



THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
CENTRAL CONFERENCE MATTERS

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Press Release—Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

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March 26, 2019

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In 2016, the General Conference approved the addition of five new bishops in Africa starting in 2021 (Petition 60274), with placement made according to specific criteria: number of churches and clergy; size of episcopal area; number of annual conferences and lay membership.

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A task force of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (SCCCM) was designated to study the number and make up of central conferences in Africa and the number and placement of episcopal areas inside each central conference. The task force held two consultations with representatives from each annual conference and provisional annual conference in Africa. The conversations in Harare, Zimbabwe in August of 2017, and Freetown, Sierra Leone in August of 2018 along with analysis of the data led to the following recommendations to the 2020 General Conference, where delegates will make final decisions.

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That General Conference shall authorize, beginning in 2021, four central conferences in Africa as follows:

- a. Central Africa Central Conference—consisting of Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zambia
- b. East Africa Central Conference—consisting of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda
- b. Southern Africa Central Conference—consisting of Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe
- c. West Africa Central Conference—Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone

Furthermore, General Conference shall authorize:

- a. The Central Africa Central Conference to elect two new bishops, bringing the total episcopal areas to six (recommended new episcopal areas created from parts of North Katanga and South Congo episcopal areas).
- b. The East Africa Central Conference to elect one new bishop, bringing the total episcopal areas to two (recommended new episcopal area in Burundi).
- c. The Southern Africa Central Conference to elect one new bishop, bringing the total episcopal areas to five (recommended new episcopal area in Zimbabwe)
- d. The West Africa Central Conference to elect one new bishop, bringing the total episcopal areas to five (recommended new episcopal area in Nigeria)

At its meeting March 26, 2019, **the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters approved the above recommendations with a unanimous vote**, with excitement for the way it will strengthen mission and ministry on the continent of Africa.

On Behalf of the Standing Committee,

Bishop Ciriaco Francisco