

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Most critics would agree that the overall structure of *Four Quartets* is that of a journey, involving poetic, personal, and religious aspects of Eliot's own life. Given the place of *Four Quartets* in Eliot's career, "Little Gidding," specifically, would represent the culmination not only of *Four Quartets* but also of Eliot's poetry, personal life, and religious journey. From my perspective of considering Eliot's works in terms of the Oxford Movement and high-church Anglo-Catholicism, this is a fine place to end my discussion. Little Gidding is not just a place used at Eliot's convenience as a site to draw out certain themes, and not even a religiously oriented site to focus on more general religious issues, but specifically the seventeenth-century site of a religious community with a very liturgical tradition and with the blessing of Archbishop William Laud. Hence, it is representative of Eliot's strong religious background, his Anglo-Catholic conversion, and his spiritual journey, all at the same time. So he ends where he began in each of those regards — with a strong religious orientation from seventeenth-century roots, with a strongly Anglo-Catholic and liturgical tradition to which he first converted, and at a humble and relatively ordinary end of his long personal religious quest. So we pause for a final note on Little Gidding and its importance as the final destination of Eliot's journey, poetically, personally, and religiously.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Little Gidding was a liturgical religious community of the seventeenth century. Horton Davies includes the following description of it:

Space forces compression and omission ... to describe unusual experiments in spirituality such as Little Gidding, the creation of Nicholas Ferrar. ... Its memory has been kept green in a Victorian novel, *John Inglesant* by J. H. Shorthouse, and in the final one of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

The community, centred on his family and that of his brother-in-law, to which neighbouring friends came from time to time, lived a life of prayer and work according to a strict rule. At the beginning of every hour, from 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., there was an office lasting for about a quarter of an hour, in which several groups in the community took their turn. This office comprised a hymn and portions from the Psalms and Gospels, so that the entire Psalter was recited each day and the Gospels once a month. Furthermore, two or more members kept a vigil

from 9:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. while reciting the Psalter once more. Charles I visited the community in 1633 and called it his "little Arminian Nunnery."

Davies discusses the various other work of the community, which included visitation of the sick and the poor. Further, the group at Little Gidding taught children, practiced gardening, and even illuminated manuscripts. As discussed in chapter two, this practice was a commonplace of the liturgically oriented — a sort of living out the liturgy in daily life. In short, they functioned very much like a medieval monastic community. As if to remind his readers of the natural way these activities grew out of spirituality, Davies adds a reassurance of Ferrar's personal piety and commitment: "The austerities of the founder, Ferrar, were also genuine. He kept the late watch in the chapel in his manor house two or three times a week and slept only four hours on other nights, and was sparing in eating and drinking. His piety was modelled upon the Bible and in a filial conformity with the canons of the Church of England." After Ferrar's death in 1637, the community continued to 1646. At that point, it disbanded under attack from the Puritans. Davies quotes from one of these attacks, specifically on what a Puritan would consider the "idolatry" of the chapel:

I observed the Chapel in general to be fairly and spaciouly adorned with herbs and flowers, natural and artificial, and upon every pillar along both sides of the chapel ... tapers (I mean great Virgin-wax candles on every pillar). The half-pace [a semi-step dividing nave and east end?] was all covered with tapestry, and upon that half-pace stood the Altar-like Table, with a rich carpet hanging very large on the half-pace, and some plate, as a chalice and candlesticks ... a laver and cover all of brass, cut and carved with imagery work ... and the cover had a cross erected on it. ...¹

As discussed in chapter two, part of the high-church orientation of the Oxford Movement was architecture and decoration of churches, in addition to liturgical texts and practices. This Puritan's description, meant to point out excesses and misdirected piety, serves to confirm the strongly liturgical character of the community, from social actions to liturgical practices and appreciation for beauty. In addition, the description makes one think of the brief reference to St. Magnus the Martyr Church in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, discussed in chapter four.

1. Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603-1690*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975) 105-106. Davies' note 94 to his quotation cites: *The Arminian Nunnery, or, A Brief Description and Relation of the late Erected Monasticall Place called the Arminian Nunnery at Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire* (1641), pp. 7-8. (The bracketed insertion in the last quotation is Davies')

Elsewhere, in his third volume, Davies includes further information about the community, noting specifically its liturgical worship practices that went together with the beautiful and liturgical setting:

Family devotions were not, of course, the exclusive usage of the Evangelicals; High Church families of the period also gathered about the family altar. Indeed, High Churchmen could have claimed that Nicholas Ferrar of the seventeenth century had taken the duty of family devotions more seriously than any Evangelical, for his family monasticism at Little Gidding, Huntingdonshire, recited the offices both night and day. Ferrar's practice, moreover, gives the clue to the fundamental difference between the family worship of High Churchmen and the Evangelicals: it was liturgical for the former and extemporary prayer, with either the exposition of Scripture or the reading from an edifying book, for the latter.²

In addition, according to Cross and Livingstone's *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, the community's study circle, called the Little Academy, discussed events and stories relating to the Church Year. About Ferrar himself, they include that he was ordained a deacon by none other than the High Church Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud (1573-1645) in 1626. Further, the community was founded not only on the Bible but also on the *Book of Common Prayer*. All of this clarifies how the Puritans, who saw Little Gidding as "an attempt to introduce RC [Roman Catholic] practices in the country," would seek to abuse and destroy it.³ Such details strongly reinforce the community's high-church liturgical orientation. It is also, no doubt, information which Eliot would have received on his visit to Little Gidding, if he did not know it before. Given Eliot's readings in seventeenth-century divines, as well as his knowledge of the history and traditions of the Church of England, as discussed in chapter two, he would have known much of the historical connections and characters, if not the specific history of the Little Gidding community itself.

Such descriptions and clarifications about Little Gidding from Davies and from Cross and

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2. Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850*, vol. 3 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961) 220. Davies' note 29 here adds: Shorthouse describes what Charles I called the "Arminian Nunnery at Little Gidding" in his *John Inglesant* and T. S. Eliot introduces reflections on it in *The Four Quartets*. For a seventeenth century account see Izaak Walton's *Life of Mr. George Herbert*. See also A. L. Maycock's *Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding*.
 3. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1974) 828, 508-509. See also my second chapter for further information about Archbishop Laud and this time period in the Church of England.

Livingstone strongly reinforce my contention about Eliot's high-church orientation and the effect it had on his work. Little Gidding was a classically high-church community of the seventeenth century. Given the way the Oxford Movement built on that seventeenth-century high-church tradition makes another clear link between Eliot and that Anglo-Catholic tradition that ran from the seventeenth century to the Oxford Movement and beyond. Davies' distinction between a high-church devotional style and that of low-church Evangelicals coincides here and confirms my distinctions between the two traditions, as discussed in chapter two. And given Eliot's knowledge of the high-church tradition, seventeenth-century divines, and the Oxford Movement, Eliot's reference to Little Gidding is more than just use of it as a site — he must mean to include in his reference the high-church character of the community as part of his awareness, understanding, and appreciation of both the site and its tradition. This is all central to the location and community of Little Gidding, and certainly Eliot was aware of its specific history and tradition and used it in *Four Quartets* for that reason. Incidentally, it appears that the church and site are still standing and being maintained today. In addition, there is a remnant of a religious community still in residence, and I understand from recent tourists, there are even two or three guest rooms which one can rent for spiritual retreat. Such continue to be the emphases of these characteristically high-church liturgical communities.

The fact that the Puritans wanted to destroy Little Gidding not only places them opposite in orientation to the Little Gidding community, but also indicates the continuing dispute between the two opposite poles of Protestantism and Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England. Such a dispute reminds us of how much weight identifications like "Anglo-Catholic" had — they weren't casual interests or associations, but true Church orientations. As such, one's aligning oneself with such a specific camp within the Church meant that the issues stood for more than a passing interest. Such a commitment on the part of Eliot would certainly have to show in his work, as I have indicated in this study. Thus, the fact that Little Gidding community faced destruction by the Puritans; received the blessing of Archbishop Laud, a strongly liturgical leader of the seventeenth-century beginnings of the Anglo-Catholic tradition; practiced daily prayer

offices; observed the Church Year; elaborately decorated its worship space; emphasized community over and against individualism; and modeled itself on monastic ideals — not only clearly indicates a high-church community of faith, but also corroborates Eliot's use of the location in *Four Quartets*. Further, for Eliot, the use of this site and community of faith is the culmination of *Four Quartets* and also of his personal and spiritual journey, ending at a point in line with the Anglo-Catholicism he originally proclaimed and to which he was formally converted in 1927. The site also contains, albeit in a negative way, an allusion to the more Puritan and Protestant roots of Eliot's own religious life. The community existed at a time when the emphases of Puritanism and Protestantism were being brought to America, as discussed in chapter two. Add to that the refuge the Little Gidding community provided Charles I, and it also ties Eliot's royalism to the more high-church attitude of Charles I. Finally, with the community's stress on worship and liturgical appointments, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the discipline of the prayer offices, Little Gidding exemplifies the "prayer, observance, discipline, thought, and action" of those seeking to understand and live out the Incarnation.⁴

Given the time in England's history, during the Second World War, when *Four Quartets*, especially "The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding," were written, they make a wonderful conclusion for Eliot's work. "The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding" nicely conclude *Four Quartets* poetically. They also conclude this portion of Eliot's career and make a fitting ending to this study. Further, at this time, both in his own life and at the time of the war, Eliot identifies with the greater English community, which was a very healthy development for him and very helpful for the English society of the day. Given the above details about the religious make-up of the Little Gidding community and the purpose of this study, "The Dry Salvages" and especially "Little Gidding" form a fitting and strong conclusion to the religious journey traced through this dissertation. Thus, the conclusion of *Four Quartets* works poetically, personally, and religiously in a way that brings together the themes of the *Four Quartets*, places his personal life in the context of the larger community, and completes his religious journey by continuing his religious orienta-

4. T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," *Four Quartets*, 1943 (New York: Harcourt-Harvest, 1971) 214.

tion stressing community, doctrine, discipline, thought, and action. Hence, "Little Gidding" is a fit ending to Eliot's poetry and also to the concerns of this dissertation.

But further, in "Little Gidding" many of Eliot's earlier concerns resurface. His quest for a religious identity, rooted in seventeenth-century American Puritanism, Protestantism, and Unitarianism, comes to fullness in Little Gidding's seventeenth-century high-church and community orientation. The two groups, very much at odds in the seventeenth century, stressed different sides of the same deep religious piety, which started Eliot on his religious quest and which ultimately satisfied that same quest. Thus, the faith he holds at the end of *Four Quartets* has grown out of his earlier questions and readings. And the spiritual certainty he has grown to have has been long in coming, with those same questions providing the impetus. We can trace the questions that continued to propel him through the latter stages of his spiritual journey back to his earlier stages. Thus, we can see his formal conversion in 1927 as an outgrowth of his earlier spiritual concerns, culminating in a spiritual orientation still formed by those same questions. His initial orientation at the time of his formal conversion remained to the end — that of a high-church Anglo-Catholic.

The Waste Land was analyzed in the fourth chapter in terms of the season of Lent and the journey to baptism and conversion — the poem was presented in the context of a spiritual journey. Father Boyd's discussion of the Paschal Action as related to *Four Quartets*, outlined in the previous chapter, brings us full circle — again, *Four Quartets* also has the strong sense of a spiritual journey, as discussed. In terms of the chronology of Eliot's life, the beginnings of his own spiritual journey can be seen in *The Waste Land* as it relates to the season of Lent. In *Four Quartets*, the work of a older, spiritually mature Eliot, the journey of Lent in the Paschal Action and Paschal mystery is arrived at. This makes Eliot's spiritual journey coincide with the season of Lent, with *The Waste Land* as the starting point and *Four Quartets* as the end and goal of Eliot's spiritual journey. Thus, in several ways, in his beginning was his end, and in his end was his beginning. From either end, one can see the self-same Eliot, both in terms of his spirituality and development and in terms of his literary themes. Hence, when referring to Eliot's conver-

sion to Anglicanism and his baptism in 1927, many critics have come to see that event as primarily a formalizing of what was already spiritually present in him — a fulfillment of his earlier searching. In line with one's beginning and end being the same, baptism makes one what one already is — a child of God. From here, Eliot spent much of his time, intellectual life, and writing trying to get back to that rootedness in faith, only to arrive where he already was — a child of God, a member of the community of faith, the Church, and a part of the larger community of England as both a citizen and a member of the Church of England. It is good to see him come to rest on the *Four Quartets* — to rest not only his reputation on the work, but to bring his spiritual quest to rest.

The thrust of this dissertation has been to look at the specifics of Eliot's self-declared Anglo-Catholicism. While it is easier to see this high-church influence in Eliot's later works, I have also shown the influence on Eliot's earlier works, as well. Eliot started his religious searching at a fairly early age, and his personality, background, and readings gradually led him to the high-church end of the Anglican Church. In addition to his pre-conversion works revealing a generic spiritual quest, my contention is that those early works also revealed the liturgical direction of that spiritual quest. It is not that Eliot simply converts from Unitarianism to Anglicanism, but rather from a complex of Puritan, Protestant, and Unitarian influences blended with a personality and interest that gradually developed into the full-blown high-church orientation of 1927 and following. Eliot's steady growth in the high-church tradition can be traced from the time of his writing "Gerontion" and *The Waste Land* all the way through *Four Quartets*.

Just the same, many readers and critics have had difficulty with Eliot's Christianity, even after his conversion. Some have tried to downplay or ignore his conversion, have overlooked his spiritual searching, have missed the Christian and liturgical elements in his earlier poems, and have even avoided Christian interpretations of his later works, not wishing to be too narrowed down in interpretive approaches. However, the reality of Eliot's conversion, his self-declaration as an Anglo-Catholic, the obvious Christian themes and subjects in his later works, and his overt Christian social writings are incontrovertible. And those writings are so strongly and specifically

Christian that Horton Davies, in volume five of his *Worship and Theology in England*, names Eliot as one of the “three most successful apologists for Christianity in England” in the twentieth century, along with C. S. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers, all three lay members of the Anglican Church.⁵ As such, far from limiting interpretations of Eliot’s works, a strongly Christian approach, especially of a liturgical bent, can only add further and deeper insights to the works.

Another acknowledgment of Eliot’s Christianity comes from Harold Bloom in his introduction to *T. S. Eliot* in the *Modern Critical Views* series. Contrary to those who choose to ignore or minimize Eliot’s conversion and Christianity, Bloom’s criticisms of Eliot’s Christian orientation are well grounded and worth touching on. They also, however, help to justify the current study. Bloom states, “An obsessive reader of poetry growing up in the nineteen thirties and forties entered a critical world dominated by the opinions and example of Eliot.” As one of those who grew up in the nineteen thirties and forties, and contrary to Eliot’s “Anglo-Catholic, Royalist and Classical” self-proclamation, Bloom identifies himself as “Jewish, Liberal and Romantic” in what had become, from his perspective, “a neochristian and neoclassical Academy.”⁶ This is not only a humorous qualification, but also an apt one, indicating the strength of influence of liturgical Christianity on Eliot, who in turn exerted his influence on the literature and criticism of his day. These perspectives strongly recognize Eliot’s Anglo-Catholicism, its influence on Eliot’s life and work, and its subsequent influence on literature and criticism.

Then there are those who question the completeness and sincerity of Eliot’s conversion, seeing it as only as a comfortable identification for him, enhancing his English-ness, and offering him a way to accommodate his guilt. Some critics suggest that it may have been more a convenience or an ideological shift. Kristian Smidt assures us of Eliot’s sincerity:

No one who has met T. S. Eliot in private life or has looked into the hundreds of articles of various kinds that he has written, can doubt that he has gone a very long way in perfecting himself in accordance with his ideals. His self-discipline seems to have kindled in him a peculiar graciousness. Above all he is eminently

5. Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: The Ecumenical Century, 1900-1965*, vol. 5 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1965) 253.

6. Harold Bloom, “Introduction,” *T. S. Eliot, Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1985) 1.

sincere, and the conviction of his sincerity is of capital importance in judging his poetry.

His Christianity, which in his prose writing may seem lacking in enthusiasm, a matter of the head rather than of the heart, a matter of Church membership even, is apparently suspect to some people. But he never wraps it up in stock phrases to which he cannot give personal assent, nor does he affirm more than he safely may. On the contrary, one often feels that he understates his religious views, and is over-scrupulous in revealing the limitations of his religious sensibility.⁷

Smidt quotes Eliot from a 1932 radio broadcast by way of confirming Eliot's sincerity:

Towards any profound conviction one is borne gradually, perhaps insensibly over a long period of time, by what Newman called "powerful and concurrent reasons." ... At some moment or other, a kind of crystallisation occurs, in which appears an element of *faith*. ... Among other things, the Christian scheme seemed the only possible scheme which found a place for values which I must maintain or perish (and belief comes first and practice second), the belief, for instance, in holy living and holy dying, in sanctity, chastity, humility, austerity. ... No perfect scheme can work perfectly with imperfect men.⁸

This quotation not only confirms Eliot's faith sincerity, but also further establishes one of my points, that his conversion developed over time. Such conversions usually are more thought out, longer-lived, and more sincere than overnight conversions. Questioning the sincerity of Eliot's conversion and faith is really to ask the wrong question. That question grows more out of a Protestant mind-set that seeks to look into Eliot's heart — a very pietistic concern. In more high-church circles, such a question is rarely, if ever, asked. Rather, one's attendance at liturgy, living by the church year and saints calendar, and outward working in various ways for the Church are sufficient demonstrations of a sincere faith. Eliot's participation in various parish churches in London as warden and in other capacities obviates such pietistic conjectures and questions.

Further, I believe that tracing Eliot's long spiritual journey from "Gerontion" and *The Waste Land* to *Four Quartets*, as I have here done, reveals a man who indeed had questions and was definitely searching spiritually in his early years. However, the sense of arrival in *Four Quartets* is clear in so many ways. As outlined above and in the previous chapter, there is a sense of Eliot's having arrived spiritually, personally, socially, and poetically. Eliot has come to grips with the fact that his way of faith is not that of the mystics, and he has come to rest in that resolution. Along the way, Eliot has continued to search while he has continued to hold on to the Ang-

7. Kristian Smidt, *Poetry and Belief in the Work of T. S. Eliot*, 1949 (London: Routledge, 1961) 32.

8. Smidt 28-29.

lo-Catholic faith to which he was converted. As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, that faith has continued to grow and influence his writing. Throughout his writings, his faith and liturgical orientation have continued to be major elements. Such a persistent quest, with the resolution in *Four Quartets*, does not come from insincerity.

As for what some might consider the more "superficial Catholic elements"⁹ of "adoration of the Virgin" and "intercession of saints," Kristian Smidt sees them in Eliot's poetry but gives them little attention. But the fact of their inclusion helps to reinforce Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism in our analysis of Eliot's work. I might counter Smidt's minimizing of such doctrines in his assessment of the religious elements in Eliot's poetry with a quotation from Eliot himself on these issues. In her book, *Poets at Prayer*, Sister Mary James Power, SSND, includes a photocopy and transcription of a letter from T. S. Eliot himself, written to her on 6 December 1932, in response to her letter to him in regards to her research and work on her book. The letter, in its totality, reads:

Dear Sister:

In reply to your letter of December 1st, perhaps the simplest account that I can give is to say that I was brought up as a Unitarian of the New England variety; that for many years I was without any definite religious faith, or without any at all; that in 1927 I was baptised and confirmed into the Church of England; and that I am associated with what is called the Catholic movement in that Church, as represented by Viscount Halifax and the English Church Union. I accordingly believe in the Creeds, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, the Sacrament of Penance, etc.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) T. S. Eliot

6 December 1932.¹⁰

So in addition to the more important theological points which Smidt notes in Eliot's work, it is clear from Eliot's short letter that "adoration of the Virgin" and "intercession of saints" are more central to Eliot's theology than Smidt might like to admit. Such things might be "superficial" to more Protestant thinkers, and indeed they do not rank at the level of dogma. However, they receive more attention and enjoy greater importance in high-church circles than might appear to

9. Smidt 210.

10. Sister Mary James Power, SSND, *Poets at Prayer* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938) 126 and facing unnumbered photocopy page.

some, as Eliot's short letter suggests. And we have seen elsewhere in this dissertation that such teachings are more than just "superficial," but rather they are integral to the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Such are the limitations of Smidt's analysis of Eliot's poetry, but at least an acknowledged limitation of his study.

Another challenge to Eliot's Christianity has come from Eliot's continued allusions to Hinduism and Buddhism. Certainly, there are such references blended in with Christian references in his later works. However, in an age of greater ecumenism, this also is not as out of the ordinary for a Christian writer as some might think. Certainly, many ideas and values dovetail between Eastern and Western traditions. Given Eliot's extensive reading in Eastern philosophies in his school days, reading which also demonstrated his spiritual searching, it is to be expected that he would continue to draw on that knowledge. Besides, Thomas Merton, who exemplified the twentieth-century contemplative and mystic, was himself a thoroughgoing ecumenical theologian, making visits to the East for religious ecumenical discussions. Contrary to any of these questions of Eliot's strength of faith or sincerity of conversion, they rather reinforce the depth of Eliot's spirituality and intellect.

The purpose of this dissertation has been to follow the development of Eliot's high-church spirituality through his works. From the Lenten structure of *The Waste Land*, through the critical writings, to the later poetry, Eliot's development has not only been stretched out over time, but has also been consistently liturgical in form throughout that long development. Just the same, it has become clear that Eliot's earliest interest and searching took the same Catholic, mystical, and liturgical orientation that the later poetry demonstrates so clearly. Having looked at Eliot's religious growth from his family's background and the American religious scene, other elements leading to a liturgical spirituality have revealed themselves. Hence, in a way, given Eliot's personality, religious background, and consistency, he arrives at a point which is not such a far step from his beginnings as might first appear. In this way, Eliot's first and last lines of "East Coker," "In my beginning is my end" and "In my end is my beginning," have even greater

resonance.¹¹ Looking back over the entire *Four Quartets*, Gordon comments on "the linear form of the converted life which leads through the ordeals of the wilderness to a vision of the promised land, the grail, or the Celestial City." However, she adds, as I do, and as Eliot's *Four Quartets* assert, that "Eliot's journey, though, ends where it began. Its final form is circular. After the effort at transformation, he realizes that he has become what was always implicit in his origins."¹² So it is not so much that Eliot converts to an entirely new orientation and leaves behind his American Puritan and Unitarian past, but rather that he makes explicit what was implicit in his faith orientation.

Thus, this dissertation has spent much time discussing earlier works of Eliot, like *The Waste Land*. While many critics will venture a religious analysis of the later works, it is only recently that critics have grown in the direction of bravely noting the religious themes and liturgical elements of those earlier works. While it might be safer to exercise a liturgical interpretation on those later works, it is no less appropriate to do so with regard to many of Eliot's earlier works, as well. It is true that Eliot's beginning and end are the same, and this dissertation has demonstrated precisely that.

11. T. S. Eliot, "East Coker," 1940, *Four Quartets*, 1943 (New York: Harcourt-Harvest, 1971) 23, 32.

12. Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's New Life* (New York: Farrar, 1988) 141.

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Liturgical Influences of Anglo-Catholicism on
The Waste Land and Other Works by T. S. Eliot

Dissertation directed by Gale Swiontkowski, Ph.D.

T. S. Eliot became a baptized Anglican in 1927 and, in the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes*, declared himself an "anglo-catholic in religion." This dissertation examines Eliot's works in the light of his Anglo-Catholicism. The first chapter is introductory, discussing some of the biographical and psychological background of Eliot's conversion. Chapter two presents the Unitarian religious background of Eliot's family and sets that background into the context of the larger American religious scene. The chapter goes on to outline the history of the Anglican Church and includes a discussion of the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. That movement was largely a high-church, liturgical reform movement of the Anglican Church that helped to define Anglo-Catholicism as Eliot would have understood it in his day. Chapter three concentrates on Eliot's critical writings as they show increasing evidence of Eliot's religious orientation. Eliot's later essays go into the social implications of religious faith in the larger community.

Chapter four looks at *The Waste Land*, the central work of the dissertation. *The Waste Land* reveals a spiritually searching and developing Eliot in anticipation of his formal conversion in 1927. The poem's structure is similar to the traditional process of conversion, especially as seen in the Christian Lenten season. Thus, the poem becomes the chronicle of Eliot's own spiritual journey to conversion. The five sections of *The Waste Land* are analyzed liturgically, in relation to the five Sundays of Lent and their respective themes. Chapter five continues this liturgical approach with "Gerontion," *Ash-Wednesday*, the Ariel poems, *Four Quartets*, and *Murder in the*

Cathedral.

Chapter six concludes with a discussion of "Little Gidding," the final poem of *Four Quartets*. "Little Gidding" focuses on communal faith and makes reference to the liturgically oriented religious community of the seventeenth-century Ferrar family. Finally, Eliot traced his family heritage to East Coker, where his remains are buried, so both his family and his religious roots can be seen as starting and ending there. In his own words, in his beginning is his end and in his end is his beginning.

VITA

A. Lee Fjordbotten, son of Dr. Alf and Helene Fjordbotten, was born on 26 April 1952 in Camrose, Alberta, Canada. The family moved to the Washington, D. C., area in February 1960, where Lee's father completed a residency in Ophthalmology. From June 1963 to to May 1964, the family was privileged to live in Jerusalem, Jordan, where Lee's father served as an eye surgeon under Care-Medico and the Eye Bank of Jordan at St. John's Eye Hospital.

After graduating from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in June 1970, Lee attended St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, completing the Bachelor of Arts in Religion in May 1974. While at St. Olaf, he sang bass for the St. Olaf Concert Choir, an international touring choir. He entered Luther-Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, in September 1974. After an internship year with Grace Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Home, Allentown, Pennsylvania, he graduated from Lutheran Seminary with the Master of Divinity in May 1978.

From December 1, 1978, to January 31, 1983, he served as Pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Ridge. Long Island, New York. On February 1, 1983, he became Pastor of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Leonia, New Jersey, and moved to Teaneck, New Jersey. He met Beverly Lee that spring, and they were married on October 22, 1983. From 1986 to 1989, he studied for the Master of Arts degree in English and Comparative Literature at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, New Jersey. After graduating from Fairleigh Dickinson in May 1989, he entered Fordham University in the Bronx, New York, to begin doctoral studies in English Language and Literature. Lee received a Presidential Scholarship and a three-year Teaching Fellowship from Fordham, and Holy Spirit Church gave him a sabbatical. He completed his dissertation on T. S. Eliot in the spring of 1999, under the mentorship of Gale Swiontkowski, Ph.D.

Since fall of 1994, Lee has been teaching as an adjunct instructor of English Composition, Literature, and Speech at Fairleigh Dickinson University. He is still Pastor of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, and he and Beverly continue to live in Teaneck with their three cats.