

Book review

Korey J. Dyck

In Tune with God: The Art of Congregational Discernment, by Sally Weaver Glick. Scottsdale, PA: Faith and Life Resources, 2004.

It seemed so simple. The church council invited a group of members to assess the current state of the church and give direction for the future of the congregation. But this “simple” task proved so challenging and confusing that the committee lost its sense of direction and vitality before it could meet the goals it set out to achieve.

Have you ever had this experience? If you have, this book offers direction and hope.

In Tune with God: The Art of Congregational Discernment, by Sally Weaver Glick, acts as a primer for those called to bring

***In Tune with God* acts as a primer for those called to bring clarity to issues within a congregation; it outlines concepts and practices to guide discernment processes.**

clarity to issues within a congregation; it outlines important concepts and practices to guide church leaders in their discernment processes. Glick believes that congregations have lost the art of aligning the church’s goals with what God desires. Being “in tune with God” requires that church members start their discernment by creating space to hear God and by increasing their ability to listen to one another. Glick treats these themes by presenting biblical exegesis and examples of

early church conflict, as well as by increasing the ways we listen to the Holy Spirit’s guidance. This listening can be enhanced, she argues, through spiritual practices such as writing laments, journaling, scriptural meditation, and through the effective use of silence.

The book is arranged in eight chapters. Helpful appendices provide a one-day retreat outline, practical tips for using healthy

discernment, a leader's guide, and a short bibliography. *In Tune* begins by defining the term *discernment* and discovering our preconceived images of God. Then it moves into exploring the question, What is God's will for us? Chapters five and six consider what type of community the church is called to be in Christ and the actual process of discernment—with emphasis on our attitudes toward God, self, and others. Chapter seven details how a wise reading of the Bible produces a faithful adherence to scripture, and the final chapter discusses obstacles to and stories of congregational discernment.

Glick's primary audience is North American churches, and her education (M.Div. from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary) and experience (thirty years in congregational leadership) make her well suited to writing this study. A pastoral tone is evident, and the pace and style of the chapters is welcome and relaxing. Each chapter begins with an amusing reader's theatre introducing the chapter's content, and reflection questions are interspersed throughout each chapter. They encourage readers to pause and reflect on their own experience, and to listen for the Spirit's leading in discernment.

A few minor editorial matters: The use of nonsense words such as *higgledy-piggledy* detracted from content already well stated, and occasionally a foreign term such as *portmanteau* could be replaced with a common English word without loss of meaning.

In a larger sense, *In Tune* names the challenges that are part of congregational discernment. It does not address the complexities of working with real people or offer a step-by-step outline for congregational discernment. Nor should it; that is another book. This book's value is twofold: it names what comes before our actual discernment, that is, opening ourselves to hearing God clearly, and it outlines ways to invite and value God's insight in the midst of our disagreements and misunderstandings. *In Tune* will resonate well with those in leadership positions.

About the reviewer

Korey J. Dyck is an instructor in the Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies Program at Canadian Mennonite University (Winnipeg, MB).