

**Peg Birk Appointed Interim President
of The Fund for Theological Education**

Board of Trustees names leadership strategist to guide presidential transition period

ATLANTA, August 3, 2010 – The Board of Trustees of The Fund for Theological Education (FTE), an ecumenical nonprofit that supports future pastors and scholars, has appointed leadership strategist Peg Birk as its interim president, effective September 1. FTE Trustee Florida Smith Ellis has served as the Fund’s acting president since July 2010.

As president and chief executive officer of Interim Solutions in Minneapolis, Birk comes to FTE with a special interest in connections between leadership, faith, education and spirituality, forged in her work with philanthropic, business, nonprofit, governmental and civic organizations.

“Peg Birk’s expertise is grounded in principles of transformative leadership across the public, private and nonprofit sectors,” said the Rev. Dr. Gary V. Simpson, chair of the FTE Board. “Her executive management experience, her understanding of organizational opportunities during transition periods, and her personal commitment to causes that serve the common good make Peg uniquely qualified to lead FTE at this time and to prepare the way for new presidential leadership in 2011.”

Professionally, Birk has served as executive director of the George Family Foundation; interim president for The McKnight Foundation; co-executive director of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation; senior vice president and general counsel for Federated Insurance Companies; city attorney for the City of St. Paul; general counsel for AIG’s U.S. insurance business; and senior government affairs counsel and senior corporate counsel for the St. Paul Companies.

“FTE is indispensable to cultivating a new generation of leaders who impact local communities in countless ways,” said Ms. Birk. “I am honored to work with the Fund’s talented and committed Board and staff, building on a solid foundation and anticipating new leadership.”

Birk has extensive governance experience, which includes service on the McKnight Foundation board of directors; the Hamline University board of trustees; the Dean’s Advisory Council at the University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; the

Minnesota Early Learning Foundation board of directors; the Minnesota Women's Economic Roundtable board of directors; and the Strozzi Institute Advisory Board. She also served as co-chair of the Center for Religious Inquiry with Vice President Walter Mondale at St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis.

A former attorney, Birk earned her doctor of jurisprudence degree from the William Mitchell College of Law and a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Houston. She is a member of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis.

The Fund for Theological Education advocates for excellence and diversity in pastoral ministry and theological scholarship. It supports the next generation of leaders among pastors and scholars, annually providing more than \$1.5 million in fellowships and support to gifted young people from all denominations and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

FTE engages congregations, church-related organizations, educational institutions and other partners in developing capacities to nurture young men and women for vocations in ministry and teaching. For more information, visit www.fteleaders.org.

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