



News from the Blue Ridge



Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Issue 1



Family Events:

With this issue Claire and I begin five years of sending out this newsletter. We began doing this when we first arrived in NC in January 1998 as a way to stay in touch with family and friends. The Lord has used the newsletter to encourage hundreds of people in a ministry that we could never have imagined at the beginning.

A quick note about my health. I underwent the prostate cancer surgery on Dec. 10 as originally planned and the pathology report indicated that the surgery successfully removed all the cancer from my body. After five days in the hospital in Shelby I came home and have been virtually confined to the house the remainder of the month. The few trips outside have been to see doctors. Gradually my strength is returning, although at the end of Dec. I'm still only able to walk some around the house. I have gotten rid of the staples and the catheter from the surgery, and am working on getting the "plumbing" back into proper functioning. Hopefully, the level of strength will be sufficient to begin the semester okay on Jan. 9.

The most exciting health news is the beginning of a new medicine for the pain problems. Last Friday the neurologist proposed a new program that has only recently been released in the US. So far the results have been most encouraging. It will take about a month to ease into the prescribed dosage level, but in the first week I'm experiencing a noticeable reduction of pain in my back and feet. This would be nothing short of miraculous, if it can give me relief from the severe pain that I've been experiencing over the past several months.

Christmas 2001 was a different celebration than in past years. After coming home from the hospital on Dec. 14, we had a steady stream of people coming by to check on us. On Christmas eve Daniel and Carrie came over for lunch. Then on Christmas day Claire and I had the entire day to ourselves. It was a wonderfully quiet, relaxing day. Then on the next day Donald and his family arrived from Reston, VA for three days. We had a delightful time visiting. On Friday morning Angie and Brian arrived back from Texas and came over. We all enjoyed breakfast together and a wonderful visit until noon when Donald and Hallie had to head back home.

I have done more resting during the semester break than any time in recent memory. The surgery made this necessary, but I suspect my body has needed it for quite some time. Also, I've enjoyed family during these holidays as much or more than I can remember. We've had some absolutely wonderful times together during the holidays. Claire has had time to cook some absolutely fabulous meals, and I've enjoyed them and continued to loose weight at the same time. I hate to see the holidays come to an end!

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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](http://cranfordville.com) at <http://cranfordville.com>

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University Happenings:

On January 9, the spring semester cranks up again at GWU. My teaching load this semester is similar to past semesters: Greek 102, 202, 495 (Galatians), Religion 102 (NT survey, 2 sections), and Religion 305O (online version of NT survey). Additionally, I'll be working with several DivSchool students in the second semester of a Theological German reading program. These courses are located at Cranfordville.com (<http://cranfordville.com/GWUclass.htm>).

One of my goals for the spring semester is to continually update and enhance these courses as the material is covered during the semester. I've found that this is the best time to deal with improvements and to experiment with new additions to the web site. As my health gradually returns I hope to have more time and energy to devote to this.

The year 2002, however, will signal the beginning of a project that I have dreamed of doing for several decades. During the fall, even in the midst of all the health issues, I managed to experiment with the basic design of a commentary series on the New Testament. The series will be called *Biblical Insights: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary on the New Testament*. The commentary will be electronic in form and thus take advantage of the additional features that electronic publishing makes available. More importantly, the commentary will be made available free of charge on Cranfordville.com. Just go to the **Resources for Spiritual Growth** section in the homepage, then click on the commentary link.

The first volume to be worked on is Galatians. Right now I'm completing the first chapter on Gal. 1:1-5 which will be some 45 pages when done. Each pericope in Galatians will be gradually completed then uploaded in the Adobe PDF format.

The aim of the commentary is extensive. Technical sections for those skilled with the Greek language include the morphological and syntactical parsing of each word, the analysis of the text critical apparatus variant readings of the UBS 4th edition, the block and semantic diagramming of the Greek text of the pericope. Also, a detailed treatment of the literary and historical issues is included under the Exegetical Issues section and an Exegetical Outline of the passage.

For those limited to working with English translations, the commentary includes a listing of representative translations of each pericope. Under the Expository Issues section a detailed treatment of the relevance of the pericope to today's world is provided; also an expository outline of the passage and a sermon based on the passage are included.

Needless to say, this project is going to take a long time in completing. Actually, I anticipate working on it throughout my retirement years as the culmination of the many years of research and study of the New Testament.



Claire's Musings:

Jan. 2002

Happy New Year! The best news of our entire year is that Lorin is cancer free. The surgery went fine and he has been recuperating during the holidays. The timing has been absolutely perfect to allow him this time to recuperate. Now we can concentrate on the problems that are causing him the most pain – the diabetes and arthritis. He kept me so busy during the holidays with small nursing duties that I think going back to work will give me some rest. Each day, as Lorin was able to do more things on his own, made it a little easier for me. The first morning that he woke me up to help him was the most exciting because he could walk on his own without my help.

So many people, family, and friends were wonderful for moral support. I was so touched when my third-floor co-workers took up a collection for me, which I would be able to use for my meals on the run or any of the many things that come up during times like these. That came in handy so many times during and after the hospital stay and I was reminded often of good friends. They even made a huge card and had all of the third and fourth graders on our floor to sign it. Get-well cards, plants, goodies, and visits to the hospital and home encouraged Lorin. Since I was staying in the hospital day and night, I'm afraid that I ate most of the goodies. One thing that especially helped me was when Sophia (Lorin's co-worker) brought us a meal and then Doug (another co-worker) brought a meal. I was never so glad to see a meal coming. At that time I was struggling to keep up with everything. What would we do without such good friends?

We had the strangest Christmas day with absolutely nothing happening. But the days before and after were filled with loved ones and excitement. We had our Christmas with Angie and Carrie and families the first part of December. The day after Christmas Donald and Hallie and the kids, Brittany, Preston, and Trevor came to spend a few days. It was such a good time to spend together. The kids are so cute and when the three of them are together it is hysterical. The drive they made from VA to visit us is a long one, but made a little more difficult with three little ones in the back seat. The visit meant so much to Lorin and I, but especially to Lorin during his recuperation.

The morning Donald and Hallie were getting ready to leave Angie and Brian with Clay and Taylor arrived back from their trip to Texas. They got home very early in the morning to a cold, cold house. The timing was perfect for them to come on over for breakfast with all of us. I was so glad we all got to visit for a short while. It just made Christmas that much better.

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these documents 'gospels.' This because the Gospel was the good news of God's salvation in Jesus Christ, and each of these four documents tells their own distinctive story of that divine redemption through Christ. To be sure they have biographical and historical aspects, but the interpreter makes a huge mistake by reading these documents as biography or as pure history. The gospel writers were far more interested in converting the reader to faith in Jesus than merely informing the reader about Jesus.



Lorin's Musings:

As we continue our exploration of how to interpret a scripture text, this segment touches on identifying the flow of

thought inside a passage.

The more recent literary analysis emphasis in biblical studies has underscored the critical importance of this part of the interpretative process. Sometimes labeled rhetorical analysis or discourse analysis, biblical scholars are increasingly recognizing that following the line of reasoning by a biblical author is at the heart of understanding what the author wants to communicate. But how to do this? Especially since patterns of thinking in a first century Jewish/Roman culture are significantly different than in modern America.

For the trained biblical scholar, to study ancient patterns of thinking both in the Greco-Roman and the Jewish worlds is very important. For the Bible student, to learn as much about these patterns as possible becomes important. The writers of the NT do reflect the cultural trends of their time in their writing styles and ways of developing ideas.

One important aspect of this process is the identification of the **genre** of the passage, that is, the literary form in which the ideas are written. The idea of genre is that repetitive patterns of thought expression occur in different writings that become a common way of expressing an idea.

For example, a parable is a distinctive genre. The content of each parable will differ, but the way each parable is expressed follows the same essential pattern. Something is compared to something else for the purpose of making a point about the first 'something.' With Jesus' parables the Kingdom of God is compared to some aspect of daily life in first century Palestine for the purpose of emphasizing some aspect about the Kingdom. For more detailed treatment of the study of parables see *The Exegesis of Parables* (<http://cranfordville.com/ParExegesis.html>).

The NT reflects a wide variety of genre at both a broad level and also at a smaller sub-genre level (for details see Summary List of NT Genre at <http://cranfordville.com/NT-genre.htm>). At the basic level, four types of literary forms exist in the NT: gospel, history, letter, and apocalypse. But inside each of these numerous sub-forms can be found.

What impact on interpretation does identifying a passage under one of these broad genre have? Sometimes not a great deal, but at other times a lot. It depends upon the sub-genre of the passage.

Let's treat each of the broad genre successively to explore the implications of each for the interpretative process.

First, one encounters the four **gospels** -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, John -- in the NT. What literary form are these documents? The titles, which were added to the original documents over a hundred years after their composition for identification purposes, read in the English translation "The Gospel According to" Thus we encounter the word 'gospel.' Are these documents biographies? Histories? To be sure early Christians didn't label them "The Biography of Jesus according to..." nor "The History of Jesus according to...." Both biography and history were well established literary forms in the ancient world in both Greek and Latin writings, and many of these writings have survived to our time. Instead, early Christians labeled

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