



News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

This fall Claire and I have been able to spend a little more time enjoying the fall scenery than has been the case over the past three years. The foliage this year wasn't quite as pretty as in past years, but still it is spectacular -- especially for one coming from the western part of Texas. With the addition of a software utility program called Picasa that easily and quickly creates photo albums formatted for internet viewing, we have been able to share some of the hundreds of pictures taken over three Saturday trips during October to the mountains of NC and the northwestern part of SC. These are posted at Cranfordville.com in the Photos section under [Fall Foliage 2003](#). Here is sample of one of them.



On another subject, I continue to be amazed at the progress that the physical therapy is making with the osteoarthritis problems. I will complete the cycle of treatments just before Thanksgiving and am freer from pain than has been the case in several years. Don Miller and his staff at Cleveland Physical Therapy Associates have my deep admiration and gratitude for how they have helped me. I'm gradually getting into a daily stretch exercise routine that they're teaching me to do at home so that the benefits of the therapy will continue after the treatments have stopped. Of course, some days have pain just because sudden weather changes etc. dramatically impact the arthritis. But, most all the time my body is relatively free of the disabling pain that had been exploding on me since midsummer.

We continue to enjoy working with the group of men in the Sunday School class at our church in Shelby. This is a wonderful group of men who love the Lord and want to genuinely serve Him. I get teased a lot about my Texas heritage, but not as much as they tease one another. Claire has a great time participating in the class with me. The discipline of preparing the written handouts on the lesson each week has been good for me as well.

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University Happenings:

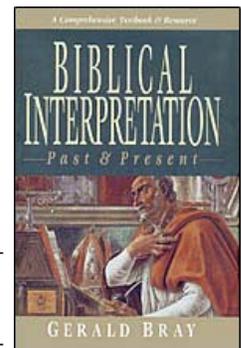


November is always a hectic month in the educational world! You're past the halfway mark in the semester; the students (and professors) are getting tired; thoughts increasingly turn to the big holidays ahead (Thanksgiving and Christmas) etc. For the thirty plus years that I've been teaching in higher education, I've always tried to get everything with real substance out of the way in each course by Thanksgiving, in the realization that afterwards nothing of real substance is going to get done in the American university classroom. Typically, only a couple of weeks remain until final exams begin.

The Thanksgiving holiday is also crazy. At the American university level most schools give only Thursday and Friday off for the break, although the vast majority of students take off the entire week in order to have a long holiday period. This is especially true if they have to drive any real distance to get home for the break. My feeling is that schools would do much better by scheduling in an entire week for the holiday. These lost days could be made up by beginning the semester three days earlier, since the public schools begin now two and three weeks before most universities.

In the education world one has to think and plan months in advance. Thus a lot of preparatory work for the spring semester is already underway. For me, it will be the normal twelve hour course teaching load. This includes second and fourth semester Greek classes, along with a NT survey class and one new course.

The new course that is being added to the mixture this time is Religion 492, New Testament Seminar. This is a senior level course that is structured to help prepare students for more advanced level studies in seminary or divinity school. The subject matter for the course is pretty much open to the professor's choice. The course this spring is going to focus on the history of the interpretation of the New Testament. We will be using Gerald Bray's *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present* as the launchpad for our study. One of the noticeable weaknesses that I've observed over the years among religious studies students is a huge lack of understanding of how various Christian traditions over the centuries have attempted to understand the scriptures. The goal for this course is to address that gap so that these students will come away with a much better understanding of patterns of New Testament interpretation since the apostolic era. This, in turn, will help them develop a much more substantive personal approach to their own interpretative method.



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😊 *Claire's Musings:*

Nov, 2003

This past month has been better with family and friends through talking, emails, and letters giving us encouragement and letting us know that they will be praying for all of us. I'm sure that most families prefer to hide family problems for fear of embarrassment, but I am glad that we didn't. We don't have to be evasive when asked about family and make up excuses. But, the most important reason of all (what I had hoped for) is that many people are praying for our family. That is what it is all about. I want to say "Thank you" to all of you that have given us encouragement.

Lorin and I made three Saturday trips to the mountains, which are more trips in one autumn than we have done before. We were disappointed that the leaves were not as beautiful this year as in previous years. But, it was fun for us to be able to use the digital camera this year. Maybe next year will be better. Of course, we still enjoy outings like this and we just needed to get away from everyday stresses of life. It's been hard for both of us lately to keep up with our work load. My master's class schedule is close to the end and I am trying to make sure that I am able to get in all my work before the deadline.

We have missed many of our Sunday School parties recently and finally were able to make the latest one. What a



On SC 107 headed north



great time we had visiting with friends at John and Linda Thompson's home. There's just not enough time on Sunday morning to just sit and visit. This is a special group of people who love the Lord and who love helping each other. Needless to say, we ate and ate. That was the best home cooked meal we've had in a long time. We celebrated Avery's 80th birthday and sang "God Bless America" around the piano. Of course, I took pictures and my favorite ones were the pictures taken on the stairs with as many of us as we could squeeze in. We had a great time.



✌️ *Lorin's Musings:*

In our continuing focus on Paraenesis (moral exhortation) especially in the letters of the NT, another aspect of the nature of moral admonition needs to be considered. Last month, we took a look at the importance of high standards of moral

behavior as an integral part of Christian and Jewish religious faith in the ancient world, over against the almost total lack of emphasis in the surrounding religious world.

Quite clearly the moral teachings in the New Testament grow out of the foundation laid in the OT Israelite faith. One of the basic principles grew out of the OT Holiness Code mandate (Lev. 19:2, NRSV): You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. The imperative for God's people to behave themselves a certain way grows out of the character and behavior of their God. The worshippers' conduct is supposed to be guided by the con-

duct of Almighty God.

This principle is so deeply ingrained into the OT religious system that proper relationship with God in covenant is predicated upon proper treatment of people around you. But, one must understand that these are two distinct obligations. Right relationship with others doesn't guarantee right relationship with God. But, -- and it's very important -- there absolutely is no right relationship with God apart from right relationship with others! This so-called vertical-horizontal dimension in the Judeo-Christian tradition is built into the structure of the Ten Commandments which served as the core of the OT Legal Code for ancient Israel.

With the beginning of Christianity, this issue was quickly addressed by Jesus. He reaffirmed the spiritual basis for moral behavior in his reiteration of Lev 19:2 in the Sermon on the Mount in Mt. 5:48 (NRSV): "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This verse climaxes the six contrasts of righteousness in the Kingdom of God that was introduced by the astounding declaration in 5:20 that "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (NRSV). Both the Beatitudes and the Model Prayer incorporate the earlier vertical-horizontal perspective into religious experience. The apostles continued that emphasis in their writings. The moral admonition sections of the letters constitute an important part of the content of those NT documents.

Speaking of Sunday School groups I am really enjoying going with Lorin as he teaches the men's class for Dr. White. They are such a gracious group of men who don't mind at all that I come with Lorin. Lorin is such a good teacher and I learn so much from him, especially all the background information that he gives on the Bible stories. And, I have a new group of friends to learn with. I have so much to be thankful for.