
PODCAST START:

Brian: Welcome to the Queer Theology podcast!

Fr. Shay: Where each episode, we take a queer look at the week's lectionary readings. We're the cofounders of QueerTheology.com and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns —

B: And I'm Brian G. Murphy. Hello and welcome back to the Queer Theology podcast! We're a little bit late this week because we were in Hot Springs, North Carolina this past weekend for the Wild Goose festival. We recorded a live podcast there based upon one of the audience member's favorite Bible passages, and we were going to show them how to queer it. And then there was a technical snafu with our recording and it just didn't work... and so we've been scrambling to come up with a Plan B ever since then. One of the things that we wanted to do was talk a little bit about our experience there, and compare and contrast it to our experience at the first Wild Goose about six years ago, and talk also a little bit about what our talk was, and share with you how you can get a download of some of the materials we used at Wild Goose. So Shay, what was it like being at Wild Goose this year?

FS: For those that aren't familiar, Wild Goose is this Christian festival that is all about the intersection of art, justice and spirituality. You and I had both attended the very first Wild Goose, like you said, six or seven years ago. Frankly, the first one was a bit of a hot mess when it came to LGBTQ issues in particular. That first year there were lots of sessions on homosexuality in the Bible, and they were all led by straight, cisgender, white men, if I'm recalling correctly.

B: There might have been *one*...

FS: Maybe one woman. [laughs] And the only two LGBTQ presenters who were openly queer were two performance pieces. One person did a reading from a book he had written and one person did a performance piece. You and I went just to kind of check it out, and really over the course of the weekend started to raise a bit of hell because it was just a mess. It wasn't serving queer folks very well. I remember when we left that first Wild Goose, we were both like, "We are not going back, and we are not telling our communities to go back, unless things seriously change." And so, you know, flash forward six years. We haven't been back - this year we decided to make a proposal and go. It was quite different. There were lots of queer presenters who were presenting on queer issues, and also queer presenters that were presenting on *other* things, which was exciting to see. There were some musicians, and all of that - it was really great. And there's

still a lot of work to be done. I am leaving Wild Goose this year with both gratitude for how far things have come and the realization that things have a lot further to go.

B: ... yes. [laughs] The first year that we went, as you said, there were no openly-LGBT workshop presenters. So you and I and our friend Matt Beams wore [Legalize Trans t-shirts](#) the *entire* festival long. We had a number of different shirts so that we could have clean clothes and still be wearing them. And I think that was a really powerful witness - that we were so visibly queer, perhaps aggressively queer, we sort of became a lightning rod for LGBT folks who were there and didn't know who they could talk to, didn't know where safe spaces were. They sort of saw our shirts and came down to us. I think that's a reminder that being visibly queer, or if you're not queer, finding some way (if you're a church, if you're an institution) to visibly mark your space as queer-inclusive. And to only do so if you're actually queer-inclusive, or actually safe for queer people. That was so powerful. And we also have a lot of conversations with folks who are not queer, who were straight and cisgender, some who were perhaps 'welcoming' but not affirming, and some who were affirming and like "Where do we go from here, and how do we move forward?" I was really struck by - we often feel like, we have to have a response for all of these seven Bible passages, and there's this long drawn-out process that takes years to get people to move on these issues... and I don't want to sound arrogant, but we talked with people who started Wild Goose Year One not affirming, and ended the weekend not just affirming, but fired up to make change. And when we connected with them six years later, this Wild Goose, their lives look completely different because of those realizations and the actions they took as a result of that. I think that we sell ourselves short and we sell other people short when we resign ourselves to this like, really slow-moving, thoughtful, painful process, where if you ask people to step up, not everyone will. But some people will. So it's important to not shy away from 201 conversations, from advanced conversations - not just like "How do you be accepting?" but "How do you be an active ally?" I think it is a really important conversation to be having within the church.

FS: Yeah, and I think that what we learned in that first Wild Goose is that we *don't* have to have the 101 conversations. We were able to jump right over those into the 201 conversations, and if we lead the conversation, people were willing to jump with us. That was a really important lesson for me, because I had often felt like I had to do it 'in order'. Had to have the 101 first, then the 201, then the 301... and it was like, oh, no, actually we can just jump right into the good stuff, and screw this boring apologetics stuff, because that's not helpful anyway.

B: So at this year's Wild Goose we did just that. We jumped right into queering the gospel - that was the name of our workshop. It was all about how to queer the gospel. It was sort of a very super-abbreviated version of what we go over in our [Reading Queerly](#) course within [Sanctuary Collective](#). If that interests you, you can learn more at [QueerTheology.com/dashboard](#). You'll see Reading Queerly partway down. We taught people how to identify passages that resonated with them, identify formative experiences in their life, and figure out where need might be that they can fill when it comes to a message that they might want to tell with scripture. And we talked about how to queer the gospel - we had a little worksheet to go along with that. If you're interested in getting that worksheet you can go to [QueerTheology.com/wildgoose2017](#). We'll send you that worksheet right on over. You can obviously not get the *whole* workshop, since you weren't there, but you can get a little piece of it and do some of it on your own. Anything else that you would add, Shay?

FS: Nope, that's it. Hopefully we'll be back again at Wild Goose next year, and we'd love to see more of you there. We've got some big plans for how we can continue to Queer the Goose. Hopefully we'll see some of you in person.

B: [outro music plays] The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at [QueerTheology.com](#), which provides resources, community and inspiration for LGBT Christians and straight cisgender supporters.

FS: To dive into more of the action, visit us at [QueerTheology.com](#). You can also connect with us online on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

PODCAST END

Transcript by Taylor Walker