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**Judge halts minute of silence in N.J. schools**

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—A federal judge on Monday blocked New Jersey public schools from requiring a minute of silence at the start of each class day and said the state law ordering the observance appears to be unconstitutional.

U.S. Judge Dickinson Debevoise ruled in a suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union that said the moment of silence for "contemplation and introspection" is an unconstitutional attempt to reintroduce prayer in public schools.

Debevoise issued a restraining order and scheduled a full hearing on the issue for Jan. 13. The legislature had voted final approval of the law Dec. 18 by overriding a veto by

Gov. Thomas Kean, who said the proposal was illegal.

DEBEVOISE said it appears that the law "is unconstitutional on its face and as applied in that it violates the 1st and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and that immediate and irreparable injury will result to plaintiffs pending a hearing on an application for a preliminary injunction."

The suit contends that the law "was passed with the singular purpose of reintroducing prayer into the public schools in the state of New Jersey" and "is a subterfuge for avoiding the [U.S.] Supreme Court ban on prayer in the public schools."

The ACLU filed suit Monday on behalf of six plaintiffs, including Jeffrey May, an Edison high school teacher ousted from his homeroom by school officials after he refused to hold a minute of silence.

ASKED IF he would conduct the silent minute if the court decides to allow it after next week's hearing, May replied: "I have absolutely no intention of enforcing that law. One doesn't change one's conscience in a week."

Named as defendants in the suit are the state Department of Education, Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman and the school systems of Edison and Old Bridge.

WORDS OF LOVE - CASE STUDY No. 7

The article above is not the entire case for this morning; it is merely an example to get us thinking about what LOVE should do in the face of laws such as this which restrict a christian's right to approach God in prayer and worship.

There are actually several different issues to be considered here. Of course, the most obvious is whether Christian LOVE would require us to show others how Jesus suffered all manner of insults and degradation in order to pay the price to save us on the cross. We could do this by suffering the government to deny us our right to pray and worship God just because we happen to be on public property. This would also fulfill the requirement of the scriptures that we obey our secular authorities (Romans 13:1-4).

Or, alternatively, does Christian LOVE demand that we show others that there does exist a power higher than the state and that, when the state enacts laws that directly violate the laws of God, we are duty bound by LOVE to show forth God's supremacy by disobeying the improper laws of the state as Peter and John did in Acts 4:19.

Another consideration is whether or not we want to support general prayer and worship in the public schools. Under the assumption that any such program in the public schools would have to be so non-sectarian as to be literally non-christian, do we want to support the idea that such prayer (without Christ) is in any way efficacious. We should think about whether this would be tantamount to telling non-christians that they should behave in a religious fashion (with the concomitant connotation that this will somehow bring them closer to God when, in fact, only the blood of Christ can do that).

And, is our LOVE to be affected by the knowledge that there are many who are not merely indifferent to Christ and our message about him, but who are rather the sworn mortal enemies of Christ and we who follow the Savior? Are we, as Francis Schaeffer says in A Christian Manifesto, literally at War with these Secular Humanists and engaged in a battle to the death that is only now beginning to show itself to us in its total, awful reality?