

# California Catholic Daily

[Return to Article] This printable article is taken from [www.calcatholic.com](http://www.calcatholic.com)

Published: December 12, 2008

## No-Christ Zone

*Oakland prosecutes gentle pastor*

Today, November 12, attorneys from Life Legal Defense Foundation will argue to dismiss a restraining order against Reverend Walter Hoye, the Baptist pastor from Berkeley who is the first person to face charges for violating Oakland's "bubble-law" against abortion clinic sidewalk counselors. Hoye is aware that if the order is not dismissed, he will be in court the following week facing criminal charges for violating the ordinance. "If we don't settle this Friday, I'm going to have a jury trial. If I'm convicted, I could get a year in jail and a \$2000 fine."



Walter Hoye

Family Planning Specialists Medical Group and two of its escorts sought the order, only to admit later under oath that Hoye had never threatened either of them or used force. Hoye was charged with four misdemeanor counts of violating the new ordinance, but insists that he has done nothing wrong. "I was standing outside of that clinic on a public sidewalk. This ordinance makes it crime to counsel on the sidewalk or to have any kind of religious conversation within 100 feet of a clinic. I can't even hand out a tract."

Hoye, a soft-spoken man with a friendly demeanor, has been told in court that he is mean and violent. "They are trying to say that I got within eight feet of patients going into the clinic, and that is simply not true. In fact, the escorts were surrounding me all the time. They looked like basketball players on defense, the way they maneuvered around me. I've got witnesses that can verify this, but it's my word against their (the clinic's) word, because the police never saw me do anything. When they arrested me, they just came and got me because the clinic told them to."

For Hoye, what makes this law so despicable is that it hides the true intent of its authors under the guise of "protecting women". "This new law is essentially a 'No-Christ Zone'. You can't hold a sign, have a conversation or pass out literature. Forget abortion, I can't even tell you about Jesus, and that's because Jesus discourages people from having abortions. Even wearing my cap that says, 'Got Jesus?' is a violation. That should scare every single pastor and priest in the world."

The ordinance has potential to cause problems with the clinic's neighbors. "If you're 100 feet from the clinic, we're almost in front of a warehouse. They said, 'You know what, we don't like these Christians on a public sidewalk in front of us either.' They want the same protection that they clinic gets, and the city can't just grant that kind of protection to one industry. If warehouses, clubs, liquor stores and all these businesses don't want it, then they have to have 'No-Christ Zones' everywhere and this becomes much bigger than just simply Walter being in front of an abortion clinic on a sidewalk."

© California Catholic Daily 2008. All Rights Reserved.

Article URL: <http://calcatholic.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?id=7c49a7a8-f27c-46f2-851a-c8780d7fa733>