

Ben Carson Discusses Presidential Aspirations, Christian Persecution

Ben Carson's latest book, *One Nation: What We Can All Do to Save America's Future*, outlines his ideas to help turn the country around morally, socially and financially. In part one of this exclusive interview we talked about religious freedom, the state of the church and more. In part two, Carson dives into politics.

Charisma News: You said in your National Prayer Breakfast speech in 2013 that you think that political correctness is "a horrible thing" and that "it's dangerous." Why is that, and how do you think this country got to this point when it comes to political correctness?

Ben Carson: The reason it's so dangerous is that it keeps people from talking. It puts a blanket of silence over everything. Many have noticed, before people get divorced, what do they do? They stop talking and they stop communicating. The next thing you know their spouse is the devil incarnate. That's exactly what's going on with our society—the demonization of people who disagree with you in any way. That's why I dislike it so much.

Then you have people out there who are trying to create hypersensitivity. There were things where people normally just listened and move right along. But now it's like, "Did you hear what that person just said? Oh my God." It's like the kid on the playground that would say, "Did you hear what he said about your mama?" It's just stirring up trouble. People have to realize that we're being manipulated and we're not each other's enemies. Even if someone disagrees with you, they are not your enemy. We have a lot more in common than people

think. We have to allow ourselves to stop being manipulated and work together to solve problems.

We have the most powerful economic engine on the face of the earth. But, we have things going on that are preventing it from being able to move forward. We can easily take the foot of government off the neck of the business industry and get things moving again. The Environmental Protection Agency, I believe, is a very important agency. But it should be used to work in tandem with business, with industry, with academia to find the safest ways that we can use our abundance of energy to solve our problems. Who's getting hurt by our policies? It's the poor. Look at the energy prices. Everybody has to pay those energy prices, but it doesn't hurt the rich. It hurts the poor. These are the kinds of things that are causing the rapidly increasing debt. If we could just go back to the regular economic model and allow the free market to work, those gaps will close again. Jobs will become abundant again, people will begin to become innovative again and we will see America prosper again.

CN: Democrats and Republicans these days seem to simply do things to spite each other. Do you ever see a time where they might put such childishness down for the good of the country?

Carson: Bear in mind that we have not had the kind of leadership that will lead to union or a common vision. The current administration is incredibly divisive. The administration before that was so engrossed and concentrated on the war that there certainly was no time to tend to the issues. The administration before that was very political. We need good leadership again. I think it would make a tremendous difference.

CN: You said in the book, "Balancing the federal budget is not a goal out of reach." What will it take for that to happen, and wouldn't many people say that's a far-fetched dream?

Carson: Not a far-fetched dream at all. Recognize just how much our government has grown the last year. Good statistics are available. In 2010, if you took the income of the middle class and above—\$69,000 a year and greater—it comes out to about \$5.1 trillion. The Federal budget that year was about \$3.5 trillion. That's about 60 percent of everything the middle class and above makes—that is absurd. And it is still growing. What I would do, and it's pretty simple actually, would be to allow the government to shrink by attrition. Thousands of government workers retire each year; don't replace them. You can shift people from one department to another and don't replace them. If you do that for about four or five years, the government will be down to the size it needs to be. Then, they'll be able to concentrate on the bigger issues at hand and they won't try to regulate everything. You would be amazed at how much and how quickly things would get done.

CN: Have you read Todd Starnes' book, *God Less America*, and if so, what did you think of it?

Carson: I have read some excerpts from it. That's a big part of our problem. We are a Judeo-Christian nation. Our values come from the Bible and Judeo-Christian tradition. When we try to divorce ourselves from those things, then we find ourselves in trouble. The media, Hollywood, politicians—make a decision as to where you want your values to come from. What seems to be the trouble is that we've moved away from the value systems that God gave us and recognize that this is a nation that was unashamed of its relationship with God. Loving and caring about your fellow man. We were unashamed of it. We put it on our money—in God we trust. It's in our pledge, it's in our creed, it's in all of our documents like the Declaration of Independence, like the inalienable rights given to us by our Creator. What happened when we did that? We went from nowhere to the pinnacle of the world in record time. We became by far the most powerful and prosperous nation in the history of the world. As we have rejected those principles, we have started

going just as rapidly in the opposite direction.

CN: It's a question you've heard many times before in the last few weeks, but will you seriously consider running for president of the United States in 2016?

Carson: It's not something that I exactly would desire to do after having a very arduous surgical career. I am really looking forward to relaxing a bit. Another thing about it is that anyone who enters the political arena looks about 20 years older after only four years. It's not something that I want to do, but I also recognize that our steps and our life are ordered by a power higher than ourselves.

I will be looking very carefully at what happens this November in the elections. If in fact the American people indicate that they are ready to move back in the direction of a nation that is forever by the people and not a nanny state, that would tell me quite a bit. We'll see. I just have to keep my eyes and ears open. I won't be a Jonah and run away. If people continue to clamor for it, I'm not sure that I could turn my back on that.

CN: Given today's atmosphere of Christian persecution in America, do you think that an unashamedly born-again Believer could ever again be elected to the highest office in this land?

Carson: Absolutely, it can happen, especially when people stop being afraid to express themselves. I believe the majority of the people in this country are Believers. It's just that they've been beaten into submission. We need to recognize that this is who we are and not allow ourselves to be changed into something else by a pop culture that tells you, "Yeah, this is cool. This is how you have to act." Anybody that believes that stuff is wacky. I think the majority of the people in this country have traditional beliefs, have common sense and think in a logical way. That's why they're so alarmed at what's

going on today. The only thing that's lacking right now is the courage to stand up for their beliefs.

I believe that if you get the right kind of people talking about it, you will see the change that is needed. I think it will happen. When it does happen, it will be absolutely crucial to recognize that this is a free country. When we begin to apply the right principles, you will see an explosion in business, you will see a lot of morality coming back and a lot of strong values coming back. People who are on the wrong track who think they're on the right track will notice that and they will begin to say, "You know what, maybe we need to rethink this." That's the way you do things. You don't force them.