

Prozac Christians: Has Jesus Been Replaced With a Substitute?

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It's become common knowledge that the 60 percent divorce rate inside the church -- a place that upholds the sanctity of marriage -- is higher than in secular society.

But failed marriages and broken homes are not the only tragedies that Christians share with the rest of the world. **Depression, a recent epidemic in the church, is spreading throughout the Christian community.**

During a recent visit to my hometown in North Carolina, I spent the afternoon with a friend's mother. We talked about the issues many women face at the large Southern Baptist church where I grew up. She spoke of the different women she knows who take anti-depressants.

"I wouldn't be surprised to find out that half the women in the church are on anti-depressants," she said.

I was shocked. She told me story after story about women she knew who have strong faith and selflessly serve in the congregation but are also prescribed Prozac and other common depression medication. I realized that I also knew several women, my friends and my mother's friends, who use anti-depressants.

What makes this situation more troubling is the recent news about increased suicide risk now associated with popular anti-depressants. ABC News Channel 7 in Los Angeles reported a couple weeks ago that:

"The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is finally considering stronger warning labels on anti-depressants after acknowledging for the first time that the drugs appear to lead some children and teenagers to suicide ...

"According to their findings [of the study], the worst offenders are Effexor, Luvox and Paxil, but even Prozac, the only anti-depressant specifically approved for young people, can increase suicidal tendencies."

Currently the FDA only connects this risk to teens and children, but the results of the study could be enough to make any adult on these medications think twice.

But for Christians, the issue goes beyond the safety of the medication. The question that needs to be asked is "why?!" Christians claim the truth from the hymn "Power in the Blood" and the Apostle John's concept of "abundant life". **But why are they caught up in an emotional existence of mere survival?** The church is supposed to be the place to find the answer, the cure, Jesus.

Instead, it has become a social gathering of sedated spiritualists lining the pews. They dress neatly, implying a sense of togetherness, and they sing songs that describe surrender to their God that they didn't naturally wake up experiencing.

This is not an attack on individuals who struggle with chronic depression, for which some medication is useful for a period of time. **But, there is something seriously wrong with church teaching and discipleship when half of a 4,000 plus population church takes anti-depressants.** I would think someone -- pastors, elders, and church leaders -- would connect the dots and say *"look, something doesn't add up."*

This disease choking the church may be embedded in the phenomenon that a friend described to me as "sin management." Some churches are being unrealistic about addressing shortcomings, failures, disappointments and sin in the lives of Christians. Depression and anxiety have become private struggles

that women and men mask with medication and mention only in confidence to one another. But these strongholds are not being addressed from the pulpit. **If Jesus really is “the way, the truth and the life,” then why isn’t that message applied to the issue of depression?**

It is not Christ’s design that Christians be dependent on anything but him for physical, emotional and spiritual stability. We teach that Jesus is enough; we say that he has changed our lives that the old has gone away and that we have been born into new life.

But if this is the case, then why is the church full of people suppressing secret struggles with depression?

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New Wine Online Editor’s comment: One of the saddest conditions in modern Christendom is that most pastors, denominations, and theologians are either ignorant about deliverance or they have discounted the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today. Most Christian leaders have never been taught the full implication of what it means that Jesus “is the same yesterday, today and forever.” Even the majority of so-called “charismatic” or “Spirit-filled” churches are clueless to the realities of the constant spiritual warfare all around us.

A major deception in the modern church is that Christians are immune to the attacks and influences of the devil from the moment that they are born again. This conclusion is not found in Scripture. On the contrary, a human being is of little threat to satan if he or she is not born again. A born again believer with the knowledge of their Christ-delegated authority over the kingdom of darkness causes hell to shudder in terror. It only makes sense that he would do all in his power to keep Christians from coming to that revelation. Even though the Spirit is born-again when salvation occurs, the human soul is a veritable battleground where heaven and hell collide. Heaven seeks the sanctification of the believer while Hell is dead set against that ever occurring. For more information on that subject, please reference <http://www.newwineonline.com>’s publications page and seek out the treatise entitled **“Can a Christian Have a Demon?”**

It has been the sad experience of those of us in ministry at New Wine to hear numerous stories of spirit-filled church pastors and counselors recommending anti-depressant and psychoactive drugs to folks with anxiety and depression. As implied in the article by Ms. Dorian, one must ask themselves with all objectivity:

“Did Jesus die on the cross and was He raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit so that Christians would have to take Prozac?”

What a slap in the face to the passion of the Christ. These folks need deliverance from evil spirits of fear, depression, heaviness, and anxiety. Unfortunately, the best guidance that most of them ever will receive will come from good-hearted and well-intentioned authorities with no knowledge of God’s power for deliverance. They will most likely remain “sheep without a [knowledgeable] shepherd.”

It is our heartfelt prayer that God grant revelation of His power for deliverance to those in authority in every Christian Church in the days ahead.