

September 25, 2012

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to serve as both a professional and personal reference for Christopher A. Rollston, Ph.D. I first encountered Professor Rollston at Emmanuel School of Religion during his initial year of teaching at that institution. While I was a Church History major, I found something about his personality and reputation interesting that led me to take several classes under him. I am glad that I did.

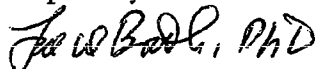
I can state from personal experience that Professor Rollston's teaching more often focuses on the historical and cultural aspects of the Biblical text rather than the direct practical theological application from it. This is very useful as most seminary students seeking to get ministry training have the least exposure to this area of Biblical scholarship. It also is a nice complement to the very sufficient amount of practical ministries courses that Emmanuel students are required to take including Old Testament Theology. I have also found that Professor Rollston's direct engagement of the text has allowed me not to base my theological interpretations on questionable texts which do not historically or linguistically support my conclusions. Thus, making me a better interpreter of the Biblical text and a more informed apologist for my faith.

I cannot understate the importance of seminary student exposure to this style of Biblical and textual criticism. In this day and age of a more informed populace, one must know the context of language and customs in relation to the stories we find in the Bible. In fact, Rollston's approach is not significantly different from the Renaissance humanists who wanted to examine the Biblical text with the same scrutiny they gave any other document. Let us not forget because of their efforts, we have a more reliable edition of the Bible as well as the text in the vernacular.

Let me now say something about Chris Rollston, the man. There was never a day at Emmanuel that I did not see him surrounded by a group of students who appeared "hungry" to learn from this man. There was also not a day at Emmanuel that I do not recall him being readily available to talk to students about their studies or their personal lives. Having a large familiarity with graduate education myself, I can say that Rollston is a rare breed of academic who readily shares the academic wealth with his students. I know of instances where Rollston asked students to aid him in writing a commentary, a paper, or help him give a presentation at another university. In each instance, Rollston was more than eager to share the credit and the academic limelight. I am trained as a cultural and intellectual historian of the renaissance and reformation, but I remember once giving Professor Rollston what I feel was the highest academic compliment I have ever given. I told him that because of his interest in and mentoring of current and former students; I felt that if I entered Emmanuel again, I would have ended up with a concentration in Hebrew Bible.

Professor Rollston is a distinguished academic, an accomplished teacher and a great witness of what it means to live out one's faith as a servant.

Respectfully submitted;



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