



The Good News

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The Case for “Organized Religion”

By Michael McCleary

There are millions of people in our world today that believe in God. Most of these millions will also claim to believe in the Bible as the word of God. However, many of the millions of people that are “spiritual” reject organized religion. There are many reasons for this, and with some of these reasons we can empathize. Without getting into too detailed a list, there are those who reject organized religion because of hypocrisy, because of legalistic restrictions on conduct, or because of the terrors that organized religion has brought about in the past. At some point in time, we will all come into contact with someone that truly believes that they can please God without organized religion. Let us consider the following points to provide such a person with some godly food for thought:

Is organized religion found in the New Testament? Yes! In **Acts 2:41-47** we find the early Christians involved in organized religion and obeying the commands of the apostles. All throughout the epistles there are references to the church, its organization, and its function.

Is spirituality ever found separate from organized religion? No! In **Acts 8:26-39** we find a spiritual Ethiopian eunuch that is taught and baptized into the church. In **Acts 10:1-4, 48** we find a spiritual man named Cornelius who feared God and he and his house were taught and baptized into the church. In **Acts 17:29-31** Paul preaches to some very spiritual people concerning the one true God and the necessity to repent of sins. It is implied that forgiveness of these sins was also necessary as Peter told the Jews in **Acts 2:38**. This is only accomplished through baptism, being added to the church. In **Acts 19:1, 4-5** Paul encounters twelve spiritual men who were disciples of John. These men were taught concerning Jesus and were baptized into the church. Therefore, we can say, based on the Biblical example, that it is not possible to

be spiritually pleasing to God without organized religion.

Is organized religion necessary to be saved?

Yes and for several reasons! 1) The New Testament example involves serving and worshipping God with more than one person present. We have the example of the Lord’s Supper, contribution, and the singing of hymns as example of spiritual services to God that must be done in the accompaniment of others. 2) Pleasing God means following the apostle’s commands – **I Thess. 4:1-2**. It is clear by the New Testament example that the commands of the apostles included organized religion. 3) The only way to please God is through faith – **Heb. 11:6**. We learn that we are saved by grace through faith and that grace is the gift of God in **Eph. 2:8**. We find that this gift is only obtained in baptism as Peter told the Jews in **Acts 2:38**. Baptism also adds us to the church in **Acts 2:41, 47**.

Can we please God without organized religion? Absolutely not! However, the church must be organized as God authorizes and it must function as the New Testament shows. There have been, and are, many organized religions that simply are not what God commands. Let us seek to teach our friends the necessity of Biblically-based organized religion.