

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of spiritual accompaniment in the implementation of the Church's mission of reconciliation today. In Chapter One, the mission objectives and historical journey of the Good Shepherd Congregation, from its foundation and the early years of its development, to the present time, are traced and analysed. This serves to illustrate the value of accompaniment as a complementary component of the process of reconciliation.

In Chapter Two biblical texts are explored in order to demonstrate the 'plan' of Yahweh God to be a companion to humanity on life's journey, and the continuing manifestation of that 'plan' today. In the New Testament texts examined, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is shown to walk the same path of companionship and to further encourage all humanity to be a reconciled people.

In Chapter Three, the nature of the human person is examined in order to gain new insights which may enhance the process of reconciliation. For this purpose the value of an interdisciplinary approach is recognized and due consideration is given to the theories of various counsellors, psychologists and psychotherapists, as well as to those who are well-known spiritual companions. These are attempts to better understand the role of spiritual accompaniment in the achievement of reconciliation.

Chapter Four seeks to analyse the dynamics operating in a person's multi-dimensional nature, by means of a case narrative presented within the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter, in an attempt to further elucidate the process of reconciliation. While the value of psychological and counselling approaches are evident in this context, this chapter also underlines the special significance of spiritual accompaniment on the path to reconciliation.

Further to the exploration and analysis undertaken in the previous chapters, Chapter Five illustrates the foundational activities for spiritual accompaniment currently practiced by The Life-Direction Team in Singapore. The Chapter further addresses contemporary pastoral concerns and suggests new forms of accompaniment which may be relevant for today's world. It also invites new ways of finding active expressions, in the Good Shepherd Sisters' mission of reconciliation, an activity and objective at the heart of the universal church.