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**Peruvian Baptist granted  
asylum by Argentine embassy**

LIMA, Peru (BP)--Peruvian Baptist Carlos Garcia, named Peru's president by the country's dissolved Congress April 9, has taken refuge in the Argentine embassy in Lima.

Garcia, a Baptist pastor and lawyer and Peru's second vice president, sought asylum April 10 in the Argentine embassy to "secure my physical integrity," he said in an Argentine radio interview quoted by United Press International.

Garcia was named president by Peruvian legislators in a secret meeting April 9 in protest of the emergency government declared by President Alberto Fujimori. The legislators decided Garcia should seek asylum for his own safety, UPI reported. Garcia reportedly was picked as president because of the absence of the first vice president, who is outside Peru.

Fujimori suspended the Peruvian constitution April 5, dismissing Congress and declaring an emergency government. He said his actions were necessary because legislative and judicial corruption was hampering his efforts to revive Peru's economy and curb guerrilla violence. Fujimori sent troops into the streets, placed some politicians under house arrest and shut down some magazines and radio stations. Some detained politicians and journalists reportedly were later released.

Garcia quickly opposed the president's decision and condemned "the coup perpetrated by President Alberto Fujimori," according to the Reuters news agency. He said he thought the president had installed a "civilian-military dictatorship."

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**U.S. Christian businessmen  
see Turkmenistan opportunities**

By Beth Simmons

Baptist Press  
4/13/92

ASHKHABAD, Turkmenistan (BP)--One man designs and builds hand-carved Turkman tables. Another raises cotton. Another has a proposal to provide construction materials necessary for producing a popular type of Turkman house shingle.

"What kind of equipment would you need?" the American businessman asks the third man, a merchant.

The man, who has traveled 100 miles toward this glimmer of hope the strangers hold, shifts nervously. He has come with only an idea. He does not know what technology exists outside his country, which has been closed to the rest of the world more than 70 years. He has heard the necessary technology exists in America but he can hardly conceive of it.

These three men represent just a sampling of the hopeful entrepreneurs, tremendous resources and vast needs in the republics of the former Soviet Union.

Turkmenistan, with nearly 4 million people, is located east of Iran. The republic has natural resources, such as silk, cotton and oil, and is famous for its carpets, rugs and jewelry. It has opened its doors to help from the West.

Specifically, it has opened its doors to Christian business people willing to use their resources to educate and support Turkmen business enterprises.

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Gary DeBauche and Ken Middleton, business teachers at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and representatives of a group called Global Consortium International, recently traveled to Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan's capital. They met with government officials and local businessmen and proposed the establishment of a Center for Free Enterprise and Economics.

"We considered this trip a fact-finding mission," DeBauche said. "We want to begin to discover the needs of the Turkmen and see what we can do to assist them."

The consortium is a nonprofit organization that aims to bring together Christian business people, educators and students with an interest in free enterprise economics. It wants to provide technological and economic assistance to the people of Turkmenistan as they move toward a free-market economy.

The Center for Free Enterprise and Economics will operate as a business partnership between the Turkmen and American business people. The center will educate Turkmen in free enterprise economics, provide a forum for idea exchange, offer suggestions for forming new Turkmen business ventures, assist in joint ventures with U.S. firms and provide an avenue for selling Turkmen products on the world market.

During their March 12-21 visit, DeBauche and Middleton met with the government minister of culture and other ministry representatives, the president of Turkmenistan's Economic Institute and a number of Turkmen business people with proposals for new businesses, products and joint ventures.

Minister of Culture Mamilyev Ashyrmurat told the two Southern Baptists his country is anxious for help American business people can provide.

"These days we need very much help," he said. "The administration of Turkmenistan is doing everything possible so people don't have major difficulties. That's why the president and administration have opened the doors so foreign people could come and help."

The American teachers were overwhelmed by the needs as well as the openness of the people seeking help.

"There are a lot of needs," Middleton said. "Everywhere you look you can see something that needs to be improved or changed, though not necessarily in a U.S. mold. There are many things we could do within their own system."

Another Christian worker who has lived in several Third World countries said during his Turkmenistan visit he couldn't believe the poor conditions in the country.

With soaring inflation in recent months, many Turkmen have begun to question whether the end of Soviet communism was a change for the good. A recent article in Moscow News reported Turkmenistan's government remains openly communist. Opposing parties still are outlawed as is private ownership of equipment such as copy machines.

But the U.S. group's visit revealed many Turkmen are anxious to reap the benefits of a free-market system.

During one meeting the minister of culture explained for 70 years Turkmen did not rely on their own skills or ingenuity in business because everything was done for them. For example, previously 90 percent of all cotton harvested in Turkmenistan was processed outside the republic. In return for cotton, Turkmenistan received manufactured items from other Soviet republics.

"Everything was strongly centralized," he said. "We didn't think much ourselves. It was all planned in Moscow. Other people were thinking and making decisions on our behalf. Now we know that's not the right way. That's why we're desperate to learn the free-market system."

DeBauche called opportunities for American business people "incredible" if they are willing to use their time and resources to help the people of Turkmenistan. His group returned to America with a number of business proposals to evaluate.

"This is such a great opportunity to share ... free enterprise but also the love of God," DeBauche said. "We are working with people high up in government who can change the country more quickly. We are enthused about what we as business people can do."

Middleton noted education is the key. "It's got to start with education because the people we've talked with so far have very little knowledge of the free market system," he said. "It's going to take some time."

By establishing the Center for Free Enterprise and Economics, the consortium plans to send groups of Christian business people to Turkmenistan three times each year to conduct business seminars. DeBauche said interested people can write to Global Consortium International, 1601 S. Springfield, Bolivar, Mo., 65613, or contact the group by phone at (417) 326-1756 or by fax at (417) 326-1887.

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(BP) photo and graphic mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Pro-lifers 'only just begun'  
if Roe v. Wade overturned

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
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WASHINGTON (BP)--If the Supreme Court votes this year to overturn its 1973 decision legalizing abortion, the task for pro-life advocates will have "only just begun," a Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission staff member told reporters recently.

"Americans will then, once again, have the opportunity to enact laws which protect women from the exploitation of abortion and their unborn children from the results of that exploitation," said James A. Smith, CLC director of government relations.

"Only pro-lifers offer a truly compassionate response to crisis and unwanted pregnancies," Smith said. "People of faith have been and will continue to minister to the needs of women in crisis and unwanted pregnancies, and their precious children. We look forward to the day when the sanctity of human life is again the rule, rather than the exception."

Smith made his comments at an April 6 news conference announcing the filing of a joint friend-of-the-court brief asking the Supreme Court to reverse the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. The brief, filed in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, was signed onto by the United States Catholic Conference, the National Association of Evangelicals and the CLC.

The court will hear oral arguments in Planned Parenthood v. Casey April 22. Many observers believe it is unlikely the justices will abandon the Roe decision in this case, which involves a Pennsylvania law mandating restrictions such as informed consent for women considering abortion and parental consent for minors. If the court reverses Roe, abortion will become a state-by-state issue.

Southern Baptists are more equipped than ever to meet ministry challenges presented by abortion, Smith said.

"Southern Baptists have become increasingly involved in providing services to women in crisis and unwanted pregnancies," Smith said. They're "involved at every level in every way both through our bureaucracy and through local churches and as individuals."

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He pointed to the recent establishment of crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) through the Home Mission Board and the sponsorship of children's homes by many state conventions as examples of Southern Baptist ministry in this area. The HMB's Alternatives to Abortion Ministries has helped start 23 crisis pregnancy centers in churches and associations during the last two years and expects to help establish at least 10 annually for the next few years, Smith told reporters.

Southern Baptists are involved in a total of about 1,000 CPCs as individual volunteers or as local churches providing financial support, he said. There are about 3,000 CPCs in the country, according to the latest figures from the Pro-life Resources Directory, said Helen Alvare of the United States Catholic Conference.

The Catholic Church and the National Association of Evangelicals also are meeting needs of women with crisis pregnancies, representatives of both groups told reporters.

The Catholic Church is "the single largest provider of social services in the entire United States after the federal government," Alvare said. "The Catholic Church is committed to providing real financial, social, material resources to women who want another alternative, who want to give life to their child."

Such ministry by NAE, which includes 44 denominations, is done by local churches, said Forest Montgomery, counsel in NAE's Office of Public Affairs. One of NAE's members, the Christian Action Council, sponsors more than 400 evangelistic crisis pregnancy centers.

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Bivocational pastor puts out  
some fires, starts others

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press  
4/13/92

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Earl Greene earns his living putting out fires. But he obeys his calling by starting them.

As deputy fire chief for the Clark County Fire Department which services the Las Vegas area, Greene is in charge of several divisions. He is indirectly responsible for the fire fighters who answer daily calls to extinguish flames.

As pastor of Mount Charleston Baptist Church, 35 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Greene, 41, is in charge of starting fires in the hearts of his congregation.

Both jobs demand his 24-hour attention.

"I'm on call 24 hours a day -- everyday -- for both jobs," said Greene, a teddy-bearish, black man with a comforting smile. "Sometimes (working both jobs) gets tough. But it's a lot of fun."

Greene never expected his life would turn out as it did. He wanted to be a lawyer, but the tests proved too menacing. After graduating from college in Oklahoma in 1973, Greene's uncle suggested he move to Las Vegas to become a fire fighter. The hours were such that he could also continue his education.

"I said, 'I don't want to be no fire fighter.' And he said, 'You work 10 days a month, 24-hours a day, and get paid \$1,000 a month.' And I said, 'Yeah, OK, maybe I'll try it.'"

He then sent for the girl he met and fell in love with in college. They were married in Las Vegas in 1974.

Greene was not a Christian when they married but because Susan, his wife, was a Southern Baptist she suggested they attend First Southern Baptist Church of Las Vegas.

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"I said, 'I ain't going to no Southern Baptist church.' But the little ole preacher came knocking on my door -- he had wire-rim glasses and a southern accent. I had all these questions prepared to ask him and he did a pretty good job at answering them.

"He then asked me if there was any reason I wouldn't want to go to heaven when I died. I couldn't think of any but I wasn't going to tell him that."

Although at the time he couldn't identify the feeling, Greene said he fell under conviction. The very next day he and his wife went to the church to speak with the pastor. Greene accepted Christ at age 23.

"I didn't know it until 10 years later but that preacher had prepared his church for me being a member before I had even become a Christian. I was the first black member of that church.

"I went to that church, got baptized and that church asked me to be a Sunday school teacher. Then they asked me to become a deacon."

Just as suddenly as he became a career fire fighter and then a Christian, Greene became a pastor.

He had given his testimony at a local rescue mission and someone who had heard him asked him to come to their church to preach while they found a full-time pastor.

"I said, 'I ain't going to be no preacher.'"

But, guess what?

"I was their preacher for three months until they finally found one. I kind of enjoyed preaching. I enjoyed studying the Bible more than anything else because I really wasn't much of a preacher."

Although Greene continued to preach on an interim basis, he said, "My wife did not want to be a preacher's wife.

"I told the Lord, 'If you want me to be a preacher you're going to have to make some changes here or I'm going to lose my wife.'"

Greene said when he went five years ago to preach at Mount Charleston the congregation "was so different, so unusual" both he and his wife had the feeling that is where they would stay.

"When my wife came up to me and said, 'Earl, I think the Lord is calling us to this church,' I knew that was where we were suppose to be."

One member is a former Satanist "whose heart is now on fire for the Lord," Greene said.

Another is a former rock singer. Before that, she and her husband were in a motorcycle gang. Some of the members hail from Southern Baptist backgrounds, Greene said. But most were either unchurched or raised Catholics.

"The church is a strange place. It's located in a mountain resort area where little bitty lots go for \$90,000. It's an exclusive type of community, a closed community. They move there to get away from people." A mission of College Park Baptist Church in Las Vegas, the congregation has nearly outgrown its two single-wide trailer facilities.

"We are not a normal Southern Baptist church," Greene said. "I am a black Southern Baptist preacher with an all-white congregation. But the church has been there seven years (Greene has been pastor for five). All the other churches that have tried to make it on that mountain have closed their doors."

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Located beside a riding stable, Mount Charleston church has had its share of problems -- more than just the smell of horses and huge, buzzing flies, Greene said.

In 1989 someone pushed the piano his wife played and the pulpit from which he preached together and set the trailer they used for worship on fire.

"It was totally destroyed but God gave us one week of beautiful weather" during a season usually characterized by snow and freezing temperatures to get another trailer. "We didn't miss any services," he recalled, adding "about a year later someone left \$5,000 in cash on the steps of the church. I would certainly hope it was the person who set fire to the church."

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James H. Currin, 64,  
dies of heart attack

By Joyce S. Martin

Baptist Press  
4/13/92

NORTHBOROUGH, Mass. (BP)--James H. Currin, executive director/treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New England, died of a heart attack at his home in Shrewsbury, Mass. April 10.

Currin, 64, had been executive of the convention, which includes six New England states, since December 1., 1978.

The funeral will be April 14 at 2 p.m. at the Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Northborough.

Significant growth in the BCNE marked Currin's 13 years as executive director. When he arrived in New England 65 churches and missions formed what was then the Baptist General Association of New England. By 1983 the association had grown to 115 congregations and Currin led in the formation of a state convention. There are now 198 churches and missions affiliated with the BCNE.

Under Currin's leadership, the BCNE led the Southern Baptist Convention in resident membership percentage increase during the decade of the 80s. While the percentage gain for the SBC was only 8.3 percent the BCNE saw a 135 percent gain.

Currin was active in denominational life, speaking often to state convention meetings and chairing committees for national boards and agencies. Most recently he was chairman of the state convention executive directors' task team to renegotiate the Cooperative Agreement between state conventions and the Home Mission Board.

Currin was named president-elect of Southern Baptist Association of State Convention Executive Directors at its February 1992 meeting.

His writings include a chapter in the Broadman book, "The Birth of Churches," a booklet entitled "Starting Missions and Churches," and numerous articles in Baptist publications.

Prior to his ministry in New England, Currin, a Tennessee native, served as pastor of churches in Illinois, Kentucky and Indiana. He also served as state Sunday school director and state missions director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

Currin is survived by his wife Margery, a son James Stephen of Shrewsbury, a daughter Connie Minniear of Scottsdale, Ariz., and six grandchildren.

The family has requested expressions of sympathy be given to the Baptist Convention of New England with designations for the New England Mission Fund for church loans, the Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry and campus ministry.

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Also available upon request:

-- Feature by Mark Wingfield about a suburban Cincinnati church that has reversed declines dating back to the 1950s.