

Christian School Fights for Its Existence

Two years ago, Livingston Christian Schools sought permission to relocate their facility to church property in Genoa Charter Township in Michigan.

Its previous facility could no longer support the school, so LCS officials sought a new home, finding what seemed to be the perfect location at Brighton Church of the Nazarene. The church agreed to lease one of its buildings to house the school.

Brighton Church then submitted an application to amend its permit to allow LCS to use the building as a religious school. Although the Township's experts, the local community, and the local zoning board all agreed that the permit should be granted, the Township Board denied the application, preventing LCS from operating anywhere within Genoa Township.

LCS has since been engaged in the federal courts in an attempt to secure the right to operate in Genoa Township. They sued the Township under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, arguing the township's actions substantially burdened their ability to operate as a religious ministry.

The First Liberty Institute has now filed a brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit on behalf of LCS.

"The government is refusing to allow a Christian school to move into a building on church property or, for that matter, anywhere else in town," says First Liberty Deputy Chief Counsel Hiram Sasser. "That's wrong. Federal law expressly prohibits the government using zoning laws to keep religious institutions out of their town."