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Deceptive Diagnosis

By Johnny Kicklighter

The book, *Deceptive Diagnosis: When Sin is Called Sickness*, explores the major shift in how

Christian evangelicals view and deal with sin. The authors, Dr. David Tyler and Dr. Kurt Grady, believe that the Church stopped calling sinful and deviant behavior "sin," and started calling it "sickness" beginning in the mid 1960's. The sexual sinner Apostle Paul wrote about became the sex addict. The thief became the kleptomaniac. The drunkard became the alcoholic. The rebellious child became afflicted with "Oppositional Defiant Disorder." A family in which the husband will not work, the wife will not keep the home, and the children will not obey is no longer considered sinful; it is dysfunctional. The liar became a compulsive liar. The gambler became a compulsive gambler. The "deeds of the flesh, which are immorality impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing" (Galatians 5:19-21) were all redefined using psychopathological words.

Tyler and Grady believe the landscape of evangelicalism today is very disturbing. Christians have jettisoned their commitment to the Bible and embraced psychology. Biblical definitions and categories have changed and a new vocabulary has emerged within the Church. Behaviors and attitudes once regarded as sinful have undergone a dramatic change. Sin is called sickness and confessing sin has been replaced with recovering from sickness. The word "sin" has nearly disappeared from our vocabulary. As such, the impact of the Gospel to a non-believer is less pronounced and the need for progressive sanctification in the believer is minimized. Although we try to make ourselves feel better by calling sin by another name, it is always there. It never fully goes away.

"Deceptive Diagnosis" claims that in 1946 the federal government took responsibility for promoting American's mental health. Some of the initiatives included the National Mental Health Act (1946), the National Institute of Mental Health (1949), the National Mental Health Study Act (1955), and the creation of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health (1955). It was believed that American society would be dramatically transformed with the building of new mental health centers, the incorporation of training programs as well as countless locations disseminating mental health principles. On February 5, 1963 President John F. Kennedy delivered a national speech on mental health. He referred to mental health as the nation's number one health problem. In order to confront what was considered a mental health care crisis, Kennedy signed into law the Community Mental

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Health Centers Act on October 31, 1963. This gave Federal Government backing to the diseasing of America and calling sin sickness. In 1977 President Jimmy Carter organized the Commission on Mental Health. The agency studied the state of the nation's mental health and concluded a quarter of all Americans needed mental health services. In the 1980's an eruption of twelve step programs provided a disease label for virtually anyone who wanted one. The television talk shows capitalized on and added to the success and growth of the disease model. From Donahue to Oprah, common everyday people and celebrities alike pour out their heart-wrenching stories of codependency and other addictions, disorders and compulsions. No segment of society was exempt. Therapeutic holidays such as National Depression Screening Day, National Anxiety Disorder Day and National Eating Disorders Awareness Week were created. Local malls provided a convenient venue on these special days where people could be diagnosed and learn more about their disease. For those who were too busy to go to the malls, a program of mental health education and screening for early detection and intervention was available online or by telephone.

The authors' of *Deceptive Diagnosis* believe that if a person thinks he is morally fine though physically sick, he will not repent. If one's bad behavior is a disease, he will not go to Christ for cleansing. If, on the other hand one decides to call sinful behavior, sin, he has made a major shift in his perception of reality. He has acknowledged, like the prodigal son, something is wrong with himself. Confession of sin requires responsibility on one's part.

Tyler and Grady believe that evangelicalism has opened its gates to a Trojan horse by introducing the teachings of modern psychology. Some Christian psychologists have become so beloved that to criticize them would be almost like criticizing the Bible itself. While their intentions may be good, intentions are not the issue. The issue is whether today's Christians are mixing men's ideas with the Bible. Amazingly, most of today's Christian leaders who rightly cry so fervently against so many false teachings are saying little if anything about subtle shifts in biblical interpretation that undermine the faith of millions. In many cases, it reflects a lack of awareness and understanding of the teachings of psychology.

The book states there is a tendency today is to forget the roots and ignore the essentials. The doctrine of sin is understandably disliked by the world. Moreover, what is alarming and tragic is the opposition Christians have for the doctrine of sin. There was a time when sin was clear and definite. But who can say that is true today? Vagueness characterizes what we think of sin. Sin is sin, but it is sickness too and Christians must consult the "experts" who are trained in detecting these things. There is no clarity of view, no definition of position and the language is confused. In fact, any attempt to recognize a clear distinction between sin and sickness is branded as being anti-Christian and unloving. The apparent glory of Christianity today is in its vagueness.

Tyler and Grady promote the case that labeling sin as sickness is seen nowhere more clearly than in the fields of clinical psychology and psychiatry. From the world's perspective, clinical psychology and psychiatry are the answer to the mental and emotional problems of man. The word "psychology" actually means "the study of the soul." Sigmund Freud, in what was lauded as breakthrough scientific exploration, cast aside the study of the soul and redefined psychology in terms of human behavior. Freud placed practical theology in the crosshairs of psychology through his underlying premise that man's problems are based in man and are solved through man and man alone. He knowingly or unknowingly created a religion around man with theories that are in direct opposition to God's word. Today's mental health industry is largely built upon Freud; some 250 to 450 counseling theories are in

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practice worldwide. They are either directly Freudian, built from underlying Freudian philosophy or are built in opposition to Freud

In man's attempt to run from sin, he also reduced man's lifespan thus sparing him from a miserable existence mired in sin. Since the Garden, man has continued to run and hide from God, shift the blame for his behavior onto others, and cover his sin so no one will see how miserably depraved he is. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is man's attempt run, hide, and cover-up. A collection of sins or sin-related behaviors have been composed into convenient lists, labeled as diseases, explained to the lay public using fundamentally flawed research tied to unproven chemical imbalances...and the list goes on and on.

The authors believe we have witnessed a severe blow to the body of Christ as a result of the DSM and the disease-oriented culture it has helped to create. Believers everywhere they are sick, diseased, genetically predisposed to illness, etc. Those same believers have been led away from the language and direction of the Bible and into themselves. Progressive sanctification is a foreign concept to many today. Becoming more like Christ each day does not require medication; it requires submission, humility, reconciliation, forgiveness, and most of all repentance. It requires a steady diet of God's Word, an environment bathed in His presence, and consistent work for His Kingdom. Evangelism begins with believers becoming sanctified and developing a burden for the lost. Those wayward souls

do not need more therapy nor do they need an excuse for blame shifting.

Dr. Tyler and Grady's book challenges the worldview of today's church. Statistics tell us church membership has been steadily decreasing year after year. Sunday School, which was once popular, has also been declining in attendance. Prayer meetings, missionary groups, and fellowship meetings in general are weak and feeble. Today, because of poor attendance, many churches have cancelled mid-week and Sunday evening services altogether or have limited preaching in favor of other activities where the activity is the focus and the gospel is absent or only alluded to by association. Mega churches are growing in prominence, but they are generally marketing driven entities short on doctrine and long on a feeling orientation. Thus, the church as a whole is declining in attendance and in its knowledge and commitment to Scripture.

The authors believe that the critical necessity for an accurate diagnosis of a person's problem is fundamental to solving, or curing, the pathology. If the diagnosis is wrong, the treatment is likely to be not only ineffective, but also potentially dangerous. Dangerous in the sense that the original problem is not addressed and that the wrong treatment carries with it the potential for side effects or other unwanted results. Psychology and Worriers Anonymous will not solve man's problem. Psychology may help man feel better about himself, but Jesus is the only hope for his sin problem. Jesus Christ is the Great Physician who possesses the cure to the most serious, life threatening problem man faces: his inability to deal with his sin and separation from a Righteous and Holy God. The book "Deceptive Diagnosis" lays the problem on the front door step of the Christian church and it's up to the church repent and turn back to the Bible as the sole source for truth.

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Diagnosis Unknown

By Randy Davis

Diagnosis Unknown by Randy Davis

Diagnosis Unknown

Diagnosis Unknown is a heart–felt love story of courage and persistence that finally paid off. This is a book about one couple's journey to find a cure for a mysterious, chronic health problem, the labyrinth of medical doctors they went through. If you have a health crisis, having this book is like having a friend. Or if you are a health care professional you can gain valuable insight from seeing what it is like to be in these shoes. The solutions they found may very well not be your solutions, but the steps they took, the indicators they used, the ways they kept themselves on track will give you a map for your own journey.

Visit www.a-quantum-reach.com

Randy's journey is cronicled in his book.



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