

Whatever Happened to Communicating Christianity without the Chaos? Five Lessons from Conversations with Ye

Lisa L. McGloiry

Lisa McGloiry was Communications Director at Shepherd Church in Los Angeles, and then shifted to leading the church's "Dream of Destiny" racial reconciliation ministry. Now she's traveling around the country helping churches navigate racial issues – especially from a communication standpoint. Recently, she came to me with some frustrations about how we tend to give celebrities who are new Christians a big spotlight – often way too early. Although it's happened for most of my lifetime, a recent example is comments made by Kanye West, or "Ye" as he calls himself. So, I asked Lisa to share some thoughts about the challenges of giving new believers (or believers we don't know well) the stage before they're spiritually ready. Her response is worth reading:

Ye. Kanye. Yezzy. Whether you are familiar with Kanye West or not, he is known to many as a musical icon, business mogul, mega-brand influencer, and Christian. His opinions have been covered by leading liberal and conservative news channels, turning him into a trending internet topic.

In recent unfettered media interviews, Ye communicated his stances on white and black lives matter, abortion, and various viewpoints on Christianity. Many questioned what was driving his rambling and sometimes hedonistic rhetoric. However, it wasn't until he posted an antisemitic social media post that the world finally agreed that his racist communication was unacceptable. He had finally crossed the line.

As a Christian and communications professional, I find it troubling that these conversations occurred after Ye rebranded himself as a Christ follower. In the wake of Ye's Jesus is King album, Sunday church services, and politically charged diatribes, he has gained access to prominent Christian circles that he didn't have access to before.

As I listened to his recent conversation gaffes, with God thrown in from time to time, I wondered: *1) What constitutes a Christian? 2) Is there a proper way to discuss Christianity? and 3) In news articles, sermons, or private conversations, what communication guidelines should we follow as Christ followers?*

Statistics indicate that America is becoming a post-Christian nation. Our influence as believers is challenged everywhere we turn. As Christians, we are held accountable for how we act, what we say, what we don't say, and our alliances.

Here are five lessons we can learn from Ye's recent media interviews on how to communicate Christ effectively without causing chaos:

1. First, check the speaker's fruit.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:20, "By your fruits, you will know them." Let's not be so quick to give the bullhorn to someone who is a newer Christian too soon. Let's monitor their walk as much as their talk and allow them to learn what it means to follow Jesus. Let's mentor them because they will make mistakes, and they'll need grace and guidance. Let's not give them such a wide platform to speak without helping them grow into maturity in Christ.

2. Communicate Christ over Agenda.

Let's reevaluate our motives and those of other speakers before posting on social media. What's the goal? Is it to lift up Christ, or to debate a social issue, or push our own agenda?

3. Follow the Jesus Model.

Jesus was a brilliant communicator. He was intentional about reaching across the aisle. He asked a lot of questions to delve deeper into the issue at hand. He cautioned us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. He didn't compromise the Gospel message with his words or actions, but spoke truth with boldness, love, compassion, and understanding. We should do the same.

4. Hold Christian speakers accountable.

Sometimes it's difficult to hold speakers accountable for what they say in the media, especially when they agree with our viewpoints on social issues or value statements. And yet, as believers, we must not hesitate to call out questionable, insensitive, hurtful, or hateful speech when they happen, even if fellow Christians make them.

5. Check the tone and goal of the message.

It's imperative to check a messenger's tone as well as our own. Does the message unify the body of Christ or divide it, even if it is difficult to accept? Or does the speaker's voice drip with sarcasm, rudeness, or bias?

As the world becomes more polarized, Christians must become more effective communicators. Before uttering a word or commenting, we should season our words with Godly wisdom. When it comes to listening to others speak on Christianity, we must exercise better discernment. Thus, we will convey Christ's message without creating chaos since the world is watching.