

# CENTENNIAL REVIEW

Principled Ideas from the Centennial Institute

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Publisher, William L. Armstrong

Editor, John Andrews

JEFF HUNT  
Named to Lead  
Centennial Institute  
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## MY VISION FOR AMERICA

By Dr. Ben Carson



I'm delighted to be here at Colorado Christian University, a bastion of morality in today's society. It takes courage to stand up for principle as you do.

That's one of the reasons I got into this race. I was afraid we were starting to lose a part of who we are as Americans—our freedom to live as we wish, to live by our faith, to speak our mind.

The vast majority of Americans are logical people with common sense, but they have discovered that if you say certain things you're going to be pulverized and ostracized. So people have been beaten down, and that's exactly what the secular progressives want.

They don't care whether you agree with them or not, as long as you sit down and shut up. It's time for people to stand up for what they believe in. That is what will save America.

### A Mother's Prayer

We must also recognize we are so fortunate to live in this country. There is no other place like America; it's a land of dreams. And don't you find it comical that despite all those who criticize us and say how horrible we are, everybody is trying to get in here and nobody's trying to get out?

My dream as a young child was to be a doctor. But I was a horrible student, and my mother was so disappointed in me. We lived in dire poverty. She worked two or three jobs

at a time as a domestic, cleaning other people's houses and saving every penny.

She recognized that the way out was through education, and she was disturbed that my brother and I were doing poorly in school. She prayed for God to give her the wisdom to get her young sons to understand the importance of intellectual development, so we could control our own lives.

He did give her wisdom, although my brother and I didn't think it was that wise. Turning off the TV; what kind of wisdom is that? Making us read two books apiece from the Detroit Public Library and submit to her written book reports?

She couldn't read them, but we didn't know that. She would put in checkmarks and highlights to make us think she was reading them. I was outraged. Here I am stuck in the house reading books when everybody else is outside playing. My mother's friends would warn her, "Those boys will grow up and hate you." And I would say, "Mother, you know they're right."

### Accomplish Anything

But what a transformation. Because, as I started reading, particularly about people of great accomplishment, I began to recognize an essential fact: The person who has the most to do with what happens to you in life is not somebody else. It's you.

Once I understood that, my mother didn't have to make me do stuff. I now knew that in spite of all the negativity around me, I could accomplish anything I wanted to, as long as I was willing to put the effort behind it.

I call this the "can do" attitude—and it is what propelled America to the pinnacle of the world so fast. Alexis de Tocqueville noticed it when he came here in 1831 to study America. He and other Europeans were fascinated to learn

## Stand up for principle.

Dr. Ben Carson is an author, pediatric neurosurgeon, and presidential candidate. He gave this speech to a crowd of 1500 at Colorado Christian University on Oct. 29, 2015. The transcript was edited for length and clarity.

Centennial Institute sponsors research, events, and publications to enhance public understanding of the most important issues facing our state and nation. By proclaiming Truth, we aim to foster faith, family, and freedom, teach citizenship, and renew the spirit of 1776.



Ben and Candy Carson pose for a "class picture" with Centennial Institute Business Council, Board of Advisers, and other close friends of Colorado Christian University

how a fledgling nation, barely 50 years old, could already be competing with the powers of the world on almost every level.

Tocqueville was amazed to find that anybody finishing the second grade was completely literate. A mountain man could read the newspaper and tell him how the government worked. So many Americans knew how to do things. They could build roads and bridges and dams. They could invent things to solve problems. They pushed the frontier from one ocean to the other.

But that "can do" attitude is in the process of being replaced today by a "what can you do for me" attitude. It is important we change that. We must once again emphasize education and make it available; education of all kinds. We need incredible universities like yours, but we also need to remember all the professions that don't require a university.

I was talking to a welding entrepreneur the other day, and he mentioned the trouble they have finding people who can do welding, despite the high salary he starts them at. The number made my head spin. A lot of people in colleges don't come out and make that kind of money.

### **Nobody Thrown Away**

There's a whole host of things we should be looking at, rather than having people idle. Remember in this nation we only have 330 million people, whereas China and India each have over a billion. In order to compete with them, we need to develop every single one of our people.

We can't afford to throw away any of our people. We can't have a situation where 20 percent of the people who go to high school don't finish. A situation where we have 5

percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's prisoners.

For every one of those kids that we keep from going down the path of self-destruction, that's one less person to be afraid of or protect our family from. One less person to pay for in the penal or the welfare system. One more taxpaying, productive member of society who may discover a new energy source or the cure for cancer.

Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton keep asking why we have this growing income gap. They would have you believe it's because of how rich people are doing bad things to poor people. In a sense they're right—but the rich people who are doing it are *them*.

Look at all these regulations. It was never intended that the government would be in every aspect of our lives. But they are. They're in everything, and every single federal regulation costs money. Who gets to pay for that? The consumer does, as the price of everything increases.

It doesn't hurt a rich person when they go into the store and a bar of soap has gone up by 10 cents, but it hurts a poor person. It hurts a middle-class person when they come to the register and everything in their cart has gone up 15 or 20 cents. Regulations drastically reduce our buying power, yet most people have no idea what's going on.

## **'Can do' has become 'Do for me.'**

### **Astronomical**

Then look at the accumulated debt: \$18 trillion, half of which has been accumulated just in the last seven years. That puts the Federal Reserve between a rock and a hard place, because if they raise interest rates to a normal level, the government's debt service is going to be astronomical.

So the Fed has to keep the rate suppressed, down near zero. Who does that hurt the most? Poor people and middle-class people, who used to be able to increase their earnings by putting some in a savings account or bond and watching it grow. That doesn't happen any more. They don't have any place to grow their money.

How big is that \$18 trillion debt? If you tried to pay it off at a rate of \$10 million a day, 365 days a year, it would take you over 5,000 years. That is what we are putting on the backs of the next generation. How can we even look at ourselves in the mirror, knowing that we are destroying their future?



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- John Andrews, Director



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And many of them don't even know. We have to wake up the young people. All you students, talk to your friends. Tell them what's going on. Their future is being compromised by greedy people in my generation who are selfish and only care about themselves. They want it all now, the heck with anybody else.

These are not good people. They are not our friends. You and I have to start putting some pressure on them, letting them know that we will not stand for them to destroy our future because of their greed today. We cannot allow that to continue.

But that's not the worst of it, because now we come to the fiscal gap. The fiscal gap is all the unfunded liabilities that we owe—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, all of those government agencies and departments, our future obligations out to the infinite horizon—versus what we expect to collect from taxes and other revenues.

Those numbers should be pretty close together if we were fiscally responsible. But they're not close at all. Right now the fiscal gap sits at over \$200 trillion in today's dollars. That number is almost incomprehensible, yet we just continue to multiply it.

Take the recent deal between the President and Congress to raise the debt ceiling even more. Some say, "It's just a number. It doesn't mean anything." Are you kidding? The only reason we can sustain the level of debt that we have is because we can print money, and we can only do that because our dollar is the reserve currency of the world.

### Nothing is Free

That comes with being the number one economy in the world, but now we're in a struggle with China for that position. It looks like they've recently passed us up. If tomorrow we were not the reserve currency and we couldn't print money—albeit irresponsibly as we are doing—our economy could face collapse. Wall Street 1929 would be a walk in the park by comparison.

So we need to take warning. The next time some politician comes along and says "free college for everyone," we need to know how to evaluate that. There is nothing free, nothing, when you have that kind of debt. We have to reverse this.

Start with our gigantic, bloated government. We do not need 4.1 million federal employees. I would just let them retire, thousands of them every year, and not replace them. You can shift people around.

There are 645 federal agencies and sub-agencies. No one can convince me there isn't fat in every single one, so I would require a certain percentage of that fat to be cut. That's going to reduce costs very significantly.

Then I would make sure we have a taxation system that



Jeff Hunt (center), Centennial Institute's marketing director since 2013 and a veteran of Romney 2012, was named by CCU President Bill Armstrong (right) to succeed John Andrews (left), who has led the think tank since its founding in 2009. Andrews called Hunt "one of the ablest and most visionary Christian conservatives of the rising generation."

is fair. We have the highest corporate tax rates in the developed world. Even in the less-developed world there are only two places that have taxes higher: Chad and the UAE. It is absurd.

Let's declare a tax holiday for six months so we can repatriate the \$2.1 trillion overseas that's not being brought back because of our high corporate tax rate. Bring it back here, without taxes, only requiring that 10 percent be used in enterprise zones to create jobs for the unemployed and people on welfare.

## Bring home a \$2.1 trillion stimulus.

Talk about a stimulus; that would be the biggest stimulus since FDR's New Deal, and it wouldn't cost the taxpayers a penny. Get our businesses into the mindset of reaching out and investing in people, the way it used to be in America before government tried to become the great savior and take care of everybody.

### Invest in People

Remember how the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson was going to eliminate poverty? Nineteen trillion dollars later, we have ten times more people on food stamps, more poverty and welfare, more crime and incarceration, more out-of-wedlock births. Everything that was supposed to be better is worse.

I don't want to demonize the government—much as they deserve it—but the fact is, they don't do a good job. The ones who do a good job are *us*. For example, all the non-government programs, including one here in Denver, Save Our Youth, where individuals become mentors for students who are heading in the wrong direction.

That mentor brings a kid into his or her world, teaches them things they would never have known, and almost all of those kids then graduate from high school. Many go on to college and do very useful things in life, when the trajectory before was just the opposite.

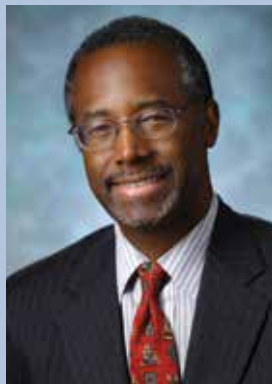
That happens when people invest in people, and it's another of the reasons America got to the pinnacle so quickly. Not only because of our country's "can do" attitude, but also



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### MY VISION FOR AMERICA

By Dr. Ben Carson

Fresh off the Republican debate in Boulder and topping the national polls, the two-time Western Conservative Summit straw poll winner addressed a packed house at the CCU Event Center with national media in attendance. Carson

lauded Colorado Christian University as “incredible... a bastion of morality in today’s society.”

because we cared about each other. It’s a vital part of who we are as Americans, and we have to reclaim it.

### Citizen Statesmen

We have to have unity. Let’s stop allowing the agents of hatred and division to prevail in our society. They’ve tried to convince people we’re all each other’s enemies—the supposed war on women, racial wars, income wars, age wars, religious wars, on and on.

It’s not true. We’re not the divided states of America, we’re the United States. This nation was designed around We the People, not the government. The government is there to facilitate life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for us—led by citizen statesmen, not career politicians.

### Now it’s our turn.

I love it when people say to me, “You’ve never been elected to any public office. You can’t possibly know how to do anything.” Well, let me just tell you: the Ark was built by amateurs; the *Titanic* was built by professionals.

In closing, remember we live in a very dangerous world. We need a government that understands that, not a government that won’t even mention our enemies by

name—the global jihadists who want to destroy us. I’m a nice guy—but peace comes through strength. We must use our collective strength the way America has in the past.

We must think proactively and understand we are vulnerable. Our electric grid can be attacked so easily. Cyber-security is also vital. We have to ramp up those defensive and offensive capabilities.

### Questions to Ask

As for the secular progressives who are trying to kick God out of our country, stop listening to them. We were founded as a Judeo-Christian nation. Take your wallet out and look at the money: it all says, “In God We Trust.”

If we’re willing to stand up for what we believe as those who preceded us did, imagine what we can do in this nation. When they didn’t like what King George III was doing, they got everybody together and asked:

“What kind of country do you want to have? What do you want to pass on to your children? What are you willing to fight for? What are you willing to die for?”

Now it’s our turn to ask ourselves those questions. It’s not about being comfortable. It’s not about never being called names. It’s about saving the future for our children. ■

# Issue Monday: You’re Invited



**January 11, 7:00pm**

“Getting Economics Right”

Dr. Brian Dimitrovic  
Visiting Conservative Scholar  
University of Colorado



**February 8, 7:00pm**

“Breaking the Tyranny  
of Political Correctness”

Nick Adams  
Author & Lecturer  
Sydney, Australia



**March 14, 7:00pm**

“Immigration and Our Nation’s Survival”

John Fonte, Hudson Institute  
debating  
Linda Chavez,  
Becoming American Institute

Centennial Institute sponsors Issue Monday as an open forum where current issues are tested against timeless truths.

Programs are held at CCU Leprino Hall, free to the public but reservations are required. Reserve online starting Dec. 15.