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Harding School of Theology

Winter 2009

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Hospitality

▶ **Editor's note:** This article is excerpted from a lecture in *Still Living by Faith*, a collection of essays by Annie May Lewis published posthumously. *Hospitality* is a vital part of Christian community – this year's theme at Harding University Graduate School of Religion.

More than 150 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed a tendency in the U.S. toward an individualism "which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the rest of his fellows and to withdraw into the circle of family and friends." In North America and Europe, hospitality has become increasingly a commercial concept.

Our present period seems preoccupied with individual autonomy and the prosperity of family and friends.

Into this atmosphere comes biblical texts that speak of the love (philoxenia) of strangers and the meaning of the New Testament word, which is translated "hospitality." In Luke 9:58, Jesus enters upon the scene as a guest in need of hospitality. He has nowhere to lay his head. On another level, in Luke 7:36-50, Jesus is the supreme host. At the home of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus appears first in the role of a guest. But as the story moves on, he is the one

who takes charge and hosts the occasion.

Someone has said we all fall somewhere between Martha Stewart and the person who has the pizza place listed on speed dial. Entertaining says, "I want to impress you with my beautiful home, my clever decorating, and my gourmet cooking." Hospitality says, "This is



not mine. It is a gift from God, and I'll use it as he desires." Hospitality may suggest a place of rest from our labors and journeys, a place that is not our home but nevertheless enables us to feel at home as Paul felt in the home of Rufus' mother (Romans 16:13).

Entertaining always puts things before people. Hospitality puts people before things.

Jesus ate with outcasts. Paul and Luke took strong stands on behalf of those relegated to the position of second-class citizens in the

church. We miss out on this fullness of life if we limit our partnerships to those who most resemble ourselves.

The hospitality we have talked about has largely been in the home, but there are many ways to show hospitality, such as at church. A little boy came home from his first day at Sunday school, and his mother asked him how he liked it. The child replied, "I hated it. They put me in a room full of children all by myself."

The most sobering thought and the most powerful motivation for extending hospitality that we have in scripture is found in Matthew 25:31 at the judgment scene: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Finally, in Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

▶ Annie May Alston Lewis

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Dean's Note

Our Story

Annie May Lewis has a special chapter in the story of HUGSR. The presidents of the University, deans, professors, staff and students were touched by her presence for over four decades. Jean Saunders organized a special collection of her lectures (*Still Living by Faith*) according to "the way it was, the way it is, and the way it will be." This format came from a lecture Annie May gave in 2003 on "Living With Debilitating Illness." Her time perspective spurred my own reflections on the way it was.

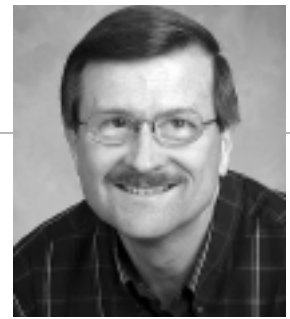
Our story began with George Benson, a missionary to China in 1925. On his first furlough, he completed a master's degree at the University of Chicago in East Asian history so he could be a better missionary in China. In fall 1931 he taught a course on missions at Harding before returning to China. He was called back to serve as president of Harding College from 1936-1965.

In 1953, a graduate program in Bible began in Searcy under Benson's leadership, and, by 1958, the program expanded to Memphis with professors W.B. West Jr. and Jack P. Lewis. Three years later West convinced Annie May (who completed an M.A. at University of Chicago in 1952) to come to Memphis to develop a library, which began with 5,000 volumes and 82 periodical subscriptions. By her

retirement in 1983, it had 69,000 volumes and 582 subscriptions. She also loved corresponding with missionaries and teaching ladies classes at church.

At 90, Dr. Jack Lewis still walks to his office in the library every day. Since his move to Memphis in 1959, he has taught 33 different courses and written more than 12 books and 400 articles. History of the English Bible and Minor Prophets may have been his favorite classes. He also had a passion for missions as he encouraged missionaries on his travels and served on a missions committee for 20 years. He is currently serving in his 25th year as an elder. After he completes the introduction to Zechariah and checks a few more footnotes, his two-volume commentary on the minor prophets should be ready for publication.

To have only five deans in 52 years must break some kind of administrative record. Each dean merits a chapter in our history. West (1958-1972) became pioneer dean of graduate studies in the churches of Christ, starting the first two programs (Pepperdine in 1944; Harding in 1953). Dr. Harold Hazelip (1972-1986) cleared the way for theological reflection and led the School in completing SACS accreditation. As an effective preacher and national speaker for *Herald of Truth*, he raised the bar in preaching. Dr. Philip Slate (1986-1992)



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globalized the School with a missiological perspective, a commitment to developing healthy sending churches, and a passion for expository preaching. Dr. Bill Flatt (1993-1999) developed the counseling program and saw us become the first school in the churches of Christ to gain ATS accreditation. He also served as an advocate for biblically-based counseling and applied it to healthy living and strong Christian families.

This month, we honored five professors who have each taught over 25 years at HUGSR: Jack Lewis, Earl West, Don Meredith, Rick Oster and Allen Black. The common thread they all bring to our story is a deep appreciation for biblical exegesis within the context of real life and ministry — a legacy that we all believe will survive the test of time. E-mail us if you would like to receive the 20-minute DVD that honored these professors.

Incredible lists of preachers, counselors, professors, missionaries and chaplains have their own chapters in our story. I also hear alumni reflect on how HUGSR became a major chapter in their own journeys of faith and service.

I could say much more about "the way it was," but a bunch of e-mails call me back to "the way it is" today.

▶ Dr. Evertt W. Huffard
(dean@hugsr.edu)

Professor Makes House Call

It may seem daunting to have your professor visit your ministry and interview members of the congregation to learn about you. But that is what Steve Teel (M.Th., 1980, steveteel@aol.com) experienced when Dr. Dave Bland (dbland@hugsr.edu), professor of homiletics, performed a site visit as part of Teel's Doctor of Ministry program.

The site visit is conducted by the student's dissertation committee chair and comes near the end of the Doctor of Ministry program. The visit allows the professor to explore how well the dissertation project has been enacted and to provide feedback during the process.

In Teel's case, Bland was able to see the congregation that Teel serves and speak with members of his roundtable preaching project. As part of Teel's dissertation, he explored collaborative preaching, utilizing a group of members who gave their input on the sermon topic or passage.

"The Doctor of Ministry is based on the Master of Divinity work and is rooted in the student's local ministry," explains Bland. "So the site visit ensures that the academic work is bearing fruit in the ministry in which the dissertation project comes."

The visit also allowed Bland to discover things about the student work that he would not have otherwise known. "What I find is that students are doing a lot more than their dissertation reveals."

A key to the visit is meeting with the student's elders or supervisors. Lloyd Cain,

an elder at the Hendersonville (N.C.) Church of Christ where Teel ministers, noted that in this visit the elders are able to better understand where the Doctor of Ministry fits into the local congregation.

"The program is meant not merely to deal in academic studies (though it certainly does that) but is designed to focus on real-time ministry," Cain says. "That is, the doctorate program is intended to help a minister of the gospel focus on ways of improving his ministry and more effectively carrying out our Lord's mandate to take the good news to the lost.

"We also spent some time discussing our views of Steve as a person and as a minister," Cain continued. "We feel blessed to have him here and believe he is doing a good work."

As Bland noted, the visit blesses student and congregation. "The visit provides an opportunity for congregations to reflect more intentionally on their goals and mission and on the progress they are making in meeting them."

So, what is it like to have an academic advisor see a student in his own ministry? "For the chairman of my dissertation to experience the ministry setting and interact with those involved in the project is a tremendous blessing," Teel said. "I sense more than ever that Dr. Bland can guide me toward completing the dissertation, helping me develop a ministry that will have lasting benefit to the church here and elsewhere."

Teel's dissertation project, as with all Doctor of Ministry projects, brings the student's academic training into the heart of the ministry. "My congregation is evenly [distributed] between four generations," Teel comments. "The uniqueness of what I'm doing is deliberating reflecting that distribution in a roundtable group giving me input and then reflecting their input in my sermon. Specifically, I chose eight individuals, a male and female from each generation."

The goal of including the roundtable in his sermon preparation and evaluation "was to bring a greater awareness of generational needs and with that greater appreciation and unity," said Teel.



Doctor of Ministry student Steve Teel and Dr. Dave Bland during his site visit.

The goal of the visit, project, dissertation and Doctor of Ministry program itself is to make quality ministers even better. "After 15 years of ministry as a missionary and another 16 years as a stateside preacher, the D. Min. has stimulated and ignited my desire to be the best I can possibly be as a servant of God," Teel said.

Student Paper Accepted

Joseph Kelly's article, "Is YHWH Faithful to Israel? Joel and Jonah's Use and Non-Use of Exodus 34:6-7," was accepted as a student entry at the 2009 Society of Biblical Literature conference in New Orleans. The article was originally written for the Minor Prophets class with adjunct professor Dr. John Fortner.

Scholarship Applications Due

Scholarship applications for the 2010-11 school year are due by March 1, 2010. Applications may be downloaded from the Admissions link at www.hugsr.edu.

West Acclaimed by Historical Society

Dr. Earl West, professor emeritus, was honored by Johnson Bible College at their Sept. 18 banquet during a conference commemorating the bicentennial of Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address." West was recognized for his important role as historian of the American Restoration Movement. The award was accepted on West's behalf by Dr. Jack Lewis, who addressed the conference. Later he presented the award to West in Memphis.



Dr. Earl West receives an award from Johnson Bible College from Dr. Jack Lewis.

Flatt Autobiography Released

Dean Emeritus Bill Flatt (M.R.E., 1962; billflatt@charter.net) recently published his autobiography, *Pressing Toward the Goal*. Flatt came to Harding Graduate School as a student in 1960, joined the faculty in 1965, and served as dean from 1993-99, upon his retirement.



Dr. Allen Black, Dr. Richard Oster, Dr. Jack Lewis, Don Meredith and Dottie West (accepting for her husband) are honored at the annual Leadership Council Dinner.

Faculty Honored at Annual Dinner

The annual Leadership Council Dinner, held Oct. 13 at the Memphis Botanic Gardens, honored five faculty members for their combined 1XX years of service to the Graduate School.

The dinner highlighted the work of these professors in their ministry in God's kingdom, having been instrumental in training thousands of ministers, professors and

other congregational leaders.

- ▶ Dr. Allen Black (M.Th., 1980, ablack@hugsr.edu), professor of New Testament, 1983- present
- ▶ Dr. Richard Oster (roster@hugsr.edu), professor of New Testament, 1978- present
- ▶ Dr. Jack Lewis (jlewis@hugsr.edu), professor emeritus, 1954-19XX
- ▶ Don Meredith (M.Th.,

1967; dmeredith@hugsr.edu), librarian, 1968-present

- ▶ Dr. Earl West, professor emeritus, 1966-19XX

Friends of the school and the faculty members contributed more than \$12,000 in scholarship funds in honor of the five professors. Additional gifts honoring these men may be sent to the Advancement Office or online marked "Honoring Faculty."

Lewis Recognized by Sister School

Dr. Jack Lewis, professor emeritus, will be honored at the Freed-Hardeman University Bible Lectureship for his outstanding service to the church.

"Dr. Lewis has contributed to the education of thousands of preachers, teachers, and other church leaders during his tenure at HUGSR, and has served the brotherhood through his writing and by speaking on countless lecture-

ships and other programs," said Dr. Mark Blackwelder, associate professor of Bible and missions at Freed-Hardeman University.

Tickets to the Feb 9, 2010, dinner may be reserved by calling 731-989-6769.

Poshumous Lectures Published

A little more than three years after her death, selected Bible classes and other lectures by Annie May Alston Lewis (M.A., 1967) have been published by Resource Publications in Searcy, Ark., titled *Still Living by Faith: A Collection of Lectures*.

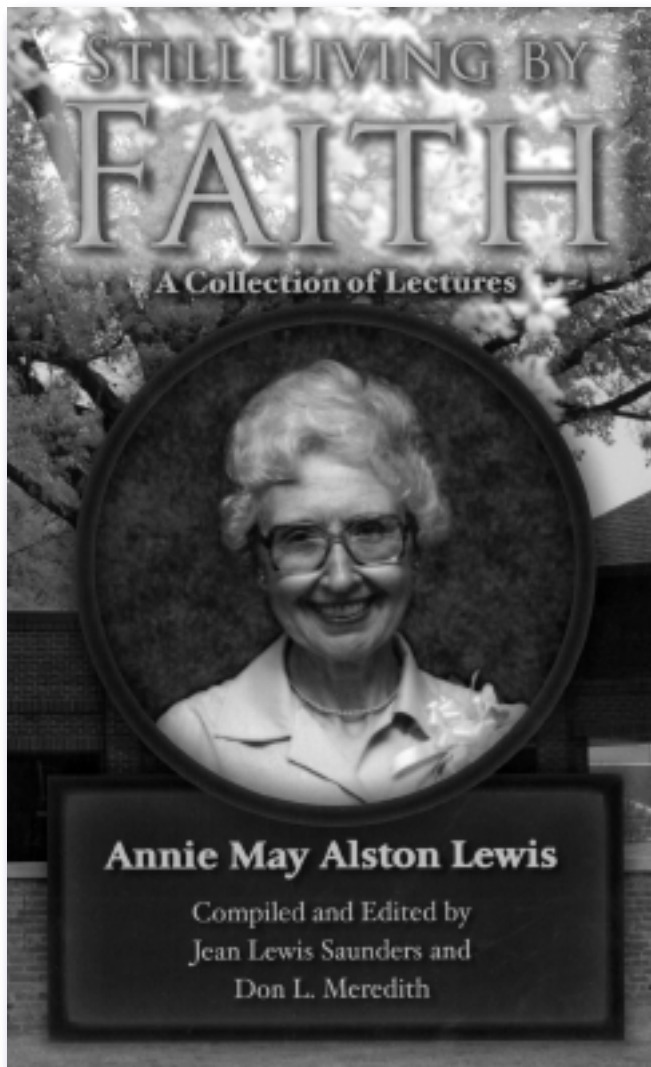
Compiled and edited by Jean Lewis Saunders and Don L. Meredith (M.Th., 1967), the volume brings together many threads of Lewis' teaching at church and women's programs over a 40-year span.

Lewis, librarian at the Graduate School from 1962 to 1983, left a legacy of rigorous research to hundreds of ministers and scholars she taught in the library skills class she developed. She also led her Sunday morning women's class for over 30 years at the Church of Christ at White Station.

The collected lectures demonstrate Lewis' ability to inspire and encourage, as well as her high regard for education and research.

Helping provide scholarships for students was a passion of Annie May Lewis. The funds from the sale of her book will be used to ensure that passion endures.

Resource Publications donated 4,000 copies of the book to the Graduate School.



In turn, the Graduate School is able to provide copies to individuals for a \$25 or greater gift to the Annie May Alston Lewis Endowed Scholarship Fund.

The sale of all of the books will provide at least

\$100,000 for the fund. Since the fund is endowed, interest from that amount will provide scholarships indefinitely.

To request a book, call 901-761-1355 or go to www.hugsr.edu/AMLewis.

What People Are Saying

"Just as Annie May's voice starts to grow faint in my ears, I read this book and hear her all over again with the wonderful, gentle reminders of what a biblically-formed life looks like. Her presence in these words is ever hospitable, ever challenging and infused with love." – Randy Harris, Abilene, Texas

"Reading one of Annie May's lessons is almost as good as hearing her teach it. She reveals her excellent insight and constant devotion to the Lord as well as her love for others." – Betty Ulrey, Searcy, Ark.

"It's a joy to hear Annie May's inimitable voice in her lessons! Firm yet gracious, full of optimism and devotion, Annie May calls us to resolute good cheer." – Dr. Carisse Berryhill, Abilene, Texas

"God's words were life to her because they taught her how to live. 'How does anyone live without reading God's word each day, especially the Psalms?' As you read her lessons, it becomes clear that she not only knew what the Bible said, she knew the living word, or, as she would say, 'my Jesus.'" – Betty Copeland, Memphis, Tenn.

"I already feel like I've 'listened' to her by reading this book, and I've loved it. Her life of faith lives on in her wonderful words and hopefully in all of us who have been touched by her." – Linda Smith, Little Rock, Ark.

"I read the book in about two days and thoroughly enjoyed it. You can surely see her strong faith and her simple lifestyle. I appreciated it so much." – Anne Frashier, Malibu, Calif.

"After reading Annie May's book, I realized all over again that she lived what she taught, and she knew how to inspire us to do better." – Lou Lawyer, Searcy, Ark.

Faculty Notes

During the fall, Dr. Phil McMillion led a teacher-training seminar on 1 and 2 Samuel at the Sycamore View congregation in Memphis as well as a class on Proverbs at Park Avenue Church of Christ. He also coordinated the Oct. 15 guest lecture by Dr. James Hoffmeier of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School titled, "The Exodus From Egypt in Light of Recent Archaeological Work in Sinai."

Dr. Allen Black spoke on "Gay Theology" at CenterPeace Conference at Highland Church in Abilene, Texas, in September. He also spoke three times on "The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews" at the Harding University Lectureship in Searcy, Ark.

Happenings

Alumni Meet to Learn and Encourage



Alumni gather for a group portrait at the meeting in Memphis.

Dr. Evertt Huffard hosted an alumni luncheon in Parkersburg, W.Va., and the alumni council hosted another in Memphis. The lunches allowed alumni to reconnect and receive updates about the School. The next alumni luncheons will held at the Graduate School Feb. 11, 2010, and at Pepperdine University May 7, 2010.

Church Audit Courses Announced

Church audit courses for the spring 2010 have been announced. These three courses may be audited for \$25 by members of supporting congregations.

- ▶ **Gospel of Mark**, Dr. Allen Black. Tuesdays, 6-8:45 p.m., beginning Jan. 5, 2010
- ▶ **Minor Prophets**, Dr. Kevin Youngblood, Jan. 22-23, Feb. 26-27, and March 19-20, 2010

- ▶ **Missionary Anthropology**, Dr. Stan Granberg, Jan. 15, Feb. 19, and March 26, 2010
- For more information about church audit courses, please call the Admissions Office at 901-761-1356.

Alumni Re-Ignite Campus Ministry

Seek the Truth; Spread the Love; Share the Life.

When Mao Zedong wanted to revolutionize China, he took his message to the universities. The result was the restructuring of one of the world's most populated nations.

Such is the power of idealism and youthful vigor.

Harnessing this power for God's kingdom purposes is the heart of campus ministry. Just beyond University of Memphis' campus, two Harding Graduate School alumni work to share the message of Christ.

In 2007, the Christian student center at University of Memphis was closing. The building was sold to the University as part of a plan for a new campus entrance. Without staff and ministers, the fate of the on-campus ministry was unknown.

A coalition of church leaders from Memphis-area congregations came together to chart a new course for the ministry. Two key decisions launched their vision: acquiring a new center for the ministry and hiring personnel to lead.

At the helm of the new ministry were alumni Jonathan Woodall (M.A., 2004; jonathan.woodall@somamemphis.org) and Rusty Woods (M.Div., 2009; rusty.woods@somamemphis.org). Woodall directs the ministry, and Woods serves as campus outreach minister.

With a broad base of support, a new facility was purchased — a former fraternity house needing extensive

renovation. Volunteers throughout the city joined together to transform the facility into a useful space for outreach to campus.

The grand opening Aug. 15 marked a great day for ministry to University students in Memphis. While a building was renovated, so was a ministry, now known as Soma.

"Soma means body, and members of Soma are dedicated to being the body of Christ in the Memphis area," Woodall said. "Our mission is to seek the truth, spread the love, and share the life."

The outreach at the new facility involves worship times, a coffeehouse atmosphere and relationship-building activities.

An interesting twist on campus ministry recently surfaced for Woodall. When helping students move into dorms at the start of the school year, he had the

opportunity to speak to a father dropping off his freshman daughter. "He began to talk to me about his daughter. As he talked about his girl, I saw his eyes well up a few times. I looked at him after he finished telling the story and asked if the day had been rougher than he expected. 'Yes,' he answered. 'I'm really not looking forward to the ride home.'"

The key to Soma Memphis is to be present with the students, challenging them to connect their lives and their studies with God, and, at the same time, giving them a safe place to grow and make friends.

The work of rebuilding a ministry — both literally with a new building and figuratively by connections between people — is surely daunting. Woodall responds succinctly to this challenge: "God is at work in this awesome ministry."



Alumni Council Recasts Vision

Keith Fussell (M.A.C., 2004; kfussell@sycamoreview.org), president of the alumni association, is working to better connect alumni to each other and to the School.

"The alumni association sponsors the annual Ministry Forum in the spring," Fussell says. "This is a great opportunity for all who can come to campus for a day to learn from other practitioners of ministry."

The 2010 Ministry Forum will be held Feb. 11 on the Graduate School campus.

Another way to connect with other alumni is through the Facebook group. Just search "Harding University Graduate School of Religion Alumni," and join the group, which allows alumni to update others about their ministries as well as personal lives.

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Final Word

The Bride of Christ

► **Editor's note:** *Rusty Woods is a 2009 M.Div. graduate now working in Soma, the church of Christ campus ministry at University of Memphis. Read more about the impact Harding Graduate School alumni are making on that ministry inside.*

According to writers of scripture, God has always known how to treat his bride. Ezekiel 16 speaks of God putting an embroidered dress on Israel and slipping sandals of fine leather on her. In order to accent her beauty he clothed her with linen and showered her with earrings and bracelets that would put Tiffany's and Hidalgo to shame.

Moving to the New Testament, Paul speaks of the church — the bride of Christ — as a lady he desires to keep pure for Jesus, her husband. Jesus made a sacrifice for his bride that showed ultimate commitment and love. Thus, he supplied the avenue through which she could be seen in splendor and beauty, absent of wrinkles and blemishes.

I have begun interacting more and more in recent years with Christians who have been burned by the church and have decided to seek fulfillment in service and community elsewhere.

Maybe you, too, have heard a faithful friend say, "I get my fellowship by meeting up with friends at the local coffee shop once a week to discuss important topics." Or perhaps you have heard someone say, "I volunteer at a local hospital as a way to serve in the way Christ served, and that is my 'church.'"

I do not want to downplay the significance of any of these things. Especially among the current college generation I work with, service and community are essential parts of their culture and truly have great value.

However, I think Derek Webb's song "The Church" respectfully and accurately identifies those activities as bridesmaids — not the bride. The bride is the full body of Christ from top to bottom — he oldest and youngest, richest and poorest, and most prophetic and gracious child of faith living in community. Despite these differences, members spur each other toward maturity as the collective body referred to as the beautiful "bride" of Christ.

Let's allow Jesus' passionate desire to receive his bride without blemish motivate us to live in Christian community in a way that honors his commitment to us, his church — his bride!

► *Rusty Woods, M.Div., 2009*
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