

Spiritual Discernment for Thriving in Change

conversation that listens for God

Our Day Together

9:00 Welcome and Prayer, Deep Listening to the Scriptures and to one another:
Dwelling in the Word

9:45 Why we do discernment
When we do discernment
The steps in the process

10:15 Break

10:30 Try it out: Groups practice TIC

12:00 Reflection: first thoughts about TIC

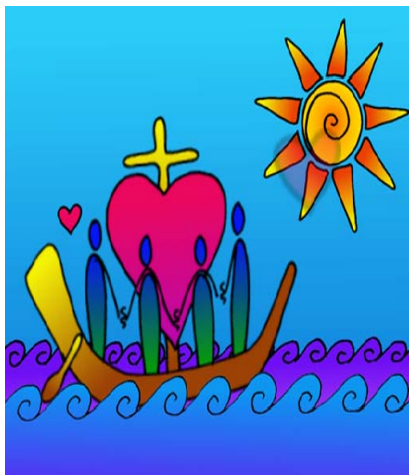
12:30 Lunch

1:00 Troubleshooting the process
Why TIC and Dwelling are linked

2:00 Break

2:15 How/when to use TIC: habit versus
intervention: planning our practice

3:00 Return to Philippians



Spiritual Discernment for Thriving in Change

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What is spiritual discernment? How can our church practice it?

Spiritual discernment is making time and space to listen to how God is calling us. Many people do spiritual discernment in their personal prayer life. Congregations also do it collectively as they consider what God might be calling them to be within God's mission.

Any group in a local church can do communal spiritual discernment. There are many methods they can choose from. Church Innovations' *Thriving in Change* is one such method. Over the past 25 years we have worked with hundreds of local churches to develop a simple *90-minute meeting format* which helps people to carve out a time when they intentionally listen deeply to God's Word and to one another as they seek to understand what God is calling them to be and do together.

A church can practice *Spiritual Discernment for Thriving in Change (TIC)* in several ways. The more often a key group practices it, the more fluid and helpful it becomes. Two possibilities:

1. A handful of leaders can use *Thriving in Change* to deliberate several issues their congregation might face in the coming months, or even deliberate social issues facing the greater community. Each time, they convene for 90 minutes and follow the steps of *Thriving in Change*, using their new topic as the "question of the day."

When this leader group is ready, they invite others in their church to a *TIC* meeting. It might be an annual meeting where the congregation is trying to discern a single major issue. That issue becomes their "question of the day." The leaders help the meeting participants to discern as a large group what God might be up to in their local church and how God might be calling them.

2. A continuing group such as a church council or board can practice the *TIC* process routinely, so that it becomes the way they run their regular meetings.

① Prayer

Pray for the Holy Spirit's presence as your group discerns together.

② Dwelling in the Word

Philippians 1:27, 2:5-11 NRSV

1:27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.

2:5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

⁷ but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.

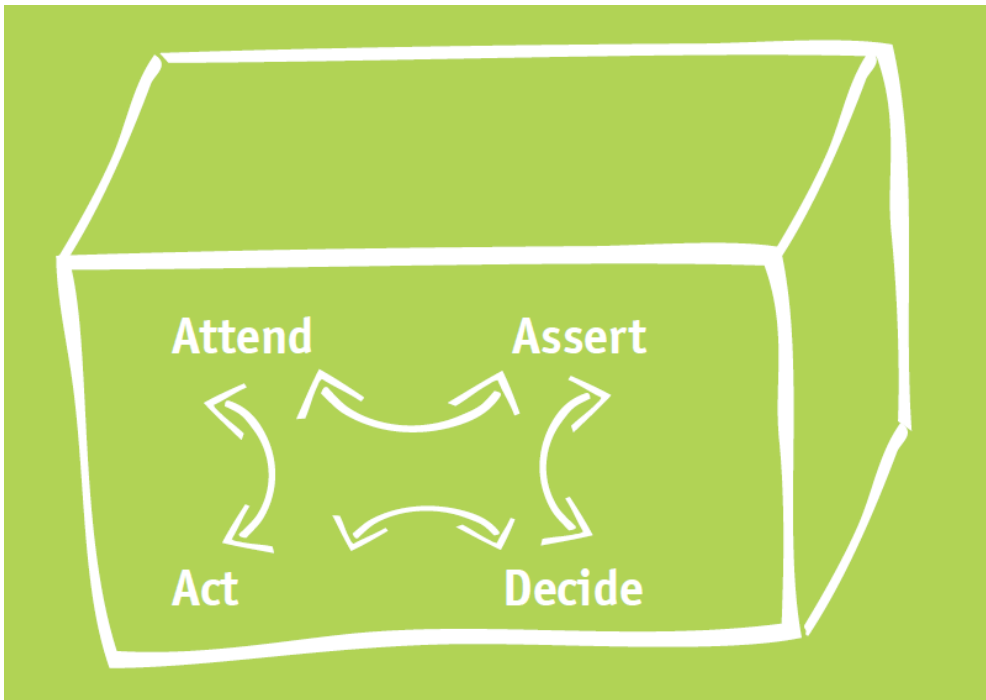
⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

③ Ground Rules



Attend

to listen to someone in and beyond words

Assert

to speak honestly, without apology or domination

Decide

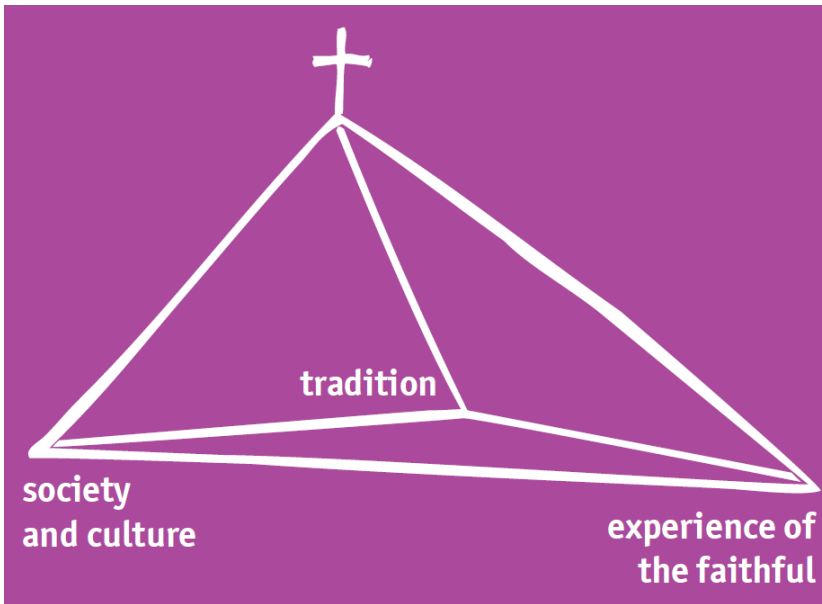
to make a communal or personal decision, to come to terms with an issue

Act

to live out our faith in the world; action will be the fruit of this conversation

④

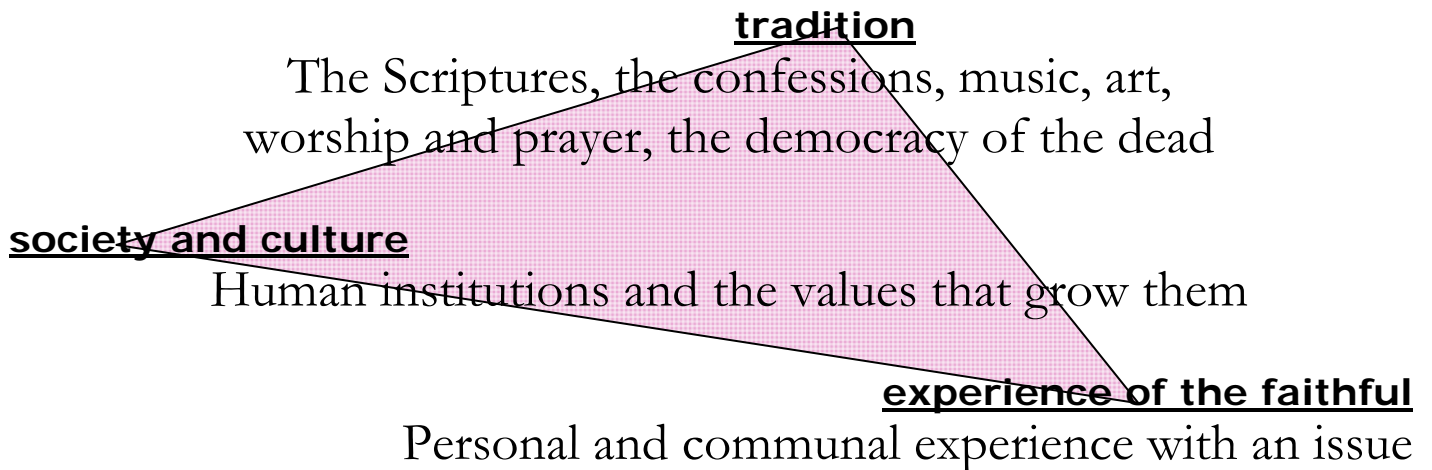
Triangle Brainstorm (create the base)



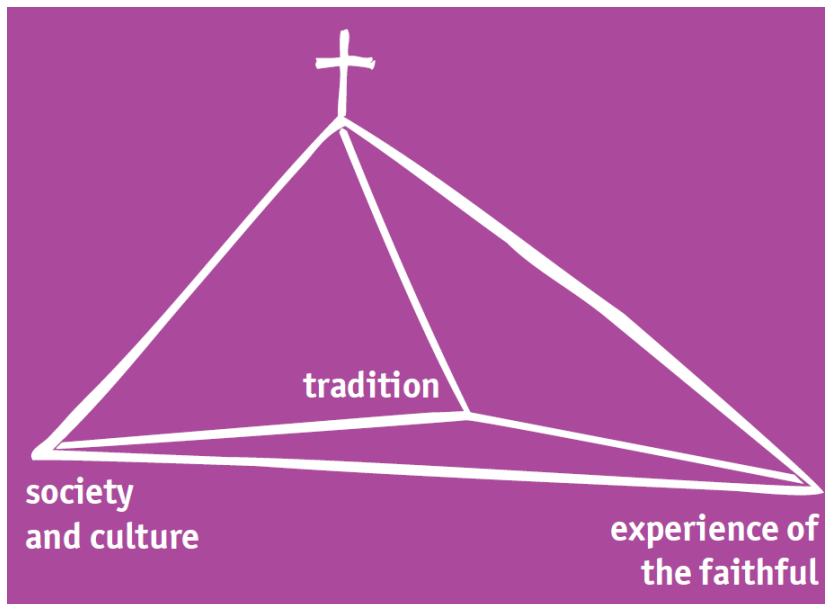
BRAINSTORM. DO NOT CONVERSE.

Spend 5 minutes on each Triangle corner. Don't explain your idea. Don't say no to someone else's idea. Make as long a list as you can for each Triangle corner.

Ask this: How is *our question* viewed by



⑤ Floated Conversation (inflate the pyramid)



- *Be suspended in deep listening to one another. Keep the “emptying posture” we recognized in Dwelling.*
- *Bring Philippians back into the conversation periodically.*
- *Refer to some of the brainstormed ideas. Urge people to open them up and talk about them.*
- *Encourage one another to use the time well, no one talking for too long and no one remaining silent.*

Ask, “What is God up to in this question for us?”

Gathering a Sense of the Room

When you have about 5 minutes left, be silent for a moment, and then ask someone to summarize any patterns or recurring themes. Claim those as learning and discerning moments for the group. If you have discerned a direction, take it!

⑥ Return to the Word and Prayer

Troubleshooting TIC

What could happen in

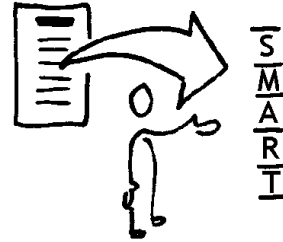
1. Prayer
2. Dwelling
3. The Box of Ground Rules
4. The Triangle Brainstorm
5. The Floated Conversation and Gathering a Sense of the Room
6. Returning to the Word and Prayer

What could happen in preparation?

What could happen in follow-up?

Getting Started Back Home

SMART Plan of Action



Specific objective:

The concrete thing you must get done

Mission/outreach:

The number of people you intend to serve

Accountability and authorization:

Name of the one Authorized Person

To whom is this person accountable?

Resources (people, funds, and materials):

Resources you already have:

Resources you'll need to get:

Timeline:

Person completing this form:

Date: