



THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
**CENTRAL CONFERENCE MATTERS**

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Bishop Ciriaco Francisco  
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**Statement on Facilitated Conversation Re: Special General Conference  
Impact Across the Worldwide Connection**

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The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters reflects the makeup of the worldwide United Methodist Church, with representation from each Central and Jurisdictional Conference.

George Howard  
Staff Representative  
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- 14 people from Africa
- 9 people from Europe/Eurasia
- 3 from the Philippines
- 14 people from the United States

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Going into the 2019 meeting in the Philippines, the officers knew that the Special General Conference on homosexuality had changed dynamics and conversation within the worldwide church. It would be important to provide safe and open space for sharing and listening to each other about the impact of St Louis across our diverse settings and contexts. Bishop Ruckert (Germany), Bishop Khegay (Eurasia), Bishop Francisco (Philippines), Simon Mafunda (lay leader for Zimbabwe) and George Howard (United States) met to develop a process to engage members in listening, conversation and reflection.

Working together and building relationships with each other over the past four years proved to be a great asset as people shared openly and honestly with each other—revealing pain and the sense of being dismissed. Many wondered aloud if our worldwide unity could withstand the pain resulting from St Louis.

While the views shared were in marked conflict, no animosity surfaced among members of the Committee. Rather the group worked with a strong commitment to deepen understanding across cultural divides and to strengthen relationships and the global mission of The United Methodist Church.