In May 2003 I received a summer stipend of $1500 to attend one of the Calvin College Seminars in Christian Scholarship. There, I proposed to continue my research on 16th century Spanish chronicler Cabeza de Vaca, and complete an article (“The Evolving View of the Indian in Cabeza de Vaca’s Relación”) by the end of summer. I am grateful for the support I received from the college and feel I made significant progress toward achieving many of my originally stated goals, as well as several unanticipated ones.

As a result of the stipend, I accomplished the following:

• First, I participated in a weeklong seminar on “Christian Perspectives on Foreign Language Education” at Calvin College in May 2003. There, I gathered an enormous amount of information on Cabeza de Vaca. This was greatly facilitated by a contact I made with a Calvin professor who was finishing his dissertation on three chroniclers, including Cabeza de Vaca. Although not a member of the seminar, he graciously agreed to meet with me during the week to discuss our projects. Most importantly, he generously gave me access to his enormous bibliography on the chronicler, and photocopied for me numerous articles for my research. (A detailed bibliography is available upon request.)

• At Calvin, I was assigned a mentor, Barbara Carvill, who worked with me on my project. I had been experiencing some minor problems with my original thesis (on Cabeza de Vaca’s evolving view of the other) as a result of some new research. Many of the articles published on Cabeza de Vaca’s journey contradict each other, so I was trying to synthesize everything I had read while testing my own ideas. Dr. Carvill gave me an idea for either refocusing the article, expanding my original thesis, or for something entirely new (in addition to the original). She suggested I read Miraslov Volf’s article, “The Role of the’ Other,”” and his book, Exclusion and Embrace, which I completed upon my return to Santa Barbara. I made several notes and began thinking about how to incorporate this new information, which would also give my piece a decidedly more Christian perspective.

• During the seminar itself, there was not as much time as I originally anticipated for focused writing and reflection, and the five days went by much too quickly. Upon my return, however, I spent much of the summer continuing my research, rethinking my thesis, and writing a first rough draft. I regret to say that although I worked consistently over a two-month period, I was unable to finish the project before classes began in August. It was disappointing for me because I knew that the new academic year would provide no time for scholarship, as I would have to focus my energy on planning, recruiting, and designing and teaching new classes for the Westmont in Mexico semester. I hope to continue this project (which may in fact yield more than one article) during the summer of 2005 and on my sabbatical.

• One of the most important goals I accomplished at Calvin was connecting with twenty-four other Modern Language professors teaching at Christian colleges across the nation. This was an
incredibly enriching time for me; as a member of a very small department, I greatly cherished this time of intellectual stimulation and Christian fellowship with such a diverse and supportive group of scholars and educators. I made wonderful contacts in my discipline, and became newly energized in my scholarship.

- I read one book (*The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning*) and a dozen articles on foreign language teaching/learning in the Christian liberal arts. As a result of this reading and the daily lectures and discussions with colleagues, I have continued to deepen my thinking on the relationship between my faith and my discipline.

- My work on Cabeza de Vaca has also inspired me to think more about this story’s implications in the foreign language classroom, and how we view “the other” in our daily lives. I have used my research in several of my classes, most recently the orientation, seminar, and reentry course for Westmont in Mexico. Additionally, this work in part inspired me to create a new required course for all Modern Language students (SP/FR 150, Cross-Cultural Studies), in order to prepare them better for their experience abroad and their encounter with the other. I will teach this for the first time in Spring 2005. (The course syllabus is available on-line.)