

Elements Of African Bioethics In A Western Frame - Godfrey B. Tangwa

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For millennia, Africans have lived on the African continent, in close contact with the diversities of nature: floral, faunal and human; and in so doing they have developed cultures, values, attitudes and perspectives to the problems, ethical and otherwise, that have arisen from the existential pressures of their situation. The problem, however, is that such values and perspectives do not necessarily form coherent ethical theories. Theory-making is a second order activity requiring a certain amount of leisure and comfort which the existential conditions of life on the African continent have not easily permitted in the retrospect-able past. The elements of African bioethics are to be found in its cultural values, traditions, customs and practices. These are research-able, highlight-able and usable by those who would. The bioethical problems of our current global existential situation are such that all possible solutions, no matter their provenance, ought to be tried. Western culture's has far too loud a voice combined with deaf ears in contemporary ethical discourse. But it should never be forgotten that other cultures' have their own word to say and that alternative values, ways of thinking and practices exist, and attempt should always be made to bring these out and to highlight them, if they could possibly contribute to the satisfactory solution of a global problem. This book brings together various papers on bioethical issues and problems, written at different times, some previously published, each of which attempts to bring out some African elements, perspective or concern. The African narrative style predominates through these essays but their framing conforms, more or less, to the Western paradigm for presenting academic issues.

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