

Did Ben Carson Score a Coup in Naming This Campaign Adviser?

It might be one of Dr. Ben Carson's brainiest moves to date. The retired pediatric neurosurgeon's campaign announced the appointment of Johnnie Moore, a prominent millennial evangelical Christian leader, as their "Special Faith Adviser," according to a news release.

"I'm very pleased to welcome Johnnie," Carson said in the statement. "I have been humbled by the overwhelming support the American people have shown me, and I am grateful to God for opening door after door for me during this election season. To me, reaching out to communities of faith is a top priority. I am excited to have Johnnie help lead this effort."

Moore, the campaign noted, is "an author, speaker and commentator, and is best known for extensive humanitarian work around the world, especially on behalf of persecuted Christians." Among other duties, Moore is a senior fellow at the Liberty University Center for Apologetics and Cultural Engagement. He was previously with the school as a senior vice president and its public relations chief. America's largest Christian university, with over 500,000 students enrolled—the vast majority online—Liberty was founded by the late Dr. Jerry Falwell and has long been a hub for conservative political activity. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, announced his 2016 GOP Presidential bid there.

Moore currently serves on the boards of the World Evangelical Alliance; the National Association of Evangelicals; World Help, a "faith-based humanitarian organization"; and the Dream Center in Los Angeles. He also wrote the book *Defying ISIS: Preserving Christianity in the Place of Its Birth and in Your*

Own Backyard. Moore's career, which included collaboration with television series producers Mark Burnett and Roma Downey, has often focused on building bridges between evangelicals and other like-minded believers.

"I have long admired Dr. Carson," Moore said in the campaign announcement. "I first met Dr. Carson when I invited him to speak at Liberty University in 2012. I'll never forget that morning. I watched as over 10,000 students stood cheering for a man whose inspirational story truly embodied the American dream. That's the moment I first thought, 'I wonder if he'll ever run for president.' I am so glad he is running, and it's a privilege to help more people in our country discover a man whose brilliance is only matched by his goodness. He is a great man who can provide the leadership needed by this great country."

Capturing a prominent, young evangelical leader may be something of a coup for Carson. Though widely respected for the Christian faith he's discussed in his autobiography, "Gifted Hands," Carson's longtime affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose most distinctive doctrine is its observance of the Sabbath on Saturday, was the subject of questioning by current GOP front-runner Donald J. Trump, a self-proclaimed Presbyterian.

"I'm Presbyterian, boy, that's down the middle of the road, folks, in all fairness. I mean, Seventh-day Adventist, I don't know about. I just don't know about," Trump told voters in Jacksonville, Florida, on Oct. 24. Evangelicals in Iowa told *USA Today* the Trump attack would "fail miserably."

Still, with perhaps lingering concerns about Adventism's relationship to the rest of Christianity, the Moore appointment makes a great deal of sense for the Carson campaign. He's young, articulate, respected and influential—just the kind of attributes any campaign would be happy to have in their corner.