

APPLICATION FORM

United Church Women – Christian Institute for Gender Studies Exchange Matanzas, Cuba October 24 – November 2, 2008

In 2004 the Cuban Council of Churches accepted under its umbrella a new organization called The Christian Institute for Gender Studies (ICEG).

ICEG is a biblical-theological center that has the mission of creating spaces for reflection, training and exchanges on gender relation issues in Cuba, Latin America and the Caribbean. Its main objective is to increase the socio-theological level, the participation of women and men in the debates on gender typical of Latin American communities. With this objective in mind, the center promotes education from an ecumenical gender perspective so as to integrate all the sisters and brothers committed wto the work of the churches and the community.

ICEG encourages interdisciplinary, popular and ecumenical work in Bible and theology with a gender-based approach.

ICEG strives to strengthen the education of women and men encouraging a lively questioning of their realities, their experience and their daily pastoral work based on new theological ideas.

ICEG joins with regional ecumenical processes to analysis current ecclesiastical reality.

ICEG creates spaces for listening to the life stories of people affected by violence in inter-personal relationships so as to articulate the demands for peace that today constitute a call in the social forums of Cuba.

Led by Cuban feminist theologian Ofelia Ortega, the Institute works with former students of the Evangelical Theological Seminary to further the work and role of women in the church and in the community. Most often this involves work with women of local congregations as they come together to analyze the situations of their families, their churches and their communities. Together they develop a plan to address the needs as they see them and in the process build their own sense of self-esteem and ability to positively impact those around them. The Institute develops workshops and follow-up for each community as it pursues its own course of work.

Not unlike the work of our own UCW some of these women's groups turn to the production of traditional handcrafts and through the production and sale have not only responded to the needs of their families but immediately have begun reaching out to the wider community. Support for the elderly, for hospitals and schools are provided by the work of these women's groups in a situation far different than ours in Canada.

A visit between members of the UCW and women involved at every level of the Institute could provide rich opportunities for learning. As women who daily face challenges in family, church and community, as women who struggle to understand and live out their changing roles in society, as women of faith whose lives and work shape faith we have much to learn from each other.

As Canadian women who also struggle to live faithfully in a context of plenty when the majority world lives in a context of scarcity, the opportunity to share with our Cuban sisters offers the possibility of life-changing learning.

Name (as if appears on your passport):

Address:

City:

Province:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Passport number:

Country:

Date and Place of issue:

Expiration Date:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

United Church congregation:

Presbytery:

Conference:

Please briefly describe your motivation for wanting to participate in this exchange exposure visit?

Can you identify particular issues of faith, spirituality or justice engagement that you think will be educated or challenged by this experience?

Briefly describe one or two expectations that you would have for this experience?

Are you active in the local mission/outreach of your United Church congregation and/or UCW? If so, please briefly describe one activity or experience?

Have you had other global experience? If so, please briefly describe your previous experience.

Are you willing to participate in pre-travel orientation and to do pre-travel study as recommended by the organizers?

Will you participate in all of the activities and reflection sessions with the group at all times during the education and exposure visit?

Are you willing to commit to going with “empty hands” as learners, leaving behind any desire to make financial gifts to partners visited?

Do you agree to do post-visit presentations to constituencies of the UCW and the United Church of Canada to further education and advocacy on the situation of global partners and others in Cuba?

During orientation you will be provided with a resource called “Remaining Faithful” which is a guide to reflection, integration and prayer after a short-term experience in another culture. It is designed to be used over the course of one year. Are you willing to use “Remaining Faithful” for the year following your visit to Cuba?

Do you agree to abide by any covenant made within the group regarding follow-up actions and commitments to or on behalf of ICEG?

Will you make time and energy available to plan and implement a follow-up visit from the women of ICEG if that becomes part of an agreement during the visit to Cuba?

Please describe any skills or interest that you have which may be useful to the group? Do you speak any Spanish?

Are you able to share that work of your UCW through words and examples? (i.e. educational programs, outreach projects, craft and handwork projects and others)

Are you adaptable to simple living accommodations and dormitory-style living?

Are you able to meet the financial costs of the visit? Approx. \$2,000 (which includes airfare from Toronto to Havana and all expenses while in Cuba)

Do you have any mobility difficulties? Please be aware that our partners are unable to accommodate wheelchair accessible needs.

Optional Information:

Because the United Church of Canada actively seeks to promote diversity please answer the following three questions *as you are comfortable*.

Age:

Ethnic/Racial identity:

Please fill out the supplemental forms regarding medical information and contact information. Please bear in mind that our Cuban partners may not always be able to meet specific dietary needs.

Send completed application to:

Anne Martin

Congregational, Educational and Community Ministries Unit

The United Church of Canada

3250 Bloor St. West Suite 300

Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

Or Fax: Anne Martin, CECM 416-231-3103

Or email to:

amartin@united-church.ca

APPLICATION DEADLINE JUNE 25th, 2008