

Peter Berger speaks suggestively about "a certain sense of life that is peculiarly modern, that has its own genius of compassion and that can be the foundation of a genuine humanism. This humanism . . . is one that does not easily wave banners, that is suspicious of too much enthusiasm and too much certainty. It is an uneasy, uncertain, hesitant thing, aware of its own precariousness, circumspect in its moral assertions," even though, as Berger hastens to add, "this does not mean that it cannot enter into passionate commitment at those points where its fundamental insights into human existence are touched upon. . . . Before the tribunals that condemn some men to indignity because of their race or sexuality, or that condemn any man to death, this humanism becomes protest, resistance and rebellion" (*Invitation to Sociology*: 161 f.).

If I am not mistaken, Berger is here talking about very much the same sort of thing I have in mind when I speak of "a properly modern, nondogmatic, and critical attitude toward all claims for the validity of religious traditions, including one's own." This becomes particularly clear when one takes account of all that I understand such an attitude to imply—namely, not only the recognition of all claimants as persons who are entitled to a unique kind of respect and the frank acknowledgement that the only way in which one can continue to be a Christian at all is to accept the possibility, and the risk, of ceasing to be such in face of experiences and reasons that, on the whole, tend to invalidate rather than to validate one's Christian claim, but also the obligation to transform social and cultural structures so that an unrestricted dialogue between all interested parties becomes a real possibility.

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