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*Whole Leaders for the Whole Church*

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## **SFTS to hold open forum on leadership needs of the church**

**SAN ANSELMO, Calif., Oct. 29** – San Francisco Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Committee on Theological Education will hold an open forum on future leadership needs of the church Nov. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at Alexander Hall.

As seminaries around the country strive to be wise stewards of shrinking resources, the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) hopes to identify goals and strategies for leadership training during the panel discussion, which is part of its scheduled meeting Nov. 16-18 hosted by SFTS. COTE serves as an advocate for theological education, developing and maintaining comprehensive plans as well as supporting seminaries financially on behalf of the PC(USA).

“The overall purpose of the interactive discussion is for all present to gain greater clarity about the emerging leadership needs of the PC(USA) and other mainline denominations,” SFTS President Phil Butin said. “We hope to gain insight into how our seminaries can better concentrate their resources over the next five to ten years to respond to and address those leadership needs.”

Butin, who will step down as SFTS president on Jan. 31, 2010 in order to return to pastoral ministry, remains committed to dialogue among PC(USA) leaders, faculty members and students in order to prepare seminaries to address the future leadership needs of the church. Butin will moderate the evening conversation, which is open to the entire SFTS community and others interested in theological education.

Also expected to participate in the panel discussion are:

- Rev. Dr. Judy Siker, SFTS Vice President for Southern California and Professor of New Testament
- Rev. Ruth Santana-Grace, Executive Presbyter of San Gabriel Presbytery, Southern California
- Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Bullock, President, University of Dubuque
- Rev. Marcia Myers, Director of Vocation, PC(USA)

Following the panel discussion, the floor will be open to comments from other COTE members, including:

- Dr. Steve Hayner (President, Columbia, former President, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship)
- Dr. Ken McFayden (Professor of Ministry and Leadership Development, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond)
- Dr. Elizabeth Liebert (Dean and Professor of Christian Spirituality, SFTS)

The final portion of the forum will be open for those in the audience to ask questions or provide the committee with insights and input. There will be a brief summary conclusion, with results of the discussion factored into the work of the Committee on Leadership Needs.

“Over the past year, I have been a member of a special COTE group focused on discerning the future leadership needs of the PC(USA), and how seminaries can respond to these needs with our educational resources,” Butin said. “In order to thoroughly and interactively involve COTE and the SFTS community, we want to bring together a variety of PC(USA) stewards and stakeholders of theological education for dialogue and prayer.”

During the three-day COTE meetings on the SFTS campus, which are not open to the public, PC(USA) leaders will break into sub-committees to review issues such as interschool and mission cooperation, theological and church concerns, and governance. COTE members will also have the opportunity to attend chapel and have lunch with SFTS faculty, staff and students.

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**San Francisco Theological Seminary**, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) graduate school, has prepared whole leaders for the whole church since 1871. One of the founding members of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, it offers theological degrees at two campuses, in San Anselmo and Pasadena. Its innovative Program in Christian Spirituality is open to clergy and non-ordained individuals. For more information please call SFTS at 1-800-447-8820 in San Anselmo or 1-800-473-8772 in Pasadena. Also find information on our Web site: [www.sfts.edu](http://www.sfts.edu).