

To Whom it May Concern:

26 September 2012

Theological education should be challenging. At its best, it should disrupt certainty and instill a robust sense of faith, wonder, and mystery. Any education that instructs in the proper things to think is idolatry or mere propaganda at best. Theological education succeeds not when it tells us what to think but how to think.

Now in my fifth academic degree, I am able to look back and name Chris Rollston as one of the most encouraging, scholarly attuned, and insightful instructors that I have encountered. Chris is the sort of professor who communicates the difficult scholarship, fully aware that it challenges some of the long-held assumptions or beliefs of his students; then he makes time—whether in class, during office hours, or over lunch—to check-in with his students, not only to be sure they understand the material but to see how they are spiritually negotiating sometimes difficult material.

Chris is a scholar and pastor who understands well why the faculty offices at Emmanuel physically reside in the hallway that connects the library and the chapel. He is a man of faith and a scholar of the highest quality. I remain thankful for the challenges of studying with Chris; the material was often challenging, the tests were always difficult, but the experience was life-changing. Other professors could have assigned the same readings and communicated the same scholarship, but they would be hard-pressed to match the quality of Prof. Rollston. Hands down, he is one of the finest scholars, mentors, Christians, fathers, husbands, and friends I have known. And to this day I remain ever grateful for those few years I was able to study with and get to know this amazing man of God.

With gratitude for the opportunity to express my love,

Brian McGrath Davis, MDiv, STM, MA, ABD