

Dr. Carson's Rx

Surgeon says he offers common sense, not ideology

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— Dr. Ben Carson said someone recently asked him how, given his background, he can be a conservative.

“I’m not conservative or liberal. I’m a logical person who has common sense,” Carson said. “And that’s

what we need.”

Carson said his mother, who had just a third-grade education, instilled in him a love of reading, which led to a thirst for knowledge. He credited that, and God, with lifting him from a life of poverty to become a physician with a notable career.

He said his role model is Jesus and, “I think most peo-

ple would consider him a conservative. But he’s also very compassionate. There’s no reason those can’t go together.”

Speaking to the Economic Club of Southwestern Michigan on Tuesday at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center, Carson shared his

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Dr. Ben Carson addresses the Economic Club of Southwestern Michigan on Tuesday evening at LMC.

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CARSON

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life story, his advice to young people and his ideas about health care.

The renowned pediatric neurosurgeon, best-selling author and Fox News contributor, has been named by CNN and TIME magazine as one of the nation's 20 foremost physicians and scientists. In 1987 he performed the first and only successful separation of twins joined at the back of the head.

He said he wanted to be a doctor ever since he can remember.

"I even liked going to the doctor and to the hospital. I'd listen to the P.A. system calling for a doctor and I'd think one day it would be, 'Dr. Carson...' Of course, now we have pagers so I don't get to hear that."

Warning the audience that he is "not politically correct," Carson challenged his listeners to educate themselves, stop being afraid to speak their minds and not let others who want to control them beat them into submission.

Carson created a stir in October when he told the Value Voters Summit in Washington, D.C., that the Affordable Care Act is "the worst thing that has happened in this nation since slavery."

He says the ACA "was never about health care" and is, rather, about "control."

"It's time for us to stand up for what we believe. You can start tonight when you leave here, by saying 'Merry Christmas' to someone. There's no reason that should offend somebody. It's a greeting of salutation. We, the people of America, are not each other's enemies."

At the same time, he said, Americans need to understand that it's OK to have differing view points.

"If two people agree about everything one of them isn't necessary, and everyone is necessary."

Carson said that in his opinion, most people do not vote intelligently. He said people look for a "D" or an "R" next to someone's name, or look for a name that's familiar.

"The name Satan is familiar," he said. "I strongly advocate a system of voting where there's no party affiliation and you have to know the actual people you are voting for."

In response to a question from an audience member about his views on health care reform, Carson said he would favor a system in which every U.S. citizen is given a health savings account of \$2,000 a year, beginning at birth. The money not spent each year would carry over, and one-third should be reserved for catastrophic health care. The system should allow family members to shift their money into each other's accounts if needed, and should allow unused money to pass on to other family members when someone dies. Also, the system he envisions would allow people to donate 5 percent of their health savings account to anyone they choose.

Initially, he said, such a system would cost the government \$360 billion a year, less than it is currently spending on health care.

"As these health savings accounts build up, eventually you don't need the government, and this is a system that makes people dependant upon each other, not the government."

The system he described would allow employers to give employees \$2,000 a

year toward their accounts as well, costing the employer less than most are currently spending on health insurance for employees.

A system like this, he said, would allow strong relationships between patients and doctors, "with nobody in the middle."

Directing some of his remarks to some 200 Benton Harbor High School students who'd been invited to attend the session with their parents, Carson said his mother never felt sorry for herself, and didn't allow him and his brother to feel sorry for themselves. While their friends were out playing, Carson and his brother were required to read two library books a week and submit book reports to their mother.

"She couldn't read them, but we didn't know that," he said.

Carson said he began to love to read and, once bad-tempered with poor grades, he began to excel and started to love learning.

"The most important thing my mother did for me and my brother was not accept excuses. People who aren't successful are the biggest excuse-makers," he said.

"To the young people here, don't be an excuse-maker. Accept responsibility and you'll go a lot further."

He also urged people not to give up in the face of defeat.

Displaying a sense of humor, he said, "You've all heard of Formula 409. I guess the first 408 didn't work."

On a more serious note, he said, early kidney transplants and heart transplants had dismal results.

"But every time there was a failure, we were able to learn."

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