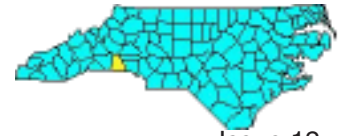




News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford

December 2005



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Family Events:

Growing older is for the birds! But "it beats the alternative!" When I passed the 64 year mark in November, I began to realize, as never before, that advancing years always impose limitations, which are mostly negative rather than positive. Add to that a fist full of health issues and the limitations become severe at times. That has been the dominant story of 2005 for Claire and me.

A big challenge, with mostly positive results, has been the participation in a medical experiment program since last April targeting feet pain caused by diabetes. This Mayo Clinic administered program is covering about 500 patients across the US for a German drug company. After the initial phase covering three months, the effects of the medicine since September have been helpful in reducing the level of constant pain in my feet over the past four years. The ongoing side effect has been a loss of balance requiring me to always use a walking cane when out of the house. My sense of balance is almost completely dependent upon external touch of something stable with my hands. The other health problems have also challenged me during the past several months --a slowly rising blood pressure, gradually increasing blood sugar levels, and a lung infection through most of the summer. The hand full of medicines that I take daily are an important part of staying well, but eventually they take a toll on one's mental alertness, memory etc.

The most frustrating aspect has been the gradual loss of productivity in the various activities that I try to accomplish. But such is life these days. Adjusting rather than fighting is the most sensible approach. At least this has been my approach.

The most enjoyable activity has been working with Claire in taking pictures. Her enthusiasm has rubbed off on me and we spend lots of delightful time doing this together. She has the artistic touch and my area is the technical part. With two nice digital cameras and a digital camcorder, we can take 200 pictures in nothing flat. With Adobe Photoshop CS and Adobe Premiere Pro CS, we can clean up all kinds of mistakes. Gradually Photos By Claire is becoming better known and requests for paying photo shoots are increasing. What a time we're going to have doing this in retirement.



Hopefully, the next edition of our newsletter won't be so long in coming. Time will tell though. Trying to set priorities and then maintaining them with our limitations is our goal.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Academics:

The year 2005 has meant continued teaching in the same general fields -- Greek and biblical survey courses. The spring semester began an experiment of offering an advanced Greek exegesis course in which both divinity school master's degree students and upper level undergraduate students were enrolled in the same class. The result has been positive. The spring was a study on Colossians and a similar course this fall was on 1 Peter. This coming spring another will focus on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and Luke. The split levels mean papers for the div school students with a formal presentation. The undergrads then have the chance to present an oral critique of the div school students' work. An interesting dynamic came out of this format, but one that seems to be a helpful learning experience.

The largest ongoing challenge of the entire year has been the research and writing on the commentary on Colossians for the Smyth-Helwys *Bible Commentary* series. A 175 page commentary necessitates an unbelievable amount of background study and preparation. Progress continues to be made and hopefully the Christmas holidays will see most, if not all of it, come to completion.

Winter and spring had inserted into the schedule the task of doing the editing of the spring issue of the *Review and Ex-*

positor Theological Journal on the NT book of Hebrews. This task was finished in late spring and the volume was published in early July. I'm grateful for the writers who contributed articles from a wide spectrum of Baptist life. This volume should help pastors and others who teach and preach from this part of the New Testament.

One of the most delightful activities has been to teach the M. Christopher White men's Sunday School class at First Baptist Church in Shelby. These men are a delight to work with. Each week I put together a ten page plus written background commentary on the scripture text and give it as a handout to the class members. These lessons are also posted at Cranfordville.com under [Bible Studies](#) in the [Spiritual Resources](#) section. Numerous hyperlinks to background material, along with graphics material, are included in each study. This has been a good discipline for me to increase my skills in trying to communicate complicated ideas in terms easy for a lay person to understand.

The fall began a volunteer responsibility that will kick into full gear later this winter. I was asked to assume the responsibility as Theological and Biblical Editor for the Christ to the World Ministry based in Longview, Texas. This group is producing 15 minute radio broadcasts and a 20+ page follow-up study

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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](http://cranfordville.com) at <http://cranfordville.com>

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Claire's Musings:

Christmas Newsletter – 2005

Another year in North Carolina has flown by with mostly wonderful memories. I still love living here in what I consider to be the most beautiful part of our country. I never get tired of the mountains no matter what time of the year, nor of the abundance of trees (which I sometimes say there are so many that they block the gorgeous view).

This past summer I attended several weddings of friends. Lorin and I were the official photographers for one home wedding and that was quite an experience. It was great getting to photograph a wedding with Lorin and I working together and we got some great shots. There have been a few other opportunities to use our home photography studio and we love being able to become more proficient with practice. We hope to be able to break even some day with our expenses. Photographing people or nature continues to be the most fun activity for me, especially nature in North Carolina.

A very special time this past summer was when Clay and Taylor spent a few days with us. The time went by very fast, but we enjoyed every moment together. Baton Rouge is just too far from us.

Carrie stayed with us for a short while and it was so great having her here. She brightened up our home with her laughter and big smile. She moved back to Hendersonville (about a one hour drive) in the mountains where her job is. Angie moved to Hendersonville during the summer from Washington.

Ruth (my late husband's mother) died in August and that was a hard time for all. Lorin, Carrie, and I flew to Fort Worth for the funeral, but could stay only for a very short time. Billy is doing okay and trying to stay as busy as he can. Thank

goodness for Dickie, his nephew, who lives in the area. He has been such a wonderful help for Billy.

In November Lorin and I drove to Philadelphia for his annual SBL meetings. I had such a wonderful time because I spent most of my time sleeping, reading, crocheting, and exploring the city a little. For me it was a very restful time. Then for Thanksgiving we headed over to Virginia (near Washington,



D.C.) to visit kids – Don, Hallie and their children, Brittany, Preston, and Trevor. We had such a wonderful time filled with lots of fun and laughter. It was a perfect Thanksgiving.

Christmas will be very quiet for us. Lorin will be working most of the time trying to finish up a commentary writing assignment. I plan on framing my nature photographs and hopefully taking them to shops to sell. If I am going to dream, I may as well dream big.

I hope that all of you are well and that you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Lorin's Musings:

Christmas is a time for giving and receiving gifts. Of course, for us who are Christians, the greatest possible gift has been given to us -- the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Gifts come in various shapes and sizes. The Greek NT uses almost a dozen different words that are translated as 'gift' in the English Bible. There is κορβᾶν (kurban) "something to be given to God"; δόσις (dosis), δῶρημα (dorema), δωρεά (dorea), and δῶρον (doron) "something given or granted"; δωρεάν (dorean) "something freely granted"; δωροφορία (dorophoria) "bringing of a present"; κοινωνία (koinonia) "something readily shared"; χάρις (charis) and χάρισμα (charisma) "gracious gift"; εὐλογία (eulogia) "gift as a blessing"; ἐλεημοσύνη (eleemosune) "gift as charity"; ἀδρότης (hadrotēs) "generous gift."

In my rare saner moments, I pause and reflect upon the constant pain I experience as a gift from God. Pain is a gift in that it causes one to realize total dependency upon God for help; it causes one to re-prioritize one's life toward things that really matter; it brings a smattering of realization of just how much our redemption cost Jesus on the cross; it generates understanding and sympathy for those whose lives are tortured by pain. Life itself is truly a gift from God, and if pain comes along with it, consider it a gift as well. You will be a better person and God will come alive in your life.

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manual based on dramatization of narrative texts in the scripture. The first set of materials deal with individuals whose path crossed that of Jesus. A team of experienced broadcast script writers, graphic artists, and study guide writers is gradually being put into place from all over the US and Puerto Rico and are producing the initial broadcast scripts and study guides in English. My responsibility is to check these manuscripts for biblical and theological accuracy. Translation and broadcast teams are already working in Seoul Korea, Hong Kong, and Moscow Russia to bring these English language materials over into several languages and dialects. The official broadcast of these materials will begin in Korea and Hong Kong in February with the Far East Radio Network, and a Russian language broadcast will come in late spring. A Tibetan version will come in early summer. A test set of broadcasts in Korea during October produced a very enthusiastic response. Schedule and broadcast contracts are in place to touch some 400 million people during the early part of 2006 with the message of the gospel. Follow up links with local evangelical church groups are being put in place to help those desiring to learn more about Christianity. Plans are developing for a large number of these broadcasts to be developed over the next several years. Pray that God can use this work to change many lives over the next several years, as this ministry grows and expands to other countries and language groups. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this project.