

The Modern Relevance of God

SPECIAL PODCAST SERIES

RICHARD LLOYD JONES WITH CLÁUDIA B. S. PACHECO

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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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Why We Miss Paradise

Richard Lloyd Jones:

Welcome to episode 13 of the Modern Relevance of God audio course here on Thinking with Somebody Else's Head. I'm Richard Lloyd Jones.

As I've been developing this series, I have to admit I've been wondering about the acceptance of its premise in the English-speaking world. Living in Brazil for the past 20 years has coloured my perceptions and tastes in ways I wasn't expecting. My Anglo-Saxon feeling of assumed superiority has been challenged here in surprising ways. I imagined the typical cultural challenges of language and bureaucracy and doing the exchange in my head about the cost of stuff. I traveled to Europe for long stretches back in my backpacking years after all, but now have come to understand the difference between those mostly tourist concerns and the deeper questionings and soul searching that mark the real existential stirring provoked by making home somewhere else.

I can characterize this with a story. One of my Brazilian colleagues at the language school I work with here in Brazil was giving a Portuguese class for foreigners one day. A diverse group: an American, a couple of Colombians, a guy from Argentina and a young woman from France. One of the Colombians was talking about his spiritual and religious beliefs in one class, openly expressing his reverence for life and God. The French woman rolled her eyes dismissively and uttered something in French about how backward this was. To her surprise, my colleague speaks French, and to her greater surprise, he jumped in immediately with a gentle rebuke. "No, no," he said. "We're in Brazil now. Here we don't ridicule people for their beliefs."

It must have been a sobering moment for the European, a consciousness that on this question of tolerance, Brazil is light years ahead of the rest of the world.

Well, exactly that cultural arrogance has also been challenged in me. My worldview, nurtured at the breast of a secular education which indoctrinated me in modernization and often vehement criticism of religious consideration in human affairs, has been challenged here. Especially in Norberto Keppe's science, which I've been deeply studying and working with. This is a science based on extensive clinical practice that doesn't exclude philosophy or spirituality in treating human beings, and it's brought ample opportunities to question my deep-seated biases and personal philosophies. At the end, I've found basic fundamentals of my philosophy of life inadequate and even profoundly wrong in the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment. One of these wrong ideas is corrected in this episode, with Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco.

Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco:

Keppe based his understanding of the human psychic in those metaphysical philosophers. The wisdom that Aristotle brought, Socrates, Plato, Parmenides. The true metaphysics that study the being. So being in itself is beauty, goodness, and truth. Our essence is threefold. All theology, all philosophy, tend to understand the being like that. That's why we have difficulties in accepting this concept of dying, because we are eternal beings because we have this transcendental aspect of our lives.

And if we consider human beings as just an animal, the evolution of a monkey or something a little bit more intelligent, we do not fully understand the problematic we suffer from. We cannot address neurosis if we don't see the spiritual dimension of mankind. And when we enter the spiritual dimension, the meaning of life, the meaning of dying, what do we live for, why do we work so hard to make a few people richer? And is it worth it to live a life like that? Questioning what I do here is very normal; it's very healthy. But if we don't get to this possibility to go deeper and address even the spiritual questioning, which is the link of man with his Creator, with God, the very source of life, the very source of energy, the very source of infinite beauty, goodness, and truth ... After all, everyone is searching for happiness in life. We have the right to be happy, to search for happiness. The problem is that we are searching for happiness in the opposite direction. We search for happiness in money, in power, prestige, material goods, sex, and we will never get it through these objects.

Jones:

This relationship then with our Creator, with God, this is the fundamental relationship that every human being has to understand better. How do we come to know better this relationship, this transcendental aspect of ourselves?

Pacheco:

This seems to be a natural thing, Richard. All cultures, all civilizations get to a point where they confront transcendence. Even the primitive people, all of them have a notion of a higher energy, a higher being, an infinite being. And this is like ingrained in our universals, in our psycho-genetics: the idea of being happy, the idea of living in truth in goodness, in justice, in peace. So this is the most present universal concept inside of us, which is paradise. Everybody's looking to live in paradise; everybody's searching for paradise and we miss paradise. In Portuguese, we say saudades ...

Jones:

Hmmm. This is like longing in English. A deep, deep, deep longing for something.

Pacheco:

Yes. A deep longing of something that you already know. Saudades. So you miss a person you know, you miss a place that you know. So you miss because it's too dear to you.

Jones:

Yeah. We could never miss or have an idea of missing something if we didn't know that inside ourselves. Right?

Pacheco:

Yeah. And this is saudades. So we miss paradise. We know what this is. Deep down, we have this concept. All cultures, all civilizations. And if we do not address this, sooner or later, if you're not prepared to deal with this higher questioning, so you'll not have a full recovery, a full therapeutic result, good result.

Jones:

Well, you said this on the weekend when I was talking with you and, and Keppe reiterates this a lot, that actually this problem with our origin, of who we are, is the source of all of our problems. Like that's the fundamental ...

Pacheco:

This is the very source and the very root. God is the first being we envy. This is interesting, isn't it? Because the first contact we have is not even with our mothers. It's with God because we come from Him. We are the result of His energy. Mother is a second contact, and father. But God is the first. And this first contact determines a lot in the future of our lives. How much do we really accept our Creator? How much do we reject? And this relation between man and God is fundamental. It's essential for how we are going to develop all areas in our lives. We envy the Infinite Being, the Infinite Power, the Infinite Goodness, Beauty and Truth.

Jones:

And we have envy of God because ...?

Pacheco:

We would like to be gods ourselves. So this is theomania; we do not accept to be creatures. We want to have our lives the way we want, we want to decide and make our fantasies, our deliriums better through saying how life should be and how I should live my life. And what I have, the good that I have, it's not enough, it's never enough. I'm never beautiful enough, I'm never good enough. And this feeling of inadequacy is something very related to that because we don't think God did a good job in us. And so we start destroying ourselves since we are very small. And do you know something in practice? Faith in goodness, in truth, is essential, if you want to heal yourself. Non-believers tend to have more diseases. They tend to have more difficulties in healing themselves. Freud said something important. He said, after religion lost its strength in people, the number of neurotic people increased a lot. So that's a symptom: 20th century materialism led humanity to much more neurosis, psychosis, chemical dependencies, etc., etc.

Jones:

Faith as an essential part of life. Well, there's a basic difference in worldviews. In Canada, we tend to have faith in the system of laws and legislation, the multicultural diversity evident in ideology, policy and practice. But this faith Claudia was talking about is more than that. It's this sense of meaning and purpose that faith in God provides that leads to healthier lives. However, faith in God, in the sense of belief in goodness, truth and beauty, in charity and generosity and intolerance, not the so-called faith of human traffickers, praying to the Holy Mother to protect them as they ferry innocent children through the desert to lives in sexual slavery. Fanaticism and unspeakable acts in the name of God,, have nothing to do with the spirituality we're talking about in this course., A true faith should be based on correct living, not any old action in my life because I feel like it. And what would that true life be like? Well, that's in episode 14.

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