

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Are We Issue Oriented?

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**S**ome take pride in saying, “*We are not an issue oriented church.*” The point is usually made to distinguish the church one belongs to from others who seem continually absorbed in issues.

The word, “*oriented*” is defined as, “(1) to cause to turn or face the east; (2) to set, as a map, in agreement with the points on a compass; figuratively, to adjust or adapt to a particular situation... (3) to show or establish relationship with others by placing or arranging in a certain manner.”

I do not believe those who speak of “issue oriented” churches believe these people are turning all issues towards “the east”, but in the definition, we see being oriented involves being arranged according to or in relation to some standard. The standard may be the compass pointing North by which the places on a map are arranged, or the standard of a straight border on the wall according to which a picture hangs parallel.

There were many issues in which Jesus, His apostles and New Testament churches were

involved. Divorce and marrying another, circumcision, our relationship to civil government, and denying a bodily resurrection are just a few we see being discussed in Scripture (*Matthew 19:1-9, I Corinthians 7, Acts 15, Matthew 22:17-22, Romans 13:1-7, I Corinthians 15*). Should we cast disparagement upon Jesus, his apostles, and New Testament churches calling them “issue oriented”?

Observe Paul as he strengthens the church in Colossae: He presents the truth that the law of Moses, “*the bond written in ordinances... (God jbf) hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross*” (*Colossians 2:15*). Then Paul writes in the very next verse, “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day.*” (*Colossians 2:16*). Paul concludes that the truth of God nailing the Old Law to the cross applies in five ways, which could be called issues. No one was “therefore” to “judge” them regarding specific ordinances in the Law Of Moses because this law has been brought to an end in Christ’s death on the cross. It was no longer God’s standard enjoined upon man.

On occasion, issues were already brewing in the minds of Christians and they wrote questions concerning them. For example, issues connected with marriage and divorce were needing attention in Corinth. He responds to “*the things whereof ye wrote*” with God-inspired direction (*I Corinthians 7:1-40*).

Was Paul creating an “issue oriented” church in Colossae by bringing to their attention some issues regarding judging? Certainly not. He was simply applying the New Testament to their lives. Did he condemn the church in Corinth for being absorbed in issues? No, he addressed their issues with Divine instruction to govern them.

“Issues” by definition are matters that are the “ultimate result” of something. This “something” in the New Testament is simply “applying God-inspired Scripture.” In light of the above accounts, Jesus and Paul would not share the pride of one who brags that their church is not an “issue oriented” church, but would probably wonder why the spiritual diet of some is lacking the distinctive application of Scripture.