

# THE ACLU'S IDEA OF FREE SPEECH

One of the problems with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is that it tends to get over-heated on a regular basis. This is especially the case when the subject turns to the public expression of religion.

Few doubt that the Ten Commandments historically symbolize the roots of American culture, but that hasn't stopped the ACLU from trying to uproot our heritage. Which is why it filed suit this past spring in Kentucky's Pulaski and McCreary counties for allowing the dreaded monument to be placed on public property. The civil libertarians also sued Kentucky's Harlan school district for the same alleged offense.

In a demonstration of its national scope, the ACLU sued over the same issue in Denver, Colorado; Plattsmouth, Nebraska; and Elkhart, Indiana. The latter lawsuit made the biggest headlines when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower-court ruling barring the public display of the Ten Commandments.

The Mojave National Preserve in San Bernardino County, California, is home to a large cross. The ACLU has sued to get it removed. The legend of the state flag in Nashville, Tennessee, is "In God We Trust." The ACLU has sued to get it removed. There is a chapel in Cumberland High School in Harlan County, Kentucky. The ACLU has sued to get it removed.

When school officials at Washington Community High School in Chicago said they would allow an invocation and benediction at the graduation ceremony, the ACLU stepped and asked that it be cancelled.

But the ACLU did not find it objectionable for a Cumberland High School student in Rhode Island to record a sexually

explicit song about a teacher that he posted on Napster. That is why they defended the kid when he was suspended for 10 days.

At Virginia Military Institute they have a tradition of offering a blessing before dinner. The ACLU doesn't like this tradition and so it has sued. State officials in Indiana have on occasion given proceeds from the state lottery to religious groups. Among the groups that have received funding is the Marion Indiana Easter Pageant. Because it hosts a pageant depicting the death and resurrection of Christ, the ACLU has sued.

Meanwhile, the ACLU's chapter in Hawaii made quite a spectacle of itself—even embarrassing the national office—when it voted to disallow a debate between ACLU president Nadine Strossen and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Thomas was called “an anti-Christ” and a “Hitler.” Ergo, he has no right to speak.

So this is what the ACLU means by free speech.