

May 30, 1960

T. S. Eliot  
24 Russell Square  
London, W.C. 1, England

Dear Mr. Eliot,

I have no doubt that it is somewhat boring for you constantly to receive plaudits from persons you have never known and will never know. Nevertheless I feel constrained to speak a word of gratitude for your life work as a poet.

I am a theologian. You may be surprised to learn that your work has helped me greatly as a theologian, not only to spell out the nature of the human predicament, but also to understand at a level of depth the nature of God's activity which meets man in the midst of his predicament. Whether I have interpreted your work as you yourself would wish it interpreted, I do not know. But I have always felt that the most profound concern of your work, or at least much of it, is, in theological jargon, a christological affirmation. The theology which undergirds your view toward life is, I think, primordially informed by the kerygma of the early Christian community.

In any event, whether I understand you adequately or not, at least you have helped me to understand myself, and my task as a theologian as well. For this I am deeply grateful. Your work has edified me, threatened me, instructed me, and filled me with true joy.

You may be interested in seeing how what you have said has been heard by someone else. As a teacher, I am constantly amazed with what my students tell me I am saying. If you are interested, you may wish to read an attempt which I made recently to clarify my understanding of the Christology implicit in your poetry. I am enclosing the manuscript of "The Christology of T.S. Eliot", which appeared in Encounter, an American theological journal, this year. I would be most delighted if you should have any response to it, either affirmatively or negatively. With all good wishes I am and remain,

Your student from afar,

Thomas C. Oden  
Theology and Pastoral Care

May 17, 1957

Dear Mr. [Name]

Thank you for your letter of May 14, 1957, regarding the [Subject]

I am sorry that I cannot [Action]

I have no doubt that it is somewhat difficult for you to continue to receive [Benefit] from the [Organization] and I am sure that you will be glad to hear that I have contacted the [Department] to see if we can do anything to help you.

I am sure that you will be glad to hear that I have contacted the [Department] to see if we can do anything to help you. I am sure that you will be glad to hear that I have contacted the [Department] to see if we can do anything to help you. I am sure that you will be glad to hear that I have contacted the [Department] to see if we can do anything to help you.

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I am sure that you will be glad to hear that I have contacted the [Department] to see if we can do anything to help you. I am sure that you will be glad to hear that I have contacted the [Department] to see if we can do anything to help you.

Very truly yours,

Thomas C. [Name]  
Theology and Social Service