

The Modern Relevance of God

SPECIAL PODCAST SERIES

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To embrace sanity is to accept truth, live love, and be good.

Norberto Keppe

Thinking with Somebody Else's Head presents...
The Modern Relevance
of God Special Podcast Series

Science and Spirituality



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The Ceaseless Attack on Christian Values

Richard Lloyd Jones:

Welcome to episode 12 of the Modern Relevance of God audio course here on Thinking with Somebody Else's Head. I'm Richard Lloyd Jones.

I think one of the greatest difficulties I've had in coming closer to spirituality has been a pretty common one: mixing up God with religion. If God was all the mess stirred up by the church over the centuries, I wanted nothing to do with Him. It's a frequent oversimplification, one which doesn't require that much thinking actually. Just a knee jerk generalization in the same vein as all Chinese people look the same. And just as lacking in sophistication.

God never created a church after all. Neither did Jesus. This is something we do a lot. A phrase uttered by a politician whose party we don't like is worthless and evil, by definition. The Montreal Canadians are hated by Toronto Maple Leafs fans automatically.

And vice versa.

I heard a Serbian soldier in Bosnia back in the war years there say, "The Croatians are animals. I can't even bear to breathe the same air as them." And that after centuries of integration and intermarriage.

We have this black and white mentality, which serves us well in life threatening situations: "The fire is there, so I'm going over here," but this on/off, zero/one digital mind is very poor at the more complex and subtle abstractions we require when considering meaning of life questions. So lumping God and religion together as one pathological partnership to be vehemently discarded is a little too smug.

But it is what's happening. A recent Gallup poll in the U.S. verifies that less than 50% of U.S. citizens call themselves members of a church today. That's a 20% drop in 20 years. Belief in God has fallen from 86% to 41%. And a lot of this in the WIFI, app-for-everything Millennials.

A lot of this is possibly political. Left-leaning young people wanting to distance themselves from right-wing Christians. Or ethical: too much church corruption and abuse. But I want to suggest that the attack is not only against the Church; it's against the spiritual values that the church — for all its faults — preserves for us. And that is much more problematic.

Jones: As you're listening to this program, it'll be about a week later, the fire at Notre Dame in Paris. And I was just reflecting on this because I come from a culture in Canada ... I don't know about a full culture, I can't say that. But certainly where I grew up and the circle of friends I grew up with, Claudia, we didn't give much value to religion.

Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco: Mm-hmm. Not anymore.

Jones: No.

Pacheco: You used to.

Jones: I think we used to. Now there's even a big movement to take the spiritual words out of the National Anthem and these kinds of movements in Canada. And it struck me that when I saw this that it strikes very, very deep to see a church like that burning. We may think that we have no spiritual values, but in fact, it's something that every human being has. And when we see a church burning, it seems like, it seems like an attack somehow. Something deep inside.

Pacheco: It is. Not only to the spiritual values, but historical, cultural, artistic,

Jones: Who we are as a nation, yeah.

Pacheco: My God. So when they were planning to take away, in this European community, this notion that Europe was built on Christianity, all the culture, so they wanted to sweep away all notions of Christianity. This is a monstrous attitude because who in his mind, his right mind, can say, "We will take away from history the influence of Christianity, in law, in culture, arts, development, everything. Civilization." European civilization was built upon Christianity for centuries and centuries and millennia. Two millennia.

Jones: Exactly right. A student was saying to me this morning, she said, "Ah, but it's so interesting how the developed countries, there are a lot of atheists there." And I said, "Yeah, but you know what? Those cultures were totally built on Christian values. Absolutely." Being good to your neighbor. It's inside the constitutions; it's inside all of the declarations. The whole system is based on that.

Pacheco: Even visual arts, music, dance, theater, movies. Everything.

Jones: And isn't it interesting in times of crisis, no matter how atheistic we are, we call, "Oh God ..."

Pacheco: Oh God, oh God, oh Jesus, God, Jesus.

Jones: All the time.

Pacheco: All the time. So denying this seems to be a stupidity. For seven years, you know, I lived and worked in France and I used to go to Notre Dame on the Holy Friday. We had all those queues, people waiting to ...

Jones: Thousands of people.

Pacheco: Yeah. To see this crown.

Jones: Yeah. Of thorns.

Pacheco: Of thorns ...

Jones: The robe, pieces of the Cross that they have there ...

Pacheco: The cross, the wood of the cross ...

Jones: The nails ...

Pacheco: And you know something? When we got near these objects, we could absolutely feel such a tremendous magnitude in those objects. I felt that many times. So we see all this believing in goodness, in truth, in beauty, being dissolved, being dismantled. This is so sad because brothers and sisters and countries and peoples fight exactly as a result of the intention of the evil powerful that rule the world. Especially now the New World Order, which is the satanic New World Order. And we feel this. We can feel it. It's an anti-Christ, anti-God civilization. Anti-human. This is even so clear. It's anti-human. Most of these people, it's not that they are not absolutely spiritual. They are, but they are an evil spirituality. You cannot be non-spiritual; you cannot live totally as an animal. You must have some sort of spirituality. The thing is that your spirituality, if it's not a true spirituality, linked to goodness, beauty and truth, linked to Jesus Christ, to the holy Trinity, to their values, if we are not linked to this, we will be linked to anger, to projection, to death, the culture of death and suffering and pain and suicide and violence and perversion.

Jones: Yeah. The dominance of the will.

Pacheco: Like animalistic wishes and behavior. Wanting to bring down mankind to the level of just animals. And this is a very dark spirituality. Because you cannot be without your soul. You have it; you cannot take it away. So if you're not bringing light to it, it will be dark and you will suffer the darkness and people around you will suffer your darkness. It's unavoidable. So if they could eliminate their soul, their consciousness, they would, but they cannot. So it's an inner struggle all the time to hide it, to hide it and hide it and hide it.

Jones: It was one of Freud's major discoveries, actually, that the cause of human disease would be the hidden elements in the psychic structure. After all, if something is good, we don't feel the desire to hide it. This means that this modern mania to hide spirituality, to just expunge it from our history, is a sign of something that weighs heavily on our conscience. It's the same rewriting of history that we criticize the Islamic fundamentalists and the Communists of doing. Cancel culture, political correctness, all these social activist movements that seek to redefine what's acceptable, illustrate how we are disengaged from the deeper reality that has been defined as paradise or creation in the theological terminology. And that has pierced our souls and caused pain. We'll look at that in Episode 13.

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