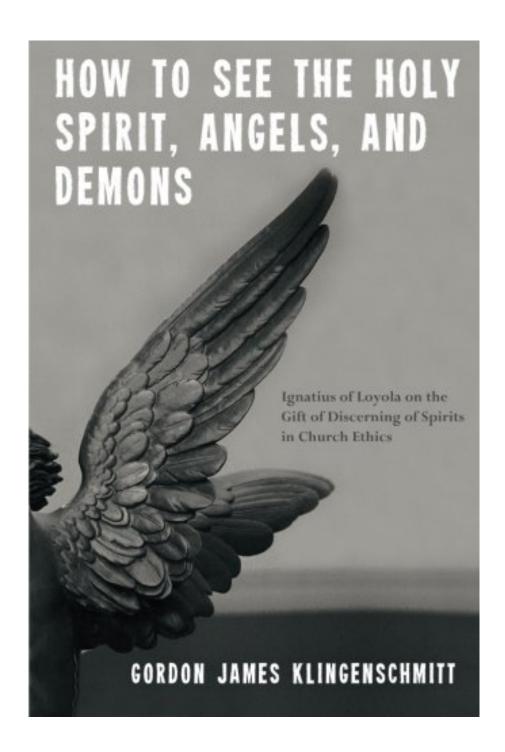


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#### Review

Klingenschmitt offers a rare opportunity for the ecumenical community to renew the understanding and the practices of spiritual discernment in the church. The historical and theological context of Ignatius of Loyola anticipates many concerns of contemporary ecclesiology and ethics regarding the still uncharted pneumatological foundations of the way Christians can discern the spirits. --Wolfgang Vondey, Interim Associate Dean for Academics & Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Regent University, School of Divinity

### About the Author

Gordon James Klingenschmitt (PhD, Regent University) is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and former Navy Chaplain. He now leads a daily, half-hour TV program, PIJN NEWS, and founded The Pray in Jesus Name Project, which has delivered 4.5 million petitions to Congress defending pro-life, pro-marriage, pro-Jesus, and pro-Israel issues. He may be contacted at prayinjesusname.org.

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Are God, angels, and demons really invisible? Or can the spirits be seen with human eyes, through the lens of Church Ethics? The gift of discerning of spirits is indispensible to the study of church ethics. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), wrote two sets of Rules for Discerning of Spirits in his Spiritual Exercises in the early 1500s. He taught how the church can receive from God the gift to see otherwise invisible angels, demons, and the Holy Spirit. Ignatius' views were influenced by John Cassian, Jacobus de Voragine, Ludolph of Saxony, and Thomas à Kempis. Ignatius' Rules are exegeted in dialogue with contemporary scholars Karl Rahner, Hugo Rahner, Piet Penning de Vries, Jules Toner, and Timothy Gallagher, and applied to one study of ecclesial ethics in the narrative theology of Samuel Wells. A four-step Ignatian "pneumato-ethical method" is developed, which any analyst can follow to see the spirits, by consolation/desolation, consent, manifestation, and pneumato-ethics. This method revolutionizes how we study ecclesiology, soteriology, missiology/world religions, liturgy, worship, Eucharist, hermeneutics, homiletics, pastoral counseling, church history, and politics. The spirits are not invisible at all. They can be clearly discerned through the lens of ecclesial ethics.

Sales Rank: #3145424 in Books
Published on: 2013-12-01

Released on: 2013-12-01Original language: English

• Number of items: 1

• Dimensions: 9.00" h x .66" w x 6.00" l, .90 pounds

• Binding: Paperback

• 290 pages

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The central argument of the text is that spiritual discernment is best done by looking at the ethical implications of proposed.

### By Mongoose

The text is divided into five chapters. In chapter one entitled: "The Pre-Ignatian Influences Upon Ignatius of Loyola's Discerning of Spirit's", Klingenschmitt examines the precursors to Ignatius such as John Cassian and Thomas A Kempis as their work laid the foundation for the importance of spiritual discernment in the area of ecclesiastical ethics. In chapter two Klingenschmitt examines the actual writings of Ignatius as they serve as the basis for his method. Chapter three examines four Ignatian thinkers: Hugo Rahner, Karl Rahner, Piet Penning de Vries, and Jules Toner as they examine the application of discernment in various non-Jesuit ecclesiological contexts. Chapter four examines application of Ignatian discernment to ecclesiastical ethics in light of Samuel Wells' ethics. Chapter five examines future trajectories of applying Ignatian discernment to subcategories of ecclesiology such as soteriology, evangelism and liturgy.

The central argument of the text is that spiritual discernment is best done by looking at the ethical implications of proposed actions. According to the Ignatian model actions which lead to consolation and grace are of God, angels or the Holy Spirit. Actions which lead to desolation and temptation are demonic (9). To this end Klingenschmitt proves his thesis by showing that pneumatology and ethics are largely interdependent in numerous ecclesiastical subcategories such as soteriology, liturgy and missions. In particular Klingenschmitt argues that as good and evil spirits influence and direct human actions they thus become visible to all (190).

The strength of the text is that the method discussed provides a practical framework for spiritual discernment which does rely upon having the special gifting of discernment or prophecy. By simply following the logical results of proposed church actions the non-academic layman is able to discern whether the actions are of God or not. In this way churches can attempt to align their decisions and doctrine with the will of God

The weakness of the text is that it fails to recognize the cunning and deceptive nature of the demonic and the real dangers of contemplative prayer and meditation. Its underlying premise that contemplative prayer and meditation can lead to divine encounter fails to take into account the real danger of demonic deceptions during such exercises. Ignatius himself cautioned that for many participants the higher exercises might do more harm than good to the participant. Looking at the unorthodox and unbiblical theologies which have been constructed by participants of these exercises such as Karl Rahner's "anonymous Christian," I would have to agree with this warning. Ignatius of course cautions that the "divine encounters" themselves must be tested against scripture (10). However, I would argue that when the participant has been demonically deceived they are far more likely to commit scriptural eisegesis than sound interpretation. While Klingenschmitt does understand the deceptive nature of the demonic, he is falsely presupposing that the demonic will always manifest itself in easily recognizable categories such as desolation and temptation.

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