

COMMON RITUAL KNOWLEDGE

Joshua Cockayne

How can participating in a liturgy allow us to know God? Recent path-breaking work on the epistemology of liturgy has argued that liturgy allows individuals to gain ritual knowledge of God by coming to know-how to engage God. However, since liturgy (as it is ordinarily practiced) is a group act, I argue that we need to give an account to explain how a *group* can know God by engaging with liturgy. If group know-how is reducible to instances of individual know-how, then the existing accounts are sufficient for explaining a group's knowing-how to engage God. However, I argue, there are good reasons to suppose that reductive accounts of group know-how fail. In this paper, I propose a non-reductive account of common ritual knowledge, according to which the group knows-how to engage God in liturgy.

Introduction

One of the most powerful moments in the Church of England's Eucharistic liturgy occurs as the priest reads the words of the Collect (a short prayer usually used after confession and before the Liturgy of the Word) over the congregation.¹ In this moment, the congregation moves from being a collection of individuals, each with their own worries, concerns and questions, to becoming a unified community, a community that worships God *together*. This change is not unique to Anglican services, or even to traditions which use only formal written liturgy, either. As Stanley Hauerwas describes, the act of gathering "indicates that Christians are called from the world, from their homes, from their families, to be constituted into a community capable of praising God."² The very act of gathering together as a community signifies the importantly communal dimension of Christian worship and the change that takes place when we worship together. This paper seeks to take seriously the theological significance of

¹As Paul Bradshaw notes in the companion to the Church of England's *Common Worship*, in using the collect, "the ministry of the president serves to unify the liturgy and draw the community into a worshipping community" (*Companion to Common Worship*, 114).

²Hauerwas, *In Good Company*, 157. This emphasis on the Church's gathering from a variety of spheres of society is discussed in detail by Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 159–166.



the communal dimension of Christian worship and to offer a social epistemology of liturgy (however formal or informal it may be) in light of this.³

To give a *social* epistemology of liturgy, I begin by first considering how liturgy can allow us to know God. As Terence Cuneo has argued, our participation in the liturgy of the Church plays an important role in a Christian way of life which is “dedicated to *engaging* God in various ways by doing such things as blessing, petitioning, and thanking God.”⁴ As he goes on to suggest, engaging God in this way allows us to gain a kind of “ritual knowledge,” which consists in knowing-how to engage God by means of participating in the repeated acts of blessing, petitioning, and thanking God.⁵

As I will argue, whilst Cuneo’s position seems entirely plausible, since the emphasis is placed only on what an individual can know, his account stops short of providing a social epistemology of liturgy.⁶ To give a social epistemology of liturgy we need an account of what it is for a group to know-how to engage God. If group know-how is reducible to individual know-how, then Cuneo’s account will suffice. However, by building on recent work on group know-how,⁷ I argue that there are good reasons to suppose that group know-how is irreducible to individual know-how. Lastly, to give an account of how a church can know-how to engage God in liturgy, I apply Deborah P. Tollefsen and S. Orestis Palermos’s account of group know-how to the context of liturgy.⁸

Ritual Knowledge

Let us begin by considering what has already been said on the epistemology of liturgy. As James K. A. Smith notes, in recent years, there has been something of a “liturgical turn” in the philosophy of religion.⁹ Philosophers of religion are beginning to take note of the importance of the practices of religion, and not just the importance of religious doctrine or religious belief. For instance, as Sarah Coakley suggests, liturgy can provide us with a kind of knowledge-by-acquaintance.¹⁰ Through repeated practices, we are able to slowly come to see the world differently and are able to develop relationships with God, “found in trust and sustained

³I use “liturgy” in a broad sense to denote any scripted communal worship.

⁴Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 148.

⁵Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 163.

⁶We can distinguish between at least two kinds of groups in reference to the Church. The Church as a whole is constituted by globally and historically distant gathered churches who are united together by the work of the Holy Spirit. Within this group, we can also describe the worship of a gathered church as a group action which individuals participate in.

⁷Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How.”

⁸Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How.”

⁹Smith, “Review of *Ritualized Faith*,” 118. For a more detailed summary of the recent literature on liturgy and epistemology see Cockayne, “Philosophy and Liturgy Part 2.”

¹⁰Coakley, “Beyond Belief.”

by repeated acts of adoration and worship."¹¹ According to Nicholas Wolterstorff, liturgy provides a kind of object-knowledge of God through the repetition of certain forms of address. By taking for granted that God is a certain way by addressing him in worship, Wolterstorff thinks, participants in a liturgy can come to know what God is like.¹²

One of the most influential of these accounts of liturgical epistemology is Cuneo's account of "ritual knowledge." Cuneo argues that one of the roles of liturgical worship is to provide participants with a certain kind of practical knowledge of how to engage God which cannot be reduced to propositional knowledge about God; he calls this "ritual knowledge."¹³ Just as knowing another person involves developing a "rapport" with that person in which we come to know-how to engage that person,¹⁴ Cuneo maintains that "knowing God consists in (although is not exhausted by) knowing how to engage God."¹⁵ Liturgy provides an important means of gaining this kind of ritual knowledge. Filling this account out, Cuneo writes,

[L]iturgy makes available act-types of a certain range such as chanting, kissing, prostrating, and eating that count in the context of a liturgical performance as cases of blessing, petitioning, and thanking God. . . . If this is correct, the liturgy provides the materials for not only engaging but also knowing how to engage God. Or more precisely: the liturgy provides the materials by which a person can acquire such knowledge and a context in which she can exercise or enact it . . . to the extent that one grasps and sufficiently understands these ways of acting, one knows how to bless, petition, and thank God in their ritualized forms. One has ritual knowledge.¹⁶

On this proposal, it is not that certain bodily acts merely accompany certain speech-acts, but, rather, "in the context of the liturgy, kissing, prostrating, and eating also count as cases of engaging God by blessing, petitioning, and thanking God."¹⁷

¹¹Coakley, "Beyond Belief," 340.

¹²Wolterstorff, "Knowing God Liturgically," 14–15.

¹³Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 162.

¹⁴Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 148–49. This claim is also confirmed by those discussing the philosophy of personal knowledge, more generally. Bonnie M. Talbert, for instance, argues that

to know another is to know how to successfully interact with him/her over time. Knowing how to interact with a particular person starts with the largely ineffable ability to recognize him/her, which recognition comes to be associated with a more complex mental representation of that individual. . . . Our interactive skills are largely intuitive and difficult to express in propositional terms. For example, when I am talking to Shannon, I find that I pace my remarks differently than I do when I am talking to Deme. Without thinking about it I seem to adjust the pace of my conversation to what I somehow perceive is most suitable to the interaction. (Talbert, "Knowing Other People," 196–197)

¹⁵Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 149.

¹⁶Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 163.

¹⁷Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 156. Cuneo attempts to stay relatively neutral on the disagreement between intellectualism (the thesis that knowledge-how can be reduced to knowledge-that) and anti-intellectualism (the thesis that it is not the case that all knowing-how is a species of

Whilst Cuneo's account is both intuitive and insightful, as I will argue, it does not provide an account of what it is for a church to know-how to engage God, but only of what it is for an individual to know-how to engage God. Thus, to take seriously the communal dimension of Christian worship, we need to provide an account which explains a church's know-how, that is, we need an account not just of ritual knowledge, but also of *common* ritual knowledge.

Common Worship

Having considered the connection between individual liturgical actions and individual know-how, it will now be important to consider the importance of collective liturgical actions so that we can see their connection to the group's know-how. In this section, I will make a number of brief observations about group liturgical action.

First, liturgy ordinarily requires acting together. As the twentieth-century Anglo-Catholic writer Evelyn Underhill puts it,

Christian worship is never a solitary undertaking. Both on its visible and invisible sides, it has a thoroughly social and organic character. The worshipper, however lonely in appearance, comes before God as a member of a great family; part of the Communion of Saints, living and dead.¹⁸

Underhill later suggests that the outward forms of worship in the Church *visible* should somehow reflect the unity of the Church *invisible*. Thus, in order to provide a "here-and-now-embodiment" by which "man and women can transcend the apparent isolation of the soul and unite in a common act of worship," Underhill suggests that the visible Church must participate in a number of practices which allow this kind of unity of action.¹⁹

Secondly, acting together requires some kind of coordination or plan. In the liturgy, this is provided by means of a liturgical script, but the point can be made more generally. As John Searle argues, there is an important difference between actions which are done at the same time and actions which are done *together*. Consider the following case, for instance:

Imagine that a group of people are sitting on the grass in various places in a park. Imagine that it suddenly starts to rain and they all get up and run to a common, centrally located, shelter. Each person has the intention expressed by the sentence "I am running to the shelter." But for each person, we may suppose that his or her intention is entirely independent of the intentions

knowing that) by giving some considerations in favour of what he describes as a 'moderate view' (*Ritualized Faith*, 151). As he describes this view, knowing-how is "a sequence of act types that an agent can perform," such as "[p]erforming a work of music, swimming the crawl . . . and offer[ing] thanks to God" (*Ritualized Faith*, 151).

¹⁸Underhill, *Worship*, 81. As Underhill stresses, the worship of the Church has both a *visible* and an *invisible* component. Both of these components are social in character. To think about the actions of the Church *invisible* would require much more careful theological work than there is space for. Here I focus only on the corporate actions of the Church *visible*.

¹⁹Underhill, *Worship*, 93.

and behavior of others. In this case, there is no collective behavior; there is just a sequence of individual acts that happen to converge on a common goal. Now imagine a case where a group of people in a park converge on a common point as a piece of collective behavior. Imagine that they are part of an outdoor ballet where the choreography calls for the entire *corps de ballet* to converge on a common point. We can even imagine that the external bodily movements are indistinguishable in the two cases; the people running for shelter make the same types of bodily movements as the ballet dancers. Externally observed the two cases are indistinguishable, but they are clearly different internally.²⁰

Whilst philosophers have disagreed on just what the nature of such intentions are, they have generally agreed that there is a distinction to be made between individual and collective intentionality. On Searle's own analysis, "we-intentions" are an irreducible phenomenon of acting together which require a kind of cooperation between individuals. In contrast to this, Michael Bratman thinks that a collective intention is reducible to each individual intending to act together, along with the belief that everyone else also has a similar intention.²¹ Nevertheless, both have in common that the intentions of individuals are different in cases of acting together.²² In relation to acting together in liturgy this is especially important. As Wolterstorff puts this point, "scripts, in many cases, are very nearly indispensable for acting together."²³ Similarly, as Underhill maintains, the kind of joint *action* involved in the worship of the Church, depends on our having "an agreed pattern, a liturgy; even though this pattern be of the simplest kind."²⁴

Thirdly, whilst a script is important for acting together, acting together also requires going beyond a script. As Wolterstorff points out, the presence of a liturgical script cannot entirely capture what it is to act together. For instance, he notes, "[i]f one person . . . says the creed very slowly and another says it very quickly, they are not saying the creed *together*," despite the fact that both individuals are following the same script.²⁵ The reason for this, Wolterstorff states, is that

the script for enacting a particular liturgy is never fully specified by a text, nor by a text supplemented by oral directives. Always some of the

²⁰John Searle, "Collective Intentions and Actions," 403–404.

²¹Bratman, "Shared Agency," 43–49.

²²Both Searle's and Bratman's analyses have also been applied to explain acting liturgically. For instance, Cuneo suggests that Searle's analysis of collective action can be used to explain the actions involved in liturgical singing (Cuneo, *Ritualized Faith*, 138), and Wolterstorff suggests that reading a liturgical script together requires a kind of "interlocking" and "meshing" of individual intentions in the way described by Bratman (Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 61). Just as the choreography of the *corps de ballet* is essential for forming the kind of we-intentions required for performing a ballet together, the liturgical script (or at least some agreed pattern of worship) is essential for being able to worship God together.

²³Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 15.

²⁴Underhill, *Worship*, 99.

²⁵Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 64.

prescriptions constituting the script are embedded within the social practice of that particular religious community for enacting its liturgies.²⁶

This point is developed in more detail by Bruce Ellis Benson, who thinks of following liturgy not as following some orchestral score (as Wolterstorff suggests),²⁷ but, rather, as performing a piece of jazz.²⁸ Even in the use of repetitive, scripted liturgy, Benson suggests that each performance is different from the last; he notes that “there is still a difference between one repetition and another, in the same way that there is a difference between one performance of a symphony and another.”²⁹ As Benson explains, just as jazz musicians must be well prepared and “know . . . how to respond to the call of other improvisers,” the same must be the case for improvising in liturgical contexts.³⁰ Whilst following a script is important for acting together, there must be some level of responsiveness to those one is acting alongside, as well as a responsiveness to the norms which are implicit in a community, but which cannot be made explicit in a liturgical script.

Finally, acting together requires uniting a set of disparate actors and actions. Whilst it is important that a church worships together, this does not mean that all ways of participating must be identical. For instance, in his discussion of the epistemology of the rituals described in Scripture, Dru Johnson writes that

not only is knowing a social process, but there is an intentional disparity in the performance of rites, which means that by its constitution, the Torah does not construct an egalitarian epistemology, where everyone has access to the same knowledge—a caricatured ideal of rationalism. Rather, because different roles in Israelite society will necessarily dispose persons to be variously discerning, they must rely upon each other in order to know well.³¹

As Johnson highlights, one of the remarkable aspects of Hebrew ritual is that it is inclusive of children. This inclusivity exists not only for the sake of the children, but also for the sake of those who participate alongside children and are led by children in worship.³² Moreover, we might think, such inclusivity extends to thinking about the liturgy of the Church today—as Benson observes, a worshipping community is composed of

²⁶Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 20.

²⁷Wolterstorff, *The God We Worship*, 7.

²⁸Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 41.

²⁹Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 141

³⁰Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 41.

³¹Johnson, *Knowledge by Ritual*, 246.

³²In recent work, I make a similar point with reference to participating in liturgy alongside those with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I suggest that an account of group liturgical action cannot be defined only with reference to neuro-typical individuals, who can interlock their intentions without difficulty, but it must also be inclusive of those who cannot form we-intentions (Cockayne, “Inclusive Worship”).

“multiple voices,”³³ which do not always provide *polyphony*, which often remain “distinct and sometimes dissonant.”³⁴

Thus, not only is the liturgical worship of the visible Church communal, scripted and partially improvised, but it also brings together difference to be united.

From Acting Together to Knowing Together

We have now seen that liturgy can provide a means of knowing-how to engage God via acts of blessing, petitioning and thanking God, and we have also seen that liturgy can provide a means of acting together. Now, I turn to consider the interaction between these two points.

As Johnson outlines, since Hebrew rituals are inherently social in nature, the result is that “[i]n being disposed to know objects, constructs, or God Himself, more than one person is required.”³⁵ Similarly, as Wolterstorff describes it, “liturgy is like music in that one acquires some particular know-how by being inducted into a social practice for the exercise of this know-how. There are others who possess the know-how in question; liturgical know-how is a shared know-how.”³⁶ What remains to be seen, however, is how best to analyse the nature of this shared know-how.

In this section, I begin by considering the possibility that group know-how is reducible to instances of individual know-how. We might think that, in talking of a church’s knowing-how to engage God by blessing, petitioning and thanking God, we are only saying something about the know-how of the individual members of that church. If this reductive account is successful, then Cuneo’s account of ritual knowledge is easily extendible to cases of church know-how. However, I argue that there are good reasons to think that reductive accounts of group know-how are not successful.

First, it is important to note that the phenomenon of a group knowing-how to perform some action is not unique to the Church; we talk of an orchestra’s knowing-how to play a piece of music, a scientific research team knowing-how to perform experiments and a sports team knowing-how to win games.³⁷ In all of these cases, it appears that it is the group which knows-how to perform various actions and not just the individuals—the violin player does not know-how to perform a symphony any more than the percussion player. Yet, the orchestra does appear to

³³Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 94.

³⁴Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 94.

³⁵Johnson, *Knowledge by Ritual*, 245.

³⁶Wolterstorff, *The God We Worship*, 7–8. Wolterstorff introduces this discussion of shared know-how in *The God We Worship* but it is not developed into an account of group know-how. The closest Wolterstorff gets to discussing group know-how is in his recent work on liturgy in which he discusses the role of collective intentionality in acting together in liturgy (*Acting Liturgically*, 61–65). The epistemological implications of this account of collective intentionality in liturgy are not discussed in detail by Wolterstorff.

³⁷Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 112.

know-how to perform the symphony. We often praise group performances and award orchestras, football teams and companies for their group performances. This implies that, in some sense, the group is responsible for acting in a certain way.

One natural way of understanding these claims, and, thereby, one way of understanding a church's know-how in corporate liturgy, is to reduce instances of group know-how to instances of individual-know-how, or a summation of individual-know-hows. Put simply, an account of group know-how is reducible to individual know-how if all statements concerning group know-how are true in virtue of statements concerning individual know-how.

As I will argue in this section, a reductive approach does not appear promising. Whilst there is not space for a decisive refutation of the reductive approach here, I argue that attempting to reduce group know-how to the know-how of the individuals involved leads to a number of counterintuitive consequences. Whilst it might be possible for defenders of reductive accounts to simply bite the bullet and accept that how we ordinarily talk about group know-how is mistaken, at the very least, these counterintuitive consequences provide the motivation for looking towards an alternative, non-reductive account. Let us begin, then, by considering two different reductive accounts of group know-how.

First, we might think that talk of group know-how is a "short-hand" way of referring to the addition of the know-how of each specific individual member of a group.³⁸ If it is possible to conceive of group-action as a simple addition of many individual actions, then perhaps we can think of group know-how as the addition of each individual instance of know-how. As Palermos and Tollefsen suggest, a case which seems easy to describe in these terms is that of a car production line, in which the expertise is distributed in such a way that each individual performs her own role, thereby allowing a car, say, a Chevrolet Corvette to be produced. Thus, we might think, to say that the Corvette production line knows-how to make Corvettes is simply to say that John the welder knows-how to weld, Mary the painter knows-how to paint, and so on. On the additive view, group know-how is identical with the summation of the know-how of each specific member.³⁹

However, in explaining what the Corvette production line knows by referring only to an addition of the know-how of the individuals working on this production line, we must admit that strictly speaking, "no one knows-how to make a Corvette. Each individual in the company knows their own domain but no person knows-how to do all the various things that comprise making the Corvette . . . Corvettes are made but apparently

³⁸Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 114–115.

³⁹As Palermos and Tollefsen formalize the additive definition of group know-how:
 $A(KH) + B(KH) + C(KH) \dots = G-KH'$ ("Group Know-How," 116).

no one knows-how to make them.”⁴⁰ Additionally, although typically credit is given to Chevrolet for the quality of their car production, on an additive approach, “no one should be given credit because no one knows-how to make a Corvette.”⁴¹ Even if we focus on individuals with the most expertise in such a process, say, the production manager, or the original designer of the car, it is highly unlikely that these individuals know-how to make the car since they do not actually make the car themselves, at least not entirely. Moreover, focusing on the addition of specific individuals also appears to run into further issues. For instance, if group know-how is a summation of *specific* group members’ know-how, then we would have to admit that “when Catherine takes a job at Honda, Corvette no longer knows-how to make cars.”⁴² Thus, a straightforward additive reduction appears problematic.

Secondly, then, if we want to make sense of the production line’s know-how whilst avoiding these counterintuitive consequences, we might consider a less specific account, which attributes group know-how to general roles rather than specific individuals. For instance, rather than think of the production line’s group know-how as identical to John’s knowing-how to weld and Mary’s knowing-how to paint, we might think that the production line’s know-how is identical with *some* individual’s knowing-how to weld and *some* individual’s knowing-how to paint.⁴³ What is important for the production line is not Catherine or Mary or John, but, rather, the roles that each of these individuals play in the production of the Corvette. Thus, on this view “Corvette knows-how to make a car whenever there is some person in the various positions that knows-how to do their job.”⁴⁴

Whilst this view appears more promising, it also runs into problems. On this account, when Chevrolet has a position open or loses an employee, they no longer know-how to make Corvettes. This might seem like an obvious conclusion for some—if the machinery is running, all other employees are present and willing to work, it still appears that the production line is no longer able to make Corvettes, so we should think that some know-how has gone missing and that the production line ceases to have know-how.⁴⁵ However, this conclusion runs counter to how know-how is usually thought of. When a person breaks her leg, she does not lose the ability to run, and when we are asleep we do not lose our knowledge of how to ride bikes—know-how appears to be something we retain even when we momentarily lack the capacity to engage in the relevant

⁴⁰Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 115.

⁴¹Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 115.

⁴²Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 116.

⁴³As they formalise this second position: ‘ $p(\text{KH}) + q(\text{KH}) + r(\text{KH}) \dots = G(\text{KH}) \dots$ where $p, q, r \dots$ represent *some* individual rather than any specific individual’ (“Group Know-How,” 116).

⁴⁴Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 116.

⁴⁵With thanks to the editor for articulating this objection so clearly.

activities. Whilst it is clearly possible to lose one's know-how in certain cases, momentarily being unable to ride a bike or to run does not mean that one ceases to know-how to do these things. Analogously, Palermos and Tollefsen suggest, "surely we would want to say that Corvette still knows-how to make its famous cars, just as we would want to say that someone with a broken leg still knows how to ride a bike."⁴⁶ Whilst it is surely possible for Chevrolet to cease knowing-how to produce Corvettes (we might say, for instance, "They just don't know how to make cars like they used to" after a period of sustained poor quality production), losing this know-how as a result of momentarily having a vacancy would seem to be a strange conclusion to draw for it would imply that Chevrolet has to relearn how to make cars each time they gain a new employee. Yet on the reductive account of group know-how outlined above, group know-how is identical with the addition of the know-how of some individuals who fill various roles within the production line—so if we wish to say Chevrolet still knows-how to make Corvettes when it has vacancies, we should look elsewhere than some addition of its members' know-how.

Whilst the move from a reductive account which focuses on specific individuals to one which is presented more generally avoids us having to say that the group's know-how depends on some individual's know-how, it does appear to require that these roles are always filled for the group to retain its know-how. On this position know-how appears to be lost very easily in a way which does not appear to be the case in individual cases of know-how.

At this point, the defender of the reductive account might simply bite the bullet and admit that companies and production lines lose and gain know-how much more easily than individuals. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to decisively reject all versions of the reductive account of group know-how, it seems reasonable to think that the intuitions driving the objections above are enough to motivate an alternative position. Moreover, although intuitions might vary on whether Corvette retains its know-how when it has vacancies, and there may be ways of rescuing the reductive account from these counter-examples, there are more general problems with thinking about group know-how in additive terms. As Palermos and Tollefsen note, whilst a straightforward addition of individual know-how seems to capture something plausible about the way in which group know-how functions on a production line, it appears less plausible in cases where continuous interaction between group members takes place. For instance, in reflecting on the example of an American football team's acting together, they note that,

Players on offense need to know-how to do each of their particular jobs but each of those jobs requires an ongoing interaction with others in the team. The play is not a result of adding up discrete individual actions or individual know-how regarding these actions. . . . Rather, the play itself is constituted

⁴⁶Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 116.

by the complex interactions of individuals on the team. The performance of a symphony is similar in this respect. I may perform my musical instrument very skilfully but the skilled performance of the New York Philharmonic requires more than my skilful contribution. My contribution needs to be integrated with others' contributions in a way that produces a collective skilled performance. This type of performance seems to emerge from the complex interactions of individual members, rendering . . . [group know-how] irreducibly collective.⁴⁷

Even if we add up what each individual knows-how to do in the context of group action, we have yet to give an account of group know-how; we need to explain how this know-how is integrated and combined to produce group action. The point appears to be that whilst individual know-how is clearly necessary for a group's knowing-how in many cases, it is not sufficient.⁴⁸ We also need to say something about the function and structure of the group itself to make sense of attributions of know-how to it. The non-reductive accounts of group know-how outlined in the next section seek to show what else is needed for a group to know-how, above and beyond the know-how of each individual member.

As I described in the previous section, liturgical action is in some sense both scripted and improvised. That is, there is a kind of responsiveness and mutual awareness that must take place for a group to worship God together. The way in which individual intentions intertwine and mesh in such situations is complex. If we want to retain the idea that a church knows-how to engage God, then we should look beyond reductive accounts of group know-how. In the next section, I consider two such accounts.

Group Know-how without Reduction

In this section, I outline two ways of thinking about group know-how which are non-reductive, before applying these to the context of liturgical worship. In the next section, I will suggest that both of these two accounts capture something of what it is for a church to know-how to engage God, and so the two accounts should be combined to give an account of common ritual knowledge. To recap: to say that group know-how is non-reductive is simply to say that it cannot be explained entirely with reference to the know-how of each individual member of the group.

First, I will outline an intellectualist account of group know-how. On this account, we can avoid giving a reductive account of group know-how

⁴⁷Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 117.

⁴⁸As Palermos and Tollefsen highlight, the irreducibility of group know-how is also attested to by work in cognitive science. For instance, Cooke et al. note,

The term "cognition" used in the team context refers to cognitive processes or activities that occur at a team level. Like the cognitive processes of individuals, the cognitive processes of teams include learning, planning, reasoning, decision making, problem solving, remembering, designing, and assessing situations. . . . Teams are cognitive (dynamical) systems in which cognition emerges through interactions. ("Interactive Team Cognition," 256)

by invoking some proposition, known by the group, which enables the group to perform together. As such, the group's knowing-how is not reducible only to what we can say about the know-how of each individual group member—it also requires that the group knows some proposition which provides a way of acting together. On such a proposal, as Palermos and Tollefsen describe it, “[t]he individual members of the group may know-how to perform their part, but their individual know-how depends on and is guided by there being a jointly accepted overall way, W , which is the way to perform the overall act of ϕ .”⁴⁹

To see how this might be the case, let us consider an account of group propositional knowledge. On Raimo Tuomela's account, for instance, for a group to believe some proposition is for the operative members (i.e., those in a position to make decisions on behalf of the group, such as CEOs, managers and leadership teams) of that group to accept some proposition as true, and for the non-operative members of the group to accept and to be aware of the group's belief. Tuomela's account of belief is formalised as follows:

(Belief of Group) G believes that p in the social and normative circumstances C if and only if in C there are operative members $A_1 \dots A_m$ in G with respective positions $P_1 \dots P_m$ such that

- (1) the agents $A_1 \dots A_m$, when they are performing their social tasks in their positions $P_1 \dots P_m$, and due to their exercising the relevant authority system of G , (intentionally) jointly accept that p , and because of this exercise of authority system, they ought to continue to accept or positionally believe it;
- (2) there is a mutual belief among the operative members to the effect that (1);
- (3) because of (1) the (full-fledged and adequately informed) non-operative members of G tend tacitly to accept—or at least ought to accept— p as members of G ; and
- (4) there is a mutual belief in G to the effect that (3).⁵⁰

The group's justification for this belief, on Tuomela's account, depends on the members having reasons to accept the belief as the belief of the group.⁵¹ Thus, if the group believes W , and is justified in believing W , then the group knows that W . Note that this analysis of group knowledge requires a proposition to be common knowledge amongst the group. Thus, it is not sufficient for a group of individuals to happen to all know some proposition at the same time, or even for each individual to accept this proposition as the belief of the group. It is also necessary for the group to

⁴⁹Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 118–119.

⁵⁰Tuomela, “Group Belief,” 295.

⁵¹Tuomela, “Group Knowledge Analyzed.” Alternatively, one might describe group justification in reliabilist terms (see Tollefsen, “Challenging Epistemic Individualism”; Alvin Goldman, “Social Process Reliabilism”).

be aware that this proposition is accepted as the belief of the group by the other members.

Assuming that this analysis of a group's knowing a proposition (or some other account) is plausible, we can see one way of giving a non-reductive account of group know-how. On such an account, the members of an orchestra must jointly accept some proposition, *W*, which provides a way of performing some group action. For instance, what is needed for a group to know-how to perform Beethoven's Ninth is for each member of the orchestra to know-how to perform her own instrument and for the group to accept some proposition, *W*, which provides a way to perform Beethoven's Ninth. Whilst this proposal is reductive on the propositional nature of know-how, it is non-reductive on the question of who the agent of such knowledge is—the group is the subject that knows of *W*, that it is the way to perform Beethoven's Ninth, and, in virtue of this, the group knows-how to perform that symphony.⁵² Note that on such an analysis, what one individually knows is partly dependent on the role one plays in the group. On Tuomela's account of group belief, not everyone (or in some cases no one) in the group personally believes *p*, but, rather, the operative members determine the group's belief, and the non-operative members need only to *accept* this belief as the belief of the group. Thus, the account appears helpful in capturing cases in which there is a variety of ways of contributing to the group's action. As long as an individual at least tacitly accepts some way of acting, she can contribute to the group's know-how, regardless of her personal beliefs and personal contribution.

Note, however, that the intellectualist account of group know-how depends on there being some agreed way of performing which the group knows propositionally since for the group to know that *p*, *p* must be common knowledge to the group's members. That is, not only must the violinist know that *p*, and the cellist know that *p*, but also the violinist must know that the cellist knows that *p* and that the cellist knows that the violinist knows that *p* (and so on). This rules out the possibility of using the intellectualist analysis to capture certain cases of group performance, since it requires there to be some kind of agreement in place prior to acting. Thus, certain kinds of improvised performance or group actions where there is no prior agreement between individuals are difficult to capture in intellectualist terms.⁵³ This is not to say anything about the limitations of reducing all instances of know-how to know-that. In the case of individual know-how, the intellectualist will surely insist that all instances of know-how, regardless of how complex or how difficult to describe in propositional terms, can be reducible to instances of knowledge-that.⁵⁴ The same cannot be said for group know-how, however. The reason for this is that, for some proposition to be known by a group, the proposition has to

⁵²Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 118.

⁵³Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 120.

⁵⁴Thanks to the editor for suggesting this objection.

be common knowledge to the members of the group and accepted as the group's belief by the relevant operative and non-operative members. This requires there to be prior understanding of a proposition before the group acts. Thus, in the case of improvised or spontaneous performance, whilst it might be possible for each individual's know-how to be summarized propositionally (if intellectualism is true), it is not clear how the group's know-how could be known propositionally since there is no prior agreement between individuals that they will act in a certain way. The fact that some group performance does not fit the intellectualist account well (and as we will see in the next section, some aspects of group liturgical action seem difficult to capture on the intellectualist account) provides some motivation for looking to non-intellectualist accounts of group know-how.

Secondly, then, it is possible to give an account of group know-how which does not reduce know-how to propositional knowledge. I will refer to this account as the "non-intellectualist account." On this account, "know-how is a form of disposition or ability, that belongs to an intelligent agent, because, when manifested, not only can it be well regulated, but also performed in a *responsible* manner."⁵⁵ Thus, assuming know-how is not always reducible to know-that, we must provide an account of how groups could be considered intelligent agents which have dispositions to act in a certain way. Note again that whilst individuals within the group are required to have certain kinds of know-how, what is required in addition to this is something about the group (a disposition to act in a certain way in certain circumstances).

As with the literature on group belief, the literature on group agency is considerable.⁵⁶ Many of the positions developed in this literature seek to give an account of how groups, constituted by individual members, could be considered agents in their own right. Often, this requires taking a certain functionalist stance on what it is to be an agent. For instance, as Peter French describes it, agents must display a level of rationality (i.e., they must have a reason for acting), and they must be able to respond to feedback and adjust their actions accordingly.⁵⁷ Similarly, Christian List and Philip Pettit suggest that an agent must have "representational states, motivational states, and a capacity to act on their basis."⁵⁸ By examining the decisionmaking processes of groups, whether that be through some

⁵⁵Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 120. Note (as an anonymous referee helpfully pointed out) that this view of know-how also implies a kind of virtue epistemology in which epistemic agents (and thus groups) can be praised or blamed. This appears to have interesting implications for a view of worship—on this view congregations can worship God well or poorly and some churches appear to be more or less virtuous. This conclusion seems to be compatible with the way worship is described in Scripture in many places. For instance, in Amos 5, God condemns the worship and festivals of the people of Israel because they fail to pursue justice. This topic is deserving a more detailed exploration and there is not space to explore the moral implications of this position here.

⁵⁶Tollefsen summarizes much of this literature in *Groups as Agents*.

⁵⁷French, *Corporate Ethics*, 10–12.

⁵⁸List and Pettit, *Group Agency*, 20.

hierarchical structure, a dictatorship, or an egalitarian voting process, both French, and List and Pettit suggest that groups can meet the conditions for agency. Thus, if groups can be considered intelligent agents capable of performing certain actions, we ought to consider them capable of knowing-how to perform these actions.

Yet, whilst such accounts might provide some explanation of how groups can be considered agents, as Tollefsen argues elsewhere, what is lacking from such accounts is an explanation of how groups could be regarded as having mental states and engaging in cognitive processes.⁵⁹ Palermos and Tollefsen attempt to provide such an account by appealing to the literature on distributed cognition. As they explain,

In order to claim that two (or more) systems give rise to some distributed process and, thereby, to an overall distributed system . . . we need to establish that the contributing parts are non-linearly related to each other on the basis of *continuous reciprocal interactions* between them. . . . in order to have an overall distributed cognitive system — as opposed to merely several individual cognitive systems that are socially embedded . . . the requirement is that the contributing members . . . collaboratively perform a cognitive task by interacting continuously and reciprocally with each other.⁶⁰

Put simply, an account of distributed cognition is required when the interactions between group members cannot be straightforwardly divided into individual cognition. For instance, as we saw previously, an orchestra's performing of a symphony is not merely a case of violin players knowing-how to read the violin score and percussionists knowing-how to read the percussion score—there must be a level of interaction and responsiveness to one another's performance. On Palermos and Tollefsen's account, this kind of distributed cognitive system requires that "the contributing members (i.e., the relevant cognitive agents) collaboratively perform a cognitive task by interacting continuously and reciprocally with each other."⁶¹

It is important to note that not all behaviour which might potentially be identified as cognitive in this way will meet the conditions for group action. For instance, a random group of individuals might all individually be proficient at playing jazz instruments, and happen, momentarily, to play a piece of jazz music harmoniously.⁶² While such an example might appear to be a case of group know-how, the reason that it should not be considered as such, Palermos and Tollefsen suggest, is that "[t]he relevant behaviour needs to instead rise out of the *cooperative* and (thereby) self-regulatory activity of some appropriate collection of units that will allow it to be (at least potentially) *regular* behaviour."⁶³ Thus, they think,

⁵⁹Tollefsen, *Groups as Agents*, 64–65.

⁶⁰Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 121.

⁶¹Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 121.

⁶²Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 123–124.

⁶³Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 122.

“in order for them to qualify as a jazz band, they must regularly be in tune and in synch, and for that to be the case, every player’s performance must be continuously interdependent to everyone else’s.”⁶⁴

If groups are organised in the relevant way, it is possible that group know-how might emerge. In contrast to a kind of reductive additive account of group know-how, then, the non-reductive non-intellectualist account holds that group know-how is an emergent property of groups which have a certain functional role. On this account, group know-how emerges,

[w]hen individual members *coordinate* on the basis of reciprocal interactions, they adapt mutually to each other by *restricting* their actions in such a way so as to *reliably*—that is, regularly—achieve ends that they would only luckily—if ever—bring about were they to act on their own. Via the application of such positive mutual constrains, which result from, and further guide, the members’ coordinated activity, new collective properties (i.e., regular behaviors) emerge and the collective achieves a stable configuration that is necessary for successful operation.⁶⁵

Thus, just as the intellectualist account depends on providing some plausible account of group knowledge, the non-intellectualist account depends on providing some plausible account of distributed cognition. Whilst filling out both of these positions is not within the scope of this paper, the bare bones of both accounts should be sufficient to see how an account of common ritual knowledge might develop.

Common Ritual Knowledge

We are now in a position to consider an account of group know-how which can help fill out an account of common ritual knowledge.

As we have seen, there are reasons to suppose that liturgical worship requires group actions for which there is a diversity of participants and ways of participating. Furthermore, we have also seen that we should regard the community as the agent of the action of engaging God, and not just the individual participants. Thus, if group know-how is truly non-reductive, then we must look to explain the nature of acting liturgically with reference to a non-reductive account of group know-how. Let us consider the possibility of such an application with reference to the two accounts outlined above.

First, the application of an intellectualist account of group know-how, according to which a group accepts some proposition as a way of acting, has some promise in the context of liturgy. As Wolterstorff highlights, the presence of a script in the context of group action allows for the possibility of *correct or incorrect* performance of some group action, by reference to how well a script is followed.⁶⁶ In part, Wolterstorff notes,

⁶⁴Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 122.

⁶⁵Palermos and Tollefsen, “Group Know-How,” 122.

⁶⁶Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 15.

performing some group action correctly is a matter of suspending acting on one's own judgement "as to what would be good to do and instead follow the script."⁶⁷ He continues, "[w]e are all, in fact, *rule-submissive* and *script-submissive* selves; nobody is a purely autonomous self. We all act heteronomously."⁶⁸

The kind of correctness rules which Wolterstorff refers to here can be captured well by thinking of a church's group know-how as a mutually accepted way of acting. In the context of a sports team's acting, for instance, this account appears to capture much of what it is to act together. To be committed to a certain team with certain values is a commitment to a certain way of playing. Playing for Manchester United, for instance, might bring with it a commitment to playing attacking, fast-paced football (although perhaps less so in recent seasons). Furthermore, following the instructions of a coach in performing some maneuver on the pitch might also be captured by commitment to a joint way of playing—for instance, Jose Mourinho might specify that a free kick is to be taken in a certain way, outlining the roles of each particular player. Performing this maneuver correctly requires successfully adhering to Mourinho's instructions. More generally, as Palermos and Tollefsen describe, "team members need to be explicitly committed to act as parts of the team, such that their behaviour will mesh with the actions of the other members."⁶⁹

It is easy to see how this account might be extended to think about acting together in following a liturgical script—in belonging to a church or a particular tradition, we are committing to some particular way of performing liturgy and thereby to some particular way of engaging God. Moreover, as we have seen, commitment to worshipping together does appear to require some explicit commitment to acting as part of a group. The use of plural pronouns in a liturgical script (e.g., "*We* believe in God the Father . . ." is used in the recitation of the creed) is one example of how the script reinforces our commitment to acting together in liturgy.⁷⁰ Thus, assuming Tuomela's (or some other plausible alternative) can capture a church's knowledge of a proposition, then this account can provide some explanation of what it is for a church to know-how to engage God in worship.

If all that took place in group liturgical actions were following a script, then the intellectualist account might suffice for an account of common

⁶⁷Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 15.

⁶⁸Wolterstorff, *Acting Liturgically*, 16.

⁶⁹Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 126.

⁷⁰As an anonymous referee helpfully points out, liturgy also uses singular first-person pronouns, such as in the Apostles' Creed ("I believe in God the Father . . ."). This highlights the point that Christian liturgy does put emphasis on the individual's response to God and her engaging God in liturgy, as well as having a corporate emphasis. This need not undermine anything I have argued for in this paper, however, and Cuneo's and Wolterstorff's recent work gives a detailed overview of the philosophical implications of this individual emphasis.

ritual knowledge. But it is not all that takes place. As we have seen, there are some actions which can't be specified by the script, and a level of liturgical improvisation and mutual responsiveness which is crucial to acting together. Palermos and Tollefsen suggest that in the context of acting together in a sports team, for instance, whilst there may be some joint commitment to a way of playing which can be captured by a shared commitment to a way of performing, this cannot capture all that the group knows-how to do. They note that,

a number of studies also indicate that certain forms of joint action and . . . [group know-how], such as interpersonal rhythmic coordination, can spontaneously emerge on the basis of dynamical process interaction—without the further need, on the part of the individual members to take up any intellectualist commitments. . . . [Intellectualist commitments] prevent the behaviour of the individual members of the team from deviating from the individual behaviour that is required for the team to coordinate—or, perhaps somewhat more weakly, intellectualist commitments disallow team members to engage in behaviour that would prevent the team from acting in a sufficient coordinated manner.⁷¹

Their point, put simply, is that not all group actions require commitment to a way of playing. Some group-level behavior emerges through repeated performance without prior agreement. Yet, as we have seen the intellectualist account depends on there being prior agreement to some way of acting. Moreover, even in cases in which such commitment already exists (such as in sports teams), intellectualist commitments appear to function as necessary requirements for group action, but not sufficient requirements. There is more to following Mourinho's plan for enacting some new maneuver in taking a free-kick than remembering all of the relevant instructions, and there is more to performing an orchestral symphony than correctly reading one's own part of the score and knowing that the group is committed to playing the symphony in a certain way. Such commitments might provide helpful parameters to the group's performance in these two cases, but what is required for correctly performing both actions is a mutual awareness of the relevant group members and an ability to self-correct when things go wrong.

In the context of liturgy, the script can provide the correctness rules for performing a certain liturgy, and a certain way of engaging God. Yet, if there is some element of going beyond the script or *improvising* from the script, then the intellectualist account won't be sufficient for providing an account of common ritual knowledge. The intellectualist account might provide the necessary conditions for acting together, but it cannot provide the sufficient conditions. Thus, there is need to give an account of the group cognition which arises from the complex engagement between church members in liturgy, which cannot be reduced to a propositional way of acting.

⁷¹Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 126–127.

In earlier work I have suggested that in thinking of the church's actions in worship, we should appeal not only to the collective intentions of church members, but also to how they might act as a group agent. Building on the account of agency developed by List and Pettit (summarized in the previous section), I noted that

the organizational structure of a church will depend, in part, on one's tradition, but it seems clear that a member of a church, by participating in the reading of liturgical scripts and singing hymns can act on behalf of the group in a manner analogous to a member of a trade union acting on behalf of a group by standing on a picket line. Note that these kinds of actions might be performed through acts of . . . [collective intentionality], such as the singing of the liturgical script, but we might also include many other actions as instances of playing an active role in a group. Just as organizations need both sub-committees and expert individuals to contribute to the actions of the group, the individual actions of neuro-atypical individuals could rightly be considered as playing an active role in the actions of the group.⁷²

I then develop this account to suggest that, as long as one is licensed appropriately by the operative members of the group, one could contribute to the church's actions in a number of different ways. For instance, "in the case of an individual with ASD who experiences a heightened spiritual awareness, such an individual might in turn lead other individuals in the congregation to a heightened awareness of the presence of God, and thereby, in turn, contribute to the collective actions of the group."⁷³ Thinking of the church as an agent which is capable of acting is helpful for thinking about how the church might know-how to engage God.

Moving beyond an account of church agency, to thinking about a church's distributed cognition, we must suppose that in performing some liturgical script, members coordinate their actions and mutually adapt to one another's actions to reliably produce ends. This kind of interaction is not merely a matter of following instruction, but it also requires a kind of responsiveness to how the other members of the congregation follow this instruction. Thinking about the question of self-regulation will be helpful here. In the case of a jazz band performing, for instance, "the drummer could give visual or even verbal hints to the trombonist that he's lost his concentration and that he fails to follow the band's rhythm, despite her best attempts to 'bring her back'."⁷⁴ In such a situation, so long as the drummer is *brought back* into the rhythm of the band, the interactivity between the trombonist and the drummer allows the group to self-regulate in such a way that it performs the piece correctly.

This kind of interactivity must take place within a church community too. An excellent example of how this interactivity and self-correction might take place (against the backdrop of a scripted way of performing)

⁷²Cockayne, "Inclusive Worship," 469.

⁷³Cockayne, "Inclusive Worship," 473.

⁷⁴Palermos and Tollefsen, "Group Know-How," 124.

can be found in Benson's description of his visit to Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco:

the service begins . . . with a prayer, some announcements, and yet another welcome to everyone. Then the cantor . . . casually explains how the service will go. He sings the melody of the first piece of music . . . giving the congregation a brief chance to practice and become comfortable with the music. . . . Although there is a choir, the choir members are interspersed throughout the congregation—which means that wherever you're standing, nearby is a good singer whom you can count on for help . . . after the service . . . those involved in the service disappear to spend five minutes discussing what went well in the service and what could be improved . . . one remarkable thing about the worship at Saint Gregory's is that it feels so spontaneous. And yet it is actually highly scripted. In other words, it achieves what less liturgical churches often hope to achieve—a sense of openness, spontaneity, and lack of formality, and the sense that the Holy Spirit is alive in guiding the worship. But it does so by very closely following a script, one that gets modified on the basis of . . . short meetings after each service.⁷⁵

As Benson highlights here, St Gregory's engagement with God is both scripted and spontaneous. They are committed to a way of acting and engaging God which is made possible both by a written script, as well as by the instructions of the cantor. But they are also involved in a complex, higher-level group action in which members of the group are constantly interacting with one another, allowing the group to self-regulate their actions in liturgy. This is achieved by strategic placement of the choir, which helps the group to self-correct when members of the group veer from the pitch of the group, but also by the reflection on the content and performance of the script in the short after service meetings. If Palermos and Tollefsen are right, then the know-how that emerges in a context like this is not reducible to what each individual knows, but it is only analyzable by looking at the group's performance.

Indeed, that acting together in liturgy requires more than a commitment to a way of acting, can be observed by noting that worshipping as part of a community is something which is acquired by repeated engagement and not just by grasping some theoretical fact. As Smith puts this point, there is a kind of irreducible "logic of practice" involved in being part of a ritual community, which resists propositional reduction.⁷⁶ He suggests that

natives—that is, practitioners, "unselfconsciously" embedded in a community of practice—are not primarily theorists. They are not "thinking" their way through the world; they are not reflecting on what they're doing—which is precisely why any adequate interpretation of what's going on *in* such a community of practice will need to resist the temptation to construe practitioners as implicit theorizers.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Bruce Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life*, 135–140.

⁷⁶Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 76–79.

⁷⁷Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 77.

This seems right. Belonging to a liturgical community is something which takes time and repeated practice. One way of describing why this is the case is in reference to the kind of improvisation that takes place in liturgical worship—as we have seen, performing a liturgy is not simply reciting a script. In learning how to belong and act in such a community, one is also learning to contribute to the group as an agent.

As Palermos and Tollefsen admit, many cases of group action will involve both a kind of intellectualist group know-how in which a group accepts a proposition, and a kind of non-intellectualist group know-how in which participation in a complex group interaction gives rise to emergent cognitive states. As we have seen, whilst a sports team's commitment to a certain way of playing might account, to some extent, for the group know-how of the sports team, it cannot account for all aspects of the group's performance. Similarly, I have suggested, whilst a commitment to a certain way of acting liturgically might partially capture what it is for a church to know-how to engage God, it cannot capture this entirely. What is required is an account of how individuals coordinate and interact in such a way that the group functions as an agent, and thereby group know-how emerges in the complex interactions of the group members. A helpful way to summarize how these two accounts might interact can be found in Underhill's discussion of the tensions of "habit" and "attention" in Christian worship:

Habit and attention must therefore co-operate in the life of worship; and it is a function of cultus to maintain this vital partnership. Habit alone easily deteriorates into mechanical repetition, the besetting sin of the liturgical mind. Attention alone means, in the end, intolerable strain. Each partner has his weak point. Habit tends to routine and spiritual red-tape; the vice of the institutionalist. Attention is apt to care for nothing but the experience of the moment, and ignore the need of a stable practice, independent of personal fluctuations; the vice of the individualist. Habit is a ritualist. Attention is a pietist. But it is the beautiful combination of order and spontaneity, docility and freedom, living humbly—and therefore fully and freely—within the agreed pattern of the cultus and not in defiance of it, which is the mark of a genuine spiritual maturity and indeed the fine flower of a worshipping life.⁷⁸

Conclusion

If ritual knowledge is acquired by means of an individual's engaging God by blessing, thanking and petitioning God, then common ritual knowledge is acquired by means of a church's engaging God by blessing, thanking and petitioning God. To perform these liturgical actions together, we must follow a script closely, but yet remain aware of the other members of the community. If we wish to claim (as Wolterstorff does) that "[t]he church blesses God, praises God, thanks God. . . . It's not the individual members who do these things simultaneously; it's the assembled body that does

⁷⁸Underhill, *Worship*, 27–28.

these things,"⁷⁹ then we need some account not only of ritual knowledge but also of common ritual knowledge. If we are reductive about group know-how, then it cannot be true that the church knows-how to worship God but, rather, we have to admit, each individual member knows-how to engage God, and together these acts constitute a church's worship. Such a reduction looks problematic for both theological and philosophical reasons. Thus, as I have suggested, we should look to a non-reductive account of group know-how.

On this account, the church knows-how to act by means of (i) its group knowledge of some proposition which summarizes some way of acting together in the liturgy, and (ii) its acting together to form a group agent capable of emergent cognitive states and a disposition to engage God. Acting together in this second way requires mutual awareness, as well as an ability for the group to self-correct when its actions go wrong.

There is clearly much more work to be done both in social epistemology and on the philosophy of liturgy. Much of what I have been exploring in this article pushes at the limits of what analytic theology and philosophy of religion has explored, and one notable area of silence from philosophers and analytic theologians is that of ecclesiology. If we want to say that the Church engages God or that the Church knows-how to engage God, then to properly advance the discussion of liturgy, we must think more carefully about just what the Church is.⁸⁰

University of St Andrews

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⁷⁹Wolterstorff, *The God We Worship*, 11.

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