



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 18, 2013

Rutgers University Bus Driver Fired After Praying With Student

Another bus driver has apparently paid the  price for praying with one of his passengers. New Jersey media sources reported that Stan McNeil, who drove bus for a company serving Rutgers University, was fired after he prayed with a wheelchair-bound student on his bus in early November. McNeil, a retired Newark fireman, had been driving a bus around the Rutgers campus since 2011, and was well-known and loved by students for his inspirational and faith-filled speeches from behind the wheel.

But in a nearly nine-minute [YouTube video](#) McNeil explained how he was terminated by First Transit, the bus company that contracts with Rutgers, after he placed his hand on a woman in a wheelchair who was riding his bus, and prayed for her to be healed. "I prayed for the lady. I put my hand on her and I prayed," McNeil, who is a Christian, said in the video posted shortly after his dismissal. "They said, 'We don't need your services anymore.' They said, 'We don't do that here.'"

A spokesperson for the bus company claimed that McNeil was not fired, but was warned that he had violated one of the company's safety protocols, after which he chose to leave. The company would not specify what the violation was. "This case is about safety, which is a core value of First Transit," said the First Transit spokesperson in a statement. "All of our vehicle operators are instructed, 'If it can't be done safely, don't do it.' Unfortunately, a full internal review revealed that Mr. McNeil had failed to follow a critical safety protocol that was cause for immediate termination. When advised of his violation, Mr. McNeil chose to resign."

McNeil, however, told [NJ.com](#), a New Jersey news source, that a bus company official told him that a video recorded on the bus showed that he had not used the required number of straps to secure the disabled student's wheelchair. Despite the claims of First Transit officials, McNeil insisted that he was pressured to resign because of the prayer for the student, adding that he had been warned previously about his religious expression while on duty.

"The married father of two said he had a strong faith in God and regularly shared his motivational speeches with students on the LX bus route traveling between Rutgers' College Avenue campus in New Brunswick and the Livingston campus in Piscataway," reported [NJ.com](#).

In response to McNeil's departure, Rutgers students have taken to Facebook and other social media outlets to lobby for his return. McNeil has been so popular that last year students even launched a Facebook page, [LX Bus Driver](#), that includes videos of McNeil's inspirational speeches during his route. The Facebook page calls McNeil "the most inspirational, supportive and reassuring person many of us have ever met."

Most students insist that McNeil never pushed his religious beliefs on others, and merely encouraged people with positive words. In one video posted by a student, McNeil can be seen encouraging his



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passengers while glancing from time to time in the rearview mirror of the bus. "You're one thought away from greatness, people!" he is heard telling his passengers. "You got to continue to do well, do good, keep doing good, keep getting knowledge. And at the right time, that knowledge will explode and it will put you into greatness."

In his own YouTube view explaining his departure from the job, McNeil defended his faith-filled actions, including praying for many of his passengers. "I don't regret none of it," he said. "I said this is who I am. I ain't going to back down from who I am. I will not compromise. I am all about God, brother."

NJ.com noted that one Rutgers student, Hannah Young, "said she e-mailed the university's transportation department to say she was ashamed to go to a school where a man could lose his job over a prayer. 'You will never know how much Stan helped his students,' Young said. 'He was an inspiration, but he was also that one ray of sunshine that many students will never admit to desperately needing.'"

On November 10, [The New American](#) reported on a Minneapolis school bus driver who was fired after someone complained about his practice of praying with students on his route. After changing his route and warning him about talking about faith to students, the bus company fired George Nathaniel, who is also a Minneapolis-area pastor, with a letter reading in part: "There have been more complaints of religious material on the bus as well as other complaints regarding performance. In accordance with the previous final written warning you received, your employment is hereby terminated."

The bus company that employed Nathaniel reportedly expressed concern over possible violations of the "separation of church and state" supposedly enforced in the First Amendment, since it was contracting with public school systems. For his part, Nathaniel defended his actions, saying that he saw his job as an opportunity to encourage children in their faith. "We got to get Christians to be able to be Christians and not have to be closet Christians," he said. "If you have something good, you are going to share it with somebody."



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