

Pastor Convicted for Preaching John 3:16 Refuses to Back Down, Files Appeal

A retired pastor in Northern Ireland is refusing to back down after being convicted and fined for preaching a gospel message near a hospital where abortions are performed.

Clive Johnston, 78, announced this week that he has filed an appeal after a judge found he violated Northern Ireland's Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act while preaching a sermon based on John 3:16 near Causeway Hospital in July 2024.

The conviction has become a flashpoint in the growing debate over religious liberty, public evangelism and free speech throughout the United Kingdom.

According to Fox News, Johnston was found guilty of being "reckless" regarding whether his actions of preaching and standing near a large cross might "'influence' someone accessing the hospital's abortion services."

The court imposed a fine of 450 pounds, approximately \$614.

Johnston maintains his message had nothing to do with abortion.

According to Fox News, he said he did not mention abortion during the sermon and was simply pointing people "to the hope found in Jesus Christ."



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Rather than retreating from public ministry, Johnston has chosen to challenge the ruling.

"If this conviction is allowed to stand, it will signal that basic Christian witness and public expressions of faith can be criminalized simply because they take place in the wrong location," Johnston said. "That should concern every person who values freedom of religion and freedom of expression, regardless of their views on abortion."

His legal team at The Christian Institute said the appeal will challenge the conviction as a "disproportionate interference with fundamental rights protected under the European Convention on Human Rights and codified into UK law under the Human Rights Act, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of peaceful assembly."

The Christian Institute said Johnston is the first person prosecuted under the law for preaching a sermon unrelated to abortion within a protected zone.

Simon Calvert, deputy director of The Christian Institute, said the case centers on a much larger question than one pastor or one sermon.

"This case was never about harassment or intimidation," Calvert said. It is about "whether the state can criminalize the peaceful expression of Christian faith in a public place."

Calvert warned that the consequences extend far beyond Northern Ireland.

"The implications of this dangerous ruling reach far beyond one individual pastor in Northern Ireland," he said. "If public authorities can prosecute someone for reading the Bible and preaching on God's love, then fundamental freedoms are at risk."

Johnston previously warned that government officials were claiming authority over what forms of Christian expression may be permitted in public spaces.

“Once the state claims the authority to decide that peaceful biblical preaching is an unacceptable ‘influence,’ in some places, the space for Christians to live out and share their faith in public life risks becoming increasingly narrow,” Johnston told Fox News Digital.

He also raised concerns about where such restrictions could ultimately lead.

“And we can go further than faith-related concerns – if an act that doesn’t mention abortion is criminalized, what other acts could fall within the reach of this law?” he said.

Johnston made clear that his decision to preach near the hospital was intentional.

“The whole point of preaching within the buffer zone was to stand against the chilling effect that these zones have on gospel preaching,” he said.

As Christians around the world watch this event unfold, Johnston’s appeal serves as a reminder that opposition to the Gospel is not new. Scripture repeatedly calls believers to remain faithful under pressure, stand firm in their convictions and continue proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul urged believers to persevere until the end, declaring in 2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

Johnston’s appeal now moves forward as a test case with implications for the future of Christian expression in the United Kingdom.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a journalism background from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and at the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force

veteran, he is the author of The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary and a contributor to Charisma magazine. For interviews and media inquiries, please contact media@.

Researchers Uncover the Biggest Predictor of Lasting Christian Faith

A new study is delivering a message that will encourage Christian families across America: the most powerful influence on whether children keep their faith into adulthood is the home.

Research from the Institute for Family Studies and Communio found that parents play the central role in passing faith to the next generation. The report, titled *Passing the Torch: How Faith Moves Across Generations*, examined adults raised in Christian homes and identified the habits most closely linked to lasting faith.

Researchers found that children whose parents regularly attended church, prayed daily, talked openly about their faith and built strong family relationships were significantly more likely to remain committed Christians as adults.

Church attendance proved especially important. Adults whose parents attended church weekly were more than twice as likely to attend church regularly later in life. Children who attended church with both parents showed even stronger rates of faith retention.



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The study also found that simple spiritual practices at home make a lasting impact. Families who prayed together, said grace before meals and discussed faith several times a week raised children who were more likely to attend church, pray daily and identify as Christian as adults.

Strong family relationships emerged as another key factor.

"Research suggests parent-child relationship quality does not transmit religion by itself, but it creates the relational conditions under which transmission becomes more likely," the study stated, according to Fox News.

The findings showed that adults who had strong relationships with their parents were more likely to attend church, pray, read Scripture and believe in God. The role of fathers stood out, with strong father-child relationships linked to substantially higher levels of church attendance, prayer and belief later in life.

Healthy marriages also contributed to stronger faith transmission. Children raised in happy, stable homes were more likely to maintain spiritual disciplines as adults, while parents who reported greater marital satisfaction had more faith-centered conversations with their children.

Study authors Jesse Smith, Ph.D., and Jane Lankes Smith, Ph.D., said parents must take an active role in discipling their children.

"In a culture where religion is no longer reinforced by broader society, parents cannot assume faith will simply 'rub off' on their children," the Smiths said, according to Fox News. "The families most successful at passing on faith are the ones who practice it openly, talk about it regularly, and build it into everyday life."

JP De Gance, founder and president of Communio, said the findings offer hope because many of the factors influencing a child's faith are within a parent's control.

"The number of marriages, the health of those marriages, the quality of a parent's relationship with his children, and the types of conversations we have with our kids are all major factors affecting the future of faith in America," De Gance said, according to Fox News. "Here's the good news: many of these factors are within a parents' control. This research shows that the family really is the best small group ever created."

The study points to a simple conclusion: the strongest discipleship program in America is not found in a church building. It is found in Christian parents faithfully living out their faith at home every day.

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Lana Savchuk: The Enemy Uses This 1 Tactic to Control Your Thoughts

Death is not the end. It is a doorway.

That was one of the central themes Rabbi Jason Sobel shared during a recent appearance on the Blurry Creatures podcast, where he explored the meaning of Christ's death, resurrection and the hope of eternal life.

Sobel recounted a supernatural encounter that transformed the course of his life before he ever opened a New Testament.

"One day I was meditating and my soul began to vibrate and it left my body, went through the ceiling, through the clouds, and the next thing I know I was standing in heaven and there was this king high and lifted up in this glorious light, and I felt the power of God pulsate through every cell of my body," Sobel said. "It's a indescribable experience."

"He told me I was called to serve and then I knew that king was Jesus. I knew nothing about Jesus. No one ever shared with me about Jesus, but I knew that was Jesus."



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Later in the discussion, Sobel pointed to the resurrection as the ultimate picture of God's power to bring life where death appeared to have won.

"The Hebrew word for tomb is kever. And it's the same word for womb," he said. "How can tomb and womb be the same word?"

He explained that both serve as gateways into different realities.

"The tomb and the womb are connected because they're both portals. The tomb is a portal to the afterlife. The womb is a portal to this life."

"They're both doors. They're both portals to realities."

The empty tomb reveals God's ability to transform what appears to be an ending into a new beginning.

“The reason why these words are the same is because Jesus is in the business of transforming the tomb into a womb,” Sobel said. “The very thing that seems like it was going to be the end is the very thing that God uses to become the beginning.”

Sobel also connected the resurrection to freedom from fear.

“When Jesus resurrected from the dead it said your fear is as empty as the empty tomb,” he said. “We don’t need to live in fear. Fear is empty. Jesus overcame.”

He closed with an encouragement rooted in the victory of Christ.

“The very thing that seems that’s going to be your end is the very thing that God wants to transform into that new beginning for you,” Sobel said. “So don’t worry. Don’t live in fear. Let’s live by faith. Place it in Jesus because He changes everything.”

The resurrection story declares that death does not have the final word. Jesus does. The empty tomb stands as a testimony that God brings life out of death, hope out of despair and new beginnings out of what appeared finished.

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Jack Hibbs: Understanding These 3 Events Unlocks the Entire End-Times Timeline

Katie Souza's recent interview with Pastor Darren Stott covered a remarkable range of subjects. CIA consciousness research. Astral projection. Dream manipulation. UFO disclosure. Psychedelic spirituality. Spirit guides. Occult symbolism in entertainment. Spiritual warfare.

At first glance, the topics appear unrelated.

One discussion centers on a CIA document known as the Gateway Intermediate Workbook. Another explores the growing popularity of astral projection and consciousness expansion on social media. Another examines the modern UFO phenomenon and reports of non-human intelligences. Yet another focuses on psychedelic experiences, spirit guides and occult practices.

Souza and Stott argued that these subjects are not separate conversations at all.

They are pieces of a larger puzzle.

Throughout the interview, Stott repeatedly pointed to what he described as a growing "consciousness revival" spreading throughout culture.

"It's a new world religion," he said.

That observation highlights one of the most significant spiritual developments taking place in the world today.

For decades, society was told that science and technology would eventually replace spiritual belief. Instead, the opposite has happened. A generation raised in an age of

skepticism has become increasingly fascinated with the supernatural.

Gen Z is discussing spiritual awakening, supernatural experiences, UFO disclosure, consciousness expansion, spirit guides and altered states of consciousness with a level of interest that previous generations rarely displayed.

Many are finding Jesus Christ.

Many are searching elsewhere.

That distinction sits at the center of the conversation Souza and Stott explored.



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As the interview unfolded, a hidden thread began connecting subjects that normally occupy entirely different corners of culture.

CIA consciousness research.

Astral projection.

Psychedelic spirituality.

Manifestation culture.

UFO encounters.

Occult symbolism in music and entertainment.

Viewed independently, they seem disconnected.

Viewed together, they reveal a civilization searching for spiritual knowledge and supernatural experiences.

"The future is far faster than what we think," Stott said.

He described a world where concepts once confined to occult

circles are now spreading through social media, podcasts, entertainment and mainstream discussions surrounding consciousness and spirituality.

The convergence is impossible to ignore. UFO disclosure, consciousness expansion, psychedelic spirituality, astral projection, spirit guides, manifestation culture and New Age spirituality are all gaining mainstream attention at the same moment. What appears to be a collection of unrelated trends increasingly looks like a single spiritual movement. Each promises hidden knowledge, expanded awareness or supernatural experiences. Each encourages people to explore spiritual realities. Each offers a pathway to enlightenment.

The language has changed.

Ancient spiritism is now discussed as consciousness exploration.

Occult practices are presented as wellness tools.

Spirit guides are described as higher intelligences.

Forbidden knowledge is marketed as awakening.

The packaging changes. The destination does not. This is where the discussion becomes prophetically significant.

The first deception recorded in Scripture was not an invitation to reject God. It was an invitation to pursue enlightenment apart from Him.

The serpent told Eve:

*“For God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
(Gen. 3:5).*

The temptation was not unbelief. The temptation was hidden knowledge.

Expanded awareness. Spiritual advancement without submission.

Thousands of years later, that same promise continues to appear under different names.

Awakening. Ascension. Consciousness expansion. Spiritual evolution.

Many of the subjects discussed by Souza and Stott revolve around that same pursuit.

When discussing the CIA document, Stott argued that practices once associated with occult traditions are increasingly being repackaged through the language of energy, vibration and consciousness.

When discussing astral projection, he warned against efforts to normalize spiritual exploration detached from biblical boundaries.

When discussing psychedelic spirituality, he pointed to a growing movement that presents altered states of consciousness as gateways to enlightenment and healing.

When discussing the UFO phenomenon and UFO disclosure, he connected the fascination with non-human intelligences to humanity's age-old desire to gain access to hidden mysteries.

Even their discussion of entertainment centered on the same theme.

Stott argued that modern music and entertainment increasingly use imagery involving portals, gateways and spiritual access points. Discussing the Astroworld tragedy, he described the event as "The whole theme of this festival was a portal into hell."

Whether the topic was UFOs, consciousness expansion, psychedelics or occult symbolism, the underlying issue remained the same.

Humanity is searching for the supernatural.

The Bible explains why.

Ecclesiastes says God has “set eternity in their hearts” (Eccl. 3:11).

Human beings were created to know God. We were created to experience His presence. We were created for relationship with our Creator.

That longing never disappears.

What changes is where people look to satisfy it.

This may explain why spiritual awakening and spiritual deception often emerge side by side throughout history.

When Moses confronted Pharaoh, God’s miracles appeared alongside counterfeit signs from Pharaoh’s magicians.

When Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal, genuine spiritual authority stood opposite a counterfeit system.

When the early church exploded with growth in Acts, Simon the Sorcerer emerged seeking spiritual power for himself.

The pattern repeats throughout Scripture.

Whenever people become hungry for the supernatural, competing voices emerge offering alternative paths.

That reality gives new meaning to the cultural moment unfolding before us.

A generation is rejecting the idea that human beings are merely biological machines.

Young people are asking questions about Bible prophecy, spiritual warfare, supernatural encounters, UFO disclosure, consciousness expansion and unseen realities.

Those questions are leading many people to Jesus Christ.

They are also leading many people into New Age spirituality, occult practices, spirit guide encounters and alternative spiritual systems that promise enlightenment while bypassing the Gospel.

That is why spiritual discernment has become so important.

Jesus warned that deception would increase in the last days. The most effective deception is never built entirely upon lies. It succeeds because it mixes fragments of truth with distortions that ultimately lead people away from the source of truth itself.

As Souza and Stott's conversation demonstrated, subjects such as UFO disclosure, consciousness expansion, astral projection, psychedelic spirituality and occult practices may appear unrelated on the surface. Yet beneath them runs a common current: humanity's desire to access spiritual realities apart from the One who created them.

That reality makes this far more than a discussion about strange phenomena, government documents or emerging spiritual trends.

It is a battle over the source of truth itself.

A generation is awakening to the reality that there is more than the physical world. At the same time, ancient deceptions are returning with modern language, modern technology and unprecedented reach.

Scripture warned that such a time would come. The last days would not be marked by a disappearance of spirituality but by a flood of counterfeits competing with the truth.

The supernatural is not returning to culture. It never left.

What is changing is that millions of people are becoming aware

of it again.

The defining spiritual battle of this generation is not whether people will seek the supernatural.

They already are.

The battle is over who gets to define it.

As the worlds of UFO disclosure, consciousness expansion, psychedelic spirituality, occult practices and spiritual awakening continue to converge, one reality becomes increasingly clear: humanity is not moving away from the supernatural. It is moving deeper into it.

In the midst of that search, the Gospel remains what it has always been.

Not one path among many.

The truth standing in the middle of a thousand counterfeits.

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