

Why We Should All Join Team Kanye West

I am not a divider, but I diligently try to be a uniter. I refuse to be a critic, but I will always choose to be an encourager.

I endeavor, especially on social media and in my writing, to be a voice of hope, of wisdom and of peace. I believe with my whole heart that the only way that one can make a lasting difference in the world is through showing kindness rather than through spouting negativity.

Many people have an opinion on Kanye West concerning whether or not his decision to follow Christ is authentic or not. Many people also have a strong opinion on his very public display of faith.

I have read the articles, watched the TV programs and prayed my way through this. I have come to a conclusion based on what I believe to be discernment.

This is my decision: I am team West all the way!

May I just remind you that the apostle Paul was a murderer who met Jesus! Then, this former assassin Paul went on to write nearly half of the New Testament. This historical fact alone serves to remind me that people, regardless of their past, can change when they meet Jesus!

During the first century, many people were cautious about the apostle Paul's faith, just like some are concerning West's faith today, but the fruit of Paul's life and his passion for the gospel proved that he was the real deal. I believe that we will discover the same fruit in West's life.

One of the aspects that I love about being a Christian for

many decades is the exuberance and excitement I see as I observe a newborn Christian grow in their faith. When I see a baby Christian who just can't keep quiet, it stirs my ardor for Christ once again! When I hear about a brand-new Christian who is passionately telling others about Jesus, it causes me to evaluate who I have told lately.

I am not naïve nor am I foolish; I understand that just like a toddler may stumble and fall, West might make a few stumbles along the way. But so did I. I stumbled and fell often in the early days and years of my faith. But because I had faithful and encouraging people around me, I was able to stand up, dust myself off and move ahead in serving and loving Jesus.

Last week, West went to Baton Rouge and partnered with Bethany Church, pastored by Jonathan Stockstill, for an outdoor event that drew nearly 6,000 people. West personally paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to make this event happen. West wasn't even the main event at this evangelistic event! West sang for about 20 minutes at the two-hour event. A seasoned pastor preached a biblical message and afterward approximately 1,000 people responded to the call for living a life for Christ and His kingdom.

Hell got smaller that night and heaven got bigger because a man by the name of Kanye West is not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I think that we would all do well to remember the words of Paul, the murderer, who met Jesus on the road to Damascus and then decided to serve Him the remainder of his days:

"Some indeed are preaching Christ out of envy and strife, and some also from good will. The former preach Christ out of contention, not sincerely, intending to add trouble to my circumstance. But the latter preach out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is

preached. And in this I rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18).

I hope that rather than criticize West that you will pray for him and for his wife and children. I hope that rather than throw stones at a new believer that you will throw grace his way.

I sincerely pray that rather than judging a famous man whose fame has now been sacrificed at the foot of the cross, you will find it in your heart to love him. {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: *No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, *Defiant Joy!* and *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.