



News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 5

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

The beginning of school is always a chaotic time. With both Claire and I in the education business, we get a double whammy each August.

Claire's start back to her librarian's position at Cliffside Elementary School some 6 miles west of us was one of her most enjoyable returns to public school since we've been married. This second year of being the librarian has meant she had a much better understanding of what to expect and how to plan ahead. Added to that are the new insights she's gaining about this work through her study at ECU on her Masters of Library Science degree. She's coming home regularly at decent hours and no longer putting in the 14 to 16 hour days at school. My crazy schedule doesn't get any easier from year to year, but her's is and for that we're both grateful.

The challenge that began in August for us and others in western NC especially is coping with the deepening drought. Boiling Springs had to go onto severe water rationing the first of August and the county has taken to emergency measures to insure an adequate supply of water for just the basics. Our part of the state is almost 60 inches behind in rainfall over a three year period. Most of the towns in the area depend on wells and the rivers for their water supply, rather than impounded water in large lakes. Needless to say, yards and flowers have pretty much gone by the wayside without the ability to water them adequately and consistently. My hope is that a political will will be generated sufficiently by this to begin preparing for the future by building some large reservoirs on some of the nearby rivers so that these problems can be avoided in the future.

One very exciting news is the word from Greg and Jennifer that they're expecting their second child. They know the baby is a girl and the due date is Feb. 13, 2003. We're excited about having another girl in the family who will become grandkid number 11 for us making 6 girls and 5 boys. Greg will join Chris, Don, and Angie with learning to manage both little boys and girls.

On the health front, things are moving along about the same as before. A return to one of the blood pressure medicines has brought my blood pressure back down to a very good level. So far in September it's averaging about 123 over 78. The blood pressure medicine did kick my blood sugar level up above where it should be, so I having to work on getting it back down through more rigid dieting, exercise etc. Vicki Smith, one of the professors in our nursing school, introduced me to a soybean diet plan at the beginning of school. Claire and I have traded our evening meal for a soybean milkshake. Although we have not been on the plan long enough for it to make significant difference, I can already tell that it is helping continue bringing down my weight, and is also helping reduce some of the pain in the feet. The plan is the Revival Soy plan produced by the Physicians' Laboratories in NC. Their web site is www.revivalsoy.com. My big ongoing problem is the walking. I've had to go back to using a cane. Hopefully, this can help slow down the deterioration in my legs and feet.

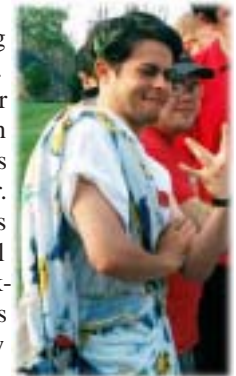


University Happenings:

The fall semester has gotten off with a bang! GWU is experiencing one of the bursts of growth this fall with something over 3,600 students enrolled for the fall. This translated into additional classes being added at the last minute in order to provide for the new students. More crowding in the hallways etc. All kinds of really fun things!

The impact on my schedule was to be assigned a class room on the opposite side of the campus from my office, taking a G.O.A.L. class at Valdese -- one of our 16 extension campuses about an hour's drive north of Boiling Springs -- among several other things. With my growing limitation in walking now, I just drive to this 8:00 class from the house first, then drive to my office once I have finished class.

After some confusion at the beginning of the semester, I have a new student worker, Hans Koschmann, who helps me with grading etc. in the office ten hours each week. Jenny Treadaway who worked with me for two years before graduation was such an outstanding student and worker that I was doubtful of ever being able to replace her. But Hans is doing a wonderful job and is catching on to office routines quite well and quickly. I'm looking forward to working with him over the next couple of years until he graduates and moves on to new levels of study and ministry.



The fourth edition of the Greek grammar is finally finished and should be released this coming week. It's both exciting and a relief to have this project behind me. Through the professional training from Adobe that I received last spring at Charlotte in programming with the Acrobat software, I have been able to incorporate a host of new features into this CD-ROM grammar textbook, including audio clips for help with pronunciation of the Greek text. I'm already using it in the first and third semester Greek classes and it's working out quite well. One new transfer student in the second year class indicated to me after class that he had already learned more Greek in the first two weeks of class this semester than he had learned all last year in the school he was attending at that time.

The two classes providing the greatest enjoyment so far are the fourth year Greek exegesis class on James and the New Testament Theology class. I have excellent students in both classes and we have in-depth discussions on vital issues as we're working our way through the materials. The theological German reading group of divinity school students is also off to a good start as we're going through a quick review before hitting the more advanced theological texts written in German.

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☺ Claire's Musings:

Sept, 2002

This past summer was tough with the three master's classes and they left me little time to do my usual catch up jobs around the house before the new school year began. But, one good thing is that I made A's in all three classes. What a relief to have some of that behind me.

School started off much easier for me this year in my second year as an elementary librarian. My official title is Media Specialist, but I still prefer librarian. I felt so much better having much more of an idea of what to expect. Last year in the beginning of the year I almost felt like one of the three stooges because everything was so hectic. I'm still wishing for help this year, but I know that I can handle things much better. I have learned to not stay late trying to get all the library books back in order. It's just not possible, so I have learned to deal with it better. Besides I can put that time to better use by getting home earlier and working on my master's class.

I remembered a funny incident from last year in the library. One of the students brought back a library book and said she could not read it because it had bad words in it. The bad word was used several times in the beginning. In further investigation I discovered that the student thought the word was "damn". Instead the story was set in England and a character in the story was "Dame" Edith. At least we get to laugh at the funny situations.

We had a marvelous visit from Donald, Hallie, and the kids. Being from Virginia their schools started later. We had such a



great time and Angie and Brian brought their kids over and what fun all those kids had playing together. There was a lot of laughter that filled the house. After everyone left, Lorin and I had to adjust to a much too quiet house.

The last part of August Carrie left for Jacksonville, Florida to join Daniel where he is now stationed on the Navy base there. She was so excited about getting to live in Florida. I am so glad that they are happy. They have a lot to look forward to.

I have not had a chance to work on my pictures for almost a year and have really missed that. I let everything go, including my studies during the three day Labor Day weekend. Angie and I spent most of one day getting to work together on our pictures. We both have missed getting to catch up on the pictures. We were going so well that we worked until midnight. It was a special time. Only now we agree that we shouldn't wait so long until the next time.



✌ Lorin's Musings:

In trying to make sense out of the narrative materials, two steps are critical: (1) figuring out what the historically conditioned text is talking about in its original setting in the first Christian century, and then (2) exploring how it may speak to concerns in our day. In the last couple of columns we have explored the first of these issues, especially as they relate to the letters in the New Testament.

In this column we will take a closer look at the second step in the interpretative process. With the development of better, more carefully thought out methods of interpreting scriptures over the past two centuries in the western world, modern biblical scholars have become more aware of the 'then' and 'now' aspects of biblical interpretation. One can measure the difficulty of applying a scripture text in proportion to the distance culturally etc. between this 'then' and 'now' that shows up inside individual passages of scripture. The less the distance, the easier the text is to understand and apply. The greater this gap, the more complex and difficult it is to apply a scripture passage to our world.

The basic literary genre of a passage plays a big role in this also. Didactic texts, that is, scripture passages teaching spiritual principles directly, are more easily understood, and often contain less distance between the 'then' and 'now.' The NT document with the least amount of gap between the 'then' and 'now' is the letter of James. This reality lies behind the reason so many lay people love to read the book of James. It's easy to understand, especially at the point of how it relates to Christian living today.

On the other hand, some of Paul's letters are often neglected by modern Christians usually on the basis of "I can't understand what he's talking about." More often than not, the reason for this is that Paul is talking about a subject that is uniquely an issue in the first century world and we have no similar concern or issue in our world. For example, when Paul spoke in 1 Cor. 11:4-5 (NRSV) that "Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head -- it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved," most modern Christians are at a loss to know what in the world he was talking about. The cultural gap between proper dress as it related to head covering in the ancient world and in our world is huge. In that world any woman appearing in public, Christians included, had to be veiled from head to toe. In the Christian congregations then, a woman could lead in public prayer and preach to the congregation but according to Paul's instructions she had to do it completely veiled. I can't imagine Christian women in modern churches accepting this requirement to show up in church with only their eyes visible to everyone else! Everything else had to be covered with no bare flesh visible whatsoever.

To make sense out of such texts one has to explore the background of this ancient historical custom against the statements of the scripture text. Careful study here reveals the interesting insight that uncovered heads for males and covered heads for females symbolized the same thing: reverence for God. The 'now' application of the text can then become clearer: everything all of us do must be done in reverence for God! Our appearance should also reflect this profound respect for our Creator and Redeemer. Anything less is to express disrespect!