

# Soft on SIN *By Rich Kopp*



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**H**as the church gone soft on sin? Have we turned a blind eye to the social and political decay that threatens to destroy our culture? One of my favorite pastors thinks so. Doug Giles, pastor of ClashChurch of Miami, Florida, says: “There’s a massive contrast between the weighty and satirical, the masculine and hilarious modes of communication employed by the inspired biblical characters versus the whiny, saccharine, nicer-than-Christ, strained Gerber’s goo served up by evangelicalism and Catholicism’s effete clerics. As I see it, much of the clergy, the church, Christian music, and Christian literature have become pathetically soft and have lost their holy punch.”

Weren’t the great men of God in the Bible really MEN of God? Nobody liked the prophet Elijah much. He smelled bad. Probably never brushed his teeth, and was a bit, um, temperamental.

Certainly nobody in the respectable church would want to be associated with a religious fanatic who cooked up wild challenges to other people’s religious leaders.

John the Baptist challenged a government leader to repent of his immorality; Jesus ridiculed religious leaders for their hypocrisy; and the oft-flogged, dragged-out-of-town-and-stoned Apostle Paul denounced contemporary culture and scolded the Church to “come out from among them.”

Open Bible’s forefathers were “manly men.” Guys like R. Bryant Mitchell, O. Ralph Isbill, Milton Stewart, John R. Richey, Frank W. Smith, Fred Hornshuh...even some of the Pluimer boys could get you running for the altar. They poured out their hearts about sin and perdition, about grace and forgiveness, and about heaven and hell. Now we hear blustery sermons about prosperity and self-esteem and other religious milkshakes served up as meat. Preachers pussyfoot around subjects like divorce, homosexuality, and shacking up so as not to offend anyone. Tell THAT to our Lord and Savior who minced no words to the lady taken in adultery (“go and sin no more”), or when He booted the moneychangers out of the temple and overturned their tables for good measure. Consumption of this sugarcoated so-called gospel has

caused the Church to lose its appetite for real spiritual food. Like children we spit out the meat and vegetables and devour the brownies and cupcakes. We strut about feeling fat and sassy instead of lean and mean.

I love the Church. The Church is the *only hope* for a sin-sick world. We are it, folks. That’s why I’m so mad about the current condition of some of our fellowships.

Some of you are “tsk-tsking” me under your breath, saying, “These are different times and the Church has to change.” Oh really? If our country ever needed to know about sin, repentance, and the saving grace of almighty

God, that time is now. We’ve sunk so low in politics that Richard Nixon looks like a role model for truth and integrity. Television has gone from *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best* to *Sex and the City* and the *Simpsons*. The numbers of teenage pregnancies and abortion on demand are rising. Deaths from drug overdoses, abuse, and children killing children fill our evening news. Answer this question: Why

is the divorce rate among evangelicals identical to the divorce rate among the unchurched?

What are the Spirit-filled believers doing about it? Not much. We are too busy grabbing the gusto, living the good life, and cruising town for cheaper gas. Isn’t it about time for a new generation of manly prophets and God-fearing preachers to look sinners in the eye and tell them that sin kills and Jesus saves? Don’t we need a new breed of righteously indignant clergy to shake the Church by the proverbial scruff of the neck, point a finger in our face, and remind us the command to “take up your cross and follow me” is not an option and to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”? We need preachers unafraid to berate us for carnal living and lazy spirituality, who are less concerned about numbers and more concerned about souls.

Preachers who continue to carry a torch of New Testament preaching and Old Time gospel power need to be emulated. You recognize that true status comes not from how many show up on Sunday morning for their weekend fix of sugar, but how many lives are changed and dedicated to serving God – no matter what the cost.

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