



News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 5

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Issue 2



Family Events:

The ringing of the office phone caught my attention and as I turned around I saw "Huntsville, Tx" on the message screen. Punching the speaker phone button a familiar voice said, "Dad, how are you doing?" Hardly before I could reply, I heard a loud voice in the background, "Opa, Opa, Opa!" (Now for the uninitiated, this is German for Grandpapa) Andrew, Greg and Jennifer's 2 yr old, was wanting to tell his Grandpapa about his new dog. In a moment Mimi came around the corner of my desk into the office and with just a little coaxing, there was "Oma Claire, Oma Claire" (Grandma Claire) with the same level of excitement.

The next evening I looked up at one of the two TV screens just above one of the three computer monitors in my office and noticed Mimi's car pulling into the driveway from the camera that monitors activity in the front yard. I watched as the monitor automatically switched cameras to the one in the garage as the car pulled in. In a few moments I heard the sound of a little voice coming down the hall way from the kitchen, "Papa, Papa, Papa!" Two year old Taylor had climbed out of the car seat and had made it into the house and was headed to Grandpapa's office for a hello hug and to see what I was doing. Also, to let me know that she had come over to be with me for the evening.

These two are the youngest of our ten grandchildren and both celebrated their second birthday in January. Taylor's was on Jan. 18 and we had the party here at our house. With Angie and Brian living in Forest City (NC) just 15 miles to the west of us, we get to see them quite often and love it. Taylor is all girl who loves doing little 'girl things.' She loves to help Mimi in the kitchen as well as to check up on Grandpapa working in his office. We have a lot of fun watching cartoons together on TV and playing games together.



With a football coach for a dad, Andrew is all boy and growing up in a world surrounded by athletics. Grandpapa was deeply involved in sports all through high school and some in college, so I become their cheering section now. Their trip to NC last summer provided our last opportunity to be together, but we get to talk regularly over the phone and exchange emails even more often. Greg and Jennifer are wonderful parents who provide Andrew with lots of love and good

Christian guidance.

Few experiences in life are greater than 'grandpapa-hood'! Watching these two little ones grow up is one of life's really great pleasures.



University Happenings:

The spring semester has gotten off with a bang! Already I'm having to think about the first round of major exams. One of the apprehensions about this spring was how to balance the teaching load with the health issues.

The fall semester almost did me in, more than I realized at the time, as I have reflected back after the break between semesters. At times I thought that I couldn't continue teaching because I hurt so terribly bad, and I wondered whether I was doing any good by going into the class room. Yet, it was the class room and the exuberance of the young people that kept me going. I seriously don't think I would have survived last fall apart from them. God in his graciousness gave me enough strength to get through to the end of the semester.

The recovery from the prostate cancer surgery continues on schedule, although I'm still not nearly as strong as I would like to be. At the end of January, almost two months beyond the surgery, I'm at that point of being considerably stronger than before, but not completely back to normal. It's at the point where I have trouble knowing when to back off to keep from over extending myself. I usually know well when I have because the body send me some really powerful signals that I've tried to do too much! I've had to learn to really pace myself carefully each day.

The real challenge of the moment is the 'diabetic feet,' that is, the continuing pain caused by the nerve damage from the diabetes. I see a nerve specialist in Charlotte in February to explore some possible solutions that will hopefully provide some additional relief. The weight loss is continuing so that I've now approaching the lost of 40 pounds since last August.

All these issues have made teaching somewhat challenging but haven't slowed me down too much this semester. The students and colleagues on campus have been so very thoughtful in inquiring about my health. Hardly a day goes by that someone doesn't stop me and let me know that they're praying for me and give me an encouraging word. It has been a most humbling and uplifting experience for me. GWU has become family to me over the past several months in ways that I could have never imagined. I will never be able to thank the Lord enough for bringing Claire and me to Boiling Springs and for allowing me the opportunity to teach here.

Gradually work is progressing on the *Biblical Insights* commentary. The first segment on Galatians 1:1-5 is nearing completing in the new few weeks at about 50 pages. I work on it in short segments as I can find a few moments here and there. It is one of the more satisfying activities. Look for it to appear soon in the spiritual resources section of Cranfordville.

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Claire's Musings:

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Lorin continues to improve and I believe that this has been a miracle. It's wonderful to see him almost back to normal. He continues to work with his doctors on the pain management. Hopefully that will improve, also. He has lost quite a bit of weight, but unfortunately I think I have gone in the opposite direction.

I have begun working on my Master's degree through East Carolina University. The class is "Foundations of Library and Information Studies". Whew! – just the name sounds intimidating. I am able to do all my work online. Working with the Internet is not easy for me, but that is what makes this class good for me. I'm struggling, but learning more with each project.

Lorin and I both are truly enjoying being grandparents. Even though with some of our grandkids which we don't get to see often enough, we enjoy and treasure the moments that we do get to share with them. Thank goodness for telephones, e-mail and pictures sent through the mail. The picture in this news letter is of Taylor when she was baking cookies at our house. You may notice white spots on her shirt – that is flour which she managed to get all over her, including her hair. It reminded me of special times with Angie and Carrie when they were little. What fun!

We had the honor of having Taylor's second birthday party in our home. Carrie and Daniel were there, too. It's always so much fun watching a small child open presents. It took her a little bit to get to really get going, but after that she took off.



illustrates. The animosity against Paul both from within the Christian community and from among the Jewish people in general will grow so strong that he will be arrested and sent to Rome to stand trial as a traitor against the Empire for his Christian activity.

Luke's 'philosophy' is that God's blessings have rested on the ministries of both Peter and Paul in their preaching of a similar gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Just as the Heavenly Father had poured out His Spirit on the Lord during his earthly ministry (as Luke's Gospel has demonstrated), his volume 2, Acts, now demonstrates the continuation of the Father's blessings on the ministries of these two apostolic leaders to both Jews and Gentiles with the common message of salvation through faith in the risen Christ. Thus all who respond, whether Jew or Gentile, in faith can experience the Heavenly Father's blessings as His covenant people.

This is history in the ancient sense of history, not in the modern sense of history. Against the standards of ancient history writing, Luke does an excellent job of writing history. Thus, modern scholars will often speak of the theology of St. Luke and will study in great detail the spiritual principles set forth in this document of the New Testament. As pure modern history, it could not be so studied.



Lorin's Musings:

The second broad literary form, or genre, in the New Testament is typically called history. The book of Acts is normally identified as history. But what is 'history'? For the past four hundred years in the western world the definition of history has taken on meaning far different than it had in the ancient world. In fact, the whole meaning and purpose of history is considerably different today than it was when Luke composed the book of Acts. Thus when we call Acts history great caution needs to be exercised lest we force demands upon the book that it's not prepared to meet.

In Luke's day, history was a servant of philosophy. That is, one looked to the past in order to glean ideas and insights to help form a distinct view on how to best cope in decision making with life's issues in the present and the future. History was one way to set forth a philosophy, that is, a view of life and how to best live it. A study of heroic figures of the past both illustrated and confirmed this philosophy. The wise reader would profit from reading history by implementing this same philosophy into his own personal life.

The modern western idea of studying the past just for the sake of knowing what actually happened would have seemed very strange, if not down right stupid to the ancient world. Also, there were no 'historians' in the ancient world. To be sure, modern history books speak of ancient historians but that is a modern label. Their own self label was philosopher. They taught people how to live by using history. Additionally, history to them was all inclusive. That is, it wasn't limited just to describing human activity in a one dimensional plane as modern western history is. Divine and human activity were both natural aspects of history in the ancient world.

Consequently, the book of Acts as history is history in the ancient sense of history. That is, Luke intends to set forth a 'philosophy,' a way of living that he considers to be superior to any other. In fact, he often speaks of the movement Jesus established as the 'Way' in the book of Acts. The time period described in Acts is approximately from AD 30 to the early 60s. He traces the movement of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. Jerusalem was the location of the Jewish temple and the center of the Jewish religion. Rome was the imperial capitol of the Roman Empire and the most powerful city in the world of that day.

The story centers around two central characters. Peter who in the first twelve chapters is the leader of the Twelve Apostles that Jesus had commissioned to carry on his work before ascending back into Heaven after his resurrection. During this period of about 15 years the Christian movement was virtually a Jewish religious movement made up of converts coming from a Jewish background. The second half of the story and the book, chapters 13 through 28, center on Paul of Tarsus. Although his conversion is narrated earlier, his real story begins with the first missionary journey that intentionally begins radically transforming Christianity into a completely new religious movement. New converts now are increasingly non-Jews and as the Pauline mission progresses the Christian movement will rapidly distance itself from its Jewish beginnings, but not without severe controversy, as the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15