

well and good. But it must be remembered that the temptation presented by the devil to take shortcuts in bringing about God's purposes is sin (2 Cor. 2:11). The "dyed in the wool" situation ethics practitioner will never admit he is guilty of such. Brethren, beware! He will do just about anything he can get away with in order to reach his goals. He will lie when he determines he will not be detected. He will teach false doctrine if his purposes call for it. It does not bother his seared conscience to intentionally deceive (I Tim. 4:2). In addition to a desire to succeed, here are some other possible reasons a person practices Situation Ethics in the work of the church:

1. Lack of trust in God and in the power of the gospel.
2. Desire for preeminence in the local church (3 John 9-10).
3. Love of money (I Tim. 6:10).
4. Egotism.
5. A desire to see unity in the church at any cost, even the cost of truth.
6. A desire to see the church grow at any cost, even by filling it with adulterers, drunkards and other unconverted types (Gal. 5:19-21).

A LESSON FROM HISTORY

The oral discussion between brother **Foy E. Wallace, Jr.** and **Dr. J. Frank Norris**, Baptist, took place in 1934 at the First Baptist Church building at Fort Worth, Texas. That particular debate was called by some, "The debate of the century."

The persecution brother Wallace received from Norris before, during, and after the debate is almost unbelievable and certainly inexcusable. To influence the people to believe his stand to be a Biblical one, this faith only "debater" intentionally misquoted certain writers, had his stenographers to put their pencils down when Wallace was refuting his false arguments and a host of other "short cuts." When brother Wallace perceived one of his dishonest tricks and thus pointed it out to him, he

became angry. Before a crowd of thousands he threatened Wallace that he had 100 armed men in the audience. Brother Wallace never gave up his teaching of the truth during the debate. After the debate, many brotherhood papers tried to describe the wickedness and dishonest character of such a practitioner of situation ethics. Perhaps the statement from *The Vindicator*, December 1934 described him best:

"A psychologist capitalizing on religion for earthly glory and filthy lucre."

Norris had not learned what many today have not learned and that is it is never right to do wrong (James 4:17).

It was basically situation ethics that **the Jews in Jesus' day** were guilty of in their religious goals. They, like many today, believed they could have God on their own humanly devised terms (Rom. 16:17-18; Phil. 3:18-19). May we ever trust in the gospel as God's wisdom to save us from sin, govern our lives, and reach our God given goals in the church today (Rom. 1:16-17; I Cor. 1:17-25). May all **church leaders** do the work of evangelism, benevolence and edification by the means which only the gospel authorizes and be satisfied to allow God to bless our efforts as He sees fit. ■

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The Sin Of Situation Ethics

By

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