

Report to the Synod of 2014
From: The Unity Women's Desk

Mission, Purpose and Values—the Unity Women's Desk (UWD) was created by resolutions of the 2002 Unity Synod. The purpose of the UWD **“is the coordination of the resources of women (spiritual, financial, intellectual, and material) at the congregational level to affect global change by raising up the objectives of women and celebrating their successes.”** The UWD focuses on the following issues, which were identified at the Unity Women's Consultations of 1995, 2002, and 2008: Education, Violence against Women, Employment and Overcoming Poverty, Health Issues of Women and Children, Parenting for Justice, and examining the Biblical Imperatives for Justice for Women. Thus far we have addressed these issues by granting scholarships, making micro-loans, and supporting projects that women have developed that are working in their areas but need additional funding.

Since 2012, we have awarded scholarships to over 40 girls and women. Some of the scholarships are in their third year since we support the applicants until they complete their studies whenever possible. We have also made five micro-loans to Lending Circles and individuals for businesses such as a sewing school, a fishing business, a farming business, and a meal grinding business. In addition, we have helped to financial training seminars for women involved in helping other women to succeed. Perhaps our best-known activity is producing a PrayerList each month with concerns and offerings of gratitude from women around the world.

We have been very blessed that our administrative costs have been minimal. Our coordinator and office assistant are both volunteers. Our office space has been donated by the Salem Congregation, and our brochures have thus far been printed *gratis* by the Moravian Ministries Foundation. Our video presentation was produced by a talented Moravian friend, Br. Brian Faulkner, who was intrigued by the task we are attempting, and our website was developed and is maintained by a Moravian couple, Kathleen and Michael Brady, who have long been interested in empowering women.

The Unity Women's Desk works under the auspices of the Unity Board of the world-wide Moravian Church. The Advisory Board is composed of four women—one from each of the four Regions of the Unity. Sr. Sallie Greenfield from the American Region, Sr. Angelene Swart from Africa, Sr. Muriel Held from the Caribbean, and the Reverend Erdmute Frank from Europe. In addition, we have Sub-Desk Coordinators in each of the four Regions, and we have Provincial Coordinators in each Province, Mission Province, and Mission Area.

We are currently planning the Fourth Unity Women's Consultation to be held February 18-25, 2016 in Paramaribo, Suriname. We will be bringing women from around The Unity together to discuss the above-name issues and develop strategies for helping women to overcome the impediments to justice for women.

The UWD was assigned the task of accomplishing Resolution # of the 2009 Unity Synod and Resolution #12 of the 2012 Unity Board meeting in early 2012. These resolutions call for the development of a resource to “assist pastors dealing with violence against women and advocacy, fighting violence against women.” The UWD has been working with the Reverend Dr. Deborah Appler of the Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in

conjunction with the Teofilo Kisanji University seminary staff in Mbeya, Tanzania to develop a resource to be taught to all current and future ministers so that they may be better equipped to deal with violence against women in their congregations and communities. This resource should be available for use later this year.

It is hoped that approval of capital campaigns for the UWD in both the Northern and Southern provinces will be a model for other provinces to raise awareness and funds to continue to expand the work of the UWD. We look forward to the day when every Moravian girl and woman will have access to an education, opportunities to use their God-given talents to benefit the world in which we live, and to live in a just and peaceful world that allows them and their brothers to become the people that God created them to be.