

Speaker 1: 0:00

Hey, David Andrew. Hello. Well,

Speaker 2: 0:08

I'm not sure that's the right move.

Speaker 1: 0:10

The right tone. Yeah, for it's that just, just the note off. Yeah. Well,

Speaker 2: 0:19

We are lucky that goes deeper than the word. Lucky to be joined by Darren Calhoun today on this episode, Darren is a justice advocate, a worship leader, a photographer among many other things based in Chicago, Illinois. And , um, one of those things is he's a lead singer for a band called the mini. And so we'll talk a little bit today about how the mini , uh, has impacted influenced us , uh, here at pine street church for our Lenten series. We'll talk about intersectionality today. Um, we'll talk about , uh , Darren's own story , uh , about how he came to be embraced and accepted, moving from what he described today as a toxic church culture to a better church culture , uh, with still some room for growth and evolution , uh, to go about embracing , um, who, who he is and what we're about embracing , uh, here at pine street church in Boulder , um, we say embrace everyone. And

Speaker 1: 1:22

To me today as a

Speaker 2: 1:24

Pastor was really challenged by Darren story to really figure out what does it mean to embrace everyone,

Speaker 3: 1:32

Right ? Where whereas the call to action for a community, a church community. And he gets into that in a really beautiful way. Um, beautiful. Isn't the best describer for it, but in a meaningful way , um, he talks about the next steps beyond saying we are an open and affirming church. And also with Darren, we spoke a bit about the wild goose festival. I think we confirmed , um, what , uh , maybe 20, 20 fall of 2022, we'll say he and Andrew and I will be producing wild goose festival West

Speaker 2: 2:05

Here in Boulder. That's a beautiful dream

Speaker 3: 2:08

Out. Just pencil it into your calendars for now. It's not quite there yet, but , uh, yeah, we , we get some good stories about the wild goose festival and here at pine street, we just finished a series called , um, the wild goose, a returned to the mystic and all this goose talk is the wild goose is an ancient Celtic Christianity symbol for the Holy spirit.

Something that challenges you in is wild and unbridled. So,

Speaker 2: 2:32

And they say tunes also for a beautiful story from the wild goose festival there . And we'll talk about from 2016 , uh, in hot Springs, North Carolina. So , um, stay tuned for a really powerful story about re-imagining what a doorway into a new world can be. And he describes that in ways that you'll definitely want to hear about today,

Speaker 3: 2:57

Break on through to the other side.

Speaker 4: 3:20

[inaudible] welcome to hyphenated life.

Speaker 3: 3:22

We invite you to join us on this journey to explore the connection of the sacred and the secular that inspires us to become more full

Speaker 4: 3:38

Right .

Speaker 3: 3:40

Well, I'm excited, honored, and thrilled to welcome Darren Calhoun to a hyphenated life. Thanks for joining us, Darren ,

Speaker 4: 3:50

Glad to be here. All right.

Speaker 3: 3:52

Uh, for our audience, it's on a little bit about Darren's background. What he does, what he's passionate about. Darren is a justice advocate, worship leader, and photographer based out of Chicago. He works to bridge the connections between people of differing perspectives through story and relationship. Intersectionality is his primary lens when facilitating dialogue and education about justice and inclusion for people marginalized based on race, gender, and or sexuality. Darren Calhoun is currently the worship leader at urban village church. South loop in previously served as a volunteer worship leader at Willow Chicago for close to a decade. Darren is an associate fellow with Christians for social action and sings with a band called the many we know about them here. He also co-lead the hashtag I'm sorry, and hashtag make love louder campaigns at Chicago's LGBTQ pride parades. He's been a speaker and performer at notable events like the gay Christian network conference, the wild goose festival and sojourners summit for change. He serves on the board of directors for the center for inclusivity, the reformation project, and Q Christian fellowship. He brings with him an intentional focus on the church being inclusive of a diversity of people and expressions as an authentic reflection of the love of God. Lastly, Darren is an extrovert who loves hugs. Please follow him on social media at Hey Darren or through his blog. Darren calhoun.com. My goodness, Darren, I already said at the beginning, but thank you. This is so exciting. Um, I , I think we'll find at the end through all of this, that we have a lot in common and , uh, and thank you again for joining us.

Speaker 4: 5:47

Yeah. It's , it's fun . I feel like you've sent it all in my bio, so I can just go ahead and go .

Speaker 3: 5:52

All right . Yeah. Thanks for joining us. That's a wrap. Join us next week on life, where we'll

Speaker 2: 5:58

Read another bio. Um, let's see, Andrew, do you want to , do you want to kick us off here? I do. I would love to Darren. Welcome. Thank you so much. We're honored to have you on. And , um, you know, just with the intro, I'm, I'd love to start with how you define and describe intersectionality for our listeners who might not be fully familiar with that word and what it means. Um, and so in terms of your story and work, what is intersectionality?

Speaker 5: 6:32

Yeah , uh, so intersectionality is, it's actually a term that was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, who was a lawyer and a researcher. And she was basically looking to find ways to describe how , um, someone can have multiple forms of oppression or multiple forms of privilege at the same time. Um, and so we often think about, well, there's racial oppression and we often think about there's gender oppression. Um, so anti-blackness and being against women or not giving women the same opportunities, but what's unique in the intersection of these two is that black women face as an especially hard challenge sometimes in spaces that will say, well, yes, we have black people working and yes, we have women working, but black women because they are, are encountering, both of those intersections will often face a unique and a different kind of oppression that isn't addressed by just being inclusive of black people or just being inclusive of women. Um, and so in my, in my work, I really do try to bring these stories together because we tend to have these conversations only looking at one particular lens and we ended up leaving people in groups out and we'll say, Oh no, we're inclusive. And there's like, kind of , uh , and so, so yeah, this is just , uh, intersectionality is essentially a lens or a tool to see things through. It's not a new goal. It's not a new strategy. It is just a way to help us have language to talk about what's going on in our work world. Thank you for that

Speaker 2: 8:10

Description. And I know that, you know, language is sort of a moving target sometimes , uh, uh, in our society today and getting clear on, on terms and definitions and acronyms and all of that , uh , sometimes is helpful. Um, there, I love on your Twitter page, by the way, if you want to follow Darren, it is at, Hey, Darren, H E Y D R R E N on Twitter. Um, I love what you say , uh, with , uh, on your Twitter page. Make no mistake. I am created in the image and likeness of God, I am black. I am gay and I am loved. Could you tell us about your spiritual background and what growing up was like for you and what led you to such a place to be able to , to have that sort of self-love or self-affirmation? I found that really profound.

Speaker 5: 9:08

Yeah. It's , it's been a heck of a journey. Um, my earliest church memories weren't church, but it was just having a family that's Christian. And I grew up knowing that Jesus was real and God is real and we pray. Um, but probably around sixth grade, I started attending a Catholic church , um, and got involved with leadership in church right away of leading youth groups, planning , shut ins . Um, and that continued all the way into college, where I had this charismatic born again, experience. And I became part of this nondenominational church where I was ordained as a minister at about 19 years old. Wow. Um, but this was, you know, for the, for the, for the upsides, it's always a bittersweet other side of it. This was also where , um , within basically about a year of me coming out as gay , um, I ended up no longer identifying as gay and spent about the next nine to 10 years, trying not to be gay and a very informal version of conversion therapy. And it was in that space that I did a lot of doubt, a lot of like, God, you know, I want to follow you and serve you and I'm willing to give up everything. So I gave up school, I gave up my family. I told my friends to countless dad . I gave up my business. I gave him my car and I was willing to literally sell everything, follow Jesus, and hopefully have something left in heaven . Um, and on that road, I found that I wasn't, he loved that even though I had messed up. And even though I had all these things at the church,

excuse me, that the church was telling me, wasn't going to let me go to heaven. Even with all that, God was still showing up in my life the same way God had always done, even before I was part of a church. And , um, eventually I began to see how the church I was part of was really toxic and harmful. Um, and I left that church and , uh, still loved God still loved the people of God. So I went on and found another church that was better, but still had some policy issues that harmed people like me. Um, and that's how I became an advocate and outspoken because I was sharing my story. Um, and I was speaking up just about what I'd been through, but there's so many, who've been through similar things as me. And sometimes you have to just remind people that what you think about me is not what God thinks about me. And so when I made that declaration, it was another one of those times where churches were doing policy, where politicians were doing lawmaking , where people were having these conversations about quote unquote, homosexuality as a topic. And I wanted to make it clear that I'm not a topic I'm beloved. And so that's kinda where that comes from.

Speaker 3: 12:05

Yeah. I hear, I hear a lot in there. Um, you can't separate those things, right? You can't be , um, a commodified topic and be pure and truly loved those things, how they , I see how they can't really coexist . Um, and I see while it's a powerful testimony, this journey that you went on and in churches today, w you know, churches are going through those types of things. And I , I kind of can observe similar things to what you're observing from the outside. Looking in, in , I'm wondering about churches who are, maybe they go through a , some sort of , um, discernment process, community discernment process to decide, to become open and affirming and all the things that go into that. And, you know, whether the process was healthy or not aside, once they've done that, do they just get to check that box and then move on to the next thing? Or what does it look like for a church to , um, to live the life of, of a community that, that says that LGBTQ plus are loved? They are not necessarily that stamp.

Speaker 5: 13:24

Yeah. LGBTQ plus people are part of this great cloud of witnesses, this great. And before and still to come, that is the people that are loved by God created in God's image and likeness and so forth. A lot of times in the society that we're in, especially as informed by Western values and by capitalism, we think of things and check boxes. We think of things in lists, and we go, okay, what's the problem. Let's fix it as quickly as possible. So we can move on and go back to not thinking about these things. Um, and that's , that's a challenge. That's a problem that I'm really calling out in our, in our American church where we really think we're pretty much, okay. We just have a few little things to fix. And , um, while I still hold full optimism and hope and , and , and value and redemption, there are so many things that are going on and the big topics like LGBTQ inclusion or race or gender, those are just the tips of the iceberg . Um, and that's, you know, that is why intersectionality is so, so important, because for example, you might have a church that says we welcome all LGBTQ people at our are and inclusive to the highest levels of leadership, but there's no one of color anywhere in that leadership. And they'll be on paper. You could say, yes, we're diverse. Yes, we're inclusive because we have certain numbers of certain minority or , uh , non-dominant groups. But until, until we really look like every nation, tribe and tongue, until we , um, are a place where people who typically been , um , with been kept out of dominant society. And so we're a

place where those people are fully empowered to bring their voices, their culture, their values, their histories, then we still got work to do. And we can't be seeking to just check off that box to say, yes, we've done it. She's going to be very proud of us.

Speaker 2: 15:35

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I'm , I'm curious, Darren, when you were talking about , uh , kind of going from a church that was , uh, exclusive , uh, and keeping who you were from being fully, fully known in the world and , uh , and affirmed in the world and, and beloved, as you said, I love that language , uh , quote, a lot in sermons and reference a lot in my own , uh, kind of theology. You are the beloved, you are my beloved son. You are my beloved daughter. And , uh, in you, I am well-pleased . So I think that was part of what really took me about , uh, what what's on your pinned to , uh , Twitter statement, which was so powerful. What , what was a hinge point or, or , uh , a change or maybe someone who influenced you about that journey , uh, going from a church that did not accept fully who you were to , uh, to being able to say, I'm at home in God, and I can actually be at home in this church.

Speaker 5: 16:37

Yeah. That's a really great question because there's so many nuances in that journey. Uh, like a lot of people just think you go from, Oh, I can't be gay and go to heaven to , Oh, I'm going to get married someday. It's a person at the same gender, and God is all happy. And for the vast majority of people, and especially for the vast majority of churches, that is not the path , um, what happens for many of us is, you know, we, we believe what society has told us about who we are as , as sexual and gender minorities. And we do a lot of, you know, if you've grown up in the U S you've probably done a lot of self hate and so forth, but when we have this opportunity to , um, to move into a different space, which is what happened to me , um, my church had basically restricted me from everything except for doing backgrounds . So I can design the website, do the photography. I could , um, help decorate for special church events, but I couldn't stand on stage and , and, you know, be acknowledged as a man of God. Um, and that happened in both the harmful abusive church. And it happened in my better church, just with nicer words and with more convoluted policy. And I share that to say that most of us don't want to be the Westboro Baptist church. God hates, you know, fill in the blank. Right. But many of us don't necessarily feel like, okay, well, the only other option is to go to full affirmation. And so somewhere in between, you have people who are asking , um, LGBTQ people to be celibate . You have people who are just trying to figure out how do I hold on to , to whatever your theology is, and still be nice if you will. Um, and to me, I think the important things there are to be transparent to say, you're in a process. If you're at a process to say , um, that you have a traditional theology, if you have a traditional theology, don't hide it. Don't invite people to coffee, don't tiptoe around it. But the other party is, let's say you, aren't in a space of fully affirming same-sex marriage. My life is way more than if I'm married or not. My life is way more than if I'm having sex or not. So if you're not a church that is ready to speak out about injustices, like when the pulse Orlando shooting happened, if you can't Nang that those were LGBTQ people who are terrorized, then you're not actually showing up for us. If your church says, you're fine. If you're celibate , then I need policy that shows that I'm going to be protected as a celibate, gay Christian, not all . Well, we welcome everyone. You don't, it's not how this works. It's not how any of this works. Um, we need policy. We need

direct action that shows that you are thinking about us and that I can access it for myself. If I have to email the church secretary and give a calendar appointment to find out what you believe, then it's not accessible and it's not enough. Um, but we can do better. I feel like I've like gone off into a tangent, but this is great. Very good. Yeah, we can, we can do better. Um, but we have to, we have to realize that there's so much work for us to do that for a lot of people. The marriage question, actually, isn't the main question. They wanna know if they're beloved, they want to know if they're going to be okay. And I had people along the way who weren't trying to tell me what might not be algae needed to be, who weren't trying to rescue me from somebody else's theology, but they were present with me. They were willing to walk with me. They were willing to , to be there and help hold attention for the things that that I had tension about. And it was their commitment to me, as opposed to their commitment , to not theology. That really made all the difference for me to come to a place of wholeness.

Speaker 2: 20:32

Uh it's um, uh, Oh gosh, there, there was a book a few years ago by a sociologist of religion talking about how, you know, we used to care. We used to care about what people believed and then wanted to, you know, see how they behaved. Then maybe they would belong in our church. Right? And so what you're describing is a real upside down version of that in a beautiful way of where can I belong? Where do I belong? And then, you know, behave. And then maybe we get to believe at some point, but , but the belonging factor is where you find community. It's where you are at home. So I loved , I loved the way you describe that. And even here at pine street church in Boulder, we have a six word sermon. We like to say with our spiritual mantra, David of embrace everyone, inspire life, create more, and that embrace everyone. It might be more updated language for open to all right. Or we welcome everyone. Um, and we're still learning about that too, as a predominantly white church here and in downtown Boulder, Colorado bastion of liberalism and all of that. But, but we're still learning that too . And it's taken, taking the church some years to really fully be able to say we do embrace everyone . And what does that mean? And what does that look like about the way the church behaves and not just about what the church believes, but how do we create, how do we become spiritual environmentalist, so to speak, to create a culture of belonging. And you just said that , uh , beautifully , uh , I also think one of the things , um, that we , uh , that's a creative challenge in Boulder, Colorado, where everyone would not everyone, I was going to be a little cheeky about that, but we're so enlightened. Right. What would you say Darren to , and I would just say, especially white congregations who believe they are woke, right. Theologically socially and beyond. What would you want folks like us to know about being black, being gay and being Christian and the church today with that sense of well, we're a woke congregation, right?

Speaker 5: 22:48

Yeah. I think the very first and most important thing to know is that woke got colonized. So stop saying, there we go. It is, it is the debt joke of, of social activism. Um, it came from black people and many, many, many white people jumped on it, turned it into something else. Um, so that being said , uh, I think every congregation , um, white or otherwise should be figuring out what it means to do an anti-racism assessment within your community, within your institution. Um, my church urban village , uh, spent, spent

about a year doing our assessment. And even as a church that was founded in anti-racism and founded as LGBT inclusive, there were still imbalances that were very apparent. Um, the fact that most of our leadership , uh , at the, when we started were white people, most of them SIS , most of them heterosexual , uh, meant that there was just things that were going to happen. Not because anyone didn't care, but because until we make some very intentional steps and figure out methods of holding ourselves accountable, we'll just have great intentions and great mission statements , um, that won't realize. Um, and it's , again, it's, we are in a country that from before we are born, has made decisions about who we are, what our place will be in society. And so it doesn't matter how well-intentioned we are, if we don't all do work to deconstruct that in ourselves, people of color, white people, everyone, if we don't do work to deconstruct that in ourselves, then we'll default to it. I always describe it. Like if I'm standing in the middle of the ocean, it'd be silly for me to expect not to get wet. I'd have to actually build something. I'd have to move someplace. I'd have to do something intentional, not to get wet in the middle of the ocean. The us is the ocean of racism is the bastion. It was export it as a, as a product to places like Nazi Germany into South Africa. And we, and those countries have done a much better job of acknowledging what they took on in ways that we as a country still have failed to do. And so I'm doing anti-racism assessments , um , building a team of people that helps you to be accountable about that. It doesn't matter if your congregation is all white, if it's all straight, if it's all, able-bodied, all of those things are still , um, the result of certain systems and certain things that happen within your institution. And it can be hard to put a finger on that, and it can be hard to deal with changing and moving away from that. And so that's what anti-racism assessments do. They help you to, to name it, to put it on paper, to see how it shows up to , um , and to have a strategy to deal with it. Um, and then the other thing is , um, showing up, like, maybe you're not there yet, but you can show up and make yourself accountable to listen to people of color. Um, don't come to lead, don't come to , to Khaleed , don't come to take over, come to provide resource, comes to show up and listen, come to be taught , um, and come together , come with money. Um, it is, it is too easy to just come and get a good feeling because you showed up. Um, but we need people who have put their lives and their bodies and their money on the line. Um, if we are going to have the world that we all are hoping to have someday

Speaker 2: 26:28

You talk about , um, uh , anti-racism assessments , are there resources that you use Darren and in your own work in life or churches that you know about that you would , uh, want to share and , and promote , uh, for our listeners today who are, you know, maybe in churches that want to do that kind of , uh , anti-racism assessment, but don't know where to go or what, what reliable resources that , that they might be able to use.

Speaker 5: 26:55

Yeah, I know there , um, sometimes you hear about DEI diversity, equity, inclusion experts, or you hear about , um, different organizations that kind of do this work. Um, my church paired with an organization called [inaudible] , which is Chicago regional organizing for anti-racism. I probably say it that out of order, but if you Google Chicago, anti-racism, it'll probably come up in the first hit or two. Um, they're an organization that does this with institutions and they do this and, you know, focused in Chicago, but even just going to their website and seeing what they're doing and what they're offering could

help , um, help you look for local resources or reach out to them. You know, they, they might be able to refer you , um , to someone, but I think it's a, it's a matter of us knowing that we're going to have to partner with people knowing that yes, book clubs are nice. Clubs are nice, but there's a whole lot of work that really has to happen, and you're going to need some expert knowledge on it to get it done. So

Speaker 2: 28:02

Switch a little bit , uh, to , uh, something that is kind of near and dear to our hearts throughout the season of lent , uh, Darren you're a lead singer in a band called the mini and , uh , sort of indie pop and gospel influences. And I love , uh, what the band is about it . The many makes music to help give voice to faith and doubt questions and fears, laments, and longings music that speaks to a non-violent God, a Jesus who is with us and for us, and to a spirit that can't be easily defined or controlled. Um, so we were in the series called again and again, throughout lent , leading up to Easter. And I just want to say, thank you, Darren, and to the many , because there was a really powerful song , um , called again and again, I believe David Darren , um, that we used on Palm Sunday, and that was the week of the Boulder massacre here , uh, which , uh, impacted our community with, with folks who , uh , were killed at a mass shooting at a King Soopers grocery store, just a couple of miles from where we're recording this in our church. And I just wanted to say, thank you for that beautiful song again and again. And the constellation , uh , that it provided, I know our church and our online community , um , that was so poignant and powerful that week. So thank you for that. And I was just curious to know a little bit more about how the mini came to be , um, and what inspired you , uh , create this group and maybe more specifically the song again and again. Um, what w what does that song mean to you and what, what were you wanting to say through it?

Speaker 5: 29:53

Yeah, thank you so much for that. Um, that, that song came together during pandemic. So it's not like it was kind of sitting on a shelf somewhere. Um, the recording, all of that happened , um, as a response to what's happening right now. Um, and so when you're sitting by yourself, I live alone. When you're sitting in your apartment by yourself, singing into a microphone it's so in the morning, and you don't even have other people around and sing harmonies with, it can feel so disconnected, but again, and again, I keep seeing these stories and these moments that people are having, where , um, that lonely dark night of the soul becomes a thing that is encouraging and supportive for people. So I really appreciate you sharing that story , um, for the band. Uh, the many , um, the many is , is it's a lot of things. Um, it started from Gary Rand and Lenore Rand. Um, Gary being a worship leader here in Chicago and a seminary professor , um, creating new liturgies, creating new rituals, creating resources for churches. The two of them as a married couple have been doing that for, for really their, their lives. Um, and as they continue to create these resources, you want to share it . You don't just want to use it in your service and it goes away. And so , uh, they formed a band with their daughter. Um , Hannah ran and , uh, it would be whoever whosoever was available to help record songs, sing songs, do backups and so forth. And , uh, as time went on , uh, they were trying to like have certain lead voices to make sure that it's not just a white family with good intentions . They , they want it to have , um , some other perspectives and backgrounds included in that. And so Leslie , Michelle was the first person who was

introduced by way of her friend and , and , uh, came and helped out on some , some, some Sundays with Gary and eventually was on a recording that will be for , um , I joined the band and then I was going to be at wild goose with Christmas, for social action. And , uh , a mutual friend of mine introduced me to Gary. And Gary was like, Hey, let's go grab breakfast. And I thought, I was just going to a breakfast meeting with another worship leader to talk about church stuff and commiserate. And we had a good time doing that. He was like, so we're going to be a wild goose. You're going to be there. I'd love it. If you kind of came and sang with us on, on , uh, the service we're working on. And he was describing and how it's like, Oh, I really liked this. This has been creative and innovative because our songs are not just songs, they're entire services that , that be sitting in the, of entire liturgies. And so I was like, sure. So we went and we had this , this gathering about doors and how , um, you know, we , we have these doors that keep others out and let others in and so forth. And this was, I'm getting way into a tangent, but, you know , it'll bless you in a minute . We were in North Carolina in this hot campground . I am not outdoor person, but we're singing. And we've got these doors all around this tent, and we're having this li liturgical service. And in this was the year. So this was like 2016. This was a year that North Carolina had outlawed. Um, well, they basically created a , a transgender bathroom ban, right ? Um, and so one of the doors that we had was a bathroom door and this door was in the middle of the tent, and we're doing this whole liturgy about doors. And as we like name different doors name , the ways we've been kept out, we attached prayers to these doors. We attach the names of trans people would have been killed that year. We attached immigrants, pictures who had been kept out of this country that year. We attached all that to the door. And , uh, as the service went on at the very end of the service, we took that door down and laid it across two tests , two hobby horses, and that door that were represented, all the things that kept people out became the door that we set as a communion table. And we celebrated community and brought people together around that door. Wow . And I was like, this is,

Speaker 2: 34:18

He did

Speaker 5: 34:19

So great. And I was like, that was really good. And this is me ,

Speaker 2: 34:23

North Carolina, wild goose festival 2016, right.

Speaker 5: 34:28

2016 . Yeah . Wow. And after that was all done, I said, that was really great. And Carrie says, so rehearsal will be next week. And I was like ,

Speaker 2: 34:38

When did I join?

Speaker 5: 34:40

But it has been, it has been family ever since these , these are the people that I really do life with. We , we , don't just rehearse, we eat launched. And then we talk about what's going on. And that's where the songs come from as well. We , we're sitting around eating some sandwiches and talking about how life is going. And Lenore puts that to music . We'll put that puts that lyrically, Hannah puts it, some music, Gary produces it. We S we all sing it. And that's how, that's how , uh , uh, a blessing is born,

Speaker 2: 35:13

Has some serious ripple effects. I know for us this year and several other like-minded churches, I know that use the again and again, series , uh , for lent this year. Um, uh, I think T Denise Anderson, we've been , uh, seeking to connect with her. So Denise, if you're listening, we'd love to have you on hyphen. I did live, but it was a beautiful

Speaker 3: 35:38

Series. And so thank you for that background and that what a beautiful birthing that was , um, that the wild goose festival. Yeah, we, we just finished , uh , this Pat or no, this, this coming Sunday, we'll be finishing up a three-part series of posts, Easter series that we titled the wild goose of return to the mystic. Uh, we're , we're trying to , um, educate and embrace some of these ancient Celtic Christianity concepts, you know, the wild goose being their version of the Holy spirit. Um, and, and since, since, you know, in our world where we're, we're roaming around that , uh , for someone who has experienced the wild goose festival itself, can you tell us a little bit about what that is, what it's all about, and I, you know, you just described this amazing liturgy in outdoor worship service in it , you know, in a , in the woods. Um, tell us, tell us what your experience was.

Speaker 5: 36:36

Yeah, it, it, like I said, it was wild goose was something that's way out of my norm. Um, but it was a place where I just saw some really beautiful expressions of all kinds of Christianity. Um, everything from Christians who were doing yoga to , um , kids who at 11 or 12 years old could, could identify as trans or non-binary. And , um, and, and still do that fully within the context of them being Christian and cared for by a church and so forth , um, to the concerts and festivals. Um, there was, there was a lot of good there, there was a lot of enjoyable things there. Um, and I can't, can't mention while it moves without also saying it's in the mountains of North Carolina, here's some challenges for people of color, to , to go to a place that doesn't have cell phone reception , uh , and where there are a few competitors flags waving high and feel. Okay. And so it's, it's, it's again, one of those tensions of, yes, this is this beautiful Oasis . And even Asheville Tennessee is really a pretty progressive city, a pretty inclusive city, but, you know, as many parts of our country are, we are, we're often okay as people in the major cities and on the main roads. But , um, we always carry with us. Uh , I, I concerned for our safety and an awareness of where we're going to be and what happens if we get pulled over and what happens if our car breaks down those kinds of things. So, so, yeah. Um, I'm hoping that, that we see some more expressions of the wild goose. I love that encapsulation of the Holy spirit that , um, sometimes we, we get stuck on certain images and it's just like, let's what, what about a goose? Cause the , cause these are of wild . Like they will chase you Hong Kong. So, you know, what, what, what images are we missing when we don't see God and other expressions and other paradigms and visualizations? So it's just me thinking out loud.

Speaker 3: 38:56

You said, I , I sort of, a lot of formative experiences in my life have come at music festivals, you know , um, going where you camp, not necessarily, you know , uh, religiously focused, but , um, it, it creates this sort of bubble of you , a utopian bubble of like, why can't life just be this all day, every day, maybe minus the humidity of the, of Western North Carolina in the summer. But , um, you know , uh , it's, it's something that

I think like, you, you, you hit on, there you go there and you experience that and it becomes a part of you. And hopefully you take that with you along your journey , um, and can, and it can impact even more people. But yeah, I, I want to re reiterate what Andrew was saying at the beginning of talking about your sort of musical mode of yourself and being in this band, the many in this song, again and again , um, that, that our, our church's band performed and we in rerecorded and utilize it as part of a , um, remembrance and Memorial and tribute to the victims of this Boulder shooting that really impacted our community. And sadly, you know, it's still impacting, but it was, you know, about a month ago. And it feels like it was a year ago because so many other things, so many other things have happened. Um, one of those things that has happened , uh, is just this week, we got the verdict of the Derek Shovan trial in Minneapolis. Um, obviously the former police officer who knelt on George Floyd's neck , um, for over nine minutes , uh, he was found guilty and convicted on all three counts. Um, and it's, it's, that's talking about the hottest button in this world, you know, I think that's probably a lot of what was behind the again and again, song , uh , among many things. It's certainly a layered in beautiful song. Um, but I'm curious to hear about your thoughts on the verdict and what it means for our nation, our culture, our society going forward.

Speaker 5: 40:58

Yeah. I'll, I'll be direct. Um, this, this is, and again, and again and again, like , um, yes, we're, we're glad that there's a level of accountability being , um, that , that this one particular piece of a much larger institution is being held to , but we had , uh , what, five or seven more police shooting the same week that were on video that were horrendous. Um, and if the whole world could be watching this officer on trial and someone's still think, Oh, here's a , here's a black girl who actually was the one who called the police and now she's been shot to death and we're debating about whether or not it was justified. And it's just like, no, we're the only country who believes that you have to keep allowing people to die in the name of freedom or safety or justice. Um, there's, there's so many, so many better ways that we can do this. So for me, as someone who is constantly surviving the same questions, like my, my left turn signal, the front one is, is , uh, there's a short in the wire. So sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't does that mean that I'm the next hashtag, you know, like we have to make this personal, we have to realize that the same thing, someone just got , uh , pulled over for littering and is getting tackled by police officers. Like there is no end to it. And so knowing that one I'm holding on to the radical idea, that that revolution is fully possible to that I'm holding onto this idea that the systems of our world, and more specifically the systems and institutions of the United States , um, are not greater than the candidacy of that . I am figuring out what is it that I can do? What is it that I can be committed to? So that lightened John Lewis, I can be making good trouble until the last day that I walked this earth. What is it that I can be doing to affect change in a way that's not going to kill me in the process, at least not directly , um, because I have to survive. I have to, I don't have a choice to opt out of this. I can't turn. Yes. I'm not watching the news this week, but that doesn't mean I can turn off what's going on. Um, and so it's one of those things where I need music, like what, what we make, where we can name. Yeah, this seems hopeless. Why did, why the things happened again and again? Um, but to again, remind myself, remind others that , uh, that there is something else coming that , um, that we are part of God's plan of redemption , um, and that there will be tears. Like I

spent so many years in evangelical charismatic churches that had all this certainty, God's wins God sakes . This is we're going to change the world. And like I said, I do believe in changing the world, but they've never made room for when it hurts . I never made room for when things were sad. They just kept saying, Oh, we're not going to speak those sad things. We're not going to speak these, these negative things. It was like, no, I need to name it. They named it in the Psalms. They named it in and lemon stations . We need to learn how to do that as a country, again, because in our diff in our rush to be innocent and see ourselves as good, we don't face what's wrong. Um, and I want that to change more than anything else. I want us just to be able to face it and really , uh, let God move in our hearts about it rather than rushing so much to prove, well, I'm not one of those bad people, or my friend, who's a cop. Isn't one of the bad ones or my police station. Isn't one of the bad ones. Like no , all of this works together, not for good. So how do we turn, how do we turn this around? We have to face it and really open our imaginations to the fact that it wasn't always this way. So it doesn't have to always be this way.

Speaker 2: 45:27

Calhoun, you give us hope and inspiration and motivation to be part of that revolution of love you just talked about. And , uh, I was thinking of the words of Anne Lamont. We use use recently, we are Easter people living in a good Friday world, and you have to honor both of those, right? If the Friday's here, Sunday's coming. Yes. But to name the pain, to name those wounds. And to be honest about that, so that we can , um, we can heal where the hurt is and we we've . We've got a name that, and you just said that. So brilliantly, Darren, thank you for joining us on hyphenated life today, you are a brilliant and beautiful and beloved, and we are blessed to have had this time with you today. Thank you so very much

Speaker 5: 46:16

So glad to be here. Shout out from the many and to the many who will be listening to this later. Um, one more word about the many why we are the meaning is because everyone, who's a part of what we do is playing the musicians in different places to the people who are do readings to the artists. Who've contributed in various ways to the folks who show up to a gathering, all of us are the mini . So according to your confession , you are also proud of themselves for being part of, part of what we do

Speaker 4: 46:48

When borders are being drawn and families are torn at the scene , it's getting harder and harder to see what any of this means when hate is having its day and children are shut in the street. Sometimes there's no way death has lost its day . So bro , again and again, [inaudible] writings on the wall. We just wish that we could sleep. We want to close our eyes. We're not [inaudible] and we don't like the face that we pray that God forgive us one more time . So again and again, we've [inaudible] even the stones [inaudible] so bro, steal your .