

1 **Methodist Theological School in Ohio**

2
3 Greetings from Methodist Theological School in Ohio, where five students from the
4 South Indiana Conference are preparing for ministry. Thank you for this opportunity to
5 share news from a busy year in the life of our school.

6
7 **Accreditation:** As part of MTSO's once-a-decade accreditation process, teams from
8 the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Higher
9 Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools visited
10 campus in October 2008. The teams' reports recommended continued accreditation for
11 a new 10-year term.

12
13 **Students:** The school enrolled 224 students from 20 denominations in master's-level
14 courses in the fall semester of 2008. An additional 15 students are pursuing Doctor of
15 Ministry degrees. Two-thirds of all master's level students are United Methodists; the
16 second most common denomination on campus is United Church of Christ, with 8
17 percent of students. Five percent of students now identify themselves as non-
18 denominational, a marked increase over the previous year. The student body is younger
19 than in the previous year, with 55 percent under 40. Students come from 25 states and
20 Korea—including seven from Indiana; 38 percent are from beyond Ohio's border.

21
22 **Faculty:** Academic Dean John Kampen has chosen to end his tenure as dean following
23 the 2008-09 school year. President Jay Rundell expressed his regard for Dr. Kampen
24 "not only as a scholar and academic administrator but as a friend and guide," and he
25 recommended that Dr. Kampen be appointed Professor of New Testament Studies in
26 the Dunn Chair in Biblical Interpretation effective July 1. Randy Litchfield, professor in
27 the Browning Chair of Christian Education, has been appointed interim academic dean
28 through June of 2011. Paul Burnam was appointed director of the Dickhaut Library,
29 replacing Paul Schrodts, who retired. Professor Lisa Withrow was installed in the Norman
30 E. Dewire Chair in Christian Leadership.

1 **Scholarships:** Seventy-five percent of the students at Methodist Theological School
2 received some form of scholarship aid in 2008-09; 88 percent received some form of
3 financial aid through work-study, loans or scholarships.
4

5 **Events:** In March, MTSO hosted “Women in Ancient Religion,” a major interdisciplinary,
6 international conference cosponsored by Yale Divinity School and several entities within
7 Ohio State University. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Emeritus
8 Loveday Alexander of the University of Sheffield, England. This followed a fall season
9 that featured a number of successful events. The Schooler Institute on Preaching,
10 focused on the practical theme “Rethinking Your Advent Series,” featured Dr. Sharon
11 Ringe, a former MTSO faculty member now teaching at Wesley Theological Seminary.
12 At the Mission and Evangelism Institute, whose theme was “Offering Christ in a Multi-
13 religious World,” Dr. Ajith Fernando, national director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka,
14 was the keynote speaker. “Equipping Christian Leaders to Abolish Modern Slavery” was
15 the theme for the Liberation! Conference, a student-led event coordinated by the local
16 chapter of the Beatitudes Society. Four experts in nuclear regulation and the Church’s
17 role in it participated in the forum “New Directions for a New Nuclear Age: Church
18 Influence and Public Policy.” And Bishop John Shelby Spong, the progressive Christian
19 author, spoke to an overflow crowd in the Alford Centrum.
20

21 **Strategic Plan:** The MTSO Board of Trustees adopted the school’s strategic plan for
22 2008-2015. The tone for the detailed plan was set by the following statements.

23 *Our Aspiration:* In response to the grace and call of God in Jesus Christ, Methodist
24 Theological School in Ohio will prepare and invigorate transformational leaders to
25 engage the church and the world in leadership and service.

26 *Our Identity and Purpose:* Methodist Theological School in Ohio is a center for rigorous
27 theological inquiry, spiritual formation and professional development which is rooted in
28 the scriptures and traditions of the Christian faith. We provide a vibrant learning
29 environment for the preparation of skilled, passionate transformational leaders for
30 churches, religious institutions, emerging faith communities, and the wider world.

31 Grounded in our Wesleyan tradition and influenced by our ecumenical and interfaith

1 commitments, we attend to the theological, spiritual, and vocational formation of a
2 diverse group of students involved in a wide range of pursuits. Expecting active
3 participation in our community of learning, we maintain an atmosphere of mutual
4 respect and openness, teaching how to engage in conversation with the past and with
5 others so that new and faithful perspectives may emerge. We strive for our graduates to
6 demonstrate a deep understanding of the heritage disciplines of religious study, to be
7 highly competent in areas of practical theology, and to show evidence of thoughtful
8 reflection. We are committed to individual wholeness, social justice, inclusiveness, and
9 religious diversity. We take seriously our responsibility for stewardship of the intellectual
10 life of the church and our commitment to a just and sustainable world.

11 Respectfully submitted,

12

13 **Danny Russell**

14 **Director of Public Relations**

15