

UK Street Preacher Charged With 'Causing Offense' For Preaching Gospel/Comparing Islam with Christianity

October 13, 2014 | [Michael Gryboski](#)



Mike Overd, a street preacher in the United Kingdom, is facing three charges of "causing offense," a violation of Section 5 of the Public Order Act for public remarks comparing Jesus Christ and the Muslim prophet Muhammad, whom he said had married a 9-year-old girl.

Overd has argued that his comments about Muhammad were not intended to be hateful, as his speech included, "a simple comparison and it was factual."

"I have no hatred of Muslims in me at all and only preach the truth of the Gospel. Recently a Muslim man came to my defense when I was preaching and a local shopkeeper started to shout at me," said Overd, who's been a street preacher for five years and has evangelised in Glasgow, Scotland, and Sheffield, Manchester and Taunton, England.

"The Muslim gentleman didn't take offense because he said he knew I was simply preaching what I believed and agreed there was no hatred in me. I've got this incident on video, and I also have video evidence of the incidents which have led to this forthcoming prosecution," he said, according to Christian Concern.

In June, Taunton Police Sgt. Neil Kimmins advised the public to video record Overd's street evangelism on their cellphones "if they think he is making offensive remarks," according to the Somerset County Gazette.

"I've done nothing wrong before Almighty God. My conscience is clear," Overd told the Gazette about his preaching of the Gospel.

This is not the first time Overd has faced similar charges of violating the law while street preaching. On Feb. 10, 2012, Overd was found not guilty of violating the Public Order Act 1986 for comments he made about homosexuality.

When Overd saw two men in a civil partnership walking down Taunton High Street arm in arm two years ago, he said publically: "even these dear men caught in homosexuality, if they ask God for forgiveness of sin can be forgiven their sin; God loves them that much," Christian Concern reported. Subsequently, the couple complained to police, which led to Overd's arrest on charges of committing a "hate crime."

Speaking after the trial, Overd said, "something is wrong" when "police arrest me, a Christian preacher who cares deeply for Jesus Christ and the people of Taunton," the BBC reported. "Something has to change and I hope my case will encourage others not to be scared to speak up for Christ."

Enacted in 1986, Section 5 of the Public Order Act deals with public speech that may involve "harassment, alarm or distress." Section 5 notes that a public speaker is guilty of such if said speaker "uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour" or "displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting."

"An offence under this section may be committed in a public or a private place, except that no offence is committed where the words or behaviour are used, or the writing, sign or other visible representation is displayed, by a person inside a dwelling and the other person is also inside that or another dwelling," continued Section 5.

Over the past few years, various street preachers in the U.K. have found themselves dealing with ...

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