

Christian Responses to Religious Pluralism*

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I. Religious Pluralism as Social Fact and as Theological Paradigm

Asia has long been noted for its rich diversity of religious systems of thought and practice. Christian mission in Asia has a long and chequered history, and Christians have lived alongside people of other faiths in the great cities and villages of Asia as a small, politically powerless and occasionally persecuted minority. In this, of course, their situation has been little different to that of the early Christian communities in the pluralistic Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean. Although religious pluralism has been recognized as a social fact from the earliest days of Christian mission (whether in Asia or the Graeco-Roman world), and Christian theologians in Asia have long grappled with the task of communicating Christ in thought-forms appropriate to those from other faiths, in recent decades we have

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