
Media inquiry -Former Immanuel employee Patrick Miller

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To: Josh Shepherd

STATEMENT FROM DR. STEVEN SMITH ON BEHALF OF IBC:

At Immanuel Baptist Church, nothing is more important than keeping our members and their children safe. A former staff member, who left our church nearly 8 years ago, deceived and betrayed us with horrific criminal behavior. He is fully responsible for what he did.

On May 19, 2014, this man was hired to assist with the children's ministry. The church ran a criminal background check on him, which was part of the safeguards in place at the time. The check showed no criminal convictions.

Sometime over the next two years, he committed child sex abuse. No one in any church should have to suffer such abuse. It's a sin and a crime.

His last day working for the church was January 6, 2016. When he left, no church leader knew about his abuse.

About two months later, on March 10, 2016, parents of a child who was abused by this man approached church leaders and informed them of these allegations. Within minutes, church leaders reported these allegations to the authorities.

During the law enforcement investigation, church leaders did not publicly discuss the matter. There's a very real concern that doing so could have undermined or negatively affected the ability of prosecutors to make their case and obtain a conviction.

Later, another family told us about allegations of abuse by this man. These allegations arose from the same time period – before anyone in our church knew about the abuse. Of course, we immediately reported those allegations. In all cases, public discussions of criminal matters can undermine the ability of the prosecution to bring an offender to justice.

We can always do better and we're working with national experts to create even more safeguards to protect the people in our church.

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