

**Bedford-Central Church v. Pby of NYC,
Remedial Case No. 199-1,
11.075a**

**BEDFORD-CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Complainant-Appellant**

vs.

**PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK CITY
Respondent-Appellee**

This is a remedial case on appeal arising from a complaint brought by the session of Bedford-Central Presbyterian Church against the Presbytery of New York City.

This Commission has jurisdiction, the parties have standing, the appeal has been brought to this commission in timely fashion, and the complaint states a claim upon which a relief can be granted.

In 1985 the pastor nominating committee of the appellant church presented the name of a candidate to the committee on ministry of appellee presbytery. The candidate was on the candidates roll of another presbytery, was not ordained to the office of minister of the Word. The committee on ministry approved his service as supply to appellant church, approved his care be transferred from his home presbytery to Presbytery of New York City, and charged the candidates committee to provide support, guidance, and instruction for a year. This was done.

In June 1986, the candidates committee voted not to recommend the candidate's ordination and further recommended that the name of the candidate be removed from the roll of candidates without prejudice for the following reasons:

1. The candidate's theological views did not appear to be consistent with the Presbyterian Church.
2. The candidate did not seem to be adequately informed by a doctrine or understanding of grace, and
3. The candidate excluded and condemned viewpoints and beliefs well represented within the Reformed tradition.

At a stated meeting of presbytery on June 24, 1986, presbytery voted sixty-one to twenty-eight to remove the candidate's name from the roll of candidates "without prejudice."

The appellant appealed to the synod's permanent judicial commission, alleging that the presbytery acted irregularly in two ways: in declining to ordain the candidate and in removing his name from the roll of candidates.

Specifications of error cited by the appellant are:

Specification No. 1. That the Presbytery of New York City acted irregularly by declining to ordain the candidate.

Specification No. 2. That the Presbytery of New York City acted irregularly in removing the candidate from the roll of candidates without prejudice.

The Presbyterian Church, throughout its history in this country, has sought to guarantee that its decision-making processes operate openly, deliberately, fairly, and inclusively, in ways

most likely to secure "the approbation of an impartial public and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the church universal." (G-1.0308.) In the present case, respondent presbytery followed clear and open procedures. Opportunity was given in committee and on the floor of presbytery for each interested person or group to be heard. Greater than usual time and effort was taken to become well acquainted with the candidate as a person, as a candidate, as a minister of the Word. It is apparent that weight was given to the pastoral needs and expressed wishes of the complainant church. We find that the action of the presbytery in removing the candidate from its roll without prejudice was not intended to take action limiting the candidate's right to transfer his church membership or to initiate an application to become a candidate for the Office of Minister of the Word again in the future. The responsibility of making a judgement about the wisdom of a person remaining on the roll of candidates belongs to the candidate's presbytery.

We find that the Presbytery of New York City fulfilled its proper function and exercised its power with due diligence and fairness, and ample opportunity was given to the complainant to be heard. Accordingly, it is our opinion that the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast was correct in finding no irregularity in the appellee's declining to ordain the candidate and, further, that the presbytery did not act irregularly in removing the candidate's name from the roll of candidates.

The action of the synod's permanent judicial commission is affirmed and the appeal is denied.

The Reverend Robert Craghead and Elder Evelyn Reddin were absent and did not participate in the discussion of this case or vote on the decision as required by D-4.0400b.