

Prolegomena to any future non-doxastic religion

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Abstract: I discuss some trends in recent philosophy of religion, focusing on J. L. Schellenberg's *Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Religion*. I pay special attention to Schellenberg's dual emphases on 'the Ultimate' as metaphysical object of inquiry and various non-doxastic states ('faith that', 'faith in') as psychological objects of inquiry. This view is contrasted throughout to what might be called a 'liturgical' orientation in philosophy of religion.

Past and future

A few years ago, the American Philosophical Association hosted a panel discussion on the topic 'Philosophy of Religion in the Twenty-first Century'. The three participants – Richard Swinburne, Paul Draper, and Nicholas Wolterstorff – were asked to speculate regarding the path they thought the discipline would take over the next century; they were also asked to make some recommendations.

I still recall a few details regarding the session. First, a surprising number of people attended: far more than one might have expected given that philosophy of religion is a smallish subfield within the profession as a whole, and the speakers all came from the same methodological (analytical) tradition. Second, many of the younger people in the audience had clearly come with elevated expectations: the panellists were well-known practitioners of the art, and people were eager to hear their predictions and recommendations. Third, there was a slight but palpable sense of disappointment among many of the members of the audience as the session came to a close.

The source of the disappointment, according to the brief and wholly unscientific survey that I took afterwards, was that at least two of the three panellists had predicted and recommended that business continue more or less as usual.

Discussions of the rationality of theistic belief, of the content and cogency of classical theism, of the connection between that sort of theism and ethics, and of the logical or evidential threat posed by evil and suffering – according to Swinburne and Draper, anyway – will and should remain the central topics of the field.

There were also, of course, some proposed tweaks to the model: Swinburne recommended that philosophers focus less on *knowledge* and more on *internalist justification of belief* – in particular on how various canons of probabilistic reasoning can show that theistic belief is rational. His reason was that internalist justification (as opposed to the kind of externalist ‘warrant’ that, together with true belief, makes for knowledge) is the sort of thing that religious philosophers and practitioners alike really want and need – for apologetic purposes as well as personal edification. Reflections on how one might turn out (externalistically) to *know* something about God – even if one doesn’t know *that* or *how* one knows it – is less satisfying in these respects and should be regarded as second-best consolation when internalist justification seems unavailable.

Draper’s main recommendation/tweak, by contrast, was sociological: he argued that more concerted efforts should be made to open the discipline to people who are explicitly agnostic, a-religious, or even anti-religious in an effort to de-emphasize apologetics and promote greater objectivity and more fruitful dialogue.

So why were some audience members unhappy? It’s not, I think, that they were all strict anti-internalists about justification or opposed to further work involving probabilistic logic. There was also no perceptible aversion to including non-, a-, or anti-religious philosophers in the discussion.¹ The disquiet arose rather from the following related concerns. First, the panel discussion seemed symptomatic of a general narrowing of focus in the field. After a major resurgence over the last fifty years, analytical philosophy of religion appears (to some, at least) to be in a period of relative stasis: familiar issues are worked over in ever-finer detail, but genuinely novel advances or new research programmes are difficult to find. Second, philosophical reflection on religion seems increasingly divergent from the phenomena – from the situation of actual religious people ‘on the ground’ (or ‘in the pew’). It is very unlikely, for instance, that most religious people believe in the classical God in an internalistically justified way such that their beliefs count, if true, as *knowledge* of some very high-level sort. Indeed, it’s not even clear that most religious people have full-blown belief in the various doctrines that they publicly endorse and act upon, or that the (intentional) object of the belief is the God of classical theism.

If these concerns are on the right track, then investigation of *classical theistic belief* and its justification, while still deserving a place in the discussion, threatens to be incomplete in at least two ways: First, it responds to an academic interest in sketching a regulative (and possibly western²) ideal – the ideal of someone who

firmly believes that the omni-omni-omni deity exists, and does so in a way that is (internalistically) rationally justified.³ Second, it typically goes hand-in-hand with the recommendation that we ignore the messy content of actual religious attitudes and doctrines in order to isolate the ‘bare theistic’ doctrines shared by the major monotheisms – doctrines whose content is transparent and whose justificatory status is easier to evaluate.⁴ But this, too, is an abstraction: even when religious people do have firm, justified doxastic attitudes, the latter are only rarely towards all and only the propositions that constitute ‘bare theism’ (Thomas Jefferson perhaps?).

I mentioned earlier that Nicholas Wolterstorff was the third panellist – I think he was actually the commentator on the other two. Wolterstorff discussed and elaborated the business-as-usual model, and also endorsed certain aspects of it. At some point during his remarks, however, he suggested that a new and profitable turn for the field in the twenty-first century would be towards ‘philosophically significant aspects of the liturgy’. Under interrogation later, Wolterstorff declined to elaborate, saying simply that it was just a hunch, and that ‘it’s up to you all’ – gesturing at the younger people in the room – to figure out what such a liturgical turn might involve.

If I had to guess what he meant, or if I had to come up with a programme for such a ‘liturgical philosophy’ myself, I would say that it involves de-emphasizing ideal cases of justified bare theistic belief in favour of the philosophically significant features of actual religious adherence *as modelled in various liturgical contexts*. In other words, it would turn to real-world religious practice – especially the sort that goes on in ritual *leitourgia* – as a guide for philosophical reflection concerning the attitudes and doctrines involved in religion generally.

I’ve allowed myself this long-winded anecdotal preamble because I think the APA discussion back in the first decade of the present century relates in interesting ways to J. L. Schellenberg’s contemporaneous effort, in his *Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Religion*, to ‘start the ball rolling’ on discussion of what he takes to be the ‘basic issues that *ought* to underlie a (i.e. any) philosophy of religion’.⁵ For starters, Schellenberg’s book provides an excellent illustration of Draper’s main point – namely, that work by self-professed agnostics and atheists is obviously valuable and should be absolutely welcome in the field. Second, Schellenberg also sides with Draper and numerous others in advocating a thinned-down or lowest-common-denominator concept of the object of religion, at least in our fundamental inquiries. Indeed, he wants to go even thinner than they do, chiselling ‘bare theism’ down to an extremely svelte doctrine that he calls ‘ultimism’. Third, Schellenberg prefers the more subjective or ‘personal’ orientation that is characteristic of Richard Swinburne’s internalist approach. But, fourth, Schellenberg rejects the business-as-usual assumption that individual *belief* and its internalistic justification will and should remain the central focus. Indeed, he openly de-emphasizes belief and doxastic justification in

numerous places, and there is, I think, not one Bayesian formula in the entire book.

Schellenberg's work relates in interesting ways to Wolterstorff's provocation as well. On the one hand, the focus on slender 'ultimism' is clearly at odds with a method that would both start and end amidst the thicker conceptual structures represented in particular historical rituals, ceremonies, and representations thereof. On the other hand, Schellenberg's focus on non-doxastic attitudes is consonant with the liturgical philosopher's claim that real-world forms of religious adherence should orient our reflection.

In what remains, I discuss these two main aspects of Schellenberg's prolegomenal reflections while keeping before us the contrast with the kind of 'liturgical philosophy' sketched above. Note that I do not mean to be promoting or defending 'liturgical philosophy' here; rather, I simply use it as an illustrative foil by which to understand better Schellenberg's own recommendations.

Religion as 'ultimism'

Schellenberg follows William James and Wilfrid Cantwell Smith in thinking of personal or 'internal' piety as more fundamental than, and in some sense the primary ingredient of, 'institutional' or 'external' religion.⁶ Although he grants that religious *traditions* might be suitable objects of philosophical reflection – and, later, that 'ultimism' involves the view that having a proper relationship to fundamental axiological reality is valuable for everyone and not just for oneself – he does not go beyond the personal dimension.

This will already be worrisome to proponents of a 'liturgical' turn in philosophy of religion – *not* because these personal or 'internal' aspects of religion are illegitimate objects of philosophical inquiry, but because the emphasis on interiority, first-person phenomenology, and psychology will strike them as symptomatic of an old model, one that gets things precisely backward. Liturgical philosophy, by contrast, would focus on *communal* ceremonial religious practices on the grounds that (a) they have very interesting and philosophically substantive features of their own, and (b) examining them will help us understand how participants' psychological states are inculcated and grounded, and how their actions are motivated, sustained, and explained.

Liturgical philosophers would also raise concerns about Schellenberg's preference for discussions of 'bare' doctrines like theism or ultimism rather than the more substantive doctrines of historical religions as they are actually practised.⁷ For the sake of broad appeal and widespread consensus, taking a slimmed-down doctrinal object as the aim of inquiry may be wise – its content is rationally tractable in a way that traditional creedal contents are not, and so it is easier to see whether belief in it can be justified. On the other hand, focusing on slender ultimisms can lead to the view that the more robust doctrines and

traditions are, in Schellenberg's own words, mere 'elaborations' of some more basic set of inward commitments.

A liturgical approach, by contrast, views bare theism, Kantian/Hickean noumenalism, and Schellenbergian ultimism as philosophers' abstractions from religious doctrine as it is actually represented in communal practice and devotion. Such abstractions may allow for a more tractable object of inquiry, but they also threaten to restrict our sense of what a future philosophy of religion might profitably address, thereby impoverishing the discourse. They also remove us still further from ordinary religious folk – those who fast during Ramadan, pray the rosary, sing the hymns, wear the yamulkah, and so forth.

Having aired that concern, I will now set it aside and note, in a positive vein, that Schellenberg's analysis of religion-in-general comprises a refreshingly bold search for a series of necessary, defining conditions. Schellenberg openly says that he is *not* proposing a mere family resemblance account; rather, he boldly lists 'four features . . . [that] appear to be especially closely tied to the nature of religiosity – to be defining features if any are':

- (1) Frequent thoughts of a transmundane reality.
- (2) An emphasis on a significant good, for oneself and others, that may be realized through a proper relation to this reality.
- (3) The cultivation of such a relation.
- (4) A disposition or tendency, when attending to matters in which they are implicated, to totalize or ultimize in some way the central elements of features (1)–(3).⁸

By 'thoughts' in (1) Schellenberg does not mean mere idle musings or passing fancies, but rather 'mental attention' that in its frequency reveals something about the nature and degree of the concern here. Schellenberg departs from Paul Tillich (whose talk of 'ultimate concern' is in the background here) by making the category of legitimate objects of such religious 'thoughts' equivalent to that of the 'transmundane'. This includes everything from the classical God to, somewhat paradoxically, Zen Buddhist acceptance *of* the mundane.⁹ Still, the category is not all-inclusive: Schellenberg does not count as religious those who 'ultimize' with respect to something unique to them (a romantic partner, say); nor does he include groups that refuse to take the objects of their pious thoughts to be 'in every significant respect unlimited'.¹⁰

There is more to say on this, but here I want to move on to Schellenberg's characterization of the kind of religion that is allegedly of interest to philosophers. In reflective, philosophical contexts, the claim that 'S is religious' is, according to Schellenberg, synonymous with

- (1*) S takes there to be a reality that is ultimate, in relation to which an ultimate good can be attained, and

- (2*) S's ultimate commitment is to the cultivation of dispositions appropriate to this state of affairs.¹¹

Because it explicitly refers to an entity that is ultimate in both a metaphysical and an axiological sense, religion in this narrower sense will answer to philosophical questions about what fundamentally exists and has value, and perhaps about how we can relate to such things in order to promote flourishing. A possible downside, from the 'liturgical' point of view, is that if the answers to these questions are articulated at the extremely high level of abstraction exemplified by (1*) and (2*), then they are likely to be unrecognizable to participants in actual religious traditions.

Schellenberg adds a substantive restriction here, but I find the motivation for it difficult to grasp. Any being that is ultimate in the sense of (1*), he says, must also 'transcend' the physical universe, given the axiological component of (1*). That's because the physical universe is such that one can always conceive of realities that are more excellent than it – thus 'if the physical universe and what it spawns is all there is, nothing is unsurpassably excellent'.¹² But this move is left unmotivated. If someone believes that the physical universe is all there is, then he or she might well claim that what is ultimate, even from the point of view of value, can be 'surpassed' only by things that *don't actually exist*. Presumably the point of religion is not to try to relate oneself to the best conceivable beings, but to the best *actual* ones. Lacking a Platonic, Anselmian, or Cartesian-style argument that can equate the two, it seems like folly simply to assume that the objects of our ultimizing practices are those conceivable-but-for-all-we-know-non-actual things. Schellenberg, in any case, offers no argument for this assumption here, and so his refusal to include physicalistic pantheism as a legitimate brand of ultimism seems hasty.¹³

Belief, unbelief, non-belief

After providing his articulation of 'ultimism', Schellenberg turns to the topic of *belief*. This is in some sense the topic of the rest of the book, since Schellenberg will go on to define religious belief, religious scepticism, and (his real quarry) religious faith with reference to it.

Schellenberg takes belief to be a psychological state that is dispositional in nature, has a characteristic phenomenology, is not under the control of the will, and represents 'things or possible things in various possible arrangements'.¹⁴ He distinguishes two notions of 'state of affairs' – a 'thin' notion that is familiar from Chisholm: these are abstract entities that can be but needn't be instantiated in the actual world. The other is a 'thick' notion that seems closer to Armstrong's 'state of affairs',¹⁵ or to what Russell and others refer to as a 'fact': an actually obtaining arrangement of things bearing various properties and relations. Facts such as

these have propositional structure ('to think of a state of affairs is to have a propositional thought'), but Schellenberg warns against slipping from the 'idea that the object of the thought is a state of affairs to the idea that it is a proposition'.¹⁶ This is because propositions *express* thoughts, or 'give' the content of a thought, but they are not themselves the *objects* of thought.

Schellenberg then takes himself to be departing from the consensus according to which propositions are the *objects* of most of our so-called propositional attitudes (such as entertaining the thought that, thinking that, hoping that, desiring that, and believing that). His stated reason is that an attitude that takes a proposition as its object would have to do so 'self-consciously', whereas most 'conscious belief is not self-conscious in the way that it would be if one were taking note of the fact that what one was thinking of could be represented by a proposition of a certain sort, and considering one's response to that proposition'.¹⁷

But I fear that we are here just tilting against straw men. Few philosophers who say that propositions are 'objects' of all of our beliefs regard the latter as involving the high-level kind of self-conscious awareness that Schellenberg describes. When they speak of taking an attitude 'towards' a proposition, or of a proposition as an 'object' of our attitudes, philosophers typically mean that the *content* of the proposition is the object (or, if you prefer, the content) of the attitude. Belief that *p*, in other words, is just a positive attitude of some sort towards the *truth* of *p* – towards the corresponding-to-fact-ness, so to speak, of *p*'s content.¹⁸ And though Schellenberg rarely talks of truth or its connections with belief, this general conception seems to capture his view too.¹⁹

In any case, Schellenberg goes on to say that the 'characteristic way' in which believing involves thinking of a proposition or state of affairs is a reflection, phenomenologically, of this 'facticity' at the heart of belief – when we believe something we effectively 'take a state of affairs to obtain'. This state is then cashed out as 'having a thought of the relevant arrangement of things [or 'chunk of the world'] *being* actual'.²⁰ Obviously mere belief doesn't entail that the arrangement *actually* obtains: mere thinking that *p* doesn't make it so.²¹ Rather, when we believe, we *take* some arrangement to obtain; belief that *p* involves thinking of or 'apprehending' the thick state of affairs expressed by *p* under 'the category of the real'.²²

Having provided this account, Schellenberg proceeds to argue against the inclusion of anything more in the phenomenology of belief *simpliciter*, and against the inclusion of connections to behaviour, speech, or affect in the concept thereof. He offers a number of cases, some of which I'll discuss in a moment, that are meant to show that no 'property attribution', 'assent', 'feeling component', or tendency to behave or assert is a part of belief *simpliciter*, since the characteristic way in which beliefs relate us to their objects is 'nothing but a reflection of the object itself'.²³ But why is all of this important? Why do we need an articulate

account of belief *simpliciter* in order to lay the groundwork for philosophy of religion?

Schellenberg's answer, I think, is that by denying that 'belief-that' is essentially affective or action-guiding or voluntary, we make room for the conceptually distinct concepts of 'belief in', 'faith that', and 'faith in' that he elaborates in subsequent chapters (and utilizes in subsequent books). 'Belief-in', for instance, involves belief *simpliciter* plus a disposition to feel and act in certain ways. 'Faith-that' is similar to what L. Jonathan Cohen and William Alston have called 'acceptance' – except that it too has no essential connection to action.²⁴ Faith-that plus the connection to action then becomes the distinctive feature of 'faith-in'. Schellenberg's overall taxonomical strategy, in short, is to argue for a stripped-down conception of belief-that in order to deflect the common objection that some combination of beliefs, desires, volitions, and affective states can account for *all* of the psychological phenomena in the domain.²⁵ He then builds up all of his other more robust concepts with reference to belief. The account of belief is thus a key lynchpin of his view – one without which there would not be much room for non-doxastic religious faith-that (and faith-in), or for the kind of non-believing scepticism that can still count as broadly 'religious'.

I join Schellenberg in finding something like this picture attractive, and have actually tried to develop a conception of non-doxastic acceptance in a more historical context elsewhere (I think that Kant's *Glaube* is often something very much like Schellenberg's 'faith-in'²⁶). Advocates of the liturgical turn in philosophy of religion more generally will typically be disposed to regard some 'non-believers' as genuinely religious. The devil is in the details, however; here I will simply play his advocate by raising a series of objections to Schellenberg's version of the picture.

(1) What should we make of the feeling or affective state that many philosophers identify, in a Humean spirit, with belief? Again, Schellenberg says that such feelings come into play 'only' with the more self-conscious act of 'thinking about the epistemic status of the proposition that my original believing thought expresses'.²⁷ But this is implausibly strong. Surely we *may* have various feelings of confidence and so forth, or at least be disposed to have them, even when we don't or can't entertain second-order thoughts about the proposition and its epistemic status. Young children, for instance, seem perfectly able to do the former without even having the conceptual equipment to do the latter.

(2) Because Schellenberg allows that there *are* dispositions to feel intellectual confidence in a given proposition, and also allows that such dispositions often if not always accompany belief, he seems vulnerable to the charge of needlessly multiplying dispositions: 'Belief and confidence, then, are different things, dispositionally and otherwise, though they may occur together and causally interact'.²⁸ Surely the default position is to see belief that p and intellectual confidence that p as the same disposition, and thus to view belief as identical to a

disposition to feel confident in the truth of a proposition (to some degree). The dramatic loss in theoretical economy that Schellenberg promotes (not to mention the loss that comes with the correlated addition of propositional faith to the taxonomy) would require a very strong motivation. Schellenberg provides a series of thought-experiments here, but . . .

(3) Schellenberg's thought-experiments don't obviously succeed in showing that belief and credence/confidence come apart. He describes a fearful airline passenger, for instance, who on the one hand believes that she is safe, but on the other hand 'cannot be said to feel confidence when considering that proposition'.²⁹ One way that a degrees-of-confidence conception of belief could handle this case is to say that there is a belief plus an irrational fear, and that the latter is momentarily blocking the activation of the belief-disposition. Alternatively, the belief disposition may in fact be activated, but the subject's confidence is simply not the object of her mental focus, given the presence of the irrational fear. It seems possible for one to feel genuine confidence and yet not be focused on that feeling because one has another countervailing feeling of anxiety, for instance. Finally, a degrees-of-belief theorist might simply say that the subject irrationally has conflicting beliefs – one that she is safe, and the other that she is in peril – and that the confidences in question vary over time such that first one and then the other becomes more salient in her self-reportage. As for the claim, regarding this case, that the belief about her safety 'may be occurrently experienced even while all confidence is absent', this just seems stipulative (and possibly question-begging).³⁰ More discussion would be required here, but this at least suggests that Schellenberg's thought-experiments may not be able to bear the burden that is laid upon them.

(4) By distinguishing these two dispositions in this way, and by characterizing belief in such a stripped-down fashion, Schellenberg is led to conceive of activated belief, at least, as simply an 'all or nothing' affair.³¹ But this leaves it unclear how activated belief can be genuinely, progressively sensitive to *evidence* – which surely does come in degrees. Is there a specific degree of evidence that suddenly triggers the belief-disposition? If so, is that a brute fact about individual psychologies, or is there something less *ad hoc* to say here? What about belief-suspension – is it, too, triggered at a particular point as a belief's justification is gradually undermined? If so, can that point be specified in a non-arbitrary way? Relatedly, it is unclear what sort of occurrent attitude various lesser degrees of evidence would support, if not belief.³² Is such an attitude supposed to be categorically different from belief – something like what Locke calls 'opinion'? If so, then we've multiplied basic attitudes once again, and made the taxonomy even more complex. In one place, Schellenberg suggests that what we have in such cases are beliefs that the relevant proposition is probable.³³ But given that such a belief presupposes, by his own admission, that the subject possesses a rudimentary understanding of probability and is able self-consciously to reflect on the proposition, it again seems to be out

of reach for many subjects (e.g. children) who, all the same, seem eminently able to have Lockean 'opinions'.

(5) A related point: Schellenberg's account backs him into claiming that a subject can't have both the occurrent belief that *p* and feel full confidence that *p* at *precisely the same time*, since the latter requires first that she go through the self-conscious reflective steps mentioned earlier, and this process then 'crowds out' belief that *p*. While it is hard to *argue* for the claim that one can both believe that *p* and feel confident that *p* at the same time, it is even harder, in my view, to doubt it.³⁴

I wonder if the term 'feeling' is what Schellenberg is mainly resisting here, especially in view of his sophisticated and subtle phenomenological descriptions. He describes the process of forming belief *simpliciter* as that of a world-thought 'clicking into place', thus making it the case that 'my world picture has a new part'.³⁵ This happens so quickly, he says, that it seems unrealistic to think that it could be an affect: many feelings take longer to generate, and may even involve a 'gradual build-up',³⁶ and thus belief can seem like it has to be 'prior to and independent of' any feeling of confidence.³⁷ But what if we use a more contemporary term of art like 'credence'? Would that make the view less objectionable to Schellenberg? I hear the sound and a second later I find myself with credence to a certain degree (probably not an outright 1 in this case) that there is a seagull outside. Such credences are still 'degrees of confidence' and perhaps even 'feelings' in some broad sense, but they are produced in us by perceived evidence instantaneously, just as (phenomenologically speaking) I can be perfectly fine at one instant and at the next be experiencing severe pain. In short, I don't see a reason to think that belief is something different and psychologically 'faster' than the disposition to have a certain credence.

(6) Finally, in addition to the distinctions between 'belief-that' and some of these other dispositions, Schellenberg distinguishes 'belief-that' from 'faith-that' by claiming that the former is always involuntary and the latter is always (and indeed necessarily) voluntary. But I don't see why this should be obvious, even if we grant the other aspects of the account of belief. Why not think that the same kind of attitude can sometimes be involuntary and sometimes be voluntary? Carl Ginet offers some nice examples here: consider, for example, a man who leaves home on vacation, drives an hour or so to the airport, and only then realizes that he is not certain that the garage door was closed when he left. After considering all of his (inconclusive) evidence and noting how much is at stake and how loath he is to turn around and go home (miss his plane, cancel his vacation), he is finally able, according to Ginet, simply to *decide to believe firmly* that he did close the garage door and thus that he can get on with his vacation.³⁸ Such cases of voluntary belief (if they are such) may be infrequent relative to the vast number of cases in which belief is produced involuntarily. But they don't seem just *obviously* to involve an entirely different kind of attitude. Similarly, though I don't have

the space to argue for this here, I am not convinced that the other aspects of ‘faith-that’ which Schellenberg cites in chapter 6 couldn’t be handled by a sophisticated combination of beliefs (including probabilistic beliefs), desires, and emotions.

The upshot of this discussion is that it remains unobvious that Schellenberg’s narrowly defined notion of belief is preferable to competing notions, and that what he discusses under the rubric of non-doxastic, propositional faith can’t be captured in a less exotic belief–desire–affect taxonomy. As noted earlier, the payoff that Schellenberg thinks we receive from his analysis is that space is opened for his two notions of *faith* – especially the non-doxastic propositional faith that he discusses in chapter 6 of *Prolegomena*. But if at least some of the foregoing arguments are correct, then the motivation for the distinction is weak. That is not to say that there isn’t an interesting notion of ‘religious scepticism’ in the region, but it is to say that it doesn’t require the inclusion of all these new non-doxastic notions of acceptance, faith, and the like – not, at least, without further argument.

There may of course be other reasons to distinguish belief from faith, acceptance, and the like. But it is worth noting that the foregoing objections will not in any case work with respect to the attitude of hope. Hope is *clearly* weaker than and fundamentally different from belief, and yet it has sometimes been used to interpret the talk of ‘faith’ that is prevalent in religious circles. Kant, for instance, tells us at the end of the first *Critique* that philosophy of religion is primarily occupied with the question of ‘What may I hope?’ rather than questions about belief or faith. Limitations on space preclude further discussion of this intriguing alternative here, however. Instead, I will simply conclude by expressing hope that Schellenberg’s valuable prolegomenal reflections will stimulate more reflection on the topic of non-doxastic religious attitudes generally. Although the rarified ‘ultimism’ that Schellenberg takes to be the proper *object* of those attitudes will be less interesting to those of a more ‘liturgical-philosophical’ orientation, his discussion of non-doxastic attitudes generally will reward further study by those who wish to go beyond the business-as-usual focus on belief.³⁹

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Notes

1. My sense is that atheists and agnostics are and have been welcome in most discussions. The people who have the hardest time in professional philosophy of religion are those in 'fringe' religious movements and denominations: Adventism, Jehovah's Witnessism, Mormonism, Pentecostalism, Swedenborgianism, and the like.
2. My sense of the non-Abrahamic traditions is that belief has never played the central role that it has been thought to play in the Abrahamic traditions. So the point I am making here may be even more relevant in, for example, Buddhist, Confucian, Shinto, and Taoist contexts.
3. See Chignell (2002).
4. Swinburne is an important exception here. He has numerous books and articles on the justification of bare theistic belief, but others on more robust doctrines in the Christian tradition (atonement, resurrection, and so forth).
5. Schellenberg (2005), x.
6. *Ibid.*, 5.
7. In one place, however, there is talk of 'embracing religious practice not just in the abstract but also in its concrete manifestations' and of an interest not just in beliefs but 'in what we might call *complete responses*' that are 'embedded in religious practices' (*ibid.*, 188–189). Even there, though, the focus is typically on the 'claims' involved (*ibid.*, 191).
8. *Ibid.*, 12.
9. *Ibid.*, 14–15.
10. *Ibid.*, 22.
11. *Ibid.*, 23.
12. *Ibid.*, 27.
13. For a recent articulation of such a picture – and a defence of its status as 'religious' – see Johnston (2009). For more on Schellenberg on religion in general and ultimism in particular, see Diller (2013).
14. Schellenberg (2005), 41. It's not clear whether he simply rules out by fiat here that we can also represent impossible things and impossible arrangements, and even, if we're modally misguided, have the belief that some of them obtain.
15. Armstrong (1998).
16. Schellenberg (2005), 42.
17. *Ibid.*, 44.
18. Not towards the truth of the proposition *that p is true*, which is a higher-order and more 'self-conscious' attitude, as Schellenberg rightly notes. See Adler (2002) for a sustained argument to the effect that it is in the nature of belief to 'aim at truth', i.e. to aim at having, as its content, some true proposition.
19. There are a few philosophers who suggest that a state of affairs just *is* a proposition (this is different from the claim that propositions are states of affairs in the sense Schellenberg discusses at Schellenberg (2005), 43, n. 6. Typically, however, analytic philosophers distinguish between the two in order to ground their theories of (correspondence) truth, even if that makes for a somewhat less wieldy ontology.
20. *Ibid.*, 46.
21. *Ibid.*, 41 n. 4, 46 n. 11.
22. More expansively: 'my experiencing a belief amounts to my having a thought concerning what is objectively a way things might be (or might be said to be) in which that item is apprehended under the concept *reality*' (*ibid.*, 49). More succinctly, having a belief is having a 'world-thought'.

23. *Ibid.*, 47, 60ff.
24. Cohen (1992), Alston (1996).
25. See for example Audi (1999).
26. See Chignell (2007).
27. Schellenberg (2005), 52.
28. *Ibid.*, 52.
29. *Ibid.*, 58.
30. *Ibid.*, 59.
31. *Ibid.*, 52.
32. Schellenberg does allow for degrees of dispositional belief, but does not cash this out in strictly evidential terms or in terms of the strength of the activated belief that the disposition produces (since the latter is an all-or-nothing affair). Rather, he cites what appears to be a mixture of evidential and psychological considerations (such as how long one has reflected on the relevant proposition, or how many objections one has encountered) as governing the degree to which one has the dispositional belief (*ibid.*, 54).
33. *Ibid.*
34. It's not clear to me *why* Schellenberg thinks he has to grasp this particular nettle. Why not just allow that the mind is capacious enough both to retain the activated belief that p and quickly to go through the considerations about the proposition p that lead, on his view, to the feeling of confidence that p? Perhaps this is meant to be based in phenomenology, but then I fear that we have reached a kind of argumentative stalemate, since I feel quite confident (that is, I believe) that I can feel full confidence that p and all the while believe that p. (That said, perhaps my belief about the compatibility of these two states stems from the difficulties I have in distinguishing the two. If they are one and the same, then they are clearly compatible.)
35. Schellenberg (2005), 57. Compare here the 'Australian' picture of belief as a kind of mapping mechanism Armstrong (1973) and Braddon-Mitchell & Jackson (1996).
36. Schellenberg (2005), 58.
37. *Ibid.*, 57.
38. See Ginet (2001), as well as Winters (1979), Montmarquet (1986), and Weatherson (2008).
39. For concerns about the particular way in which Schellenberg goes beyond the business-as-usual focus on belief, and a sympathetic alternative, see Howard-Snyder (2013). My thanks to Howard-Snyder and to J. L. Schellenberg for their feedback on an earlier draft.