

Evangelicals tap new lobbyist for Washington: National Association of Evangelicals picks Galen Carey

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America's largest evangelical umbrella group has tapped a veteran expert on refugee resettlement and international relief efforts as its new top lobbyist in Washington, D.C.

Galen Carey, 53, will serve as director of government affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals, succeeding Richard Cizik, who resigned last December under pressure. Cizik, a longtime lobbyist for the NAE, angered some evangelicals with his outspokenness on the environment and, finally, by seeming to signal support for same-sex civil unions in a National Public Radio interview.

Carey has worked for more than 25 years with World Relief, the NAE's humanitarian relief agency. He assumes the NAE post on August 1.

NAE president Leith Anderson, a Minnesota megachurch pastor, said Carey has "experience in areas that are of special importance" to the organization, which represents more than 40 evangelical denominations and ministries.

During Carey's time with Baltimore-based World Relief, he lived in six countries, addressing floods in Mozambique, working to prevent HIV/AIDS in Burundi and overseeing relief efforts after a tsunami hit Indonesia in 2004.

While Carey's strengths lie in refugee resettlement and international relief efforts, Anderson said he also has personal experience related to some of the NAE's key issues: he has resided among poor people in Chicago for 20 years, and he has lived out his antiabortion stance by raising a son with Down syndrome.

Still, Carey "will have to learn in some areas where he has less experience," Anderson added.

The NAE's Washington agenda, outlined in the document "For the Health of the Nation," prioritizes religious freedom, peacemaking and human rights, as well as caring for the poor, protecting the environment and opposing same-sex marriage.

Anderson hopes Carey's fluency in Spanish and his past work with the United Nations on refugee resettlement will help the NAE as it continues developing its policy statement on immigration, which could be finalized in the fall.

Carey said working on immigration reform dovetails with the NAE's goal of caring for the vulnerable. He thinks that future policy will need to address both "respect for the law" and relief for families that have been separated. "For legislation to pass, it has to address both those issues," he said. *-Religion News Service*