

Minister Risks Jail to Read Christmas Story, Pray at Capitol

Taking the war on Christmas to new heights, Patrick Mahoney is preparing to go to jail to defend religious freedom.

Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition, is planning to read the Christmas story at the Capitol Tree on Thursday at noon. The Capitol Christmas Tree is located on the West Lawn of the United States Capitol Building.

“It is hard to imagine that a minister, or any American, would face possible arrest or citation for reading the Christmas story from the Bible or holding a Nativity Display in the palm of their hand in front of the Capitol Christmas tree on the lawn of the United States Capitol Building,” Mahoney says. “Yet, this is what I am facing on Thursday at noon.”

Mahoney met with Capitol police officials to share his plans to sing Christmas carols, read the Christmas story, pray for peace, justice and religious freedom, hold a small five-inch nativity display, and pray for political leaders at the Capitol Christmas tree.

Police informed Mahoney that some of his activities may be prohibited or constitute an illegal demonstration. So Mahoney contacted his attorney, Jim Henderson, senior counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, who in turn called the Office of General Counsel for the Capitol Police on Tuesday.

Henderson sent Mahoney an email explaining that his use of the Bible or the ornament would convert his activity, in the view of the Capitol police, into a prohibited demonstration.

The bottom line: If Mahoney proceeds with his plans he could

be ticketed—or even arrested. And he plans to do it anyway.

“Sadly, we are seeing a growing hostility toward public expressions of faith in the public square especially during the Christmas season. I was told I could hold sheet music, an instrument or camera in my hand, but if I hold a Bible or small nativity scene that would be considered a ‘prop’ and cause me to face arrest or citation,” Mahoney said.

“I want to make to clear that every American should have the right to express their faith in the public square free from government intimidation or harassment. If that means spending time in jail for reading the Christmas story from the Bible, then I consider that a small price to pay.”