



News from the Blue Ridge



Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

The *fall season* has come slowly this year in western NC. The weather has been unusually dry and warm for this time of the year. In the middle of Oct. we began experiencing some cooler weather with nightly low temperatures getting down into the 40s and the daytime highs in the middle 70s. Consequently the trees etc. are late in turning colors this year. On Sat. Oct 24, Claire and I spent the afternoon on the Blue Ridge Parkway just north of



Ashville taking in the breath-taking scenery. We timed the trek so as to be on Mt. Mitchell at sunset to enjoy the double view down both sides of the mountains. At the highest elevations -- above 5,000 ft. -- the prime viewing came the week before, but still was quite beautiful. At the middle elevations -- 3,000 to 5,000 -- the views were spectacular! The first of Nov. should be the peak season for the lower elevations, which we plan to catch.



The views are breathtaking! One just has to experience it to comprehend how beautiful the scenery can be. For those reading this newsletter online, I have set up some web links to provide pictures of the scenery. Simply click on http://www.gocarolinas.com/travel/mnts/blueridge/1998/09/0918_viewspts.html and you will get a series of "postcards" of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Some of the views are included here to whet your appetite, although one simply has to be there to really sense something of the brilliant beauty. The Lord outdid himself in creating this part of the world!



The last weekend in Oct. brought the *time change* as well, the "fall back" time giving an extra hour of sleep on Sat. night. Because of the location of Boiling Springs northward, all of a sudden now the sun sets at 5:30 pm and will move toward 5:00 pm as we get closer to December. That takes some getting used to after living in Texas all these years. The good aspect is that we're not as far north as Bonn Germany where the sun goes down in "mid-afternoon" and doesn't come up until "mid-morning" as I remember experiencing it in the early 80s. We are far enough north to experience the more rapid shifts in the rising and setting of the sun through the seasons. That takes getting accustomed to. For Claire the adjustments are especially challenging with leaving school in the dark in the afternoons.

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For all kinds of info about us as well as a PDF copy of this newsletter, check out our homepage [Cranfordville at http://www.shelby.net/cranford/index.htm](http://www.shelby.net/cranford/index.htm)



University Happenings:

One new experience for me at Gardner-Webb came at the beginning of October. The university not only does the required ten-year self-study required by the accrediting agencies such as SACS and ATS, but additionally a five-year *internal self-study* is conducted in-house. The internal self-study is massive and attempts to uncover every possible aspect of our degree programs, personnel needs, enrollment trends etc.

The religious studies dept. self-study was completed in October with the visit of Prof. Don Garner, from Carson-Newman University in Tennessee as the external evaluator of our department. Extensive individual and dept. meetings with Don over a two day period provided invaluable insights from someone outside serving as dept. chair in another Baptist university of similar size. Although it entails an enormous amount of work, such studies help keep the dept. in touch with trends in higher education and needed modifications to our programs to keep us on the cutting edge.

One very big difference between teaching seminary students and undergrad students is with *early morning classes*. Nineteen and twenty year old students are just not awake at 8:00 in the morning! Both the MWF first year Greek class and the TTh OT survey class meeting at 8:00 prove to be the great challenge of the day -- just to keep them awake, much less to get across substantive course content. The younger students have not gotten over their high school days of staying up all hours of the night. The difference in time slots can be amazing. The TTh 10:25 OT survey class, taking similar tests and having identical learning responsibilities to the 8:00 OT survey class, has a class average almost ten points higher. And, I quite convinced that no meaningful difference intellectually exists between the two classes. Some of us on the faculty are becoming convinced that we should do away with 8:00 morning classes! Only a pipe dream!!!!

The last of October means *student advising* at GWU. Pre-registration for the spring semester began Oct. 21 and in GWU's structure only the faculty advisor can register each student for classes in the following semester. This means a series of conferences for each faculty for the dozen or so advisees. Each student brings in his or her course requests for the spring; the professor goes over it according to a degree plan check-list; then the prof approves the course requests and calls in the courses to the computer in the registrar's office. Once it's approved, then the student is set for the next semester. At first, I thought this would be a lot of unnecessary work but after getting into it, I see the importance of guiding the younger student through their degree program to help them finish on time.

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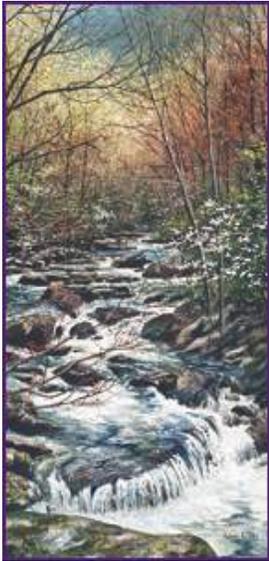


😊 Claire's' Musings:

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Well, I am still adjusting to these tough fourth graders. But the great part is that I am becoming tougher myself. Just the other day some in my class told me I am mean. Y-e-e-s-s !! I think I have finally arrived, because I took that as a compliment. I also realize that was not how they meant it. I have finished up my computer classes in Windows '95 and Classroom Manager, and it is great to have that behind me.

Lorin and I have been much too busy with our school



work, but hopefully by the beginning of the new year, things will let up a little. Starting a new life is really meant for younger people, but we're still hanging on.

We missed the big fall attraction in this part of the country - the Cleveland County Fair. We were too busy to make it this year, but I'm planning to go next year for sure. Even better, though, we were able to drive to the mountains one Saturday to see the beautiful fall foliage. I am glad that we live so close to the mountains. It was amazing how we

could drive just a little way and be able to observe what hadn't changed yet, what had, and what would change soon. To make sure that we don't miss anything, we are planning to go again the next Saturday. And, of course, take lots more pictures. Although, pictures never seem to do the scenery justice. We were even able to see a beautiful sunset up on the mountain. We were still so high when it became dark, that we were able to observe the city lights down below. It reminded me of seeing the lights at night from an airplane. What a thrill!

Continued from Lorin's Musings

I do enjoy the occasional chance to fill the pulpit. It is important for helping the students in the class room, especially the religion majors, to come to grips with Baptist tradition in North Carolina, some of which seems to be more of a hanging onto patterns of doing church typical some fifty or so years ago across the country. We have met some delightfully wonderful people and have enjoyed worshipping together. With the scheduled revival in New York City during Nov, there will come another different kind of experience for us. We are looking forward to getting acquainted with this congregation.



✌ Lorin's Musings:

At the end of Sept. a very special opportunity came: an invitation to *preach in the chapel service* of the School of Divinity. The planning of the worship service by John Campbell, music professor in the divinity school, was outstanding. John is new this fall and an excellent addition to the faculty. The divinity school is not only growing numerically but the program is developing into an outstanding degree program that will make a difference in the lives of the students as well as church life in western North Carolina.

One of the very positive dynamics at GWU is the *close relationship* between the divinity school faculty and the religious studies dept. The divinity school emerged originally out of the religious studies dept. and the relationship has been very cordial from the outset -- in contrast to some of the programs in Baptist university life. Our mutual location in the same building as well as professors in both schools serving as adjuncts in the other helps build bridges of understanding and cooperation.

Another very strong aspect is the *new curriculum* of the divinity school for the Masters of Divinity degree. The program works off a strong core of required courses including Hebrew and Greek with the option of concentrating in pastoral ministries, Christian education, or church music. Very deliberate effort is being made to train vocational ministers who work well with one another in a church staff setting as a team of servant leaders drawing upon one another's strengths and gifts, rather than competing with one another in some kind of hierarchial chain of command. The two faculties seek to model this kind of servant role in relationships with one another.

I look forward to the continued growth of the school of divinity, especially as plans for a new *Doctor of Ministries* degree program begin taking shape. The potential impact for good in Baptist life in this part of the country is enormous, and can serve as an important corrective to the distortion of the gospel and church life coming from the right-wing side of Baptists.

Over the past several months a number of opportunities to *preach in area churches* have come my way. This has provided both Claire and me the opportunity to meet quite a number of new people scattered over the western part of the state. Although I have concluded that doing a interim pastorate here is not a option for me with the heavy demands expected on the interim -- much greater than typical in churches in Texas -- and with the extremely busy schedule at the university, none the less

Continued in Column One