

To Whom it May Concern:

During my time at Emmanuel School of Religion (which is what it was called when I attended), my faith was shaken, broken down, rebuilt, and made whole again. It was a process that was painful but necessary (being "forged in the fire"), and it was an experience that was, and is, vital to my Christian faith today. There were several professors at Emmanuel that challenged me and deepened my understanding of God in such a way, but Dr. Christopher Rollston stands out among them. He has such a depth of understanding the multidimensional sacredness of scripture, and he is extremely and brilliantly gifted at maintaining the balance between critique and reverence of said scripture. It was necessary in my spiritual growth to be challenged in such a way: I was taught NOT to discard pieces of scripture just because they did not particularly resonate with my personal understanding of God, but instead to explore those very scriptures with a deeper understanding of their truth/historical context/spiritual meaning. Dr. Rollston was a tether to God for me during a time in my life where I was unable to reconcile my head and my heart: my intellectual understanding of God versus my emotional/personal understanding of Him. He taught me that the two can, and indeed should, go hand in hand. I was at a critical fork in the road at which I could have easily thrown my hands up in frustration and walked away from my faith.... but Dr. Rollston's intellect, critique, and his deep, personal belief in the truth that is God, as well as his deep belief in the sanctity and power of scripture, are what helped me through my "dark night." I am forever grateful.

Sincerely,
Rachel Knowles