

## It's a sic, sic world [sic]

**H**AVE YOU EVER BEEN reading along when suddenly a [sic] jumped out of nowhere? From the Latin for "so" or "thus," sic means "intentionally so written." According to the dictionary, it shows that a printed word or passage "exactly reproduces an original."

A writer sics a sic on his readers when he wants to quote another author's exact words, but there are some oddities in the quotation and he doesn't want to be blamed for the original author's mistake. A Web site devoted to English grammar notes, "It amounts to saying, 'It really *is* this way, so don't blame me.'" For example:

- "There was things [sic] which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth" (Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*).

- "We will receive a massage [sic] from God's Word" (from a church bulletin).

Actually, there's something a little snooty about using sic. It's a clever way to shine the spotlight on someone else's error while making sure the reader knows you aren't personally responsible for the mistake—as if to say, "This quote is good enough for me to use, but the person who said it was too stupid to say it correctly."

Come to think of it, sic is a handy word for our postmodern times. We're a sic society—a culture of copycats. We're good at imitating others' mistakes while shifting the responsibility to someone else. Like Adam who ate the forbidden fruit and then blamed Eve, we do things we know are wrong, then attempt to justify them with the shallow rationalization, "We're just copying what others do."

There are sic morals. "I know it's wrong to have sex outside of marriage, but hey, everybody does it."

There are sic politics. "It may not be completely ethical, but the other party got their candidates elected by doing it,

so why shouldn't we?"

There are sic clothing styles. "I don't care if it's immodest; it's what everyone is wearing these days."

Sic music, sic TV shows—the list goes on. Let "The Bachelor" earn high ratings, and the networks produce copycat shows like "The Bachelorette" and "Joe Millionaire" until the public grows tired of the concept. (It doesn't take long.)

There are even sic churches. Instead of being original and prayerfully discovering their own unique way to minister to their communities, they take a shortcut and copy the latest evangelical fad—mistakes and all.

The Lord, however, calls us to be Christians, not copycats. If we're going to imitate any person, let it be Christ, in whom there is no error (1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 5:1, 2). If we're going to imitate any church, let it be the one described in Acts chapter two. That church was filled with ordinary, mistake-prone people who faced conflict within and persecution from without. But in the exciting days described in Acts 2:36-47, God's people boldly preached the good news that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. They joyfully baptized those who believed. Young and old met together for teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer. They loved each other, met one another's needs, and worshiped together in unity. The church grew spontaneously and steadily, not because of elaborate programs, but because it was propelled by faith and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord made sure a shining example of a healthy church was "intentionally so written" in his Word. We'll never find a better model to imitate than that one. And as the saying goes, "If it ain't broke [sic], don't fix it." ■

**Be a Christian,  
not a copycat.**



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Cover illustration: Lyne Willis

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Volume CXV. Number 12.