

# BABY JESUS EVICTED FROM MICHIGAN TOWN

In December 2005, the ACLU threatened a lawsuit against Berkley, Michigan unless a crèche outside the city hall was removed. This past November, the Berkley City Council voted 6-1 to remove it, angering many of the residents who packed the building.

There is a lot of blame to go around. First, there is the ACLU, an organization that is so terrified of religion that it has actually expressed anger over a 9-foot statue of Jesus that is located on the ocean floor off the coast of Key Largo. Second, there are the spineless residents and clergymen in the area who liked the idea of giving the nativity scene to the Berkley Clergy Association for display on church property (it was one of three options on the table); in doing so, they handed a victory to the ACLU. Third, there is the bogus argument made by the mayor, Marilyn Stephan, who said, "It's a risk to the safety of the crèche. We want Santa to come and do the Christmas tree lighting and for the safety of all who come, you can't have all that stuff around." The stuff—baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph—has been in the same spot for 65 years, without incident. Fourth, there was the concern, expressed by some city officials, that the cost of litigation might prove prohibitive: six organizations, including the Thomas More Law Center, agreed to accept the case pro bono (the only reasonable concern was that if the town lost, it would have to pay the ACLU's legal fees).

Perhaps the most telling commentary in this case came when a city ad hoc committee suggested that, as one of three options, residents consider establishing a free-speech zone for religious displays. That the ACLU—the so-called guardians of liberty—would oppose a free-speech zone says it all. But it's a sure bet that if the zone were to house child pornography,

the ACLU would have broken out the cigars. That's because it sees nativity scenes as obscene, not pictures of sexually abused kids. And owing to the fact that the ACLU wants all drugs legalized, it probably would have broken out the cocaine, not the cigars.