

2004

THE FLYNN FAMILY YEAR-IN-REVIEW

"You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have turned my sorrow into joy"
from the hymn, "This is How We Overcome" (an adaptation of Psalm 30:11)

Greetings family and friends! It feels like we spent most of this year transitioning out of transition. It has been a year of uncertainty, answered prayers, and rich blessings. Through it all, we were constantly reminded of God's steadfast love for us, His hand of providence, and that His will and timing are perfect.

CARL In last year's Christmas newsletter, Carl wrote candidly of his decision to no longer pursue a career as a university professor, and of the uncertainty in the aftermath of that decision. This year, he taught 4 courses during the spring semester, knowing that it would be the end of his full-time teaching career. In April, as the semester was drawing to a close, Carl received a letter from Baylor indicating a dissertation-related deadline that we both realized he simply could not meet. It was a true blessing, because, in a way, Baylor made the decision for us: Carl would not finish the dissertation and would not graduate with his Ph.D. However, by completing his coursework and passing his comprehensive exams, he earned a Masters degree in Religion. In a whirlwind of conversations and planning, Carl was approved to graduate—in person—with his M.A. in Religion from Baylor on May 15. So before you could say "plane and rental car reservations," there we were in Waco, Texas once again, with Carl marching in cap and gown amid all the pomp and circumstance and Chantal (and dear friends Kenneth & Beth Ransom) cheering him on from the stands. It was a moment of true closure for both of us, and we were—and continue to be—at peace about everything that happened. We spent several days in Waco, seeing dear friends and simply enjoying ourselves. Upon our return, one thing was very clear: Carl needed a new job! And the Lord eventually led him to a great one: On July 6, Carl began a new job back at Pepperdine as Communication Specialist for the Office of Student Information and Services (which consists of Academic Advising, Student Accounts, Academic Records, and OneStop). Carl manages the internal and external communications for the aforementioned departments, which allows him to apply many of his gifts, talents and strengths. He has wonderful co-workers and is blessed to be a part of an encouraging work environment. The one thing that Carl misses in his new role is his mentoring relationship with students. Because of this, Carl will be teaching one section of Christianity and Culture (REL 301) next spring semester, and is very much looking forward to it.

CHANTAL Chantal began her 4th year as Office Manager of the Seaver College Career Center. She spent nearly a year without a Director, and it was a time of extreme uncertainty and stress for her department. The Lord heard her cries, however, and on August 1 answered her prayers by bringing her a wonderful new Director, Brad Dudley (for those of you Pepperdinians who know Brad, get on your knees right now and thank God for him!). It's been a rejuvenating fall semester of solid leadership, resurrected staff morale, and overall lightheartedness in the department. With Brad continuing his existing role as Director of Pepperdine's Volunteer Center, in addition to his new duties as Director of the Career Center, Chantal now also supports the Volunteer Center as its Office Manager. Her added responsibilities are all student-focused, and she enjoys her growing relationships with many of the Volunteer Center's student leaders. Our trip to Waco for Carl's graduation in May was very healing for Chantal. We left Waco 3 years ago, and it's been a long 3 years of, in many ways, her mourning and grieving the loss of the life there that she loved. Even though we've been back to visit each year, this year's trip really opened her eyes to how much things have changed and how much things have moved on without her. It helped to finally, finally heal her broken heart over leaving Waco, and to finally make her understand that here (at Pepperdine, in southern California, near family), at least for the foreseeable future, is where God wants us to be. Make no mistake—she still despises the cost of living in California and how long it takes to get anywhere—but she is finally at peace that this is home.

TRAVELS We enjoyed visiting with friends and former classmates at Pepperdine's Homecoming in January. Carl was the guest preacher at Redlands Church of Christ in January and at Palm Springs Church of Christ in February. While in Palm Springs, we enjoyed seeing both Chantal's Mama, as well as cousins Stan and David (who we're sure are delighted to be mentioned by name!). We also enjoyed seeing many friends at the Pepperdine

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Bible Lectures in May. We again made our semi-annual pilgrimages to Lake Havasu for the Memorial and Labor Day weekends to spend time with Carl's family (Chantal's Mama came along as well). In June we traveled to San Leandro for the surprise 40th birthday party of our friend Tim Castle, and the next day went on to Palo Alto for the Stanford graduation of our friend John Smithson. In July, we journeyed to Fallbrook for the wedding of our dear Pepperdine friend Angela Clements to Mark Manassee, and also to Laguna Beach to once again attend the arts festival and "Pageant of the Masters" (while in Laguna Beach we also saw Chantal's childhood pen pal Christine Vanek and her family).

VISITORS We met up with our vacationing friends Kelly and Wendy Neill and family (formerly of Waco) in Laguna Beach in April, and in July we met up with our vacationing friend Betty Murphy (Chantal's former co-worker, also from Waco) and her grandson James in Hollywood (at this point in the narrative Chantal must point out that at the time of their visit, Betty's hotel was also hosting a porn convention—it could only happen to Betty!!!).

ACTIVITIES We continue to worship with University Church of Christ, which meets on-campus at Pepperdine (the congregation is in the process of fundraising so that it can one day soon have its own church building, so if anybody out there is interested in donating—please let us know!). We routinely serve as greeters, and Chantal serves in the nursery once a month. Chantal also attended the University Church Women's Retreat in early November. Our relationships with Pepperdine students continue to be an enormous blessing to us. We attend the college Care Group on Wednesday nights, the fall and spring Campus Ministry retreats, and student performing arts productions. This past March we both participated in the much-anticipated reprise of the Faculty/Staff/Alumni group at Pepperdine's Songfest, with Carl making his stage debut and us playing the romantic lead couple in the storyline! This summer we became fierce ultimate Frisbee competitors with a group of Pepperdine staff and alumni. In September, we both participated in Pepperdine's Step Forward Day, a university-wide day of service to the surrounding communities. Carl has gone volleyball crazy this fall, playing 3 times a week: in a community league, on a Pepperdine Intramurals team, and helping to teach a volleyball class at Pepperdine—and he loves it!

FAMILY Carl's family celebrated the 1-year anniversary of Dad's quadruple bypass surgery on September 12. His recovery has been amazing, and he's changed his diet and exercise habits for the better. We began facilitating pre-marriage counseling sessions with Carl's brother Sean and his fiancée Cheyenne in preparation for their wedding that Carl will perform next April. In October we traveled to California's Central Valley for the funeral of Carl's Dad's longtime friend, Jim Pinion. Later that same week, Carl officiated at the funeral of Ron Harrington (Carl's stepmother's brother).

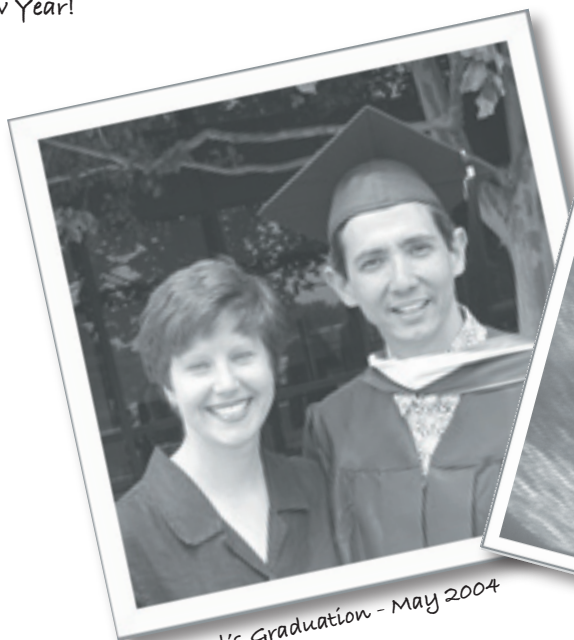
CELEBRATIONS In February, Chantal whisked Carl away to a nearby inn for a romantic valentine weekend getaway. Carl baptized our friend and Pepperdine student Ryan Burch—who Carl has mentored for 4 years—in March. Carl surprised Chantal with tickets to see "Mamma Mia!" for her birthday in June. Also in June, Carl performed his first wedding for Flynn family friends Jeff and Brandi Bowers. We attended a record 4 weddings this summer (out of the 7 we were invited to!). In July, we attended Carl's 16-year high school reunion. We traded in our Jeep and bought a new-to-us Jeep Grand Cherokee in August. In November, Carl was among 12 recipients of the Dean's Service Award, a student-nominated recognition of staff members who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to students. We will celebrate our 12th wedding anniversary on December 12 by attending a performance of "Les Misérables" (Chantal has seen it twice, and has waited what feels like a lifetime for the opportunity to take Carl to see it, so for her it's a dream come true!). By far, however, our biggest celebration will culminate around June 3, when we welcome the much-anticipated birth of Baby Flynn. Yes, that's right—we're pregnant, and God is good. Check out <http://homepage.mac.com/carlflynn/babyflynn/> for pictures and updates!

We hope that this newsletter finds you well, anticipating a wonderful holiday with family and friends! Until our next meeting, may the Lord bless you and keep you; May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; May the Lord lift his countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

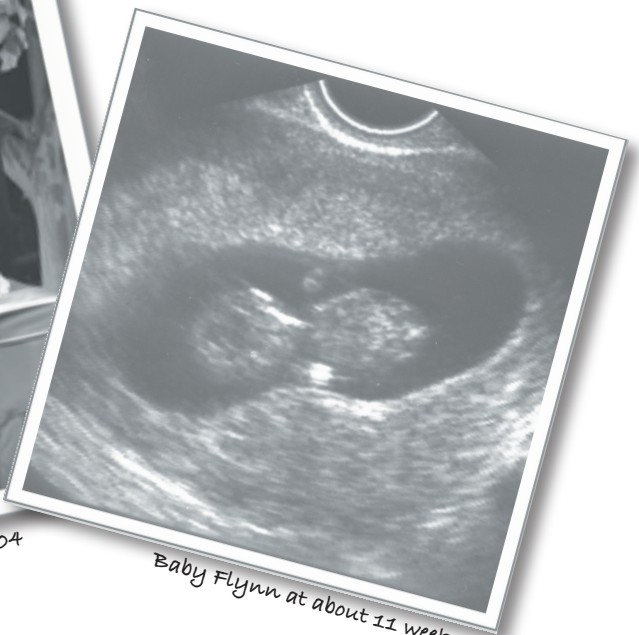
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Carl, Chantal
+ Baby Flynn

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At Carl's Graduation - May 2004



Baby Flynn at about 11 weeks