

Saying Yes to Christ but No to Church!  
*I have great respect for the life and teaching  
of Christ but little use for organized religion.*

The above comment is one frequently repeated today and no doubt you have heard critical remarks about the church and its members. But, is it fair to blacklist all churches because someone had an unfortunate experience, perhaps years ago? Churches can and do change, and some are doing so with tears of repentance. There is renewed emphasis on the great commandment—“ Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself”(Luke 10:27).

Recently, in feedback from readers, Sharon tells how in her younger years she attended church and concluded that when she was “of age” she would not want to be involved in religion. And yet she knew that there was something essential missing in her life.

Sharon tells how later she discovered that the empty void in her life could only be filled through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that came through repentance and faith. In daily prayer she asked God to send her where she was needed and where she could grow in faith. In fellowship with other believers she is now beginning to find the unconditional love and acceptance for which she searched.

She came to a completely new understanding of the church. It is not a building but rather a fellowship of believers, each member a cell in the body of Christ. Christ desires His body in the world, to be a vibrant community of faith, hope, compassion and service.

The church is meant to be a hospital for sinners rather than a museum for saints. It should be a safe place to come because God accepts us just as we are. But he loves us so much that He does not want us to remain that way. He wants us to be transformed into the image of his Son.

Church people, in their best moments, have much in common with members of a twelve-step recovery group. They attend meetings and remain faithful, not because they believe they are better than others, but because they know they need God and one another to overcome the problems that would ruin their lives. Furthermore, they discover how the spirit of honesty with God and one another builds healthy relationships that can lead to a wonderful bond of acceptance and support within a community of faith.

Sharon concludes her remarks by saying: “We who are searching for spiritual fulfillment need to become part of a fellowship of believers and cooperate with God to bring about change. A church, (and you will know when you find the right one), is waiting, open and in need of your gifts. Come on in, we're expecting you!”

*It is time for the people of God who are the church to go out into the world and be the church.*

