



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 28, 2013

Dr. Ben Carson May Consider 2016 Run for President

Still enjoying the afterglow [from his speech](#) at a prayer breakfast with President Obama wherein he chastised the political ideals that the president holds dear and, [according to the New York Times](#), “lofted him into the conservative firmament as its newest star,” Dr. Benjamin Carson (shown center) sat down with *Times* writer Trip Gabriel last week to expand on his beliefs and his political future. When asked directly about that future, Carson said, “I would like to have a voice.” He added: “Certainly if a year and a half went by and there was no one on the scene and people are still clamoring, I would have to take that into consideration. I would never turn my back on my fellow citizens.”



This was an echo from a more recent speech given just 10 days ago at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) when he announced his intention to retire: “I’d much rather quit when I’m at the top of my game. And there are so many more things that can be done.” He told Gabriel that he noticed that a lot of neurosurgeons died young due to stress and overwork, and that he had a wife and family with whom he wanted to spend more time. He also wanted to do some more public speaking to promote his educational foundation, the Carson Scholars Fund.

His political platform is beginning to take shape. He has a compelling personal story, coming from a poor neighborhood in Detroit where he had a dismal academic record and a string of difficulties with the school authorities. His mother, divorced when Carson was just eight, worked three jobs just to keep the family together. In learning about his poor performance in school, she turned off the television and turned Carson and his brother on to books, requiring that they borrow two books from the local library every week, read them, and prepare a book review of them for her. Carson said this was a turning point, about which he wrote in his autobiography, [Gifted Hands](#). He began to like to read and discovered a world of opportunity outside Detroit.

Carson [said](#) of his mother:

[She] never made excuses, and she never accepted excuses from us. If we ever came up with an excuse, she always said, “Do you have a brain?” And if the answer was “yes” then she said, “You could have thought your way out of it.” ... It was the most important thing she did for my brother and me.

Because if you don’t accept excuses, pretty soon people stop giving them, and [you] start looking for solutions. And that is a critical issue when it comes to success.

By age 33 Carson was the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University, and at age 36 performed the first successful operation to separate twins who were joined at the back of the head. For his pioneering work, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2008, the highest civilian award



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in the United States.

But it was the story of his transformation from a “flaming liberal” in college (Yale) to a person with a more realistic view of the world that is capturing the attention of conservatives hungry for a new face and a new voice. He told Gabriel, “One thing I always believed strongly in was personal responsibility and hard work. I found the Democrat Party leaving me behind on that particular issue.”

In his prayer breakfast speech, he began to lay in the groundwork for a possible run for the White House in 2016. He stated that his first principles included an abiding faith in God, Who is increasingly being ignored and marginalized in a country founded by believers:

We are moving further and further away from God.... God is becoming politically incorrect in our nation. But the First Amendment also says there can be no government suppression of religious expression.... That was not part of the deal when this country was envisioned. It was to be a place where there could be freedom of expression, freedom of thoughts.

He attacked the contagion of political correctness that is now stifling conversation in the country:

PC is dangerous. In this country one of the founding principles was freedom of thought and expression. PC puts a muzzle on people. We have imposed upon people restrictions on what they can say, on what they can think. And the media is the largest proponent of this, crucifying people who say [politically incorrect] things.

He also took aim at the method of taxing income:

What about our taxation system? It’s so complex there is no one who can possibly comply with every jot and tittle of our tax system. What we need to do is come up with something that is simple: you make \$10 billion, you put in a billion. You make \$10, you put in \$1....

But now some people say, “That’s not fair because it doesn’t hurt the guy who made \$10 billion as much as the guy who made \$10.” Where does it say you have to hurt the guy? He’s just put a billion into the pot! We don’t need to hurt him.

He then turned his attention to public education:

The founders said our system of government was designed for a well-informed and educated populace. And when they become less informed and less educated, they become vulnerable. That is why education is so vitally important.

Carson is also [learning how to deal with naysayers](#) who consider him an [Uncle Tom](#). He ran into one, [Touré Neblett](#), who called him a “token” for the GOP who is merely helping them “assuage their guilt” because in their heart of hearts, conservatives are really racists. Rather than responding directly to the charge, Carson calmly replied, “If you don’t have anything useful to say, if you attack people, if you feel your house of cards has been discovered and is starting to come unraveled, you become very desperate.”

He added:

Intelligent people tend to talk about the facts. They don’t sit around and call each other names. That’s what you find on a third grade playground ... to sit around and act like third graders is not productive.

Calling him an “Uncle Tom” [doesn’t work very well](#):



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I've heard some people refer to me as an "Uncle Tom." Obviously, they don't know what an Uncle Tom is because they need to read Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And they'll see he was a very subservient, kind of go-along get-along type of person. Obviously that is not what I'm doing.

Constitutionalists have noted that his conservative credentials need some polishing. He thinks the American healthcare system can be fixed with a different mix of government intervention. He fails to mention the Constitution's limitations consistently. His ideology springs more from his street experience rather than from a study of the Founding Fathers or the books they read. But for all of that, constitutionalists have also observed that Carson manifests an honesty and a forthrightness and even an attractive naïveté — sort of a [Mr. Smith Goes to Washington](#) style — that could serve him well in the years ahead.

Hopeful conservatives, and Dr. Carson himself, should know in about 18 months.

Photo of Dr. Benjamin Carson: AP Images

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