

## ENDORSEMENTS



### **Centered-Set Church** *Discipleship and Community Without Judgmentalism*

January 18, 2022 | \$24, 256 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0094-6

## Centering Your Church on Jesus, Not Judgmentalism

"Mark Baker's *Centered-Set Church* is a life-giving exposition of a life-transforming concept. With each story, he draws us in to another way of being the people of Jesus in the world. We leave judgmentalism behind, we lose old ways of drawing lines, and Hiebert's concept comes alive. A must-read for us who are called to lead churches to engage this world with the good news of Jesus Christ."

—David Fitch, Northern Seminary, author of *Faithful Presence*

"When Jesus prayed for his future followers, he had only one thing on his mind—our miraculous, attractive, authentic, and authenticating unity. Mark Baker's book *Centered-Set Church* is helping this generation of believers become the answer to Jesus' prayer for his body and his bride."

—Bruxy Cavey, teaching pastor at the Meeting House and author of *The End of Religion*

"When it comes to discerning what it looks like to live a Jesus-centered faith in a Jesus-centered community, it isn't an overstatement to say that Mark Baker's teaching and modeling of 'centered-set' Christianity completely revolutionized my vision of Christian formation within the local church. For years I'd hoped he'd put words on a page that could guide congregations—beyond the reach of his seminary classrooms—and finally . . . it is here! *Centered-Set Church* is a must-read for any church desiring to authentically follow Jesus without the trappings of religiosity or relativism. While many churches in North America have a track record for focusing on rule-based boundaries, this book paints a vision of a church transformed by a simple yet costly idea: What if Jesus were truly the center of a church's values, programs, community life, and discipleship? Without a doubt, that church's witness would be absolutely transformed. Church leaders and Christian readers, put this book at the top of your stack!"

—Kurt Willems, pastor and author of *Echoing Hope: How the Humanity of Jesus Redeems Our Pain*

"*Centered-Set Church* is an immensely practical book brimming with eloquent theology and a lively hope in the loving spirit of Christ active in the world. It's not often that you find the practical and the lyrically beautiful so entwined. Baker embodies the traits he suggests the church needs to embrace to maintain a centered approach. Though clear about his vision, he presents his case with humility and vulnerability—something you don't often find in church manuals. I wish I'd had this book when I planted a church years ago. I highly recommend it to anyone involved in Christian community—church planters, lay leaders, and anyone who longs to glimpse the gracious love at the center of Christian faith."

—Debbie Blue, pastor of House of Mercy in St. Paul, Minnesota, and author of *Sensual Orthodoxy*

"How can we hold beliefs and values without falling into gracelessness, self-righteousness, and conditional acceptance of others? In this excellent resource for churches, Mark Baker offers a practical alternative to help your community of faith keep firm convictions without drawing lines that promote polarization and judgmental attitudes. Highly recommended!"

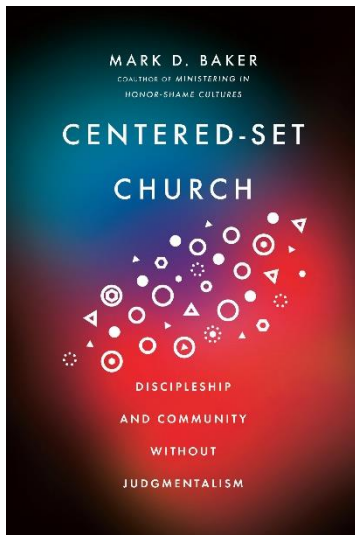
—César García, general secretary, Mennonite World Conference



Karin DeHaven, academic publicist  
800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [kdehaven@ivpress.com](mailto:kdehaven@ivpress.com)



[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)



## ENDORSEMENTS



### **Centered-Set Church** *Discipleship and Community Without Judgmentalism*

January 18, 2022 | \$24, 256 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0094-6

"I can still vividly recall the moment of gracious encounter with the loving God who provides a covering from shame. That moment was unexpectedly in the middle of one of Mark Baker's lectures in his Discipleship and Ethics course. Dr. Baker provides helpful examples, reflective questions, and stirring testimonies from ministry leaders engaging in the work of moving from bounded or fuzzy toward restorative and centered systems. To say that the insights from the course and this book are transformative is to only begin to tell the story of beauty, love, and truth in this material. I highly recommend this book for those seeking to lead and be led in the way of Jesus, toward Jesus, and with one another."

—**Noemi Vega Quiñones**, coauthor of *Hermanas: Growing Our Identity and Increasing Our Influence*

"Few concepts have had as much impact on my own work as a minister and theology lecturer as Mark Baker's explanation of the church in terms of bounded, fuzzy, and centered sets. I've been benefiting from Mark's work on this topic for years. Now with *Centered-Set Church*, we have Mark's full treatment of a paradigm that will surely shift the conversation and the church into a space of renewal and Christ-centered recalibration. Baker's advocacy for gospel communities that are defined not by theological fences or doctrinal fuzziness but by Jesus Christ the center will resonate with both new seminarians and seasoned ministry practitioners. *Centered-Set Church* will spark fresh, imaginative gospel hope in the hearts of the recently deconstructed, and it will provide a healing balm for the heavy-handed and the heavy-laden alike."

—**John Frederick**, lecturer in New Testament and Greek at Trinity College, Queensland, Australia, and author of *Worship in the Way of the Cross*



---

Karin DeHaven, academic publicist  
800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [kdehaven@ivpress.com](mailto:kdehaven@ivpress.com)



BIO



## **Centered-Set Church** *Discipleship and Community Without Judgmentalism*

January 18, 2022 | \$24, 256 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0094-6

Is there an alternative to the church's impulse to either obsess over boundaries or erase them completely? Building on the work of Paul Hiebert, Mark D. Baker provides a unique manual for understanding and applying the vision of a "centered" church, charting a new path for congregations and leaders to grow in authentic freedom and dynamic movement toward the true center: Jesus himself.

## Practical Guidance from an Experienced Leader

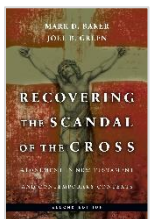
**Mark D. Baker** (PhD, Duke University) is professor of mission and theology at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. He served as a missionary in Honduras for ten years and has written a number of books, including *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures* (with Jayson Georges) and *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* (with Joel B. Green).

Also by Mark D. Baker:



**Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials** by Jayson Georges and Mark D. Baker  
September 1, 2016 | \$28, 295 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5146-1

Many a Westerner has had a cross-cultural experience of honor and shame. In this well-rounded and ministry-tested guide, Georges and Baker help us decode the cultural script of honor and shame, assisting us also in reading the Bible anew through that lens. Then they offer thoughtful and practical guidance in ministry within honor-shame contexts.



**Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts** by Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green  
July 7, 2011 | \$29, 287 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-3931-5

Since its publication in 2000, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* has provoked thought among evangelicals about the nature of the atonement and how it should be expressed in today's various global contexts. In this second edition Baker and Green have clarified and enlarged the text to ensure its ongoing critical relevance.



Karin DeHaven, academic publicity  
800.846.4587 ext. 4096 or [kdehaven@ivpress.com](mailto:kdehaven@ivpress.com)



[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)