

Pastor Offers Behind-the-Scenes Look at Kanye West Service Where Thousands Got Saved

It's no secret that Kanye West is getting serious about his faith in Jesus. West went from rapping about sinful topics with coarse language to singing God's praises with bold faith. And now we're seeing the fruit—at least 1,000 people were reportedly saved during an impromptu altar call at one of West's recent concerts.

West performed some of his songs from his new album, *Jesus Is King*, in front of the crosses outside of Bethany Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A crowd of thousands of people raised their hands in worship to Jesus Christ.

I had the privilege to speak with the pastor of Bethany Church, Jonathan Stockstill, about this incredible moment of mass salvation and what God is doing in West's life. My first question, though, was how on earth he managed to book West at his church.

"The answer is: We didn't," Stockstill says. "We didn't book him at all. It was just something that happened. One of his promoters was driving past our property. And we have three really large crosses on our property. And he took a snapshot of it and sent it to Kanye, and Kanye said, 'I want to do a service there.'"

After 48 hours of consideration, Bethany Church gave West's team the green light, and two days later, West had his Sunday Service.

West started holding these Sunday Service events in the

beginning of this year. They often include gospel songs and a gospel-centric sermon. The event at Bethany Church was no different. West even gave an altar call. And as I mentioned before, around 1,000 people gave their lives to Jesus, according to Curvine Brewington, a pastor and musician who attended the service.

Stockstill says the police estimates that 10,000 people showed up to the event—2,000 of whom reportedly bought tickets and 7,000 of whom received them free. Stockstill describes the scene as “an ocean of hands” lifted up to Jesus.

“I would say a few thousand people lifted their hands to respond to salvation,” he says. “This was one of the most exciting, electric experiences I’ve had. It’s wasn’t in a building. It was in the open air. It was very simple. There was no light show, no fog machines. There was no stage, really. It was just flat ground with 10,000 people.”

Although Stockstill says the scene was hard to describe, it gave off an atmosphere that was “very genuine, very energetic, very worshipful, very Jesus-centered.” That sounds like a worship service to me!

And even though many Christians were skeptical of West’s claim of conversion earlier this year, it’s hard to ignore the spiritual fruit in West’s life. Every single song on his new album talks about the Lord, and one of them even refers to spiritual warfare against Jezebel. Add to that his growing discomfort with people cussing around him and immodest outfits his wife sometimes wears.

“I have watched all the interviews that he’s done on different talk shows and have talked to different people who know him personally, and I came to the conclusion that his salvation was very genuine,” Stockstill says. “What’s been going on in his life is very genuine.”

Stockstill recalls the story of the man who was controlled by

a legion of demons until Jesus delivered him (see Mark 5 and Luke 8). After Jesus set the demonized man free, He told him to go back to the Decapolis and tell everybody what Jesus did for him.

“It was almost an instant releasing to give a testimony,” Stockstill says. “And that’s how I’ve viewed [West’s salvation]—God has allowed this man, who has been transformed by Christ, to give his testimony. And it was awesome.”

Modern Pharisees will be quick to point out that West’s former life was full of sin. His music often highlighted lyrics that degraded women, praised violence and boasted of drugs and sexual immorality. But if God saved Paul—a murderer of Christians—He can surely rescue a sinful rapper.

And perhaps God has chosen West for such a time as this—a time when we need an unconventional approach to the gospel to wake up a sleeping, dying church. If West’s nontraditional services bring thousands to the Lord, I hope he keeps doing them.

Be sure to listen to my full interview with Stockstill to hear his deep insight into West’s new life in Christ as well as exciting details about West’s concert at Bethany Church. And if you’re excited about what God is doing in West’s life, be sure to share this article with a friend and ask them to pray for this new believer. Let’s welcome West into the family of God with open arms.