Scripture and Tradition in the Early Church

Rick Wade examines the nature of the gospel message as oral tradition in the early church, and the relation of that tradition with the New Testament.

This article is also available in Spanish. 

Introduction: Evangelicals and Tradition

Evangelical Protestants have historically considered the Bible to be the final source for faith and practice. Church tradition plays little or no role in our lives beyond the celebration of certain holidays. In this article, I want to look at one context in which tradition was very important in the church. I'm referring to the relationship between tradition in the early church and Scripture. In this study, I'll refer often to the book *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism*{1} by Daniel Williams, an ordained Baptist minister teaching patristics at Loyola University.

Most of us don't realize that tradition played an important role in the establishment of our faith. We tend to see the New Testament and its development as separate from the life of the early church. In fact, if there's a dirty word in church history to evangelicals, it is "tradition." We think of tradition as something man comes up with on his own. Since what man produces is tainted, we want to keep it separate from Scripture. We don't think of the Scriptures—specifically the New Testament—as being a written form of tradition.

We need to note, however, that all tradition isn't bad. What the apostles learned from Jesus, they handed on to others orally, and what they handed on they called "tradition." Thus, the Gospel proclamation began as oral tradition. Recall Paul's

words to the Thessalonians, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.” (2 Th. 3:6; see also 2:15. The NIV translates the word “tradition” as “teachings.”) The apostles taught people who taught others who taught others, and this tradition was authoritative for the church. As the tradition was being conveyed orally, it was also being written down by the apostles and sent throughout the church. As the various local churches received these writings they weighed them against what had been taught orally. Many writings were circulating at the time, some of which falsely carried the names of apostles. The major test for the authenticity of these writings was whether they accurately reflected the apostolic tradition as taught in the churches.

Losing the Past

If evangelicals attempt to study the past, it’s typically out of historical interest alone, not with a view to being taught by our forebears. While we’re doing better at crossing boundaries with our contemporaries in the church, we forget that the church extends back in time as well. We tend to isolate the church in the here and now.

How is it that we’ve become separated from our past?

Individualism

First, we’re an individualistic church. A fairly prevalent attitude in the church is that “me, my Bible, and the Holy Spirit” are all that we need to understand Christianity. In most debates today, what is the final word? “Well, it seems to me that . . .” It is considered impolite or even arrogant to tell someone he or she is wrong, especially in the area of religion and morality. This attitude has penetrated the church

as well. It is considered rude and pretentious to say that someone's understanding of something in Scripture is wrong, no matter how gently and lovingly it is said. We think, "Why should we need anyone else to tell us what the Bible means?" We have let modernistic individualism take root in our psyches to the extent that we believe we are individually the final arbiters of truth.

Some consequences of this attitude, however, are disunity in the church, and the possibility of the intrusion of false teaching as individuals attempt to understand the faith by themselves. While we certainly are responsible individually to be in the Word and seeking to understand it, we learn from a study of church history that it is the lone interpreter of Scripture who can easily go astray. Theologian Harold O. J. Brown notes that "Solitary study, cut off from the fellowship of believers seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and lacking any awareness of the faith of the church through the ages, is often a source of serious error."{2} "Evangelicals should come to grips with the fact that the Bible belongs to the church," says Robert Webber. "It is the living church that receives, guards, passes on, and interprets Scripture. Consequently the modern individualistic approach to interpretation of Scripture should give way to the authority of what the church has always believed, taught, and passed down in history."{3} As Daniel Williams notes, "Protestants must reconsider the work of the Holy Spirit in the life history of the church no less than in the life of the individual believer. For it is with the church that God's new covenant was formed."{4} The Spirit is working to build the body of Christ, not just individuals. Each of us needs the church.

Anti-traditionalism

A second problem is our anti-traditional attitude. There have been several influences on our thinking about tradition. The Enlightenment era was very significant in this regard.

Enlightenment philosophers taught us to see the world as a collection of scientific facts, to look forward instead of back to the wisdom of the past, and to see the individual as the final authority for what is true. The ideal is the individual who examines the raw data of experience with no prior value commitments, with a view to discovering something new. Unfortunately, knowledge was pursued at the expense of wisdom. The past had little relevance. What could those who lived in the past tell us that would be relevant for today?{5} Besides, the church dominated people in the past. Such superstition was no longer to be allowed to rule our lives.

This new attitude had an effect on the handling of Scripture. Bible scholar Christopher Hall writes, "Evangelical scholars assented to the Enlightenment's deep suspicion of tradition and proceeded to produce a traditionless hermeneutic. The 'Bible alone' survived the Enlightenment assault against tradition, but only by becoming a timeless text filled with facts to be scientifically identified, analyzed and categorized."{6} Now we were to interpret Scripture individually through a simple examination of the facts. "As [historian] Nathan Hatch observes, the Bible 'very easily became . . . 'a book dropped from the skies for all sorts of men to use in their own way.'"{7} There was no need to look to the past for help.

Thus, evangelicals came to believe that simply by using their reason under the guidance of the Spirit they could understand the Bible as it was intended. Tradition and the history of exegesis no longer mattered. For some, it was a mark of triumph to be able to say one wasn't affected by what anyone else said about the meaning of the text. Some actually believed that a *lack* of formal training was beneficial for understanding Scripture!{8} Mark Noll sees this as "bordering on hubris, manifested by an extreme anti-traditionalism that casually discounted the possibility of wisdom from earlier generations."{9}

The Enlightenment's anti-traditional stance was fostered to some extent by Pietism, the 19th century movement encouraging a return to Scripture and ministry by lay people. Pietism served as a corrective in a church which had given the work of the kingdom over to the professional ministers. For all the good that it wrought, however, its emphasis on the individual and his or her religious experience encouraged a focus only on the here and now. The larger church, especially the church in time past, wasn't so important.

The Free Church Tradition

Following the Reformation, the Protestant Church split into multiple denominations or traditions. Out of the Anabaptist branch grew what is called the Free Church tradition. This includes such offshoots as the Baptist, Evangelical Free, Methodist, Holiness, Pentecostal and Bible churches. A core belief is that "the church is not an institution on account of its structure or external rites, but exists only when it is voluntarily composed of the faithful." Williams further explains: "There is little or no sacramental attribution to any place, thing or ritual, because only the believing members of the congregation are holy by reason of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. . . . The believer is free, therefore, to follow the faith in accord with his or her conscience . . . having no other ultimate authorities than the Bible and the Holy Spirit."{10} Thus, there is a rejection of authoritative tradition of the church.

For whatever good this brought about, it also meant "The councils, the creeds, the grand theologians, the apologists, and the philosophers—all could now be abandoned." Protestants tend to look only as far back as the Reformation if they look to the past at all. What we must understand, though, is that the Reformers were trying to restore apostolic Christianity. In their disputes with Roman Catholics, they sometimes referred to the church Fathers directly or indirectly to prove they weren't guilty of theological novelty.{11} For all their

efforts to restore the church to what it should be, what followed them was a splintering "into a multitude of conflicting versions of the faith."{12} In time, that which was common to all, the tradition of the apostles, was diminished in favor of an emphasis on our differences.

This way of looking only as far back as the Reformers has produced "a huge gap in the historical consciousness of the Free church."{13} We have little sense of historical continuity with the church from the early days up to the Reformation. Williams believes we are in real danger of amnesia, of losing our roots, of forgetting who we are. "The formation of a distinct Christian identity in years to come will not be successful unless we deliberately reestablish the link to those resources that provide us with the defining 'center' of Christian belief and practice."{14}

Constantine

Occasionally one will find references to the idea of a "fall" of the church following the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. Some believe that under Constantine the church began its slide into a state religion, having been corrupted by power and money. The interests of church and state overlapped, resulting in the corruption of the church. This cast a pall over the whole of church history until the Reformation. Tradition is seen as an element of the corrupted, institutionalized church.{15}

While it is true that the new freedom the church experienced under Constantine did have its negative side, it doesn't follow that the church "fell" as some say. Throughout history the church has made mistakes in its dealings with secular society and in knowing how to properly handle the freedom and power it has experienced. Some complain *today* that Christians become too wedded to political parties, courting compromise in the process. This was no different in Constantine's day. That there was a new coloring to the church when it became

established under Constantine, there is no debate. But the idea that the church quickly became corrupt, and that the councils convened during his reign were simply pawns of the emperor is simplistic. The church continued to be faithful to the task of clarifying and passing on the apostolic tradition. "The faith professed and practiced in the early churches was not determined by the political machinations of emperors and episcopal hierarchies," says Williams. "The essential formulation and construction of the Christian identity was something that the fourth century *received* and continued to expand upon through its biblical exegesis and liturgical life as reflected in the credal Tradition."{16}

Consider what came out of the period of Constantine's reign. Says Williams:

> *I am claiming the late patristic period functioned as a kind of doctrinal canon by which all subsequent developments of theology were measured up to the present day. The great creeds of the period, the development of Trinitarian and Christological theology, the finalization of the biblical canon, doctrines pertaining to the human soul and being made in the image of God, to the fall and redemption, to justification by faith, and so on, find their first and (in many cases) enduring foothold in this period. All theological steps later taken, in confirmation or denial, will begin on the trail marked by the early Fathers. . . . The theology that developed after Constantine was not a movement radically subversive to Scripture and to the apostolic faith. On the contrary, the major creeds and doctrinal deliberations were a conscious extension of the earlier Tradition and teaching of the New Testament while attempting, in light new challenges, to articulate a Christian understanding of God and salvation.{17}*

The reason this is significant for our study is that some have let the idea that the church fell in the late patristic era

cause them to discount the entire era. This is a mistake. There was good and bad for the church under Constantine's reign. Nonetheless, the church continued to develop in its understanding of the apostolic Tradition. We shouldn't ignore the early church because of occasional failings.

Tradition and Roman Catholicism

Because we so often associate tradition with the Catholic Church, it is very likely that the reader is wondering how this understanding of tradition differs from that taught by the Roman Church. Before beginning our look at tradition, then, let's distinguish what we're talking about from that which is held by the Roman Church.

In the first few centuries after Christ, oral and written tradition was thought of as being the same thing. The "canon" was acknowledged in either form. By the 4th and 5th centuries tradition and Scripture were distinguished more carefully, but still were seen as being of one piece. In the 14th century, however, tradition became a separate *source* of truth when it was realized that some traditions couldn't be proved from Scripture.{18} There were now, then, *two* sources of revelation—Scripture and Church—tradition, rather than *one* source in two forms. What the Reformers wanted to do was not to pit Scripture against tradition *per se* and throw out the latter. They wanted to let go of man-made traditions and go back to the true apostolic tradition. "The sixteenth-century Reformers were cognizant of this distinction and highly valued the Tradition located in the Fathers as a means of interpreting biblical truth. . . . The Reformation was not about Scripture versus tradition but about reclaiming the ancient Tradition against distortions of that Tradition, or what eventually became a conflict of Tradition versus traditions."{19} They wanted to avoid citing the church fathers as authorities for doctrines or practices, which were incongruent with Scripture. They rejected the idea that the

ancient Tradition had become secondary to the traditions of medieval Catholicism. Tradition with a small "t" had begun to interpret Tradition with a capital "T"; the Reformers thus emphasized Scripture as delivering true apostolic Tradition to argue against Rome's claim to authority.

While some branches of the Reformation retained some of the old traditions, others didn't. The former wanted to be sure Scripture didn't *oppose* them; the latter wanted to know if a tradition or belief was actually *taught* in Scripture. Man-devised traditions were to be set aside. This is the more dominant approach taken by the Free Church tradition.

Unfortunately, the emphasis on Scripture along with a suspicion of traditions in general worked together to produce an anti-traditional attitude that was unnecessary, and which has cut-off much of the church's past from Christians today.

Apostolic Tradition

Tradition and Traditionalism

The Greek word that is translated *tradition (paradosis)* "means a transmission from one party to another, an exchange of some sort, implying living subjects." It involves the idea of receiving and passing on. Williams notes that tradition is "not something *dead* handed *down,* but *living* being *handed over*."{20} It is as much a noun as a verb, meaning "that which is handed over" as well as "the process of handing it over."

Note, too, that tradition isn't necessarily something old. As one scholar writes, "The scriptural use of the term *tradition* has nothing to do with oldness or with a practice or beliefs being time-honored. A tradition, in the strict sense of the word, becomes tradition the instant it is handed over."{21}

This kind of tradition isn't to be confused with "traditionalism," which refers to faith in tradition *per se*.

Historian Jaroslav Pelikan contrasts the two this way: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."{22}

We often think of traditions as being *practices,* such as decorating a church a certain way during certain seasons, or conducting worship services certain ways. But traditions can be teachings—beliefs passed from one person to another. Paul referred to his teachings as traditions. He exhorts the Thessalonians: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us." (2 Th. 3:6, *NASB*. The *NIV* translates the word "tradition" as "teaching.") Paul's job was to pass on what he had been taught so those who heard could pass it on themselves. This idea is expressed clearly in his letter to Timothy, where he said, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." (2 Tim 2:2)

Someone might object, pointing out that Jesus speaks only negatively about tradition. "You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men," He says. (Mark 7:8) But notice: Jesus is chastising the Pharisees, not for holding to traditions *per se*, but for letting the traditions of *men* trump the things of God.

Apostolic Tradition

The traditions that Paul passed on included three parts: the *kerygmatic* part, which was the core teaching of Christ (e.g., I Cor. 15); the *ecclesiastical* part, which dealt with matters of practice in the church (e.g., I Cor. 11); and the *ethical* part, which taught people how to live upright lives (e.g., II Thess. 3:6). Together, all this was simply called the Tradition (Williams and others capitalize the word to distinguish it from the individual traditions of churches that

often distinguish them.{23}). “The Tradition indicates the core teaching and preaching of the early church which has bequeathed to us the fundamentals of what it is to think and believe Christianly.”{24}

The Tradition, then, was the substance of the Gospel message passed on from one person to the next. “Tradition was an expression of the original apostolic preaching,” says Daniel Williams. It was not “an extracanonical source of revelation . . . but a summary of the essential content of faith to which the Scripture, Old and New Testaments, testifies.”{25}

Apostolic Tradition was transmitted through “baptismal professions, credal-like formulas, and hymns. Such vehicles were the primary means by which Christian teaching and spirituality was conveyed to believers.”{26} The Tradition was also conveyed to the church in the writings that make up our New Testament. These, of course, were not an afterthought; they provided a fixed source of truth for God’s people and eventually became the church’s ultimate authority.

The Rule of Faith

The doctrinal core of the Tradition came to be known as the Rule of Faith. This was the “summary of the main points of Christian teaching.” It referred “to the apostolic preaching that served as the norm of Christian faith.”{27} “Those elements of what the church believed (*fides quae creditur*), a kind of ‘mere Christianity,'” says Williams, “are discovered in the *regula fidei* or Rule of faith.”{28} The Rule was widely recognized by middle to late second century, and universally recognized by the early third century.{29}

Although there was no set form for the Rule of Faith, which makes it distinct from creeds, “the essential message,” says Everett Ferguson, “was fixed by the facts of the gospel and the structure of Christian belief in one God, reception of salvation in Christ, and experience of the Holy Spirit; but

each teacher had his own way of stating or elaborating these points."{30}

Here is perhaps the fullest expression of the Rule, found in the writings of Tertullian.

> *Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, and, under the name of God, was seen "in diverse manners" by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh. This rule, as it will be proved, was taught by Christ, and raises amongst ourselves no other questions than those which heresies introduce, and which make men heretics.{31}*

The Rule of Faith served a few important functions. It provided a summary of the faith for new converts preparing for baptism.{32} It also was used to counter the heresies such as those of the Marcionites and the gnostics. Marcion's understanding of Paul's doctrine of grace hindered him from accepting the Old Testament God as the Father of Jesus. This

rejection was reflected in his treatment of the New Testament. He only accepted Luke and Paul's writings, and altered even those to suit his beliefs. Marcion believed that only those would be saved who accepted his teachings. Gnostic beliefs, which had to be answered, were that Jesus hadn't come in the flesh, or that the Christ had simply borrowed the human body of Jesus in the incarnation. Salvation was obtained by obtaining certain secret knowledge. The Rule was used as a response to such beliefs. It stood as a known oral tradition against the gnostics' secret traditions.

Since even these opponents of apostolic Christianity appealed to the Bible for support, appeal was made to the Rule of Faith for the proper interpretation of authentic Scripture. Says William DiPuccio,

> *The Rule served as a canon within a canon, enabling the Fathers to ascertain the correct interpretation of the Bible in fundamental matters of faith, and as a yardstick for measuring the canonicity of a particular writing. . . . The Rule was regarded, then, as the lens or reference grid through which the Scriptures were interpreted. Clement of Alexandria makes this distinction when he declares that the first principle of his system is the Scriptures as they are rightly interpreted through the church's Rule of Faith.{33}*

As a canon of interpretation, it served as the "plumbline of the truth." Without such a plumbline, "scriptural exegesis is left to the discretion of the individual interpreter or school of interpretation."{34}

Scripture, Tradition, and the Church

In the evangelical church, Scripture and tradition are typically set in opposition to one another. But in the early church the two worked together as two forms of the same message. As one writer notes, "It is not a question of whether

Scripture *or* tradition has the primacy; nor is it even a question of Scripture *and* tradition; rather, it is more properly a question of *scriptural tradition*."{35}

At first, it was the oral Tradition or teachings of the apostles which was authoritative in the churches, because that was what people received. As the apostles' writings became available, they were accepted as authoritative because they were recognized as mirroring the Rule of Faith.{36} In the early church, Scripture and the Rule were never placed in opposition to one another; they taught the same thing.{37} These three—Scripture, Tradition, and the church—were considered one collective source for the truth of Christ. The Bible was to be interpreted by the church in keeping with the Tradition.{38} "Dividing Scripture from the Tradition or from the church," says Williams, "creates an artificial distinction which would have been completely alien to the earliest generations of Christians."{39}

It's important to note, too, that the Tradition was never held above Scripture.{40} The two worked together. "The Rule, then, is co-extensive with the Bible, but it is not above it," says William DiPuccio. "It provides the *optics* we need to bring the Bible into focus."{41}

One might ask, however, why the Rule *itself* was accepted as authoritative in the early church. Wouldn't oral tradition by its nature be subject to contamination? What guaranteed it was *apostolic succession*. "Setting aside later alterations and/or distortions of this idea," DiPuccio says, "the original concept of apostolic succession (which included deacons or presbyters as well as bishops) was not so much a succession of ordination, as a succession of living *faith and truth* as these are embodied in the Scriptures and the ancient Rule of Faith."{42} Everett Ferguson gives us the thinking of Irenaeus on the matter:

> *A person could go to the churches founded by the apostles . .*

> *. and determine what was taught in those churches by the succession of teachers since the days of the apostles. In other words, the apostles taught those they ordained to lead the churches, and then these passed on to others what they had been taught. The constancy of this teaching was guaranteed by its public nature; a change could have been detected, since the teaching was open. The accuracy of the teaching in each church was confirmed by its agreement with what was taught in other churches. One and the same faith had been taught in all the churches since the time of the apostles.{43}*

Significance of the Tradition for Today

Does this issue carry any significance beyond historical information? Should the Rule of Faith have any meaning for us today? I think it does. First, it opens to us the teachings of the church fathers, providing a wonderful resource for understanding our faith. Once we recognize that the church didn't fall so precipitously in the patristic era and following, we can look to the church of earlier times for understanding and inspiration.

Second, by looking at the core message taught in the early church we can be reminded of the central truths of Christianity, which will give us a basis for evaluating doctrinal teachings today. Paul warned Timothy of the destruction caused by false teachings, and encouraged him to remember his teaching and to "continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of." (II Tim. 3:14) What Prof. Christopher Hall says makes sense: "The hermeneutical and historical proximity of the fathers to the New Testament church and its apostolic tradition demands that we listen carefully to their exegetical insights, advice and intuitions."{44}

Third, by seeing what is most important we can work to correct

the disunity in the church. Think about what separates Christians in America. Right now worship style is a major issue. Ideas about end times and modes of baptism are two other divisive issues. When we think about our differences, however, do we stop to think about our similarities? Do we even *know* what people of other Christian traditions believe? We shouldn't minimize significant differences between churches. But by keeping our lines so carefully drawn, are we dishonoring our Lord who prayed for unity among His people? (Jn. 17:20-23) Maybe a look back will remind us of what is most important and around which we can unite. We can begin to break down the walls constructed by our differences over matters which aren't so clear or which aren't as important as the central truths. Without taking hold of the Tradition flowing from the apostles into and through the early church, Williams believes we will see an increasing sectarianism "characterized by an ahistoricism and spiritual subjectivism," and we will be more susceptible to accommodation to the world.{45}

Fourth, we can be re-connected with the church of the past. Simply knowing about the history of the church gives us a sense of being part of something big; something that stretches beyond the world we see. It lifts us out of our provincialism, thus expanding our understanding of God and His ways with His church.

Finally, we will see even more clearly how down to earth our faith is. We can see how it moved with the ebb and flow of real life as regular people (like you and me) did their best amid trying circumstances to understand and live out the faith.

Conclusion

By reopening the church's past we will find a storehouse of knowledge and wisdom which can serve us well today. By learning about the early church and church fathers one will be

both encouraged and challenged. Both are important for a vital faith.

There are a number of resources available for those who are interested in probing the minds of those who have gone before us. Daniel Williams' *Retrieving the Tradition,* Christopher Hall's *Reading the Scripture With the Church Fathers*, or Robert Webber's *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*{46} are excellent places to start.

Notes

1. D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition, and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).
2. Harold O.J. Brown, "Proclamation and Preservation: The Necessity and Temptations of Church Tradition" in James S. Cutsinger, ed. *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 80.
3. Robert E. Webber, *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 128. See also Harold O.J. Brown, "Proclamation and Preservation," 80.
4. Williams, 18.
5. Cf. Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture With the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 24.
6. Hall, 25.
7. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), quoted in Hall, 25.
8. Hall, 25-26. Cf. Williams, 22.
9. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 127, quoted in Hall, 26.
10. Williams, 2-3.
11. Williams, chap. 6, 173ff.
12. A. J. Conyers, "Protestant Principle, Catholic Substance,"

First Things 67 (November 1996): 17, quoted in Williams, 15.
13. Williams, 5.
14. Williams, 13.
15. Williams deals with this at length in *Retrieving the Tradition*, especially pp. 101-131.
16. Williams, 130.
17. Williams, 139.
18. Walter Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), s.v. "Tradition" by J. Van Engen. See also Dewey Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition and Infallibility* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 96.
19. Williams, 175.
20. Williams, 35.
21. Father Andrew, "A Response to Harold O.J. Brown" in Cutsinger, ed. *Reclaiming the Great Tradition*, 201, n. 2.
22. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, "The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition" (100-600), (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), 9.
23. Williams, 36.
24. Williams, 6.
25. Williams, 97.
26. Williams, 68-69.
27. Everett Ferguson, ed, *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1999), s.v. "Rule of Faith," by Ferguson, 1003.
28. Williams, 92.
29. William DiPuccio, (1995). "Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and the Rule of Faith: An Ancient Key to a Modern Question," *Premise II* (9), 5ff. capo.org/premise/95/oct/p950905.html.
30. Ferguson, "Rule of Faith," 1004.
31. Tertullian, "The Prescription Against Heretics" Chap. 13, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* Vol. 3, 448-449, The AGES Digital Library Collections.
32. Ferguson, "Rule," 1004.
33. DiPuccio. See also Williams, 97-98.
34. Williams, 99.

35. Everett Ferguson, ed, *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 19990, s.v. “Tradition,” by Donald F. Winslow, 908, quoted in DiPuccio. One can see the organic unity of the oral and written traditions by noting that both were called canon, first the Tradition, and later the Scriptures. Cf. R.P.C. *Hanson, Tradition in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 78-79, and F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, Ill.: 1988), 77.
36. Williams, 45.
37. “Tertullian clearly states that the Rule is identical to Scripture in content, though not in form.” DiPuccio.
38. Williams, 97-98. See also DiPuccio.
39. Williams, 14.
40. Williams, 96-97.
41. DiPuccio.
42. DiPuccio.
43. DiPuccio.
44. Hall, 196.
45. Williams, 14.
46. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. This is a reworking of his earlier Common Roots cited above.

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