A reflection upon the loneliness of Korean elderly in family support: A Christian-pastoral perspective

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the situation for generational conflict in terms of co-residence between the aging parents and their adult children in Korea. It investigates the history and problems of the intergenerational bond in Korean society and the Korean Church based on a hierarchical relationship. The study proposes a Christian approach about the intimate intergenerational relationship. In addition, it suggests the Church Round Table as a method for resolving the conflict. To develop this study, two kinds of methods, the first advocated by D Browning (1991) and the second by Rubin and Rubin (1995), are adopted.

In traditional Korean society, the duty of family members to care for the elderly is a concept known as filial piety. It has been commonly assumed that elderly people are expected to depend on their children in their old age. However, during the past decades, Korea has experienced dramatic social restructuring. This rapid modernisation and industrialisation in Korea has deprived the elderly of many important family and social roles. Whereas the elderly, who had hardly prepared for their own well being, expect to live together under their children's care, the adult children do not want to give full support to their parents, resulting in intergenerational conflict for family support.

To create an intergenerational relationship with open dialogue, communicability is needed to resolve the conflict between the aging parents and the adult children, namely the communicability of the Church Round Table, as adapted from the story of King Arthur's Round Table. The Church Round Table has three key issues: kenosis, equality, and reconciliation within all three participates: the aging parent, the adult child, and a pastor. In rule-governed interpersonal interaction by three issues, this thesis has developed by proposing the Church Round Table as place to resolve intergenerational conflict between them. To accomplish the claims, theoretical background and practical strategies are addressed in this study.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek die situasie vir konflik tussen generasies in terme van samewoning van bejaarde ouers en hul volwasse kinders in Korea. Dit ondersoek die geskiedenis en probleme van die intergenerasieband in die Koreaanse samelewing en die Koreaanse Kerk gegrond op 'n hiërargiese verhouding. Die studie stel voor dat 'n Christen benadering gebruik moet word, om die intergenerasie verhouding te interpreteer. Dit stel daarbenewens die Kerklike Ronde Tafel voor as metode om konflik op te los. Ter ontwikkeling van hierdie studie word twee tipes metodes ingeneem, die eerste word aanbeveel deur D Browning (1991) en die tweede deur Rubin en Rubin (1995).

In die tradisionele Koreaanse samelewing is die plig van familielede om vir die bejaardes te sorg en hul te respekteer bekend as die konsep van ouerverering. Dit is algemeen aanvaar dat daar van bejaarde mense verwag word op hul oudag van hul kinders afhanklik te wees. Tydens die laaste dekades het Korea egter dramatiese sosiale herstrukturering ervaar. Hierdie vinnige modernisasie en industrialisasie het die bejaardes van verskeie belangrike familie en sosiale rolle beroof. Waar die bejaardes, wat skaars vir hul eie welstand voorberei het, verwag om saam onder hul kinders se sorg te lewe, wil die volwasse kinders nie volle ondersteuning aan hul ouers bied nie, en dit veroorsaak intergenerasie konflik vir familie-ondersteuning. Om 'n inter-generasie verhouding met oop dialoog te skep, is mededeelbaarheid, naamlik die Kerklike Ronde Tafel, soos aangepas uit die storie van Koning Arthur se Ronde Tafel, noodsaaklik om die konflik tussen bejaarde ouers en die volwasse kinders op te los. Die Kerklike Ronde Tafel het drie sleutel strydvrae: kenosis, gelykheid, en versoening by al drie deelhebbers: die bejaarde ouer, die volwasse kind en die pastoor. Deur reëlgeheersde interpersoonlike interaksie by drie probleme, het hierdie tesis die Kerklike Ronde Tafel as plek voorgestel om intergenerasie konflik tussen hulle op te los. Om die beweringe, teoretiese agtergrond en praktiese strategieë wat in hierdie studie aangespreek word, te volbring.

ABBREVIATIONS

Old Testament	Abbreviation	New Testament	Abbreviation
Genesis	Gen	Matthew	Mt
Exodus	Exo	Mark	Mk
Leviticus	Lev	Luke	Lk
Numbers	Num	John	Jn
Deuteronomy	Deut	Acts	Act
Joshua	Jos	Romans	Rom
Judges	Jud	1 Corinthians	1 Cor
Ruth	Ru	2 Corinthians	2 Cor
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Galatians	Gal
2 Samuel	2 Sam	Ephesians	Eph
1 Kings	1 Ki	Philippians	Php
2 Kings	2 Ki	Colossians	Col
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	1 Thessalonians	1 The
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	2 Thessalonians	2 The
Ezra	Ezr	1 Timothy	1 Tim
Nehemiah	Neh	2 Timothy	2 Tim
Esther	Est	Titus	Tit
Job	Job	Philemon	Phm
Psalms	Ps	Hebrews	Heb
Proverbs	Pro	James	Jam
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Peter	1 Pet
Song of songs	SS	2 Peter	2 Pet
Isaiah	Isa	1 John	1 Jn
Jeremiah	Jer	2 John	2 Jn
Lamentations	Lam	3 John	3 Jn
Ezekiel	Ezk	Jude	Jude
Daniel	Dan	Revelation	Rev
Hosea	Hos		
Joel	Joe		
Amos	Am		
Obadiah	Oba		
Jonah	Jon		
Micah	Mic		
Nahum	Nah		
Habakkuk	Hab		
Zephaniah	Zep		
Haggai	Hag		
Zechariah	Zec		
Malachi	Mal		

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem and theme

When I was an assistant pastor at Incheon Second Presbyterian Church in Incheon, Korea, in 2000, there was a 73 year old man in my church who was a retired middle-school principal.[1] One day, this man did not attend the Sunday morning service because of a severe cold. I paid him a visit and was shocked because his accommodation was in such a deplorable state. His room was very cold because he did not have sufficient money to provide proper heating for himself.

The old man told me his life-story. He had three sons and a daughter. When they were grown up, all of his children got married and left him and his wife alone. This man and his wife were then living on retirement grants, and their second son borrowed money from them to fund his business. Unfortunately, his business soon went bankrupt. After the son's financial failure, the circumstances of the man and his wife began deteriorating. Furthermore, the man's wife died from stomach cancer in 1998. This caused him terrible sorrow and pain. Even though he had four adult children, they gave him very little emotional and financial support and did not care about him at all. He had suffered severe loneliness and felt especially betrayed by his adult children for their shabby treatment of him. None of his children visited often nor cared for him. He missed his wife intensely. A few days after my visit to the old man, I heard the shocking news that he had committed suicide. Because there was no written will, people did not know the exact reason that he had killed himself, but I could imagine the motive for his suicide. This experience caused me to develop a decisive interest in the problem of loneliness among the elderly in terms of parent care.

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[1] For the purposes of this study, "the elderly" is a terms used to describe those aged 65 and over.

In the past four decades, there have been enormous changes, including rapid industrialisation, for the fast-increasing population of the aged in Korea. In just 19 years, the proportion of persons over the age of 65 is expected to double from 7 percent to 14 percent (Peterson 2000:57).[2] In addition, because of modernisation, Korea has experienced huge migration from rural areas to urban areas among the younger generations, and it has also fallen under the influence of Western culture. Such changes in demographic trends and social contexts have resulted in several problems for the elderly. Many scholars (Lee 1997:85; Park 1997:44; Choi & Chang 2002:27-32; Cho 1998:52-59) divide the problems of the Korean elderly into "four troubles": poverty, health, loss of social role, and socio-psychological alienation.

In Korea, a very important issue in discussions of the problems of the aging population pertains to the family support system. On the basis of patriarchy, Korean families have formerly not only shown unconditional respect and obedience towards the elderly, but have also supported them economically, socially, and psychologically, living under the same roof with them according to traditional custom (Kim 2000:6). Under this social system, there was little possibility that the elderly experienced problems of the type described above because family and society felt strongly that parents were to be respected and supported by their children. In contrast to the Western ideal of independent living and the reluctance to be a burden to one's children, Korean elderly have lived with their offspring and been cared for by their adult children in accordance with East Asian culture (Williams & Nussabum 2001:264-265). In such a family system, the elderly maintained the image of being the head of the family. As a result, they could solve the problems concerning poverty, loss of social role, and psychological loneliness that might have occurred in later life through family.

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[2] As of 1 July 2000, the population of those over the age of 65 in Korea stands at 3.37 million, and accounts for 7.1 percent of the total population (Park 2003:30,31). The proportion of 7 percent is the standard for an aging society. This statistic is expected to increase to 14 per cent of the total population, which is the criterion for an aged society, within 19 years. Such a rate of change from aging society to aged society is very rapid, compared to 115 years in France, 71 years in the U.S., and 47 years in England (Peterson 2000:57; Kim *et al* 2003:20-21).

In recent decades, the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation has eroded the willingness of Koreans, especially the young generation, to care for their elderly parents. The adult children have disengaged themselves from the responsibility of supporting their parents through the establishment of nuclear families, and have moved towards the emphasis of an individualistic lifestyle. The problem is that the elderly were unable to accumulate funds for themselves because they needed to take complete care of their family, including their own parents. Moreover, the elderly thought that there was no need to save money for their later life because they believed that their adult children would support them in the same way that they had supported their parents and grandparents. While the elderly still expect to get full support from their adult children as did the former generation, the younger generation does not want the responsibility of caring for their elderly parents (Yoon *et al* 2000:129-131). This gives rise to conflict between the elderly, who want to be cared for by their children, and the younger generation, who want to avoid caring for their parents.

Nowadays, many elderly people do not have jobs and obtain little financial support from their adult children. Thus, their living standards fall below the poverty level. Government also has no suitable funding for the elderly and there is little probability of getting sufficient money for such a purpose (Bengtson & Putney 2000:273). The elderly who did not prepare for their later life suffer economically and emotionally due to the disregard of their adult children. They are seriously concerned about their current situation and the future. At the same time, the Korean elderly are not only gravely worried that their adult children may consider them to be useless burdens, but also seem to feel betrayed by their society and family, especially their children.

In addition to this, in the Korean family over past decades, relationships between the different generations in the family have been unproductive. It appears that the biggest problem with sectoral relationships has been the miscommunication across the intergenerational gap in views regarding the

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issues between the older generations and the younger generations.

The basic and central solution for solving conflicts within families is dialogue. In a "closed" family, there is poor dialogue in which neither generation communicates directly with the other. In contrast, a healthy family has "direct, loving, and constructive" dialogue (Larson 1986:28). In this way, the Korean family has been severely affected by the lack of communication paths or discussion between aged parents and their children in the traditional one-way communication system based on hierarchical structure.

It is for this reason that the elderly are currently struggling enormously with a loneliness crisis arising from miscommunication with their children: "I am losing all: health, money, strength, and children." It is thus necessary to explore the situations of the Korean society regarding family support of the elderly and listen to the elderly's voices regarding problems and conflict with their adult children. Then, we must ask the question: what does God's story say about the mutual relationship with open dialogue between the aging parents and the adult children?

Following the result of these explorations, the formulation of communicability for open dialogue between the generations will be explored. I believe that the Church Round Table process, as communicability, holds the potential to improve understanding of two parties' different views and improve the intergenerational relationships. The Church Round Table has been extracted from the Round Table in literature, which enables the development, regulation, and facilitation of open dialogue processes in intergenerational conflict.

1.2 Positioning: Narrative practical theology

Since practical theology has been studied in the mode of an unfathomable revolution for about 200 years, it is no longer the so-called *applied* discipline,

which is constituted and operated by classical disciplines of systematic theology, biblical theology, church history, and ethics (Fowler 1999:75). Rather, practical theology constructs and spells out theological understanding.

Practical theology is a praxis-based discipline. The word *praxis* means "action." However, it is a special form of action. Whereas practice entails the simple "non-reflective performance" in a network of relations, praxis implies reflection because its focus is on achieving a particular end of such action (Swinton 2000:10-11). According to Browning (1983:13), "the difference between practice and praxis is that in the latter the theory has been made self-conscious and reflected upon critically."

When practical theology is engaged in praxis, it reflects on intentional action strategies, which are aimed at transforming social contexts. Practical theology claims to point towards a concrete contextual concept. "It is always local, concrete, and specific," with real stories and real lives (Müller 2004:20). From such contexts of praxis, practical theological method starts. Practical theology begins and ends in praxis and all praxis is theory-laden. It develops reflections out of the context of ongoing practices in which communities of faith engage. It arises out of practices and returns to practices, which enables the modification of the adequacy and faithfulness of the practice that it initiates (Fowler 1999:84). This is to say, it epitomises a practice-theory-practice model that brings about a complete practical cast to the entire theological enterprise.

This model clearly breaks the classic *theory-to-practice* approach of humanistic learning, such as Barth's schema of theology, which begins at biblical discipline, and then moves to systematic theology, before moving to application (Browning 1991:5, 39). Without moving from practice to theory, it is impossible to practise theology. Firstly, the practical theologian needs to develop an initial understanding of a particular practice. Then, he/she must reflect critically on the theory in the praxis throughout the hermeneutical conversation. This critical conversation then transforms the first practice into a new second practice.

Gerkin (1986:54) refers to practical theology as narrative practical theology. He understands narrative practical theology as an ongoing hermeneutical process within the immediate storied context of ministry. Müller (1996:5) agrees with Gerkin, writing:

Practical theology is an ongoing, systematically structured hermeneutical process that endeavours to enlighten and renew human acts that relates to the narrative of the Christian faith community.

Seen hermeneutically, there are two narrative structures in narrative practical theology: the story of the human activity, and God's story. Firstly, a narrative in human activity is a unit portraying some meaning, in an endeavour to provide a frame for an experience lived (Epston 1998:11). These stories, which we tell about ourselves, are not merely ways to describe our lives, but ways to form and give meaning to our lives (Müller 1999:8). The story of human activity attempts to make sense of the world and give structure to reality. "Humans are in some sense rooted in, or find their deepest structural framework in, a narrative or story of some kind" (Gerkin 1986:26). Therefore, knowing people's identity, past, situation, and future, is to live in and through a story (Willow & Swinton 2000:15).

As a researcher, I position myself within the narrative paradigm. The narrative paradigm provides us with a central role which helps us to understand people and to communicate with them through stories (Morgan 2000:5). Thus, in order to understand the lives, thoughts, and feelings of the Korean elderly, we need to know the stories of the Korean elderly regarding their situation and problems. In the narrative structure, I shall examine the stories of five elderly Korean people for concerns, conflict, and problems in parent care. With this approach, the "problem becomes a separate entity and thus external to the person or relationship that was ascribed to the problem" (White & Epston 1990:38).

Secondly, the narrative practical theological approach deals not only with human experiences in the world, but also with God's revelation in order to portray God's stories to people (Peterson 1997:41). Christian stories shape the character and lives of Christian communities and individuals (Browning 1991:44-45). Without a story, the Bible would not have the meanings it has. But the Bible consists of "a series of clusters of stories," such as the origins of people, the history of the Christian community, and God's revelation (Gerkin 1986:26, 49). Thus, the identity of the Christian should be rooted in the Christian story, whose significant theme is God's activity (Polling 1988:88). In this process, God's story functions as the practice of the normative story. According to the discernment of God's story, "practical theological reflection is in an interpretive process which takes place in the midst of unfolding situations and seeks to understand and shape those situations" (Browning 1991:51; Osmer 1990:227).

Narrative practical theology is a hermeneutical event that deals with God's encounter and the context of human experience (Louw 1998:96-97). In the light of this framework, Browning (1991:50) describes an important point about hermeneutics as follows:

> A hermeneutical dialogue with classic texts is not just a solitary conversation between one interpreter and his or her texts. In the situation of a congregation, it should be a community effort involving several people and their respective horizons in a dialogue with the classic texts.

This process implicates a dialogical relationship as communal understanding of hermeneutics "between the issues and problems involved in the particular human situation at hand and the core metaphorical meanings of the Christian story." In this dialogue within a narrative practical theology, both stories become open to continuous re-evaluation and re-interpretation, thus the research never ends, but has an open ending as a new story (Müller *et al* 2001: 90; Gerkin 1986:60; 1991:19).

1.3 Research methodology

1.3.1 The four movements advocated by Don Browning

In *Fundamental Practical Theology,* Browning defines practical theology as a critical reflection on the dialogue between the Christian story and the story of contemporary culture, and demonstrates the method of practical theology by making use of four movements (Browning 1991:36). He distinguishes a fundamental practical theology from a traditional practical theology, which was a separate field of theology.

According to Browning (1991:7), the whole theology needs to be oriented toward praxis, through the theory of fundamental practical theology. He points out that the whole theology has to be practical fundamentally. He defines fundamental practical theology in following ways:

> I will be claming that Christian theology should be seen as practical through and through at its very heart. Historical, systematic, and practical theology (in the more specific sense of the term) should be seen as subspecialities of the larger and more encompassing discipline called fundamental practical theology. Many will think this claim to be imperialistic. I think that it is the natural outcome of the rebirth of practical philosophy and its implication for theology (Browning 1991:7-8).

Browning contributed to the search for the model of the relationship between theology and practice in this book. He attempts to move practical theology beyond "the one-way application of theology to practice." In order to achieve this, he suggests a method of practical thinking that moves from "practice to

historical theology, systematic theology and ethics, and then back to strategic theology" (Wimberly 1992:110).

Browning employs descriptive, historical, systematic, and strategic movements to validate contemporary ministerial practices in the book. These four movements follow not only the dialogue as narrative orientation, but also the practice-theory-practice model, so that it can be related to the positioning of narrative practical theology (Browning 1991:39, 81). These movements will form the basis of this study.

These four categories from fundamental practical theology can be explained as follows: Firstly, a *descriptive movement* provides "a thick description of situation." In order to describe contemporary culture and real life stories, this descriptive theology needs the help of the human or social sciences: sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy of education, administrative sciences, communications, drama, literature, and visual and plastic arts (Browning 1991:94; Fowler 1983:153). Non-Christian texts and sources of history and sociology would be used in order to obtain information regarding, and a description of, the intergenerational conflict surrounding family support of the Korean elderly (Yuen 2002:10). This movement will indicate a "description of lived experience," which will be presented in Chapter 2 (Poling & Miller 1985:70).

Secondly, a *historical movement* is the interpretation of the situation from the first movement in the light of normative Christian classic sources (Browning 1991:49). After describing concrete social situations and practices, it is necessary to reflect upon the analysed result with biblical text and the historical tradition of the church, as well as thoughts of contemporary Christian thinkers with which the church validates its practice. This movement will be examined and discussed in chapter 3.

Thirdly, a systematic movement is for fusing the horizons between the implicit in

contemporary practices and the implied in the practices of normative Christian sources (Browning 1991:51). The goal of this movement is to develop the "criteria for testing the practical validity claims of the Christian faith" (Loder 1993:330).

Finally, the last step of a fundamental practical theology is a strategic practical movement, which enables a return to the proximate situation that deals with "the development of guidelines and specific plans for a particular community" (Browning 1991:58; Poling & Miller 1985:97). This last movement is a recurrent phase to the practice of theology, that is, applied theology, and is composed of religious education, pastoral care, preaching, liturgy, and social ministries (Browning 1991:8). Chapter 4 will combine the final two movements: systematic and strategic.

1.3.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is focused on finding meaning and quality. This tradition is aimed at interpreting and describing (Willig 2001:9). While quantitative research is based on observations that are converted into distinct units, which are then compared to other units through statistical analysis, qualitative research "generally examines people's words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways, to more clearly represent the situation as experienced by the participants" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:2). This means, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) point out, "that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." Since qualitative research is committed to the interpretive understanding of human experience that people attach to everyday life, I believe it fits in with a narrative practical theology as my positioning and my study for the loneliness of the Korean elderly (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:4).

I will be using conversational interviews to allow interaction with my participants,

which makes the interviewee an active participant in shaping the conversation with the researcher. In this model, the interviewee stands as a conversational partner, in contrast to interviewing from a positivist model, which denies "the significance of cultural distinctions," and is thus not useful for hearing the personal voice (Rubin & Rubin 1995:7-12, 32).

In an attempt to accomplish these purposes for qualitative research, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* by Rubin & Rubin (1995) is employed in this thesis. It will also give reference to the above four movements and be used to better hear and understand the loneliness crisis of the elderly in the realm of parent care in Korea.

1.4 Delimitations

Firstly, this study's scope is confined to the Korean society. The exploration of family support of the elderly will cover the period from traditionally hierarchical family structure (the end of fourteen century) to the present time. Specifically, this study will deal with the intergenerational conflict in the Korean situation.

Secondly, this study is limited to helping the Christian community in Korea. Although there are many non-Christian families who are also struggling with intergenerational conflict regarding family support of the elderly, the main task of this thesis is to help the Christian family to build reconciliation through open dialogue.

Thirdly, the means of open dialogue between the aging parents and the adult children is confined to an examination and implementation of the Church Round Table's philosophy as communicability for the problem of the intergenerational conflict.

1.5 Research outline

This study is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1, as the introduction of this study, will contain the research problem/ theme, positioning, methodology, delimitations, and research outline.

Chapter 2 will deal with the stories of the loneliness crisis of the elderly in family support of the elderly of Korea, and will engage in descriptive theology according to Browning's method of four movements. It will examine the historical and cultural background, as well as the social situation and changes regarding the elderly with family. In addition, Chapter 2 will research the voices of the Korean elderly to identify their problems and concerns through interviews.

In Chapter 3, after observing the context of the loneliness crisis of the elderly in parent care and through the interviews conducted, the interpretation of the Christian story will be constructed. The chapter looks at historical theology, and the teaching of the Bible and contemporary Christian thinkers will be epitomised as a normative Christian perception of the stories of the elderly in family support. In addition, it will explore historical interpretations of the conflict of intergenerational relationship in the Korean society

Having examined the experience and context of loneliness among the elderly in Chapter 2 and 3, Chapter 4 will review the fusion of horizons between understanding the implicit contemporary practices of the loneliness crisis of the elderly, and the interpretation implied in its practices of the normative Christian resources according to systematic theology. In order to arrive at the fusion of these two horizons, the concept of the Church Round Table will be introduced and examined as communicability for intergenerational conflict. In exploring the Church Round Table, several types of literary theories and theorists will be examined and taken into account.

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Chapter 5 is based on a strategic approach, which will make suggestions for constructing praxis for open dialogue within the intergenerational conflict. This will be explored according to James Fowler's six stages of faith (1978, 1981) and will include three case studies which will provide practical strategies for open dialogue to arrive reconciliation in the context the Korean family and church.

The final Chapter will sum up the findings of this study and reflect upon the conclusions reached. Recommendations for further research will be made.

CHAPTER 2

FAMILY SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY IN KOREA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical history and present context of family support for the elderly in Korea, where the cultural forces of traditional filial responsibility and individualism have created conflicts between elderly parents and adult children.

In this chapter I will review the traditional elderly, families, and family support in Korea. Then I will discuss several factors, such as social, demographic, and cultural changes, that have influenced the family support system. Thirdly, the changing image and status of the Korean elderly will be considered with particular focus on modernisation theory and ageism. Fourthly, I will deal with the change of family support, intergenerational conflicts, and the loneliness of the elderly. Finally, empirical interpretations, based on qualitative interviewing, that are relevant to this study will be discussed.

2.2 The traditional elderly, families, and family support

2.2.1 The elderly in history

2.2.1.1 Japanese colonial period (1910-1945)

Before 1876, Korea was a closed society that had the nickname "The Hermit Kingdom" because the experience of many invasions from China and Japan

resulted in a policy of international isolation. In 1876 Korea was forcefully pulled into the modern era because of the request for a commercial treaty with Japan (Pilat 1994:33-35). This was the prelude to the more threatening Japanese involvement with Korea that culminated in the annexation of Korea in 1910.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Korea had to adapt to the forced colonial rule of Japan. The Japanese colonial rule of 1910-1945 in Korea was the most humiliating era in the entire history of Korea. During this period, Japan attempted to lay the groundwork for institutional control of Korea, devastating every aspect of Korean life (Kim 1995:91). The integration of currency was accomplished, transport and communications were controlled by the Japanese, and all land-holdings became the property of the Japanese government (Simons 1995:126). Furthermore, since Japan's invasion of China in 1937, the Korean industry under the control of the Japanese Empire was forced to support the military program for the Japanese army's advance into the continent, which meant that the Korean people had to struggle to provide war materials and foods (Kim 1995:100-104).

The Japanese tried to erase not only Korea's natural resources, but also Korean culture by forcing Koreans to adopt Japanese names and participate in Japanese rituals, and by prohibiting the Korean language from being taught in schools. Korean-language publications, including newspapers, were subjected to thorough inspection under the Japanese censors, and in the end they were compelled to close. The use of the Korean language was now regarded as a rebellious activity (Simons 1995:126-131). In addition, Korean women and girls were abducted to serve as sex slaves for the Japanese forces. About 200,000 women were brought to the battlegrounds and then required to have sexual relationships with a dozen or more Japanese soldiers each day. Such sexual exploitation continued from 1932 until 1945, ending with Japan's final defeat in World War II (Simons 1995:150-151). The Korean people experienced a helpless captive state for about four decades without any hope of freeing themselves from colonial oppression. Those who were brutalised and ravaged

totally by the Japanese are today's current old generation.

Korea finally attained independence in August of 1945; however, she still had difficulties with self-government. She was in turmoil for the four years (1945-1949) that foreign powers had been forcefully in control. The foreign powers that intervened did so only to the extent that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union wanted the other to control Korea. The Soviet Union wanted a Communist government in place, while the United States insisted on a democratic, capitalist system. Thus, the Soviet Union occupied the country north of the 38th parallel, while American troops remained south of it. The Korean problem of a separated government was not an indigenous problem, but rather an international problem resulting from a struggle between the two external powers, the United States and the Soviet Union (Lowe 2000:10-16).

2.2.1.2 The Korean War (1950-1952)

In June 1950, South Korea was attacked by the armed forces of North Korea. It was the beginning of the Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1952 and resulted in the partitioning of the peninsula and which grew out of the ideological conflict between North and South Korea. In South Korea, the war left some 230,000 wounded, 300,000 permanently handicapped, and 100,000 orphaned, as well as one million tuberculosis cases. Exact records for North Korean casualties are not available, but they would probably be similar to those of South Korea (Kim 1988:3).

War resulted in the devastation of all industry over the entire peninsula. The worth of destroyed buildings and capital goods was nearly the same as the total 1953 Gross National Product (GNP). Economic and export growth were clearly disappointing, in addition to the chaotic state of the manufacturing sector (Moreira 1995:32-33). Every Korean person struggled in severely destitute situations resulting from the war. Furthermore, an estimated five million people were separated from their families during the course of the war (Kim 1988:3-4).

The problem of the separation of families has remained a critical issue up until the present day in Korea. Those who live in South Korea and North Korea respectively do not even communicate freely with one another.

By July 1953, a truce agreement between South Korea and North Korea had been concluded and Korea has remained the only divided nation in the world for more than 50 years, while the two Koreas are still at war (Olk 2004:5). Moreover, in the Korean peninsula today, there is always the possibility of nuclear warfare from North Korea, which poses a serious threat to global security (Omestad 2004:133).

2.2.1.3 Economic growth: one of the four great dragons in East Asia

As recently as 1960 Korea was a typical low-income developing country with a resource-poor and underdeveloped labour force, as well as dreary poverty. In 1961, the *per capita* gross product of Korea was US$ 82 and Korea was considered one of the poorest nations in the world (Kim & Park 2003:171, 177). There was massive assistance from the United States. In the periods 1956-60 and 1961-65 respectively, US military assistance to Korea amounted to US$ 1,275.7 million and US$ 974 million. Korea was the third largest US aid-receiving country in the world at that time, after Vietnam and Israel (Song 1990:5).

Moreover, the continued conflict with North Korea and the heavy military involvement made it difficult to develop long-term, stabilising economic polices. It was not until the Park Chung-hee regime took over, in line with "the First Five Year Plan for Economic Development," in 1962 that economic development was given top priority. The basic philosophy of President Park was "nation building through export promotion" (Chung 2003:892; Cole & Lyman 1971:193). Government undertook an ambitious economic development plan and foreign investment and loans began to pour into Korea. Since then, the Korean economy has been dramatically transformed such that the *per capita* GNP

increased to US$ 1,640 by 1981, and US$ 10,000 by 1997, which was followed by Korea joining the elite circle of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Kim & Park 2003:171-172).[3]

At the beginning of the 1970s, Japan was recognised as the first country in Asia to experience rapid economic development. However, by the late 1970s, the focus of global economic growth had changed to Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs), the four great dragons of East Asia, namely the states of Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea (Li 2001:20). In the past four decades, Korea has accomplished truly impressive economic growth; as a result, she has been one of most rapidly industrialising and modernising countries in the world.

The noteworthy economic experience of Korea is closely related to the educational aspirations and investments of Korean people (Kim & Park 2003:172). People believed that investment in education was the best way to guarantee not only individual improvement, but also economic growth. A system of compulsory primary school education was introduced in 1945 and it contributed to the relatively high level of educational attainment in Korea. As a result, the literacy rate had increased from 22 percent in 1945 to 90 percent by the early 1960s, and it is currently over 97 percent, one of the highest in the world. By 2000, this high level of education had reached 71.8 percent in the population over the age of 25, who had either a senior high school diploma or a college degree (Park   2003:89, 94; Kim & Park 2003:17).

Such investment in education and attained educational excellence resulted in the advancement of human resource conditions that became the basic and instrumental source of the rapid expansion of labour-intensive manufactured goods (Park 2003:89). In Korea, education has been one of the biggest benefits of achieving economic development.

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[3] In 1998, Korea experienced a severe economic crisis and its economy shrank more than 30% under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) jurisdiction. However, from 1999, Korea's economy gradually began to recover and in early 2002, it recovered its pre-1997 crisis level (Chung 2003:891).

2.2.1.4 The elderly in the modern era of Korea

Korea has faced an incredible change from the worst circumstances after the wars, to joining the OECD; and has arisen "out of ashes like a modern-day phoenix" (Cho 1998:23). Park (2003:89) explains the reasons for this development:

> After a long period of colonial exploitation (1910-1945) and further conflict throughout the Korean War (1950-1953), both the aspirations and eagerness of the Korean people to improve their living conditions were very strong in the 1960s and 1970s. Koreans were willing to dedicate themselves fully to hard work. The abundant supply of labor, combined with the relatively high educational background and strong motivation of the work, not only provided very favorable initial conditions for the Korean economy to take off, but also has continued to be the primary source of growth in the Korean economy thereafter.

The success of Korea after "the era of extreme suffering" is based on the Korean people's faith in Korea's future and a fierce zeal to reassert Korean development. There are people involved in the story of success: the elderly who were eager to work hard for long hours every day during rapid industrialisation. The elderly are the true pioneers of modern times in Korea. Without their enthusiasm for work and education for their children, it might have been impossible to expect the present economic development of Korea.

When they were young, the elderly experienced the bitterness of colonial rule, war, and social turmoil of the last century, and they sacrificed themselves for their families, placing particular emphasis on education for their children (Yoon *et al* 2000:129).

2.2.2 The traditional Korean family and family support

2.2.2.1 Familism

2.2.2.1.1 Korean familism

There is an old Korean saying: "A happy family life leads to successful social achievement" (*ga-wha-man-sa-sung*). It represents the family as a pillar of society (Yang 2003:121). Traditional Korean society is characterised by familism: family and familial solidarity assume a position of ascendance over individual rights and interests. Cho (2000:340) defines familism as "the value system that strongly assigns first priority to the family. Individual interest was to be sacrificed for family interest, and the family was favored and emphasized over other groups." Familism, with its emphasis on the collective characteristic, contrasts with Western individualism, which favours independence and self-sufficiency (Sung 2000:45-46).

Familism is based on collectivism values and filial responsibilities as a means of reaffirming family ties rather than individualist families (Pyke 1999:661). It is grounded in the belief that adult children have a moral obligation to take care of parents as a debt because they were raised by their parents. Despite the advancing industrialisation of Korea, extended family patterns remain more traditional and familistic than most Western industrialised societies (Yoon *et al* 2000:126).

The greatest goal of the traditional Korean family was the prosperity of the present family and the continued existence of the family through an endless sequence of parent-child relationships from the progenitor to the future descendants. These goals naturally led to the emphasis on the family as a group. In this sense, an individual was recognised only as a member of a family. In other words, without family the individual could not exist in the Korean

community (Choi & Kim 2003:37-38). An individual's status in the society was largely related to the status of his/her family in society, whether noble or common, scholars or peasants. Family status depended on the number of ancestors who had taken high government positions.

2.2.2.1.2 Factors of familism constitution

There are three factors that have developed traits of familism in Korea. The first factor was Confucianism, which was adopted in Korea about 2,000 years ago. Initially, the influence of Confucian philosophy was limited to political and academic areas. Confucianism was chosen as the truly national ethic during the period of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), influencing all aspects of individual and social life, including politics and scholarship (Kim & Park 2003:176). With well-defined family ethics as its centre, Confucianism emphasised the importance of family and family relationships and hence it has characterised Korea as a "family state" (Yoon *et al* 2000:122; Cho 1998:201). According to this view, the family is regarded as the prototype for all relationships and society is seen as an extension of the family.

The second factor in developing familism was the agricultural-economic structure of traditional Korean society, which necessitated the collective labour of all family members. Without "family solidarity and lineage," it was impossible to sustain an agriculturally-based society because the family was the basic unit for production and consumption. To be able to afford to survive, it was necessary to emphasise the family that can supply and produce all objects required for them to make a living (Lee 1998:251).

The third factor was the historical experience of the Korean people. Owing to the geographical situation of Korea, Koreans had suffered countless invasions and harassment from other countries, such as China and Japan, during the last 3,000 years. They had to struggle to defend themselves and to resist submission to the invading nations. In times of foreign invasions, Koreans

received little protection from their governments, and even in times of peace they were often oppressed by the central government and exploited by the local officials. These historical experiences led Koreans to look upon family as the only means of security (Cho 1998:201-202). Most people believed that there was nothing but family that a person could trust. In this historical process, exclusive family-centeredness dominated Korean loyalty, over government or public organisation.

2.2.2.2 Paternalistic nature of Korean society

2.2.2.2.1 Patriarchal families

In the traditional Korean family, the "patriarch" represented his family as the family head. It was a patrilineal society, which meant that the family was defined and maintained throughout the male line (Gupta *et al* 2002:7). In this structure, the father was responsible for the behaviour of his family members and had the final authority in making important family decisions, such as selecting a marriage partner or establishing the branch-home of sons. When necessary, he not only ordered something to be done to other family members, but also punished them himself. In traditional agrarian societies, the elderly could possess and direct productive property in a farm. In such societies, the elderly could ensure their independence and security, and retained firm control over their children, especially sons, until their later life (Hutter 1998:436).

In the agriculturally-based traditional family system, the role of the Korean elderly was important as the unit of production. Regardless of age, it was possible for the elderly to work to obtain a small gross product in the society. Furthermore, the elderly could teach and instruct the young on the proper methods and techniques for agriculture from the experience and wisdom that they had garnered throughout their lives (Park 2003:85-56). Therefore, the Korean elderly had superior authority in the family, and their children showed unconditional obedience to their decisions (Hutter 1998:431; Williams &

Nussbaum 2001:266). Lee (1998:252) defines the three specific roles of the patriarch as the household head as: 1) representing the family in society, 2) supervising family members, and 3) controlling family property.

In the structure of patrilineage, the eldest son could ascend to a higher social status as the patriarch of the family than other younger brothers and sisters. The younger sons or daughters left the parents' house after marriage to establish their branch families. The eldest son and his wife, however, had to live with his elderly parents to take care of their parents and grandparents.

2.2.2.2.2 The status and role of women in patriarchy

Whereas traditional Korean men were described as being extremely strong, under the patrilineal family the assessment of women's status was much lower and they held no public positions. For example, there are two Korean sayings, "men are the heavens, women are the earth"[4] and "A woman must follow three men in her lifetime: her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and finally her eldest son in old age," that indicate that women were discriminated against in society, especially by men (Cho 1998:187, 190). In patriarchy, a woman was taught from childhood the following values and rules: 1) she should not expect more than what she deserves, 2) she should stay at home and concentrate on serving male folk, and 3) A daughter-in-law should not even lend or borrow a household item without the permission of her parents-in-law.

There were four important roles for women in the traditional Korean family. The first and foremost role of a woman was to give birth to as many sons as possible. No matter how good a daughter-in-law and wife she might be, she could not have recognition from families and society until she gave birth to a son. Bearing a son was most the important and the greatest pressure on

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[4] This saying describes women as the earth that must follow men. Men are the heavens, high and destined to lead. Heaven is strong with the principle of "one" while the earth is low and soft with the principle of "many" (Cho 1998:190).

Korean women (Gupta *et al* 2002:19). The woman's second role was to serve her parents-in-law well. She had to learn about their habits, personalities, and preferences. This meant that it was required of her to spend much time and energy to care for them, both emotionally and psychologically. The third role of a woman was that of housewife: to be responsible for "inside" work in the house, while the "outside" was in charge of the male as family head (Lee 1998:252). The last role of a woman was to worship the ancestors as house gods. Performing ritual service that honoured the ancestors was considered the most important work that they had.

2.2.2.3 Filial piety ideology

2.2.2.3.1 Filial piety

The most distinctive characteristic of the traditional Korean family was the hierarchical structure among the family members. In this rigid hierarchical system, the relationships between each family member were matters of much greater concern than emotional closeness. Among many family relationships, the father-son relationship was dominant in the traditional family system in that fathers were the main providers. Fathers valued their sons as an indispensable labour force and the only source of security in their later lives. Therefore, the father-son relationship was enormously important in the agricultural economic structure (Choi 2000:32-33).[5]

Within an agrarian economic society, the significance of the nature of a father-son relationship has taken the form of filial piety in the social order of the Korean society. The son, especially the eldest son of a family, is expected to live with his parents and grandparents to support them financially and emotionally until their death. Old age support, according to the value of filial piety, has brought about exclusive kinship systems for son-preference in Korea. Many

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[5] In this case, the father-daughter relationship was not important because women's labour was regarded as being merely trivial domestic work compared to that of men.

Korean aged have lived with their adult children, especially their sons, because they have received full support from their sons. The support for the elderly would seem to be one of the most important reasons for the tendency of Korean people to prefer sons over daughters (Gupta *et al* 2002:15).[6]

Browning and Miller-Malemore (1999:95-96) describe the Confucian moral regarding filial piety in Korean family as: "Children were trained to honor their parents, especially their fathers, and elder sons were expected to serve and care for their parents in their old age." Therefore, when parents can no longer take care of themselves, it is an indispensable requirement in the ethics of filial piety that the elderly should be supported by their adult children (Sung 2001:70; 2000:45). Park and Kim (1992:399) make the point about the family's moral responsibility to care for the elderly: "growing old represents signs of grace, respect and piety, and age is the first consideration when Koreans communicate with each other."

Within this tradition, if the aged did not receive support and help from their children, problems would occur. They might feel frustrated and struggle because filial piety is not a choice, but a moral duty according to the Confucian tradition of Korean society.[7] In addition, if adult children did not practise their obligation of filial piety as expected, they might be labelled by society as a very shameful person. Therefore, in case of insincere fulfilment of filial responsibility, it might happen that severe tensions arise between parents and children (Hong & Liu 2000:177-178).

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[6] Higher son preference in Korea created a severe imbalance of sex ratio at birth, which has a higher male to female ratio than the normal biological range of around 110 boys for every 100 girls born in 2000 (Lee & Kim 2003:41).
[7] Filial piety is the cornerstone of social effort in Korea, and East Asian nations have shared its ideals for many generations. Filial piety is called "Hyo" in Korean, "Hsiao" in Chinese, and "Ko" in Japanese (Sung 2000:46). Elliott and Campbell (1993:133) report a similar attitude for filial piety among the three East Asian countries – Korea, China, and Japan: "Expectations regarding family care of the elderly" in Korean and Chinese cultures strongly resemble those found in Japan, "as all three of these East Asian cultures have been much influenced by Confucian ethical conceptions of filial piety."

2.2.2.3.2 The morale of filial piety

Filial piety has to be imbued with respect and warmth. Among the categories of filial piety, respect is the most important. Material goods, such as finance, and care-giving alone do not suffice for family support. Even more, it calls for the attitude of true reverence and concern for the elderly that distinguishes filial piety from the humanitarian caring for one's pets (Ng 2002:300). There is the excerpt taken from the Analects that relates to Confucius' teachings about the attitude of filial piety: "Tzu-yu asked about filial piety. Confucius said, 'Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If there is no feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference?'" (Chan 1963:23).

Confucius envisions harmonious relations among all members of society, and the hallmark of these moral relations is filial piety. Thus, a respectful attitude is demanded towards all old people, even those who do not belong to one's own family. In a society where filial piety was practised, the elderly were revered and obeyed, not alienated. In a 19th century translation of the classic, *The Teaching of Filial Piety*, Mencius stresses, "As I care for my own parents, I care for other elderly persons as well" (Lang 1946:10-11). Hence, filial piety is not confined to within a particular family system, but extends to the neighbourhood and society.

2.2.2.3.3 Family support for aging parents

In Korea, family support for the elderly has age-old cultural roots. In the traditional Korean family, several generations lived together under the male head of the family, who enjoyed absolute authority and commanded obedience and respect from his children. In this culture, the eldest male was always the head of the family, even if he no longer had economic ability and was very old. For the part of children, they were expected to live with their parents and grandparents. To live with elderly parents was the most basic requirement in the

practice of filial piety (Lee *et al* 2000:273).

Sung (2000:45) identified family support based on filial piety for the elderly in the following statements:

> Filial piety is reflected in the practice of family-centered care and support for parents. Family support is characterized by cohesive ties between family members, family responsibility, interdependence between the members, family harmony, the individual as a unit of the family, and the pooling of individual members' resources to promote the well-being of parents and the family.

Family support can be, on the one hand, the objective types of tasks needed on a daily basis like meal preparation, household help, shopping, and financial help. This is to say, instrumental/material support. On the other hand, it is also emotional/effective support based on advice, comfort, and duty (Qureshi & Walker 1990:245; Johnson 1988:172-173). Based on the traditional support of the family, Korean adult children had endeavoured to care for and fully support their parents and grandparents, showing respect to them.

2.3 Limitations of the family support system

For the Korean elderly person, family is the predominant mode of support. The traditional family support system in Korea was characterised by familism, patrilineage, and filial piety as the guiding moral principle for intergenerational relationships. As a unique aspect of the traditional Korean family, filial piety emphasised children's obedience to the wishes of parents and total devotion to their welfare. This cultural value was rooted in Confucianism, which was the dominating state ideology in Korea's history, and thus the practice of filial piety had been strongly supported by the society and the people. However, in the last

four decades, Korea has undergone dramatic social restructuring that has influenced the family support system. There are a number of factors that account for the decline in family support of the elderly in Korea.

In this section, I shall examine various influences occurring today, which have limited an adult child's capacity and willingness to support the elderly in three areas: 1) industrialisation and urbanisation, 2) demographic transition of an aging population, and 3) the advent of Western culture.

2.3.1 Social trend: rapid industrialisation and urbanisation

2.3.1.1 Migration to urban areas

As mentioned earlier (2.2.1.3), in Korea, industrialisation has proceeded very rapidly since 1962, after the experience of colonial exploitation, the devastation of the war, and absolute poverty with social disorder. In addition, Korea has one of the fastest growing urbanised populations in the world, with an annual urban growth rate of 4.7 percent. In 1960 the rate of urban population growth was 56 percent, by 1980 it had jumped to 67 percent, and by 1994 it had increased to 80 percent of the total population.[8] The capital, Seoul, has a population of over 10 million and is one of the largest cities in the world (Inoue 1998:39).

The rapidly increasing rate of industrialisation has led to massive migration of the younger generation from rural to urban areas. Heavy industries and new industrial centres were established in urban areas, which caused the young generation to be widely dispersed from their elderly parents. The percentage of workers in agricultural employment has dropped sharply from 63 percent of total employment in 1963 to 11 percent in 2000. In the meantime, the proportion of workers in non-farming employment increased at an average rate of 5.4 percent

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[8] Compared with United States, in which the percentage of urban population in 1994 was 76%.

per year (Park 2003:85). This means that many young people have departed their hometowns in rural areas to find new jobs in urban areas. Even if adult children remain with the same employer, they might frequently be forced to move to other industrial areas for various reasons. In such cases, aging parents tend to prefer to remain in their own homes rather than move to an unknown place with the children's family. In addition, many young men and women have migrated to other places, mostly urban areas, in order to obtain the opportunity of higher education, leaving their elderly parents behind (Kim 1999:104-105).

As a result of the exodus of younger people for the purpose of career or education, there are now very few families in rural areas who do not have a departed member. Indeed, there are almost no families in which adult children live with their parents. The migration has made it difficult to live together and provide family support to the elderly parents (Yoon *et al* 2000:13). Thus, the swift industrialisation and urbanisation of Korea has resulted in a geographic mobility that is not compatible with extended family relationships.

2.3.1.2 Increased population of woman in the labour force

Another great change that industrialisation and urbanisation has brought about is increased participation of women in the labour force. In comparison to women in previous times, women today have an equal right to acquire the opportunity of education and employment to men. The status of woman has been growing and there is an increasing number of women competing for job opportunities (Lee *et al* 2000:274). A rising number of workingwomen is likely to affect the family support for elderly people. Ogawa (1990:643) asserts that while increased participation of woman in the labour market gives an advantage towards economic development, it might allow the psychological and emotional well-being of the elderly to deteriorate because of declining family care for elderly parents.

In Korea, because of economic development, the number of workingwomen is

increasing. In addition, the attitudes of children of the younger Korean parents are associated with woman's employment. Korean parents have full responsibility for their children, not merely for their education, but for their marriage or overall success in the future. They even compete with each other to provide "better education, better care, and more material support" to their children, and for this reason, many younger mothers are eager to seek jobs (Kwon 2003:30-31).

Many married women who were once the most valuable caretakers of dependent older parents are now working in outside employment for various reasons. The proportion of the married working women increased from 36.9 percent in 1970 to 47.9 percent in 2000 (Choi & Chang 2002:24). Larger proportions of women in the work field of Korea mean that there are fewer potential caregivers at home to care for elderly parents.

2.3.2 Demographic trend: demographic transition of population aging

2.3.2.1 Declining mortality and fertility

Korea has undergone dramatic social change in terms of family support in the last four decades. One of the causes of the change is rapid demographic transition. Korea has experienced a decline in fertility and mortality since the 1960s; as a result, there has been a rise in the proportion of older people to younger ones (Park 2003:26-33). Such changes in the age structure of society have influenced the situation of parent care.

Aging is a combined product of the demographic processes of mortality and fertility. The mortality rate in Korea decreased from 35 per 1,000 in 1910, to 5.0 per 1,000 in 1990 because of the development of medical technologies and

industrialisation (see Table 1) (Yoon *et al* 2000:123-124; Kim 1999:22). With a lessening in mortality since the 1960s, the fertility change was initiated and remained until the implementation of a program to control fertility by government. Owing to the powerful practice of government's fertility program, the total fertility rate was greatly reduced from 6.0 percent in 1960 to 1.6 percent in 1990. In 2002, the fertility rate was recorded as 1.17 percent, one of the lowest levels in the world (Yoon *et al* 2000:124; Park *et al* 2003:169).

Table 1. **Crude Death Rate and Average Life Span for Korea 1910-2001** (Choi & Chang 2002:15; Park *et al* 2003:23)

Year	Crude death rate (%)	Average life span	
		Male	**Female**
1910	35	-----	-----
1960	16	51.1	53.7
1980	8	62.3	70.5
1990	5	67.7	75.9
2001	----	72.8	80.0

The decline of the mortality and fertility rates contributed to an increased average life span. As shown in Table 1, the average life span rose from 51.1 years for males and 53.7 years for females in 1960 to 72.8 for males 80.0 years for females in 2001 (Choi & Chang 2002:15).

2.3.2.2 Increasing population aging

Coupled with declining mortality and high fertility rates, the average life span has substantially increased the proportion of older persons. According to Table 2, while most developed countries underwent the demographic transition for aging population slowly, it is happening at a much faster pace in the developing world, like Korea. In France and America it took 115 years and 71 years, respectively, for the population aged 65 and over to double from 7 to 14

percent. As the table reveals, it is estimated that this same change would take only 19 years for Korea. Korea is thus experiencing the fastest growth for percentage of older population in the world.

Table 2.   Selected Demographic Characteristics of Some Nations (Park *et al* 2003:20, 229)

Country	Years reached			Years required	
	7%	14%	20%	7%→14%	14%→20%
France	1864	1979	2020	115	41
America	1942	2013	2028	71	15
England	1929	1976	2021	47	45
Japan	1970	1994	2006	24	15
Korea	2000	2019	2026	19	7

The problem is that there is a growing concern as to who will take care of those older people. Such a striking increase of the elderly population in recent decades means that there will be increasingly large numbers of older persons that may need assistance (Kinsella 1995:50). In addition, the number of adult children to provide support for the aged is becoming relatively smaller than in previous time periods because of lower fertility rates. As a result, looking after the elderly might cause a burden to the family, especially to adult children. Most Korean elderly have been taken care of in intergenerationally extended households. However, in recent years, the availability of kin to support them is said to be declining.

2.3.3 Cultural trend: the advent of Western culture

2.3.3.1 The advent of individualism

There is a fundamental underlying difference in relationship patterns between Eastern and Western cultures. While Western society is characteristic of

individual assumption, in Asian cultures, the basic structure of the personality of relationships generally de-emphasises individualism and emphasises social relationships between individuals (Kim & Choi 2003:32-35). Following Asian nature, Koreans have placed a high value on relation-oriented dimensions for an interdependent view. They are eager to spend huge amounts time and energy to maintain good relationships with each other in their community (Lim & Choi 1996:122).

The organisation of the United States military regime in the Korean peninsula has, remarkably, caused Korea to start to accept Western culture (Yoon *et al* 2000:121). Once Koreans recovered the power of their nation after the defeat of Japan in Second World War, they came into contact with the United States of America in 1945, exposing them to Western culture.

The philosophical tendency of the West is based on Liberalism – that the primary unit of social life is the individual, whose rights are supreme (Kim 1999:23). Sung (2000:45-46) characterised the Western value of individualism as "self-determination, independence, autonomy, respect for the dignity of an individual, the success and well-being of an individual, and strong emphasis on the nuclear family." The introduction of Western culture, especially individualism and rationalism, has caused traditional filial piety in Korea, which was founded on unconditional respect for and full support of the elderly parents, to decline. From the influence of individualism, some Koreans have become more egocentric, especially with regards to the elderly.

In addition, recent trends indicate that some elderly think that they are responsible for their own financial well-being (Yoon *et al* 2000:126). On the part of some of the elderly, the emerging value seems to be self-sufficiency rather than family dependency (Yoon *et al* 2000:131). Increasing living standards, convenient equipment for housekeeping, and the availability of full-time or part-time helpers have apparently brought about a growing tendency for some elderly to want to live independently in their own leisure and privacy.

2.3.3.2 Declining Confucian ethics

Regarding the relationships between elderly parents and adult children, Korean society has faced the transition from hierarchical relationships to comparatively reciprocal relationships, which came from the weakening of a patriarchal family system that was influenced by Confucianism (Bengtson & Putney 2000:275-276).

Cho (1998:105) challenges the effects of Confucianism in Korean society that have brought about the basis of filial piety in the following way:

> In the early phase of recent modernization, Confucianism was criticized as an obstruction and hindrance to change. Confucianism emphasizes the vertical structure of relationships, particularly, emphasis on the obedience of younger to the elderly, and was considered authoritarian. It was opposed to the horizontal structure of a democratic society that highlights individual freedom and equality in Western society, based on democratic ideology.

In the Confucian family ideology, the most fundamental element is "the inequality of interpersonal relations," which emphasises "unequal decision-making authority" among generations (Yang 2003:122). This justifies the fact that filial piety is to respect and obey the elderly with unconditional submission. In this tradition, children were not allowed to question the will or decisions of their parents whether that decision was right or not, but only to obey to them.

However, in recent years, such authoritarian-dependency relationships between generations have shown the limitations for the expressions of filial piety. Today adult children tend to be reluctant towards such rigid family obligations based on authoritarian and patriarchal relationships (Sung 2001:72). They believe that the aspect of filial piety, which has as its emphasis the obedience and service to

their parents, has tended to rob the father-son relationship of emotional intimacy and spontaneity. Korean families no longer follow the hierarchical ideology of Confucianism regarding family support for the elderly (Yang 2003:146).

2.4 The change of the image and status of the elderly

In a few decades, the image and status of the elderly in Korea appears to have deviated increasingly from the traditional ideal of respecting them because of the transition of the societal context. In this section, I shall examine the changed image and status of Korean elderly in light of the perspectives of modernisation theory and ageism.

2.4.1 Modernisation theory

2.4.1.1 The declining image and status of the elderly

Modernisation theorists often assume that industrialisation and urbanisation deprive the elderly of many important roles in family and society. According to Cogwill and Holmes (1972:13), one of the key assumptions of modernisation theory with regard to aging is that "the role and status of the aged varies systematically with the degree of modernization of society and that modernization tends to decrease the relative status of the aged and to undermine their security within the social system."[9] According to this view, the

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[9] Osmer and Schweitzer (1997:233) define modernisation as having the following five characteristics: 1) large-scale industrialisation, including the shift from a local, rural economy to a national economy organised around the corporation; 2) widespread confidence in the power of science as a source of technological innovation and as a model of rationality; 3) movement of the population from rural settings to cities; 4) the continuing differentiation of modern institutions, especially the separation of state education from that offered by religious communities; and 5) the growth of the professions, viewed as based on a specialised body of scientific knowledge formulated and transmitted in specialised programs of higher education, with special emphasis on the emergence of the teaching profession.

elderly, who had power as owners and organisers in an agricultural-economic structure, have become devalued and can be seen as useless in modern society.

More industrialised and urbanised circumstances from the largely rural and agricultural society of the past gave people valuable advantages in their quality of life. However, in a world of modernisation the elderly can be left behind as historical remnants (Williams & Nussbaum 2001:266). While in an agrarian society the elderly could organise assets, the advent of an industrial economy deprived the elderly of the opportunity to possess and manage them. The knowledge and experiences that the elderly had built up throughout their lives in an agricultural society were less needed; as a result, the status of the elderly has been eroded in contemporary family and society (Hutter 1998:51, 436).

2.4.1.2 Modernisation and Korean elderly

The declining image and status of the elderly in Korean society corresponds to the weakened authority of the eldest male. In the traditional patrilineal society, the eldest male exercised his more-or-less absolute authority in all areas of family life, such as education, marriage, and work. The eldest male and his wife lived with their adult children in a common household on land that the family may have owned for many generations. While the family unit shared both the work and the resources of the land, the family patriarch had final authority on all family economic and social matters (Choi 1995:80-81).

However, Korea's rapid modernisation in recent decades has been gradually turning the majority of the elderly from managers of their independent household farms into mere dependent receivers. This has meant the loss of one sphere of authority and of their self-confidence, resulting in the weakening of their status. Simultaneously, children were becoming more independent and self-assertive in these areas because they could earn their living without waiting to inherit the land of the family (Mason *et al* 1998:4).

In the traditional patrilineal family system, the Korean elderly, who had superior authorship as family heads, were losing their status and role in modern family as the younger generation were better educated and earned more money than them. Today the increasing favouring of the nuclear family has seriously diminished the Korean elderly's role in organising and instructing family members. The transition of the social role of the elderly from "patriarch" to "outsider" in the family would be inconceivable to them. These changes caused the traditional extended family unit to decline from a point where three generations once lived together (Hutter 1998:51). As a result, Korean families become less concerned about the elderly, providing less support, visiting them less often, and showing less respect and obedience towards them.

2.4.2 Ageism

2.4.2.1 An understanding of ageism

'Ageism' is a relatively new term coined by the gerontologist Robert Butler to describe the prejudice against the elderly in America in the 1960s. Butler (1995:35) in *The Encyclopedia of Aging* defines ageism as follows:

> Ageism is defined as a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this for skin color and gender. Older people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, and old-fashioned in morality and skills… Ageism allows the younger generation to see older people as different from themselves; thus they suddenly cease to identify with their elders as human beings and thereby reduce their own sense of fear and dread of aging.

According to this perspective, the elderly are generally regarded as being at the

subtype level because the aging process leads to deterioration in judgment, adaptability to new circumstances, and physical strength when compared to the younger generation. For example, this could produce discrimination towards older workers based on the perception that aging reduces efficiency in the workplace (Breitung 1995:132). Modernisation has led the younger generation to seek jobs in the outside labour market, leaving the household. The expanded industrial economy has created new jobs occupied by younger people. Higher education also provides further opportunities for the young. However, at the same time, it has made a comparison of attitudes between the old generation and the young generation for the jobs. Thus, people became more negative towards older people (Hutter 1998:436).

Kite and Wagner (2002:131) group ageist attitudes into following three categories, each of which can have a positive or negative part: 1) feelings due to a person's age, 2) stereotypes about what someone is like just because the person is "of a certain age," and 3) differential treatment because of a person's advanced age.

Ageism makes it easier for many people to ignore the elderly. It allows younger people to exercise power over the elderly through strength, ability, and wealth that they keep in societal resources (Osgood 1993:169-170). In our society, the elderly tend to be described as performing poorly, old-fashioned, and inefficient, whereas youth is the standard held to have the highest value.

2.4.2.2 Ageism and the Korean elderly

Ageism can be equally applied to Korea. A number of negative images are now associated with the elderly, revealing the existence of prejudice. A survey of 396 students at a university in Korea carried out by Mo (2002:17-21) revealed the stereotypes of the elderly in a society, especially among young generations. The subjects were shown a list of 'True,' 'False,' and 'Not Sure' statements. They had to identify those they believed to be true, those they believed to be false,

and those that they were not sure of. In this survey, 55 percent believed that old age necessarily leads to senility,[10] 61.4 percent believed that the elderly cannot work as effectively as young persons,[11] and 61.6 percent believed that 10 percent of the Korean population is already at least 65 of age.[12] However, these last three assumptions are all incorrect. The prevalence of negative images of the elderly such as these, allows people to portray the elderly as an unproductive burden on society. It may also reveal a false image of the elderly.

In addition, investigation from a newspaper, 'Ohmynews' by Kim (2003:21-28) exposed the negative description of the image of the elderly. In 93.5 percent of the articles written concerning the elderly from February 2000 to September 2002 in this newspaper, the image portrayed was negative. The portrayal of the elderly in the newspaper was that they are lonely, senile, and poor, and they were characterised as feeling depreciated, ill-treated, and relatively miserable. In mass media, such as a newspaper, the treatment of this negative image of the elderly has devalued and demeaned the image of the elderly in Korean society.

The spread of ageism and the association of terms with negative connotations with the elderly is a relatively modern phenomenon, which contrasts with the depiction of traditional Korean elderly, in which the elderly should be respected. At present, many Korean elderly are considered to be reliant and poor persons with outdated ideas in society. This negative image of the elderly can result in not only a decrease in respect toward them from younger generations, but also in lower self-esteem of the elderly themselves. In agrarian societies, those who have decided and commanded most resources with authority in the home and in society are in psychological distress in light of negative perceptions of the elderly.

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[10] For this question, 37.3% gave the correct answer and 7.7% responded that they did not know.
[11] For this question, 32.7% gave the correct answer and 5.9% responded that they did not know.
[12] For this question, 11.0% gave the correct answer and 27.4% responded that they did not know. In 2000, population aging of the total population had reached 7%.

2.5 The change of family support, intergenerational conflicts, and loneliness of the elderly

2.5.1 The change of family support

2.5.1.1 The elderly in changes of living arrangements

Living arrangements, which are an important dimension of family relations, influence the daily lives of the elderly (Won & Lee 1995:315). In the modern family, changes of attitude toward filial piety have brought about a change in the actual living arrangements of the elderly. With the eroding of the practice of filial piety, co-residing is no longer a duty of adult children. Co-residence, which was a common type of living arrangement for the elderly in the past, has changed and three types of living arrangements are prevalent in Korea today.

In the first type of arrangement, the elderly live with their adult children, especially a son.[13] Whereas, in the traditional family system, it was generally the eldest son who lived with his parents, in today's family it does not have to be the eldest son. Any son who can financially afford it or whose wife is willing to live with the parents in her home can fulfil the filial responsibility. However, the traditional element still remains to some extent in that the eldest son is usually most conscious of the welfare of his elderly parents, even when he does not live with them.

Living with adult children is regarded as the most effective method for family

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[13] In a patriarchal family system like that in Korea, daughters, as the saying goes, were like "spilled water." Once spilled out into the world, nothing comes back. After marriage, daughters enter another family and must serve a new family. However, in contemporary Korean society, the status of women has been raised and daughters can support their elderly parents to some degree. Nevertheless, there are very few elderly who live with their daughters (0.7%) because of the son preference of the elderly. Many elderly still want to live with the eldest son (46.0%) or other sons (9.6%) according to a survey by Chung (1998:251).

support because children make possible every kind of care. In recent years, however, the prevalence of this type of living arrangement has rapidly declined. According to Table 3, the percentage of Korean aged 65 and over who lived with their adult children decreased from 78.1 percent in 1975 to 30.8 percent in 2000. This indicates the process of social change concerning family support that Korean society has experienced in the last four decades (Mo 1999:99; Choi & Chang 2002:17).

Table 3.   Change in Living Arrangement of the Korean Elderly (Unit:%) (Mo 1999:99; Choi & Chang 2002:17; Cho 1998:41)

Year	Living with adult children	Living with single children	Living alone	Aged couple	Other
1975	78.1	6.8	7.0		8.0
1981	69.1	11.1	19.8		----
1990	44.0	29.4	10.6	13.2	2.8
2000	30.8	23.9	16.2	28.7	0.4

The second type of living arrangement is that where adult children and the parents live separate from one another. This tendency is on the rise in Korean society. While the number of the elderly who live with their adult children has decreased, the number of elderly living separate from their adult children has increased from 7.0 percent in 1975 to 44.9 percent in 2000 (Table 3). This type of living arrangement is becoming the most popular option for Korean elderly.

In the last type of living arrangement, adult children live apart from their parents for some time after marriage and then live with their elderly parents later in life when the parents cannot care for themselves. This type of living arrangement is becoming very common. It seems to be a compromise between the demands of filial piety and its practical difficulties in an extended family.

2.5.1.2 Declining family support

In East Asian NICs – Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea – "three generation residence" and full support by adult children have been viewed as a "cultural asset" in elderly care. In *Improving Health of Older People: A World View,* Macfadyen (1990:617) states that "it is likely that Asian countries such as Singapore, the Republic of Korea, and China will parallel Japan's policies on aging, since they have comparable traditions and family support systems." In the same book, Ogawa (1990:628) asserts that the "Japanese model" of taking care of the elderly under the same roof may be a great example of a welfare policy in "combining the best of traditional and modern approaches" to provide support for the elderly.

In Korea, such investigation of Asian family traditions, where three generations live together in the same house, appears to have been possible until the 1980s because, as shown in Table 3, the majority of the elderly (69 percent) were still living with their adult children in 1981 (Mo 1999:99). However, Korean attitudes toward co-residence are changing. According to the same report, the rate of intergenerational co-residence dropped continually to 44.0 percent in 1990 and 30.8 percent in 2000. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) report for the Asian cultural preference where children give extensive support to the elderly seems to have cast doubt on the efficiency of the practice of co-residence in Korea today.

For the elderly, the type of living arrangement is a very significant dimension of their lives because it is closely related to their own support. Co-residence with adult children seems to be the best way to support the elderly because it is possible to provide most types of support, for instance, financial, emotional, and instrumental support towards them throughout co-residence (Kim 1999:114).

Needless to say, we need to be careful not to assume that the decline of co-residence means that the family support has become weak. The adult children may live apart from their parents for various social or economic reasons. If, in

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such situations, adult children can still provide economic, emotional, and physical care to their elderly parents, family support for them can be considered to exist (Hong & Byun 1998:180-181).

However, at the same time, it is true that the elderly who live apart from their adult children are neglected by their children. The elderly who live alone or with their spouses generally receive limited support from their children (Kim 1999:114). Dispersion is likely to cause less contact, less interaction, and less support to parents from adult children. For example, frequency of contact is an important indicator of care for elderly parents (Hong & Byun 1998:181). A survey conducted by Mo in 2002 revealed that more than one-third (36.9 percent) of the adult children visit their parents only once every 6 months or once a year (Mo 1999:110-111). Considering the fact that Korea is a small nation, this figure for frequency of contact is quite low.

An increased number of Korean elderly, especially those who are living apart from their children, suffer from poverty, health, loss of social roles, and socio-psychological alienation in comparison to persons who are living with their adult children (Kim 1999:116). Furthermore, some elderly who are living alone suffer from serious financial difficulties because of their children's indifference. The changed traditional notion of filial responsibility has resulted in growing numbers of the elderly being without income (Shin & Shaw 2003:333).

In the past, there were fewer problems for the elderly because, while they lived under the same roof as their children, most elderly received financial and emotional support from their children. In Korea, family support is positively related to co-residence. While, in a Western ideal, the elderly are independent and reluctant to be a burden on their children, in the Korean community, they prefer to live with their children because they still place great value on filial responsibility (Hu & Chou 2000:227). Thus, the decline of co-residence with elderly parents is one clear indication of weakening parent care in Korean society.

2.5.2 Limitations of other support systems

If adult children cannot fulfil the supportive role towards their elderly parents, then it is important to explore the current financial resources of the elderly and the role of other support programs. However, the economic situation of the elderly is one of deprivation and other support systems are extremely limited.

2.5.2.1 Financial resources of the elderly

In traditional agrarian societies, the elderly were able to maintain economic productivity for a greater portion of their lifetimes. With industrialisation, retirement as an institution became a widespread reality. The elderly persons in Korea are forced to retire from their occupations at a stipulated age (Park *et al* 2003:81-85). The institution of mandatory retirement has made a significant impact on the economic well-being of the elderly. Whereas economic growth during the last four decades has fostered a greater potential of the aged for independence from adult children, many employees still have not made preparations for old age.

In the past, when the elderly population depended on the family support system, they had no financial problems in their later lives whether they were economically stable or not. However, today it is difficult to expect a family support system that fully cares for the elderly under the same roof (Choi & Chang 2002:31). As a result, the elderly without support from their children are suffering with serious financial problems (Kim & Choi 2003:116).

The development of the ideologies of individualism and the absence of the traditional practice of filial piety has resulted in the growth of the nuclear family. In the increased nuclear family, some of the elderly population who did not prepare for their welfare are living with economic problems due to the

disinterest of their adult children and society.

2.5.2.2 Social welfare program for the elderly

Historically, the Korean government has developed a welfare policy for the elderly based on the principle of "family first, then the government" (Kim 1999:120). The social welfare program is not adequately developed and has relied on the family care system for the elderly, so that the current older generations cannot live with only the benefit of the social welfare system (Yoon *et al* 2000:132; Bengtson & Putney 2000:273).

Until the 1970s there were pensions that were only available to employees of the state: civil servants, the military personnel, and public school teachers who had worked for more than 20 years in each working area. The proportion of people aged 55 and over receiving the benefit of these contributory old-age pensions is only 3.4 per cent (Kim & Park 2003:164).

In the private sector, the Korean pension program was enacted in 1973. Yet it was not implemented by government until 1988, some 15 years later (Kim & Park 2003:181). However, even after it was implemented, the National Pension program (a public program) has two disadvantages for the elderly. Firstly, many people working in the informal and agricultural sectors are not included in this pension program. Secondly, it is only possible to receive a pension when one has paid contributions for at least for 20 years. Therefore, many elderly, who have not worked in formal sectors and have not paid for 20 years, are not currently eligible for benefits of the pension program. Only very few (less than 5 percent) of the elderly receive a state pension (Yoon *et al* 2000:132-133; Bengtson & Putney 2000:277).

2.5.3 Intergenerational conflicts in family support

2.5.3.1 Values of elderly parents regarding family support

When the percentage of Korean elderly who live alone or with their spouse increases, the question may arise about family support: "in the actual living arrangement, does the Korean elderly who live with their spouse or alone really not to want to live with their adult children?"

Table 4. Current and Preferred Living Arrangement by the Elderly (Unit:%)
  (Mo 2002:100)

Preferred arrangement	Living with the adult children	Living with couple or alone	Living with single Children	Others
Current practice	41.6	42.8	10.7	4.9
Ideal	76.3	18.3	0.3	5.1

Table 4 presents the results of a survey carried out by Mo (2002:98-102) and might seem to provide the answer to the question. In the study, 41.6 percent of respondents currently live with their adult children. However, 76.3 percent of respondents actually want to live with their adult children. The reason that many of the 42.8 percent's participants who lived independently responded that they wanted to live with their children and yet did not was because of unavoidable circumstances, such as the departure of adult children to seek higher education or employment.

Following the survey, many elderly parents today still anticipate receiving support from their children, under the same roof if possible, or should they face difficult situations, such as the death of spouse or severe illness. The traditional Eastern Asian culture of filial piety whereby the adult children show respect and care for their elderly parents has lost its value (Park 2003:62). While the elderly parents in Western society usually do not expect support from their adult children in their later life, the elderly in Korea tend to expect to obtain care from their children (Mabry *et al* 2004:97).

On the part of some elderly, the notion of co-residence is still upheld. More elderly parents than the younger generation indicate stronger social norms, favouring joint living arrangements. The notion of the elderly living with children gives a somewhat nostalgic image of a happy and well-cared for life in which the old people are surrounded by their caring offspring. However, this living arrangement seems not to have been extended out of genuine concern and affection.

Considering that Korean culture pursues a Western culture based on individualism, it might be expected for the elderly to alone live independently without any financial or emotional support from their adult children. However, currently, some older generations expect to depend on their adult children in their later life, so they have hardly prepared for their well-being.

2.5.3.2 Values of adult children regarding family support

Filial piety has been the built-in cultural norm that favours secure support and an honoured status for the elderly. As the important values in modern society change to freedom and independence from the traditional norm regarding filial responsibility, adult children are unwilling to sacrifice their own needs to support their elderly parents. Recent evidence indicates that only 20.5 percent of adult children believe that the children are primarily responsible for the emotional and financial well being of elderly parents, as compared to 83.8 percent of elderly parents (Chung 1998:251, 383).

As a result of the large generational differences produced by the drastic social changes following the Korean War, Korean younger generations are more functionally, economically, socially, and psychologically independent than older generations. At the same time, swift transitions such as industrialisation and demographic change of population aging made it difficult for adult children to care for their parents (Bengtson & Putney 2000:276).

A growing number of adult children will be less able to provide support for their elderly parents than their parents did in the past. With rapid changes in social circumstances for family support, the younger generations' tendency for individualistic pursuit might play the most important part in the decline of family support for the aged.

2.5.3.3 Intergenerational conflicts regarding family support

Mabry, Giarrusso, and Bengtson (2004:96) elucidate the process of intergenerational family conflict in the following statements: "intergenerational ambivalence connotes contradictions in relationships both at the psychological level, where people experience contradictory feelings, motivations, and thought; and at the sociological level, where social norms, roles, and statuses come into conflict in intergenerational family relations." According to this view, traditional filial piety for supporting the elderly tends to bring about conflict with younger generations in their pursuit of the convenience of individual life in the rapid social change for family support (Yoon *et al* 2000:129).

While the younger generation had learned resources and methods of life from their parents through previous generations, today they have a tendency to move into a new cultural pattern and reverse prior mechanisms of socialisation (Bengtsen 1989:31). Following the traditional East Asian ethos, norms of filial piety in Korea, which were more clearly articulated, tend to be individually negotiated for the happiness of individual members among younger generations (Hong & Byun 1998:189).

In the face of rapid social change, some Korean younger generations feel that they cannot meet the expectations of some of the elderly with regard to traditional filial responsibility. Younger persons do not attempt to understand their parent's psychological distress towards their children in view of the absence of traditional family support (Park 2003:62-63). This gives rise to

conflict between the elderly, who did not prepare for such social change, and the younger generation, who have lived in such times of change.

2.5.4 Intergenerational conflicts and loneliness of the elderly

2.5.4.1 An understanding of loneliness

Loneliness is involved in the experience of having contact with family or friends. Loneliness can be illustrated as persons having trouble communicating with family members or companions (Segrin 1998:227-228). It is associated with numerous problems in social and personal relationships in the life of humans.

Deutsch (1998:116) identifies loneliness as an "essentially social category that is experienced as a keenly felt, unwanted disengagement from others." According to his definition, loneliness is an emotional separation that results from the loss or lack of a sustaining social bond. Loneliness arises when there is an eagerly felt sense that "one ought not to be alone in this particular situation."

There are several causes contributing to loneliness, and these can be separated into two dimensions, namely precipitating and maintaining factors. Precipitating factors frequently involve changes in one's social life, such as the death of an intimate someone, leaving home, divorce or separation, and breaking up with a lover or friends. The other aspect, maintaining factors, can prolong or continue loneliness. Factors such as bashfulness, having no sense of social skills, and a low self-esteem could contribute to loneliness (Cultrona 1982:294-297).

Loneliness affects every aspect of life and can eat away our vitality and erode our desires and dreams. It brings about a sense of emptiness and futility that

nothing seems to dispel. Whatever the cause, its experience is painful in the extreme.

2.5.4.2 Loneliness and old age

Loneliness is not an experience that is limited exclusively to the elderly. Loneliness can arise in present society for people of all ages, from infancy to late adulthood. In a sense, throughout the whole human experience, loneliness occurs in combination with various circumstances and conditions (Gibson 2000:xiii). Simultaneously, however, loneliness is a problem which can become a genuine crisis for older persons because they experience many losses, such as physical loss, alienation from family or friends, and a loss of social role (Payne & McFadden 1994:13).

Loneliness of the elderly seems to be an especially Western trend. In South East Asia, according to filial piety based on the Confucian moral, the average Asians genuinely believed that old age marked the beginning of a higher and more respected status. It brings about the attitude of respect for the elderly and the elderly were cared for emotionally and financially by their families until death. In such a context, loneliness was a hardly known circumstance for the elderly in Korea and other Asian nations (Levete 1993:1).

However, due to rapid social changes, the status of the elderly and the extended family system in Korea declined in recent decades, so that some elderly began to experience loneliness because of not obtaining respect and support from their children. They indulged themselves in undermining their self-respect and self-regard.

2.5.4.3 The loneliness of Korean elderly in intergenerational conflicts

Yoon, Eun, and Park (2000:128) articulate the competing cultural dilemmas of Korean society about individualism and familism for family support in the

following statements:

> Korea is currently an amalgamation of Western and traditional Korean cultures. Norms and values governing family relationships in Korean society today consist of both the traditional and the modern. The notion of filial piety has lost much of its power in promoting the exchange and support between parents and their children.

Within such a trend, the expectations of some Korean elderly who want to have three generations living together and obtain their children's support in old age changed to disappointment and frustration due to disregard by their adult children. Today some Korean elderly are marginalised and isolated from their adult children and society.

For the elderly, such rapid change was an unpredicted and terrible situation. As a result, they were likely to experience feelings of dislocation, effective isolation, and loneliness with regard to their children and society. Loneliness of the elderly may arise when they keenly feel a lacking of social, intimate relations in their later life (Mullins *et al* 1989:253). Some Korean elderly are not satisfactorily prepared in this aspect of their lives concerning family support. The Korean elderly who want more interpersonal respect and support from their children do not receive as much as they desire, and thus they run the risk of loneliness.

Unexpected change of the family support system has resulted in the loneliness of the elderly. Some elderly believed that their children would live together with them with support, respect, and love. At least, for some of them, they were the ones who ought not to be alone in the Korean family system. However, practically, they are recognising that their children cannot afford to provide family support for them, even if they intended to do so. It is a dreadful experience for those who have eagerly sacrificed for their children their whole lives and could not imagine such change. Alienation from adult children who are not practising filial duty causes the elderly to feel that their lives are no longer

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worthwhile. Such a sense of uselessness and alienation contributes to their emotional loneliness (Jeong 2001:256). There are isolated, rejected, or unhappy feelings for some Korean elderly in the depths of loneliness.

2.6 Voices of the elderly: the empirical interpretation for their image, family support, and loneliness.

This empirical research with the elderly focuses on gaining a better understanding of my literature research on the subject of the loneliness of the elderly and the intergenerational conflict for family support between them and their adult children. It concerns the circumstances and thoughts about their image, family support, and loneliness from their perspective. Although the participants in these conversations cannot claim to be representative of the general population, there are certain advantages in conducting in-depth interviews with a small group.

2.6.1 The selection process

The stories presented are based on an original, in-depth interview of a small sample of five elderly individuals, who ranged in age from 68 to 77. Table 5 shows the detailed profile of the elderly as conversational partners. They all have different backgrounds and ideas in their lives and were selected from people who were attending Incheon Second Presbyterian Church in Incheon, Korea.

Table 5.   Profiles of Conversational Partners

Code	Sex	Age	Martial status	Living arrangement	Children (No)	Education
E1	Male	72	Married	Living	3	High

				with spouse		school
E2	Male	68	Married	Living with spouse	4	Element-ary
E3	Female	77	Widowed	Living with children	3	College
E4	Female	73	Married	Living with spouse	4	High school
E5	Male	75	Widowed	Living alone	3	Element-ary

In order to select the co-researchers, first of all, I asked Gun Young Lee, who is the senior pastor of the church, to introduce me to ten elderly persons who have the adult children. I met with the elderly a total of ten times. Upon meeting them, I introduced my process of interviewing and the project, and showed them a consent form. Where applicants did not know or understand certain words used in the form, I explained the meaning to them. Some of the elderly who had been involved in conflict with their adult children regarding co-residence did not want to participate in the interview process, so that I attempted to persuade them to participate at the interview. The pastor helped me from the beginning of this interviewing process. He endeavoured to make intimate communication between the elderly and me during the meeting.

Participants had various experiences, family trees, contexts, and thoughts in their lives, so I would be able to hear diverse voices from them. In this process, several criteria were used for the selection of five conversational partners out of ten persons. It did not matter whether the adult children lived with their elderly parents or not. The criteria for selecting participants were, firstly, that there was no age boundary. The only limitation for age was that they were at least 65 because my research field was for loneliness of Korean elderly regarding intergenerational conflict. Secondly, however, I considered the gender of the participants and chose three males and two females to make up the five elderly.

Thirdly, all the participants are Christian because my thesis is based on reflection on family support problems from a Christian-pastoral perspective. Lastly, most participants suffered from alienation from their adult children or had an expectation that their children would care for them, with the exception of one participant who did not want to live with her children and was satisfied with life. The reason that I selected her was to hear different stories and voices about the intergenerational conflicts in family support.

2.6.2 Interviewing the co-researchers

2.6.2.1 Interview process

The interviews with the five elderly took place during a two month period, with each meeting lasting two hours, from November to December 2004 in Incheon, Korea. At first, it was difficult for them to discuss the stories of intergenerational conflicts in family support with their children. Because although the elderly had struggled with family conflicts through their lives, they had a tendency to be reluctant to talk about the experience because they believed that it was a great shame that elderly parents do not receive filial responsibility from their children (Yang & Risenblatt 2000:365). However, as I continued the interview process, the participants opened their hearts and showed me great co-operation, providing me with more detailed stories. In addition, during the limited time of two months, I could freely meet with them several times without any restrictions on deciding on interview times because they were sincere and were not active participants in the labour market at the time of the interviews.

The interviews with the conversation partners occurred in several places. First of all, according to their wishes, I decided on a meeting schedule and a place, such as a park, a quiet office, or their homes. When I conducted an interview, I felt that I became a part of the life of the elderly throughout their stories. Their stories reminded me of my parents. When I, as an adult child, heard the stories

about the history, family, current feelings towards their adult children, and several occurrences from them, the stories did not only belong to them alone, but also to me. I could feel, understand, and experience their lives through their stories. Thus, I was convinced that I became part of the elderly.

I tried to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of my co-researchers. No one has been identified by name in my thesis. The names in this study were signified by 'E,' the first letter of 'Elderly,' and a number, such as E1 or E2, owing to the convenience of research processing. After completing the research and writing the thesis, all materials such as written documents and audiotapes were appropriately disposed of.

2.6.2.2 Unstructured conversational interviews

I made use of conversational interviews, which are unstructured and emphasise that the interviews are conversations, allowing the interviewer to discover the world of the interviewee, in order to have interaction with my participants. In this model, the interviewee stands for a conversational partner, in comparison to interviewing from a positivist model, which denies the significance of cultural distinction, so that there is little room for individual voice (Rubin & Rubin 1995:7-12, 32).

Another reason that I employed unstructured conversational interviews was because its aim is to describe a guided conversation, to turn to the 'flexible strategy of discovery' and bring forward information that the researcher had not planned to ask for (Mishler 1985:27-28). In this process, not only answers to the contents of the questioning in the form of unstructured conversation are advanced, but also answers to those questions that emerge after hearing the response of the co-researcher to the planned questions. I believe that the use of unstructured interviews allowed me to share much more detailed and open-ended conversations with the interviewees, and to explore more subtle issues that may not be readily captured by the tightly structured questions typically

used in larger samples.

2.6.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

In order to obtain more particular information, I also made use of semi-structured questions in my interviews with the elderly. In this format, the interviewer can direct the conversational agenda by introducing certain topics. For example, the interviewer might ask the following question of a graduate student, "What happened when you discussed your thesis with your advisor?" or "Are you prepared to do qualitative research?" (Rubin & Rubin 1995:5).

In terms of the interviews with the elderly, I questioned each in a similar way about the loneliness of the elderly and their conflict with their children. First of all, I approached at the topic with unstructured questions to listen the elderlys' own stories, emotions, and current thoughts. Then I moved on to semi-structured questions in order to draw out specific themes, for instance, I questioned them regarding their views on the following topics: 1) the image and status of the elderly; 2) family support for the elderly; and 3) conflict of the elderly regarding family support by adult children and their own loneliness.

For the use of semi-structured conversational interview, Gillham (2000:65) mentions two points in the process on which the interviewer should be clear:

  (1) What are the key issues are in the research investigation; and
  (2) What will *best* be answered in a face-to-face interview?

2.6.2.4 Recording

I used audio recording in interviews to preserve the stories of the elderly, and after the interviews I transcribed the content of the recordings. When I had a meeting with my co-researchers, I recorded their speaking in simple and important points. My co-researchers were the elderly, so sometimes I did not

understand their manner of speaking. It was thus required that I record the stories to minimise disruption during the meetings while still retaining the stories themselves.

Considering the characteristics of my co-researchers, I utilised videotape, with their permission, in case some of their non-verbal conversation was missed. From time to time, they expressed non-verbal conversation, such as a pause or lamentation in their face and behaviour. When I watched the video after the interview, I could not miss the hidden thinking and emotion in their stories.

2.6.3 Hearing the stories

The data gathered from the conversations with the elderly can be categorised into three primary areas:

1. *The image and status of the elderly*: Participants were asked to think about and rate their beliefs regarding others' perception of the current image and status of the elderly, especially those of the young generation.

2. *Family support for the elderly*: Data collected in this area is important in relating intergenerational conflicts that the elderly confront with their children. Co-researchers were asked open-ended questions as to their situations and thoughts on family support for the elderly.

3. *Conflict of the elderly for family support by adult children and their loneliness*: Participants were asked about the conflicts with their adult children with relation to family support. Respondents were also asked about the loneliness of the elderly followed by conflict with their children.

1. Image and status of the elderly

E1 speaks about his experience of having been ignored by the younger generation, and he complains that people are no longer respectful of the elderly:

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We have a right to be respected. I see this lack of respect all the time now in the streets. The other day, some youngsters were riding by on a motorcycle, and they shouted at me, "Get aside, old fool!" If I were younger, I would have kicked them in the butt. Today, there is little honour, no respect for the elderly. I am not saying this because I want to be served; I am saying it because it is part of the basic ethics of a human beings. We must stand up for ourselves.

E2 also talks about his experiences and how badly he was insulted by the younger generation while he was looking for a job. He expresses his grief over the change of social recognition towards the elderly:

After my retirement, I looked everywhere for a new job. In terms of health, I was still confident even though I was a retiree. But there weren't many openings. Once I went to an apartment complex to apply for a job as a security guard. While I was being interviewed by the security manager, some women barged into the office. They told the manager angrily, with their sleeves rolled up and their hands on their hips. "Don't you remember? We couldn't catch a thief right under our noses because the old security guard couldn't catch up with the young thief. How on earth can this old guy do his job properly?" Then one woman turned and said to me "Why don't you stay at home? That suits you. You are over the hill." I've never had such a humiliating experience. After that, I haven't thought of getting a job. People say courtesy has disappeared in this world, but the times have changed too much. It's hard to swallow.

E3 talks about the change of the young generation's recognition towards the elderly, at the same time she admits that the times have also changed:

When we were children, we didn't interfere in an adult's affairs or talk back to them. We obeyed them unconditionally. Nowadays young people make their voices heard. They don't listen to the elderly. It's merciful that young

people don't totally ignore the elderly. There is a huge gap between the two sides. The young are really free spirits. What are we supposed to do? The elderly might try to accommodate young people. It doesn't work when older people tell young people what to do. It's hopeless. The times has changed like this…

E4 grieves at the image of weak old people. Simultaneously, she relates her hope for the positive image of the elderly:

The young generation thinks we are so weak and sick, so we are regarded as being in need. The mass media thinks the same thing. They are telling we are useless and just killing time in the parks. Nobody takes care of us, neither our children nor our society. Nowadays people think the elderly are waiting for the last moment of their days, without any hope. But we are not just sitting around doing nothing. We also have things to think about and hopes for our future. We'd like to get some credit for giving our hands to the society and homes as we used to do in our youth.

E5 reminisces about the superior image of the elderly in the past. He also grieves that the elderly became useless figures in Korean society and homes in the present day, identifying with E4:

In those old days, there were things the elderly could do. They engaged in farming, and taught young people what to do. The old people had authority over the young in town. They were the heads of their families. Nobody could rebel against the elderly. Everybody obeyed and followed them, but now everything has changed. The elderly have nothing to do. I don't think I could do any big favour for my children and grandchildren, but above all things they don't need me. I don't expect any reverence from them. Who could ever image this kind of age…? For what reason?

2. Family support for the elderly

E1 is estranged from his children, and he is experiencing emotional emptiness and financial difficulty. However, he longs to live with his children and grandchildren:

> Children are only your children when they are in your arms. Once they become grown-ups, they don't care whether their parents die of hunger or freeze to death. I live off a small pension from the government and I sell gums in the street. I'm not sure I can survive this winter, because I don't have any money for heating. In spite of that I still miss my children. I desperately want to see my grandchildren. I expect them every moment to drop by or call me on a big holiday such as New Year's Day or Choosuk.[14]
> I wish I could live with them even if it's only for a short time.

At present, E2 lives independently; however, he wants to live with his children in his later years:

> I don't even think about asking my children for any favours. Nevertheless, they don't get in touch with us. My wife and I are very sorry and saddened by it. We only think of our children, we can't do anything about it, though. I just blame the times…that have changed. We're wondering whether we could ever live together with our children in later life. We think their urban lifestyle is so hectic that we can't keep up with them. We've lived in the country most of our lives. We are worried about it tremendously.

E3 has the satisfaction of living with her children. At the same time, she expresses her thanks to her son and daughter-in-law because she recognises the rarity of this way of supporting parents because of the rapid change of the times:

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[14] Choosuk, sometimes called the "Korean Thanksgiving Day," is a harvest moon festival when most family members return to their hometowns to pay respect to their ancestors and prepare traditional offerings.

I've lived with my eldest son's family, who else can I live with? I see my grandchildren's cute tricks. On Sundays, my other son's family comes to see me. Though it's a bit of a hustle and bustle, that's fine, isn't it? I'd say it's a lie, there's no inconvenience when people live together. At first there were some conflicts, but everything is much better now. Everybody in the family has to make an effort. My son and daughter-in-law treat me with respect. They are really nice, not like the young people of today. I'm just thankful for that.

Exceptionally, E4 prefers living by herself to living with her children:

I have three daughters who are all married. For the time being, my husband and I live on our own. My eldest daughter lives nearby and comes and goes often. As for me, I prefer living by myself to living with my daughter's family. I think living with them causes inconveniences to everyone. Even if I survive my husband or I get sick, I'm not going to live with them. I don't want to be dependent on my children or show my ugliness to them either. In case I have some difficulties when I live on my own, so I'm going to go to a nursing home.

E5 is temporarily living alone because of his son's financial difficulty. However, he talks about the hope of living with his children. He says: "As long as possible, I'd like to live with my children, except that there's no alternative. Living alone is too hard on me, both mentally and financially." And he goes on to say:

Who wants to go to a nursing home when they have children? It's all up to how the children make up their minds. I believe that children must support their parents when they are old. We gave birth to them and raised them. Even if parents and children hate each other, no one should cut off their family line. Children must obey their parents and have them close no matter how great the children may be. That's filial duty, isn't it? Now I live

by myself, but my son will bring me to his home to care for me as soon as… his living situation improves. Who on earth can sit back and watch when their parents are in difficult situations? The children should take care of their parents, shouldn't they?

3. Conflicts of the elderly for family support and their loneliness

E1 had expected to get support from his children, but they did not live up to his expectations:

There have been lots of ups and downs in my life. My wife and I were purposeful. The only aim we had was to support our three children. Even though it was terribly hard work… it was our priceless joy. We trusted and believed that our children would care for us in our later life. However, it was just what we thought. Then life became worse. Nobody cared for us. Now, we don't believe in or trust anybody. We get a small… old-age pension that is impossible to live on... At last we are getting older. I have stopped thinking about a social life. I am not the same as I was before. This is a tragedy for us. I worry about my future, as this is a very hard situation.

I couldn't bear the thought that I was suddenly abandoned by my children and lived a useless existence. It was hard to take that I was ashamed of my wretched life. I have to do whatever I can do to buy food, but I don't have many options. Early in the morning I leave home after breakfast, and pass the time in the park and come home after dark. These days I sigh first when I open my eyes in bed. What shall I do today? This is not a life! I wish I could die instantly. Taking my life is not in my hands, though. I lament my miserable life even in my dreams.

E2 lives with his wife in a small town, and he is in conflict with his children because of lack of interaction:

Living in the country, just two of us, is really lonely. What consolation is there for us in our declining years? Just seeing our children and grandchildren would make all the difference in the world. But my wife and I rarely have a chance to see them. My children are too busy. My son and daughter-in-law are a two-income couple. They seem to come home very late, and their children are also all tied up with their schools and after school programs. We just guess that's why they can't come to visit us often or phone us either. They come just on Choosuk each year, and they are always behind in their work, so they leave quickly. What a life!

E3 experienced some conflict with her daughter-in-law at the beginning of her son's marriage, but now she has a good relationship with her daughter-in-law and they have come to understand each other. She also stays in touch with her other children. She is very satisfied with her life:

There were a number of conflicts between my daughter-in-law and me when my son got married. We started to live together, and, as a mother-in-law, I thought I had something to teach my daughter-in-law. However, she seemed to regard any advice or help from me as too much interference. The conflict went on for a while. At that time my husband was alive, so I thought I'd rather not live with them. As time went on, my daughter-in-law and I started meeting halfway. We passed the crisis. Now I'm glad that we're getting on well.

I've felt lonely sometimes since my husband passed away, but I enjoy living with my son's family. Also, I keep in touch with my other children… and they come to visit me every week. I see my school friends sometimes. All they talk about is that life is hard and they feel lonely, but I'm really fine with my life. I take care of my grandchildren and do some house chores, because my daughter-in-law goes to work. Even though I'm tired I like the way of life. Sometimes, I go along when my son's family goes on vacation.

E4 insists that living apart from her children is better, which differs from the opinions of the other four elderly:

I don't expect anything from my children. I think I did… my duty since I gave birth to them and raised them. Now my children are grown-ups. I need to do something for myself. I'm sure there's no problem when parents and children respect each other and their way of life.

'Loneliness.' I don't feel it now. My husband and I have lived by ourselves since our children's weddings. We travel sometimes. I also go to the welfare centre for the elderly in my neighbourhood to learn Paduk[15] for fun and enjoy other hobbies as well. It pays off, you know. When I reached middle age I started saving money for a rainy day. From time to time we see our children and grandchildren. Things can't be better than now. I'm relaxed and happy.

E5 thinks his children are inconsiderate because he has been placed in the situation of being alone:

Actually I had no choice but to live alone. My son's business had gone bankrupt, and he wanted to move to another city where the cost of living is lower. What could I say when he said he would come back with some money? I hope he organises things well, so he can take me there soon. In the last year, he has called me several times, but he hasn't asked me to come. Although I try to understand his difficulties, I can't help but feel… rejected. My other children do… the same… None of them has asked me to live with them, even though they are quite well-off. I've led a hard life to raise them, but they don't care about me now. I think that my sons treated me unfairly. I kept wondering when the day would come when I could live with my son's family again. I became weak. I hate the whole world. I am

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[15] Paduk is a Korean checkers game.

lonely and pathetic and unsure about my future. This situation is dragging me down day by day.

2.6.4 Interpreting data

This section serves to interpret the data expressed by the stories of the participants in order to examine some of the thoughts about the image and the problems of the elderly in family support. The following are the thematic interpretations of sentiments from the elderly:

1. The image and status of the elderly is declining in contemporary society.

All of the conversational partners allude to a declining image and status of the elderly. The parties concerned lay bare their puzzlement and difficulties with regard to the drastically changing image of the elderly as well as the rapidly changing Korean society. Most of them feel that such changes are unacceptable and dreadful. Especially, E1 and E2 relate their experiences of having been insulted by younger persons. They lament that they were not supposed to be treated like that. As is shown by my research into the change to a negative evaluation of the elderly from people in chapter 2.4.1, most conversational partners see that the unexpected decline of the elderly's status has been prominent in recent years.

As E4 and E5 reminisce about the authority of the elderly in earlier times and mourn the change of their role from provider to dependent, most participants do not attempt to adapt themselves to their position. This goes particularly for E3, who admits that the change of status of the elderly was an inevitable phenomenon, and she suggests that the elderly themselves might be eager to adjust society's changed image of themselves. It might not be easy thinking and behaving as the elderly who have lived in a hierarchical social structure with difficult times throughout the century, such as the last years of Japanese

colonial rule and Korean War. I particularly value the sentiment of E3 because it might be seen as a more mature attitude, which will reflect and enhance the image and status of the elderly in society.

2. Expectation for family support is still available to some Korean elderly.

Four of the five conversational partners are living with a spouse or alone. Only E3 is living with her eldest son and daughter-in-law. Although, at present, E1, E2, and E5 are living apart from their children, they anticipate living together with them in their later years. E1 is feeling distressed because of being disregarded by his children and E2, who lives with his spouse in the country, worries about living with his children later due to the adjustment of a hectic lifestyle in the city. In spite of the difficulty of intergenerational relationships and the concerns about living arrangements, both of them are expecting to live with their adult children at a later stage. In addition, E5, who is temporarily living apart from his children, has a strong desire to live with his children as soon as possible.

There is reluctance in Korea among some of the elderly to go to nursing homes and stay there for the rest of their lives, whereas in Western culture, staying at a nursing home is a generally acceptable option (Kim 1999:390-391). It is simply that the elderly prefer living with their children rather than spending their old age in any other place because they take getting financial and emotional support for granted as long as their children are there. In other words, the expectation of living with one's children signifies that the elderly parents want to extract filial responsibility from their adult children.

However, unlike other participants, E4 who is living apart from her children, articulates the desire to live independently in her later years. She also has a positive attitude towards nursing homes, just like E3. In the future, it is assumed that the preference among the elderly for independent living will increase gradually, as their financial situation improves, and that they will pursue privacy

and free time.

This sentiment is closely related to the conflicts between elderly parents and their adult children in family support, because those who anticipate receiving family support have the potential to cause conflict in the case that their adult children do not support them. For example, in this section E4, who spoke about an independent lifestyle, has little conflict with her children in the next conversation. In addition, she feels less loneliness than the other participants, who maintain a dependent attitude towards their children. This means that if the elderly does not anticipate obtaining support from their children, there is potential for solving many of the problems and conflicts between parents and children which occur in the family support system in Korea. However, as mentioned above, this is also not an easy option for the elderly. It is difficult for the elderly to admit to a declining image of themselves.

3. Conflicts of the elderly in family support and their loneliness are not easy to manage

Of the five conversational partners, three participants, namely E1, E2, and E5, are struggling with intergenerational relationships in family support and feelings of loneliness. E1 felt betrayed in conflicts with his children and is stressed about being lonely; he also experiences financial difficulty and the disregard of his children. E2 is almost out of touch with his children and grandchildren. This makes him and his wife miss them very much. He hopes to live with his children's family later, although the intergenerational relationships are not good and the idea of living together imposes a burden on him due to the difficulty of urban life. In my opinion, it would be unadvisable for him to live with his adult children later because there is a poor relationship between the generations. However, he strongly believes that his children will suggest living together soon. This shows that, in some areas, there is still an intense desire on the part of the elderly to get support from one's children in their later life. E5 is also experiencing severe loneliness after separating from his son's family.

Unlike these three participants, E4 agrees that parents and children might lead independent ways of life, apart from each other. She also solves her conflicts in this regard. As she has an independent way of life, she has prepared for her well-being from middle age. She does not feel loneliness even though she does not live with her children.

Conflicts in terms of family support in Korea originate from the traditional culture of filial duty which emphasizes the responsibility of family support from children. On the part of the elderly parents, they feel conflict when their children do not practice the filial responsibility that they expect. In terms of parental support, the elderly in Korea feel the difficulty of emotional separation, which is far from the pattern of the traditional supporting system. Some elderly in Korea like E1, E2, and E5, express their loneliness, which stems from the idea that they should have been cared for emotionally or financially by their children. For them, alienation from their children could definitely be a hard experience to handle.

2.7 Summary

In traditional Korean society the family, especially the adult children, has been the major provider of economic and emotional assistance to the elderly. However, during the last four decades, a number of remarkable changes have occurred in the socio-economic and cultural spheres, namely rapid industrialisation, demographic change of the elderly, and the advent of Western culture. These changes have impinged on the family support system and have resulted in intergenerational conflicts in Korea.

Intergenerational family conflicts show that elderly parents and their adult children tend to disagree on a certain values, which may create friction among them (Mabry *et al* 2004:95-96). In Korea, the biggest issue in terms of

intergenerational conflicts between aged parents and their adult children result from differences of values regarding the family support system. These conflicts among generations have caused the elderly, who had not organised their welfare for their post-retirement life because they had suffered absolute poverty in order to fully support their families over the past decades, to experience only alienation from their adult children. These findings regarding the intergenerational conflicts of the Korean elderly in family support proved to be quite relevant throughout the qualitative interviewing with the elderly.

In Korea, one of the biggest reason for intergenerational conflict in family support for the elderly between the elderly and their children is the problem of communication (Kim 1989:34). More specifically speaking, there is an increasingly huge difference of perspective between the expectations of each generation and the reality in family support. On the part of some elderly parents, their desire and request to be respected and cared for is a natural expectation, according to traditional custom. On the part of some adult children, such filial piety pressure, based on an authoritarian style, is unacceptable according to their reasonable thinking, which based on Western culture. Unfortunately, the two generations rarely communicate with one another in contemporary Korean society.

In this process, such dysfunctional communication styles need "open dialogue" between the elderly parents and children. Open dialogue allows for both elderly parents and adult children to enter the conversation in their own way. In open dialogue, an important rule is that both parties have the right to comment (Seikkula & Olson 2003:410). Since open dialogue is "a less structured and more spontaneous kind of discussion," it facilitates free talking and listening and allows both groups to understand each other (Guilfoyle 2003:332).

Of course, it is not easy to bring about conversation, understanding, and reconciliation in the conflicts between Korean elderly parents and adult children through open dialogue. However, I believe, open dialogue is recommended to

reflect Korean elderly parents' authoritarian communication style as being demanding, admonishing, and criticising, and to generate new opportunities to reproduce the children's understanding of their parents' experiences and thinking in their life.

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIAN AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 Introduction

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

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

(1) vertical hierarchy of intergenerational relationships (1392-1962),

(2) change of intergenerational relationships (1962-2002), and

(3) deepening intergenerational conflicts (2002-to the present).

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

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

intergenerational relationships are also briefly examined in this context.

3.2 Christian interpretation

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

3.2.1 Biblical foundations for the intergenerational relationships: Three stories

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2.1.1.2 The first dialogue: 1:6-10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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3.2.1.1.3 The second dialogue: 1:11-14

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2.1.1.4 The third dialogue: 1:15-18

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

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

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

> 16 But Ruth replied "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.
> 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2.1.1.5 Partnership in intergenerational relationship

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

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

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

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[20] In cultures of the ancient Near East, burial in one's ancestral homeland was considered extremely important. The Biblical narrative of the transporting of Joseph's bones back from Egypt to land purchased by his father Jacob (Jos. 24:32; cf. Gen. 20:24:26) illustrates this tradition (Sakenfeld 1989:33).
[21] Ruth's devotion to Naomi is unconditional from the start of the book where she declares, "where you die I will die, and there I will be buried" (Ruth 1:17).

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

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

> 11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons.
> 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.
> 13 "Not long after that, the younger son gather all he had and set off for a distant country, and there squandered his wealth in wild living.
> 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.
> 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.
> 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

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

3.2.1.2.1 The benevolent father: 15:11-19

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

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

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

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

3.2.1.2.2 The forgiving father: 15:20-24

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[22] According to Mosaic Law, the first son has the right to a double share of his father's inheritance (Deut 21:17). The younger son would receive a third (Forbes 2000:132).
[23] The son said "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired help"(vv. 17-19).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2.1.2.3 The reconciling father: 15:25-32

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

shows his unhesitating obedience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2.1.3.3 God's providing: 22:11-14

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

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

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

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

3.2.2 Thoughts of contemporary Christian thinkers regarding intergenerational relationships

3.2.2.1 Don S. Browning and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore: Love as equal-regard through dialogue[34]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2.2.2 J. Gordon Harris: Loving reciprocity[37]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Under these conditions, the intergenerational relationship between aging

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

separated parents from children at home.

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

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

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

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

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

Even though the election was over, the intergenerational confrontation

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

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

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

3.3.4 An attempt at dialogue between generations in contemporary Korean society

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

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

2003 report on the generations of Korea

(Chapter4) Conversation, Cross the Intergenerational Value Gap

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

■   **Participants in the 50s to 60s age group**

Yoon Hye Won: I'm glad to see you again.
(The elderly greeted each other, talking about the previous episode, last Thursday's).
Chi Jin Hyun: You have had a lot of feedback from people, haven't you?
Jeon Segi: Yes, I have, exactly.
Bae Byung Hew: Our 50s to 60s' grudge….

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

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

■   **Participants in the 30s to 40s age group**

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

Park Chung Hyen: Well, I'm very excited. I think this is once-in-a-lifetime experience. …I'd particularly like to listen to those in the 10 to 20 age group.
Ann Hee Jeong: Um… I don't have anything to worry about with younger generation, but I'm not comfortable with the older generation.
Pi Kyung II: In which aspect?
Am Hee Jeong: Well… I just can't… feel at ease. It's burdensome.

- ■ **Participants in the 10s to 20s age group**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The 30s to 40s raise objections

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.4 Summary

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 4
THE CHURCH'S TASK TO RESOLVE
INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT:
FOCUSING ON THE CHURCH ROUND TABLE

4.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.1 The church's role in promoting reconciliation

4.2.1.1 Reconciliatory work

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.1.2 Mutual responsibility between the church and the family

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.2 Limitations of the Korean Church in creating open intergenerational communication

4.2.2.1 Conflicting church

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.2.2 The poor relationship between the Korean Church and the family

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3 The Round Table as alternative communicability

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

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

Table – will be further explored.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.2 Practices of a Round Table in contemporary society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.3.1 Characteristics of the Church Round Table as a communicative medium

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.3.2 The Church Round Table in rule-governed interpersonal interaction

4.3.3.2.1 Literary genre as communication covenant

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

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

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

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

4.3.3.2.2 The Church Round Table as a pastoral counselling genre

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.1 Kenosis

For intergenerational reconciliation, the change in the Church Round Table

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

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

4.4.1.1 Kenosis and power-over culture

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.1.2.1 The author as sovereign subject

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

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

Figure 1. The communication model for narrative criticism

Real Author ⟶ Text ⟶ Real Reader

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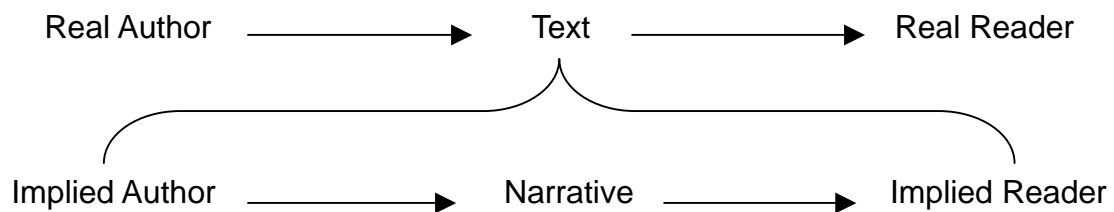
In this diagram, the real author and the real reader are lying outside the parameters of the text itself. The implied author, narrative, and implied reader take the place of the text. In this context, the text is described as the message component of a larger communication model. In addition, the text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

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

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

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

4.4.1.2.2 The author as a communicative agent

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

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

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

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[57] Taylor (1984:80) acidly comments: "Since He enjoys the privilege of origin, the author is authoritative."
[58] New Criticism was an American and English movement in the mid-twentieth century that "privileged the autonomy and formal unity of the text rather than the personality or biography of the author" (Vanhoozer 1998:82).

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

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

4.4.1.3 Self-emptying for the other

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.2 Equality

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

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

4.4.2.1 Equal partnership in the Church Round Table

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

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

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

4.4.2.2 The attitude of the reader: Accepting the author

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

author's evaluative point of view.[60]

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.2.3 Equality through unconditional acceptance of others

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.3 Reconciliation

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

4.4.3.1 From conflict to reconciliation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.3.2 The pastor as a mediator in the Church Round Table

4.4.3.2.1 The authoritarian Korean pastor

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

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

Figure 2. The leadership structure in the Korean churches

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.3.2.2 The pastor as a mediator

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.3.3 Accountability for reconciliation

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.4 The Church Round Table's schema

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

Figure 3. The Church Round Table's schema

Pastor

Kenosis
Equality
Reconciliation

Aging parent   Adult child
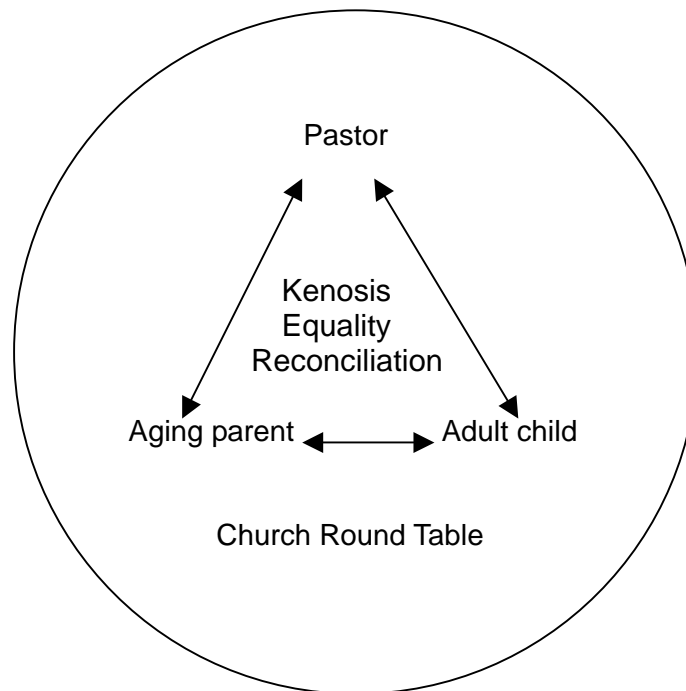
Church Round Table

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

kenosis in the Round Table.

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

4.5 Summary and suggestion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.3.1 Mutual interpersonal perspective taking

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

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

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

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

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

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

Be open to the possible truth of other views.

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

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

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

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

5.2.3.2 Role-play

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

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

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

styles inherent in the role.

6. Relating the fictional role to everyday life.
7. Integrating the roles to create a functional role system.
8. Social modelling: discovering ways that clients' behaviour in role affects others in their social environments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.4.1 Self-emptying

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do not dominate others or place them in subjection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.5 Stage 5 – A culture of transformation: Conjunctive

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.6 Stage 6 – A culture of reconciliation: Universalising

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

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

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

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

5.3 Case study

5.3.1 Organisation

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

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

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

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

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

5.3.2 Observation

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

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

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

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

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

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

(6) Symbolic and connotative meanings of words.

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

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

5.3.3 Reflection with my co-researchers

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

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

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

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

5.3.4 Hearing the story

5.3.4.1 An interview with a pastor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

generations.

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

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

5.3.4.2 An interview with the aging parent

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

Q: How is the relationship going with your children?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.3.4.3 Interview with the adult child

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

about the process and the result of it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.3.5 Interpretations

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

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

two generations is difficult.

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

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

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

5.4 A culture of multiplication of the Church Round Table

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Equip and encourage members to carry reconciliation into every life.

Educate the entire congregation in reconciliation.

Train gifted people within your congregation to become mediators.

Develop a church-based reconciliation ministry.

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

5.5 Summary

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

1) Stage 1: Intuitive-projective

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

2) Stage 2: Mythic-literal

Explaining the theme of the Church Round Table to participants.

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

3) Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional

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

culture of equality.

Using the experience of role-playing for understanding others.

4) Stage 4: Individuative-reflective

Focusing on self-emptiness for the other.

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

5) Stage 5: Conjunctive

Encountering a culture of transformation for intergenerational reconciliation.

6) Stage 6: Universalising

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

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

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary and reflection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

operative partnership between diverse opinions.

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

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

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

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

6.2. Recommendations for further study

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On various media for free communication regarding the intergenerational conflict:

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

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APPENDICES

Appendix1: Letter of intent

Dear

Greetings in Christ.

My name is James Wonsuk Roh. I am writing my PhD dissertation in the department of practical theology at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. The topic of my research is a reflection upon the loneliness of Korean elderly in family support, from a Christian-pastoral perspective

I am conducting a critical description of interview with the elderly who have adult children and live in Korea as part of my research. The aim of the interview is to hear the stories of the elderly about life, relationships, and conflict in parent care between them and their adult children. I have sought the help of K Y Lee who ministers as a senior pastor in Incheon Second Presbyterian Church, Incheon, South Korea and it is for this reason that he has introduced you to me.

I will present the information provided through the interviewing sessions with you, in my dissertation. It will be used to give crucial relevance and a cornerstone to my research. Therefore, your response through interviewing is very important to this study. I encourage you to be open-minded and display a sincere attitude during the interviewing. I assure you, your response will be kept confidential. No one will be identified by name in my dissertation, and no individual will know the information through interviewing except me. After completing the research, I guarantee, all material concerning interviews will be appropriately disposed of. Please be assured of for that. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully in Christ, Wonsuk James Roh, PhD student
Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa

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Appendix 2: Conversational guide for the elderly

Research Topic:

A reflection upon the loneliness of Korean elderly in family support: A Christian-pastoral perspective

Conversational topic 1: Life frustration

Main question 1: Could you share some stories about the 'ups and downs' in your life?

a. Own experience
b. Own thought

Conversational topic 2: Problems and conflicts in intergenerational relationships

Main question 2: Do you have any trouble with your adult children? If you have, would you tell me your problems or conflicts in relation to your roles and responsibilities in the relationships with your adult children?

a. What struggles have you gone through in this regard?
b. How did you feel in case of your struggles / to them?

Conversational topic 3: Expectations of the elderly

Main question 3: You have adult children. What are your expectations of them to your family life, and what would you like to see happen to it?

a. Material and emotional support
b. Making decisions and giving guidance