

Responsible to God: Christian and Muslim Perspectives on Biotechnology and Bioethics for the Common Good

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2.1 Typology: Theological Methodologies

*Religious bioethical positions depend on hermeneutics
(methods of interpretation of the Holy Scriptures):*

1. Fundamentalist positions:
scripture: literal (selective) interpretation
2. Orthodox positions
scripture+tradition, laws of religious authorities
3. Reformist positions
scripture+contextualisation, inculturation
4. Liberal positions
scripture+autonomy, individual conscience
5. Mystical positions:
scripture+spiritual way towards unity with God

2.2 Typology: Freedom, Authority, power

Freedom *versus* *Authority*
Individual Conscience *versus* *Institutional Power*
God's Spirit for all *versus* *priesthood of a few*



Fundamentalist

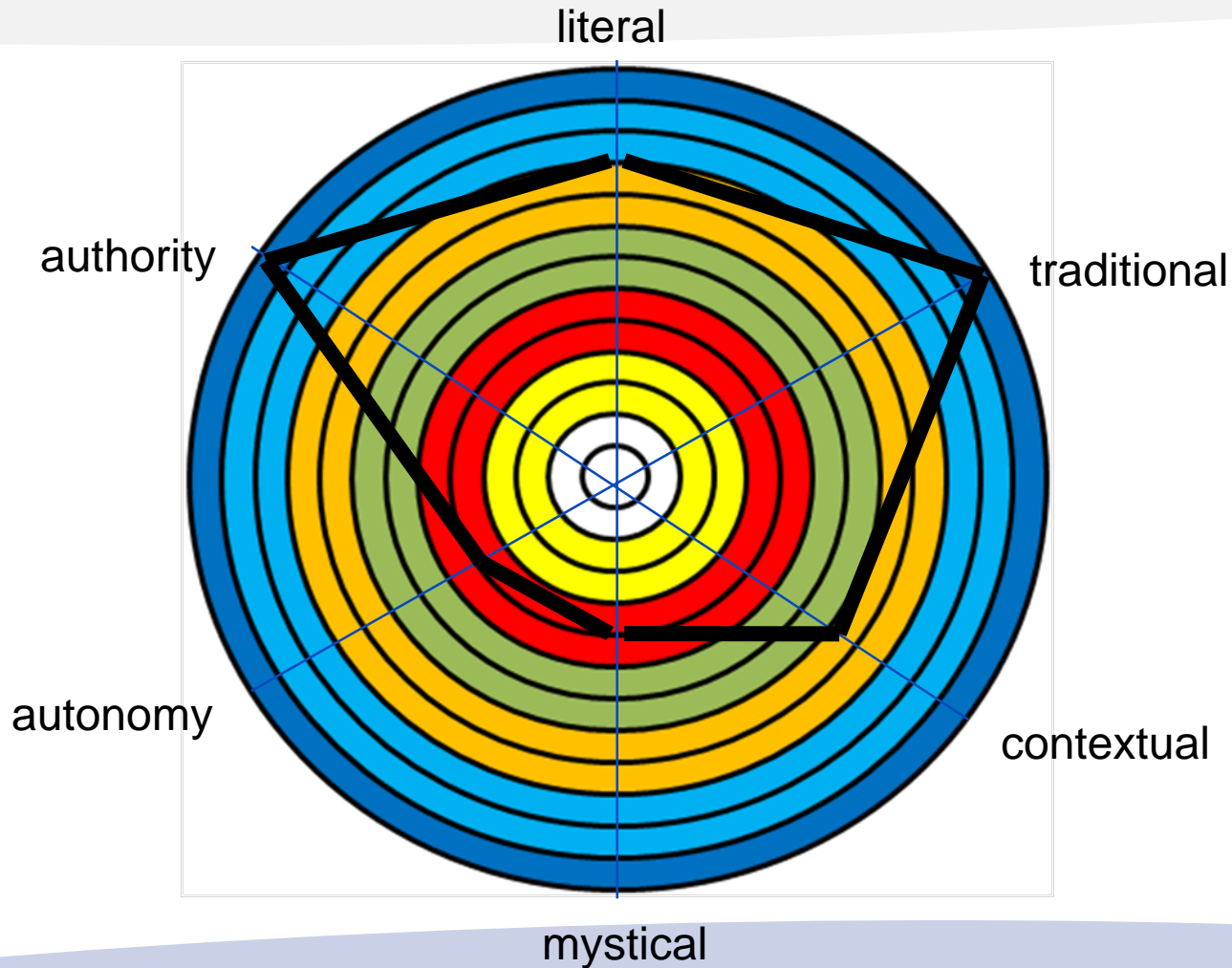
Orthodox

Reformist

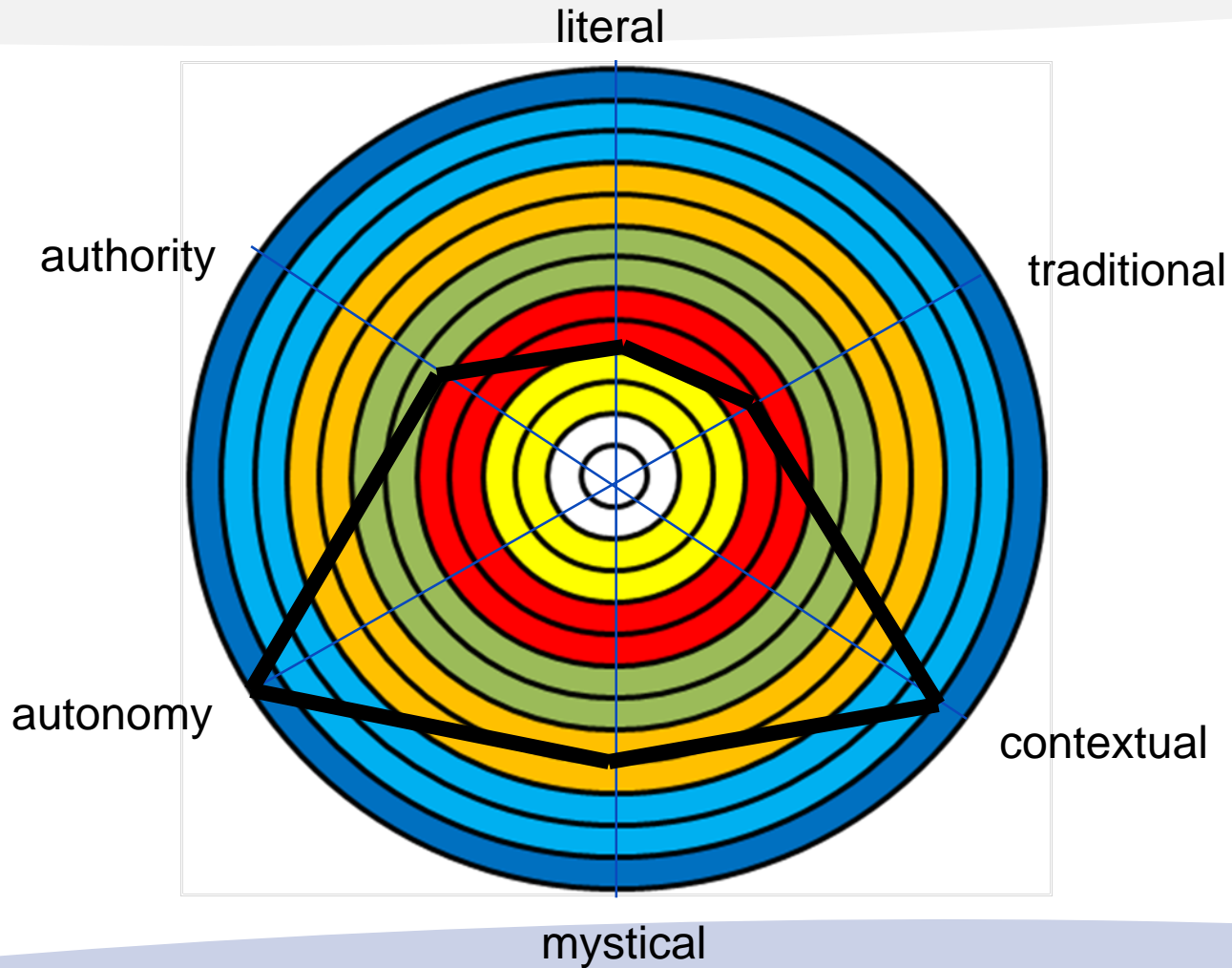
Liberal

Mystical

2.3 Profile of Orthodox Positions



2.3 Profile of Liberal Positions



3. Christian/Islamic Themes in Bioethics

Human Life (medical ethics) *very often, esp. orthodox*

- Beginning of life
- Enhancement and duration of life
- End of life

Agriculture, Health, Environment, *not often, esp. reformist*

- food ,water etc.

Economy, Politics, Law, Leadership, *rare, esp. reformist*

- patenting
- gender
- governance
- bio-piracy, economic criminality etc.

4. “Welcome as Guests on Earth”

“In the name of God” is the profound motto of this conference. The anthropological foundation of Bioethics is that God invites all human beings: “You are welcome as guests on Earth!” As Iranians, Asians and Europeans, as Americans and Africans, as rich and poor, as socialists and capitalists, as Muslim, Hindu, Christians, Buddhists, Jews etc. - we all are guests on earth. Life and natural resources are not personal possession. “To be a guest on earth” is an anthropology which is deeply rooted in many religious traditions and many cultures. In the abrahamic religions it is linked to God the creator and human beings as his creation with a specific offer and responsibility.

5. Responsibility means to respond to God

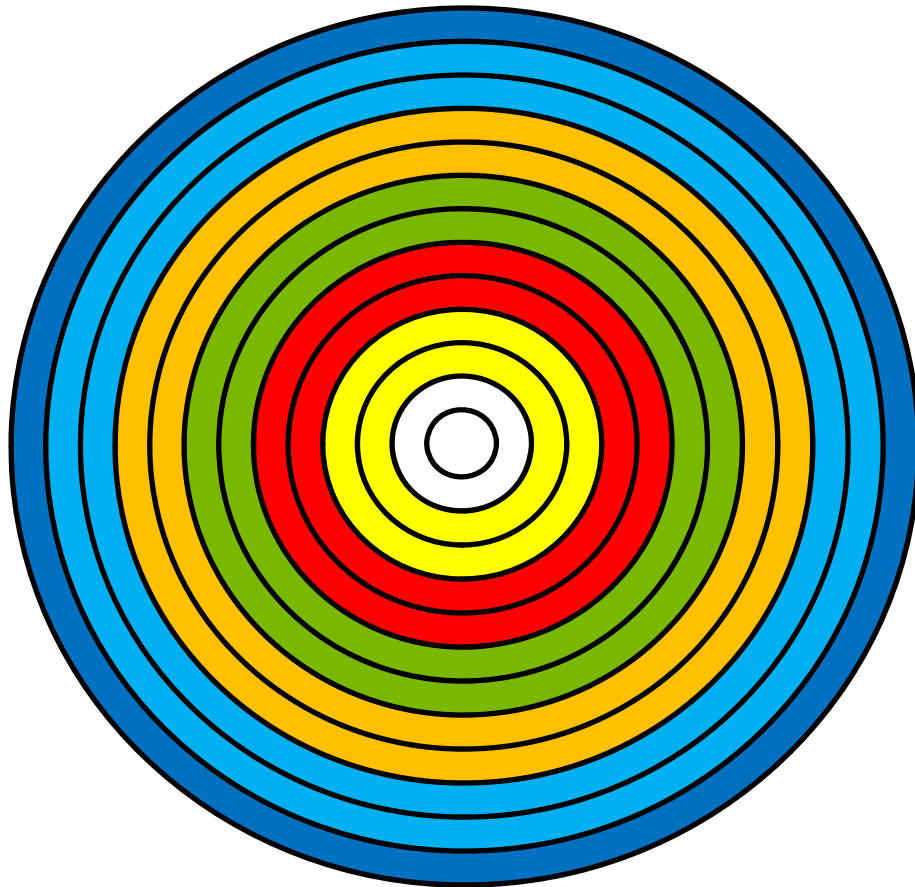
Responsibility means to respond, to answer to God's call. The Latin word 'spondere' means 'to give', 'to sponsor'. God sponsors all life and his whole creation so that living beings as his creatures can have life in its fullness by grace (John 1:16). Human responsibility is the response to these gifts. Today, the Greek word *oikos*, house, is present in three dimensions: *economy*, *ecology* and *ecumenism*: responsible stewards care for the economy as the material basis of life in God's household, the earth; they care for the ecology as the environmental basis of life in God's household; they also care for ecumenism as the spiritual basis for life and its inter-denominational, inter-religious and intercultural community in the global household.

6.1 Responsibility for the Common Good

The bad and the good manager (oikonomos)/scientist Luke 12,42-48)

42 Who then is the faithful and wise steward (*scientist*), 2 whom his master will set over his household (*technologies*), to give them their portion of food at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. 44 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 45 But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the unfaithful. ... 48 Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more.

6.2 Common Good - of which community?



White:

1 Myself

2 Inner Family: partner, children

Yellow

3 Broader Family: Clan

4 Professional Community: team

Red

5 Neighbourhood: village, quarter

6 Religious Community: parish/temple

Green

7 Peers: sport, ethnic, interest groups

8 Professional Community: company

Brown

9 Nation: state, peoples,

10 Regions: EU, Asean

Blue

11 All Religions: world spirituality

12 Humankind: all human beings

Dark Blue

13 Biosphere: all living beings

7.1 Ethical Principles for Biotechnologies

1. *Contributing to meet basic human needs*
2. *Respecting and enabling a life in dignity*
3. *Promoting equity in access and distribution of natural resources, goods and services*
4. *Promoting sustainability:*
5. *Promoting human and animal health*
6. *Promoting security and social peace*
7. *Promoting participation in decision-making*
8. *Increasing efficiency in use of resources and funds*
9. *Preserving biological and cultural diversity*
10. *Enabling balanced development*

7.2 Consequences for Biotechnologies

- *Biotechnologies - as all technologies - are from an ethical point of view positive if they set the priority in meeting the basic human needs of all human beings in order to enable them to live in dignity. They are positive if they promote values such as justice, sustainability, peace, participation and diversity.*
- *Biotechnologies are negative, if they hinder them and increase the gap between rich and poor, increase injustice and conflicts, destroy environment, violate the dignity and integrity of human and non human beings and threaten biodiversity.*

Thank you