

THE NATURE OF DOCTRINE AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS*

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TRADITIONALLY THE relationship between theology and science has been stated in the Diltheyan terms of incompatible methodologies and epistemologies. At the same time much of theology has become in practice interdisciplinary. Philology, exegesis, historical and redactional criticism, hermeneutics, sociology, psychology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, biology, and even physics have become integral to theology's functioning. Constructive, opposed reactions to this situation have crystallized in the debate between Yale and Chicago, between H. Frei¹ and G. Lindbeck² on the one hand and B. A. Gerrish³ and D. Tracy⁴ on the other. It has rekindled the earlier rivalry between Barthian confessionism and Schleiermacher's liberalism.

Lindbeck's programmatic study *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* best expresses Barth's confessionism. Here theology "permits Scripture to function as the lens through which the world is viewed, *rather than* interpreting Scripture itself by means of extrabiblical categories; it seeks to teach the language of religion *instead of* redescribing the faith in new concepts."⁵ In his reformulation of a postmodern confessionism Lindbeck does not shy away from the use of other sciences or disciplines, but he contends that their usage must remain ancillary to the primary framework provided by Scripture.⁶ For the same reason he insists that the institutional ecclesial tradition is the proper setting for theology. Faced with what he perceives as a pervasive cultural and religious relativism, Lindbeck asks how ecclesial communities are to adjudicate competing doctrinal and interpretive claims and how doctrinal progress takes place. He wishes to defend the view that some doctrines are ecclesiastically normative (infallible).

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¹ Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narratives: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale Univ, 1974).

² George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

³ B. A. Gerrish, "The Nature of Doctrine," *Journal of Religion* (1988) 87-92.

⁴ David Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program for Theology: A Reflection," *Thomist* 49 (1985) 460-71.

⁵ Gerrish 92.

⁶ Lindbeck 124.

Lindbeck understands doctrines according to the ancient formula, as "regulae fidei." Doctrines are rules governing the discourse and activities of faith. They regulate truth claims by excluding some truths and permitting others in the way that grammatical rules decide the correctness of a particular linguistic usage.⁷ Reasonableness in religion and theology has the quality of the unformalizable skill which we associate with the linguistically competent. These are Lindbeck's "fideles." This understanding of doctrines also sets the parameters of their meaning. Lindbeck masterfully adapts Kuhn's thesis that theories belonging to different paradigms cannot be translated or compared. As a result he can claim that doctrines derive their meaning and function from their relation to churches and their world views. Other paradigms, such as those belonging to the social sciences, can play at most a supporting role. Their normativity cannot be imported into theology. Creeds are the rule-governed discourse of ecclesial communities expressing their stable orientations. Even if doctrines are unofficial, they express the most important and abiding orientations or beliefs of a community.

Gerrish and Tracy of the Chicago School, on the other hand, stand in the tradition of Schleiermacher's liberalism. They envisage the relation of theology to the various sciences as an egalitarian exchange. They postulate a dialectical or correlational model. Tracy holds on to the possibility of mutual enrichment by way of a pluralistic and demanding "conversation"⁸ based on "common human experience and language."⁹ He recognizes three possible relationships: identity, similarity-in-difference, or pure nonidentity.¹⁰ But he offers no guidelines as to how that conversation is to be conducted and how it is to progress.

The Lindbeck-Tracy/Gerrish debate has focused on the nature and development of ecclesial doctrines. We intend to explore and evaluate this debate in light of theology's relationship with other disciplines. We find that Lindbeck's constructive thesis encounters two insuperable difficulties. He can identify the "fideles" in the "consensus ecclesiae" only theoretically; he admits that in practice he cannot draw a "sample"¹¹ from which to arrive at a consensus. More fundamentally, recourse to the social sciences to obtain an "empirically recognizable"¹² sample would not decide the matter. According to Kuhn, their theories, methods, and

⁷ Lindbeck 19.

⁸ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 363.

⁹ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1975) 43.

¹⁰ Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program" 470. ¹¹ Lindbeck 99.

¹² *Ibid.* 100.

values are incommunicable and subject to the charge of relativism. In the first two parts of this article we will look into the status of scientific method. Rebutting Kuhn's charge of methodological and axiological relativism will require a lengthy detour through post-Kuhnian developments in the philosophy of science. Having secured social-science method, we will turn to recent developments in the psychology of religion to identify Lindbeck's "fideles." Only then, in our third part, will we be able to raise the central questions in the debate between Yale and Chicago: Do the social sciences play only an ancillary role in doctrinal infallibility and development, or are they equal partners with theology? Whether ancillary or egalitarian, what is the nature of the role of the social sciences? As a test case we will take the doctrine of neighborly love, since this fundamental doctrine is common to all Christian denominations.

DOCTRINES AND KUHN'S PARADIGMS

Lindbeck's original and constructive solution appeals to Kuhn's concept of paradigms in the philosophy of science. On the basis of historical studies of scientific revolutions, Kuhn challenged the accepted view of science as cumulative and convergent. In an attempt to make sense of the broad range, variety, and persistence of scientific disagreement he argued that rival scientific theories arise in distinct, innovative paradigms based on radically shifting configurations of specific beliefs, values, goals, and methods.¹³ Paradigms such as the Ptolemaic and Copernican astronomical theories cannot be fully translated. The difference of one paradigm in relation to a competing one is such that communication fails with respect to the substance of their theories and the standards appropriate for their appraisal.¹⁴ The data to support a theory, he considered, along with Wittgenstein and others before him,¹⁵ was frequently underdetermined and evaluative methods too ambiguous.¹⁶ So deep-rooted are the divergences and incommensurabilities between scientific theories, that there remains no common foundation upon which to build a new consensus. Yet ironically for Kuhn such a consensus constitutes normal science. This self-reinforcing character of paradigms makes a revolution or the formation of a new consensus equally unlikely and unintelligible.

Lindbeck uses Kuhn's description of normal science to illumine the

¹³ Larry Laudan, *Science and Values* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1984) 3-17.

¹⁴ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1962).

¹⁵ Thomas Kuhn, *The Essential Tension* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1977); Laudan, *Science and Values* 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 15; and Larry Laudan, "Relativism, Naturalism and Reticulation," *Synthese* 71 (1987) 222.

role of doctrines in churches. The "fideles," like scientists, operate out of a faith paradigm that regulates their worldview in such a way that a "consensus ecclesiae" results. Doctrines articulate their consensus within the faith paradigm but have no extraecclesial referent which would be a more generalized understanding of human existence. For Kuhn as well as for Lindbeck communication between those within and those outside the paradigm can only lead to category mistakes.

Kuhn's self-enclosed worlds of discourse have not fared well with the "new wave philosophers of science."¹⁷ They have begun the process of rehabilitating scientific rationality with its theories, methods, and concomitant beliefs and values. The most prominent among them is Larry Laudan.¹⁸ He offers the most progressive of the postpositivist and post-Kuhnian defenses of scientific rational progress. In the process he re-describes the operation of scientific research in a way that seriously puts in question Lindbeck's use of Kuhnian paradigm theory for doctrines.

Laudan agrees with Kuhn when he says that methodological rules underdetermine theory choice. But he does not agree with the conclusion that such rules are generally or invariably insufficient to choose between rivals.¹⁹ One theory may be better supported by the evidence than the others: "theory choice takes place in a comparative context."²⁰ It alone is acceptable even though it, along with the others, is strictly underdetermined.²¹ This, Laudan's first contribution, can explain simultaneously the growth of a consensus and enduring disagreement.²²

Laudan takes the same approach to method. He concedes that methods, as the means to realize scientific values and goals, are underdetermined. Specific methods are probably not the only route or the best of all possible ways to such familiar cognitive goals as truth, coherence, simplicity, empirical accuracy, and predictive fertility, but they are the best among those available. We make this judgment in terms of their capacity to promote certain cognitive values better than their rivals that are under active consideration. Moreover, methodology is refined not simply in terms of our goals but in terms of our beliefs about how the world works. For example, randomization or double-blind experiments were introduced not as a result of a prior reflection on cognitive aims but because experience of the world showed how certain goals could be achieved.

¹⁷ Laudan, "Relativism" 233.

¹⁸ The importance of his work can be gauged by its reception. E.g., cf. the symposium dedicated to his normative naturalism: "Symposium on Normative Naturalism," *Philosophy of Science* 57 (1990) 1-59.

¹⁹ Laudan, *Science and Values* 31.

²⁰ Laudan, "Relativism" 224.

²¹ Laudan, *Science and Values*, 29.

²² *Ibid.* 33.

From examples such as these and the comparative historical study of methods as means to scientific ends, Laudan concludes that methodology and epistemology should be conceived of as empirical disciplines. Methodological norms and rules assert empirically testable relations between ends and means. Such epistemic norms can be expressed only as conditional imperatives, conditional to a given set of aims. As normative linkages between cognitive ends and means they constitute scientific rationality.²³ Just as, for example, theoretical physics makes extensive use of techniques of conceptual analysis as well as empirical results, so “the theory of methodology can be and should be as empirical as the natural sciences whose results it draws on.”²⁴ We can find out empirically which methods utilized in the past have promoted our cognitive ends and which have not.

Laudan has recast methodological rules as contingent statements between ends and means which are to be tested empirically. But choosing between rival families of methodological rules by these empirical means requires that we take for granted the prior establishment of some other methodological rule which will tell us how to test the former, and so on. Laudan proposes to block this infinite regress by applying a rudimentary principle of successful action to methodological rules. The principle states that if certain actions have consistently promoted certain cognitive ends in the past and rival actions have failed to do so, then in the future we should use the successful actions for these ends. The claims of philosophy are to be adjudicated in the same ways as science, common sense, and the law. He shows that this principle is uncontroversial for all major theories of scientific methodology. In sum, the only important meta-methodological question is this: “Given any proposed methodological rule . . . do we have—or can we find—evidence that the means proposed in the rule promotes its associated cognitive end better than its extant rivals?”²⁵ If the answer is yes, then we have reasonable grounds for endorsing the rule; if the answer is no, then we have grounds for rejecting the rule. Otherwise its status is indeterminate. Such reasoning is familiar in every other area of empirical inquiry. Since this “epistemic naturalism” enables Laudan to develop methodological rules, he calls it “normative naturalism.”²⁶

²³ Ibid. 37–41.

²⁴ Laudan, “Relativism” 231.

²⁵ Larry Laudan, “Progress or Rationality? The Progress for Normative Naturalism,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1987) 26. We should not presume that this thesis warrants moral axioms such as “the end justifies the means.” Laudan cautions his readers against drawing out apparent parallels between cognitive and moral values. The debate over moral axiology is significantly more complex, and metaethics presupposes clarity in metaepistemology (Laudan, *Science and Values* 138–39).

²⁶ Larry Laudan, “Normative Naturalism,” *Philosophy of Science* 57 (1990) 44–46.

Nevertheless, shared goals may fail to specify a methodological preference or again scientists may only partially share goals or weigh them differently or, most crucially, subscribe to different goals. For example, the Cartesian demand for intelligibility or cogency of conception in physics was a casualty of Newton's theory of gravitation and the obscurity of several key Cartesian explanatory concepts.²⁷ These circumstances pose a fundamental challenge to the very idea of rational progress. Hierarchists, such as Popper, Lakatos, Reichenbach, or Carnap have regarded goal choice as subject only to convention.²⁸ In common with Kuhn, they believed there could be no rational deliberation about the suitability of different goals.²⁹ In response Laudan proposes two general modes of choosing between cognitive goals.

One may argue against a goal on the grounds that it is utopian, or unrealizable. Certain cognitive goals cannot possibly be achieved, given our understanding of logic or the laws of nature. For example, 19th-century infallibilism was abandoned because not all instances of any universal claim could be checked empirically. Again, semantic imprecision makes goals such as simplicity and elegance utopian. If they cannot be described in the abstract nor identified in concrete examples, there is no objective way to decide whether or not the aim has been realized. Finally, goals with semantic clarity may be epistemically utopian. For example, the correspondence theory of truth has no way of showing that any particular theory has its well-designed property of truth.³⁰ In sum, we decide whether or not a specific aim can be realized by a mixture of conceptual analysis and empirical research.³¹

One may also judge between goals and values on the basis of a discrepancy between theory and practice, and implicit and explicit goals. Where there is a discrepancy, we can adopt a new set of explicit values that accord more nearly with our actions and practical judgments or vice versa.³² Exemplary science can play a part here. So long as opposed camps can agree on some such examples from the past—"a shared canon"³³—then these can be brought to bear in examining conflicting goals: "It remains a compelling argument against a proposed cognitive aim if the primary theories of a discipline fail to exemplify it."³⁴ Again, a goal will be abandoned if, despite persistent and arduous efforts, proponents can produce no theories that manage to exemplify those

²⁷ Laudan, *Science and Values* 60–61.

²⁸ Laudan, "Relativism" 233.

²⁹ Laudan, *Science and Values* 50.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 51–53.

³¹ Laudan, "Relativism" 232.

³² Laudan, *Science and Values* 55.

³³ *Ibid.* 53.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 60; and Laudan "Normative Naturalism" 47.

standards or ideals—for example, the Cartesian goal of intelligibility in 18th-century physics.³⁵

These two general modes of goal evaluation cannot decide every case of disagreement. In this matter, goals and values are exactly on a par with factual and methodological disputes: “Sometimes they can be rationally brought to closure; other times, they cannot. But there is nothing about the nature of cognitive goals which makes them intrinsically immune to criticism and modification.”³⁶ This is a far cry from Kuhn’s axiological relativism or Popper’s and Carnap’s conventionalism, or, for that matter, from a priori reflection on cognition following Aristotle or Kant.³⁷ Rationality is secured by ensuring that our cognitive goals reflect our best beliefs about what is or is not possible, that our methods stand in an appropriate relation to our goals, and that our implicit and explicit values are synchronized.³⁸ Judgments of progress must depend upon our specification of goals. If these change, then our judgments will change. We decide the relative progressivity of, say, Newtonian and Cartesian optics without reference to their founders’ goals and solely in terms of our shared views about the aims and goals of science: “Recognition of the fact that aims and values both change does nothing to preclude our use of a robust notion of cognitive scientific progress.”³⁹

Rational scientific progress was impossible among Kuhn’s competing paradigms because of the tight-knit and mutual exclusivity of the paradigm pieces. We can loosen up the fit of the paradigm pieces if we replace the hierarchical model, to which Kuhn subscribes, with Laudan’s network model (his “reticulated model”). Laudan solves the problem surrounding disagreement and consensus formation by showing that the various components are “individually negotiable.” The replacement of elements is piecemeal and does not require the wholesale rejection of the other elements.⁴⁰ There is no nonnegotiable “hard core.”⁴¹ As we have seen in practice already, Laudan’s network alternative to the hierarchical model describes a process of mutual adjustment and justification among all three levels: “Justification flows upward as well as downward in the hierarchy, linking aims, methods, and factual claims. No longer should we regard any one of these levels as privileged or primary or more fundamental than the others. Axiology, methodology, and factual claims are inevitably intertwined in relations of mutual dependency.”⁴² Granted these egalitarian relations of mutual dependence, scientists need not face

³⁵ Laudan, *Science and Values* 60.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 62.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 47.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 64.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 65. See also Laudan, “Relativism” 28–29; and “Normative Naturalism” 48–49.

⁴⁰ Laudan, *Science and Values* 73.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 74.

⁴² *Ibid.* 63.

the stark choice of either throwing over or hanging on to what they know best. As the history of science confirms, they have, instead, the choice of modifying one core element while retaining the others, and so of improving their position.⁴³ Kuhn's wholesale model of change is plausible only because we mistakenly telescope a number of gradual changes of level into what, at our distance, appears as an abrupt, monumental shift.⁴⁴

Where does this leave Lindbeck's comparison of doctrines in the ecclesial confession with Kuhn's hermetically sealed paradigms? Laudan has broken the seal. Laudan's network model permits one to judge the relative, progressive rationality of competing paradigms with their conflicting beliefs, values, goals, and methods. Processes of mutual adjustment, justification, and comparison help to resolve Kuhn's persistent problems with translatability, underdetermination, ambiguity of evaluative methods and axiological conflicts. In other words, rational scientific progress is possible. The theories, methods, and goals of different paradigms are subject to common empirical validation processes. There are good grounds for believing that the sciences can offer us reasonable, progressive theories, and that members of different paradigms can communicate. We believe that this applies to doctrines as well. If scientific paradigms can be critically examined in terms of rational progress, Lindbeck can no longer argue by extension that the doctrinal paradigms of ecclesial communities are impervious to external comparative judgments of progressive rationality. Moreover, doctrines are not immune to empirical research and can be shown to apply beyond the ecclesial confines. But if doctrines turn out to say more than the literal meaning of the Scriptures and to have a meaning beyond the inner, confessional, ecclesial context, it will also mean that the confessional thesis loses its validity.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND THE "CONSENSUS FIDELIUM"

This does not mean that we must abandon Lindbeck's well-received proposal for establishing ecclesiastically normative doctrines along with confessionalism. Rather we will argue that his rule theory can be decisively strengthened by recourse to the social sciences as understood by Laudan. Lindbeck has given some criteria for judging what is doctrinally reasonable. His constructive thesis shows how we are to decide what will count as doctrinally reasonable: "Credibility comes from good performance, not adherence to independently formulated criteria."⁴⁵ Lindbeck believes that Wittgenstein makes it possible for him to provide at least

⁴³ Ibid. 74.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 75.

⁴⁵ Lindbeck 131.

a partial empirical ground for deciding doctrinal development. The task of ascertaining which of the changing forms is faithful to the "putatively abiding substance" is the job of the "consensus fidelium," or the "consensus ecclesiae." Those who constitute this body and whose consensus counts are those "who have effectively interiorized a religion."⁴⁶ With this claim Lindbeck indicates how his rule theory functions in the search for infallible doctrines. He proposes to test the language and practices of competent practitioners of a religion in a manner similar to the testing of grammatical formulations of competent speakers of a language by contemporary ordinary-language philosophers. But how does one identify comparable competent practitioners given Christianity's denominational differences?

Lindbeck's solution is to suggest that an investigator draw a "sample" from as ecumenical a consensus as possible.⁴⁷ Tradition, magisterial pronouncements, and canonical writings provide the generally accepted instances of genuinely Christian speech. These criteria delimit the mainstream of Christian communities from which to draw a sample of competent practitioners.

However, membership in a mainstream community does not guarantee competence. According to Lindbeck, most Christians speak their own official tongue very poorly.⁴⁸ He turns, therefore, to the cultural linguistic model to look for "empirically recognizable," "objective tests" of competency.⁴⁹ Like competent natural-language users, competent religious practitioners are those who are not tied to fixed formulas but can discriminate between innovative uses and address unprecedented situations. They have interiorized the grammar of their religion. Therefore, they are reliable judges of the acceptability of the consequences of doctrinal formulations in ordinary religious life and language. Even though doctrinal formulations themselves may be too technical for them to understand, they can judge the acceptability in life of the consequences of these formulations. The reliability of their agreement with each other in doctrinal matters can, he concludes, be called infallible: "This demand for competence is the empirical equivalent of insisting on the Spirit as one of the tests of doctrine."⁵⁰

But Lindbeck is unable to go further in gathering this "empirically indisputable evidence"⁵¹ because of the practical difficulties of verifying the existence of such a consensus. "Empirical certitude" is only theoretically available.⁵² But how can a "consensus fidelium" be operative if it is not identifiable? Perhaps modern survey methods provide opportuni-

⁴⁶ Ibid. 79.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 100.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid. 101.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 99.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

ties.⁵³ Polling techniques are regularly used to discover, within specified margins of error, the consensus of Christians and their denominations on doctrinal and moral questions. However, since the competent and incompetent believers are indiscriminately mingled, Lindbeck's lack of empirical resources leaves his theory prey to the uninspired and unreflective prejudice that he found in relativism and literalism.⁵⁴

Our solution to the identity of the "fideles" is to turn to the psychology of religion. What we intend to show is that the psychology of religion has the resources to identify (in terms of Laudan's network model) the "fideles" from whom a representative sample might be drawn. In this way an empirically grounded "consensus" could be reached on particular doctrinal or moral issues. The methodological rules in the empirical psychology of religion are sufficiently clear and unambiguous that scientists can decide which theories fail to satisfy them and which among them explain better the facts of the matter. Academic psychology, of which the psychology of religion is a division, stipulates that the only legitimate entities about which theories can be postulated are publicly and directly observable data. This commitment admits only empirical methods and favors research design.⁵⁵ There is no place among these shared, sufficiently determinate, collective criteria for Kuhn's supplemental individual and subjective criteria.⁵⁶ Laudan's network model is alive and well in the psychology of religion.

To identify Lindbeck's "fideles" we will use a research program from psychology of religion—currently its most progressive—which has been developed over a period of forty years.⁵⁷ This research program grew out of the disturbing finding that, despite the centrality of neighborly love to Christianity, Christian religion is associated with increased intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry.⁵⁸ As the theory advanced it was found that, if church membership was broken down into active versus casual church attendance, the casual group exceeded both the active group and nonreligious people in prejudice.

This finding led Allport to hypothesize that there are two ways of expressing one's faith:

⁵³ Michael Hout and Andrew R. Greeley, "The Center Doesn't Hold: Church Attendance in the United States, 1940–1984," *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987) 325–45.

⁵⁴ Lindbeck 79.

⁵⁵ Bernard Spilka, Ralph W. Hood, and Richard L. Gorsuch, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1985) 319–23; C. Daniel Batson and W. B. Larry Ventis, *The Religious Experience: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (New York: Oxford Univ., 1982) 313–19.

⁵⁶ Laudan, *Science and Values* 88–92.

⁵⁷ Michael J. Donahue, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 48 (1985) 400.

⁵⁸ Batson 257.

Intrinsic religiousness is religion as a meaning-endowing framework in terms of which all of life is understood; it is religion as a proto-point . . . *Extrinsic* religiousness, in contrast, is the religion of comfort and social convention, a self-serving, instrumental approach shaped to suit oneself . . . [T]he extrinsically motivated person *uses* his religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated *lives* his religion.⁵⁹

Examination of the “intrinsic” orientation to religion reveals a profile of the “fideles.” First, Lindbeck’s competent religious practitioners are not tied to fixed formulas but can discriminate between innovative uses and address unprecedented situations. The corresponding cognitive characteristics of the believer’s faith, identified by an “intrinsic” measure of religion, are:

- Uses abstract principles and sees relationships among things;
- Discerning, orderly, exact in meaning, clear;
- Complex, differentiated, uses multiple categories and ideas, sees things as on a continuum;
- Open, flexible, creative in thinking, thoughtful, tolerant of different ideas and positions.⁶⁰

Second, Lindbeck identifies believers as those who have interiorized the grammar of their religion so that they are reliable judges of the acceptability of the consequences of doctrinal formulations in ordinary religious life and language. Some of the comparable characteristics of faith captured by the “intrinsic” orientation are:

- Devout, strong personal commitment;
- Universalistic, strongly ethical, holds to brotherhood ideas, stresses love of one’s neighbor;
- Unselfish, transcends self-centered needs, altruistic, humanitarian;
- A guide to living, general framework for daily life, provides life with meaning;
- Faith is of primary importance, accepted without reservations, creed is fully followed;
- Faith is of ultimate significance, a final good, supreme value, the ultimate answer.⁶¹

It can be reasonably argued that the “intrinsic” orientation to religion empirically operationalizes Lindbeck’s “flexibly devout.”⁶² Further, the “extrinsic-intrinsic” constructs can be assessed by a reliable and valid

⁵⁹ Donahue 400.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 19.

⁶⁰ Spilka 19.

⁶² Lindbeck 100.

instrument in the form of a 16-item "Likert" scale, which can be easily administered and scored. As a result the "extrinsic-intrinsic" scale can identify the personal and religious orientation of the "fideles" within Lindbeck's mainline communities.⁶³ Once a truly representative sample of the "intrinsically" oriented believer is identified, it should be possible to reach an empirical "consensus" on specific doctrinal or moral issues.

The question to put to this sample of the "fideles" is not how traditional teaching in Christology, Trinity, ecclesiology and so forth can be interpreted in modern categories. The goal is not to translate Nicea or Chalcedon. The question is "how contemporary Christians can do as well or better in maximizing the Jesus Christ of the biblical narrative as the way to the one God of whom the Bible speaks."⁶⁴ New answers to this perennial question can now be submitted to the judgment of the "fideles" in a regular and systematic way. Just as in the past the Church's growing opposition to slavery, its Christological and trinitarian decrees, its rejection of Pelagianism, its acceptance of the possibility of infant baptism were finally subjected to the "consensus ecclesiae," so now we have the means of mobilizing this consensus on a regular basis. The responsibility of the theologian with reference, for example, to those who believe in the immortality of the soul, couched as it is in its outmoded mind-body dualism, is "to specify the circumstances, whether temporary or enduring, in which it applies."⁶⁵ In this view theological reflection becomes directly relevant to the praxis of the Church, and this application can be subjected to an identifiable "consensus ecclesiae." The importance of a known "consensus fidelium" on pressing issues in social justice, medical ethics, war and peace, and the like is readily apparent.

Allport's research program advances Lindbeck's rule-theory view with an empirically grounded method of reasonable (normative) doctrinal development. In this way the ground has been cleared for the debate between Yale and Chicago, between an ancillary and an egalitarian view of the role of other disciplines in doctrinal development. First, Lindbeck's intratextual position has either to drop Kuhn's paradigm model and look for an alternative to explain the formation of its "consensus ecclesiae" or to adopt Laudan's model. However, Laudan's admits to processes of extratextual validation. Second, psychology of religion seems better able

⁶³ Since the "intrinsic" orientation to religion correlates more highly with some denominations, it might be necessary to correct for some sample bias introduced by basic denominational differences (see Donahue 400). One might use proportional sampling procedures or covary out these differences. See Jacob Cohen and Patricia Cohen, *Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 2d ed. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1983). The choice of method would require further empirical research.

⁶⁴ Lindbeck 107.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 107.

to identify the linguistically competent "fideles" than Lindbeck's sample. If the consensus cannot rely on the general membership of the Church and must discriminate to find the linguistically competent believer, confessionalism must go beyond the language game of the confession to gain access to the believer.

This thesis is borne out by an expansion of current research in "intrinsic-extrinsic" religion. Lindbeck, as we said above, is unable to identify the "fideles" who can adjudicate the authenticity or attest to the truth of the doctrinal language game. Lindbeck thinks that the social sciences cannot be of any help, and, if they could, they would only support his thesis. This is not the case. The social sciences show that his attempt to restrict the "fideles" to confessionalism is inadequate. Recent research in the psychology of religion reveals that the "fideles" who are able to adjudicate turn out to be of a different class of "fideles" than those identified by Lindbeck. This we will demonstrate from recent psychological research into neighborly love. Moreover, this research also displays the deficiency of Tracy's thesis. Incorporating the scientific, as understood by Laudan, within theology makes theology more than just demanding conversation.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND THE DOCTRINE OF NEIGHBORLY LOVE

In the instance of the doctrine of neighborly love, this debate over the role of doctrine finds empirical expression in recent developments in the parallel debate in social psychology over pro- and antisocial behavior (prejudice and selfishness versus tolerance and altruism). C. D. Batson has argued that when Allport operationalized the "intrinsic" orientation in response to the finding that religion is positively associated with antisocial behavior, he limited his rich theoretical treatment to the dimension of single-mindedness. Thereby, he left out the complexity and tentativeness characteristic of dialectical theology. Batson operationalized these missing dimensions in his "Quest" (Q) scale. As a result, Batson came to differentiate between "intrinsic" and "quest" orientations. The scoring of the "intrinsic" and "quest" scales is so weighted that a high score on the "Orthodoxy" scale (this scale reads like the Apostles' Creed⁶⁶) tends to give a higher "intrinsic" but a lower "quest" rating. While the "intrinsic" orientation takes account of the "degree of devout adherence to religious beliefs and practices," the "quest" orientation concerns the "degree of open-minded, critical struggle with existential questions."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Batson 154. Batson's "quest" scale has recently been simplified and improved in a new 9-item scale. See Brian A. Kojetin et al., "Quest: Constructive Search or Religious Conflict," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 (1987) 111-15.

⁶⁷ Batson 168.

The "quest" orientation to religion views doctrines as personal preferences in much the same way that the liberal position is characterized by Lindbeck. Batson confirms this interpretation. Those scoring high in the "quest" orientation, he says, are "not necessarily aligned with any formal religious institution or creed, they are continually raising ultimate 'whys,' both about the existing social structure and about the structure of life itself."⁶⁸ Unlike the "intrinsic" orientation for which loyalty is characterized by acceptance of the answers provided by doctrines and communal norms,⁶⁹ loyalty for the "quest" orientation subserves religious doubt, questioning, a growing sense of personal identity and of the tensions in one's world.⁷⁰

Batson's version of the "intrinsic" and "quest" orientation has led to a lively debate in the psychology of religion. This involves not only empirical problems but also major conceptual issues which Lindbeck has characterized as the paradigm clash between liberalism and confession-alism. Batson and his critics hold similarly opposed views of what constitutes religion. Batson claims that the Hebrew prophets were high on the "quest" orientation; Donahue replies that they were "a far cry from the identity-crisis picture that the Q scale presents."⁷¹ He believes that Batson's claim that Allport's theory is broader than its operation-alization in his "intrinsic" scale also misses the mark: "unlike the individual operating within a "quest" orientation, for whom doubts are almost a master motive, doubts for the mature religionist are, according to Allport, simply the fires in which belief is tempered."⁷²

This dispute need not end in a draw. Laudan's network model makes it possible for us to compare opposed paradigms at the level of their differing beliefs and values. As long as the consensus in empirical psychology holds at the levels of methods and facts, then it is possible to make reasonable choices at this third level. On the basis of methods and factual claims, we can alter core elements of confession-alism or liberalism. The history of science shows the implausibility of Kuhn's wholesale model of change and reveals a process of mutual adjustment and justification among all three levels. In academic psychology, the methodological norms and the criteria for what constitutes a fact are uncontroversial. Allport's and Batson's theories were both designed to explain the finding

⁶⁸ C. Daniel Batson, "Religion as Prosocial: Agent or Double Agent?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 15 (1976) 32.

⁶⁹ C. Daniel Batson, Patricia A. Schoenrade, and Virginia Pych, "Brotherly Love or Self-Concern? Behavioral Consequences of Religion," *Advances in the Psychology of Religion*, ed. L. B. Brown (Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1985) 204.

⁷⁰ Batson, *The Religious Experience* 153.

⁷¹ Donahue 413.

⁷² *Ibid.*

that religious people are more prejudiced and intolerant than nonreligious people. This permits a comparative choice. What is being assessed is not how one theory stands up against all possible rivals, but how it fares against extant rivals.⁷³ Moreover, according to Laudan, reasonable scientists do not attach the greatest probative weight to the problems which a theory was designed to solve. In the history of science the severest test has generally been common alternative problems.⁷⁴ The doctrine of neighborly love, expressed as altruism, has become just such a test for these opposed paradigms.

Applying Laudan's theory to the "intrinsic" and "quest" debate we arrive at interesting results. Since its inception in the 1950s, the common empirical problem for distinguishing orientation to religion has been pro- and antisocial attitudes and behavior, such as prejudice and discrimination. Thus in 1978 Batson connected "intrinsic" religion with social desirability to conclude that "intrinsic" religion does not lead to increased tolerance.⁷⁵ In response, Donahue cited a series of studies in which "intrinsic" religion and social desirability were not connected. He went on to argue that the "intrinsic" orientation is not Batson's "true believer" and to speculate that Batson's "quest" scale "might be characterized as an agnosticism scale."⁷⁶ This echoes Lindbeck's assertion that the private and inward religion of liberal "experimental expressivism" fosters an historicism which leads to relativism.⁷⁷

What tells against an exclusive reliance on Lindbeck's intratextual view of doctrine is a group of Batson's studies. At a behavioral and situational level Batson found a clear correlation between "quest" and increased compassion rather than the appearance of compassion.⁷⁸ For example, in Batson's "Good Samaritan" experiment, the more devout, "intrinsically" oriented seminarians did not modify their preprogrammed response (for example, to take the needy target person in the experiment for coffee, to the infirmary, or to pray for his welfare) even when it did not meet the expressed needs of the recipient. In contrast, the more "quest" oriented were attuned to these needs. In another study, "intrinsically" oriented students reported themselves as significantly more helpful and concerned than their "quest" counterparts. In fact, the

⁷³ Laudan, "Relativism" 224.

⁷⁴ Laudan, *Science and Values* 100.

⁷⁵ Donahue 408.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 413. The debate continues. See C. Daniel Batson "Prosocial Motivation: Is It Ever Altruistic?" in L. Berkowitz, ed., *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 29 (1987) 65-122; and R. L. Gorsuch, "Psychology of Religion," in M. R. Rosenzweig and L. W. Porter, eds., *Annual Review of Psychology* 39 (1988) 212-15.

⁷⁷ Lindbeck 33-34.

⁷⁸ Batson, "Brotherly Love or Self-Concern?" 202.

“intrinsically” oriented responded in the same way whether the recipients said they did or did not want the help. The helping of “quest” groups, however, correlated highly with the expressed needs. On the basis of these and other studies of compassion and prejudice Batson concluded that, in comparison to the “intrinsic” orientation, a “quest” orientation to religion not only reduces intolerance but also increases sensitivity to the needs of others.⁷⁹

We have argued that Lindbeck’s authentic believers are characterized by the “intrinsic” orientation. But the finding that in ordinary life and language, people with a high “intrinsic” orientation are not as reliable judges of the acceptability of the consequences of doctrinal formulations (in this instance neighborly love and compassion) as those on the “quest” orientation argues against his position. Parallel research has shown that situational and social variables must be written into a normative account of such doctrines. Such variables include social constraint (e.g., the number of bystanders witnessing a person in distress affects the likelihood of an altruistic response from an individual) or social norms (e.g., role expectation) and, above all, the degree of situational empathy. We have reported elsewhere just such a research program.⁸⁰ In this way the concept of the believer will be enriched via association with several attributes of two different orders: personality (e.g., “extrinsic,” “intrinsic,” “quest”) and situational.⁸¹

It is interesting to note that, according to Donahue, persons with

⁷⁹ Ibid. 204. These findings remain controversial. In C. Daniel Batson and Janine Dyck Flory, “Goal-Relevant Cognitions Associated with Helping Individuals High on Intrinsic End Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29 (1990) 346–60, the “intrinsic” orientation has not had those whom Allport called “the indiscriminately proreligious” subtracted out. (These people respond to religious material in an implausible positive manner.) Pargament’s new scale has made this possible. (See Kenneth I. Pargament et al., “Indiscriminate Proreligiousness: Conceptualization and Measurement,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 [1987] 182–200). Further, in P. J. Watson et al., “Interactional Factor Correlations with Means and End Religiousness,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 (1989) 237–347, it is tentatively suggested that “quest’s” so-called increased sensitivity might be simply an excuse for not persevering in proffering help.

⁸⁰ Paul Rigby and Paul O’Grady, “Agape and Altruism: Debates in Theology and Social Psychology,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 57 (1989) 719–37. In the 60s and 70s over 1,000 empirical studies of altruism appeared; this research continues. Moreover, advances in research design have made it possible for researchers to claim to isolate a genuinely altruistic motivation. This is released when circumstances induce increased feelings of empathy. These findings have implications for the theological debate over agape and eros and for pastoral practice. See also C. Daniel Batson, “How Social an Animal? The Human Capacity for Caring,” *American Psychologist* 45 (1990) 336–46.

⁸¹ For the importance of situational factors in the assessment of personality, see W. Mischel, “On the Interface of Cognition and Personality: Beyond the Person–Situation Debate,” *American Psychologist* 34 (1979) 740–54.

mature and differentiated religious orientations might agree with the "quest" scale items. This means that a certain level of "quest" possibly contributes to the "intrinsic" orientation and vice versa.⁸² Casting the "fideles" in terms of both the "intrinsic" and "quest" orientations and certain situational variables places the rule theory of doctrine and the "consensus fidelium" outside Lindbeck's confessional paradigm. Individuals high on the "intrinsic" orientation would be at home in confession-alism. But coupling the doubting "quest" orientation with the "intrinsic" true believer forces us out of a confessional paradigm into a dialectical or correlational paradigm. Lindbeck populates this paradigm only with "quest" straw men. This is the force of Tracy's and Gerrish's objection. Both claim that Lindbeck has drawn a caricature of liberalism⁸³ according to which doctrines are only public thematizations of private or prereflective experience (Batson's "quest" orientation) and not "accounts of a particular community's faith."⁸⁴ The correlational and dialectical theology of liberalism, with its continuous exchange between Bible and world, is at present most effectively operationalized in a dual "intrinsic" and "quest" orientation to religion. Selection of these "fideles" results from liberalism's egalitarian commitment to church and society. For example, it interprets the doctrine of neighborly love in terms of the Bible story of the "Good Samaritan," "extrinsic," "intrinsic," "indiscriminately pro-religious," and "quest" traits, and situational findings such as empathy in helping, drawn from the psychology of religion and social psychology respectively.

By examining the common, perennial, empirical and conceptual problems of pro- and antisocial attitudes, situations and behaviors, and social psychology, using generally accepted empirical methods in the psychology of religion we have been able to compare differing theological paradigms. Laudan's network model allowed us to turn the comparison into a critical

⁸² Donahue thinks that religion defined as an existential concern on the "quest" scale may be curvilinearly related to the "intrinsic" scale (Donahue 413). This is possible because the "extrinsic," "intrinsic," and "quest" orientations each define a dimension of religious orientation that is entirely independent of the other two. (These components are orthogonal, i.e. the correlations between each pair are zero.) Each subject has a score on each dimension. A subject could with equal probability score high on all three dimensions, low on all three, high on two and low on the other, and so on. It is, therefore, possible to type a subject by means of a differential score using all three scales (Batson, "Goal-Relevant Cognitions" 353-54). Recent research has combined the "intrinsic" and "quest" orientations. See the new eleven-item scale in Roger L. Dudley and Robert J. Cruise, "Measuring Religious Maturity: A Proposed Scale," *Review of Religious Research* 32 (1990) 97-109. This scale purports to measure simultaneously "intelligent and informed commitment to a belief system with the openminded tentativeness of the searcher for truth" (ibid. 103).

⁸³ Gerrish 92; Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program for Theology" 471.

⁸⁴ Gerrish 89.

assessment. As a consequence, we find the dialectical and correlational approach to theology to be more rationally progressive than intratextual theology. Its egalitarian relations with other disciplines such as the psychology of religion open it axiologically and methodologically to Laudan's network model and the progressive rationality of its findings. It is better able to adjudicate between competing doctrinal meanings and to give reasons for doctrinal development. The choice of the intratextual approach to remain within a literal sense of the Scriptures runs into problems. The empirical findings concerning pro- and antisocial behavior favors some combination of the "intrinsic" and the "quest" orientations and certain situational variables over the "intrinsic" orientation by itself. We have associated the "intrinsic" orientation with intratextual theology. For intratextual theology these findings create insoluble conceptual problems. But these are readily intelligible in dialectical and correlational theology. Confessionalism's ancillary use of other disciplines can survive in a Kuhnian world of paradigmatic incommensurability, but in Laudan's world of rational progress scientific or ecclesial claims of paradigmatic immunity cannot be sustained.

CONCLUSION

Both Tracy and Gerrish accept Lindbeck's rule theory of doctrine as ecumenically "genuinely illuminating"⁸⁵ and as "helpful to disentangle the valid rules of doctrine."⁸⁶ Further both agree that doctrines are second-order explanatory discourses regulating first-order activities such as praying, praising, preaching, and exhorting.⁸⁷ But for Tracy and Gerrish doctrines are also "referential propositions"⁸⁸ asserting "fundamental truths maintained by the community."⁸⁹ For Lindbeck doctrines need have no such ontological aim. Like grammar they need affirm nothing either true or false regarding the world in which language is used.⁹⁰

Lindbeck receives support from Laudan. Laudan sees science as a second-order activity; it has only explanatory force.⁹¹ He shunts aside the truth question in favor of problem-solving effectiveness. He under-

⁸⁵ Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program for Theology" 471.

⁸⁶ Gerrish 91.

⁸⁷ Gerrish 91-92.

⁸⁸ Tracy, "Lindbeck's New Program for Theology" 471.

⁸⁹ Gerrish 91-92.

⁹⁰ Lindbeck believes that it belongs to the first-order faith activities to make true and false assertions about God and God's relationship to creatures (69). In this way he seeks to circumvent the problems associated with the development of doctrine in "modernized and relativizing propositional interpretations" (107).

⁹¹ Larry Laudan, *Progress and Its Problems* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1977) 123.

stands truth as correspondence, and correspondence is unrealizable.⁹² Explanations are valid and acceptable until falsified. If truth, not rationality, were science's aim, then that aim would be utopian, and science could be shown to be neither progressive nor degenerative.⁹³ Science's rationality finds expression in the comparative progress of its solutions, judged in terms of our aims and values.⁹⁴ But it does not for that reason discover truth.⁹⁵

But truth need not be understood as correspondence. Another option is possible in which doctrines can be envisaged as being simultaneously intratextual and referential.⁹⁶ Reference need not be predicated on an equivalency of meaning between discourse and reality, such as Laudan rightly rejected as realist and positivist. The reference of doctrines, as second-order language, is not an ostensive reference pointing to a state of affairs but is a prospective or heuristic reference. They do not describe the world as it is but as it could be. Doctrines project practical possibilities of life and of being in the world.⁹⁷ They are not about ostensive realities but about religious possibilities of being human. The truth of doctrines can be defined in terms of Laudan's concept of realizability and not correspondence. Such truths can be measured, for example, in well-designed outcome and longitudinal studies in terms of success. Success is judged, as Laudan argued, in accord with goals and values. The fundamental truths they assert receive their genuine explanatory power from epistemological procedures such as Lindbeck's grammatical analysis and the empirical methods of science. To the extent that research programs like Allport's and Batson's function as heuristic redescriptions of reality, they open up the potential for truth. In the research cited, one theory (that religious people are more prejudiced and less compassionate than nonreligious people) is changed by the adoption of a redescription derived from competing theories (the relative prejudice and compassion of "extrinsic," "intrinsic" and "quest" orientations to religion). These theories teach us to see religion and pro- and antisocial behavior in the most progressive way by letting the comparisons and contrasts of their

⁹² Laudan, *Science and Values* 51–53, 103–37.

⁹³ Laudan, *Progress and Its Problems* 126.

⁹⁴ Laudan, *Science and Values* 65.

⁹⁵ Laudan, *Progress and Its Problems* 121.

⁹⁶ The work of Paul Ricoeur on reference is most helpful in distinguishing the different modes of referencing. See, e.g., his *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, trans. and ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 1981) 132.

⁹⁷ See Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1977) 216–56; Mary Hesse, "The Explanatory Function of Metaphor," Appendix to *Models and Analogies in Science* (Univ. of Notre Dame, 1966)

angle of vision interact. Their reasonableness and progressiveness presuppose a comparative judgment on their common empirical and conceptual problem-solving effectiveness.

Moreover, the position held here is applicable not only to the succession of theories within similar research programs; it also functions between disciplines. For instance, Lindbeck proposes to insert the language of grammatical rules into his understanding of doctrines. Valuable and constructive as this move is, it is inadequate. We called upon another discipline and argued that linguistic competence for doctrines is best seen in the manner of Allport's "intrinsic" orientation to religion. This introduction of the social sciences revealed the limitations of the intra-textual confessional paradigm in comparison to the liberal one. The linguistic competence of the "quest" orientation revealed the linguistic incompetence of the "intrinsic" orientation left to itself.

Interdisciplinary use of competing research programs is indispensable in order to see pro- and antisocial behavior, doctrines, and religion in the most progressive way. In other words, these disciplines open up and discover in doctrines new possibilities of being religiously in the world. As rules and as heuristic figures doctrines offer normative specifications (Lindbeck) and redescriptions of Christian life. Lindbeck's focus on praxis⁹⁸ and psychology of religion's focus on outcome studies permit us to assess their progressive rationality and truth not as correspondence but in terms of realizability in accord with our evolving goals and values (Laudan).

Rational progress and truth are at the heart of the liberal enterprise. Its method is one of mutually critical correlations. On the one hand, there is an interpretation of the meaning and truth of the tradition such as we find in Lindbeck's codes and the "consensus fidelium" and in the hermeneutical analysis of how these codes become lived discourses. On the other hand, there is an interpretation of the meaning and truth of the contemporary situation. Both advance by means of the human and social sciences. However, we are able to do more than simply note identities, similarity-in-difference, or pure nonidentity, as Tracy proposes. Certain correlations can be shown to be, as we have seen, more rationally progressive and, therefore, to disclose more truth for the theological enterprise in terms of our goals and values. Some social-science theories and some interpretations of doctrine offer us more authentic possibilities of life than others because they present us with a more accurate redescription of our present reality. By the inclusion of the disciplined theories, methods, goals, and values of the sciences the rationality and truth of theological discourse is empirically secured.

⁹⁸ Lindbeck 107.