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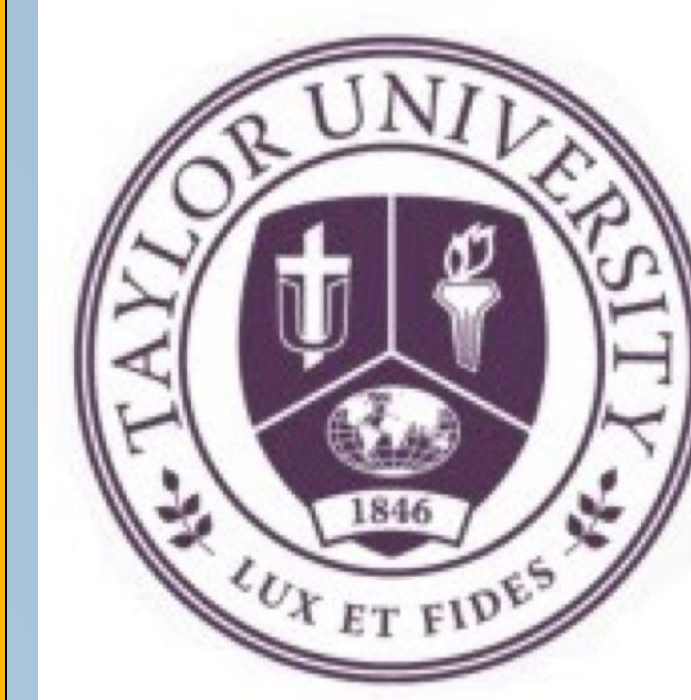


# Saint Irenaeus of Lyons and the Modern-Day Evangelical

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## BACKGROUND

- **St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 202)** – Probably born towards the end of the first half of the second century, Irenaeus himself states that he knew Polycarp, who himself knew the apostles and was chosen by them to be the bishop of the church in Smyrna (Behr 1). At some point down the line, Irenaeus became bishop of Vienne and Lyons and during that time wrote his two lasting works, *Against the Heresies* and *On the Apostolic Preaching* (Behr 2-3).
- ***On the Apostolic Preaching*** – The latter written of Irenaeus' two lasting works, his purpose in writing this book was, "to relate the content of the apostolic preaching by outlining the history narrated in Scripture, culminating in the apostles' proclamation that what is prophesied therein is now fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and thereby, in reverse, recognizing the scriptural authority of this preaching of the apostles," (Behr 16).
- **Upcoming Sacred Roots Translation** – Dr. Greg MaGee is currently editing his own translation of the text from a Greek reconstruction that was made from a full Armenian translation of the text that was discovered in 1904 in Armenia (Behr 4).

## PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTION

In the spring of 2023, Sacred Roots will publish a translation of St. Irenaeus' work, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, as *Reading the Bible to Meet Jesus*. The goal of any publication by Sacred Roots is to encourage congregational leaders in under-resourced ministries by providing resources to address perennial pastoral problems. With this in mind, this research will seek to answer the question: What are the spiritual benefits of reading Irenaeus as Evangelicals?



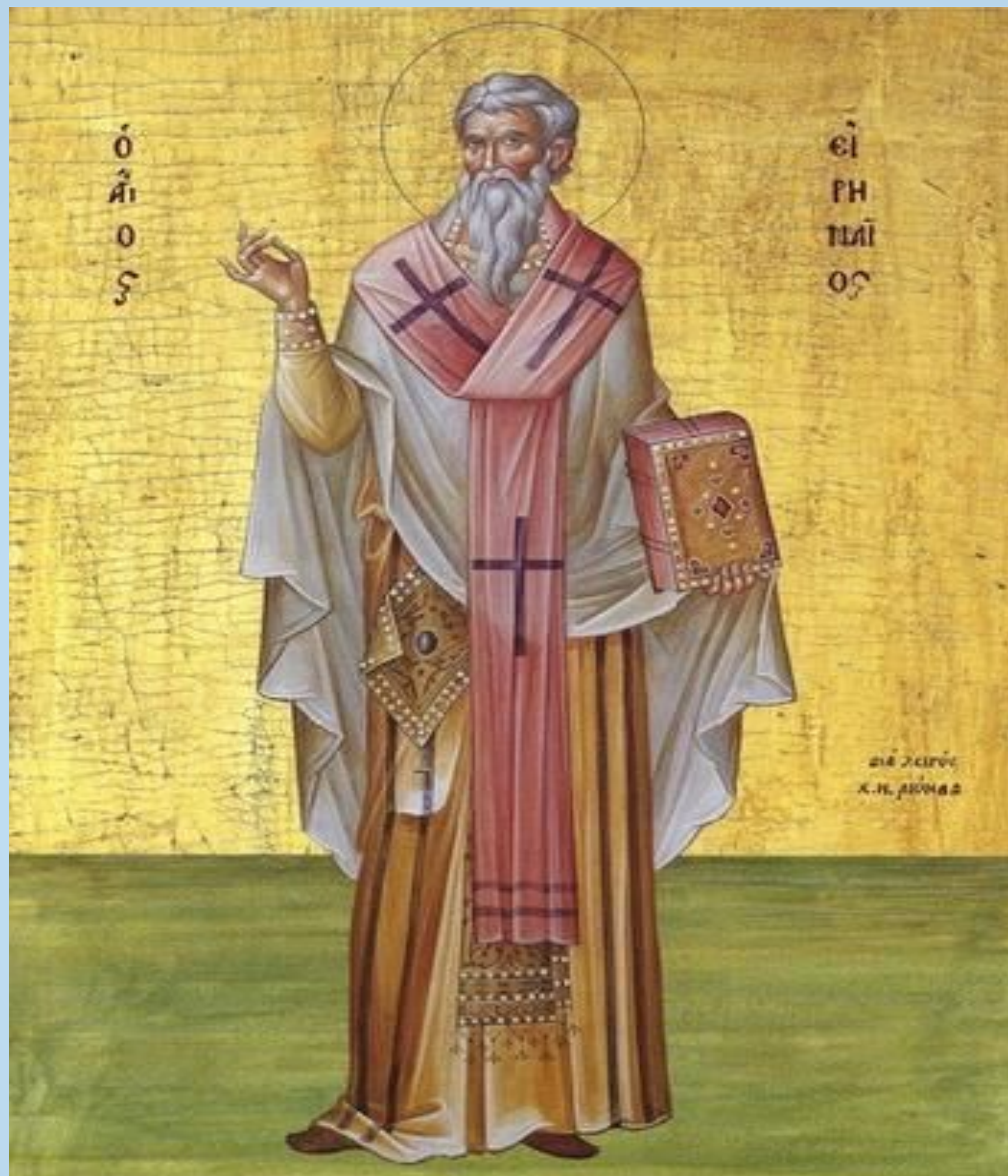
Dr. Greg  
MaGee



Gabe  
Bruner



Sarah Kelley



## ST. IRENAEUS OF LYON QUOTES

- "And this is why our Lord received a body formed in the same way as that of the first man, so that He might fight on behalf of the patriarchs, and overcome in Adam what had struck against us in Adam." – *On the Apostolic Preaching*, Paragraph 31
- "For He received both life, so that He would rise again, and length of days forever and ever, so that He would be imperishable." – *On the Apostolic Preaching*, Paragraph 72
- "Therefore, if the prophets prophesied that the Son of God was to be seen on earth, and prophesied also where on the earth and how and as what kind He would be seen, and the Lord fulfilled all of these prophecies in His incarnation, then our faith in Him is well-founded, and the handed-down tradition of the preaching is true." -- *On the Apostolic Preaching*, Paragraph 86

## MATERIALS & METHODS

To begin their research, both students read through a rough draft of Dr. Greg MaGee's revised translation of Irenaeus' work *On the Apostolic Preaching*. Both students provided feedback on this translation. Continuing their research, they pursued a preliminary understanding of Irenaeus' life, followed by an analysis of the impact of his work on contemporary evangelicals.

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- In speaking generally on the usefulness of reading the early Church fathers and mothers, one Evangelical scholar writes, "it provides us a model of biblical spirituality that challenges contemporary spiritualities that undercut the connection between right thinking and right living," (Glerup 192)
- "Others point to Irenaeus as a principle example of the initial form of biblical theology within the early centuries of the church," (Presley 3)
- Evangelicals can be challenged and edified by Irenaeus' rich theology of the Trinity and baptism (Graham 77)

## FURTHER RESEARCH

- The overall history of Irenaeus' life (much is unknown).
- How Irenaeus shaped the theology of his contemporaries (such as Justin Martyr) and the leading thinkers of the Church to follow him.
- How much weight should be given to his theology due to being only one person removed from the apostle John.

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