



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 9, 2013

American Street Preacher Arrested in London for “Homophobic” Speech

An American evangelist preaching on the streets of London was arrested July 1 on a charge of using “homophobic” speech. Tony Miano, a pastor and retired 20-year Los Angeles County deputy sheriff, was arrested by London police in front of the stadium holding the Wimbledon tennis championships, after a woman told police she was offended by Miano’s words concerning homosexual behavior.

The [London Telegraph](#) reported that Miano was speaking to passersby from the New Testament book of I Thessalonians (chapter 4), warning of the eternal dangers of sexual immorality, including homosexuality. A woman, who can be seen on a video of the incident on the *Telegraph* website, complained to police, who took the man into custody, arresting him for using “homophobic” speech. “During the subsequent questioning at Wimbledon police station,” the *Telegraph* reported, Miano “was asked about his beliefs on what constitutes ‘sin’ and about how he would treat gay people in hypothetical situations.”

Miano recalled that “as the questioning started it became apparent that the interrogation was about more than the incident that took place in the street, but what I believed and how I think.” He added that “I was being interrogated about my thoughts.”

He told reporters that in no way was his speech “homophobic” or hateful. “I began my message by assuring the people that mine was not a message of hate but of love,” he recalled, as quoted by [Charisma News Service](#). “I was simply explaining a passage in the Bible which speaks of sexual immorality and that people should abstain from it. I did not speak solely about homosexuality as a form of sexual immorality, but also about any kind of sex outside of marriage between one man and one woman, as well as lustful thoughts. All of these are considered mainstream Christian positions and have been taught and believed by Christians for thousands of years.” He added that “it was very distressing to be arrested and interrogated for openly expressing my deeply held Christian beliefs.”

The veteran police officer told reporters that he had arrested countless individuals in his 20-year career in law enforcement, but never for a thought or for expressing an opinion. “It surprised me that it is possible for a person to be taken to jail for their thoughts,” he said. “It surprised me that here in the country that produced the Magna Carta that an otherwise law abiding person could lose his freedom because one person was offended by the content of my speech.”





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The 49-year-old Miano, who is a U.S. citizen, was provided with an attorney from the U.K. [Christian Legal Centre](#), a conservative legal advocacy group. After spending nearly seven hours in a London jail, Miano was released without charge. Andrea Williams, a spokeswoman for the group, told the *Telegraph*: “We might joke about there being ‘thought police,’ but this case shows that it has already become a reality. Sadly we are seeing cases like this increasingly often.” She added that “if we continue on the current trajectory, Tony’s arrest will simply be the first of many. It’s clear that there is already a clampdown on freedom of speech where people publicly express mainstream Christian views on sexual ethics.”

Following the incident Miano said that he believed “every human being should have the right to speak their mind. Homosexuals should have the right to free speech, as should atheists, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. All I’m asking is that we are allowed to be part of the conversation and that society stops treating itself as tolerant when the authorities are intolerant to the Christian point of view.”

He predicted that the same thing he experienced on the streets of London will soon be happening in America. “I believe that’s what our government is going to eventually do here,” he said. “I believe homosexuals or others who are sensitive to their point of view will be visiting churches to listen to what preachers say from the pulpit. And I believe that pastors will be arrested in their pulpits for teaching what the Bible says about homosexuality and other sins.”

Photo of Westminster Palace in London, England



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