

Mainline Christian Denomination Issues Surprise Repentance Statement

The Presbyterian Church in America has issued a statement of repentance after one of its websites published guidance advising illegal immigrants on how to avoid U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention.

The since-deleted page, published in January by the PCA's Mission to North America, provided recommendations such as not carrying documents that show one's country of origin and not disclosing information about criminal history. The guidance went viral on X last week, prompting swift backlash.

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Following the removal of the resource, MNA Director Irwyn Ince released a statement of repentance, acknowledging the mistake:

Mission to North America serves the PCA for the advancement of Christ's kingdom through our churches in the U.S. and Canada. We do this through a two-pronged focus on church planting and church vitality. Our church planting efforts facilitate starting and supporting new PCA churches. Our church vitality efforts provide ministry resources that enable our churches to grow in their outward facing missional engagement in their communities, loving neighbors as our Lord commands (Matt. 22:39). One such long-standing MNA ministry is our Refugee and Immigrant Ministry.

Recently, we posted links on our webpage to external organizations offering a wide range of recommendations and frequently asked questions on immigration. MNA's leadership erroneously allowed the posting of content that advised

undocumented persons on ways to avoid being detained by authorities.

We also apologize for causing confusion and consternation in our church. We have removed all the previously posted information from our website.

MNA's Refugee & Immigrant Ministry, along with other MNA ministries, seeks to serve our churches with resources that enable them to faithfully follow our Lord's call to love the stranger. However, MNA does not engage in providing legal advice, political campaigning or partisan positions. The information we post going forward will provide ecclesiastical resources in line with our Confession for guidance on the matter.

The MNA Permanent Committee is holding its Spring Meeting during the first week of March and this issue is docketed for further focused discussion as part of the Committee's regular oversight of MNA's ministries. The Committee does this work on behalf of the General Assembly of the PCA, which meets annually in June.

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"We affirm that it is our Christian duty to obey the lawful commands of the civil magistrate and be subject to their authority," Ince said, citing biblical passages and the Westminster Confession of Faith. "To counsel otherwise is a sin. We confess that we fell short of our Biblical and Confessional standard. We repent and apologize."

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As reported by The Christian Post, Zachary Groff, senior pastor at Antioch Presbyterian Church in Greer, South

Carolina, and a member of the committee overseeing MNA, said many in the denomination were “very, very alarmed” by the guidance.

“The rank-and-file of the PCA is not at all pleased or supportive of what was published,” Groff said, calling it a “grave error in judgment.”

He added that while the guidance was misguided, he believes it stemmed from “a well-intentioned desire to love our neighbor that was not adequately defined.”

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