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**Rev. Laura Mariko Cheifetz Named  
Director of FTE Leading Generations Initiative**

***New leadership role will connect and support a growing network  
of pastors, teachers and Christian leaders***

ATLANTA, February 8, 2010 – Rev. Laura Mariko Cheifetz has been named director of the Leading Generations initiative at The Fund for Theological Education (FTE). In this newly created position, Cheifetz will connect the growing network of pastoral leaders, theological educators and Christian leaders who have participated in FTE’s programs, which aim to increase the number of gifted and diverse young people considering vocations as pastors and scholars. She will join the FTE staff on March 15.

FTE has awarded nearly 7,000 fellowships since 1954 and its alumni are leaders in congregations, campuses and communities across North America and around the world.

Cheifetz will also direct grant activities to support Transition into Ministry (TiM), a Lilly Endowment Inc. program that provides leadership development resources to pastors in their earliest years of ministry. TiM helps young pastors move through the often-difficult transition from student to pastor, fostering pastoral leadership practices that enrich congregational life.

A 2001 FTE Ministry Fellow, Cheifetz most recently served as director of the Common Ground Project at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. Common Ground brings together African American, Asian American and Hispanic pastors and young adults to explore vocation and cross-cultural ministry. Previously, she was the director of AADVENT—Asian American Discipleship for Vocational Empowerment, Nurture and Transformation—a McCormick program designed to prepare Asian-American students for transformational leadership in the church and society.

Cheifetz holds a Master of Divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary, a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Western Washington University, and is enrolled in Master of Business Administration studies at North Park University. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

“As we reach across generations of leaders who are serving the work of the church and the needs of society, Laura will bring creativity and commitment to the mission of FTE,” said Dr. Trace Haythorn, president of The Fund for Theological Education. “She understands—as a pastor

and as an FTE alumna—what’s at stake in calling a new generation of leaders to renew the church as ministers, teachers and lay leaders, to change the world in ways that make Christ known, that heals, feeds, tends and prays.”

FTE is an ecumenical, nonprofit advocate 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.

For more information about FTE, visit [www.thefund.org](http://www.thefund.org).

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