

September 27, 2012

Emmanuel Christian Seminary
ONE WALKER DR.
Johnson City, TN 37601

Esteemed Faculty, Board and Trustees,

I reflect on my time at Emmanuel community with tremendous appreciation for the education I was blessed with and the dear community who fostered the experience. Among those to whom I am grateful is Dr. Christopher Rollston, Toyozo W. Nakarai Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Studies.

I vividly recall how initially difficult it was for me as a first year student with no formal theological background to dive into the deep end in Dr. Rollston's year-long Old Testament Introduction (OTI). I was blessed and grateful to talk with him and encouraged all the more to know that such a learned and theologically deep professor could embrace both rigorous academic study and sincere, authentic faith in Jesus Christ.

Indeed, it was in personal conversations with Dr. Rollston, as well as through comments and explanations he offered in the classroom that I came to appreciate the depth of his character and his commitment to faith. I have also seen this lived out in his care for others, both inside and outside the classroom.

OTI, coupled with Dr. Ramsaran's New Testament Introduction, provided much of the framework for which my theological understanding is built and continually enriched. In Dr. Rollston's class, I first encountered the richness of the Semitic term "shalom." Chris helped me to develop my understanding to such a degree that an entire chapter of my thesis was dedicated to this topic. I have since used this language to describe both the ministry I've been called to here in Seattle, as well as my personal vocation as a follower of Christ. I've also been grateful for ongoing friendship and consultations with Chris related to language and ministry.

I pray this letter conveys a glimpse of the depth of gratitude, appreciation and esteem I have for Dr. Rollston, and that it will remind you of his value to the Emmanuel community as both an academic, and role model in Christian faith.

Sincerely,


Nathan Hawkins, MDiv '05