encouraged Dreamer not to worry so much about finances. Dreamer was able to understand the heart of his mother and it stimulated him to focus on his studies and to discard idle thoughts. He worked harder at his English and French studies since he recognized that his parents had high expectations for him.

Through his experiences of financial difficulties, Dreamer was able to understand the financial situation of missionary families, and this gave him a vision and motivation in future to establish a foundation for scholarships for the education of Korean missionary children. He recognized that financial difficulties are an obstacle to most missionary children to pursue their plans for their future. He was unhappy with the fact that because of financial constraints he could not attend the university of his choice. This became his motivation to support Korean missionary children with their education in the future.

Dreamer reflected on our interviews saying, “It was beneficial to look back at the past experiences that were stained with wounds. During the interview times, I was able to awaken to the value of God’s existence and his forgiveness of me. In my life, I often wandered on account of my difficulties with God and with my parents. But now, I want to say that it is God’s grace to be myself. God guided me until now and everything in my life is God’s plan.” It was a significant point for him to think of God’s grace for him. He said, “Before I started my interviews with you, I couldn’t believe how much love God showed me in my life, I forgot it since I wandered in life. But, by telling my life stories and giving new meaning to them, I am aware that God always guides me (even though I do not realize it). I could find a power in me through the interviews. It is very important for me to think of my life in a positive way. I was a complaining person before you heard my stories. I really thank you for giving me a great opportunity to find my reality and a power with a new perspective, and especially I am so glad to think of my relationship with God. I feel really comfortable as I know His love and care are still upon me.” He is assured that, “People who have their dream in God are not ruined. Because they walk straight toward their dream, and so have confidence and enthusiasm. Now I have a dream in God and am walking toward it. I know that I am not a perfect man. I am an insufficient person. But, I have confidence in God that He will raise me up if I do my best in Him.” Dreamer has real faith in God as he has recognized God as the source of all power. This new awakening challenged him to do his best in his studies and his life at university, to make his dream come true. Even though he faces many difficulties to accomplish his goal, he will not give up the dream that came from God. He knows that his time as a young adult is the time to prepare for his future and times of change.

2.2.4 Reflection on the preferred stories of Dreamer

Interviews with Dreamer were carried out for a year. Twice the interviews were held at my home, while he was visiting his parents in Botswana, and thereafter I contacted him three times by internet phone. I felt pity for him especially concerning his financial difficulties as I realized that was the main point of his sufferings. I was

aware that this situation influenced his self-esteem. Though he was determined to do well in his studies, he often felt discouraged and angry with his situation, and lost self-confidence. He recognized that his problem was to miss seeing God's love through blindness to what God had accomplished in him. Through the process of interviews he was assured of God's love and guidance for him, and it led him to trust God. He said "To recognize my power comes from God empowers me in the present and in the future."

In spite of his difficult situation, this new perspective empowered him to find meaning in his studies. The new, embodied in the emerging story, can support new perceptions and behaviors (Freedman & Combs 2002:210).

He asked me to write the following sentences in my thesis and I agreed to his suggestion: "It's the grace of God to be myself. God guided me until now and everything in my life is God's plan." He confessed that everything done in his life was the result of the grace of God. His expression reminded me of a beautiful gospel song which was composed by a Korean musician that described God's grace. Thus, I wanted to sing this song with Dreamer, but unfortunately he did not know the song. Hence, I sang this song for my young friend, Dreamer, as a gift and he was delighted with it. After singing, I wrote down the words of the song and gave it to him in order to remind him of God's love and grace in his life.

As I conclude the preferred stories of Dreamer, I will present a beautiful gospel song in order to express his admission of God's guidance in his life. The words were originally written in Korean as it was composed by a Korean singer and I translated it into English in order to help readers.

Grace of God

It is God who made me, it is God who created me, and it is God who sent me here.
It is the grace of God to be myself; Grace that has no limitation, Grace that I cannot
repay, Grace that can manage my life.

By the grace of God, I can step on the land without fear.

2.3 The preferred stories of Challenger

2.3.1 A new perspective on Christian education

Challenger expressed her feelings on the matter of education by saying that “Being a Korean child brings much pressure, because most Korean missionary parents made their children work very hard and made them participate in many activities to prepare for university entrance. It bothered me a lot. Because of so much pressure I couldn’t do anything well. I always felt that I was a failure. I didn’t like the attitude of Korean parents, and I thought that Korean missionary children missed great advantages as human beings and as missionary children.” She stressed that Korean missionary parents have too high expectations for their children’s education. The children experience pressure due to the expectations of their parents for them. In this way they lose the advantages that missionary children should have in living unique and meaningful lives. Since her parents forced her to study, she was stressed by the possibility to miss her goals for her future. Taking the situation of Korean missionary children into consideration, Challenger and I discussed Christian education. According to Wilhoit (1986:11) the aim of Christian education is “to lead students to a more Christian view of life and the world”, and to help people gain a comprehensive view of God’s world and the meaning and purpose of life. The Christian educator must understand children as they are, guide them in their goals and the best means to achieve these goals. He/she must guide them in the search for meaning. Christian education must give children a sense of purpose in life. So, Christian education can facilitate the search for personal meaning and help children detect God’s purpose for life (Wilhoit 1986:13). Challenger was glad to discuss Christian education and argued that Korean missionary parents need to recognize the uniqueness of their children as missionary children, rather than compel them to study hard in order to enter one of the top universities. They also need to encourage their children to make their own unique contribution to the cause of God’s people in the world (Wolterstorff 2002:56). In this way, missionary children will discover their potential and find God’s purpose for them.

I invited my co-researchers into our discussions by email and received their replies. I found that they were interested in giving their views of Christian education. They agreed that the goal of the education of missionary children must be Christian. They had similar ideas on what we were discussing. We have a strong desire that God may help in the world to contribute our gifts to His glory. We were encouraged by the fact that we can be light of this world even though we are weak. Challenger, Faithful and Dreamer suggested that it would be good to encourage Korean missionary parents to see the importance of Christian education and to guide their children in this way, rather than just to participate in the competitiveness that exists in Korea. They eagerly desire to accomplish this goal, and realized that this new awareness was vital for them.

2.3.2 Restoring self-esteem

Because of the negative experiences at MK school, Challenger struggled with Christianity as she was marked as an ill-behaved child by some of teachers with their strict discipline of the children. She was also hurt by Korean people who were prejudiced against missionary children. These affected her negatively, she lost confidence in herself, and felt angry towards her parents, the Korean Church and God.

During the interview sessions, we tried to focus on the issues about Christianity and its application in this world. During the first two sessions Challenger and I discussed the issues, and for the rest of the interview sessions her closest friend joined us in discussing this matter. We recommended some books to one another in order to help broaden our thoughts and brought many themes about Christianity into our discussions. We earnestly tried to find the correct view on Christianity, and as a result, Challenger was able to explore alternative ideas concerning her traditions of interpretation of Christianity. Through our discussions Challenger realized that the failure she experienced at school had not originated in her. It came from the wrong attitude of the teachers and staff. They and the other children made a lot of mistakes in their dealings with her. Through reading books and discussing the principles of Christianity she gained confidence in her faith in God. She could recognize that she

was not the same as she had been in the past. She found differences between the past and the present. In the past, she was too young to explain her feelings to her teachers and her parents, and was marked as a trouble maker, and was discouraged. This still affects her and she easily becomes discouraged. Yet, she was encouraged by the process of our interviews as she recognized her difference from the past. Teachers and staff at the MK school defined a good Christian as a well-behaved child, and she was the opposite of it. What does it really mean to be a good Christian? We both agreed that genuine faith in God is the most important fact in Christianity. Who knows another person's heart? We believed that only God knows a person's inmost thoughts and desires. We want Christianity to be alive instead of dead. We became to love this verse from the Bible, "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:32)." She has been set free from the past, and is able to see her power to overcome the pain. She is determined to avoid thinking of the past, and will rather try to think of her power that has emerged through facing the past. She said "I have become a different person now, since I realized my power, thus, my past no longer troubles me. I now clearly understand my purpose and have courage. I now have a clear dream and have hope for my future."

2.3.3 Taking opportunities to prepare for the future

Challenger was struggling to find a hospital in which to do volunteer work in order to prepare for medical school in America. She had been looking for a suitable place for six months, but had failed to find anything. She thought finding volunteer work at a hospital in Korea was almost impossible due to her unfamiliarity with the Korean culture and people, as well as not being fluent in the Korean language. However, after six months she was accepted at a private hospital in Korea and joyfully took this opportunity. Through the hospital experience she was more assured of her future dream to be a medical doctor. As was mentioned earlier, she had found the power herself during the research process through seeing the difference between the past and the present. Therefore, she has hope to accomplish her dream to be a doctor even though the course will be difficult.

2.3.4 Rebuilding relationships with parents

Challenger has been working on the development of her relationship with her parents while she had been staying in Korea. By listening to the voices of other missionary parents and interdisciplinary conversations about Korean family life and society, she gained understanding about the attitude of her parents and their life as missionaries. Recently, she also experienced missionary work overseas for several months, and this helped her to gain understanding of her parents. She was dissatisfied with her parents' parenting of their children in the past, but now she has a different view on the situation. She is aware that her parents did their best for their children while they were growing up on the mission field. By being challenged in different ways, she now has a new insight in missionary work and the life of her parents on the mission field. This has influenced her to have a positive mindset toward her parents, and stop blaming them. It has given her hope that her relationship with parents will improve.

2.3.5 Reflections on the preferred stories of Challenger

Interviews with Challenger stretch over two years. Initially, the interviews were started in Korea when I visited that country and were continued by internet phone. Due to her personal situation of moving around the interviews were stopped after three months. Personally, I felt that the interviews were not enough to accomplish the goal, and I was looking for more opportunities to contact her. Then, I heard that she had moved to a country close to the country where I live. It was a great privilege for both of us to communicate with each other regularly and more deeply through visits and phoning. We both enjoyed our reconnection in Africa, and she took the opportunity to share her difficulties at a deeper level. Our relationship became closer as we freely talked about sensitive issues in a relationship of trust. Thus, I had many opportunities to listen to the stories of her past and present, to her interpretations of traditions, and was able to hear the alternative interpretations of those stories. We thank God for guiding us to be close in such a miraculous way to be able to share our uncertainties. I could help her to find the power to face the future.

She returned to Korea after visiting Africa for a short term, and at present is working hard in order to prepare for her future. To accomplish her dream seems difficult, yet, she does not give up trying. She said, “I now have a clear vision, have courage and hope in my future.”

Having summarized the alternative stories of Challenger, I would like to present the gospel song that reminded her of God’s grace that restored her life. By God’s grace she was able to establish a positive self-esteem and has a future dream.

You raise me up

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary, when troubles come and my heart burdened be. Then, I am still and wait here in the silence until you come and sit awhile with me. You raise me up so I can stand on mountains. You raise me up to walk on stormy seas. I am strong when I am on your shoulders. You raise me up to more than I can be.

2.4 The preferred stories of Visionary

2.4.1 Accomplishing the first purpose at university

“I must work hard in order to accomplish my purpose. I know that time management is the key in doing all things.” This was the statement of Visionary that was presented earlier in this chapter. With this determination, she worked very hard during the first and second year of university and put all of her effort into making good progress to keep up to the same academic level of the other Korean students. As a result she caught up to them and accomplished her first goal. This gave her the opportunity of being chosen for a special study course at the university. She tried to think positively about the present and the future, and managed her time carefully. She tried to keep her dream for the future in her mind at all times. Sharing her difficulties with me and listening to other voices during this research journey also helped her to have a better understanding of her situation, and encouraged her to focus on her studies. Moreover, she said that trusting God is the primary factor that sustains her life in a

difficult situation in Korea. Yet, she recognized that she was not up to standard in mathematics and science even though she worked hard at them, so she needed to focus on them.

In addition, she pointed out the following merits of studying in Korea. She had the opportunity to improve her Korean language fluency, of to learn more about the Korean society and culture, and to enjoy them. Another opportunity was tutoring, and she has a great opportunity to build human relationships with Koreans for the future. She was happy with all these advantages in Korea. She realized that she had become independent, and has accepted many responsibilities while she living in Korea without her parents' supervision. As an answer to prayer she found suitable accommodation in the private home of a Korean family after leaving the dormitory. She may have to pay more for her new accommodation, but she is satisfied with its location as the house is close to the university. Since she has to pay more, she realizes that she will have to do more tutoring, but she encourages herself to focus on her purpose for the future.

2.4.2 Dream a future dream

Visionary wanted to succeed in life for the sake of God. Since she accomplished her first goal at the university it became evident that she could make her dream come true in the future. She said, "A person who has a dream is not ruined in life". She said that the dream she has will not only satisfy her, it may also reveal God's glory to the world through helping other people. She said, "I am empowered by God to accomplish my dream. The dream will come true in future if I work hard in the present, so I must be patient. I cannot complain in any situation." Dependence on God and prayer support from her parents are vital to sustain her. She constantly dreams the dream of her future, and the image of a better future leads her to carry on to accomplish this purpose. "Miracles are what we expect to happen when we wait and depend upon God for the future" (Müller 1999:45).

2.4.3 Reflections on the preferred stories of Visionary

For the last two years, Visionary has visited South Africa, where she grew up, to see her parents during school holidays. I had the opportunity of meeting with her three times as part of this research. She seemed so stiff when I first met her and I was aware that her life in Korea was tough. Reentry into Korea after fourteen years of living in South Africa has not been easy for Visionary in terms of her studies at the university and of her adjustment in an unfamiliar country without parental support. However, during the last two years she has persevered and worked hard at her studies in order to accomplish her purpose.

Recently she struggle to adapt to the Korean culture and social life that she experiences at the university among the students. During the first year at university she had many positive experiences in Korea and enjoyed its environment. But in the second year she found many differences between Korean students who had grown up in Korea and her values, thoughts and world view. The world view she has is very different from other students at the university. Therefore she is struggling to form close relationships with other students and feels lonely among them. I know that it is not unusual to experience a culture shock in the culture of Korean young people, since she grew up in Africa. Reading Hiebert (1987:76) helped her to gain a deeper understanding of her situation as he explained that people understand the world through their own culture and this often causes trouble between cultures. She now recognizes that her struggle is not different from what other Korean missionary children experience, since her world view and values were shaped while she was growing up in Africa. Her experiences in Africa influenced her to embrace a different world view from the students in Korea. She also emphasized her identity as a child of God more than her identity as a Korean. She found stability in this position. She is sure that she will succeed in future and that the present is an important period to prepare for her future dream. She is convicted that her unique experiences as a missionary child have added strength to her life, and will become a powerful influence in her future.

I contacted her by email after she returned to Korea and hope that my support in prayer and by letter may give her comfort and courage.

I will quote Isaiah 40:28-31 in order to encourage Visionary in her study difficulties.

Isaiah 40:28-31

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

2.5 The preferred stories of Faithful

2.5.1 Alternative interpretations on the matter of graduation

While Faithful needed to extend his studies at university by a year, he found new meaning from this experience as he wondered if the reason for his failure originated with him. He realized that he had gained more understanding of uncertain parts of his studies during that year. He said that he may have missed some important points in his studies if he had not extended his studies by a year. Finding this new meaning opened up his perspective to an alternative interpretation of the matter of the failure to the graduate. According to Müller (1999:65), "If people can be helped to be able to see the road in front of them, their whole experience of the present will be changed." In addition, Faithful could overcome his stress about his lack of English ability to cope academically at university by the new insight discovered when he read Haag (1999:2), he understood that the effect of language learning is different from one age group to another. This new awakening helped him to accept his ability in English, and he had a more positive opinion of himself as a student.

2.5.2 Reflections on the sovereignty of God

During the extended year, Faithful was seriously thinking about the sovereignty of God. He became more humble through this experience and tried to pray more and to

meditate on the Bible in order to find God's will for his future. He also tried to depend on Him more. Doing this, he changed and grew in his understanding and his faith strengthened. He learned more about God's will by reading the Bible. He was encouraged by the statement in Proverbs that "To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue... Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed... In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:1,3,9). "A man's steps are directed by the Lord, How can anyone understand his own way?" (Proverbs 20:21). Since he did not know what his future holds, God helped him to be able to have stability in his thoughts through His Word. His stress from English and mathematics reduced by depending on God, and his faith in Him developed during that year. He also realized that financial problems were normal among missionary families. He learned this as he listened to the other voices during the interdisciplinary work. He learned to take this burden to God in whom he learned to trust throughout the suffering of that year. Instead of worrying about his future, he tried to firmly hold onto God's promises that he found in the Bible.

2.5.3 A new perspective upon the future

After a year Faithful graduated from the university and went to Korea to study for his master's degree as his parents suggested. The matter of joining the army was postponed because he was doing further studies. He worried about going back to Korea on account of the language medium of the study, a different education system and a different environment. Since he had moved to South Africa he had not visited Korea for eight years. However, he was determined to trust God and to depend on Him. He was sure that there was a special reason why God guided him to Korea as he had no thoughts or plans for his future. He would wait for God's guidance. Even though he was not sure of what kind of life Korea held for him, he was willing to follow God's guidance, as he had learned to trust Him.

2.5.4 Reflections on the preferred stories of Faithful

I started the interviews with Faithful with the intention of helping him to get rid of his stress about his studies. We had two face to face interviews and continued by email for reflection and to investigate some issues. It took a year. However, after a year I heard from his mother that he failed to graduate and he was really disappointed and depressed by the results. Hence, I reconnected with him by phone and was glad that he did not hold back. He expressed his feelings of anxiety and fear over his failure. During the year he had lost confidence to pursue his dream for the following year. I thank God that He did not leave Faithful alone in the dark world. God challenged him through the Bible and met him in prayer. During this time Faithful was contemplating the sovereignty of God and became more humble before Him. This experience changed his future plans and motivated him to trust God with his whole heart.

This year Faithful started his master's studies in Korea. He is finding it very difficult to study in Korean, and in a different education system. He is struggling to cope socially, and financially to pay for tuition and boarding which are very expensive. He knows the financial condition of his parents and is trying to find a solution. To solve this problem he plans to tutor school children but has not yet found any students. However, he is sure that God who guided him to Korea will help him in this situation, and so he waits and depends upon God. "Miracles are not contrived, but rather happen when one waits and depends upon God for the future" (Müller 1999:45).

As I conclude the alternative stories of Faithful, his confusion about the future is reviewed in my mind. Hence, I would like to give these meaningful words from the Bible to my young friend Faithful in order to encourage him and bless his future.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

3 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the preferred stories of the co-researchers that emerged were described. There are many outcomes of the stories of the co-researchers during this research journey. Yet, the co-researchers are still struggling with their problems, but are expecting an alternative interpretation to their stories for a better future. According to Müller (1999:45), true narrative work is “not result-orientated, but rather wait-orientated. It does not offer answers, but facilitates questions and waits.” The narrative approach is open-ended rather than results-oriented so I am waiting on the ongoing process for my co-researchers problems. Müller (1999:45) cites the metaphor of the Polaroid used by Lamott (1995:39) in order to express that narrative researchers must be patient and curious to listen to the participants' stories and wait until the plot emerges. There is no quick solution to children's problems. Miracles happen when we wait and depend upon God for the future “to bring about a new thing in His own surprising way” regarding the problems (1999:45), thus, we need to facilitate waiting. Therefore, as a narrative researcher, I made every effort to avoid the short term solutions of my research and rather learn to wait for the full scope of the research to develop. Hence, my co-researchers are remaining curious about their progress. My role as a narrative researcher is “to help people dream dreams in the midst of hopeless situations and to imagine a better future... I must with all effort seek to help create stories of the future-stories which fit into the realistic hope of the gospel.” (Müller 1999:73). Hence, this research is not closed-ended, but rather allows for growth and development to take place. I will continually develop my relationship with my co-researchers in order to support them, so that we can become ‘companion[s] on the journey’ (Müller 1999) of our lives.

CHAPTER 7

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

1 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

1.1 Period of the research interviews

The research interviews for the present thesis have been carried out over a period of around two years. Initially, I planned to complete the research within a year. But it was insufficient for specific situations of some of the co-researchers. Thus the period was extended. It was difficult to continue the research for this long period. However, interviews with the co-researchers went well. They all cooperated with me and enjoyed to participate with the research since they agreed with my intention with this research. I deeply thank them for being patient during the long period of the research interviews.

1.2 Reflection on the research aims

For this research, I have had the following five aims: (i) to understand the educational difficulties Korean missionary children face on the mission field. (ii) to study various schooling options for Korean missionary children on the mission field. (iii) to describe an alternative understanding of Korean missionary children's educational difficulties through interdisciplinary discussion. (iv) to examining the advantages and disadvantages Korean missionary children will face, at university either in Korea and/or in another country. (v) through discussion with the co-researchers to propose practical ideas to help Korean missionary children focus on their education and other issues.

By fulfilling these aims, my co-researchers and I would make significant contributions toward the research process and would obtain a beneficial result through our

conversations in this research project. I present the benefits the researcher and the co-researchers obtained as follows:

The researcher

- I developed a close relationship with the co-researchers through the research process and I have the possibility of counseling them in future.
- I obtained a better understanding of the educational challenges Korean missionary children face on the mission field, and a new insight to help Korean missionary children. This also helps me in different way to guide my own children in their education.
- I take my role seriously to help Korean missionary children in future and I have gained some practical ideas in the discussions with the co-researchers; these ideas will be introduced later.

The co-researchers

- By telling and retelling the stories, the co-researchers could add value to their stories of powerlessness and create new meanings to understand their problems. They were encouraged by alternative perspectives.
- Unlike the past the co-researchers were able to relate their stories to others through the narrative research process, and their stories will be reconstructed in future as narrative research is an ongoing process.
- Through telling the stories they also revealed common problems which Korean missionary children face with education and the issues young adult missionary children may face. My co-researchers proposed some practical ideas in order to help other Korean missionary children. I will present these practical ideas as a proposal for an alternative perspective on the pastoral care of Korean missionary children.

1.3 Proposal for an alternative perspective on the educational difficulties Korean missionary children face on the mission field

1. To providing an orientation course for children when they enter the mission field is essential. My co-researchers felt that by taking an orientation course at this stage, children would have a pre-knowledge about the field including schools, and this would help them to have more confidence in a new country. To providing counseling when necessary is also useful in order to sustain and protect them.
2. To having regular meetings in a small group with other missionary children would be helpful. My co-researchers agreed that missionary children need to belong to a specific group with significant people with whom they share common interests, their difficulties and their Christian faith. Young adult children and teenagers especially need to develop relationships with the same age group.
3. Knowledge of the academic language needed to enter university in Korea is important. This is an important matter Korean missionary children have to understand if they plan to study at a university in Korea, because Korean is used as the official academic language at most of these universities. Children whose Korean is not up to standard may face difficulties in completing the course at university. In the case of Visionary, English was offered as the main language for study at the university, but this is unusual in Korea. English is taught there only at a small number of universities. Thus it is important for children to understand the language issues before they decide on a university.
4. Young adult children need careful guidance for further studies, careers and marriage as these are the issues that confront this age group. They also need guidance to find their potential for the future.
5. Helping children to develop their Christian faith in God is a priority for missionary children. My co-researchers pointed out that missionary children may become stronger, more motivated and powerful when they meet God in a personal way. According to them, children who know God personally will not be overcome by difficult situations but will find security for their future in Him. Since this is so important, they argued that parents should not only

focus the academic achievement of their children, but also make the development of their children's Christian faith their priority.

6. Caring for children who have problems with their studies and with other issues is necessary, and counseling helps them. Most of the co-researchers were seriously concerned about other missionary children who have serious difficulties with their studies and their everyday lives. At the beginning of the research project they were not concerned about others, because they were immersed in their own problems. But now they are able to show concern for other children, and are willing to help them with advice with the problems they face. I was deeply impressed by their changed mindset and attitude. They were empowered through the new stories that point beyond traditions, to have better dreams for the future.

My co-researchers hoped that the proposal may be useful in helping Korean missionary children and wanted inform missionary parents and mission agencies of this proposal. As an expedient they suggested to me to help Korean missionary children in some ways, and I was also seriously concerned about their suggestion. Hence, ideas discussed from the collaboration with my co-researchers and the following plans were made: (1) organize an orientation course in my area for children of school age before they enter a new school and help them to adapt. (2) help children by providing study materials for some Korean subjects. (3) with some of the co-researchers organize regular small group meetings for Korean young adult missionary children. (4) provide counseling for children who have difficulties. The plans will begin in the year following the completion of this thesis.

1.4 Selection of the co-researchers and the physical distance between the researcher and the co-researchers

When I started this research, I wanted to study various educational options in order to understand the educational difficulties Korean missionary children face on the mission field. I selected the co-researchers from different educational backgrounds in order to take into account their various experiences. Children from different countries

such as Korea, America and South Africa were selected.

As most of my co-researchers were living far from me, I used networking with them for the research process. I sometimes communicated with them through networking such as internet phones, email and chatting. Internet phone was an extremely useful method in my research process. My co-researchers and I enjoyed communicating through internet phone from a long distance. We also chatted via the internet and cell phone for short conversations. However, due to the great physical distances between the researcher and the co-researchers, there were times when it was difficult to communicate with my co-researchers as we needed to communicate via internet phone rather than via email, and there were times when it was difficult as the change in their problems were slow. Therefore, I sometimes wondered if I should not have selected the co-researchers from the area in which I live. Other missionary children in my area would have been easier to communicate. I sometimes felt that the physical distances between the researcher and the co-researchers was an obstacle in the research. Yet, I have no regrets over my selection of the co-researchers, because I wanted to have a better understanding of educational issues Korean missionary children experience by listening to children from various educational backgrounds, and I have achieved my purpose.

2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This research studied the difficulties that the Korean missionary children experience at MK/International schools and boarding schools run by Western missionaries. Information on the Korean MK schools recently started on the mission fields and their educational statuses, as well as boarding and lodging is not yet available and needs more research. Furthermore, the emotional difficulties Korean missionary children experience in their schools and on the mission field need to be understood. The number of Koreans missionary children that choose to go to Korean universities is increasing. Although most universities in Korea only lecture in Korean, Korean missionary children experience difficulties with their studies as they are deficient in Korean. To help Korean missionary children who intend to study at Korean

universities, more research is needed about how Korean missionary children can adapt to study in Korea. Research is also needed on the status of university education in Korea as compared to other countries.

As Korean young adult missionary children are going to Korea for employment teaching English and other jobs, more research is needed about the ability of Korean missionary children to adapt to Korean society.

This research included the educational difficulties of Korean missionary children on the mission field. Further research is needed on the difficulties of Korean missionaries with regard to their children's education. This research revealed the educational problems Korean missionary families encounter on the mission field, and I hope that the Korean churches and mission agencies can help Korean missionaries with regard to their children's education in an effective way.