



THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
of
THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SESSION OF BEVERLY HEIGHTS CHURCH, et al. v.
PRESBYTERY OF THE ALLEGHENIES V

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

[January 17, 2025]

This commission has reviewed the fifth complaint filed by the session of Beverly Heights Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and its Teaching Elder Nate Devlin (jointly, the “Complainant”) against the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (the “Respondent”). Filed on November 4, 2024, the complaint alleged, among other things, that an administrative commission of the Respondent erroneously “express[ed] an unbiblical teaching on the Lord’s Supper, giving permission to a member of Beverly Heights Church to ignore the pastoral care of the session and thereby interfering with exercising the responsibilities of the local church through abuse of power.” “[T]here are,” the complaint also alleged, “significant concerns of heresy present in the [Respondent’s] position on this matter.”

The complaint therefore requested that we provide relief in one or more of the following ways:

- (1) “Void... all actions of the [Respondent] regarding its instruction to members to refrain from the sacraments or session invitations;”
- (2) “Direct... the Ministerial Committee of the [Respondent] to inquire into the [Respondent]’s position on sacramentology and the theological alignment or misalignment with the Essential Tenets of the EPC and the Westminster Confession and Christian Scripture;” and
- (3) “Direct... the [Respondent] to allow Beverly Heights [Church] to hold a lawful second [*Book of Government* section 5-10] meeting and vote on the request for dismissal.”

According to the Complainant, granting the third request for relief “would require [this commission] to void all lower court actions regarding the ‘list of members approved to vote,’ by which the [Respondent] has rendered it impossible to achieve an uncontested vote.” Granting the third request for relief would also, the Complainant argued, “require staying all actions and authority of the [Administrative Commission], the [Respondent’s currently constituted] judicial commission, and all further interference by the [Respondent] until Beverly Heights [Church] can hold our second meeting under [section] 5-10 due to the [Respondent]’s pattern of interference with proper procedures and their unwillingness to exercise proper oversight.”

Section 14-8A.2 of the *Book of Discipline* gives this commission authority to strike portions of a complaint and proceed forward. We hereby strike the Complainant’s second request for relief as duplicative and its third request for relief as ungermane, but leave intact the Complainant’s first request that, as potential relief, we consider voiding any actions of the Respondent that had the effect of instructing the Complainant’s members from refraining from the sacraments or session invitations.

Subject to the foregoing modification, we find that the complaint states grounds on which relief may be granted. The Respondent shall (1) appoint one or more representatives to defend the complaint, and (2) direct its appointed representative(s) to file with this commission an answer to the complaint no later than midnight on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. The answer shall respond to each allegation in the complaint, as modified above, and shall set forth with specificity all defenses on which the Respondent relies. In addition, the Respondent shall provide to this commission the record of the case as required in section D.14-8C of the *Book of Order*.

We decline to stay any proceedings below that are related to this matter.