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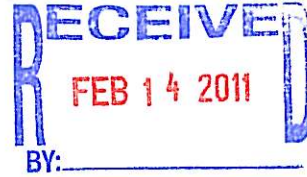
POST OFFICE BOX 35

TABOR CITY

NORTH CAROLINA 28463

February 8, 2011

Ms. Rebecca S. Markert
Staff Attorney
Freedom from Religion Foundation
PO Box 750
Madison, WI 53701



Re: Illegal Prayer in a 3rd Grade Classroom
Columbus County, North Carolina

Dear Ms. Markert:

I was given your letter of January 28, 2011 by Dr. Dan Strickland, the Superintendent of the Columbus County Schools. Our Central Office did investigate the circumstances and found that the very instructions were being given and we have instructed the principal as well as the teacher to cease and desist from any prayer time or references to prayer, at lunchtime or at any other time during the day, as we are well aware that it is violative of the US Constitution and the various Court cases that have been brought under the principal of Separation of Church and State. We regret the circumstances having arisen; however, the Central Office was unaware that it was going on and we appreciate your bringing it to our attention, as each year, at the beginning of the year, teachers are instructed concerning this issue, but being in the "Bible Belt" it is oftentimes forgotten. We have taken the appropriate measures to address it and will monitor the situation to be sure that it does not occur again. If any other matters occur, please feel free to contact us and we appreciate your having prompted us in writing, so as to allow us to prevent the offense from occurring as our purpose is to educate the students and not to litigate issues that are not relevant to education. I appreciate your contacting us in this matter and trust that this will serve as notice to you that we have investigated and taken the appropriate actions to correct the issues. With all good wishes, I am

Very Sincerely,

Billy
William W. Phipps

WWP/mc

CC: Dr. Dan Strickland

VIA FAX: 910-640-1010