

WE NEED CHRIST'S CHURCH

One trendy attitude is a devil of a lie.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

If you could peek inside the devil's toolbox, you'd see precision instruments for leading people astray, as well as a few well-worn tools that are obviously among his go-to gear.

One particular saw he's been reaching for more and more these days comes in the form of this subtle lie: "You don't need organized religion to be a good person, to be spiritual, or to love Jesus. All churches are imperfect and corrupt anyway."

This deception is cunning because it relies on a couple of true ideas to get you to swallow the big lie. It's true that we should strengthen our relationship with God and that people are imperfect, but these facts don't

mean that the very idea of a church is wrong.

This kind of thinking is false, and here are just five reasons why:

1. Christ established His Church. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you'll see that a good deal of the Savior's ministry consisted of calling people, giving them authority, training them for leadership, and teaching them how to act as a group. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Those who reject the need for organized religion reject the work of the Master, who established His Church and its officers in the meridian of time and who reestablished them in modern times."¹

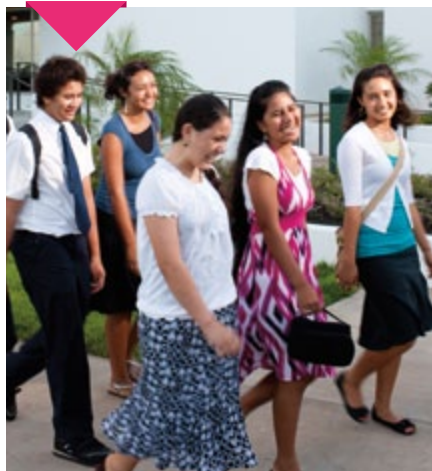
2. The Church administers the gospel and its ordinances. The Savior clearly taught that baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost are necessary for salvation (see John 3:5), and the authority to preach the gospel and perform these ordinances was regulated. As Elder Oaks has said, "The Bible is clear that priesthood authority is necessary and that this authority had to be conferred by the laying on of hands by those who held it.

Priesthood authority did not come from a desire to serve or from reading the scriptures."²

3. The Church helps us become better people. Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy recently taught: "We need the gospel *and* the Church. In fact, the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel."³ Though the Church is made up of imperfect people, it helps us become more like Jesus Christ by teaching us His doctrine, giving us opportunities for service and personal growth, and allowing us to enter into and renew covenants with God.

4. Unity matters. The Lord has commanded us to "be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27). This oneness is an essential part of our Heavenly Father's plan for us. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

"We yearn, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, for that joy which we once had with Him in the life before this one. His desire is to grant us that sacred wish for unity out of His love for us.





“He cannot grant it to us as individuals. The joy of unity He wants so much to give us is not solitary. We must seek it and qualify for it with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to gather so that He can bless us.”⁴

5. “Organized” is not a synonym for “bad” or “corrupt.” Usually when people call someone or something “organized,” it’s a compliment. But somehow in religion it’s a put-down. According to Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, one of the reasons Christ organized His Church was “because random, individual

goodness is not enough in the fight against evil.”⁵ The Lord spelled out the issue clearly when He said, “Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8). Organized is exactly what a religion needs to be.

As you encounter the lies that are the tools of the devil’s trade, remember that you have your own set of tools to help you live the gospel—tools available to us through the Church of Jesus Christ: the scriptures, the gift of the Holy Ghost, your testimony, and truths revealed through modern prophets. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Two Lines of Communication,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 85.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Only True and Living Church,” *New Era*, Aug. 2011, 4.
3. Donald L. Hallstrom, “Converted to His Gospel through His Church,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 14.
4. Henry B. Eyring, “Our Hearts Knit as One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 69.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, “Why Not Now?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 13.