

a day in the life

Chris Richards talks to *Nucleus*



Chris Richards is a Consultant Paediatrician in Newcastle

Why did you choose to be a paediatrician?

Since my student days (and before my conversion as an SHO), I have been attracted to the medical care of children. I appreciated, and still do, the generally caring atmosphere of the paediatric wards, the variety of clinical work and the three way communication between parent, child and myself.

Have you ever come into conflict in the workplace for being a Christian?

I have been called to account by my Trust for my Christian attitude and actions on a number of occasions for witnessing to patients, intervening in a proposed abortion and for advocating smacking. It has been a discipline for me to learn to submit to my 'masters' even when they reject biblical principles,¹ whilst remaining faithful to my responsibilities before God.

Do you have any other roles?

In my job, I have seen many disastrous consequences on young people from broken families and sexual immorality. In 2003 this led me to set up 'Lovewise',² an organisation that produces teaching material and gives presentations to encourage young people to honour God in their relationships and explains the importance of marriage. How great is the need! How many find themselves confused, tempted and morally directionless in this area, even some attending evangelical churches.

I am also director of a pregnancy centre in Newcastle that provides advice and the opportunity for an early ultrasound scan for women with a crisis pregnancy. Many women rush into having an abortion under pressure from partners, relatives and medical staff, and ignorant of the tiny life inside them. Seeing their child on ultrasound often has a big impact on them and their decision (the heartbeat is visible from about four weeks after conception).³

However, right now my most immediately demanding role is as father of six lovely but sinful children under eight at an age (56) when some are retiring. Wonderfully supported by my wife, Alison, the combination of regular spiritual nurture and discipline, and keeping them fed, clothed and 'nappied' is a constant, prayer-stirring challenge.

Do you have any observations or advice for young Christian medics in a sex-obsessed world?

- Sex is one of today's great spiritual battlefields for young people. Satan delights in using sex to undermine our faith, and destroy churches, marriages and future 'godly seed'.
- Your challenge is to remain 'unspotted from the world'⁴ when temptations are all around. Remember sex is holy - with every thought, word and deed God's glory and your wellbeing are at stake.
- Trust that the Lord 'will provide all your needs'⁵ in this area, and that his commandment to keep all sexual activity for marriage is full of his wisdom.
- Avoid the poison of pornography at all costs, by which many, who seem strong, have fallen disastrously.⁶
- The best context to meet a spouse is in a faithful church sharing in the Lord's service with the wise oversight of your church and, if possible, believing biological family. ■

FURTHER READING

- Richards C, Jones L. *True Love: What the Bible says about relationships and marriage*. Evangelical Press, 2015

REFERENCES

1. 1 Peter 2:18
2. www.lovewise.org.uk
3. Richards C. Ultrasound in Crisis Pregnancy. *Triple Helix* 2016; Spring:10-11
4. James 1:27
5. Philippians 4:19
6. Proverbs 7:26