



News from the Blue Ridge



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Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

WOW! Summer is quickly coming to a close. That is, all but the weather! For folks in the education world summer means June and July, at best. It takes until the end of May to finish the spring term, and the fall term -- preparations at least -- begin the first of August. With the trend toward longer school terms in public education, an erosion of the fringes is well underway, shortening even these two months. This trends then spills over into higher education in a variety of ways. Mixed emotions always characterize the end of July. The joyful memories of pleasant experiences during summer become increasingly important. The excitement of teaching new students anticipates the beginning of the fall term, but the regret of loosing a more relaxed, less chaotic daily schedule looms large in one's emotions.

Such is my experience now at the end of July. The reality of too many expectations for the summer has set in with a thud. So many projects had been moved to the front burner in the hopes of completion during June and July. Now, the reality that many of these would have to be shifted to a back burner again isn't easy for me to accept. Yet, there is a deep satisfaction in those projects that were accomplished -- some that had been setting on a back burner for several years.

Probably the greatest disappointment has been in regard to my health. The healing from the cancer has gone well and on schedule. For that I'm exceedingly grateful. But the blood pressure problems have begun surfacing again. Not critical but enough to dictate a return to medication. My 143 over 86 average for July is above the 134 over 85 national average for males at 60 years of age. Connected to this is the weight gain to the 234 pound level from the low of 222 in February. Fortunately, the blood sugar level has held steady at 110.

These factors probably are playing a role in the slowly increasing difficulties in walking and standing. The diabetic induced neuropathy problem causing the feet pain continues at about the same level, but the arthritis pain is steadily increasing all over the body from the neck down to the feet. Only now with a different twist -- the weakening of muscles especially in the legs. The use again of a walking cane is looming ever larger across the horizon. This something I have vigorously resisted, since it represents defeat rather than victory, but I'm learning to accept things as they exist. Another reality is applying for a handicap parking permit from the DOMV in NC. Until now I've refused to do it because of the symbolism of the permit to me -- another defeat -- but I'm having to give in to the reality that I just can't walk substantial distances.

In spite of these negatives, I remain basically optimistic about my situation. So much progress has been made; major obstacles have been hurdled. I'm not about to give in to these lesser challenges. But I do need your prayers. Healing ultimately lays in God's hands. Prayer is the key to tapping into that healing.

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University Happenings:

The month of July has been dominately a computer month. At the first of the month the mother board on Claire's computer suddenly died, right in the middle of her taking two online masters courses at East Carolina University in her MLS degree program. That triggered a reconfiguration of the computers and network system in the office here at home.

The end result was Claire taking one of my computers with some spiffing up for her growing use of computers. The old computer was replaced by a new Pentium 4 computer supped up to 1 gig of SDRAM memory and 160 gigs of hard drive space working off the MS Windows XP system. The reloading of programs and (re-) configuration of computers and the network has consumed more than two weeks of time -- time away from other projects on the To-Do list. Some of it still is underway into August. Technology is both a blessing and a curse at the same time.

The summer has seen some real progress on several fronts. Work has continued on the new course, New Testament Theology, that will be offered for the first time in the fall semester. I have found myself delighting in doing the background research and then putting together the lecture notes and learning activities for the classroom. To be sure, much work remains before the beginning of the semester on August 21. You can check it out by going to Religion 314 in the GWU Classes section of Cranfordville.com.

Another satisfying project has been the development of bibliographical data bases at Cranfordville.com for the study of the New Testament. Somewhere over a thousand references have been posted thus far, out of the goal of ten thousand references by next summer. Every available chance is used to post some additional references. These are also available at Cranfordville.com under Resources for Spiritual Growth.

The work on the fourth edition of the Greek grammar has progressed and will be completed soon. It has been more involved and complicated because of the complex programming involved in creating the PDF files. This should be the last edition for at least a couple of years, since this will bring the grammar to the level of sophistication that I have been aiming at from the outset of the project three years ago. The first overseas sales of the grammar occurred this month with a professor in Belfast Ireland purchasing a copy over the internet. You can check out the demo version of the grammar by going to the Publications page at C&L Ventures (<http://cranfordville.com/CLVentures>).

I'm starting to feel excitement about the fall semester. Gardner-Webb is anticipating another record breaking enrollment, topping the 3,500 plus students last year. Most of my classes are already at the ceiling enrollment allowed by university policy.



☺ **Claire's Musings:**

Aug, 2002

Whew!! I just finished up one of the toughest summers I have ever had and I'm tired. I discovered that I don't want to ever take two summer graduate classes at the same time again, not for a five-week period. I need more time to absorb information to understand and remember it. Those two classes just about put me over the edge and I lost a lot of sleep. So far my favorite classes have been the library classes. One of these last two was a class about the Dewey Decimal System. Probably most people would find it a little on the dull side, but I actually enjoyed it. I have had some really great professors who are very helpful. That's not easy online and we've never even seen each other. For samples of some of my work see my ECU homepage at Cranfordville.com. My next class will be Intro to Reference. In our school district the first day for teachers started August 1 and my final paper for the graduate class was due that night.

The more fun part of the summer was at the beginning when we got to keep the grandkids for a little while. Then the latter part of the summer we had the most fantastic time. Parents came to visit from Texas and all of us tried to spend every minute together we could. This was their first trip here and I am so glad that they got to see the beautiful countryside that we live in. Carrie, Angie, Brian, Clay, and Taylor came over as much as possible and we packed in everything we could. Ruth and Billy especially enjoyed the trip on the Blue Ridge Parkway. They kept saying it was so beautiful. It is one of those things that you have to experience yourself to truly understand. We drove through the mountains and shopped in some little mountain tourist stores. All of us, including the kids went to our favorite Japanese restaurant. The chefs are so fascinating to watch as they prepare our food in front of us and are funny too. All of us got together for hamburger cookouts, homemade ice cream, and even one night of a movie on TV. After all, we did have to rest sometime. Most of our evenings were spent sitting on the front porch and visiting. Thank goodness the evenings were fairly cool. We had just gotten two new rocking chairs for the porch and that made it just that much better. It



was such a great visit and we all enjoyed being together as a family. The hard part was that the visit was not long enough. It was hard to see them leave. They need to come back during autumn and see the Blue Ridge Parkway again, but this time with the leaves changing colors.

Lorin and I were sitting in our rocking chairs on the front porch a few days ago and two deer ran across our yard. That was awesome. Then every once in a while we see wild geese grazing in the back yard. We have the best of all worlds here.



✌ **Lorin's Musings:**

In this issue we continue our exploration of the body section of the letters in the New Testament. An ancient writer could choose a variety of ways in which to present the desired issues. Large chunks of this material don't fall into a particular repetitive literary form, or genre. But NT scholars have identified several literary patterns that surface in this part of the letters, especially those of the apostle Paul. (I have gone into much greater detail here in a section of Cranfordville.com.) We will explore some of the more common patterns, since awareness of these patterns and how they were used in the ancient world can help avoid misunderstandings about the meaning of the scripture texts. One important thing to remember: these patterns were widely used way beyond the NT writings, and thus served as a means of communicating ideas.

Especially in the letters of Paul and John, one often finds narrative materials that describe some event or occurrence common to both the writer and reader(s) of the letter. Frequently, these texts have a biographical nature to them. For example, in 1 Cor. 2:1-5 (NRSV) Paul characterizes his initial preaching ministry at Corinth. "2:1When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2:2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 2:3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 2:4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 2:5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."

When trying to understand narrative materials, the more one can learn about the historical situation being alluded to in the passage, the more confident one can be about the derived interpretation of the text. Here more details about that episode are found in Acts 18:1-17. Luke makes a similar point to Paul's above in 18:5 where he says, "Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus."

Also important to proper understanding of a narrative text is the context in which it occurs. 1 Cor. 2:1-5 is sandwiched between two sections emphasizing the wisdom and power of God in the gospel message: 1 Cor. 1:18-31 and 2:6-16. Paul's point in 2:1-5 is to stress that he trusted the inherent divine power of the gospel to produce results, rather than resorting to the flashy rhetoric in his preaching style. The use of ornate, flowery language in speech making was often practiced by the traveling sophist philosophers, who to the Corinthians initially seemed no different from these Christian missionaries since their patterns of activity had similarities. Paul had realized long before that authentic response to the gospel had to be prompted by God, not by eloquent preaching. Thus he intentionally avoided using the compositional and delivery style of the sophists in order to attract attention to the gospel message.

When seeking then to apply insights from narrative materials, a crucial beginning question must be answered: Is this material so conditioned by its ancient historical, cultural setting that it has little relevance to my world? Most of the time the answer will be no. Some points of relevance can be found. This passage sits in severe judgment of a lot of modern preaching that tends to emphasize style more than anything else! That probably has a lot to do with the dominant impression of our day that sermons are boring and uninteresting. God's power isn't clearly evident in the presentation of the gospel message.