

Scientist Fired for Believing Jesus Heals

People can believe a lot of crazy stuff nowadays and not be fired from their jobs, but a senior research associate at the Catholic University of Leuven learned that you better not believe that God can heal.

The university is the oldest and largest in Belgium. It was founded in the 1400s under the approval of the Vatican. But as modern Europe has secularized, so has the University, and even here, faith has come under fire.

Fernando Pauwels worked at the University's Research Institute for Work and Society for 11 years without a negative review when he was suddenly fired.

He said, "If you would have asked me, 'Do you get a new contract?,' I would say, 'Yes, of course.' 'Do you have problems with your colleagues?' I would say 'No, everything is fine.' So there were no issues there. A week later I'm out, and I'm like, 'What happened?'"

What happened was the Catholic University's great displeasure with Fernando's ministry website, that included testimonies of people healed through the power of God.

Pauwels said, "The University saw some of these movie clips of people being healed and giving their testimonies, and called them 'unscientific.'"

The university, which declined our interview request, told CBN News in a statement that "when a researcher working on matters of a scientific or medical nature allows religion to take the place of science, he compromises the scientific reputation of the university and breaks the bonds of trust with the university."

Pauwels says, "If I'm fired because of believing something unscientific like that, that Jesus Christ still heals, I'm fine with that. But it's still wrong."

Ward Kennes of the Christian Democratic Party, who serves in the Flemish parliament told CBN News, "I was very much surprised that a Catholic university, which is also a university where I have studied myself, was behaving like this."

Rik Torfs, a faculty member at the university, is a national media figure who wrote about the case for the Flemish newspaper, *The Standard* (**italics**). He said, "Freedom of religion means people can believe anything they like or anything they feel attracted to."

Torfs was recently elected faculty dean at the university, and had told CBN News that, if elected, he would re-hire Fernando Pauwels.

Pauwels, who has a heart for the persecuted church, especially in Pakistan, told us he feels privileged to have suffered for Christ, but he also wants those Christians who come after him to be protected from discrimination.

"One day I will stand before the Lord and He will say 'Well done.' That's all that counts. That's all that matters," he said.