

I don't believe organized religion is necessary

Written by Bob Stone

If by "organized religion" you mean an impersonal, monolithic bureaucracy, then I share your desire to escape such an institution; **but the church is something very different.** A church is a group of people who have come together to worship God together, and to encourage and aid each other as they grow closer to Him. Jesus' intention in establishing the church was to create a community that would be united in love and service.

Of course, the church doesn't always succeed at this goal. This is because it is made up of people like me—people still struggling with their selfishness as they learn to be more like Jesus himself. It is not a lost cause, though. God's Spirit brings true change to those who follow God. It does get a little better each day as God leads us beyond our former limitations.

We are always reminded, however, that only God is perfect. We are still a work in process. This isn't a copout that allows us to wallow in our inadequacies; rather, a realization which allows us to create a safe place for people to make mistakes. We are able to forgive much because we have been forgiven much. We are able to serve because God serves us. We are told that God gathers us together in a purposeful manner to form church communities, where each person's weakness is complemented by another's strength. God has created the church because love is an action that cannot be completed alone. God brings us together to learn love so we have something to give the rest of the world.