

Christian Church in Indiana Regional Board addresses refugee concern

The Christian Church in Indiana has been proud to support our local congregations who have resettled refugees from around the world in years past. As this vital ministry is being threatened by government action, we, the Regional Board, feel the need to speak out, to offer our voices against new policies that go against our country's tradition of providing protection to people seeking safety.

Disciples throughout the United States have served over 40,000 refugees since World War II. Although we pray for the day when all violence comes to an end, we hope to continue doing this important part of our ministry, of living out God's call to welcome the stranger who is in need, a call deeply rooted in our scripture and our history.

By halting refugee resettlement for 120 days, refugee processing has ground to a halt. Each step of the refugee security check process is time sensitive, so a pause in processing has meant that refugees are pulled off of planes, families who are anticipating their loved ones are devastated, and communities that have planned for refugees to arrive are left in limbo. Such an interruption in processing will force refugees who were set to arrive in the United States today to wait months--and even years--to go through fingerprinting, interviews, health screenings, and multiple security screenings yet again, all while their lives are in danger.

By reducing refugee admissions from 110,000 to 50,000, President Trump, with the support of some members of Congress, is going back on America's promise to refugees and abdicating America's leadership role on human rights and refugee protection. By stopping the resettlement of Syrian refugees and narrowly preferencing religious minorities, this announcement is tantamount to the religious test that President Trump threatened during his campaign. This is a clear case of discrimination against the Muslim community and must be decried as such.

Many of our congregations have experienced the joy of growing through helping refugees. The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that by showing hospitality, "some have entertained angels without knowing it." We hope that our leaders will reconsider their decisions, so that we may continue to welcome new angels, new neighbors, and new citizens of the United States.

