

## One on One with the Notable Pediatric Neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson M.D.

Written by Kam Williams

Wednesday, 04 June 2014 21:13

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Dr. Benjamin Solomon Carson was born in Detroit on September 18, 1951, where he and his big brother, Curtis Carson, were raised by a single-mom. Dr. Carson, who realized his childhood dream of becoming a physician, recently retired as the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital after a groundbreaking career of over 35 years.

Now a *Washington Times* columnist and *Fox News* contributor, he is also the author of numerous *New York Times* best-sellers, including *Gifted Hands*, an autobiography which was made into a feature-length film starring Cuba Gooding, Jr. More recently, he co-wrote *America the Beautiful* and now *One Nation* with his wife Candy Carson.

A former member of the President's *Council on Bioethics*, [Dr](#) . Carson is a recipient of the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*

,  
**the nation's highest civilian honor**

. He and his wife founded the

[Carson Scholars Fund](#)

, an organization dedicated to recognizing the academic achievements of deserving young people.

On February 7, 2013, he delivered a seismic keynote address at the *National Prayer Breakfast* during which he criticized

*Obamacare*

and other core principles of the Obama administration while the President was sitting ten feet away from the podium. The speech catapulted Dr. Carson into the political limelight for the first time, and he is presently the #2 contender for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination at 29%, trailing Senator Ted Cruz by just 1 point. [See:

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/05/31/ted-cruz-edges-out-ben-carson-in-2016-straw-poll.html>

].

Here, he talks about all of the above and the possibility of throwing his surgical scrub cap into the presidential ring.

**Kam Williams:** Hi Dr. Carson. I'm honored to have another opportunity to speak with you.

**Dr. Ben Carson:** Oh, it's absolutely my pleasure, Kam [Williams].

**KW:** Your 2013 speech at the National Prayer Breakfast was seismic. Did you anticipate that your remarks would catapult you so prominently into the political arena?

**Dr. BC:** No, I didn't. After the initial splash, I thought everything would go back to normal, and that I'd be able to continue with my plans for retirement. [Chuckles] I had no idea that what I said would resonate with millions of Americans. And what really shocked me was the amount of communication I received, particularly from elderly Americans who said they'd given up on the country and had just been waiting to die, but now felt that maybe there was some hope.

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**KW: You certainly proved you can hold your own against politicians, when you got the better of former Ohio Governor Ted Strickland on CNN recently.□□**

**Dr.□ BC:** I wasn't necessarily trying to get the better of anybody, but I like to deal with facts. [Laughs] When people start making statements that are non-factual, I feel an obligation to correct them.

**KW: You really made him look like a fool after he criticized your book when you forced him to admit that he hadn't even read a page of it.**

**Dr.□ BC:** [Laughs out loud] I believe he was using a talking point. And he didn't think that I would catch him.



**KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier [of [www.megadiversities.com](http://www.megadiversities.com) ], who interviewed you in [2009](#) and who plans to translate this interview into both French and Spanish, asks: Why did you decide to retire from neurosurgery?□□**

**Dr. BC:** I had been told that neurosurgeons die early. I didn't believe it, so I calculated the average age of the last ten I knew who'd died, and it was 61. So, I decided to retire at 61 if I wasn't dead. And I wasn't, so I did.

**KW: Patricia [Turnier] has a follow-up to that question: Why did you decide to get into politics?**

**Dr. BC:** I didn't make a conscious choice to get into the political arena. That sort of happened after the Prayer Breakfast when people started to focus on me and began to ask questions. And as I listened to more Americans, it encouraged me to become active in that arena. I wrote *America the Beautiful* and now this book to awaken the people as to what's going on. The ground is shifting under our very feet, and many people are not recognizing what's going on. And they aren't talking about it, because of political correctness. They're also being distracted by things that are unimportant, and being frightened and intimidated by their own government which is using federal agencies to intimidate.

**KW: Patricia [Turnier] also points out that you have been involved in education for many years through the [Carson Scholars Fund](#) . She'd like to know how you'd go about reducing the computer literacy gap, if you become President, to create well-prepared students, technologically.**

**Dr. BC:** What I would do is look at what has worked. We have a lot of laboratories around the country. There's a pretty dramatic difference between the college matriculation rate of inner-city kids who attended charter schools versus regular public schools. We need to be asking ourselves: What is the difference? And whatever that is, that's what we need to duplicate. And we need to figure out what leads to dismal results, and those are things we need to eliminate. Basing decisions on evidence, that's what we do in science. Basing decision on ideology, that's what politicians do, which is why I will never be a politician.

**KW: Lastly, Patricia [Turnier] asks: What overall message do you want the readers to take away from your new book?**

**Dr. BC:** I want them to understand that that's what we are: one nation. We, the people, are not

each other's enemies. The real enemies are those who drive a wedge into every little crack they can find to create wars. A war on women... racial wars... income wars... age wars.... You name it, there's a war on it. Somebody's your enemy. Somebody's causing your misery. Not you, of course. And they're creating all the victims and the resentment. And of course, it all comes directly out of the pages of Rules for Radicals by Saul Alinsky who particularly wants to make sure that you contain the class warfare. He says that has to be maintained at all costs. Driving those wedges into position will destroy a country. A wise man once said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Our nation was once so strong that there was no one who could even begin to challenge us. The only one who could bring us down was ourselves. And there are forces at work attempting to do just that.

**KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles asks: How can we be 'One Nation' when legislators refuse to cross the aisle any longer to pass legislation in a fine historic tradition that has the people's interest at heart, but instead simply vote as a bloc to maintain party loyalty?**

**Dr. BC:** Well, we have to break that rule ourselves. Those people are there because we, the people, have been voting as a bloc. We go into that booth looking for a "D" or an "R" or for a name that looks familiar. That's all we know, and that's why we get what we have. We don't get people who actually represent us; we get people who have familiar names, or a party affiliation. I favor a system where there are no party affiliations, so you actually have to know who it is you're voting for.

**KW: Harriet [Pakula-Teweles] also asks: With the political system hopelessly gridlocked, do you wonder whether you might be able to do more to benefit mankind in the operating room than in the White House?**

**Dr. BC:** I am 62 years-old. I've done all the operating that I'm going to do. Do I want to be in the White House? Absolutely not! It's certainly was not among my retirement plans. However, I have found my life moving in a very different direction than I had planned, and I am hearing an increasing number of requests for me to run. I would prefer that someone else come along, who really wants to be president, who understands the Constitution and business principles, and how to get our economy moving. And who understands how important it is to provide a pathway for people to move up rather than remain dependent. And who understands how to employ the EPA to facilitate the development of our natural resources in a safe way rather than blocking their use. Who understands how placing more and more regulations on business, industry and academia are strangling rather than enabling our nation. And who understands a host of other things about leadership. If that person were to come along and could generate genuine excitement, then I wouldn't see any need to do it myself.



**KW:** A government bureaucracy can really cripple a thriving business.

**Dr. BC:** The government is virtually enslaving the country, and it's supposed to be the other way around.

**KW:** What I find scary is that the government is using the NSA to monitor all conversations and can then direct the IRS to target its political enemies.

**Dr. BC:** That's very frightening. That should terrify all of us. It shouldn't be a partisan issue. Anyone interested in the preservation of freedom should be horrified by the fact that we have high IRS officials pleading the Fifth. I don't think they'd be pleading the Fifth if there was nothing there. I believe we've moved in the wrong direction when we tolerate corruption. That was one of the keys to the demise of the Roman Empire.

**KW: Troy Johnson says, besides the Bible, what book would you recommend Black men read?**

**Dr. BC:** One that I think would be a great book to read is Rules for Radicals, so that you'll recognize how you're being manipulated, and for what purpose you're being manipulated. You can always work more effectively, when you understand who is pulling the strings. I want you to notice that the dedication page lauds the original radical who gained his own kingdom, Lucifer.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0679721134/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

**KW: I've never read the book, but I'm going to now. Attorney David Barradale says: My wife and I are interested in your views on education and what role, if any, the federal government should play in shaping public education. My state, New Hampshire is currently embroiled in the "common core" debate, as are some other parts of the country, like Indiana.**

**Dr. BC:** It does not to be centrally mediated. Every state is interested in producing well-educated, young people. I think it's much more effectively achieved on the local level. The fact that the college matriculation rate is so much higher for those students who went to charter as opposed to regular public schools should be telling us something about school choice, and the need to initiate that because we as a society benefit when the children are well educated. When we engage in politics and the appeasing of unions, then we get a product that is quite inferior, of course. Special interest groups are always behind systems that don't work.

**KW: Kate Newell says: Dr. Carson, what is your solution to the college student loan crisis?**

**Dr. BC:** Don't borrow so much money. [Laughs] That's a very, very broad question. Many people get into financial strife because they don't understand the importance of work. I didn't have to take out as many loans as some of my classmates, because my wife worked full-time. So, we were able to pay our debts as we went along. There's nothing wrong with working for a few years before going to school. And frequently, that added maturity, turns them into much better and more efficient students. Similarly, look at the housing crisis. How did we get into a big problem there? Somehow, people forgot that you don't buy a house that costs more than 2½

times your annual salary. But home buyers started believing wild claims about how the value of their property would escalate and that you would make money by taking out a great loan. People have to use their brains. That's why God gave you a brain, so you could weigh the pros and cons of different options, and so you could understand what you can and cannot afford, and what you need to save for, and how you need to plan your future.

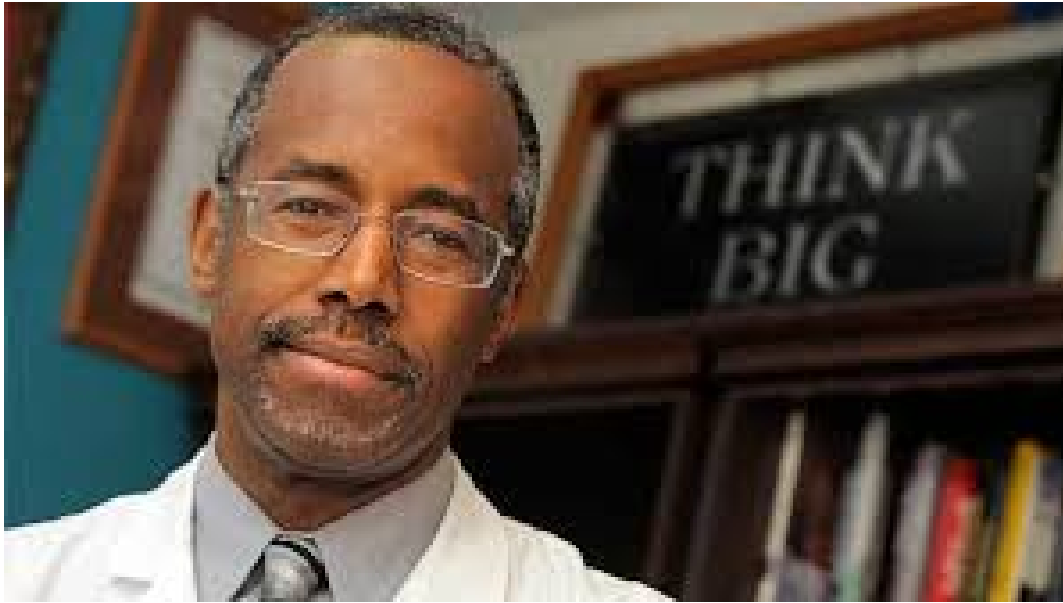
**KW: Wesley Derbyshire asks: As a man of logic who seeks empirical evidence, how do you balance a belief in God against the logic that there is no valid proof of God's existence?**

**Dr. BC:** I would answer that by asking Wesley [Derbyshire]: How do you explain how something came from nothing? And even if I give you that something came from nothing, that we have a perfectly organized universe and solar system from an explosion. In fact, it's so well organized that we can predict when a comet is coming 70 years hence. How do you square that with entropy, the Second Law of Thermodynamics which states that systems move towards states of disorganization? And how do you explain the fact that we don't observe the transitional stages of animals now? Do they just jump from one species to another? And where are all the fossils that Darwin predicted we'd find in 50 to 100 years when he said we'd be able to lay them all out from a single cell to man and see every transitional stage. Where are those fossils? They're not there! Why not? Are we still not sophisticated enough to find them? Or do they just not exist? And there are multiple other questions I could ask. What it would demonstrate is that, well, we don't know, and that's where they choose to put their faith. I choose to put my faith in God. They choose to put their faith in man.

**KW: Wesley [Derbyshire] also asks: How would you maintain the separation of church and state, if elected President?**

**Dr. BC:** I totally believe in the First Amendment, and that there is no reason ever for the church to control the government, or for the government to control the church. It works in both directions. Freedom of Religion was very important to our Founders, because many of them came from places where there was a lot of injustice done by the church to the state, or vice-versa. As long as you understand that concept, freedom of religion, not freedom from religion, people are certainly welcome to live their lives in a manner consistent with their faith, but never are they to impose their beliefs on anyone else.





**KW:** Film director Rel Dowdell asks: What did you think of the film *Something the Lord Made* about Dr. Vivien Thomas? Have you seen it?

**Dr. BC:** I did see it. And I also knew Vivien Thomas personally. He was still active when I first arrived at Johns Hopkins in 1977. I thought the film was very well done. He was a very, very humble, decent man. And I'm very happy that he finally got a degree of recognition. I believe that was very important. One of the reasons that I intentionally stayed in the background, hiding the identity of the lead surgeon, with the first separation of conjoined twins, until it was an international story, was because I wanted to make sure that someone else didn't take the credit, as had happened so many times before when an African-American made a very significant achievement. Of course many people were shocked, but I thought it was incredibly important for our youngsters to see someone who looked like them achieve a feat of this nature.

**KW:** Filmmaker Kevin Williams says: Thank you for all your wonderful work and for pushing the boundaries of pediatric care. I made a movie about the absence of Blacks in the Republican Party. What we discovered is that the main reason for the GOP's failure

**to make inroads in the Black community is an unwillingness to commit money and resources or even to just press the flesh. Do you see this as a problem for the Party? And what do you think can be done about it? □ □**

**Dr. □ BC:** I do think it is a problem. I've talked to [Republican Party Chairman] Reince Priebus about it. He is making some very significant attempts to change things and he's hired Orlando Watson, an African-American, to create that liaison that's never been there before. I've been talking to conservatives about the necessity of promoting programs that enable people to move up. And I think many people in the African-American community will begin to understand that this is the true path to economic freedom, not more handouts.

**KW: Leon Marquis says: I believe that no one making under \$100,000 per year should vote Republican. It's just not in their best interest. Why would you say I'm wrong?**

**Dr. □ BC:** Because making blanket statements is generally wrong. You should vote your values and for what you believe in. If you believe in big government and a party promoting handouts that have kept people in a dependent position for 50 years that is getting worse, where crime, poverty and out of wedlock births are increasing, then by all means vote for them. But if you think that perhaps there's a different way, and that maybe there's some new leadership in another party that actually wants to extend a hand and help people develop the talent that God has given them to move out of poverty and into the American Dream, then you ought to vote that way. If you believe in a party that wants to redefine God's word, redefine marriage, have everybody smoking pot, and doing a host of other things that are not Biblically based, then that's the party you should vote for. If you believe in the party that believes in the word of God, and in the principles that made us a great nation, then you should vote that way.

**KW: Leon also references the famous Winston Churchill quote "Show me a young Conservative and I'll show you someone with no heart; show me an old Liberal and I'll show you someone with no brains," □ before asking: Were you always a Conservative or have your views changed with age?**

**Dr. □ BC:** I was once a flaming liberal. [Laughs] I was about as out there as you could possibly be. But as time went on and I observed the difference between the people who accepted personal responsibility versus those who felt like they were victims, I began to change. I began to listen to logic, particularly when Ronald Reagan became president. He made a lot more sense than Jimmy Carter and I became a Republican. But then, over time, I saw hypocrisy in

both parties which is why I have been an independent for the past 15 years.



**KW: Dinesh Sharma asks: Would you prefer to repeal or amend the Affordable Care Act?**

**Dr. BC:** I would much prefer to replace the Affordable Care Act with a program that put healthcare in the hands of the people, and not the government.

All you have to do is look at what we've recently uncovered in the VA system, a government-run program.

There are many wonderful people working in the VA system, I've worked at the VA. The problem is that there are so many layers of bureaucrats between the patients and the caregivers, that it becomes incredibly inefficient. If you don't recognize that the same thing is going to happen with government insurance, then you're probably not a very deep-thinking person.

**KW: Robin Beckham says: Dr. Carson you have been quoted as saying that Obamacare is "the worst thing that has happened in this nation since slavery." Do you really believe this statement? What about the plight of African-Americans overall, in terms of economics and high prison rates. There are so many disparities as it relates to people of color and their plight in this country. Why is Obamacare your main concern?**

**Dr. BC:** I don't equate Obamacare with slavery. Slavery was incredibly horrible, and nothing else comes close to it. But with Obamacare, we have a turning over to the government your most valuable resource, which is what Marxists said had to happen to change America from a free and open society to what they call a "utopian society" where the government controls everything, but no one suffers, at least according to them. What you do see in every society undergoing a transition of that type is the development of a small, elite class which controls everything and lives in total luxury, a rapidly-disappearing middle class, and a just as rapidly-expanding dependent class. We're witnessing the beginning of that phenomenon, and it's exactly what the neo-Marxists have prescribed for America. The reason I know about that is because I've spent a great deal of time reading and understanding what's going on. This type of transition depends on the fact that people will not be well-informed and thus easy to manipulate. What I've proposed is a system of healthcare which will cover all Americans in which no one will be a second-class citizen. Everyone will have the resources to see whomever they want to see. But more importantly, it will bring the entire healthcare system into the free market. That's what controls quality. That's what controls price.

**KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?**

**Dr. BC:** A better question would be, "What is your favorite dish to eat?" because I'm not much of a cook. My wife is a fantastic chef. I love her eggplant parmesan.

**KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?**

**Dr. BC:** I see a person whose life is centered on serving the Lord and doing what He would like for me to do. And I see a person who has been incredibly blessed to live in America and to be able to realize the American Dream. I see someone who has worked extremely hard, who has been very successful, and who feels an obligation to give back. And a person who is very, very happy to see thousands of young people benefit from some of the programs that we've started.

**KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?**

**Dr. BC:** I can remember being picked up as a toddler by a fat woman in church, and not being very happy about it. [Chuckles]

**KW: Let's say you're throwing your dream dinner party—who's invited... and what would you serve?**

**Dr. BC:** I would have Jesus Christ over. And I wouldn't have to worry about what to serve since, whatever it was, he could turn it in to the most delicious meal imaginable.

**KW: The Jamie Foxx question: If you only had 24 hours to live, how would you spend the time?**

**Dr. BC:** Praying, and making sure there wasn't anything else I could do to improve the life of someone else that I hadn't done yet.

**KW: The Kerry Washington question: If you were an animal, what animal would you be?**

**Dr. BC:** A human animal. I don't think there's any other that even comes close.

**KW: The Anthony Anderson question: If you could have a superpower, which one would you choose?**

**Dr. BC:** The ability to be in more than one place at a time. That way, I could get a whole lot more done.

**KW: The Judyth Piazza question: What key quality do you believe all successful people share?**

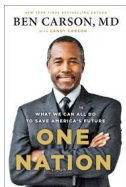
**Dr. BC:** Determination, I think, is key. And confidence.

**KW: The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?**

**Dr. BC:** I want to be remembered as someone who encouraged people to develop their God-given talents, and to recognize that the person who has the most to do with what happens to them in life is them.

**KW: Thanks for another great interview, Dr. Carson, and best of luck with the book and with your possible presidential run.**

**Dr. BC:** It has been my pleasure, Kam [Williams]. Thank you so much, and keep up the good work.



To order a copy of Dr. Carson's new book, One Nation, visit:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1595231129/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

**An excerpt of One Nation:**

*"One of the most important ways the African American community in particular can end its dependence on the elites is to lower the number of out-of wedlock births. As a result of the number of Black babies born out of wedlock in recent years, there is a gigantic economic hole from which many in the community will have to climb out of to achieve the American Dream. That ascension needs to start immediately by teaching young women the importance of self-respect and the consequences of single motherhood -- usually the end of the mother's educational endeavors, limiting her economic success and often condemning her child to poverty. (A 2013 article in US News and World Report by Steven Nelson by Steven Nelson titled "Census Bureau Links Poverty with Out-of-Wedlock Births" examines this phenomenon, which has been corroborated by many other journalistic sources). At the same time, we need to provide affordable child care to enable single mothers to further their schooling and prepare for an increasingly technologically sophisticated world. We also have to demonstrate to these mothers that men are not going to disappear or be afraid of them after they obtain advanced education. This is a total myth and if anything, advanced education increases the opportunity to meet someone with similar accomplishments and goals. We must do everything we can to convince these young ladies that they are priceless and can make contributions to all of mankind. When these valuable citizens gain appropriate self-esteem, they will avoid many careless mistakes and think more independently, weakening the elites have on them.*

*Young Black women aren't the only people needing to be freed from the elites. A quarter of the young men in the Black community are involved with the criminal justice system, which in many cases compromises their job prospects for the future. Worse than that is the fact that many end up being violently killed or taken off the streets by incarceration for long periods of time. In either case, tremendous intellectual talent is being wasted by a society that can ill afford such losses. Rather than imitating the elite and trying to make these young men feel like victims of discrimination or racism, we must look for ways to empower and help them realize their tremendous value to society.*

*Both the men and women in these communities need to be educated about basic economics and wealth creation. One of the reasons the Jewish, Korean, Vietnamese, and other communities have been able to thrive in the United States is that they have learned how to turn over the dollar in their own communities two or three times before sending it out into the larger community. By patronizing the constituents of their own neighborhoods, they allow local merchants and businesspeople to thrive, which not only provides jobs for others in the community but also gives them an opportunity to invest and grow their businesses. The more they grow, the more opportunities they are able to provide to those around them. I have a*

*friend who started his own business as a young Black man and has subsequently retired as a multimillionaire, and at least two other African American-owned businesses were started by others who got their initial breaks from him. Economic prosperity for one can mushroom into opportunities for many when greed and vice are not involved. Furthermore, this kind of thinking provides economic independence, and economic independence promotes ideological freedom, rather than creating voting blocs that can be taken for granted. If politicians have to compete for support, they will have to show results, which will be a big win for the Black community".*

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**About the author of this interview: Kam Williams** is a syndicated film and book critic who writes for 100+ publications around the U.S., Europe, Asia, Africa, Canada, and the Caribbean. He is a member of the *New York Film Critics Online*, the *NACP Image Awards Nominating Committee*, and *Rotten Tomatoes*. He is a contributor to *TheLoop21.com*, *eurweb.com* and so on. He is also a columnist for our webmag [www.megadiversities.com](http://www.megadiversities.com). One of his interviews made the cover of *Heart and Soul* magazine last fall. One of Kam Williams' interviews with Spike Lee is included in the 2002 book entitled *Spike Lee: Interviews (Conversations with filmmakers)*. This book collects the best interviews of Lee. Some of Kam Williams' articles are translated into Chinese and Spanish. In 2008, he was Voted Most Outstanding Journalist of the Decade by the *Disilgold Soul Literary Review*. In addition, he has been honored at the U.N. (for BMORENEWS GLOBAL FORUM ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT) on June 15th 2012 by the Foundation for the Support of the United Nations (FSUN). Williams is an erudite Attorney who holds a BA in Black Studies from Cornell University, an MA in English from Brown University, an M.B.A. from The Wharton



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