

5 Facts About Ben Carson's Faith Every Christian Voter Should Know

Ben Carson, the retired neurosurgeon once best-known for separating conjoined baby twins, announced Monday that he will pursue the Republican nomination for U.S. president. Carson is now known as a culture warrior whose criticisms of President Obama have made him a favorite of conservatives. Here are five faith facts about him:

1. He's a twice-baptized Seventh-day Adventist.

In his book *Gifted Hands*, Carson, 63, describes being baptized as a boy by the pastor of Detroit's Burns Seventh-day Adventist Church. At age 12, he told the pastor of another Adventist church in the Detroit suburb of Inkster, that he hadn't completely grasped his first baptism and wanted to be baptized again.

Carson has served as an Adventist local elder and Sabbath school teacher. But he attends other churches. "I spend just as much time in non-Seventh-day Adventist churches because I'm not convinced that the denomination is the most important thing," he told RNS in 1999. "I think it's the relationship with God that's most important."

2. He prayed before starting any surgery.

"Even when I don't operate, I pray because I feel that God is the ultimate source of all wisdom," said Carson, the former director of pediatric neurosurgery at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins Hospital, a role that gave him the status of an African-American hero.

"Quite frankly, as a neurosurgeon, there's a lot of emphasis

on technical ability, but I believe that that's something that can be taught, but wisdom comes from God and I think that it's something that you have to seek."

3. His prayer breakfast speech slammed political correctness, not just Obamacare.

"The PC police are out in force at all times," he said at the 2013 National Prayer Breakfast. "People are afraid to say 'Merry Christmas' at Christmastime. ... We've got to get over this sensitivity. You know it keeps people from saying what they really believe."

4. He'd govern for all in this "Judeo-Christian nation."

Asked a year ago at a National Press Club appearance about how he would include non-Jews and non-Christians, he said: "The same way that we always have. Everybody's free to do whatever they want. To try to impose one's religious beliefs on someone else is absolutely what we should not be doing. That goes in both directions. Someone who is an atheist doesn't have a right to tell someone who isn't an atheist what they can or cannot do or what they can or cannot say. We have to be fair but it has to be fair in both directions."

5. He signed books at the Southern Baptist Convention but was disinvented to its June meeting.

Carson signed copies of his book *One Nation: What We Can All Do to Save America's Future*, for a long line of admirers at last year's meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. But he agreed to drop a speaking engagement at this year's SBC pastors' conference after weeks of criticism from younger pastors who did not want to engage in overt partisanship.