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WMU executive board renames
adult women's organization

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
1/12/94

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union executive board voted at its Jan. 8-13 meeting to rename its adult organization and to publish a new magazine to succeed its current "Royal Service" and "Contempo" magazines.

The name change of the adult organization -- from "Baptist Women" to "Women on Mission" -- represented unfinished business left over after last year's action when the board adopted a new "Church WMU Base Design."

The base design, which defines WMU tasks and WMU organizations in the local church, streamlines WMU programs for more simplicity, flexibility and relevance in today's world, according to WMU Executive Director Dellanna W. O'Brien.

The new adult organization name -- Women on Mission -- fits that pattern, WMU leaders explained.

Effective October 1995, when all base design changes take place, Women on Mission will encompass both the former Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women age-level organizations.

WMU leaders stress missions education for Baptist young women will continue. Women of all ages may configure Women on Mission groups flexibly, retaining the "Baptist" designation if they wish and customizing groups on the basis of such factors as age, task, common interest or needs.

At the same time the executive board voted to discontinue "Royal Service," which has served older women nearly 80 years, and "Contempo," the magazine of the current Baptist Young Women's organization.

In its place, WMU will publish "Missions Mosaic" for members and "Missions Mosaic Executive" for leaders, beginning in October 1995.

Other age-level publications in the Mission Friends, Girls in Action (GA) and Acteens organizations will remain the same, with two exceptions. "GA World," a new magazine, will be published for GAs in grades 5-6 and "Discovery," current magazine for GAs in grades 1-6, will encompass grades 1-4.

The decision on a new name for the adult organization drew discussion over two days of deliberations among state WMU presidents, who make up the executive board, and state WMU directors and their staffs.

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Board members, drawing on grass-roots feedback from women in their states, came mainly opposed to "Women Aware," a name proposed following the WMU annual meeting in June. Brainstorming sessions discarded "Women Aware" and produced three top choices -- "Women on Mission," "Women in Missions" and "World Net."

"Women on Mission" prevailed, collecting 50 of 71 votes cast on the three top choices. "Women in Missions" received 13 votes.

Although differences of opinion existed in the beginning, the board embraced the final decision, noting "Women on Mission" signifies their purpose in the world.

The same reaction came from Jerry Rankin, who made his first report to the WMU executive board as new president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"That name reflects the reality that God is on Mission to bring the world to himself," Rankin said. "We're more and more sensitive to the fact that we must bring our plans, methods and strategies into consistency with what God is doing.

"The fact WMU chose the name 'Women on Mission' shows it has that perspective. It's providential WMU should come up with that in a time of emerging awareness of God's mission in the world."

O'Brien said the changes will raise many questions as they move toward implementation in 1995 and WMU will provide extensive training and transitional information to leadership and church members.

"We're excited about the possibilities for the future even as we face the difficulties of transition," O'Brien said. "The results will be worth the struggle of learning new ways.

"The changes will allow women and girls to focus more on missions and less on organizational structure as we seek to be on mission for God in the world," O'Brien said.

"Methods will change but missions will continue to be the heart of all we do, allowing us to change missions education approaches with changing times," she said.

"But we do recognize that many are satisfied with the present program and feel it's effective for them. The new organization, which emphasizes simplicity and flexibility, will allow them to continue."

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SBC president asks for input
in committee appointments

Baptist Press
1/12/94

HOUSTON (BP)--Recommendations for four Southern Baptist Convention committees are being solicited by SBC President H. Edwin Young who makes the appointments.

Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church, appoints members of the SBC Committee on Committees, Credentials Committee, Resolutions Committee and Tellers Committee.

In a letter to Baptist Press, Young asked for input -- no later than Feb. 15 -- from Southern Baptists "in order for wise decisions to be reached"

Speaking to Southern Baptists, Young said, "You are a vital part of this process and your wise counsel and assistance will be indispensable as we seek God's leadership in this pivotal task." Although the Committee on Committees has the singular task of nominating the Committee on Nominations, the credentials, resolutions and tellers committees will be busy during the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June.

Young has asked that a "recommendation form" be used by those making recommendations. It is available by writing Young, c/o the Southern Baptist Convention, 6400 Woodway, Houston, TX 77057.

"You may be confident that your recommendation will be given careful consideration. However, with the hundreds of names that will be submitted, you would surely understand that some very deserving and capable individuals may not be appointed this year, but would certainly merit having their names resubmitted in the coming year," Young said.

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(State paper editors not : Baptist Press will fax a copy of the requested form to your office. It also will be available at the SBC Executive Committee offices in Nashville. You may want to add the following paragraph to the above story. Also, a copy of the nomination form is available in DOS format in the SBC Newsroom under FORM.NOM.)

The form also is available from the SBC Executive Committee office at 901 Commerce St., Suite 750, Nashville, TN 37203.

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HMB's David Bunch elected
to lead Colorado Baptists

Baptist Press
1/12/94

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (BP)--Longtime Home Mission Board administrator David T. Bunch was elected the new executive director of the Colorado Baptist General Convention in a special convention meeting Jan. 11.

The 60-year-old Bunch received an "overwhelming affirmative vote," according to one Colorado Baptist staffer who attended the session at Colorado Springs' Belleview Baptist Church. An official count of messengers attending the meeting had not been compiled Jan. 12.

"David Bunch is truly a miraculous answer to prayer," noted Curtis Griffis, the convention's interim executive director, in the state's Baptist newsletter. "He is an outstanding leader. He is exactly what we need and he is a product of our prayers."

Bunch, assistant vice president of strategy planning in the Home Mission Board's extension section since 1989, previously was extension division director from 1987-88. He joined the HMB staff in 1978 as director of the Mission Service Corps, a position he held nine years.

Bunch also has been executive director of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship nine years, a church starter in South Dakota five years and a Greek teacher at St. Louis Baptist College five years.

A native of Eldon, Mo., Bunch is a 1953 graduate of William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., who earned the bachelor of divinity and master of theology degrees from Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kan., and the doctor of ministry degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

He and his wife, Joanne, have two grown sons.

Charles Sharp was the convention's executive director from 1985-93. Griffis has been the convention's evangelism director.

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Baptist college enrollment
up 12th consecutive year

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
1/12/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities showed an overall increase in fall enrollment for the 12th consecutive year, according to figures released to the Southern Baptist Convention's Education Commission.

Enrollment figures for the 1993 fall semester show 120,329 students attended Southern Baptist colleges and universities, a 4.1 percent increase over the 1992 total of 115,595.

The enrollment figures include both full-time and part-time students in college credit courses but do not include students enrolled in non-credit courses. Enrollment statistics were released to the commission by each school. This year's increase of 4,734 students is more than twice the 1.8 percent increase in enrollment from fall 1991 to fall 1992.

A compilation of the figures shows 39 of the 53 colleges and universities had an increase in enrollment from fall 1992 to fall 1993.

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Shorter College in Rome, Ga., had the largest percentage increase with 43.7 percent, followed by Missouri Baptist College, St. Louis, 26.8 percent; North Greenville College, Tigerville, S.C., 25.6 percent; Chowan College, Murfreesboro, N.C., 25.5 percent; and Averett College, Danville, Va., 21 percent.

Missouri Baptist College showed the largest numerical increase from fall 1992 to fall 1993 with 383 additional students, followed by Mercer University, Macon, Ga., 381; Shorter College, 378; Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas, 370; Averett College, 350; and Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, N.C., 290.

The last time overall enrollment in Southern Baptist colleges and universities decreased was in 1981, when enrollment was 91,602, a drop of less than 1 percent from the previous year.

The increased enrollment for the past 12 years means 28,049 more students attended the 53 Southern Baptist colleges and universities during the fall 1993 term than attended in fall 1982, for a net increase of 30.4 percent.

"The fact that nearly three-fourths of the colleges and universities experienced growth in enrollment over the previous year demonstrates the confidence Southern Baptists have in their colleges and universities," said Stephen P. Carleton, Education Commission executive director.

"The faculty members and administrators of these institutions have worked diligently to strengthen the academic programs, to reach non-traditional students and to provide higher levels of service and opportunity to students while applying their Christian faith to their particular academic disciplines. Twelve years of continual growth is a testimony to the hard work of professors, administrators, staff, trustees and students," Carleton said.

"The mission purpose of Southern Baptist-related educational institutions is to equally emphasize personal faith and professional competency, and their success in this task is evident," he said.

Baylor University in Waco, Texas, remains the nation's largest Southern Baptist-related university with 12,194 students, followed by Mercer University with 6,729 students and Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C., with 6,047 students. Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., is the fourth-largest Southern Baptist-related university with 5,593 students, and University of Richmond in Virginia, is fifth with 4,327.

Some universities have reached or surpassed their established enrollment and are limiting the number of incoming students through admissions ceilings and/or higher standards.

Following are the 1993 fall enrollment figures and the percentage of increase or decrease from fall 1992 to fall 1993 (rounded to the nearest 10th of 1 percent) at all Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities by state.

Alabama -- Judson College, 320, down 2.1 percent; University of Mobile, 1,876, up 10.9 percent; Samford University, 4,443, up 2.3 percent.

Arizona -- Grand Canyon University, 1,963, up 12.4 percent.

Arkansas -- Ouachita Baptist University, 1,371, up 5.8 percent; Williams Baptist College, 601, down 13 percent.

California -- California Baptist College, 870, up 12.4 percent.

Florida -- Florida Baptist Theological College, 497, down .2 percent; Palm Beach Atlantic College, 1,867, up 13.6 percent; Stetson University, 2,955, down 3.7 percent.

Georgia -- Brewton-Parker College, 2,205, up 11.7 percent; Mercer University, 6,729, up 6 percent; Shorter College, 1,243, up 43.7 percent; Truett-McConnell College, 2,063, up 9.9 percent.

Kentucky -- Campbellsville College, 1,157, up 11.1 percent; Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 132, down 13.2 percent; Cumberland College, 1,518, up 1.3 percent; Georgetown College, 1,382, down 6.4 percent.

Louisiana -- Louisiana College, 1,070, up 4.3 percent.

Mississippi -- Blue Mountain College, 390, down 1.5 percent; Mississippi College, 3,781, up 4 percent; William Carey College, 2,195, up 8 percent.

Missouri -- Hannibal-LaGrange College, 898, up .7 percent; Missouri Baptist College, 1,812, up 26.8 percent; Southwest Baptist University, 3,136, up 1.6 percent; William Jewell College, 1,785, down 5.1 percent.

North Carolina -- Campbell University, 6,047, up 4.2 percent; Chowan College, 802, up 25.5 percent; Gardner-Webb University, 2,369, up 13.9 percent; Mars Hill College, 1,319, down 2.6 percent; Meredith College, 2,345, up 2.4 percent; Wake Forest University, 5,593, down .6 percent; Wingate College, 1,539, up 2.9 percent.

Oklahoma -- Oklahoma Baptist University, 2,432, up 7.6 percent.

South Carolina -- Anderson College, 1,131, down 3.5 percent; Charleston Southern University, 2,485, down .2 percent; Furman University, 3,179, down 2.8 percent; North Greenville College, 598, up 25.6 percent.

Tennessee -- Belmont University, 2,871, up .2 percent; Carson-Newman College, 2,126, up 5.1 percent; Union University, 2,339, up .1 percent.

Texas -- Baylor University, 12,194, up .1 percent; Dallas Baptist University, 2,803, up 3.4 percent; East Texas Baptist University, 1,253, up 4.1 percent; Hardin-Simmons University, 1,974, up 1.2 percent; Houston Baptist University, 2,203, up .1 percent; Howard Payne University, 1,455, up 12.5 percent; University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, 2,117, up 11.2 percent; Wayland Baptist University, 3,048, up 13.8 percent.

Virginia -- Averett College, 2,024, up 21 percent; Bluefield College, 782, up 10.6 percent; University of Richmond, 4,327, down 5.4 percent; Virginia Intermont College, 715, up 10.5 percent.

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Outcome-Based Education
is emerging cultural issue

By Darrell Turner

Baptist Press
1/12/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--In school districts across the country, a radical experiment is under way to indoctrinate children with social and political attitudes that may conflict with Christian values.

That's how critics of Outcome-Based Education describe its goals.

But supporters of OBE, including education officials at the federal, state and local levels, say it's more realistic than traditional methods of education because it lets students learn different things at different paces. And it emphasizes being able to put knowledge to use rather than simply learning facts for the sake of learning.

Among the active opponents is Nancy Schaefer, president of Family Concerns in Atlanta and a former vice chairman of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

To many Southern Baptists, Outcome-Based Education is an unknown quantity. Schaefer found this out last June when she submitted a resolution on the subject to the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston. When the resolutions committee examined her statement, she said later, "It was like they were dealing with a foreign subject and did not have the information they needed at their fingertips."

The resolution was referred as a matter of information to the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, and Schaefer is working to make sure the subject doesn't die there. She is planning a session on OBE for the Christian Life Commission's national seminar this spring, and she hopes by the time of the 1994 Southern Baptist Convention, the subject will be familiar to most of the 15.2 million Southern Baptists.

Defining OBE is not easy because perceptions differ among advocates and critics. In a Family Concerns alert, Schaefer wrote, "Outcome-Based Education is the transition from education based on knowledge and intellect to student behavior and student demonstration -- from academics to attitude. Each child must reach required goals or he or she will be re-educated or remediated until performance goals are reached. The child must prove exit outcome behaviors in order to exit the curriculum. These are not academic goals, but social and attitudinal goals."

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Bill Spady, generally considered the chief architect of OBE, puts it in a more positive light. Spady, who directs the High Success Network in Eagle, Colo., said OBE tries to "set some clear standards for all students to reach eventually. It does not want to compromise on those standards; it wants to hold those standards for everybody. But it recognizes that some kids will reach some of those standards sooner than others will."

Outcomes listed in OBE programs being developed around the country include:

- Making environmentally sound decisions.
- Accepting individual and cultural diversity.
- Working toward the resolution of divergent points of view.

They may sound innocuous when worded this way, but some parents and critics fear that these objectives may become tools for teaching acceptance of homosexual lifestyles and opposition to moral absolutes.

Robert Holland, editor of the op/ed page of the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch and a Southern Baptist, wrote in a column last year "OBE begins from an unassailable premise -- that schools should be judged by 'learner outcomes' rather than, say, the number of books in the library or teachers with master's degrees. But OBE would not make schools directly accountable to parents for concrete academic outcomes. OBE actually is the polar opposite of parental choice among a wide variety of competing schools. Parents are out of the loop."

It is this factor -- parents being given confusing, contradictory or misleading information about OBE -- that has done more than anything else to make it a subject of controversy. Twenty-five states have developed or implemented some form of educational objectives, and an additional 11 are using or considering using outcomes as part of a state accreditation or implementation process. But when parents try to get information from their state and local school officials, they are often told that methods for implementing the outcomes still haven't been developed, that the outcomes are subject to change or that what is going on is not OBE.

In September, partly as a result of Holland's columns, Virginia Gov. Douglas Wilder put a hold on financing for the state's OBE programs. But Holland cautioned "OBE-style self-esteem programs already are in place in many schools under other names and acronyms."

In addition, Holland said, the "Goals 2000" program being developed by the U.S. Department of Education incorporates several elements of OBE, such as "developmentally-appropriate practice" and portfolios of student work, even though officials of the agency deny there is any connection.

Last year the Georgia General Assembly passed a Charter School Bill that Schaefer said "clearly embraces OBE, of which most senators and representatives (had) no knowledge prior to voting." She also expressed concern that the charter schools are exempt from state rules and regulations and are not accountable to local school boards.

Schaefer, an active member of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, is opposed to OBE largely because she sees it threatening to Christian teachings. In contrast, Holland has been trying to demonstrate in his columns that criticism of OBE is as strong among liberal secularists as among the "religious right." Although he attends a Southern Baptist congregation (which he declined to identify), he said his religious beliefs aren't the primary factor motivating him to oppose OBE.

"I would object to OBE if the religious people were defining the outcomes," he said. "I would oppose anyone trying to mold children in their own way" in government-operated schools.

In some states, including Iowa and Pennsylvania, citizens' groups have become active enough in lobbying lawmakers to have references to "sexual orientation" removed from the outcomes statements. But critics like Schaefer and Holland believe there is still too much of an elitist attitude on the part of educators who want to shut parents out of their children's education.

Even some people in the education establishment have concluded that keeping parents informed accurately is the way to go. Janet L. Jones, director of Educational Consulting Services in Portland, Or., has advised school boards to "treat every complaint with professional tact, courtesy, and thoroughness." Writing last April in the American School Board Journal, she noted that "challenges might be well founded, and each one that comes before the board deserves your full attention."

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Turner was on the staff of Religious News Service in New York 20 years and now is a free-lance writer in Fort Wayne, Ind. Some of the material in this piece has been adapted from an article in World magazine. Erich Bridges also contributed to this story.

Institute equipping Baptists
for new challenges in Romania

By Tim Palmer

Baptist Press
1/12/94

BUCHAREST, Romania (BP)--Daniel Maris recalled before the 1989 revolution, he and other Christians in Romania knew "one big enemy -- the atheists." Today the enemies are "those with a different understanding of freedom" -- such as cults and materialists.

"It's much more confusing now when you think about the enemies who invaded us and came on this country at the same time as freedom," said Maris, pastor of the 1,000-member Golgotha Baptist Church in Bucharest. "We prayed for this freedom and we asked God's help with it -- but we weren't prepared for it."

Missionaries Bill and Kathryn Richardson, through their assignment at the Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest, work to equip Romanian students for the ministry challenges freedom has brought.

The Baptist institute, on a Foreign Mission Board-owned site it has occupied 54 years, presently has about 90 male ministerial students in a four-year program of study.

Trained pastors are much in demand. More than 200 Baptist churches have been started in the past four years in Romania, adding to the 1,000 already in existence.

The Baptist Union of Romania comprises the second-largest Baptist body in Europe. Still, Baptists represent a small fraction of the nation's 23.3 million people. Seventy percent of the population are counted as affiliated with the Romanian Orthodox Church.

About 100 young people, mostly women, take courses at the seminary while also studying at the huge University of Bucharest. Richardson said these "double major" students combine studies in theology with fields such as social work and Romanian literature. The goal is to send well-grounded Christians into teaching and other occupations.

About 30 university nursing students take courses at the seminary as well. Also, pastors whose course work at the seminary was not acknowledged under communist rule can return for additional classes to earn recognition from the government. This can carry salary and status benefits.

Richardson, a native of Tulsa, Okla., is a professor of New Testament and Greek. Mrs. Richardson, a Missouri native, serves as the seminary librarian and teaches a religious education class. Another Foreign Mission Board missionary, John Robinson of Tennessee, teaches courses on missions and religious sects.

A lack of materials for studying Greek prompted Richardson to challenge some of his fourth-year students to prepare a Greek-Romanian lexicon as a thesis project. "They did a tremendous job," he reported. He hopes to see it published this year. Richardson himself is preparing a Greek-Romanian New Testament grammar.

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He described the students as hard-working and conscientious. Under communism, as few as four to six students a year entered the seminary. The current first-year class is 24; enrollment must be limited because of lack of space and resources. Students attend on scholarships and share dormitory quarters, three and four to a room.

Occasionally a truck loaded with potatoes or cabbage sent by a church will appear at the seminary. "There's nothing here yet like a Cooperative Program," Richardson noted.

"It's kind of, in a way, a work of faith."

Maris values highly the education he received at the institute, especially the practicums that begin in the first year of study. "It's one thing to preach at the chapel -- it's another to be a month at a church in a village or town," he said.

Under former ruler Nicolae Ceausescu, Richardson pointed out, the church was forbidden from addressing social problems such as street children, abandoned old people and drugs. Then Ceausescu was overthrown and the nation began the difficult, ongoing transition from communism to capitalism, from dictatorship to democracy.

"All of a sudden here are all these needs -- and no background for dealing with it," Richardson said. Some churches have tried to reach out, but "there's not much coordination."

The Romanian people had high expectations under a free economy, Maris noted. Instead they are having to make sacrifices.

Maris told of hearing a wise man warn that a strategy of the devil is to give a pastor a lot of good things to do. Aware of the trap of spreading himself too thin, Maris tries to focus on discipleship -- "grow up some young people with different gifts." A few girls at his church volunteer weekly at an orphanage; the pastor sees as his role to "help them develop the gifts on their hearts."

The Richardsons have developed a heart for Romania since they first arrived in late 1991 after 25 years on the field in Brazil. Ceausescu's tyrannical rule was a recent memory. Conditioned by fear of the secret police, people walked the streets without speaking to one another. Now, the missionaries noted, people are becoming much more open and hospitable.

"I think that is their real nature," Mrs. Richardson said. "The other, of course, has been put upon them."

Besides Romanians, the Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest trains students from the neighboring nations of Moldova and Ukraine. "We see tremendous possibilities and potentials for Romania and the surrounding areas as well," Richardson said.

According to tradition, Andrew the apostle evangelized Romania in the first century, and Roman soldiers who were Christians spread their faith. "They used to say the Romanian people were born a Christian people," Maris remarked.

Today he, the Richardsons and other Baptists are working and praying for Romania's Christian rebirth.

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Word & Way, Missouri Baptists' newsjournal.

EDITORS NOTE: The following story, based on new information from European Baptist Press Service, subs out the Jan. 11 story with the same headline.

Russian Baptists murdered
in Tajikistan home Dec. 31

Baptist Press
1/12/94

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (BP)--An ethnic Russian Baptist man, his four children and four others were brutally beaten and shot to death on New Year's Eve in the man's home in Tajikistan.

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The 34-year-old man, Vladimir Limorev, and his family were active members of Dushanbe Baptist Church in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia. Nothing was reported stolen from his house.

At 2 a.m., while all were asleep, a group of armed men reportedly started beating on the door. Limorev's 30-year-old wife, Helena, fled for help after the men took her husband outside and shots rang out.

She returned with authorities to find her house on fire and nine dead bodies. Besides her husband and four children -- ages 2, 4, 6 and 9 -- the victims included her mother; a visiting woman emigrating to Germany and the woman's 2-year-old daughter; and a neighbor Mrs. Limorev had contacted before she went to the police.

A funeral for all nine victims was held Jan. 6 at the church and was attended by local government and community officials.

Asked after the service how she could cope with such a tragedy, Mrs. Limorev said simply: "The Lord has given me power to overcome." She is pregnant with her fifth child.

One report from Russian Baptist leaders in Moscow said she sought out Russian border troops who were stationed nearby to quell ethnic and religious violence that has shattered the community. Local authorities at first denied the incident, the report said, but acknowledged it and began investigating after the British Broadcasting Corporation aired a report.

Limorev's father, Igor Limorev, is the choir director of Dushanbe Baptist Church. Despite local television reports that the murderers had been apprehended, the elder Limorev said he had heard nothing of it.

Tajikistan, a former republic of the Soviet Union bordering Afghanistan, is heavily Muslim. Tension between native Tajiks and others has run high in the wake of Tajikistan's September 1991 declaration of independence.

Across Central Asia, Russians are resented because of their past dominance in ethnic regions -- even before the "Russification" of former republics during the heyday of the Soviet Union. Baptist churches were started mostly by Russians in the regions.

A Russian Baptist journalist quoted by European Baptist Press Service (EBPS) said the church will continue to preach the gospel, but that members are discouraged. The situation in the country makes life difficult for them, he added.

"Before 1985, this church had 800 members," said Yuri Apatov, editor of the Russian Baptist weekly, Christian World. Most former members, ethnic Germans, have emigrated to Germany, leaving only 240. Baptists in Tajikistan now number 340, according to EBPS.

A Russian Orthodox priest in Dushanbe also was reported murdered about the same time, according to the Russian Baptist report.

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Broadman & Holman video
fourth on best-seller list

Baptist Press
1/12/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--With pre-release sales of more than 75,000 copies, a new children's video produced by Broadman & Holman made the best-seller's list in a national magazine published by the Christian Booksellers Association.

The January edition of Bookstore Journal ranks "Spin: Truth, Tubas and George Washington" -- the first episode in B&H's new "Secret Adventures" video series for children -- as the fourth best-selling Christian video in the country. The listing reflects sales for the month of November.

The video also was praised in the January issue of Christian Retailing, another trade publication for Christian bookstore owners. A review in the Jan. 1 issue of the magazine noted "when a new video project has a deluge of advance hype, the end product is somewhat of a disappointment. This, however, is definitely not the case with 'Spin.'"

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B&H officials are optimistic about a continued growth in sales of the "Secret Adventures" videos, publicity manager Trish Morrison said, thanks in part to increasing media attention, such as features on the first episode in four magazines published by Focus on the Family, a Colorado Springs, Co.,-based ministry led by Christian author and speaker James Dobson.

"How to Act Like a Responsible-Almost-Adult," the second episode in the "Secret Adventures" series, will premiere Jan. 27 at the Christian Booksellers Association's Winter Expo in Nashville and will be available in bookstores in mid-February. The third episode, "Smash: How to Survive Junior High by Really Trying," will be in stores in mid-April.

A variety of other products related to "Secret Adventures" are also planned, Morrison said, including two paperback books.

Scheduled for release in March, the books "will provide an additional opportunity to reinforce the moral values and biblical teachings parents want their children taught," said Jeff Smith, video marketing manager at B&H.

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