

This I believe: I believe that the Bible is the document of religious faith through which God reveals a plan for the salvation of all creation, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and that the Spirit of Christ is in the Church, reconciling the whole world to God.

Setting aside commonly held articles of faith, my belief is that Joseph could have been the biological father of Jesus, and that Jesus was thoroughly indoctrinated by Joseph with the Holy Scriptures that had been passed down by word of mouth throughout the centuries before Christ. In fact, Jesus not only might have confounded the priests in the temple at Jerusalem with his wisdom, he might also have had a growing realization that he was being called to fulfill God's promise of a savior for his chosen people - the Word made flesh!

In a sense, the Bible may be described as a divine-drama, in which are set forth the acts of God in history, seen against a backcloth of eternity. There are a prologue (Genesis 1-2), an epilogue (the Book of Revelation), and three acts. The first act tells of the Call and Failure of Israel, the second act records the Coming of Christ, and the 3rd act the Foundation of the Christian Church.

I like to think that Mark really was Peter's son - as Peter wrote in his first letter (I Pet. 5:13), that he was known as John when he worked with Paul and Barnabas to found the churches in Asia Minor (Acts 12: 25), and that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, writing the fourth Gospel after years of reflection about the events he had witnessed. John Mark recalled having heard Jesus give a new command, to love one another (John 13: 34), and wrote further what it means for us to love, and to have life in Jesus' name (Letters of John, Revelation).

In his novel "Remembrance Rock", the American poet Carl Sandburg wrote, "Some sacred seed lurks deep in each human personality, no matter how lowly its arrival on earth. To give any such seed the deepest possible roots and the highest possible flowering is in the vision and hope of those ideas of freedom and discipline that constitute the American Dream." I'm so grateful for a loving family, supportive communities, and for the years spent at St. Olaf College prior to graduation in 1945 - all providing the nurture to start me on the pathway of life.

Back then, while there was a war going on - as there is today - in addition to taking courses in math and science, history of art, music comp, German, Ibsen, religion, we students flocked into the old gymnasium for morning chapel. Along with fellow Christian believers throughout the world we prayed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Today I'd add, "may your Spirit guide the USA to turn swords into plowshares, in Jesus' name, Amen.