It is with deep admiration and pleasure that I express my congratulations to the Conselho Geral das Instituições Metodistas de Educação (COGEIME) on the occasion of forty-five years of service to Methodist education both in Brazil and throughout the world. Along with the Asociación Latinoamericana de Instituciones Metodistas de Educación (ALAIME), they have been a significant source of leadership for Methodist related educational institutions and have become a great source of unity for these institutions in Latin America. It was in 1984 that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church approved a new mission thrust in education by permitting the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to work with educational institutions throughout the world, which had previously been the province of the General Board of Global Ministries as many of these institutions had been founded by missionaries. It had become clear that Methodist educational institutions had become strong partners in ministry with church structures and in a unique way were forming international educational partnerships with other educational institutions throughout the world. Some of these colleges and universities were now relating to newly formed national Methodist churches and regional church associations. There was a more pressing need to identify each other’s institutions and programs so that we could seek a common educational ministry together and share in the development of new programs that would give a new generation of students grea-
ter opportunity to study abroad and share in international programs of special interest. Furthermore, there would be common needs and challenges which could be addressed together to strengthen our ministry in education.

As we began our work at GBHEM in earnest, we made a commitment to form an international association which would carry on the vision of John Wesley by uniting our Methodist institutions throughout the world. COGEIME and educational leaders from Brazil soon became our strongest partners along with representatives from Argentina, Japan, Singapore, Korea, Great Britain and the United States. Thus the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU) was born in 1991. Our first conference was held in Rio de Janeiro which was followed by many conferences held throughout the world and which has afforded many opportunities for exchanges and shared programs between institutions. In 2011, IAMSCU celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a special service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., which was followed by an important conference attended by educators from around the world. We are now about to inaugurate an international program of exchange with students and faculty participants. Following the pattern established by COGEIME, various regional organizations are forming in other countries to augment the work of the international organization. Without such dedicated leadership from our colleagues, we could never have accomplished such a promising and effective organization. So we are grateful to Brazil and to COGEIME and to so many committed leaders who have made a new century of educational cooperation possible. The vision of John Wesley, who founded Kingswood School in England, urges us forward in the fulfillment of a vision which even he could not have imagined.