



British Doctor Censured for Mentioning the Great Physician

Dr. Richard Scott, a general practitioner, is one of six partners in the Bethesda Medical Center in Margate, England. The partners are all Christians, a fact that they do not hide from their patients.

Last year Scott saw a 24-year-old male patient, who [NewsCore says](#) “has been described as ‘in a rut and in need of help.’ ” Scott recalled the consultation:

I only discussed my faith at the end of a lengthy medical consultation after exploring the various interventions that the patient had previously tried, and after promising to follow up the patient’s request for an appointment with other medical professionals.



I only discussed mutual faith after obtaining the patient’s permission. In our conversation, I said that, personally, I had found having faith in Jesus helped me and could help the patient. At no time did the patient indicate that they were offended, or that they wanted to stop the discussion. If that had been the case, I would have immediately ended the conversation.

The man left the office. His mother, who got the impression from his post-consultation remarks that the only thing the doctor had done was talk to him about Jesus, filed a complaint with the GMC. The council then sent a letter to Scott informing him that he had, according to Scott, “harassed a vulnerable patient.” Asked in an [interview with the Telegraph](#) what his response to that charge would be, Scott replied, “Absolutely not. I’ve offered a needy patient a way out of his situation.”

Rather than accept the warning — a “slap on the wrist,” Scott called it, but one that would be on his record forever and “available to any future employer” — he decided to appeal, says the *Telegraph*, “even though he has been warned this could result in him being struck off,” i.e., having his medical license revoked. “What’s happened to me is an injustice and I want to stand up for Christians who have been getting hammered in the workplace,” he said. He contacted the Christian Legal Center, which has assigned him “leading human rights lawyer” Paul Diamond, according to the newspaper.

Christian Legal Center founder and director Andrea Williams told the *Telegraph* that the GMC should stand by Scott, saying, “He acted within their own guidelines, and his unblemished record should not be tarnished — even by a letter [in] his file.”

Naturally, GMC chief executive Niall Dickson took the opposite tack:

Our guidance, which all doctors must follow, is clear. Doctors should not normally discuss their personal beliefs with patients unless those beliefs are directly relevant to the patient’s care.

They also must not impose their beliefs on patients, or cause distress by the inappropriate or insensitive



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on May 23, 2011

expression of religious, political or other beliefs or views.

Obviously Scott believes that discussing Christianity with his patients — and this patient in particular — is “directly relevant to” their care. Furthermore, as he pointed out, the patient in question never indicated that he was offended by or distressed with the conversation in any way. Scott says he has had similar conversations “thousands of times” with patients, and never before has anyone complained to the GMC.

By the way, Scott is a member of an Anglican church. The Anglican Church, of course, is the established church of England. Thus, an English doctor is now being persecuted by a state body for the offense of talking to one of his patients about the state’s official religion. One of government’s strong suits, however, has never been recognizing its own internal contradictions.

The *Telegraph*, in an editorial called [“Doctors can be Christians, too,”](#) defended Scott and pinpointed the real agenda behind his censure:

The GMC’s excessive reaction is part of a tendency: a number of institutions and companies have, in a misguided attempt to be “multicultural,” banned Christian symbols and overt expressions of faith, something that would never be attempted in the case of other religions. And yet the Christian faith is central to our country’s history and our traditions. Its legacy is visible everywhere. It is right that today, no one expects a person who holds positions of power and responsibility to be a practicing Christian. But we appear to be heading towards an alarming situation in which the profession of faith becomes an active disqualification.

Scott deserves to win. Freedom of speech and freedom of religion must be preserved. And that is something to which even the most ardent atheist can shout a hearty “Amen!”



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