

Evangelical group endorses 'fair' immigration reform: The National Association of Evangelicals

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The National Association of Evangelicals has endorsed comprehensive immigration reform, saying new policies should reflect “biblical grace to the stranger.”

“We seek fair and humane treatment for those who are immigrants,” NAE president Leith Anderson told reporters October 8 on Capitol Hill, shortly before testifying with other religious leaders at a Senate subcommittee hearing on faith-based perspectives on immigration reform.

The evangelical recommendations resembled on many points the written testimony submitted to the subcommittee by Church World Service, an agency supported by donations, foundations and members of the National Council of Churches. Faith communities “are rallying behind immigration reform,” said Erol Kekic, CWS program director for immigration and refugees.

The NAE board adopted its resolution overwhelmingly by voice vote, Anderson said. Growing numbers of immigrants fill the pews of churches affiliated with his organization, which includes 40 denominations and many other evangelical groups.

“Many of the immigrants in America are us,” he said. “That is, the growing edge of evangelical churches and denominations in the United States is the immigrant community.”

The NAE calls for the government to safeguard national borders “with respect for human dignity,” recognize the importance of family reunification and establish an “equitable process toward earned legal status for currently undocumented immigrants.”

The directors also said there should be a clear system for “legally admitting an adequate number of immigrants to meet both workforce and family reunification

needs.”

Galen Carey, NAE director of government affairs, said: “Our churches and communities have been blessed by immigrants, many of whom bring strong faith, entrepreneurial energy and traditional family values that strengthen our future.”