

*The first step of the process is that God revealed God's self through events in human history.*

acted through events in the past, and to help them see how God was still acting in their own lives. For example, the earliest writings in our New

Testament are Paul's letters.

Paul used the oral traditions about Jesus to help various communities integrate the facts of Jesus' Resurrection and presence in their midst into their daily lives.

**Edited Tradition.** At various times in history, inspired individuals went over the inherited oral and written traditions about events and wrote ordered, edited accounts of all that had occurred. The first five books of the Old Testament were edited a number of times—during the time of King David, and after the Babylonian

exile, to name two. Accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection were edited to produce the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke.

**Canon.** Not all accounts of revelatory events that passed through oral and written tradition are in the Bible. Some texts did not pass the test of time. They were not experienced by the communities as truthfully representing their faith experiences and nourishing them spiritually. Those texts which are in the Bible are called canonical. When we say that a text is canonical we are making two claims: that it contains Revelation and that those who passed it on to us were inspired to hand on to us what God intended to communicate through them.

### *For Reflection*

- What insights did you gain from this article about the formation of the Scriptures?
- What area in the formation of the Scriptures would you like to know more about?