



News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 3

Claire & Lorin Cranford
September 2000

Issue 9



Family Events:

A family highlight for August was the visit of Don and Hallie on **Aug. 11-13**. They left Reston VA after work on Thursday and arrived at our house about 1:00 am -- a long, tiring drive but the three kids slept a good bit of the way making it easier. Although we didn't have a lot of time, we did manage to get in quite a number of activities, along with some rest for Don. His work with British Cable and Wireless is increasingly necessitating frequent trips to London and a lot of long hours working on projects in their software development division where he works. We did manage to get in some really fun things. For more pictures of their visit, go to the Photo Album section of Cranfordville and click on August 2000 Visit. Especially interesting was a trip on Saturday to the Cherokee Indian Reservation about two hours west of our home. It is a fascinating place with tons of things to see and do.



One note of possible interest: all of the **back issues** of our newsletter are now archived on the internet and available in PDF file format. To access them, go into the HTML internet version of the newsletter at Cranfordville and click on Archive in the table of contents column.

The **late summer weather** here has been absolutely marvelous. Our hottest day this summer has seen the temperature climb to 97 degrees F, but most of the days the high temperature has been in the upper 80s. At night typically it has been dropping to the middle 60s and occasionally to the upper 50s. Although we could have used more rain, the reasonable temperature has made conditions quite nice. This stands in contrast to the rather unbearable heat and drought taking place in north central Texas. I can't imagine having to go through a Texas summer ever again, especially when it has been so hot and dry like this one.

In contrast, we have been able to sit out on the deck in the early evenings and just enjoy the sounds of nature. Our subdivision is a wonderful combination of both town and country with the best of both worlds. Although some places along the coastal part of NC have had mosquito problems this summer, we haven't seen a single mosquito all summer. Several times with house guests, we have moved out on the deck in the evening hours in order to watch the stars and just enjoy being outside after dark. It's been quite enjoyable to see two former colleagues from Texas make the move to GWU this fall and begin enjoying living here in western North Carolina.



University Happenings:

The fall semester is cranking up at the university and promises to be an exciting time. My teaching load this semester is fairly heavy but has several exciting aspects. As usual, I have the first and second year Greek courses. Our program is making progress and gaining appeal among the students. The new revision of the Greek grammar that I've produced will make the class room work easier. Also, we are able to offer a third year Greek exegesis course on James this fall. This enables the advanced students to develop their skills with the Greek NT at a much higher level, comparable to what they will receive in seminary studies. After the first couple of weeks of the semester I can say the classes are getting off to a most enjoyable start. About 40 students are spread out among the three Greek classes and are approaching their studies with excitement and eagerness to learn.

Additionally, there are two sections of OT survey on campus, but to be taught in a multimedia class room in the business school building using the materials directly off Cranfordville's academic section. These two classes in Craig and Hamrick halls are packed beyond the ceiling of 25 each in enrollment. Teaching the classes with the ability to project visuals etc. directly from the internet etc. onto the large screen across the front of the room is truly a delight. The quality of the learning experience is much better. Not only verbal explanations of the materials and assignments, but graphic illustrations of the materials are readily available for use, making it much easier for students to comprehend the subject matter.

A third section of OT survey is taught in the evening school G.O.A.L. program at Isothermal Community College in Forest City. With over 20 students in this class we are coming along quite well. The community college has the latest and most up-to-date equipment in the classrooms and the people there have been most helpful in getting things set up for the class. The computer lab across the hall, which we occasionally make use of, is an absolute dream. I enjoy working with these 'older' adult students who are going to night school in order to complete a degree program. They are highly motivated to work and learn.

The theological German studies will continue with a couple of new students in the Div School as they seek to prepare for PhD studies after their MDiv program. This study program is ready to crank up

I'm particularly looking forward to working with one of the English profs this fall as we meet together periodically over lunch to read classical Greek texts and discuss ancient Greek philosophy. I was involved in a somewhat similar program years ago in Texas and am looking forward to picking this up again.

If interested, you can see this schedule laid out in the GWU classes page of Cranfordville under Schedule.

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For all kinds of info about us as well as a PDF copy and an expanded HTML version of this newsletter, check out our homepage Cranfordville at <http://Cranfordville.cjb.net>

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Claire's Musings:

Aug, 2000

Well, school for teachers started August 1, which was much too early. It was a short summer and I, as always, was definitely not ready. I am so pleased that our daughters and daughters-in-law are able to be stay-at-home mothers now. Angie, Hallie, and Jennifer are all staying at home now with their little ones. That was always my dream as a young mother and it's fantastic to see how wonderful things are working out for our kids. Imagine that, they are grown with families of their own, but I still refer to them as "kids." I truly believe that, no matter how old your children are, they will always be your "kids."

We have two of our grandchildren starting kindergarten this year – Brittany in Virginia and Clay in Texas. Clay (in Texas) called us after his first day in school to tell us all about it. He was so excited about his new school, telling about his teacher and new friends. Brittany had the good fortune of being in the Virginia school system that began August 28, rather than at the beginning of August while the weather is still very hot.

I am back at Cliffside Elementary (6 ½ miles from home) as the reading teacher for 4th and 5th grades. I am trying to adjust to being back in school and to getting back some of my enthusiasm. I'm afraid over the years I have lost a lot of my enthusiasm, but I'm working on that.

Thanks to a very good friend, Lorin and I have discovered a new restaurant, Lake Bowen Fish Camp near Boiling Springs, SC. Yes, there's another Boiling Springs just across the state line from us. Besides wonderful food we had a fantastic view of the lake while we were eating. I have never seen a restaurant parking lot so huge and so full of cars. I assumed that we would have a long wait, but we didn't. The restaurant was big, too.

Right now I'm thankful for the three day Labor Day weekend. I hope to get things done around the house, plus just rest a little. It will be a long time until the Thanksgiving holiday. But with Christmas several of the kids are coming out to NC. Carrie will bring her new husband and it will be our first Christmas with Daniel. So it will be something to really look forward to.

Church service

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it.

The seven year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the boy, and said quietly, "Good morning, Alex."

"Good morning, pastor" replied the young man, still focused on the plaque. Dr. Wood what is this?" Alex asked.

"Well son, it's a memorial to all the men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Alex's voice was barely audible when he asked, "Which service, the 8:30 or the 11:00?"



Lorin's Musings:

The impact of the June 2000 SBC convention adoption of a new Baptist Faith and Message statement is already having negative impact within the convention. Students at New Orleans Baptist Seminary are reporting that the male chauvinism that undergirds the anti-women segment there has led to female students in several classes being barred from presenting reports to the class verbally because they would be 'teaching men'. Some profs have taken the stance that a woman can only address a group with males present if all the males are under 12 years of age. This past spring one prof there invited a nationally recognized expert to speak to his class and over half the class walked out in protest when they realized the expert was a woman! As time goes by, all six SBC seminaries will have to get in line or face dire consequences! And this is what Cooperative Program gifts are going to support! Do we really want this kind of narrow-minded pastoral leaders in our churches????

I'm grateful to God daily that the alternative Baptist divinity schools like GWU's have rejected such nonsense and seek to affirm everyone's value to God in ministry regardless of gender. Thankfully the Charlotte Observer newspaper published my critique of this mess on Aug 10 seeking to remind readers that there are still some Baptists left who take the scripture seriously. Hopefully, not all the non-Baptist public will look at Baptists with the feeling that we Baptists have all lost our minds!

Fundamentalism among Baptists today has the same divisive character that it has manifested for the past 100 or so years. Although it has moved from the farm to the suburbs and drives a BMW now, it still is a religion of legalism and manipulative control over people with cultic traits in the making. As such it poses real threats to the spiritual health and vitality of our country. Ironically while parading itself as the true religion of Jesus, it has much more in common with the religion that killed Jesus! But this isn't new; such has been true for a long time.

What a joy to watch Doug Dickens and Todd Still begin to adjust to the liberating atmosphere at GWU after the long time of enduring growing fundamentalism stifling their previous schools in Texas. The positive, wholesome experience of the faculty retreat, the very spiritually moving fall convocation service where the Bible without commentary or creed is signed by new div school faculty as the basis of their teaching, the excitement about learning that permeates the campus -- all these have been their experiences this fall. One who has known them from the past can see a radiant glow on their faces as they begin a new phase of their teaching careers here.

The gospel message of Jesus has just that liberating power when it has the chance to flourish among a people. To imprison it within a stifling religious legalism clouded by constant fear and suspicion of any differing viewpoint is a great travesty. It's to settle for a cold, greasy hamburger when Christ is serving up t-bone steak to the hungry soul. Where the Holy Spirit is leading lives, folks will indeed be walking in the steps of the Lord. Paul was deeply convinced of that as he wrote to the Galatian churches in chapter five of his letter. Religious legalism will never preserve the truth of the gospel! It never has and never will. Only where the Spirit of Christ is free to lead committed hearts will the gospel thrive. And it is thriving at GWU!