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**Arson fund disbursement
to states nears \$500,000**

By Herb Hollinger

**Baptist Press
9/4/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Ohio became the 15th state convention to receive funds from the Southern Baptist Convention's "Arson Fund" with the distribution of an additional \$177,198 Sept. 5, bringing the total to nearly \$471,000.

The "Arson Fund" assists African American churches victimized by arsonists. Like the initial distribution July 3 of \$246,712 to 12 state conventions and \$50,000 on Aug. 2 to 14 conventions, the Sept. 5 distribution is based on a formula developed by the Inter-Agency Council's Racial Reconciliation Task Force.

The "Arson Fund" was begun from an offering taken at the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans in June. That offering came at the request of then-SBC President Jim Henry, an Orlando, Fla., pastor, and initially raised \$282,000 in pledges and cash gifts. Most of the gifts since then have been from SBC-related churches wanting to assist in the rebuilding of the burned churches, according to Jack Wilkerson, SBC Executive Committee vice president for business and finance.

More than 87 African American churches, most in the Southeast, have burned in the last 18 months, primarily as the result of arsonists. SBC officials said the formula of distribution is based on an in-hand count of arson-related African American church fires in the state as a percentage of the total number of churches impacted nationally.

"The desire of Southern Baptists to participate in rebuilding these churches is a vivid testimony to their willingness to want to help in this time of need," Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Executive Committee, which distributes the funds.

The September distribution of \$177,198 went to: Alabama, \$14,353; Arizona, \$1,949; Arkansas, \$12,226; Florida, \$6,201; Georgia, \$4,075; Louisiana, \$18,251; Mississippi, \$16,302; North Carolina, \$16,302; Oklahoma, \$1,949; Ohio, \$1,949; South Carolina, \$34,553; Tennessee, \$16,302; Texas, \$24,807; Virginia, \$4,075; and Northwest (Oregon-Washington), \$3,898.

According to Richard Land, SBC Christian Life Commission president, the funds are sent to the state conventions which then have responsibility to determine the amount of assistance each church will need. "Baptists in Alabama know more about the needs in Alabama and Baptists in Georgia know more about the needs in Georgia," Land said.

The Inter-Agency Council, composed of the chief executives of the 19 SBC entities, created the task force to seek the eradication of racism within the convention as outlined in the Racial Reconciliation Resolution adopted by messengers to the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta.

In addition to the monies, Southern Baptist construction crews are volunteering to rebuild the burned churches. At least four state Baptist conventions have sent crews to churches in need and the SBC Brotherhood Commission is attempting to contact each of the fire-damaged congregations to assess the level of need.

Donations to the SBC Arson Fund may be sent directly to state Baptist convention offices or the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203.

Donors assisting library at American Baptist College

By Judith Lynn Howard

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The American Baptist College library was in shambles. No current issues of such periodicals as Evangelical Quarterly lined the shelves. Students browsed through old books. While the world plunged into the Internet age and downloaded information from the world's libraries, the institution didn't even have a computer.

"It was a little discouraging," remembered the current librarian, Ibiba M.D. Okpara. He was on a sabbatical from the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomoso, Nigeria, when he became acting librarian in 1994 at the Nashville, Tenn., college.

Okpara described the library's conditions to Albert W. Wardin, professor emeritus of history at Belmont University in Nashville. "He found that the library was worse off than the library in Ogbomoso," Wardin said.

Wardin and others have pitched in to help the financially strapped library. Earlier this year, Friends of the American Baptist College Library was officially formed to supply a permanent flow of financial support through fund-raising efforts.

School officials -- who had wrestled with key financial challenges, thus leaving various other areas neglected -- were willing to work with Okpara and the new group.

"The library is the cornerstone of any educational institution. And our library is really essential," said college President Bernard LaFayette Jr. "We are extremely grateful for this committee that has come together to focus on our library."

The independently organized group also encourages others to donate books to the library. Currently, the group has 26 members and has raised about \$1,500 in membership dues. A gift of \$10,000 comprises an endowment. An additional \$10,000 is pledged for next year.

"The funds are entirely independent of" the American Baptist College," Wardin said. "If for any reason the college would cease to exist, the fund could continue to be used for some other educational institution."

When Okpara first described the library's struggles, the school had endured three years without new periodicals and new books, Wardin said. A \$3,000 debt for delinquent subscriptions had prohibited the college from getting new materials.

From church and personal sources Wardin and others raised funds to clear the debt. Another \$6,000 in funds was raised to finance new periodicals for the library, as well as purchase a computer, software and a laser printer.

According to LaFayette, financial challenges that restricted the college's ability to keep the library up to date included structural problems on the campus. When asbestos was discovered about five years ago in the college's aged buildings, for example, removing it cost more than \$200,000 dollars -- landing the school in debt, he said.

As Wardin and others scurried to meet the financial needs at American Baptist College, the Southern Baptist Convention was transferring ownership of the college to the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., a step approved at the 1995 SBC annual meeting.

The decision became final this year. Since 1924 the two conventions have jointly operated the college under the corporate name of American Baptist Theological Seminary.

Wardin said over the years, the National Baptists did not always keep up their end of the financial bargain. Southern Baptists also could have contributed more to the college -- considering the relative affluence of its six seminaries, he said.

Since the decision by Southern Baptists, predominately black Baptists conventions have "come together to fill the gap the Southern Baptists left," LaFayette said. "They've joined arm and arm together to support this school."

American Baptist College is the only accredited Bible college owned by African Americans. It's also the only one where various denominational streams of black Baptists are represented on the board of trustees.

Currently, about 850 students participate in the college's program, which can be preparation for seminary. About 150 students attend classes on the Nashville campus, while others are involved in extension programs around the country. Students hail from the United States, Africa and the Caribbean.

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In 1995, when the Southern Baptist Convention agreed to disengage itself from the college, a Thompson Station, Tenn., pastor had said it was due to the changing times. Racial segregation was over, and so was white patronage, said the Tom McCoy. Moreover, Southern Baptist seminaries now are open to African Americans and all who seek seminary training.

But, Wardin lamented, "When one considers the educational background of the student, and the financial situation that he faces, educationally and financially it's not very practical for many students" to attend other institutions.

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Howard is a freelance writer in St. Louis.

**Bob Wiley recommended
as Illinois executive**

By Ferrell Foster

**Baptist Press
9/4/96**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--Robert E. "Bob" Wiley, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board associational missions division, is being recommended to become the next executive director of Illinois Baptist State Association.

Wiley, 55, will be introduced to the IBSA board of directors during its meeting in Springfield Monday, Sept. 9. The board will discuss the search committee's unanimous recommendation and vote the following day.

The board began the process of seeking a new executive director in March of this year by electing a seven-member committee, plus two ex-officio members. The previous executive director, Gene Wilson, was disabled Aug. 30, 1995, by a massive brain hemorrhage. Since the March meeting, Keith Stanford has served as acting executive director.

Wiley is a "seasoned, solid leader, a man with denominational and good church experience," Roger Marshall, search committee chairman, told the Illinois Baptist in a telephone interview. "I believe his personal commitment and involvement in church starting brings a strong quality to our executive director position."

Wiley has been an HMB staff member since 1980. Born in Kentucky, he grew up in Indiana and held pastorates and church staff positions, primarily in Indiana, before becoming an associational director of missions in that state in 1976.

Because of Wiley's experience in Indiana and at the HMB, he has an "understanding of the diversity of Illinois," Marshall said, referring to the rural and urban settings.

Marshall said the committee initially received the names of about 50 people for consideration. The committee contacted them, and about 35 agreed to be considered.

"We spent a great deal of time on every resume that came back," Marshall said. "There were many qualified names."

The committee asked God to "bring the right names to the top as we walked through the process," Marshall said. And the list gradually narrowed.

He declined to say how many people were interviewed in person.

Marshall said the committee was exceptional. "There was an openness and an honesty, straightforward communication," he stated. All members made sacrifices to attend meetings, and it was "an enjoyable process."

"We did receive wonderful response from our surveys" asking for input from Illinois Baptists, Marshall said. The committee also received input from Southern Baptists outside the state.

In an Aug. 14 letter to board members, Marshall said: "At the March board of directors meeting, it seemed impossible to have a name to present for the position of executive director by September, but then again, all things are possible with God. It has been a humbling experience to watch the obviousness of his hand throughout our committee's work. It has also been a privilege and blessing to be the object of so many prayers and so much encouragement. ..."

Marshall, in the letter, said of Wiley: "I believe with all my heart that he is the man of leadership and challenge that Illinois Baptists need. His personal commitment to the Lord is obvious, and through our referencing, his integrity is above question. By the way, we received Bob's name from several sources, including Charles Chaney, vice president, extension section at the HMB."

Chaney, a former IBSA staff member, is Wiley's supervisor at HMB.

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**Blackaby, Willis underscore
the cross at convocation**

By Douglas C. Estes

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Christians must understand the cross if they are to repent of their sin, said Henry Blackaby, exhorting an Aug. 29 convocation audience at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to pursue a call to personal holiness.

SBC President Tom Elliff scheduled the convocation at Southeastern and six other seminaries to call Southern Baptists to prayer for a spiritual awakening throughout the world.

Participating in first of the convocations at the North Carolina seminary, Blackaby, author of the "Experiencing God" discipleship study, called Christians to a "fresh encounter with the cross of our Lord."

The crucifixion of Jesus is a direct result of the sins of the world, Blackaby said. "The cross would have never been had it not been for my sin.

"I found myself looking at the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and I found myself saying if I ever understood this moment I would have an incredible hatred of sin for he was there in that hour because of my sin."

Sin must be taken seriously in a believer's life, Blackaby said. "Go by the cross and stand there long enough until you understand how serious all sin is to God and your life. The greatest deterrent to sin in a Christian's life is to look, and to look again, at the Lamb of God who takes away sin."

Jesus confronted sin throughout his earthly life, and conquered it, just as every believer should conquer the sins in their lives, he said. "(Lead) a life that is victorious over sin. A life that glorifies the Father and lets the world know the difference he makes when he comes into a life.

"Let the living Christ conquer sin in your life. The cross leads to a life of intense holiness that says I don't want to let sin rest anywhere in my life."

The call to the cross contains the most renowned paradox ever, Blackaby said. "It is the place where sin dies and the life of Christ comes alive.

"Set the cross and the awfulness of sin and the power of holiness as the basic fundamental strain of your entire life. Set your heart for holiness, without which no one will see the Lord," Blackaby said. "A call to the cross is a call to holiness and a rejection of sin."

Jesus accepted the call to the cross and a life of holiness from the beginning: "The call to the cross was on the heart of the Lord Jesus from the very first moment when he called his disciples," Blackaby said.

"He never hid the cross from his followers. Their lives became a highway of holiness over which God would go to the rest of the world."

The world watched as the disciples of Christ rejected sin and followed a life of holiness, as it watches believers even today. "We must live that holy life with victory over sin, and when we do, he is lifted up and glorified in the eyes of a watching world," Blackaby said.

"I'm convinced that there is no revival in history that did not have an intensity against sin and an intensity toward the Lord Jesus, the cross and holiness."

Avery Willis, senior vice president of the Foreign Mission Board, told the convocation the cross is God's "plumb line to measure your relationship and my relationship to him. It measures the depth of our love for our Lord, our love for our fellow man, our love for the walking close to him."

Following the convocation theme of "Back To The Cross," Willis said the cross measures not only a Christian's relationship with God, but also his ministry for God.

"How much of the cross is in your prayer ministry?" Willis asked. "How much of the cross is in your ministry to other people?"

Willis, author of the discipleship program, "MasterLife," said there are 2,161 "people groups" representing 1.7 billion people who have never heard about Jesus.

"It's not God's fault and it's not Jesus' fault and it's not the Spirit's fault because he has moved in our heart," said Willis.

Thousands of people, Willis said, have no knowledge of God's gift of salvation because Christians are too busy making excuses for not sharing the gospel.

"We've got a lot of billy goat Baptists (saying) but, but, but, but," Willis said.

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The plumb line of the cross reveals the Christian's heart-felt need to draw closer to God in all areas of life, Willis said. "What God wants to do is a radical heart transformation. He wants to surgically, spiritually change our hearts in such a way that we won't be the same again."

Once hearts are surgically transformed by the touch of the master's hand, the cross becomes the power line to Christians, he asserted. "It is the preaching of the cross that is the power of God. It is the power that frees us from sin," he said.

"This is the power that's beyond all power. That same power that raised Christ is resident now in you. And so the cross is the power line of God to bring us to him."

The cross becomes a personal lifeline between God and a dying world, Willis said. "We have to throw out the lifeline to those who are drowning and those who are lost and those who are in need. He has now made us ambassadors (to the world).

"I believe God sent an incarnate word; he didn't just send a book, he didn't just send the Jesus film, he didn't just send a radio broadcast -- he sent his only Son personally to reveal him and the only way we reveal him is we personally go and live it (a crucified life) out before them (the lost)."

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**Regeneration must precede
revival, speakers declare**

By Dan Martin & Ken Camp

**Baptist Press
9/4/96**

DALLAS (BP)--Before Southern Baptists can taste revival, they first must experience regeneration, speakers said at the Cedars of Lebanon retreat on Labor Day weekend.

More than 500 people attended the eighth annual retreat at Mt. Lebanon Encampment, sponsored by Texas Baptist Men.

Avery Willis, senior vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, noted Southern Baptist churches claim 15 million members, but half of them never attend worship services.

"What we really need in the Southern Baptist Convention is regeneration," the spiritual new birth, said Willis, a former missionary and author of the MasterLife discipleship curriculum.

"One of our biggest problems is that we seek revival among people who have never been 'vived.' There are a lot of church members who need to be saved."

He lauded the revivals taking place on Southern Baptist seminary campuses, particularly the prayer convocations requested by SBC President Tom Elliff. One was scheduled at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Fort Worth the day after the Cedars of Lebanon retreat.

Pointing to the cross of Christ as the plumb line, power line and lifeline, Willis asked those at the retreat, "If God brings revival, will it sweep past you or will God be allowed to use you?"

God comes in power, or he does not come at all, according to Henry Blackaby, coauthor of the popular "Experiencing God" discipleship curriculum. He lamented "fads" in praying, such as asking God to come "in power" or inviting his presence "as an honored guest."

"God cannot come into our midst without all of him coming. He is power. He comes in power," said Blackaby, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's office of prayer and spiritual awakening.

"He is the owner, not a guest. Are we so unfamiliar that we ask him to pop in as a guest? We pray the silliest things. They may sound good, but they are heresy."

Hearing the Word of God is a two-edged sword, bringing the potential for life or death to its hearers, Blackaby said.

"When God speaks, it is so. When God speaks, he is already acting to accomplish it," he said.

"When God speaks, it is God himself revealing to you himself and his power. When he speaks, you either obey him to live or disobey him to death."

Richard Owen Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries in Wheaton, Ill., said many modern evangelicals call people "backsliders" who never experienced a spiritual rebirth in the first place.

"At what point do we decide whether they are backslidden or unregenerate? It is much safer to assume that the person who does not have any of the marks of regeneration ... has never been born of the Spirit of God," Roberts said.

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He criticized the emphasis on reporting numbers of conversions. It is evidence of a "need for human affirmation," Roberts said, that can lead to watered-down preaching and bearing "false witness" about evangelistic results.

"Anyone who needs human affirmation ... the human witness of others ... is dangerous to the kingdom of God," he said.

"The likelihood of those being accurate numbers is just about zero. The Lord is grieved when we fail to tell the truth. We ought to refrain from listing of numbers."

America's hope rests in neither the Democratic nor the Republican Party, according to Don Miller of Bible Based Ministries, Fort Worth.

"The hope of America rests on the tears, prayers and bended knees of a body of believers coming before Holy God in a spirit of brokenness," Miller said. "The only party that will ever change America is the praying party."

The "praying party" is not owned or influenced by the world but is possessed by God, he said.

"Be cautious of any party that puts politics before prayer," Miller said. "Be cautious of any party or persons who keep prayer and Jesus out of their platform. The praying party has only one agenda -- God's glory."

Too many people spend their lives seeking relief from anxieties instead of confronting the root cause of their problems. While secular therapists can provide relief from symptoms, only God can cure the disease of sin, according to Henry Brandt, a veteran marriage and family counselor.

"Sin is the simplest thing in the world to deal with -- and the hardest" because cleansing from sin requires acknowledging personal responsibility, Brandt said.

"Sin has all but disappeared from our vocabulary," he said. "Nowadays, if you can find a way to be a victim, you are not responsible."

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**Clinton spiritually reflective
of modern church, speaker says**

By Ken Camp & Dan Martin

**Baptist Press
9/4/96**

DALLAS (BP)--President Clinton embodies modern Christianity -- professing faith but lacking evidence of spiritual rebirth, according to Richard Owen Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries, Wheaton, Ill.

Roberts, a Congregationalist, was among the speakers at the eighth annual Cedars of Lebanon spiritual awakening retreat, sponsored by Texas Baptist Men on Labor Day weekend at Mt. Lebanon Encampment near Dallas.

"God has put in the White House a man who looks just like evangelical Christianity -- one who thinks he is something that he is not," Roberts said. "Unless I am completely out of step with God, the dear man is not a Christian."

Clinton has been "defrauded by false doctrine" permeating churches today, he said. Current-day American evangelicals believe regeneration -- being born again -- follows repentance and faith. But, according to Roberts, the new birth is totally an act of God that does not follow any human action.

"We need to face the fact that regeneration must precede repentance and faith, or we are doomed to the problem that we have created in America," he said.

Using the first two chapters of the New Testament book of Ephesians as his text, Roberts pointed to at least eight actions preceding repentance and faith: election, predestination, atonement, redemption, regeneration, effectual calling, conviction and contrition.

"Regeneration is not something we do. It is clearly something God must do," he said. Failure to recognize the new birth as God's work alone has produced a professing church that looks no different than the world, Roberts noted.

The idea that God is Father of all people by virtue of creation is another false doctrine that has infiltrated churches and contributed to a faulty view of salvation, Roberts said.

"All of us are born not as children of God but as children of Satan. Our natural father is the devil," he said. "We are born dead in our trespasses and sin."

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The spiritually dead ignore "God's sovereign rights" and assert their own rights, are indifferent to their soul's state, are able to sin freely without conviction, are unchanged by their profession of faith and have "no fear of hell and the propriety of God in sending them there," Roberts said.

Departing from his message on regeneration, he lauded "what is happening in the SBC." Roberts claimed "never before in human history has a seminary which has strayed into liberalism come back to the evangelical center until several of your seminaries came back or at least are coming back."

He told of visiting R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., who said there has been an 85 percent turnover in the faculty of the school.

Roberts praised Mohler for returning the school to its historic roots. He expressed "joy at what God is doing" in the Southern Baptist Convention and led a "prayer of thanksgiving" for it.

"It is too late for my denomination but not too late for yours," the Congregationalist minister said.

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ANALYSIS

**Ross Perot platform pushes
economics over moral issues**

By Tammi Ledbetter

**Baptist Press
9/4/96**

DALLAS (BP)--After making surprising inroads into the two-party system during the 1992 presidential race, Ross Perot returned this summer for another campaign, delivering attacks on President Clinton and Republican challenger Bob Dole akin to those he waged four years ago against President Bush and Democratic contender Clinton.

Political analysts complain of the difficulty of evaluating much of the Reform Party candidate's proposals since most lack enough detail for study. And with Perot placing the emphasis of his campaign on eliminating wasteful government spending in order to reduce the deficit, his views on moral issues are rarely addressed.

While pollsters submit Perot's support has dwindled from the 19 percent received in 1992, the Texas businessman's 1996 campaign continues to attract fiscal conservatives with moderate-to-liberal views on social issues such as abortion, homosexuality and education reform.

"A lot of issues we still need to flesh out," said campaign spokeswoman Sharon Holman in a telephone interview. She said she expects more detail on a variety of campaign issues to be forthcoming in September. A resurrection of the half-hour infomercials for which Perot was famous in '92 is expected as a means of laying out his agenda.

Supporters seem attracted to the independent movement propelled by Perot because of what he brings to the ticket -- experience at getting things done. Having no previous political experience, Perot emphasizes his business ability as founder of multi-million-dollar Electronic Data Services of Dallas.

The Reform Party also has attracted diverse support among voters who see the emergence of a third party as a healthy change in the political process. Even a radical element known as the New Alliance Party has found a home in the Perot organization. This fringe collection of political activists is led by founder Fred Newman and developmental psychologist Lenora B. Fulani. Their political ties have included Libertarian Lyndon LaRouche to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

"We welcome anyone with a positive attitude and a desire to create a new political party," said Russel J. Verney, national coordinator of the Reform Party, in a recent New York Times interview. He added the party of Perot has not been bogged down with concerns about the specific ideologies or backgrounds of its recruits, as long as those recruits seem earnest and helpful.

In Fulani's words, "I don't know what a lot of their opinions are. I don't even care what a lot of their opinions are." It is the Reform Party vehicle that draws her enthusiasm for shaking up politics as usual.

Others, like Will Dodson of the Christian Life Commission's Washington, office emphasize the importance of voters knowing what candidates believe about all of the issues, not just economic concerns.

Candidates unwilling to take a position on issues they feel do not belong in the political process are "misunderstanding what that process is all about," Dodson said. "Those of us who support a nation which is based upon Christian principles cannot take the position that these issues do not matter. Nor can we take the position of being satisfied with the status quo."

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A longtime member of Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Perot has been described by senior pastor Clayton Bell as faithful in attendance. "When he's in town, he's in church," Bell told Christianity Today in an interview during the '92 campaign.

Bell noted Perot has taken church vows that include "faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and a willingness to live by the disciplines of the Scripture and the church."

When it comes to most moral issues, Perot emphasizes personal responsibility, seeking to take the government out of the picture in solving social ills. He shuns identification with pro-abortion forces who advocate a woman's right to choose abortion to end an unwanted pregnancy, but he has gone so far as to say it's a woman's decision.

He previously supported the Freedom of Choice Act to prohibit states from restricting abortion. Yet, for minors, Perot says he favors requiring parental consent for a young girl to seek an abortion.

Perot's views on homosexual rights are not clear. Holman said Perot was quoted out of context by the media in '92 when it was reported he would not select homosexuals to serve in Cabinet-level posts. "The context was that it would be unfair to place someone in a high security position" who is a homosexual, Holman said.

But the Reform Party of California turned to gay activist Jim Mangia to serve as secretary. He has been quoted as describing his own involvement in leadership as an indication of "the inclusiveness and vision of the Reform Party and of Mr. Perot."

In the area of education, more of Perot's background lies open to examination. He led a 1984 state commission in Texas to propose wide-ranging reforms that included exit tests for high school seniors, evaluation tests for teachers, smaller classes and academic requirements for athletic participation. After the changes were enacted, Perot stayed involved in the education forum to successfully oppose budget cuts that threatened to impact the state's schools.

The wealthy businessman has donated millions of dollars to universities to support research efforts, primarily in Texas higher education settings. His desire for a more educated population centers on economic needs.

"To have a growing, expanding job base and a growing, expanding tax base and a growing, expanding middle class, we have to have the world's best-educated work force," he told a Valley Forge, Pa., crowd of Reform Party delegates in early August.

"Here are our major discipline problems today: children carrying guns to school, drug abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault. Learning cannot occur in that environment. We've got to restore local control. We have to create small neighborhood schools near the child's home, especially in the primary grades." Perot also favors beginning formal education at an earlier age.

In the previous campaign, Perot questioned the value of affirmative action. His penchant for individual responsibility comes through in a C-SPAN interview in 1992: "I don't care where you come from. I don't care what color you are or what race or religion you are, what sex you are. I'm interested in what you can do and what you've done lately. We judge people on merit and strictly on merit."

Perot's rhetoric hammers away at a determination to "pass on the American dream to those we love the most," placing children and grandchildren as his motivating concern for the future. His means of delivering that vision rests solely on economic solutions, steering clear of moral issues both Democrats and Republicans include in party platforms.

The Principles of Reform which serve as the skeleton party platform of like-minded independent voters Perot represents is limited to eight elements, all dealing with economic and government change:

- Set the highest ethical standards for the White House and Congress.
- Balance the budget.
- Reform campaigning.
- Set term limits.
- Create a new tax system.
- Carefully put together plans to deal with Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.
- Create jobs in the United States.
- Reform lobbying.

Each tenant includes expectations of the Reform Party without detailed proposals. For instance, the call for a balanced budget anticipates a "detailed blueprint" and calls for "an annual financial report in plain language so the American people will know whether or not we are following the plan to balance the budget." It further supports the Balanced Budget Amendment and argues for a presidential line item veto, a legislative change enacted this year by Congress.

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