

Amber Lyon Reports

## Sanctuary movement for illegal immigrants sees revival



**A nationwide effort is under way to provide sanctuary for people facing deportation.**

Wednesday, religious leaders in five major cities announced plans to offer sanctuary inside churches to illegal immigrants.

Reverend Robin Hoover clearly remembers Tucson's sanctuary movement of the 1980s.

"In the United States, there exists the concept that one individual being pursued by some body or some danger that's putting them at risk can find sanctuary in the life of a church."

It put Tucson in the national spotlight as the Southside Presbyterian Church helped shelter people fleeing violence in Central America.

The movement fizzled after eight church members were convicted of smuggling and hiding the illegal immigrants.

But a new sanctuary movement modeled after Tucson's is making a national comeback.

Religious groups from coast to coast are offering protection for illegal immigrants who have been ordered deported by federal immigration authorities; immigrants like Elvira Arellano, the fugitive illegal immigrant who has claimed sanctuary in a Chicago storefront church for nine months.

Caesar Arroyo's North Hollywood church is where a Guatemalan illegal immigrant, who gave the name Juan Sanctuario, will be defying his order of deportation.

"We want to respect the law," says Arroyo, "that's our first goal. But when the law take other way, and the justice take other way, we have the need to stand up."

"I am here because the law is no good," say Sanctuario. "They are separating many families."

But Reverend Hoover says third parties are using the church, scrambling its message for political gain.

"It may put at risk the whole concept of sanctuary in the United States as it exists under British traditions. And therefore we think it's a risk that shouldn't be undertaken."

So far, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have yet to enter any of these churches and apprehend the illegal immigrants.

**News 4** has not learned of any Tucson congregations that plan to take part in the new sanctuary movement.