

Joseph Stubenrauch
Assistant Professor
Department of History
Baylor University

Department of History & Global Studies
ACU Box 28130
Abilene, Texas 79699-8130
1600 Campus Court Administration Building Room 324

August 21, 2015

Dr. Ron Morgan,

I am writing in enthusiastic and unequivocal support of Dr. Kelly Elliott's application for tenure and promotion to associate professor at Abilene Christian University.

As an active scholar in the fields of British history and religious history, I have had the opportunity to observe Dr. Elliott's research on multiple occasions. I first heard her present at the American Society for Church History (ASCH) spring 2011 conference. At the time, I was impressed by the way her scholarship engaged with major debates in both the fields of religious history and broader British history. Having had the opportunity to hear her present several times since then and to read her work, my high opinion of her scholarship has only grown.

The venues for her scholarly presentations and publications speak to the importance of her research. She has presented multiple times at the ASCH conference – the leading society for scholars of Christian history in North America and the publisher of the flagship journal *Church History*. Her panel and paper at NAVSA indicates the appeal of her topic to scholars outside religious history. The NAVSA conference is not only the preeminent North American conference on Victorian Studies, but also prides itself on its exclusivity and high rejection rates for its program. She was also an invited speaker for an ASCH panel celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of David Bebbington's classic work, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*. Dr. Bebbington is the foremost name in the field of British religious history and his research has fundamentally shaped the field for decades. It is no small compliment to Dr. Elliott that she was invited to present on this panel, over which Dr. Bebbington himself presided. The panel was chaired by Timothy Larsen, another preeminent name in the field, and also included Thomas Kidd and Amanda Porterfield. It is a significant achievement for a junior scholar to be included among these celebrated historians. Her paper from this conference was subsequently published in the influential journal, *Fides et Historia*.

Her research's recovery of native Christian voices in the West Indies and South Asia not only advances discussions in the fields of British imperial history and postcolonial studies, but challenges dominant scholarly assumptions by examining British imperialism and missionary work from a fresh vantage point. Debates about the relationship between British imperialism and Christian missions have previously been centered on the missionaries themselves – usually portrayed as racist agents of imperial conquest. Dr. Elliott's work challenges established paradigms by means of exciting and previously unexplored evidence, demonstrating on the one hand the tensions and failures of the missionary enterprise, but on the other hand the shared interests and communities of faith that crossed the divides of race and nation. Having read the full proposal for Dr. Elliott's book, "*Chosen Race: Colonial Christianity against the Hierarchies of Empire*", I am convinced that her book will be a timely and important intervention in recent debates in our field – one that will be frequently cited in the years to come. While many historians of religion pursue narrow topics, Elliott's research is comparative in nature and relevant to historians outside her subfield.

Dr. Kelly Elliott has proven herself to be an active scholar, recognized by her peers, and able to contribute to the field of nineteenth-century British religious history in significant ways. Her research intervenes into some of the most pressing debates of postcolonial studies and British imperial history. Her book's comparative approach and recovery of native Christian agency will be a pioneering contribution to her field.

Sincerely,

Joseph Stubenrauch