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HITTING THE MARKS

RESTORING THE ESSENTIAL IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

Barry J. York



A much-needed resource on the meaning and identity of the church in a compromised age. Invaluable and timely. Clear, concise—a clarion call for reformation. Thoroughly recommended.

DEREK W. H. THOMAS, SENIOR MINISTER, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, COLUMBIA, S.C., CHANCELLOR'S PROFESSOR, REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Evaluating a church or choosing a good one can be a difficult task. So many styles, so many types, so many different experiences and focuses. We quickly see the activities of a church, and those can be important; but how much do they reveal about the church's essential nature? Are there signs that a church is actually a good church, both on the surface and deep down?

Those questions lead to others. What distinguishes a true congregation of God's people from a cult, a misguided sect, or an apostate church? What may be signs that a church is drifting away from its calling?

Historically, the church has provided answers to these questions from the Scriptures, which are a sure and lasting guide. Certain marks have been given to distinguish the true, visible church from false ones. In particular, *there are three essential identification marks*, which we will explore in this book.

Whether you are looking for a church, seeking to understand your own church experience better, or wanting to guide others in deepening the church's true identity, this book is for you.

After more than two decades in church planting, Barry York became the professor of pastoral theology and dean of faculty at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary. In 2018, he became president. He serves as an elder, writes regularly for the blog *Gentle Reformation*, co-hosts the 3GT podcast, and is the general editor of the *Reformed Presbyterian Theological Journal*. Barry and his wife, Miriam, have six children and five grandchildren.

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