

To Discern the Body is to Become the Body

**An investigation into the
communal discernment practices of the Church**

Ph D Thesis submitted by

Beatrice Panne

Flinders Department of Theology

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Faculty of Education, Humanities, and Law

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Abstract

This thesis investigates a number of communal discernment traditions in the life of the Church. Following a methodology of mutual ecclesial learning and receptive ecumenism I am asking: What can each tradition of discernment learn from the other? In describing the various traditions I take a special interest in the interactive skills that are required for communal discernment. I argue that as a result of prayerful listening and waiting as part of the process of communal discernment the interactions among the participants take on the character of spiritual practices, in that listening to God and to one another become one and the same. As a result, prayerful interactions directed to God and to one another, can become entry points for the Spirit to influence a community's decision making and persons become active participants in the Spirit's work.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Beatriz Panner

Name

12 October 2013

Date

