



News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford
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Family Events:

The good intentions of being more regular in producing our newsletter didn't get realized this year. In large part, 2007 turned into the nightmare health wise that 2001 was. The declining health that began in the fall of 2006 continued to worsen and baffle the doctors through Christmas of last year. Not until a specialist in Gastonia was able to trace down a highly diseased gall bladder did I get some relief from the pain that had sent me to the hospital a few times. Surgery during spring break to remove the gall bladder proved to be a critical turning point. Leading up to that was another hospital stay for a laser procedure to remove a kidney stone about the size of a pinto bean. By the end of March things began looking up and then disaster hit in April with a couple of ruptured spinal disks. A series of trips to a specialist in Charlotte mixed in with several shots into the spine and hip joints and three times a week physical therapy all through the summer helped heal the spine and hip sufficiently to avoid back surgery for now. Having gone off the clinical program in August for the DNP neuropathy problem in my feet, a replacement drug proved to be unworkable because of severe side effects. So at the moment I'm coping with higher levels of feet pain without taking medicine for it. This week meant the beginning of twice daily insulin shots before breakfast and supper to try to get the blood sugar under better control. Thus 2007 has been largely a focus on solving health issues.

University Happenings:

The spring semester was a typical semester with two Greek courses and two New Testament survey courses. With all the health issues going on I was fortunate to only miss three days of classes in spite of over six trips to a hospital, and countless visits to doctors. The fall semester was one of the more enjoyable since being at GWU. There were the two undergraduate Greek courses (1st & 3rd semesters).

But added to it were two MA seminars. One, Religion 600, focuses on principles of graduate level research and writing. The students focused on skill development in formulating and completing a research project. Paper presentations at the end of the semester reflected the results of this extensive study. The research topics focus on the evolution of the critical study of religion and of the Bible in western culture.

The other, Religion 620, is an advanced Greek exegesis seminar. We read extensive texts from inside the NT during the first half of the semester, and then sifted to 1 and 2 Maccabees for the second half of the semester in order to work on ancient Greek texts outside the Bible. At the same time, extensive research into the origin and nature of the Greek language was done. In the second half of the semester, the focus shifted to how ancient Greek has been taught over the past several centuries in western culture. The seminar climaxed with a paper presentation developing a personal philosophy and approach for teaching Koine Greek in a university and / or seminary setting. GWU will graduate a group of well prepared MA students.

Academics:

With the set backs to my health, I have not yet been able to complete the commentary on Colossians for the Smyth-Helwys series. But I continue making progress and hope to finish up the project next summer. With the advanced Greek course this spring focusing on Colossians, I should be able to make some progress during the spring semester. Along with that is a request from E.J. Brill Publishers in the Netherlands to serve as a reader on a proposed manuscript dealing with Colossians. That project will be finished this week and will help me get back into a "Colossians mind-set."

Most satisfying has been the keeping of a long time personal goal to churn out at least a dozen pages of written research and writing material each week. I've been able to fairly consistently accomplish this for over three decades, and I became concerned that declining health would prevent me from continuing. In spite of all the health mess, and the teaching responsibilities at GWU, I have produced a weekly Sunday School background study for the Men's Sunday School at First Baptist Church, Shelby. It typically ranges from 10 to 20 pages of commentary material on a Bible passage. These studies are also posted under [Bible Studies](#) at Cranfordville. The study on the [History of the English Bible](#) that I did for our church in Shelby last fall laid the foundation for continuing study that I have been able to expand on a regular basis through most of this year. During this fall I did a 12 week Sunday evening study on the [book of James](#) for our church and had a delightful time with the folks who were able to participate. They have asked me to do another Sunday evening study, and so on January 13 we will begin a ten week study of the Sermon on the Mount under the title [The Basics of Discipleship: A Study of the Sermon on the Mount](#). Pulling together materials from years of teaching this text as a Greek exegesis course have been a refreshing re-introduction to this marvelous scripture text.

All of this has pushed me toward the early stages of another massive project: a major revamping of Cranfordville. As I move toward retirement, at the latest in the summer of 2010, I have begun exploring design templates with the help of my son, Donald, whose company hosts cranfordville now. At that point the 8 to 10 thousand files now making up cranfordville will migrate into a cutting edge, interactive web site for extensive Bible 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:*

December, 2007

This has been another fast-paced year and it is just as I have always heard – “The older you get the faster time flies.” I am 63 years old and proud of it. I'm just not so happy with all the aches and pains that go with age. The best part of that is that I am looking forward to retirement when I am 66 in 2 ½ years.

Meanwhile I am enjoying anything to do with photography. Lorin bought me a marvelous new digital camera which takes the best pictures and I can now enlarge pictures even more. We had one blown up to 24" x 36" and it was absolutely beautiful.

One of the hardest parts of this past year has been with Lorin's health. He has really had a difficult time and there have been several times I was very worried about him. I had more experience than I wanted in driving him to and from the hospital for procedures



including the emergency room. Just recently he has begun to feel a little better.

Some of my more enjoyable times have been with Angie, Carrie, and Nathan (Carrie's friend) and including Carrie's new dog – Petey. When we go hiking in the mountains Petey likes to lead the way. I have gotten some great pictures, but now need to go back and take more with my new camera.

Lorin and I took a digital photography class last summer at Isothermal Community College. We had a

very good teacher and we hope to take another class next month with him for an advanced class. Lorin and I went to the mountains a few Saturdays during the fall and had such a wonderful time taking way too many pictures. We photographed our second small wedding. I still much prefer taking nature pictures – it is less stressful.

We are now looking forward to Brian, Clay and Taylor coming from Texas to

visit us for the holidays. We have a lot to look forward to with family. I hope that all of you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



☺ *Lorin's Musings:*

At 66 years I look at life very differently than at 16 years in 1957 or even 36 years in 1977. The one common thread, however, through all these years has been my commitment to Christ. That has provided the framework out of which to view life. At this point in my journey on planet earth, the critical importance of that framework is more clearly in view than ever before.

God placed us humans on the planet He created with a mission: to use it for His glory and to worship Him with every fiber of our being. In a world under the domination of sin and Satan, Christ gave us marching orders to reclaim that lost world for the Kingdom of God through unconditional faith-based surrender to Christ as absolute Lord over our lives. At the end of the journey each of us will face a day of judgment where we must stand before the God of this universe to be examined by our Lord concerning the faithfulness of our carrying out His mission on earth. Our eternal destiny rests on that divine judgment. The journey itself is a marvelous adventure with the Lord walking along side us through His Spirit to give direction and strength for the task.

This framework has defined the direction of my life over these 66 years and will continue to do so until I stand before the Lord in judgment. I cannot imagine a worthwhile life outside such a framework. Certainly it can never provide the levels of satisfaction and joy that

Christian commitment brings. Maybe this is why so much pain, anger and frustration exists in our world today.

Yet within that Christian framework life takes on different perspectives at different points of the journey. Just like a hike in the mountains brings on different beautiful views, Christian living takes on different perspectives at different ages.

As a 16 year old high school student wrestling with a call to Christian ministry in 1957, I knew that serving Christ had to be central. Just what all that entailed I had no idea. Not even in moments of fantasizing about the future could I have anticipated hardly any of the things that have happened in my adult life. As a 36 year old settling into my third year of being a seminary professor in 1977, I was beginning to understand something of the demands of authentic scholarship. As the 12 month long sabbatical year was approaching in 1981-82, I began preparing for it by taking classes in German, French, and Latin at the University of Texas at Arlington. Yet, never could I have anticipated how much impact that year of study at the University of Bonn would have on my life and career. Now at 66 years in 2007, I'm looking forward to retirement from an active teaching career and to the pursuit of writing and other things that will help me serve the Lord in new and exciting ways.

The spiritual journey brings new views just like the mountain hike. Each one has its own contours and appeal, but all are shaped by the common thread of serving Christ. I pray that you share this same perspective.