How did Paul determine ethical and theological truth? Were all believers expected to be able to ‘discern the spirits’ (1 Cor. 12.10)? In contrast to previous studies, this conceptual investigation examines all the significant terms referring to discernment, leading to the insight that for Paul ethical and theological knowledge are inherently related. Understanding the will of God requires noetic and existential transformation, in short, the ‘renewal of the mind’ (Rom. 12.2). Munzinger argues that Paul implies a process of inspiration in which the Spirit sharpens the discerning functions of the mind because the believer is liberated from a value system dominated by status and performance. The love of God enables all believers to learn to interpret reality in a transformed manner and to develop creative solutions to questions facing their communities. Authentic discernment – as this study demonstrates – effectuates a comprehensive new sense of meaning.

Dr André Munzinger teaches at the Institute for Protestant Theology, University of Köln, and is Academic Assistant to the Director, Professor Dr Konrad Stock.
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Discerning the Spirits
Theological and Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul

ANDRÉ MUNZINGER
For
Maria-Theresia Pinger
and
Hermann Eyl
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This is a revised and updated version of my thesis, which was accepted by Brunel University and London School of Theology in June 2004.

Discernment had long been a topic of interest to me. Various interpretations of ‘Spirit guidance’, ‘promptings’ and ‘words of the Lord’ had accompanied me throughout my schooling, church life and theological activities. I was consequently intrigued when Professor Max Turner mentioned that there was scope for research in this area and quite surprised by the extent to which Paul challenged the concepts I had previously encountered. The spiritual discernment that I found in Paul was dependent on a liberated perception of reality and mature self-understanding. This research reflects the attempt to elucidate this new perception.

It is a privilege to be allowed to name a number of people and organisations which have contributed to the completion of this work.

First of all I am greatly indebted to Professor Max Turner for his supervision of this work. His patience, his probing and his trust allowed me to develop freely and experience the conditions for the type of discernment described below.

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André Munzinger
Köln, February 2006
ABBREVIATIONS


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNT</td>
<td>Commentaire du Nouveau Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITP</td>
<td>Intertestamental Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int.</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEThS</td>
<td>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</td>
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<td>JPT</td>
<td>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-S</td>
<td>A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley (eds.), <em>The Hellenistic Philosophers</em> I Translations of the Principal Sources with Philosophical Commentary; II. Greek and Latin Texts with Notes and Bibliography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; cited by volume and page number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICNT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNTC</td>
<td>The Pillar New Testament Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNTW</td>
<td>Studies of the New Testament and its World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ThBLNT</td>
<td>Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpubl.</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>Word Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZNT</td>
<td>Zeitschrift fur Neues Testament</td>
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