

Ministry and Today's Controversial Issues
(Same-sex Marriage, Gender Issues, Sexual Abuse/Harassment)
Dr. Jeff Iorg

Ministry Foundations

1. Prepare for messy situations that do not have easy answers – be patient with other believers who share your core convictions but make different application decisions.
2. Adopt a written doctrinal statement of your church's conviction about marriage and gender (BFM2000).
3. Revise your bylaws to reflect your doctrinal statement – and implement the documents consistently.

Ministry Focus

4. Focus on the gospel – the power to change anyone.
5. Focus on disciple-making – teaching doctrine to build strong Christians.
6. Focus on behavior – not orientation (or temptation).
7. Focus on personal responsibility – persons related to controversial people are not at fault.

Ministry Actions

8. Implement a sound church membership policy – all are welcome to attend, members must meet and submit to standards.
9. Adjust church ministry practices to recognize new challenges – like youth ministry trips; counseling relationships; background information.
10. Adjust church fellowship structures to support people coming out of controversial lifestyles.

Preaching on Controversial Issues

1. Preach and teach from the Bible – using the text as closely as you can.
2. Consider using a manuscript so you can be more precise and avoid misstatements.
3. Do your research and get your facts straight before you make outlandish claims.
4. Make sure you have age-appropriate and context-appropriate verbiage and illustrations.
5. Be serious – this is not the time for jokes or hostile humor.
6. Be positive – not just condemning wrong behavior but encouraging good behavior.
7. Be realistic – talk about real issues and real solutions.
8. Be sensitive – people in your audience are living sinful, worldly realities right now.
9. Have a follow up plan to deal with people who want to change.
10. We live in a “push back” culture so prepare for opposition.