

BOOKS WE RECOMMEND

On Religious Pluralism

Paul Hiebert, John Nyquist and Harold Netland

How should Christians respond to religious pluralism? Is Christ indeed the only way of salvation? In the past these questions were asked by Christian missionaries who served abroad. Today, due to global immigration and the missionary movements of Islam and Hinduism, they confront us in North America. The following are some of the most important books on the subject. We do not agree with the positions of all of the authors in the list, but Christians must know the central issues and the different positions in the debate to formulate a thoroughly biblical response.

D'Costa, Gavin, ed. *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990).

This collection of essays by leading theologians who fall broadly in the "inclusivist" position is a response to the writings of Paul Knitter and John Hick. The book argues for the normativity (in some broad sense) of Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior, but remains positive and very open to other religions. The book is important to understand the positions of those advocating a pluralist position in religion.

Fernando, Ajith. *The Christian's Attitude toward World Religions* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1987).

An excellent evangelical response to religious pluralism written by one of the leaders in the Asian churches. The author writes for the broader world Christian audience.

Goldsmith, Martin. *What About Other Faiths?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989).

A concise introduction to some of the theological issues written by an evangelical in an understandable, and non-technical manner. The author's concern is to present Biblical perspectives on some of the controversial questions arising from pluralism.

Knitter, Paul. *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes*

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Toward the World Religions (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985).

This book is significant mainly because it provides a good survey of the current debate and the main theological positions. Knitter's own perspective is thoroughly pluralistic, but he introduces readers to the main issues and personalities involved.

Neill, Stephen. *Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with other Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984). First published in England under the title *Crises of Belief*.

An excellent classic on the Christian encounter with other religions by an highly respected Christian missionary and scholar. The author deals with the issues particularly in the setting of Christian missions.

Netland, Harold A. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991).

An excellent analysis of the major issues involved in the debate over religious pluralism and the uniqueness of Christ, and a thoroughly biblical response. This is a major work written by an evangelical for those wanting to examine the subject in greater theological and philosophical depth.

Pinnock, Clark. *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

An important work by an evangelical theologian, calling for a more positive evangelical perspective on other religions while remaining fully committed to the finality of Christ. The author is overly optimistic about other religions, but he does raise good questions concerning the biblical data. He has properly tried to ground his "inclusivism" in Scripture, although he says little about God's wrath and judgment of sin.

Sanders, John. *No Other Name: An Investigation into the Destiny of the Unevangelized* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992).

The author examines the position of religious pluralism advocated by Paul Knitter from an evangelical point of view. He looks particularly at the mission implications of the current debate on religious pluralism.