

CDM ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

SPRING 2018

The CDM Meets in the Spring and Fall

The Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) meets face-to-face two times each year: once in the spring and once in the fall. Otherwise, much of the work of the CDM is carried out by its subcommittees which communicate by email and conference calls continually throughout the year.

This is the report on the 2018 spring meeting, which took place March 22-23, 2018, at Bethel OPC in Wheaton, IL.

GA Report

The CDM's written report to the General Assembly, prepared by the CDM Administrator, was reviewed and approved by the committee before submission to the Stated Clerk. The CDM report includes Short-Term Missions and Disaster Response as well, since the CDM Administrator serves as Coordinator of these areas for the OPC. This year's report was more lengthy than usual due to all the disaster response activities following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Diaconal Funding Requests

Various funding requests were considered. The largest of these was the annual request that comes from the Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM). The CDM is given the opportunity to support diaconal ministry on many of the OPC foreign mission fields, where our missionaries labor in both Word and deed.

This spring, the largest CFM request came from Uganda, the largest foreign mission field in the OPC.

1. The OP Uganda Mission (OPUM) is blessed to run a medical clinic that serves the health needs of the communities where our missionaries serve. The CDM moved to participate in funding the operation of the clinic, the clinic construction, and the new medical doctor, Dr. Flip Baardman, who recently began serving there.
2. The CDM is also participating in the support of the new OPUM facilities engineer, Missionary Mark Van Essendelft, who labors not only in the maintenance of the OPUM property but also as a missionary deacon in Karamoja.
3. The CDM also allotted funds to assist with the cost of drilling wells for the village churches in Mbale.

Refugee Relief

In the area of Refugee Relief, the CDM is thankful to be able to provide funding for the ministry expenses of OPC Evangelist Chris Cashen as he ministers to the needs of refugees who have settled in the vicinity of Clarkston, GA. The CDM is also considering sending additional funds to the Greek Evangelical Church in Volos, Greece, where our friend, Pastor Meleti Meletiades, is ministering to 150 more refugees who have moved to the area.

Disaster Response

The CDM received in-depth reports on the on-going hurricane relief efforts in Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico in response to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in the fall of 2017. Hundreds of volunteers have given of their time, talents, and energy, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations have been received. In Houston, dozens of homes have been restored through the work of volunteers and the leadership of an oversight committee and various coordinators. The work in Houston is anticipated to continue through the end of this calendar year. It was reported that the opportunity to serve in Florida has now come to an end. The reports from Puerto Rico reveal that the ways in which we can tangibly come alongside our brothers and sisters in their post-hurricane suffering are just now coming to light.

Given the significant ongoing opportunities for disaster response work, the CDM moved to re-designate \$200,000 from the Haiti Earthquake Fund (sitting dormant for over eight years) to the General Disaster Response Fund. Furthermore, the CDM committed \$100,000 from the General Disaster Response Fund to help bring a minister to Houston to serve as a Harvey Outreach Evangelist for the purpose of engaging the hearts and minds of those who lived through the trauma of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath.

Diaconal Training

The CDM received reports on the plans currently underway for the fourth OPC Presbytery Diaconal Summit (PDS IV), to be held in October 2019. The next OPC National Diaconal Summit will hopefully occur in 2021.

Obadiah Gifts

The CDM voted upon sending a general disbursement to the OPC's retired ministers and their widows from the Obadiah Fund. As it has every year since the Obadiah Fund was established in 2007, the CDM moved, with great pleasure, to send a "one-time" financial gift to each of the 113 eligible retired ministers or their widows. This was the last time for the CDM to exercise this responsibility. The Obadiah Fund ministry will be transferred to the new OPC Committee on Ministerial Care later this year.

Resolution of Thanks

Finally, it is with mixed feelings that the CDM sees the departure of two long-time members – sadness to see them go, yet thankfulness for their significant contributions toward the work of diaconal ministries in the OPC.

Deacon Bob Wright, Jr.

Deacon Bob Wright, Jr., will step down from the CDM after serving seven consecutive terms (21 years!). The CDM recognized his service in the following resolution adopted into its minutes:

Dear Bob,

Your unparalleled tenure of service on the CDM is testimony to your love for the Church of Jesus Christ, particularly the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and her ministry on behalf of Christ;

Your model of diaconal ministry in a missionary setting has been defining for our committee in its pursuit of a “missionary deacon” component of our ministry;

Your diverse gifts and amazing resourcefulness have provided support for the ministry of Word and prayer on the mission field in utterly indispensable ways;

Your personal sacrifice over many years of ministry under very demanding circumstances has been an inspiring example to us of radically self-denying service;

Your extensive experience in third world ministry, and your wide reading and reflection on the subject, have consistently provided an invaluable perspective to our committee;

And your personal warmth and wit have time and again refreshed the hearts of your brothers during many a long hour of deliberation.

Bob, we are deeply grateful for your twenty-one years of service on the Committee on Diaconal Ministries, and your nearly twenty years of service as a Missionary Deacon. We are thankful that by such service you have gained “a good standing for yourself, and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:13). And we look forward with you to hearing the commendation of our master one day: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25: 21, 23).

Rev. Lendall Smith

Rev. Lendall Smith also plans to step down from the CDM after serving four consecutive terms (12 years). For the last nine years, Lendall has served as the President of the CDM, aptly guiding us through heavy waters. The CDM recognized his service in the following resolution adopted into its minutes:

Dear Lendall,

Your heart of compassion for the needy within reach of our committee's ministry has been an inspiring example to all of us of the heart of our Lord Jesus for the poor;

Your steadfast devotion to the diverse and demanding responsibilities of our committee has been energizing - and occasionally convicting (!) - to us all;

Your eye for good order and attention to detail has facilitated a long succession of accomplishments, and preserved us from many a misstep in fulfillment of our duties;

Your vision of an enlarged field of the service to our denomination has contributed to an unprecedented season of growth for our committee;

Your godly character and reputation within the OPC have lent credibility and winsomeness to our committee's relationship to the larger Church;

Your humility toward those you have lead as chairman has been a compelling example of the servant leadership of our Savior in his earthly ministry;

Your personal warmth and wit have time and again refreshed the hearts of your brothers during many a long hour of deliberation;

In short, your "fullness of wisdom and of the Spirit" (Acts 6:3) have exemplified for all of us the true qualifications for diaconal service in the church of Jesus Christ.

Lendall, we are deeply grateful for your twelve years of continuous service on the Committee on Diaconal Ministries, and your nine years of service as our president. We view your retirement with a deep sense of loss, yet with the happy awareness that by your diaconal service with us you have gained "a good standing for yourself, and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13). And we look forward with you to the commendation of our master one day: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25: 21, 23).

The fall meeting of the CDM is scheduled for November 1-2, 2018, in Willow Grove, PA. Please pray for your committee in its many labors.

Respectfully submitted,

David Nakhla, Administrator
OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries
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