

The Modern Relevance of God

SPECIAL PODCAST SERIES

RICHARD LLOYD JONES WITH CLÁUDIA B. S. PACHECO

//

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



Instituto de Ciência e Tecnologia

KEPPE & PACHECO

Mantenedor das



PRESENCIAL **FACULDADES TRILÓGICAS**

EAD

Who is this God We're Talking about Anyway?

Richard Lloyd Jones:

Welcome to Episode five of our Modern Relevance of God podcast series here on Thinking with Somebody Else's Head. I'm Richard Lloyd Jones.

In our last episode, we looked at some of the scientists responsible for modern science's turn to materialism. Something that sought to make God irrelevant in the creation of life. English biologist, Richard Dawkins, perhaps best epitomises that point of view, opining in *The God Delusion* that God is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction. And then swinging from the heels with a brutal list of negative adjectives describing God that to my mind, simply substantiates the discoveries of the early explorers of the psyche who showed that sickness lies in projecting our evil qualities outward onto others.

That dismissive view of God is more than obvious in countless modern art, too, that looks at the mess in the world created by man as proof that God doesn't exist. Well, I'm struck hard by that modern conceit because ... well, I'm a product of it. Moving to Brazil 20 years ago with my wife at the time, Madalann, began a process of change inside me, a gradual opening to a theological reality that had simply not been part of my life ...the spirituality I delved into in the new age movement, notwithstanding. That had been insufficient to feed this quest for truth I hungered for. It was the certainty of the existence of God that marks Brazil that began to turn the tide in me from disdain for God, picked up through modern science and art, to a budding belief in something concrete. A real God in place of that vague and simplistic notion of cosmic energy coming from new age spirituality.

Madalann, unfortunately was not able to follow me on this journey, returning to Canada and taking her own life a short time later ... I guess, unable to take that step to developing a personal connection with her own deeper spirituality and all that that entailed. And it was when I began to study Norberto Keppe's concept of inversion, which we talked about in our second class, that I began to think, "Well, wait a minute! If we're inverted, we must be inverted from something. What would that be?" That's what we'll begin to explore in our podcast episode today with Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco: Who Is this God We're Talking about Anyway?

Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco:

Can I tell something about your life, your privacy? And I remember one day we traveled in a weekend to a church to a place, to a city, where there was a church.

Jones:

When I first came to Brazil.

Pacheco:

Yeah, and we visited this church, but you were outside. You didn't want to come in.

Jones:

I was never very comfortable with the whole aspect of organized religion.

Pacheco:

But this has a meaning because organized religions identify God with pathology, with suffering. We project onto God.

Jones:

Yeah. I'm only now because of Keppe's science coming to understand what a spiritual life means. I never came to this through religion. That never would have happened for me, if it had come through religion. It's come through science.

So I received a letter, I don't know, maybe a couple of years ago, Claudia, when we were doing another program about this and somebody said, "But why do you have to use the name Jesus in a religious way? Why can't we talk about energy? Why can't we talk about the, you know, the universe, universal energy, this great love that exists in the universe? Why do you have to separate people by talking about Jesus?" What are you talking about? And why are you talking in this way about this?

Pacheco:

We can name maybe three most important monotheistic religions. A link to an idea of one spiritual God. And God is a being. God is not a Quantic soup, as they sometimes say of energy, beauty, truth and goodness. It's not something vague. No, God is a being, and God is tangible. Sometimes he manifests himself even physically, as he did with Jesus, as he does sometimes manifesting himself through nature. And God being a being

and being a perfect being and an infinite being. He is intelligence, infinite intelligence. He has feelings, infinite love. He's joyful. He is happy. He has a will.

Jones:

Probably has a sense of humor.

Pacheco:

For sure he has a sense of humor. For sure he has.

Jones:

He's very creative.

Pacheco:

Extremely creative because he created everything that could be created. Perfectly, perfectly. Even though we destroyed a lot, a lot still remains perfect in His creation. And so this Being made us, as His children, similar to Him. So if we want sometimes to understand God, we have to understand ourselves and to understand ourselves, we must understand God. So it's a two-way thing you understand. So sometimes people say, okay, so one thing is the love, spiritual love. You love God spiritually. And another thing is to love our fellow man, but this is another love, this is a human love. As if we could have many loves. And I understand that the degree of love we can have depends mostly on our inner contact with ourselves and with this inner essence, and also has a connection in a relation to the being we love. So the resonance, the vibration, you have with a person that is more spiritual will be much bigger, much more satisfactory and resonant than a physical understanding, a sexual one. But a spiritual and psychological, artistic resonance between souls this has inspired so many artists and so many religious people and theologians and many others, men and women, that had this inner intimate connection with God. So they were able to have these ecstasies, this enormous feeling of pleasure. And St. Thomas Aquinas spoke about ecstasy even at a physical sense because we are bodies and soul. We aren't divided.

Jones:

There was a medieval saint, I believe Spanish, who wrote a poem called The Dark Night of the Soul about his exploration of his love for God. It's very powerful. Loreena McKennit, a Canadian singer, wrote a song based on the poem. And it's the expression of a Saint of his love for this Being called God. It's very powerful.

Pacheco:

You know something, Richard. We starve from, like we starve from God. We need his love so much, so much. We're starving. We are like orphans, starving ...

Jones:

Lost in the desert ...

Pacheco:

Lost in the desert. Needing and always having this "saudades". You don't have this word in English. It's a pity, because in Portuguese you can see we miss, we miss this ...

Jones:

It's a deep sense of longing.

Pacheco:

A deep, deep, deep longing for this perfection, for this total happiness.

Jones:

Yearning.

Pacheco:

And total happiness. Total fulfillment and happiness, beyond any possible imagination, is in God. So why not start now this way back to him? Why not? We are here. He's here. He's not there, far away. He's here. So why not start realizing who's with us? And when you start giving one step, two steps, in His direction, then the thing starts getting better and better. Every time each, each day, and the vibration starts to increase and increase. And beyond esthetics, beyond music, beyond beauty of the arts, is even more God there, waiting for us. Kierkegaard spoke about this, that spirituality was a degree even higher than arts and ethics. Because spirituality was beyond. It includes all the wonders of the universe: material, esthetical, cultural ... all ...

Jones:

The senses, everything.

Pacheco:

The senses, human relations and everything. And goes beyond because it

encompasses even all the infinite material universe and the transcendental universe, which has plenty of beings that are ...well, we can't imagine this at the moment, but if Thomas Aquinas or St. Augustine, or some other people that dedicated themselves to go further, why stop? They were not modest in this sense; they wanted more. They wanted more, they wanted more. So they gave their lives in terms of finding more. And Jesus said this. He said, "The lucky are those who see and who perceive what is the kingdom of my Father. It's like the most incredible, precious stone." And spirituality. Richard, is the best. And we are not speaking about institutional religion here. We are speaking about spirituality, which is part of our essence. And it's in ourselves, inside of us, all human beings, all races, all creeds, everybody. We have the same essence, which is mostly spiritual. And we are not taking advantage.

Jones:

This reminder that God was eagerly and passionately sought stands out to me in what Claudia Pacheco was talking about there. Some of our greatest souls in history desired to know God in a personal way. To live like God wanted them to. Poets and philosophers and musicians wrote about lost paradises and journeys through the levels of heaven and hell, and seeking God above the canopy of stars. And how our hearts can only be restless when outside the divine. And what to do with those extraordinary works now? Just stick Milton and Alighieri and Augustine into moldy classics courses taught by anachronistic, tweedy professors in mostly empty university classrooms? Throw them on the garbage heap of history, irrelevant as typewriters? I think not. This wisdom should not just be echoes of acquaint ignored past, but understood fervently. Stamped into our cultural heritage as surely and importantly as the celebration of the birth of a child.

Norberto Keppe expresses this spirit well in his great book, *Glorification*. "Our highest thoughts, the most beautiful and grandiose things we can imagine, are practically nothing in the face of all that is truly magnificent, beautiful, and radiant. There's no doubt that we are a part of a marvelous reality. All we have to do is look around ourselves or at ourselves, breathe in the aromas, taste the foods, feel the water and the sun on our skin. All we have to do is not deny what is before us."

Yes, because what is before us speaks loudly as evidence of God. Seems to me we'd be wise to listen again to those historic echoes. Truth is, though, we fallen from that knowledge, unable to embrace it anymore. Brought low by our arrogant modernity perhaps. John Newton knew about that. And that fall from grace is what we'll look at in our next episode.

[Listen to Episode 1](#)

[Listen to Episode 2](#)

[Listen to Episode 3](#)

[Listen to Episode 4](#)

[Download PDF for Episode 1](#)

[Download PDF for Episode 2](#)

[Download PDF for Episode 3](#)

[Download PDF for Episode 4](#)

rich@richjonesvoice.com

<https://stopradio.org>

<https://somebodyelseshead.wordpress.com>