

Terence Cuneo. *Ritualized Faith: Essays on the Philosophy of Liturgy*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016. 228 pages. \$85.55.

*Ritualized Faith: Essays on the Philosophy of Liturgy*, is a third single-authored Oxford University Press title by The University of Vermont's Marsh Chair of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Terence Cuneo. The book comprises a collection of articles and book chapters from 2012 to 2015 that appear in journals and edited volumes dedicated to discourses in psychology, philosophy, religion, and theology. Cuneo describes his essays as philosophical explorations in liturgy. He sets them apart by pointing out that "nearly no one in professional philosophy works on the topic of liturgy" (1). Though he does footnote some names (Adams, Pruss, Hütter, Toner, Baber, Wolterstorff, and James K. A. Smith) who probe Eucharist and liturgy philosophically, and one might add Jean-Luc Marion and his chapter "The Present and the Gift" in *God Without Being*, as Cuneo states, the number is small. Cuneo's central concern is the detachment of contemporary philosophy from lived religious life. That includes scriptural and textual interpretation, fasting, prayer, almsgiving, religious education, hymn singing, icon contemplation, social engagement, and especially corporate worship. For Cuneo, contemporary philosophy has failed to "deepen our understanding of what it is to be a religiously committed agent and how one ought to be such an agent" (6).

In order to rectify philosophical neglect of liturgy, Cuneo brings attention to the embodied practices of Christian congregations and those especially enacted by Christian Orthodoxy. The practices appear in a different order in his text than how I am listing them here. But they include service book prayers, iconography, liturgical singing, and rites of the Lord's Supper, baptism, and remission (remission constituting deliverance from the grip of sin, which he describes as deep disorder of moral, legal, aesthetic, and therapeutic dimensions that may or may not be morally culpable), funerals, and liturgy's connection to moral living. Cuneo investigates the liturgical actions of Orthodoxy as resources for participants to think about who God is as Trinity, as redeemer of the world and humanity, and what it means for followers of Jesus to recognize and live into the divine summoning to love God and neighbor, even the neighbor that we consider our enemy (25, 189–90). As Cuneo declares, "[w]hen in the liturgy the assembled bless what God blesses, want what God wants, stand with those whom God stands with, they enact what are surely some of the most important ways by which one can love God" (33). Liturgy immerses us into the mind and ways of God.

Though Cuneo paves a philosophical way forward with liturgy, or perhaps by virtue of his philosophical approach, his argumentation veers in moments toward the abstruse and can at times sound contained. In chapter 3 Cuneo introduces a challenge to John Schellenberg's Hiddenness Argument, a claim regarding the nonexistence of God. In chapter 4 Cuneo completes his response to Schellenberg by elucidating upon the capacity of ritual reenactment in liturgy to reorient and "revise" the narration of one's life. Cuneo disentangles meticulous formulations of religious skepticism and doubt. But one wonders if he could accomplish a similar resolution with less exposition upon Schellenberg and more direct troubling of atheism's plausibility. I also found curious the understandable, but not particularly novel rooting of Cuneo's central philosophical premises regarding liturgy in the thoughts of Alexander Schmemmann. For a text philosophizing about liturgy, why not ground the argumentation in the work of a groundbreaking philosopher? The frequency of Nicholas Wolterstorff too, referenced in approximately a tenth of the total pages also made Cuneo's precedent of philosophizing about liturgy seem less new.

How might a figure like Judith Butler who recently published *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Harvard, 2015) inform Cuneo's philosophizing of liturgy? What would Cuneo make of other voices that engage liturgy with theoretical lenses that often look past it, like postcolonialism? Here, I am thinking of writings by Kwok Pui-Lan and Stephen Burns, Cláudio Carvalhaes, and Jin Young Choi. Cuneo states that he is "committed to the central components of Christianity, as they are understood by the Orthodox church" (214). Yet is *the liturgy* also present in the life of congregations of color and free church traditions? I raise such questions not as alerts related to identity politics, but rather as under-examined considerations for texts conceptually mining worship of God as a unifying Christian activity. Without digressing further, *Ritualized Faith* exemplifies how philosophy illuminates the efficaciousness of liturgy for advanced graduate study. The last chapter delves into Cuneo's conversion to Orthodoxy, his spiritual journey, and his doubts and stands to benefit any liturgically inquisitive classroom.

Gerald C. Liu, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ