

Leadership Decision Making in the Local Church

Dr. Rich Denning



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PASTOR ♦ TEACHER ♦ LEADERSHIP COACH



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**I. Deontological Approach
(Rule-oriented) – What is right?**

**II. Relational Approach
(Relationship-oriented) – What is fitting?**

**III. Teleological Approach
(Goal-oriented) – What is good?**



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I. Deontological Approach - Rule-oriented

A. Description - Making ethical decisions on the basis of what is right in a given situation.

From the Greek word "dei," meaning "it is necessary, proper." Doing one's duty on the basis of fundamental rules.



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B. Positive Features

- 1. Takes Biblical demands seriously**
- 2. Prescribes a definite course of action**
- 3. Emphasizes faithfulness**
- 4. Avoids short-sighted manipulation**
- 5. Focuses on essentials**



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C. Negative Features

- a. **Conflicting or competing commands**
- b. **Can degenerate into legalism**
- c. **Tends to disregard the context and the consequences**

**“It’s nothing personal...
It’s a matter of principle.”**

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II. Relational Approach (Relationship-oriented)

A. Description - Making ethical decisions on the basis of what is fitting in a given situation. Focuses on vertical and horizontal relationships.

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B. Positive Features

- 1. Evangelical - focuses on what God has done in Christ**
- 2. Alive - not a static set of rules and regulations**
- 3. Personal - focuses on people, not just problems**
- d. Contextual - considers circumstances**



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C. Negative Features

1. Devalues the place of absolutes
(i.e. vague, nebulous)
2. Creates confusion about the deeds
on unbelievers
3. Can degenerate into:
 - a false dichotomy between law and gospel
 - situational ethics - existential decisions
 - relativism

**“I don’t want to hurt anybody...
and I want everybody to be happy.”**



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III. Teleological Approach (Goal-oriented)

A. Description - Making ethical decisions on the basis of what is good (i.e. What is the ideal? What is the purpose?) in a given situation.

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B. Positive Features

1. Purposeful - not merely theoretical or emotional
2. Theocentric - seeks the mind, will, purposes of God
3. Noble - seeks the best or ideal
4. Focuses on the design and intention of creation
5. Historical consciousness

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C. Negative Features

1. Determining whose purpose
(God's, mine, yours, ours, theirs)
2. Determining which purpose
(short-term, long-term, eternity)
3. Can degenerate into:
 - utilitarianism - the best for the most
 - pragmatism - the end justifies the means
 - utopianism - idealistic expectations
 - preoccupation with consequences

“What good will that do...
What will that accomplish?”



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Accommodating Lose to Win	Collaborate Win-Win
Avoiding Lose-Lose	Competitive Win-Lose

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