

## “ISSUE-ORIENTED” PREACHING?

By Keith Greer

The other day I received a letter from another gospel preacher. He was seeking names of other congregations who were searching for a man to work with them. He wanted to get back into "full time preaching." While this is commendable, something in his letter was very alarming. Let me share it with you.

In the letter he stated he was a "conservative preacher", briefly explaining his stand on the subject of divorce and remarriage. This was understandable considering the various positions which abound on the subject. Then came a statement that sent up a "red flag" in my mind.

**"Although I take a conservative stand on this and other issues, I am not an "issue-oriented" preacher."** What exactly does this mean? Honestly, he really confused me with the next sentence:

**"Instead, I prefer to devote my efforts to edifying the saints through uplifting sermons, and reaching the lost through personal evangelism."** Does this not make him an "issue-oriented" preacher? This brother seeks to preach only to lost sinners and give only uplifting and feel good sermons to the brethren.

Can a gospel preacher only preach to these two groups of people and still be considered a true gospel preacher?

"Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." {Acts 20:26,27}

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." {2 Timothy 4:2-4}

"Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain." {Titus 1:9-11}

"And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." {Galatians 2:4,5}

Was Stephen an "issue- oriented" preacher? Please read Acts 7. Did Paul try to avoid some "subjects" as being too controversial to preach on? Did Paul only preach "uplifting sermons"? Please read 1 Corinthians 5: 1-11.

It seems to me that this brother desires to get back into preaching, -- as long as he can avoid the ugly task of dealing with the false teaching and the teacher. Pardon me, but with this type of approach it would be better for him to stay out of the pulpit! Today, the church has too many of these types of preachers. Sadly, they are doing more for the cause of Satan than for the cause of Christ!

How can one do the work of the evangelist and only preach to the alien sinners and give "uplifting sermons" to the brethren? Does preaching just limit itself to teaching the "Great Commission?" Preachers need to preach the word! Unfortunately, this means that the preacher must deal with the unpleasant task of false teachers and "issues." Preachers need a **balance** approach—both positive and negative. Preachers who just want to be "one sided" — find another line of work! \*\*\*