



News from the Blue Ridge



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Claire & Lovin Cranford
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Family Events:

Christmas this year has been ever bit as much as we had hoped for, and more. Angie, Brian and the two grandkids arrived on Dec. 19, then Carrie and Daniel on Dec. 23. Both were able to stay until Dec. 27. Our house has been filled with the delightful sounds of family and holiday -- laughter, giggling, teasing, joking etc. Taylor at 11 months took a while to become re-accustomed to Mimie and Grandpapa, but soon realized what easy 'touches' both are. So she warmed up to us quite readily. She's just beginning to walk and found herself in new surroundings with lots of places to explore. Clay, the kindergartner, has grown tall and slender, and has excellent manners with his 'yes, sir' and 'no, mam' replies to adults. Christmas morning was filled from about 6:30 to noon with opening presents, eating a bit of breakfast, and delighting in the grandkids playing with their new toys. For detailed pictures, go to Cranfordville, Photo Albums. Here, check the *Christmas 2000* links under the Angie/ Brian, Carrie/ Daniel, and Grandpapa/ Mimie sections.



Wednesday, Dec. 27, was a hard day when we had to say goodbye and watch the kids head back to Texas.

Claire and I finally got around to having a new family portrait made as a Christmas present to the kids this year. The older



we become the more intimidating such an experience becomes. When compared to earlier such pictures you see how much you have aged, as well as how much extra weight has been put on. If you want to experience this for yourself, go to Cranfordville, Photo Albums, then Family Portraits under the Grandpapa and Mimie section. A digital copy of this picture is available there, in case you need something for your spring garden!



University Happenings:

The spring semester is shaping up for an exciting time of teaching. My teaching load this spring consists of two sections of New Testament survey in the day program, an online section in the adult evening school G.O.A.L. program, classes in first year, second year, and third year Koine Greek, plus the Theological German reading program. Perhaps, the third year Greek course offers the greatest challenge. The three students from the fall semester have opted to continue their skill development. In the fall we worked on exegeting the book of James, and this semester we will tackle 1/2 Thessalonians. These students are sharpening their skills with interpreting the Greek text of the NT to the level of many NT Ph.D. students. Mark Shivers will graduate next May with 24 hours of Greek studies with me at GWU. Already, he can hold his own with any of the M.Div. students that I taught over the years at Southwestern, and even with many of the Ph.D. students. He has a bright future in ministry. With these three outstanding students class becomes more of a masters level seminar where interactive discussion is the teaching approach.

The longer I work with the undergraduate students at GWU, the more I appreciate the advice that Edgar McKnight gave me when I first moved to NC three years ago. Out of his years of teaching undergraduate students at Furman, he shared his enjoyment of working with young minds that are more open and more enthusiastic toward learning than graduate students often tend to be. I have found this to be the case.

Work on advancement of computer skills also continues. I have begun to comprehend somewhat the baffling maze of developing interactive cgi based web pages. The initial experiences are now posted in the GWU Classes section of Cranfordville. The Request for Makeup Tests can be completed online by the students. Also, several of the preliminary activities of the NT online class can also be completed online by the students while sitting at their computer. This process greatly simplifies completing numerous tasks in the classes for both students and myself. Gradually this semester more similar activities will be developed this way.

Some other challenges lie ahead also. With the computer software now in place, I plan to begin learning how to set up the photo albums using thumbnail graphics files with the option of clicking on the detailed picture when desired. Also, audio and video streaming capabilities need to be developed, in order to enhance aspects of Cranfordville more, especially the academic section. The challenge is to create these files without causing the download time on the web site to balloon out so that people are discouraged from using these features. The technology for doing this is available, but one has to know a lot about the computer in order to take advantage of it.

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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:

Jan. 2001

I could not have imagined having such a perfect Christmas. With both girls and their families here to celebrate with us, it was fantastic.

Angie, Brian, Clay, and Taylor came first and stayed for eight days. The first day we went shopping in Gastonia and helped each other finish up our gift buying. Clay and Taylor, I discovered, were good shoppers. Of course, Clay was mostly interested in shopping in the toy stores. Angie and I continued shopping the next day, because she was determined to find a pair of gloves for Brian. It turned into quite an ordeal because most stores around here sold out of gloves. We really didn't mind too much, because we were having so much fun. It really doesn't matter whether we are shopping, or cooking, or watching movies, or whatever, we all have so much fun together. The time went by so fast and then all of a sudden, Carrie arrived. Carrie eloped December 8 and we met Daniel for the first time when they came here for the Christmas holidays. We had heard from everyone how much they liked him, so we were already sure he must be great. I figured that if he was half as great as Brian was, he must be special. We immediately liked him and he just fit right into our family. In no time at all he seemed liked he had been part of the family for a long time. We all had a wonderful time together. They are flying to Cancun New Year's Eve for a honeymoon. I am so very happy for them.

For months now all I have been able to think about was the possibility of the girls coming for Christmas. When everything worked out so well I could hardly believe it. The laughter rang throughout the house the whole visit. That's what we do best when we are together. We played games and watched movies and kept going until we couldn't stay awake any longer. I was getting tired, but didn't want to miss one minute of our time together.

Christmas morning was so exciting and we were so happy to be a part of watching the kids discover what Santa had brought. Of course Taylor was mostly interested in the boxes and paper, but it didn't take long to start getting the hang of tearing the wrapping paper off the presents. See Christmas 2000 under the girls sections in Photo Albums at Cranfordville.

We had the perfect situation for our Christmas dinner. Whenever we finished unwrapping the presents, of which there was no hurry, we all began the turkey dinner together. Everyone crowded into the kitchen; it's a good thing we have a large kitchen. I made a marvelous discovery that not only does Brian like to cook, but also Daniel. It was perfect, the two guys took over the preparing of the turkey and we girls worked on the side dishes. Angie and Carrie are very lucky to have married guys who like to help out in the kitchen.

The marvelous thing is that Brian and Daniel have so much in common they are turning into very good friends. These two families will have a lot of fun together in life.

A couple of days after Christmas all of us went to Linville Falls and had a fun-filled day in the snow in the mountains. I couldn't believe it turned out so perfect. The roads were clear, but we were able to play in beautiful snow. The waterfalls and the frozen parts of the river were gorgeous. On the trip up here Clay saw and played in snow for the first time. Then we were able to all play and throw snowballs at each other – what a treat! Angie and Brian got it all on video, so Clay will have some very special memories. Although Taylor was too little to understand it all she still had fun. I think our joy was catching.

I can not imagine a more enjoyable or perfect Christmas with the kids. My girls and I have always been very close and do enjoy a lot of the same things. I am thrilled to see both of them happy with their families and with so much to look forward to. What more could a parent wish for.



Lorin's Musings:

This third segment of the history of North Carolina Baptists focuses in growth of the convention during the period from the 1830s to the Civil War in the 1860s, summarizing Don Gordon's *Like Drops of Morning Dew: A Concise History of North Carolina Baptists*.

Once the state convention was formed in 1830 to promote education and missions, growth began to take place at an increasing pace. A significant spark for this was the inspirational speech made by Thomas Meredith at the inaugural convention meeting in 1830: "Men and brethren, who live in the brightest day the world has ever seen, who are permitted to witness events which would have dazzled the vision and startled the faith of prophets and apostles -- who are favored with opportunities which no preceding generation was ever permitted to enjoy...; consider, we beseech you, who and where you are."

The vehicle for spreading this vision across the state came into existence in 1833 with the establishment of the *Biblical Recorder* by Meredith. Although the economic depression of the 1830s almost closed the state paper, it managed to survive and eventually flourish.

The realization of the educational objective of the state convention began in 1834 with the opening of Wake Forest College with 25 students. Enrollment first increased then dropped because of a school requirement that all students had to work in the fields doing manual labor to help pay for their education. Once that was dropped in 1838 and non-Baptist students were allowed to enroll, attendance began a steady increase. A growing public emphasis on education helped to promote Wake Forest College in the coming years.

The period from 1830 to 1860 witnessed the growth of Baptists in NC to become the largest Protestant group with 65,000 members by 1860. Baptists were followed by Methodists with 61,000. Other groups had significantly smaller numbers. Despite the lack of education and financial means, churches grew largely based upon a very high emotionally pitched evangelism which did very little follow up and nurturing of the converts. Bible study and discipleship were not important elements to a largely illiterate church membership.

This growth did not translate into prosperity for the state convention organization, however. Financial debt, continuing anti-mission sentiment, geographic disparity and other factors combined to hobble the effectiveness of the state convention. In 1842, for example, income to the state convention (\$650) was half that in 1830.

Early missionaries employed by the state convention often were unable to continue beyond a few months because of the lack of funding. Samuel Wait, who represented the state convention to the churches, reported preaching 243 sermons and organizing 31 missionary societies during one year for a monthly salary of \$30.

Churches and associations regularly complained of 'spiritual destitution.' Associations often had over half their congregations without pastors. Very few pastors had formal education, almost none had theological training. The difficulty of travel in the state found some relief with the completion of a railroad from Charlotte to the east in 1856, but western NC, Asheville and the mountains, would remain very isolated for years to come. This led to the formation of the Western Baptist Convention in 1845. It wasn't until 1898 that it merged into the larger state convention, once railroads were extended into the mountains.