Former governor’s bust unveiled at Statehouse

By Daniel R. Gangler

INDIANAPOLIS – A bust of the late Governor Frank O’Bannon, an active lifelong United Methodist who died in 2003 of a stroke while in office, was unveiled Feb. 13 at the Indiana Statehouse by the state’s former First Lady Judy O’Bannon, her children and grandchildren.

O’Bannon served the state more than 30 years as a state senator, lieutenant governor and governor. During the hour-long ceremony, Mrs. O’Bannon said she hopes that when young people see the late governor’s bust, they will identify him, and be inspired to make a difference, too.

While governor, he worked with Bishop Woodie White in establishing broader healthcare coverage for Indiana children and participated in the Bishop’s Initiative on Children and Poverty. One part of his agenda that he did not complete before his death was full-day kindergarten in the state’s public schools. O’Bannon’s supporters asked the legislators to fulfill the O’Bannon legacy by enacting full-day kindergarten next year.

Governor O’Bannon was reared in the Corydon United Methodist Church. While living in Indianapolis, he and Mrs. O’Bannon were active members and neighborhood community volunteers at Central Ave. UMC.

His bust will be displayed near the State Senate chambers where he spent 18 years as a senator and eight years as lieutenant governor. His father also was a state senator.

Judy O’Bannon (center), an active United Methodist and former First Lady of Indiana, joins her children and grandchildren in unveiling a bust of her husband, the late Governor Frank O’Bannon, who died in 2003 while in office.

Hoosier volunteers begin building center in Mississippi

The first wave of volunteers in mission from Indiana are on site this week in D’Iberville, Miss.

More than 78 percent or 187 of the 240 volunteers needed to build the Seashore District Volunteer Center there between March 6 and April 28, have registered.

As of March 1, 53 volunteer builders, cooks and food handlers for the one-week commitment are still needed for the project. The first five weeks are booked. Nine more volunteers are needed for week six, April 10-14, 16 more for April 17-21 and 28 more for April 24-28, the end of the project.

Progress on the Volunteer Center includes: Dirt work is done; slab site built up for drainage is completed; slab forming is next with plumbing rough to follow; cabinets are ordered. Last week the steel building arrived.

Volunteers still needed

Each volunteer’s workweek begins on Sunday evening with orientation and worship, and ends on Friday afternoon. Limited RV parking will be available by arrangement. Those interested, in volunteering their time for construction work or meal preparation, need to complete a volunteer registration form available online at www.inareaumc.org or faxed by calling 317-924-1321.

The cost per person per week of this mission project is $100 and includes sleeping space and meals at Heritage United Methodist church. Each volunteer is responsible for getting to and from D’Iberville from Indiana. Registered volunteers will be contacted by a project team coordinator.

Activities for each week are listed in the Indiana Area Web site project information at www.inareaumc.org. Click on Seashore District Volunteer Center for information and forms.

$146,000 to go

Crucial to the project at this point are funds to complete the center. To date $53,895 has been received with up to $146,000 still needed. Donations can be sent to the Seashore District Volunteer Center Project, Indiana Area United Methodist Foundation, 1100 West 42nd St., Suite 210, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

Note on the check Seashore District Volunteer Center. One-hundred percent of all proceeds will go to this project. All gifts are tax deductible.

Bishop Coyner sent letters in February to Indiana churches encouraging them to support the project with Lenten special offerings and money raising projects.

Volunteers needed in South Indiana to rebuild after tornado

Pastor Randy Anderson, chairperson of Southwest Indiana Long Term Recovery Committee, is organizing volunteers for construction work. Skilled workers are needed in all areas of construction from laying the foundation to the finish work.

There are buildings that need to be rebuilt, including Baker’s Chapel UMC, resulting from the Nov. 6 tornado.

If you are interested in working as a volunteer on these projects, contact the Anderson or Bridget Noss at the Disaster Recovery Office by calling 812-490-6806 located at Epworth UMC in Newburgh, Ind. All areas are cleared except one and ready for rebuilding as soon as the weather breaks.
To merge or not to merge, that is not the question

You may have heard the rumor that a merger vote is coming to both North and South Indiana Annual Conferences this June. That rumor is almost true. The Area Committee on Episcopacy met last week and approved a proposal from the Merger Task Force that a proposal be brought to each of our Indiana Conferences during their 2006 sessions to vote for a plan for merger to be brought back and voted upon in 2007.

Here is the actual motion coming to each Annual Conference.

“We believe that God is calling us to create a new Indiana Conference.”

-- Indiana Area Episcopacy Committee

The Old City, seen behind the Dome of Rock resting on the Temple Mound in Jerusalem, is one of many places Bishop Coyner’s study tour to Israel will include.

Bishop announces 10-day study tour to Israel

In cooperation with Educational Opportunities Tours, Indiana Bishop Mike Coyner invites Hoosier United Methodists to join him on a biblical discovery trip to Israel in February 2007.

This ten-day trip begins Feb. 12. The group will visit sites and cities in Israel including Bethlehem, Jericho, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. In addition the group will have several opportunities to hear from Christians living and working in the Holy Land. Side trips also are available to Cairo, Luxor or Jordan and Petra.

In announcing the trip, Coyner told Together: “I am excited to be able to go back to the Holy Land, and I look forward to sharing this experience with many of our Indiana colleagues. A trip to the Holy Land is more than a trip, it is a spiritual pilgrimage which changes lives and expands our understanding of the Bible.”

For more information or trip brochures, contact any district office, North Indiana Conference EO Coordinator Norm Nellis (765-447-4152 or nellisn@sbcglobal.net).
Welcome

Let us speak and act with humility and conviction

This Lent, the church I attend asked me to lead a six-part discussion series on “Confronting the Controversies: Biblical Perspectives on Tough Issues” based on a book by the same title written and revised by Adam Hamilton, pastor of The United Methodist Church in suburban Kansas City, Mo. Because of my ongoing interest in social issues and how we, as the church, influence the society in which we live, I agreed to lead the group.

Upon reading Hamilton’s book, I found that I don’t agree fully with him on all of these issues — separation of church and state, creation and evolution, the death penalty, euthanasia, prayer in public schools, abortion and homosexuality — but I wholeheartedly agree with his approach. He approaches each issue, originally as a sermon in a series of sermons, with humility and conviction. Each is approached in a biblical perspective and engages Scripture, tradition, experience and reason — more commonly referred to as John Wesley’s Quadrilateral.

During this six-week series, I also will introduce the Social Principles of the church. Through the years, I have found that many of United Methodists don’t know about our Social Principles which contain the official stance of The United Methodist Church on the major social issues that confront us today. Those principles are found in The United Methodist Book of Discipline and also online at www.umcgbcs.org — the Web site of the General Board of Church and Society.

Too often, we, as the church, tend to divide ourselves on controversial issues, rather than hearing each other with understanding. Too often, we are more concerned about voicing our view or winning the debate than being concerned about the church, its members and those whom we have pledged to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Often, we wait until he fixes himself up rather than hearing each other with understanding. Too often, we, as the church, tend to divide ourselves on controversial issues. Those principles are found in The United Methodist Book of Discipline and also online at www.umcgbcs.org — the Web site of the General Board of Church and Society.

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Editor’s Note: The University Committee, is one of the support. We want partnerships with churches, pastors, students, alums, parents and friends.

This morning I opened my mail and realized that just one of our ministries, Biker’s For Jesus, now preparing for its third year, raised enough money its first year to give $1,600 for Bicycles for District Youth Programs in Nigeria and $1,600 for Bicycles for Pastors in Burundi/Rwanda, all through the General Board of Global Ministries.

This past year, thanks to students Sarah Roberts, Chase Slaughter, Sean Hoos, Brian Mathes, Becky Hanna, Olivia Kitterman, Ed Barton, Dale McCoy, Osten Nelson, Rev. David Jenn- 
das, Deana Fandrei, Mike Jacobs, Lynn Rouston and many others. More than $2,400 was raised for world hunger. This is great work. This is your campus ministry —

If you want to set plans to read more about our ministry, please sign up for the PSST (weekly summary) on the Web site at www.wesleyfoundation.org.

We also are proud of the fact that we now have three missioners in our lived. For 240 Hoosier United Methodists, Lent means assisting a congregation and community in D’Iberville, Miss., in building the Seashore District Volunteer Center. Our prayers go with those volunteers as we support them financially with our gifts. Through our good works of the future, this volunteer center also may become an evangelistic center for Heritage United Methodist Church on whose property it resides. Workers pour the slab as we go to press.

In this issue, you also will find stories about the new operating room and surgical ward at Kissy Hospital in Sierra Leone built by our connection.

That’s what’s happening as I celebrate that we have 120 partners on the way to our 600 partners in the PARTNER UP. We are so glad to report that this has raised more than $93,000, and that we can go into the future, God willing, by reducing our staff by single campus minister. All of this is in decision making right now. Please pray!

If you wish to PARTNER UP with us, please write me at steve@wesleyfoundation.org. We need partnerships with churches, pastors, students, alums, parents and friends.

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Indiana Conference Council on Ministries staff, so he is familiar with the CCOM, office staff and procedures. He has served for several years helping to coordinate annual conference sessions in his back-stage role and will bring experience to that important task. In addition, Mark is creative, will bring energy and enthusiasm to the restructured CCOM and will be able to continue the strong leadership that Cindy Reynolds has provided.

Gough, 54, was ordained as an Elder in the North Indiana Conference in 1979. During his ministry in Indiana, he has served congregations and other appointments at Millgrove-Union Chapel, Muncie High Street as associate, Muncie Center Chapel, Benjamin-Allan Associates, Associate Director of Local Church Ministries CCOM, Bristol House Ltd., and Taylor Chapel in Fort Wayne before his current appointment.

Even though a native of Winterset, Iowa, he spent his boyhood years in Indiana, before moving to Florida at 16. He returned to Indiana at 19. Gough is a graduate of Florida State University, Anderson (Ind.) University, B.A.; and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, M.Div.

He has been married to Paula Gough for 32 years. They have 10 children, four biological sons, six adopted daughters from Russia and Ukraine, and two grandchil- dren. The Goughs will return to Fort Wayne.

Accepting this position, he said, “I have always viewed the local church as the front lines of the work of the Kingdom and the conference ministry. I look forward to continuing the vis- ion of conference ministry to strengthen the local churches of our conference.

“I am very excited about working with Bishop Coyner, the Minis- tries staff, and the outstanding lay and clergy leadership on our conference ministry teams, as we move forward into the 21st century and beyond.”

Episcopacy committee votes to carry merger plans forward

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Area Episcopacy Committee voted unanimously Feb. 22 to recommend a plan for the creation of a new Indiana United Methodist Confer- ence to both 2006 North and South Indiana Conference sessions.

The committee, composed of lay and clergy from both North and South Indiana Conferences, approved the report and plan of the Merger Task Force chaired by Jack Dwiggins, of Brookston in the North Indiana Conference. The task force has worked with Bishop Coyner on a merger plan pro- poseal since the 2005 annual conferences sessions.

The decisions request both annual conferences during their 2006 Sessions “affirm their desire to have this study of the creation of a new conference for The United Methodist Church in Indiana be continued, with a proposal brought back to both conferences for a vote in their 2007 Sessions (as well as an opportunity for further revisions and votes in their 2008 Sessions), with the understanding that the actual creation of a new conference would not com- mitigate until after the 2008 vote of the North Central Jurisdictional Conference.”

Process
The plan calls for a three-action process including:
- A bishop-appointed task force bring a merger plan for recommendation to the 2007 conferences sessions;
- Input be sought by both laity and clergy from across the Indiana Area including church-related institutions and agencies; and
- Pertinent materials be gathered from other conferences of the UMC as well as from sources beyond the UMC.

Merger idea not new
According to the six-page recommenda- tion, merger of conferences in Indiana Unit- ed Methodism is not new. When The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 in two former denominations, Hoosiers went from six overlapping conferences to two conferences.

More recently a task force was created by Bishop Leroy Hodapp in 1990 to dis- cuss effective ministry in Indiana and the possible merger of the two Indiana Confer- ences or the separation of the area with each conference having its own bishop.

Again in 1997, a discussion emerged regarding the work of the bishop, and a committee was formed to study the pos- sibility of one bishop for each conference. The discussions were nixed due to the re- luctance of General Conference, the church’s top legislative body, to add more bishops.

Discussions began again in 2004 with the arrival of Coyner and the Episcopacy Committee realizing anew the demand of one bishop leading two conferences. Last year the current Merger Task Force was formed “to look at a merger of the two con- fferences as a way to reduce the demands of our bishop and also address the growing concerns about loss of membership and other ministry issues.”

Coyner expressed to the committee that he is not interested in merger as a conve- nience to our present economic woes but “to think of a ‘blank page’ as we ask how God is leading us to redesign our structures and administration… I hope that we can be creative in considering how to accomplish our mission and ministry here in Indiana,” he said.

The Episcopacy Committee talked more in terms of creating a new conference rather than merger of two existing confer- ences. Committee members see the four top benefits of one Indiana Conference that such a move:
- Creates an opportunity for United Meth- odists in Indiana to make a new start (i.e., become a new creation) in the way ministry is carried out;
- Provides for a unified approach to minis- try with one vision, one coordinated leadership team (cabinet, CFA, etc.), one budget, one set of meetings;
- Increases opportunities for better matches to be made in the appointment of clergy to churches throughout the State of Indiana; and
- Increases the opportunities for laity to be connected and to be in mission with each other throughout the State of Indiana.

Committee members see as their great- est challenge to be finding an answer to the most crucial question of all: What is God seeking to do?

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Gough chosen as North Conference Director of Ministries

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner has announced the appointment of the Rev. Mark Gough as director of the new Conference for the North Indiana Conference in Goshen, Ind., as the next Director of Min- istry of the North Indiana Conference. Gough succeeds outgoing Bishop William Lee “Bill” Coyner, who transferred to the North Indiana Conference in 1999. Gough is a graduate of Florida State University, Anderson (Ind.) University, B.A.; and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, M.Div.

He has been married to Paula Gough for 32 years. They have 10 children, four biological sons, six adopted daughters from Russia and Ukraine, and two grandchil- dren. The Goughs will return to Fort Wayne.

Accepting this position, he said, “I have always viewed the local church as the front lines of the work of the Kingdom and the conference ministry. I look forward continuing the vi- sion of conference ministry to strengthen the local churches of our conference.

“I am very excited about working with Bishop Coyner, the Minis- tries staff, and the outstanding lay and clergy leadership on our conference ministry teams, as we move forward into the 21st century and beyond.”

Howell named as new Evansville District Superintendent

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner has named the Rev. Glenn B. Howell, 49, as the new District Superintendent in the North Indiana Conference.

Howell graduated from Rochester (Ind.) High School. He also gradu- ated from the University of In- dianapolis and Christian Theo- logical Seminary.

Upon Coyner’s announce- ment, he told Together, “Most of my life is taken up with church and family. I do work out, though, and am an absolute golf lover. Play anytime I get the chance and have enjoyed quali- fying and playing in the Evans- ville City tournament for the past few years. Friends tell me if I preached as much, as well as I play golf, all of southern Indi- ana would be converted to The United Methodist Church.”

He also said that becoming a new district superintendent, “will be tough for me to leave a vibrant and dynamic church. There is a sense of excitement, though, to begin a job that has

Districts set dates for installation of new superintendents

INDIANAPOLIS – The three districts receiving new superintendents have announced the dates of their installation services.

The Rev. Craig LaSuer, incoming Marion District Superintendent in the North Indiana Confer- ence, will be installed during a 3 p.m. worship service on Sunday, June 25 at the First United Methodist Church in Anderson.

The Rev. Dr. Cindy Reynolds, incoming Warsaw District Superintendent in the North In- diana Conference, will be installed during a 7 p.m. worship service on Sunday, June 25 at First United Methodist Church in Columbia City.

The Rev. Glenn B. Howell, incoming Evans- ville District Superintendent in the South Indiana Conference, will be installed during a 3 p.m. worship service on Sunday, July 16 at Newburg United Methodist Church.

All three superintendents will begin their duties on July 1.
Schools of Christian Mission follow theme of ‘Harvesting Peace’ this summer in Manchester and Indianapolis

Both Indiana Schools of Christian Mission will follow the theme of ‘Harvesting Peace’ this year in their conferences. The North Indiana Conference will be held at Manchester College near Manchester, Ind. The Drive-in-Day is scheduled for Wednesday, July 12 from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The regular School of Christian Mission will run Thursday, July 13 through Saturday July 15. It will run concurrently with SCM’s Fun and Fabulous Children’s Program: Chi-Mi-Ca for ages 3rd through 4th grades; and Young People’s Mission Camp: Yo-Pe-Mi-Ca for youth in middle school through age 17.

The school includes: Wonderful accommodations, inspirational worship, variety of learning opportunities and is designed for women, men, youth and children – a program for every age and study for every interest. Contact your district United Methodist Women’s president for information or write online to ladonnaarw@aol.com or mami9923@cs.com.

The South Indiana Conference school will be held at the University of Indianapolis the weekend July 14-15 or the week-day school July 16-19. Youth and Children’s classes will be held during the Weekday School. The school is sponsored by the South Indiana Conference United Methodist Women. Contact the registrar, Sharon Lutz by calling 812-724-4752 or by e-mail at lutz@gibsoncounty.net.

North Indiana pastoral counselor writes books on obsessive-compulsive disorder

Haworth Pastoral Press of Binghamton, New York has released two books by a North Indiana United Methodist clergy on obsessive-compulsive disorder – one for pastors, another for family and friends.

According to publisher, The Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: Pastoral Care for the Road to Change by the Rev. Dr. Robert Collie, Th.D., delivers a provocative and stimulating discussion that is meant to inspire new areas of inquiry on this subject. As an OCD sufferer, pastoral counselor, mental health student, or professional, the reader is promised to reach a new understanding of a complex condition that can destroy the day-to-day lives of its victims. Collie is a pastoral counselor and a retired clergy member of the North Indiana Conference who lives in Fort Wayne, Ind. He says his book “is highly relevant to pastors and church members.”

A second book, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A Guide for Family, Friends, and Pastors is a handy “physician’s assistant” that not only provides a fresh overview of OCD but also focusing on the issue of scrupulosity — obsessive-compulsive anxiety over scruples in self and others — as a religious issue. This book promises to help the reader gain insight into the psychological and neurological dimensions of the disorder, the problems of those suffering from OCD, and the development of support groups.

The Rev. Brian Witwer, lead pastor at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne, says, “This book is a welcome treat for those with OCD friends, family members or parishioners. Dr. Collie’s style is different and inviting, both deeply knowledgeable and fresh. After describing OCD through many different and illuminating lenses, he turns to specific help for caring persons, including clergy. It is here that his work shines. It is both holistic and deeply caring. Readers will find a treasure chest of good counsel, including support group experiences and other practical resources.”

Both books are available online by logging on to www.haworthpress.com.
Bishops view hurricane devastation, help clean up houses

United Methodist News Service

Getting a firsthand view of hurricane damage in Louisi-ana left four United Methodist bishops moved and with a deeper understanding of the recovery task ahead.

The bishops traveled to Louisiana Jan. 12-15. They helped “muck out” two houses and also met with state and United Methodist disaster response coordinators.

The bishops agreed that the amount of damage is diffi- cult to imagine without a visit to affected areas. Included in the trip were Bishops Tom Bickerton, Pittsburgh; Charles Crutchfield, Arkansas; and Michael Coyner, Indiana, along with Coyner’s wife, Marsha. Louisiana Bishop William Hutchinson and his wife, Kay, accompanied the other bish- ops during their visit.

The group spent the afternoon Jan. 12 mucking out a house in Chalmette, one of the most affected areas in great- er New Orleans.

The bishops also toured United Methodist-related Dil-lard University in New Orleans. The school is undergoing an extensive restoration due to storm damage.

“I’m impressed with the spirit of the people here,” Coyner said of Dillard. “Despite the hardships they have endured, their spirit of hope and giving is evident.”

Information about donating to the United Methodist Committee on Relief’s hurricane response can be found at www.methodistrelief.org.

The Council of Bishops also has launched the Katrina Church Recovery Appeal for rebuilding United Methodist mini- sterns on the Gulf Coast. Details are available at http:// /archives.umc.org/interior.asp?pid=21&muid=10233.

Hoosiers join in dedication of surgical suite in Sierra Leone

By Daniel R. Gangler

Six volunteer Hoosiers with a passion for missions joined the staff of United Methodist-related Health and Maternity Center in Kissy, Sierra Leone, to dedicate the Wagner Surgical Theater and the United Methodist Health and Maternity Center in Kissy. The United Methodist bishops and members of a New Orleans United Methodist-related Dil-lard University in New Orleans.

The six-person team also continued Operation Doctor’s work on the Tele-medicine project. “Tele-medicine” is defined as patient case reviews and specialist referrals. Other applications include continuing medical and nursing education, data collection and evaluation of research and protocol development.

While they were in Sierra Le- one, talks by the six-volunteers continued with the World Bank to fund the Tele-med project. The United Methodist-related Ganta Hospital in Ganta, Liberia has a similar program.

Life changing

Marilyn Griffith said the trip to Africa was a life-changing ex- perience. “I have never seen United Methodism any finer than what we are doing in Liberia and Sierra Leone.”

Probasco commented that every- where the group went in Kissy’s bus, people waved and shouted “U-M-C, U-M-C” in appreciation for the church’s work. In addition to maternity care, surgery and AIDS testing and education, Kissy is also in- volved with nutrition, nutrition education and the treatment and prevention of malaria. Wagner said one out of four deaths in Africa is attributed to malaria. Twenty-five percent of the hos- pital’s income comes from the treatment of malaria. The aver- age worker in Sierra Leone loses seven to 11 days of work a year due to malaria.

The UMC Health and Mater- nity Center in Kissy is part of the denomination’s Sierra Leone Conference. It is one of only two facilities providing inpatient and laboratory services in the east- ern suburbs of Freetown, the West African nation’s capital. These communities are highly overpopulated, mostly with un- employed youth, women and displaced people.

In West Africa, the six-volun- teers also visited United Meth- odist-related Ganta Hospital in neighboring Liberia. Ganta also serves a community of 450,000 residents. The hospital is consid- ering building a larger facility and converting the current hos- pital into a much-needed nurs- ing school.

For more information about Operation Classroom/Operation Doctor, log on to www.operationclassroom.org

“Africa has been a great blessing,” Wagner said. “You come back with a deeper understanding of the recovery task ahead.”

“U-M-C, U-M-C”

United Methodists together

Global & Mission News

March 2006

Abingdon Press released a book this past fall on the life and work of famed India missionary E. Stanley Jones, written by Stephen A. Graham, a political science professor at the Univer- sity of Indianapolis.

Graham has written a chrono- logical account of the life and ministry of Jones’s life (1884- 1973) for a broad audience. In Ordinary Man Extraordinary Mission: The Life and Work of E. Stanley Jones, Jones’s life was lived in the context of the historical, political and religious events of his day. In particular, Jones’s life and ministry occurs against the backdrop of the Chris- tian missionary movement of the late 19th and early 20th cen- turies, the aftermath of World War I, the dif- ferent phases of the In- dian independence movement, the origins of Japanese imperial- ism and militarism in the Pacific during the 1930s and 1940s, and finally, American do- mestic and international politics following World War II.

Jones, a native of Maryland, surrendered himself to Jesus Christ as a teenager and gradu- ated from Asbury College in Wilmore, Ky.

His most notable best-selling book, The Christ of the Indian Road (1925), propelled him onto the world stage as an extraor- dinary advocate for the Kingdom of God, who became known as the most universally admired mission- ary evangelist of the 20th century.

During his ministry, Jones wrote almost 30 books.

Graham will be at Cokesbury Bookstore on Saturday, April 29 (10 a.m. to Noon) for a book sign- ing. His biography of E. Stanley Jones is available at Cokesbury Christian Store, 8808 E. 116th St. in Fishers, Ind., or online at www.cokesbury.com or by calling toll-free 800-672-1789.
President Bush committed to ending genocide in Darfur

President George W. Bush told reporters on Feb. 17 that he is committed to taking the actions necessary to end the genocide in Darfur. The President’s words are a welcome acknowledgement that the U.S. government has heard the call from Americans to protect those who are being hurt throughout the world.

According to David Rubenstein, coordinator of the Save Darfur Coalition including United Methodists, “This is an extremely important step, one which all Darfur advocates have been urging for nearly two years.” The President said that up until now his Administration’s plan had been “to encourage African Union troops to try to bring some sense of security to these poor people that are being herded out of their villages and just terribly mistreated.”

While “the African Union’s effort was welcome,” Bush continued, “it didn’t achieve the objective. We need more troops.” The African Union (AU) cease-fire monitoring force is currently the only line of defense, yet it is insufficient to protect millions of Darfur men, women and children. The AU forces’ lack of the necessary resources and capacity to for this mission is acknowledged in the Administration’s acceptance of the need for a strong international peacekeeping force to protect civilians.

Rubenstein said real peace and security in Darfur is going to require both a United Nations peacekeeping force in the long term, and increased NATO aid (a “bridging force”) to support the African Union in the short term.

$514 million requested

The President took another important step on Feb. 17 by submitting to Congress an emergency supplemental funding request of $514 million for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid programs in Sudan. Also, Senators Biden and Brownback introduced a resolution calling for NATO help for the AU mission and for implementation of a no-fly zone in Darfur.

Rubenstein said these combined actions represent a major shift in momentum toward providing people of Darfur with the security and protection they so desperately need.

“IT IS imperative to remember, however, that beyond these important steps on the path, many more will be required before security is achieved for innocent Darfurians,” he said.

Steidle coming to Indiana

In conjunction with this announcement, the Save Darfur Coalition also announced that Brian Steidle, a former Marine captain who currently is investigating war crimes in Darfur for the International Criminal Court, will be speaking in Bloomington, Ind., March 30-31, and on Sunday, April 2 in Fort Wayne during both 8:30 and 9:50 a.m. worship services at Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Steidle served as the U.S. representative to the African Union’s peacekeeping mission in Darfur from September 2004 to February 2005.

As one of only three Americans serving with a coalition of African representatives, Capt. Steidle speaks from a unique and personal perspective about witnessing mass murder, rape and other atrocities in Darfur sponsored by the Sudanese government and perpetrated by its paramilitary allies, the Janjaweed militias.

According to Beth Reilly and her pastor, the Rev. Brian Wittwer, Aldersgate will join the Fort Wayne faith community in a “Darfur Genocide: An Interfaith Response.”

Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Fort Wayne community will gather to hear Steidle and then will be invited to respond to the Darfur crisis by writing postcards to President Bush to support the Million Voices Campaign, sponsored by Save Darfur.

For more information about the coalition, log on to www.savedarfur.org.

UMCOR provides peanut plants to Darfurians

Halima Grang Shole plants peanuts on land outside a camp in the South Darfur region of Sudan. With the rainy season approaching in the area, the United Methodist Committee on Relief helps keep hope alive by supplying farm tools and seeds to the displaced families. This new agriculture program is funded in part by a large gift from Ginghamsburg United Methodist Church in Tipp City, Ohio. United Methodists can get involved in these ministries through giving to UMCOR Advance #184526, Sudan Emergency.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Citing a church policy regarding meeting in cities that are home to professional sports teams with Native American names, The United Methodist Commission on the General Conference has retracted its selection of Richmond as the site of the 2012 General Conference and named Tampa as the new meeting site.

The 2012 General Conference will be held April 25 to May 4 in the 600,000 square foot Tampa Convention Center.

At the time of the initial selection, commission members were unaware that Richmond is home to the Richmond Braves, a minor league baseball team affiliated with the Atlanta Braves.

The General Conference is The United Methodist Church’s top legislative body. Every four years, nearly 1,000 delegates from all over the world gather to set church discipline and vote on hundreds of issues related to church life.

A resolution passed by the 2004 General Conference called for United Methodist agencies and organizations to avoid holding meetings and events in cities that sponsor sport teams using Native American names and symbols. “The United Methodist Church rejects the use of Native American names and symbols for sport teams, and considers the practice a blatant expression of racism,” stated the resolution.

Tampa was a finalist in the original search process for the 2012 General Conference. When the commission reopened its search, negotiations resulted in Tampa offering the strongest proposal, Murphy-Geiss said.

World Methodist Conference set for July in South Korea

LAKE JUNALUSKA, N.C. (UMNS) – United Methodists from around the world gather to worship together and fully participate in the things which God will accomplish in and through our lives. The 4,200 delegates from 140 countries are expected to join forces to to so many of our local congregations around the globe, we have a great opportunity to celebrate.”

“We celebrate the overwhelming generosity of the people of The United Methodist Church,” said Lackore. “Explaining that total giving in 2005 was $85 million more than 2004, a 53.6 percent increase, Lackore reported that $80 million of the increase was given for tsunami and hurricane relief efforts.

Fifteen annual conferences were recognized for participating at the 100 percent level of all apportioned funds, an increase of three over the previous year. Lackore noted the faithfulness of several annual conferences in furnishing the conditional covenant of apportioned giving, citing the Mississippi and Louisiana Conferences that, in the midst of extreme devastation and hardship, maintained their apportioned giving at or slightly above their 2004 levels. The Alabama-West Florida, Florida, and Texas Conferences — greatly impacted by the hurricane season as well — were recognized for maintaining or slightly increasing their participation rate in apportioned giving.

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Editor’s note: United Methodist Publishing House in the World Methodist Council is underwritten by your support of the Inter-Denominational Cooperation Fund apportionment. For more information, please visit www.umcgiving.org or contact InfoServ online at www.UMC.org (click on “Questions”).

Information on the conference is available by contacting the World Methodist Council, P.O. Box 518, Lake Junaluska, N.C. 28745, or going to www.worldmethodiscouncil.org. Travel details are available by calling Travelink at 800-227-5680 or 828-252-8484 or going online to www.travelinkonline.com.
A program seeks to call young people into ordained ministry

By Linda Green

A UMNS Report

A new program will partially address pastoral leadership concerns in the United Methodist Church and other denominations by cultivating young candidates for ministry vocations.

The program, “Calling Congregations,” will organize churches in grass-roots programs to find and support the next generation of pastoral leaders for Christian denominations. It is being launched by the Atlantic-based Fund for Theological Education with a $6 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., based in Indianapolis.

“Calling Congregations” will be rolled out later this year in the U.S. Midwest, with additional regions being added in 2007 and 2008.

A broad range of mainline denominations and other faith traditions are concerned about multigenerational clergy in the future, according to Melissa Wiginton, a United Methodist and vice president for ministry programs and planning at the Fund for Theological Education. The fund wants to help congregations understand opportunities related to ordained leadership and encourage them to call forth gifted, young candidates for ministry.

Growing need for pastors

The concern stems from the fact that as baby boomers retire, a need is growing for pastors, especially younger ones, she said. “It makes sense that churches get stronger when they have multigenerational clergy,” Wiginton said in a news release. “In today’s environment, we’ve learned that potential pastors need encouragement at an earlier age, for a longer period of time, and from a wider range of institutions and individuals than ever before.”

Quality leadership

Denominations also are concerned about developing quality leadership. Much like in the business world, the need exists for high-quality leaders, Wiginton said. Businesses want leaders who are smart, possess integrity, are creative and can lead. Churches want someone with those qualities but also someone who can “think theologically about the hard questions that we have to grapple with at this time,” she said.

Craig Dykstra, senior vice president for religion at the Lilly Endowment, noted that “congregations are critical to the faith maturation and vocational discernment of young men and women,” and the grant to the Fund for Theological Education “is an investment in engaging congregations more deeply in this work of developing future leaders for the church.

The Fund for Theological Education is a national advocate for excellence and diversity in Christian ministry and theological scholarship. It provides $1.2 million annually in fellowships to support future pastors and scholars, and also provides a network of support for gifted young people from all denominations and racial and ethnic backgrounds.

National network

The Calling Congregations program will establish a national network of 500 congregations and church-related institutions from four regions across the country by 2009. The congregations will be members of an ecumenical partnership committed to supporting vocational discernment among their young church members with particular emphasis on consideration of ordained ministry.

Wiginton said the fund will provide congregations with tools to help young people address the question: What will I do with my life in light of my faith? The program will also help congregations, churches and church-related organizations with nurturing youth gifted for ministry, vocational discernment and the exploration of the call to ministry among young people.

Assistance will be provided through workshops and conferences, national training for adults mentoring youth, grants for local projects, Web-based resources, youth scholarships for special events and up to four fellowships annually matching a congregation’s financial support toward tuition and living expenses for a young church member.

For more information on the Calling Congregations effort, contact Kerry Traubert at 404-727-1170 or kitraubert@thefund.org.

Linda Green serves as a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

By Linda Bloom

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil (UMNS) – Churches have new opportunities to influence global policies and “bring a moral voice to the world,” but that cannot happen unless they relate to each other more closely, according to the leader of the World Council of Churches.

“We can no longer separate ethics and ecclesiology, the search for unity of the church and the unity of mankind,” said the Rev. Samuel Kobia, a Methodist pastor from Kenya and the WCC’s chief executive. “They are closely intertwined with each other.”

Kobia delivered his report Feb. 15 to participants at the World Council of Churches’ 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre. Besides the 18-member official United Methodist delegation, a number of United Methodists are attending the assembly as participants in the “mutual” – an informal, multi-day gathering of workshops, discussions and exhibits – and are present in some other capacity.

During the Feb. 14 opening worship, Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania took up the assembly’s theme of “Justice and Mission” and noted the “transformative journey (of) our church communities cannot occur on the basis of criteria occasionally proposed by fashion andogue, but through the guidance of ‘the gospel of grace.’”

In Kobia’s opinion, an ecumenical movement that is open to signs of God’s transformative grace must be grounded in spirituality, take ecumenical formation and youth seriously, work for transformative justice, take the risks to develop new and creative ways of working, and firmly put relationships at the center.

It considers the spiritual base of the ecumenical movement to be the “festa da vida, the feast of life” – a grace and invitation from God. “The wonder of grace is that it is a gift, which we don’t deserve, a reward which we don’t earn, but it is freely given and is ours for the partaking.”

Kobia issued a strong call for the nurturing and involvement of young people in the ecumenical movement. Just as an earlier generation of young adults created today’s movement, so must that opportunity for participation be transmitted to future generations.

Churches must build unity, reach young people, WCC leader says

“The very large extent, our disunity as churches is due to our incapacity to practice this genuine sharing of gifts.”

– Samuel Kobia

“A UMNS photo by Pamela Crosby, World Council of Churches.

The Rev. Samuel Kobia speaks at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Kobia is a Methodist pastor from Kenya and the WCC’s chief executive.

To a very large extent, our disunity as churches is due to our incapacity to practice this genuine sharing of gifts.”

– Samuel Kobia

Young people need opportunities to experience the joy of working and praying with others from different traditions and different contexts,” he said. “They need support and mentoring to participate fully in ecumenical gatherings with their sometimes intimidating elders.

“We need to go out to where young people are, to schools and universities. We need to be willing to change to respond to the demands of young people. We must offer opportunities to know and learn from others through scholarships and travel. At a time when information technology is forever advancing, we must enable our youth to interact more deeply and to discover creative ways of using virtual spaces for ecumenical formation.”

“To a very large extent, our disunity as churches is due to our incapacity to practice this genuine sharing of gifts.”

More than 3,000 participants – representing nearly all Christian traditions and all geographic regions – attended the assembly, which ended Feb. 23.

More information can be found at www.wcc-assembly.info, the official assembly Web site.
The next generation...

By Catherine Koziatek

In this third article of our year-long series in celebration of the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women, I am pleased to introduce you to a group of women who value intellectual exploration and the sanctuary of intellectual exploration, dialogue and discussion. I see this each week. I get to be a part of it.

In fact, it’s fun to get a peek into another person’s mind – to understand what makes that person tick, to see how diverse lives find their way to the same pew and altar. It’s a joy to be able to say, “Here’s what I think – and not because I’m the pastor!”

Is your church a people and a place where open minds are welcomed and cherished? It’s incredible to see the wonder of so many awkward, strange, downtrodden, successful, insightful, caring and hopeful people worshipping, praying and reading together. I’ve got to believe that’s one of our greatest witnessed to God’s awesome grace – the very fact that we can learn from each other as we live out the faith Jesus taught us.

Todd Outcalt serves as senior pastor of Calvary United Methodist Church in Brownsburg, Ind.

Pastors must set pace to boost church giving

By Dwight S. Busacca
Special Contributor

After serving as a pastor in two churches, and then serving as a denominational agency staff member, I am convinced there is no shortage of money in United Methodist churches.

Some pastors and congregations may say, “We only have 100 to 200 members, and we are unable to pay our World Service or Conference Benevolence apportionments, to say nothing of giving to General Advance Specials.” Then a new pastor is assigned to that parish and the same church suddenly pays all of its apportionments and gives to Advance Specials. Let me share with you my personal experience.

The first church that I served after graduating from seminary had about 100 members when I was assigned there. They had serious financial problems:

- The church received – in today’s currency – $10,000 a year as a “mission church.”
- It had a furnace that leaked gas. (If the city had known this, they would have closed our doors).
- There was no organ for worship, only handpianos.
- The church tower had serious water leaks which ruined the inside plaster.
- The tithing program gave them confidence in themselves and what they could accomplish.
- Some persons will say, “If you challenge people to give, you will lose members.” As a matter of fact, we grew in size from 100 to 150 members in this same period.

Speak effectively

After four years the conference moved me to another parish with about 325 members. The congregation greatly needed an educational unit. I spoke periodically in sermons of the role of giving and the challenge of tithing. Soon we built a new educational unit and paid for it in full. Since we needed more space and capacity for worship, on the same day we burned the mortgage for the educational unit, we broke ground for a major expansion of our sanctuary and the installation of a new organ.

Again, this was done without any help from outside fund-raising agencies, but with periodic sermon comments and illustrations of stewardship and tithing. Emphasis on giving did not hurt us, for we grew from 325 members to 750.

In order to set the pace, the pastor must be a tither and speak effectively about tithing to the congregation.

After serving these two churches as pastor, I worked as a general church agency staff member and observed pastors coming into parishes that had not paid World Service and Conference Benevolence apportionments or given to General Advance Specials. Suddenly, under the dynamic and creative leadership of a new pastor, the churches paid all of their World Service funds and moved on to give to Advance Special programs as well.

What made the change? The congregations remained the same; the difference was in the pastoral leadership.

I am convinced. There is no shortage of money in United Methodist churches. There may be a shortage of leadership or a shortage of challenge, but not a shortage of money.

Dr. Dwight S. Busacca serves as a former mission-development staff member of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. He lives in Lebanon, Ohio.

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God’s spirit moving in North Indiana

By Ed Fenstermacher

Paula Shrock, a member of our conference prayer team, recently received an interesting e-mail. It said God was bringing revival to Indiana and that it would start in the northeast corner of the state. Could it be? Will The United Methodist Church be a part of such a revival? A look at what’s happening in United Methodist congregations on the south side of Fort Wayne suggests that the UMC is in the middle of the action.

By the end of 2004, Christ United Methodist Church, once a thriving suburban church averaging nearly 300 worshippers, was in the heart of Fort Wayne’s south side, with a worship attendance of fewer than 100 people. Its pastor, the Rev. Jill Wright, and a few lay people have been praying for a year and a half that the church would be open to the leading of God and would be brought visitors from God.

First a couple, Sergio and Janie Reyes, who had planted a fledgling Hispanic church that was in need of a new home, came to Christ UMC and was adopted by the congregation. (See the March 2005 Vital Signs article online at www.nicumc.org.)

Since then, both have joined the church where they continue to lead the church’s Spanish-language service, which recently had 90 people in attendance—as many people as the whole church averaged the prior year.

Come as you are

Last fall, Wright and the Reyes launched a third “Come as You Are” Sunday service. A worship team of Hispanics, African Americans and Anglos initially led this high-energy, praise service, but God appeared to have a different plan.

A few months ago, God once again answered the prayers of the church and brought Jeff Thomas, an African-American pastor. Thomas, who still leads his own Apostolic congregation, says that he was driving past Christ UMC when the Holy Spirit told him to stop, that he needed to be a part of the ministry going on there. Like the Reyes, he too was embraced by the church. His mantra: “If we do anything that doesn’t attract one person, we need to question continuing to do it,” has become the Rev. Wright’s mantra as well. The two of them can canvass the church’s neighborhood inviting people to try the life-changing “Come as Your Are” worship service.

After being approved by the Rev. Lamar Imses, Fort Wayne District Superintendent, Thomas is now doing most of the preaching at the Sunday 11 a.m. service. What are the results of all of this? The service is averaging 40 to 50 people each week and is attracting unchurched, unemployed, alcoholics and people who have spent time in prison—real people, in search of a real God.

Open Arms

The story is similar two miles away at Open Arms, a second ministry site of Good Shepherd UMC. This site, located in a former Unitarian church that was closed in the 1980s, was opened in 2003 in a new construction made up of a similar group of formerly unchurched, hard-living people. It, too, has three weekly worship services.

Its original service is led by Donovan Coley, a Jamaican Presbyterian missionary. Soon after Good Shepherd had launched Open Arms, Coley was driving past the church, saw the sign “Open Arms,” and felt God calling him to be a part of the ministry. He and his family have been there ever since. Now the service he helps lead has people worshiping from seven different countries. (See July 2004 Vital Signs online at www.nicumc.org.)

Like Christ UMC, Open Arms has a Sunday afternoon Spanish-language service, that is led by Leonardo Flores. Open Arms has added recently its third Sunday worship service—a high-energy, praise service. This new congregation is partially composed of members from a displaced black Assembly of God congregation.

In the past month, the Holy Spirit has moved again, this time at Hope UMC, an open-country church located several miles south of Open Arms. This predominately Anglo congregation lead by the Rev. John Randall, voted to launch a Hispanic congregation. Once again, God has brought the most unexpected leader in a man named Crecendio Barahona.

Barahona, already leads a Spanish-language church on Fort Wayne’s south side, but felt called to start another one toward Decatur. Already he has gathered a half-dozen Hispanic families, has begun a new worship service in the church and prayer a group at Hope.

No doubt, God’s spirit is moving. Praise God!

Ed Fenstermacher serves as Associate Director for Church Development and Revitalization in the North Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church. (ed@nicumc.org)

Fourth Epworth Institute set for July 9-14 at Oakwood Center in Syracuse

The Epworth Institute is scheduled for July 9-14 on Lake Wawasee at the Oakwood Retreat and Conference Center in Syracuse, Ind.

The Epworth Institute is primarily for clergy under age 45 with a minimum of two years full-time ministry under appointment, but all United Methodist clergy are welcome. The purpose of the Epworth Institute is for young United Methodist clergy to be grounded in solid Wesleyan theology, educated in the sound academic foundation beneath Wesleyan theology, and afford the opportunity to develop networks of mutual support and provided high-quality continuing education.

Classes by highly-acclaimed professors are scheduled for each morning; afternoons are open for recreation and family activities; and a worship service is held each evening. The faculty for 2006 includes Dr. Elmer M. Cobb teaching “Wesley’s Trinitarian Vision of the Christian Faith,” Dr. William R. Boulton teaching “The ABC’s of Preaching” and Dr. Randy L. Maddox teaching “Wesley’s Holistic Theology of Salvation.”

Preaching each evening will be Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr. from the Holston Conference. Tuition is $149. Spouses of students are welcome to attend all sessions of the Institute, and childcare will be available each morning for children over age two.

To register or to receive scholarship information, please call 317-336-9729, write to 7995 East 31st Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219, e-mail confessingumc@qwest.net or visit the Web site at http://confessingumc.org/epworth_institute_2006.htm.

Counseling center to offer wellness seminar for clergy

Buchanan Pastoral Counseling Center, a part of Methodist Hospital and Clarian Health Partners will be offering a Wellness Seminar for clergy. This two-day seminar will be offered at Clarian West Hospital in Avon and will be on May 30-31.

Dr. Jacqueline Chandler of the Buchanan staff and Dr. David Holling, director of Buchanan, will lead this event. Other professionals from the healthcare community will participate. This event will address physical health, but will include much more. Assessment, planning and goal setting will occur in a variety of areas: spiritual, emotional, psychological, and relational wellness.

Overnight accommodations and most meals will be provided to participants. A nominal registration fee is required, and the number of participants for this pilot event is limited. For more information, a brochure or to register, contact Buchanan Pastoral Counseling in Indianapolis at 317-962-8613.

About the One Great Hour of Sharing and UMCOR

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is observed by United Methodists on the fourth Sunday in Lent but you can give all year around. This year the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Sunday is March 26.

The OGHS offering supports ongoing work of the United Methodists Committee on Relief. Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing allow UMCOR to work efficiently and effectively in disaster response, hunger and poverty ministries, and refugee ministries around the world. UMCOR does not receive support from World Service. Give generously in thanks for all that God has given you.

To order One Great Hour of Sharing resources: Call toll free 1-888-346-3862 or log on to www.umcgiving.org and click on “Special Sundays.” For more information about UMCOR, log on to www.umcor.org.
KIDS HOPE USA has identified in more than 30 denominations, including the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 2971 West Kem Rd., at the Mt. Olive United Methodist Church in Frankfort, Ind., with burial in the Kilmore Cemetery. Condolences can be sent to Evelyn Beedle, 5626 E. La Baker, Linda White, Barbara North and Melanie Allen; 26 grandchildren, Paul, Deborah and John; 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Condolences are with John Cockrell.

One child, one hour, one church, one school

KIDS HOPE USA is to hold May 6 workshop at Marion Church

The North Indiana Conference will host a KIDS HOPE USA day-long workshop on Saturday, May 6, at the Mt. Olive United Methodist Church, 2971 West Kem Rd., in Marion, Ind.

With active mentoring ministries in 327 churches in 27 states in more than 30 denominations, including United Methodists, KIDS HOPE USA has identified several factors that are essential when a church is serious about engaging and involving neighborhood children and families.

Key to the program is the concept of one child mentored one hour in one church partnering with one school.

According to Virgil Gulker, KIDS Hope founder and executive director, there are 63 Indiana congregations participating in the KIDS Hope USA program. Of these, 14 are United Methodist.

For more information and answers to your general information only and medical advice, ask your doctor to set a specific treatment plan.


A health tip for better living

High cholesterol doesn’t discriminate

Keeping your cholesterol low is important no matter what your age or gender. One out of every two men and one out of every three women will develop heart disease sometime in their life. You can reduce your risk by lowering your cholesterol level.

Follow a diet low in saturated and trans fats.
Be physically active.
Maintain a healthy weight, and
Don’t smoke.
If you are age 20 or older, you also need to have your blood cholesterol measured regularly. It’s best to have a test done that gives information about your total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol and triglycerides.

Anyone can be the victim of high cholesterol. If you determine your LDL cholesterol needs lowered, work with your doctor to set a treatment plan.

2005 giving for hurricane relief surpasses $62 million

As of Dec. 31, 2005, the United Methodist Committee on Relief reports that giving for hurricane relief during the year totaled $62,736,743.

Most of the money will be filtered through the annual conferences and be used for work in Guatemalan, El Salvador, Mexico and Nicaragua. Decisions about the expenditures will be made in April at the agency’s board meeting.

UMCOR already distributed more than $6 million. Paul Durak, deputy general secretary for the General Board of Global Ministries, which oversees UMCOR, anticipates a four-year recovery effort.

For more information or to register, call 800-877-5138 ext. 13 for Diane Kelley. For more information about KIDS HOPE USA, log on to www.kidshopeusa.org.
outdoor MINISTRIES

Each summer Outdoor Ministries provides quality Christian camping experiences for youth and adults alike. Whether you attend a traditional cabin camp this summer or embark on an out of state adventure, one fundamental premise exists, each camper is accepted for who they are and provided with a nurturing environment where they can truly appreciate Christ’s unconditional love.

For more information about summer 2006 and for campsite specific details please visit our website.

www.sicumc.org/gocamp 1.800.919.8160

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