

Welcome.

**We are glad that
you have come to
worship with us.**



Costumed Christianity



Looking inside the costume...



- A person may wear a big smile and appear to be genuine, but that may not be a true representation of how they feel in their heart

Isaiah 29:13 NASB Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me.

- What are some of the costumes that “Christians” wear?

The Costume of Faithful Attendance (I'm always here!)



- “I’ll get my blue sticker!?”

Hebrews 10:25 KJV Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

- Attendance is important! (and let’s be respectful while we are here too.) Mentally and Emotionally.
- As we get older, we should understand that God requires more of us than just showing up at the building a few times a week.

The Costume of Knowledge (I study the Bible! I can quote it!)



- The devil can quote the Bible (Matt 4:6)
- Some that are wicked can recite verses...

Psalms 50:16 NLT But God says to the wicked: “Why bother reciting my decrees and pretending to obey my covenant?”

- Certainly not discouraging anyone from memorizing God’s Word...
- But quoting versus doesn't make you a Christian.

The Costume of Confession (I confessed my sins!)



2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

Matthew 27:3-4 NIV When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. “I have sinned,” he said.

- **Confession isn't repentance, and repentance is what God desires.**

The Costume of Giving (I put my money in the plate!)



Acts 5:1-2 NIV Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

- a person might give for any number of reasons.
 - Pride (for others to see)
 - Guilt (feel like they ought to)
 - Shame (I would be embarrassed if I didn't)
 - Love (I want to give!)
- Faithfulness is more than putting a check in the plate.

The Costume of Righteousness (I'm not a bad person!)



- The Pharisee looks like a good person..

Luke 18:11-12 NLT The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don’t cheat, I don’t sin, and I don’t commit adultery. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’

- But he is the example of what not to be!

Luke 18:14 NIV For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

The Costume of Concern (I like the people at church!)



Mark 6:19-20 NIV So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

Mark 6:27 So he (Herod) immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison,

- **To like someone isn't the same as to love someone.**

The Costume of Obedience (I am doing what God wants!)



Isaiah 58:3-4 NIV ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’ “Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

- **We may be "serving" God, but not acceptably serving God.**

So what does God want?



- Jesus tells us exactly what God wants!

John 4:23, 24 NKJV But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- God wants us to worship Him...

in Spirit and in Truth!

Worship In Truth...



2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- **Unless we have knowledge of what God desires from us when we worship, there is no truth in our worship.**

Worship In Spirit...



Psalm 100:2 NIV Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

- True worship must be in spirit, which is using the whole heart. Unless there's a real desire for God, there is no spirit in our worship!

So what does God want?



- Jesus tells us God wants our worship to include both Spirit and Truth! Why?
- Spirit without truth leads to a shallow, emotional experience that fades and teaches nothing.
- Truth without Spirit leads to a dry, passionless worship that is basically just going thru motions.
- Both Truth and Spirit are necessary to please God!
- Do we promote truth?
- Do we promote spirit?

Do We Have And Do We Help Promote Lasting Joy?



Matthew 13:20-21 NIV The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

- “I use to go to Black Creek...”
- Many times, our problem isn't bringing people to church, it's keeping them here. Why?

What are we trying to accomplish in the church?



- Are we trying to do things the way we've always done them?
- Are we trying not to do certain things just because someone else is doing with them?
- Are we trying to serve God and help each other in the most effective way possible?
- I need to change my system if I'm not converting somebody, I must be doing something wrong. If in a lifetime I can't convert somebody, something needs to be considered! (Gerry Sandusky 10-4-16)

Is Black Creek a church just going thru the motions?



Matthew 15:9 NIV They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'

- Relationships or Religion (Doctrine?)
- What do we emphasize?
- Do we emphasize relationships rather than religion? (the “social gospel”)
- Do we emphasize religion rather than relationships? (the unsocial gospel)

Religion or Relationships... Which should we emphasize?



Acts 2:42-47 NIV They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold their property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. They continued to meet together in their homes, breaking bread from house to house.

Relationship

Religion

number daily those who were

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The entire church may wear a costume...



- **Written to the church of the Laodiceans**

Revelation 3:15-17 NLT I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

- **If we’re not hot, then we are as bad as anyone we call cold.**

Conclusion



- If an individual is not what God wants an individual to be, then that person should change.
- And if the church is not what God wants His church to be, then that church should change.

Conclusion



- Are we wearing a Christian mask, but really we have no

2 Timothy 3:1-5 NKJV 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 **having a form of godliness but denying its power.** And from such people turn away!

Conclusion



- Seek and search with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.