

Religious Diversity in
Muslim-majority States
in Southeast Asia
Areas of Toleration
and Conflict

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION:
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES CHALLENGES IN MALAYSIA

19

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BEING CHRISTIANS
IN
MUSLIM-MAJORITY
MALAYSIA

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Bawang

Experiences in Sarawak

recent years a situation which has emerged out Of Malaysia's multiculturalism and which has caught the attention of various commentators on Malaysian society is the position of religious minorities such as the Hindus, Buddhist, Taoists, Sikhs, Christians, and animists in Malaysia. This is especially within the context of freedom of belief, which is one of the fundamental rights upheld by the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. This basic right is clearly spelt out by Article 3(1): "Islam is the religion of the Federation, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation." Furthermore Article I I (I) indicates that, "Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and, subject to clause 4, to propagate it." In other words, except for Article II (4), which prohibits the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam, right to religion is protected in Malaysia.