



## RELIGION & RACE

General Commission on Religion and Race

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

General Commission on Religion and Race  
Board of Directors

July 19, 2023

### Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops

Dear Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops,

Grace and peace to you.

Please accept this letter as a follow-up to our letter of April 27, 2023, in which we expressed the concerns of the Board of Directors for the General Commission on Religion and Race concerning the Western Jurisdiction's ongoing suspension and treatment of Bishop Minerva Carcaño, regarding complaints filed against her.

In our April 27<sup>th</sup> letter, among other things, we urged you to issue a statement that explains the general nature of the charges, and unless they are minors, either the names or relationship of the complainant(s) to Bishop Carcaño.

We are aware of your [public update about the case, dated May 4, 2023](#), that announced the intention to move the case to a church trial. That update referenced five charges but did not disclose the nature of those charges. We are also aware that you have named a Presiding Officer and Secretary and set the trial date and place.<sup>1</sup>

Now that the matter is a judicial process, we reiterate our call for disclosure of the nature of the charges. As we said in our April 27<sup>th</sup> letter, the Book of Discipline ¶ 2701.4c, allows such a disclosure when there has been “significant disruption to the ... annual conference, or the context of ministry by the judicial matter.” As you well know, this matter has been and is causing significant disruption to the annual conference and the entire denomination. In addition to the concerns raised by MARCHA and the Chinese Caucus of California-Nevada and the Baptist News Global article titled, “What has happened to suspended UMC Latina Bishop?”<sup>2</sup>, there are

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<sup>1</sup> <https://westernjurisdictionumc.org/additional-details-set-for-trial-of-bishop-minerva-carcano/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://baptistnews.com/article/what-has-happened-to-suspended-umc-latina-bishop/>

now publicly published, dueling letters about whether the lengthy suspension or the case is warranted.

Therefore, for transparency and the good of the Annual Conference and denomination, we again strongly urge you to disclose at least the nature of the charges.

We also request answers to the questions posed in our earlier letter. For your ease in identifying the unaddressed questions, they are listed here:

1. How has (and will) the dignity of Bishop Carcaño been preserved during this process?
2. What was the role of the California Nevada Committee on Episcopacy in the complaint process?<sup>3</sup>
3. Since the Jurisdictional Committee on Investigation, which has made the determination to forward five charges for a church trial<sup>4</sup>, has no Hispanic members<sup>5</sup>, how did this result in fair process for Bishop Carcaño?
4. How did you ensure that the Committee on Investigation reflects the “racial, ethnic, and gender diversity”<sup>6</sup> of the jurisdiction?
5. Since the purpose of a suspension of a bishop, according to the Book of Discipline, is “to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church and/or bishop”,<sup>7</sup> what is the nature of the well-being and whose well-being is being protected?<sup>8</sup>
6. As Bishop Carcaño has been prevented from being in contact with persons affiliated with the organization at any level,<sup>9</sup> what mechanisms are in place for her to receive support beyond the elders she has chosen to accompany her during this lengthy and ongoing process? This draconian measure has cut her off from colleagues and others within the denomination who would ordinarily provide her with support and has even prevented her from worshiping in United Methodist Churches.
7. Has this matter been conducted free of even basic conflicts of interest or *appearance* of conflicts? Bishop Carcaño has been a bishop for 19 years and served in three episcopal areas. Other questions in this area include:

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<sup>3</sup> On Dec. 22, 2022, the California Nevada Committee on Episcopacy stated that the recommendation for continued suspension came from the Jurisdictional Committee on Investigation and was ordered by the Jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy.

<sup>4</sup> <https://westernjurisdictionumc.org/update-on-the-suspension-of-bishop-minerva-carcano-upon-committee-work-completion/>

<sup>5</sup> According to the Nominations Report of the Western Jurisdiction, the Jurisdictional Committee on Investigations is predominately white. Full member demographics include 5 white, 1 Asian, and 2 African American members. The alternates are 4 white and 1 African American. <https://westernjurisdictionumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-Public-WJ-Nominations-Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Discipline* ¶ 2703.1

<sup>7</sup> *Discipline* ¶ 413.3(a)

<sup>8</sup> In the absence of information about the nature of the suspension, particularly because the suspension involves a bishop of color who has had a history of calling the denomination to account to act on behalf of migrants and the marginalized, the denomination has been denied her voice on matters of immigration and migration, a key area of her leadership.

<sup>9</sup> *Conference Committee on Episcopacy summarizes process involving Bishop Carcaño*, December 22, 2022, California Nevada Conference of the UMC, Conference Committee on Episcopacy.

- a. Did or do any of the members of the supervisory response team, WJ Committee on Investigation, or WJ Committee on Episcopacy have any conflicts of interest (actual or perceived)?
  - b. Are any bishops in the WJ College truly free of conflicts of interest or the perception of such conflicts – either in favor of or against Bishop Carcaño? In fact, the current President of the College, who has chosen the Presiding Officer for the trial, served under a local church appointment made by Bishop Carcaño in the Desert Southwest Conference.
8. How has the process, as employed thus far, ensured Bishop Carcaño’s presumed innocence, given the lengthy, ongoing, and indefinite suspension and the mandate that she not be in communication with anyone within the denomination, including her physical separation from her colleagues at Jurisdictional Conference?

Finally, we note that both the Presiding Officer and Secretary who were appointed to conduct the trial of Bishop Carcaño are white men. How did you arrive at your decision to appoint two white men? Did you consider any women or persons of color for these roles? Furthermore, we note that the Secretary is from the California Pacific Annual Conference, where Bishop Carcaño once served. Are both men free of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest? What process did you use to determine this?

The GCORR Board of Directors requests that the matter and questions raised in this letter be expedited. We seek a process with full transparency that does not utilize confidentiality to maintain the church in a cloud of suspicion, so that we can ensure that the process is just and fair to all, including Bishop Carcaño.

We look forward to your immediate response.

Signed:



Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi  
President



Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo  
General Secretary

Rev. Dr. Stephen Handy  
Executive Committee Member

Rev. Alka Lyall  
Executive Committee Member

Prof. Framer Mella  
Executive Committee Member

Jen Ihlo, Esq.  
Executive Committee Member

Rev. Zach Anderson  
Executive Committee Member