Faculty Development Grant Report: Summer 2009

Date: September 12, 2009  
To: Rick Pointer, Provost & Professional Development Committee  
From: Helen Rhee, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies  
Re: Faculty Development Grant Report, Summer 2009

I want to first express my gratitude to the Professional Development Committee for supporting my research.

I was awarded the summer stipend in 2009 for the project, “Wealth, Poverty, and Salvation,” which would be a chapter in my larger book project, *Wealth, Poverty, and Early Christian Formation*. However, I had to revise this plan of research and writing for this chapter, and ended up using the grant for my participation in two conferences in the summer: First, I presented a paper, “Divine Judgment and Acts of Charity as Acts of Justice in Pre-Constantine Christian Texts,” at the annual meeting of the North American Patristic Society (NAPS) in Chicago (May); second, I participated in the Colloquium on Material Culture and Ancient Religion (COMCAR) in Rome, Ostia & Pompeii (July) and presented a paper, “Construction of Social Realities through the Early Christian Catacombs.” In addition, I finished revising and editing another chapter of my book, which I had been working on since last summer: “Social, Economic, and Theological World of Early Christianity.”

This change was mainly due to an unforeseen opportunity (COMCAR) presented to me in January and a rather serious auto accident I had experienced in late February and a subsequent period of substantial treatment and prolonged recovery process that has lasted entire summer and that continues even now. I was not able to start and sustain research and writing for a new chapter, but I was able to manage to research for and complete several shorter projects (see above). Although I was not able to meet the original project goal, however, these short projects also constitute necessary parts of my larger book project. Moreover, my participation in the COMCAR has proved to be invaluable for my current and future research for the book and also for my teaching; it broadened my conceptual framework and methodological tools for approaching the topic of wealth, poverty, and early Christianity, and provided with me tangible resources for the courses I am teaching this semester (e.g., RS 119: Early and Medieval Christianity) and the course I will be teaching next semester (i.e., RS 150SS Wealth and Poverty in the Bible and Christian History). My revised chapter, “Social, Economic, and Theological World of Early Christianity” will also provide the students in that course as a background text.

In sum, even though I was not as productive as I had planned to be and had to redirect my project, I have accomplished what I could—given my physical circumstance—and this has turned out be as fruitful and helpful as it could be.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Rhee