



# News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford

May 2003



Volume 6

Issue 5



## Family Events:

My experiment with Vioxx didn't work. Dr. Klein and I agreed to try the arthritic pain reliever Vioxx for a ten day trial at the first of April. In a pattern typical for me, the side effects of the drug outweighed the limited benefits. Consequently, I will continue exploring alternative means of gaining relief from the occasional severe arthritic pain over my body. Hopefully with the warmer weather the pain will not come as often. With spring coming somewhat later this year in terms of warm weather, I'm still looking forward to gaining some relief.

One of the exciting things for Claire and me during April was the opportunity to resume our occasional 'getaway' weekends. We haven't been able to do this for quite some time because of my health problems, but decided mostly on the spur of the moment to reserve a room in the Sheradon Hotel in downtown Charlotte for a Saturday night and spent the Easter weekend away from all the pressures we face day to day. The two days were absolutely delightful. We took a long Saturday afternoon nap, went to the movies after dinner and saw "Anger Management" -- the first time Claire and I have been to a movie together in over three years -- and had a wonderfully fun time.

A major motivation for the timing of the trip was to be able to attend the Easter Services of the Deutsche Kirche in Charlotte that I had helped to get started when we first moved to NC in 1998. This German speaking Lutheran congregation meets in St. Mark's Lutheran Church near downtown Charlotte and ministers to the several thousand German nationals who live and work in the Charlotte area. The mission church, although small and at times struggling, nonetheless has a marvelous ministry and is meeting a real spiritual need. Again my health problems have prevented us from being as involved in the life of the congregation as we have wanted to, but it was a marvelous experience of worship in the German language. Additionally, we had some opportunity to renew friendships with some wonderful Christian people and meet some new friends. The church conducts worship services -- all in German -- two Sunday evenings monthly at St. Mark's. For information about the congregation you can visit their website at [www.germanchurch.org](http://www.germanchurch.org).



I'm looking forward to the end of the spring semester and a full summer away from school responsibilities and pressures. Toward the end of the semester I've begun feeling my age and health limitations more than ever before. Deep physical tiredness has often left me unable to do a lot of things I would really enjoy doing as well as having slowed me down thus causing me to take a long longer in getting basic things done.

105 Twin Lake Drive  
Shelby, NC 28152-0660

**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>**

Ph: 704 434-5657  
Fax: 704 434-0472  
[webmaster@cranfordville.com](mailto:webmaster@cranfordville.com)



## University Happenings:

One of the enjoyable aspects of teaching is getting to interact with students outside the classroom in an informal setting. Every spring Claire and I host the Greek Party for the students who are studying Greek with me from their first year to their se-



nior year. On April 24 we had several students over for an outdoor cookout and a delightful time. The students seem to enjoy the evening. The weather cooperated and everyone was able to eat together outside on the deck.

On April 17 I finished up a six week study of the book of James with over two dozen lay folks from the surrounding area through the Lay Institute of Religion in the GWU divinity school. Working with these very serious minded lay people who came two hours every Thursday evening to the GWU campus in order to expand their understanding of scripture was one of the most rewarding experiences that I've had in a long time. This study provided me the opportunity to create a



simplified Bible study on the book of James at [Cranfordville.com](http://Cranfordville.com). By meeting in one of the multimedia rooms on campus I taught the course directly off [Cranfordville.com](http://Cranfordville.com) to the class. Everyone was enthusiastically involved in the study. The online Study Guide to James on [Cranfordville.com](http://Cranfordville.com) provided opportunities for the students to do follow-up study outside of class. The materials will be permanently available online; just go to <http://cranfordville.com/DSLIRJamesframe.htm>.



## Claire's Musings:

May, 2003

This past month has flown by so fast with everyone being busy and so much happening at work and at home. Things are beginning to fall together better at school now that I am finishing up my second year as librarian, or as I am now called "Media Specialist". I still prefer librarian. It is a very demanding job, but I still enjoy all of the benefits of teaching children, but not having to deal with End-of-Grade testing and other duties that the teachers have to deal with. And when I have a tough class, I only have to deal with them for 45 minutes. That's not too bad. Of course, I have other duties that the teachers don't have, but I like my job the best.

Lorin had his annual Greek party this past month and as usual it was great. Sometimes when I feel down about the lack of respect and manners from many of today's youngsters, having the opportunity to be around some of the university students gives me a ray of hope for the future. They were a lot of fun to be around and so appreciative of what we had done in having the party for them, it gave me a new enthusiasm.

The James Bible Study that Lorin led at Gardner-Webb was wonderful. I always love when Lorin preaches, or teaches in our Sunday school class, because I learn so much. He gives a lot of background information for our lesson and makes things more understandable to me. The group in the Bible study was a fun group to be with and they participated and seemed to enjoy the class as much as I did.

Angie and Brian went out of town for a few days during spring break for a much needed getaway. We kept Clay and Taylor, which meant I was extra busy. It's a reminder of why young people have children. The good part was that it forced me to work less and play more. They are such precious children and we did have lots of fun together "making memories".

The rest of spring break was spent mostly trying to catch up on my behind homework. Somehow I did manage to get most of it finished and just found out that I got an "A" in my course. I now have finished 18 hours of the 39 necessary. Check out my homepage at <http://personal.ecu.edu/cfc0702/>

The last day for teachers at my elementary school will be June 11. Soon afterward Lorin and I will be making a trip to Texas.

---

6. Oath making is one such example in Jas. 5:12 as the earlier expression of the Jesus tradition that was followed with the later, expanded version in Mt. 5:33-37.

What can be concluded from this? For one thing, what Jesus taught during his earthly ministry quickly took on special value among his followers. Very soon after his ascension Jesus' words were collected into both oral and written forms and stabilized into a rather well defined collection of authoritative teachings about how to serve God as a follower of Jesus. The writers of the letters in the NT drew from this collection as an important source of understanding. Later, the four gospel writers would draw from this same pool of material in the telling of their individual stories of Jesus. Jesus as the founder of the Christian movement and also as its central focus as the Savior of sinful humanity was the exclusive basis for early Christian religious understanding. He should still be for us today.



## Lorin's Musings:

Last month we took a quick look at the Kerygma, the gospel proclamation that shows up in the letters in the New Testament. This month, we explore the second segment of Early Christian Preaching that shows up in the NT letters, called the *Verba Christi*, that is, the sayings of Christ.

Ordinarily, we would look to the four gospel documents, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as the sources for the words that Christ spoke during public ministry while on earth. Yet one must remember that these gospel documents were not written until at least three decades after Jesus ascended back into Heaven. Most all the letters of the New Testament, at least in traditional views of authorship, were composed during these three or four intervening decades and thus constitute an earlier written source for the words of Christ, earlier than the gospel documents themselves.

The sayings of Christ surface in the NT letters in two ways: (1) direct reference to what Christ said, and (2) allusions to what Christ said indirectly. For a helpful, more detailed study of this go to the Ph.D. seminar paper by Dr. Clay Ham located at <http://cranfordville.com/Cranfordville/VerbaChristiCHam.pdf>. My comments below are a summation of Dr. Ham's presentation in my Ph.D. seminar at SWBTS on this topic.

In the letters of Paul, direct reference to *Verba Christi* is found in six places: 1 Cor. 7:10-11; 9:14; 11:23-35; 14:37; 2 Cor. 12:9; and 1 Thess. 4:15-17. As many as thirty echoes of the words of Christ can be traced in the Pauline section of the NT. One pattern becomes clear when both these types of *Verba Christi* are carefully analyzed: they show up in very well defined sections of the Pauline letters, and also, where parallels exist in the gospel documents, they are found in very well defined sections. In both places, these sections are almost always in discussions about how to behave as Christians, or in discussions about the return of Christ at the close of human history. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6), the missionary discourses (Mt. 10; Mk. 6, Luke 9-10), and Mk. 9:33-50 comprise the location of the vast majority of these parallels in the gospel documents.

One important conclusion comes from these patterns: Paul never attempts to 'hand down' the Jesus tradition, rather he 'refers to it' in his letters. That is, in the early church prior to Paul, this material already had an established oral form and identity separate from either the Old Testament and from the spiritual revelations given to Paul directly by the resurrected Christ (cf. Gal. 1:15-17). Paul used the established *Verba Christi* to remind his readers of the authoritative words of Christ, universally accepted by first century Christians.

Whereas Paul made rather infrequent reference to the *Verba Christi*, Peter in his first letter made at least fifteen references to the *Verba Christi*, mostly at the allusion level. A couple of observations emerge: (1) the allusions include sayings found in Matthew, Luke and John, but not Mark [cf. 1 Pet. 1:22, 4:8 with Jhn 13:34-35, 15:12]; (2) several allude to episodes which are associated with Peter himself in the gospel accounts [cf. 1 Pet. 5:3-5 with Jhn. 21:15-17]. But inside the General Letters section of the NT, the book of James is most dependent on the *Verba Christi* with over forty allusions, which have gospel parallels overwhelmingly in the Sermon on the Mount in Mt. 5-7 and Lk.