I bring you greetings in the name of Jesus Christ on behalf of the nearly 750 member institutions of the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities (IAMSCU). We offer warm congratulations on this 45th anniversary of the Conselho Geral das Instituições Metodistas de Educação (COGEIME). But more than that, we offer a heartfelt word of appreciation to our sister association and colleagues in the ministry of church-related higher education. In fact, IAMSCU owes its existence in no small measure to the efforts of COGEIME and the extraordinary vision that it has fostered for a global perspective on Methodist higher education.

As you know, we can all trace our roots back to a single relatively simple act: In 1748 John Wesley founded the Kingswood School. Like a family tree, we have all emerged from that single trunk. And like family genetics, we all bear certain similarities as a result. Kingswood’s mission was not just to provide educated clergy and an educated church membership, but also to seek out poverty-stricken children in the inner-city of London to give them a quality education. For John Wesley, education
had not only a theological motivation, but a social one as well—to lift the human condition.

COGEIME represents some of the finest educational institutions in Brazil and Latin America, all of which bear those same distinguishing marks of their Wesleyan heritage. But COGEIME also embodies one of the best known and most effective coordinating organizations among the Methodist colleges and universities across the globe. As the conversations began around the concept of a truly global organization for Methodist educational institutions, COGEIME representatives were among the strongest advocates. And in 1991, when IAMSCU was officially established, COGEIME leaders and institutions were among those who celebrated this great Methodist global accomplishment.

The very first IAMSCU conference was held in Rio de Janeiro, in part to recognize the extraordinary role that COGEIME had played in IAMSCU’s founding. Twenty years later in 2011 the IAMSCU Board of Directors gathered in Rio de Janeiro to mark the anniversary and to remember the six triennial conferences that had taken place throughout the world in the interim. Also in 2011, IAMSCU gathered for its seventh conference in Washington, D.C., opening with a special anniversary celebration at the National Cathedral. This conference was attended by educators from around the globe, but none more numerous than the members of COGEIME.

As we look forward to the future of Methodist education across the world, we will continue to rely on the strong arm of support from our sisters and brothers of COGEIME. There is so much important work to be accomplished as we seek to fulfill John Wesley’s vision for Methodist education.