

A THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MY LIFE

INTRODUCTION

God speaks to us through our lives, we often too easily say. Something speaks anyway, spells out some sort of godly or godforsaken meaning to us through the alphabet of our years, but often it takes many years and many further spellings out before we start to glimpse, or think we do, a little of what that meaning is. Even then we glimpse it only dimly, like the first trace of dawn on the rim of night, and even then it is a meaning that we cannot fix and be sure of once and for all because it is always incarnate meaning and thus as alive and changing as we are ourselves alive and changing.¹

These words from Frederick Buechner express the process I have been undergoing since my entry into University the first time, in 1966. At that time I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but that desire quietly dissipated by Christmas of my first year. I did know what I did not want to do with my life – to be a priest – and for that reason avoided all connection with Trinity College until the fall of 2002. In fact, until that time I don't believe I ever crossed its threshold.

I say that when I first went to university I did not want to be a priest because I had already had a call from God. It took place when I was eighteen, during my squire's vigil for Rovers; kneeling before the altar in St. Jude's Church in Oakville late one Friday evening. The sexton allowed me to stay by myself in the darkened church, with only candles on the altar for illumination, until midnight. During that period of introspection and reflection some pretty persistent thoughts began to arise that I should become a priest; thoughts that I firmly put aside because it did not accord with my concept of myself.

¹ Frederick Buechner, Listening to Your Life, (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1992) 12-13, quoted in The Online Retreat in Daily Life, Week 4, Creighton University (www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html)

When I came back to University in 2002, it was initially to research what to do about spiritual education, and appropriate chapel services, for the children's day school the School of Philosophy wished to establish in Toronto. I was leading the project and needed to Canadianize the program being offered in England and elsewhere around the world. That search led me into discussion with Fr. David Neelands, who was – at that time – my parish priest (interim) as well as Dean of Divinity. I would often encounter Fr. David at Trinity as I waited for the library to open. He often invited me to attend chapel. I demurred until the day of his installation as Dean. Up until that time I thought that the chapel was the preserve of the Divinity School, and I did not belong. However, for that day, the congregation of St. Thomas's was invited to attend the service; and so I went and was swept away by my first experience of a sung Mattins in many, many years. I had grown up with such a service and it spoke directly to the heart. From that day I began to regularly attend chapel services. It was as if something was calling to me; and this time I was disposed to hear the call – to what exactly I still did not know.

I became confused by the different calls I was hearing – one to serve in Sri Lanka, and one to establish a children's day school here; and sought spiritual direction in an attempt to find answers. One thing that became clear was that to head a school, if that was what I was to do, I needed more than a bachelor's degree. My professional designations would lapse as soon as I ceased to practice. Since the school I was planning had a substantial spiritual component, based mostly on Christianity, it seemed natural for me to take my Master's degree in Divinity.

A moment of discernment came when completing the application. I found myself unable to complete the application for a Master of Theological Studies, which had been my original intention; and instead applied for admission to the Master of Divinity program. Until that moment I had not consciously considered that I could become a priest; but, of course I had been considering it for a very long time, as my theological autobiography will demonstrate. I just was not consciously aware of doing so.

As Buechner has so aptly expressed:

It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and fully are – even if we tell it only to ourselves – because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing. It is important to tell our secrets too because it makes it easier that way to see where we have been in our lives and where we are going. It also makes it easier for other people to tell us a secret or two of their own, and exchanges like that have a lot to do with what being a family is all about. Finally, I suspect that it is by entering that deep place inside us where our secrets are kept that we come perhaps closer than we do anywhere else to the One who, whether we realize it or not, is of all our secrets the most telling and the most precious we have to tell.²

In embarking on this journey of making theological meaning of my autobiography, using the format in *Microtheology: Notes on Autobiographical Theology*, by Professor Ruttan, let me note that it is not easy to compress over fifty years of very active living into a few pages. There is much that has relevance. I will endeavour to be sparse, but ask the reader's indulgence in allowing the story to develop.

THE GIVEN IN MY LIFE

Family

I was born a cradle Anglican on April 15th, 1947; the first-born child of Jerry Bartley and Jessie McArthur. My parents, both first generation Anglo / Scottish Canadians from working class families, met in the RCAF during WWII. My father had been my mother's commanding officer. I was a 'special' child from the beginning because I was a 'blue' baby. Although I did not need surgery, I was monitored closely until Grade Three at which time the hole in my

² Frederick Buechner, *Telling Secrets*, (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1991) 2-3, , quoted in *The Online Retreat in Daily Life*, Week 2, Creighton University (www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html)

heart was pronounced healed. My two sisters, Marion and Laura were born, according to plan, at successive two year intervals. The other member of our household was my Nana, my father's mother, who lived with us until I was in my teens.

My father was upwardly mobile, and was focused on ascending from his working class roots. After the war he parlayed his graphic arts education into sales at a printing machinery business. His success earned him promotion to Branch Manager and a move to Winnipeg in 1954, just ahead of Hurricane Hazel. Our old house, at Bathurst and Sheppard did not survive the event. After four years we returned to Oakville, where we stayed for the remainder of my childhood; enjoying a typical middle class lifestyle. We had nice homes, in good neighbourhoods. My father had an executive job – albeit he traveled a lot on business. My mother stayed home. All of us were involved in Scouting or Guiding. We attended the Anglican church each and every Sunday; although neither of my parents were involved beyond membership. I became the “churchgoer” when I became an acolyte – the result of a fatal decision handed me by the Rector, either that or the choir - when I sought my Religion and Life Award for Scouts.

Education

As a child in Winnipeg I was always getting into some sort of mischief. My teachers thought it was because I was bored; and tried to have me accelerated. My mother, wisely, refused because she did not think it would be good for my social and emotional development. As a compromise I received special instruction from the Principal, Miss Gunter, in Canadian History and Art every day. That ended when we moved back to Ontario; but I recall it as a special and privileged time.

In Oakville, I attended the Public School system, doing well enough to get through; but an under-achiever. When I was old enough for High School, my father toyed with sending me to Appleby College; but I refused because I would have had to leave Scouts, which was a big part of my life, and girls. I prevailed, and attended the Public High School, where I was the only Grade Nine to attend

the Prom; continuing to do just enough to get by. I kept an active involvement in Scouts, the church's Acolyte Guild, joined the school Cadet Corps, and participated in Track and Football. By Grade eleven, I was steered into the extra option program to provide some stimulation.

I excelled in my extra-curricular activities; earning my Queen Scout Badge and attending a World Jamboree (Greece). I earned the Master Cadet Award and commanded the Cadet Corps. I played defensive end on a championship football team, and was Captain of the school's championship Rifle Team. I won my Senior Athletic Letter. I was the Art Editor on the Year Book Committee; and a member of the United Nations Club. I helped coordinate a campaign to increase food aid to India, and with others presented a petition to The Minister for External Affairs in Ottawa.

Along the way I wrote the LSAT exams; scoring high enough for acceptance into Law School, provided that I accomplished the other academic requirements.

Interests

I was quite eclectic in my interests. Art was a hobby – water colour, oil painting and sketching – that I pursued as an academic subject in High School, as others took music. I had a large model railroad. I collected stamps, was a photographer, and read voraciously. I loved the outdoors, and camped extensively. Indeed, my scout patrol had its own semi-permanent campsite at the District Camp near Creemore, and we were there at least once a month; including the winter. As I grew older, we began canoe tripping though Algonquin Park.

Paradigms

The predominant paradigm of my youth was leadership. I became a Senior Sixer in Cubs, a Troop Leader in Scouts, and the Cadet Commanding Officer of the school Cadet Corps. I was the Mate of my Rover Crew; and initiated the merger of four small Crews into a large organization that was able to lead a Provincial Rover Moot. I helped to organize a Regional Rover Round Table, and a series of Rover-Ranger joint moots. I was the Head of the church's

Server's Guild. For a year I also took on a Scout Troop as Acting Scoutmaster until a permanent leader could be found.

However, there was a secondary paradigm that emerges on reflection – that of the Church. It would be presumptive to call it spirituality. I found that I loved to be at church. For me serving at the altar was a privilege and joy, and I sought opportunities to do more of it; always willing to fill in for others, even of days where I was already on team. Indeed, as I grew older and could drive, I more than occasionally was at Church several times on Sunday; serving the 8:00 service, staying to serve the 9:30 or the 11:00, and returning to serve Evensong at 7:00 p.m. I had my first 'call' to vocation at this time – the Squire's Vigil for Rovers, I referred to earlier. That experience affected my choice of College on entering the University of Toronto. I avoided Trinity, because that was where they made priests.

CHOICES

Education

At nineteen I entered New College at the University of Toronto, in Social & Philosophical Studies, a common first year program for the social sciences; which I intended to be a pre-law program. In second year, I chose to major in History, which I found did not suit me; and changed to Political Science, which did. Over the next several years it became obvious to me that law was not what I wanted to do with my life after all. The problem then became what to do to earn a living.

Family

I met my first wife, Gayle, while we were both living in New College Residence. She was a Physiotherapy student. We were married entering our graduating year. Gayle and I had two children together, Brenna and Andrew. Both are now adults. We were divorced in 1991. I married Kay in 1994, the second marriage for each of us. We had both been in marriages that lasted for eighteen years. We have not had children together.

Occupation

While In School I worked primarily in camera shops, and one summer even managed the Camera Department of a Sayvette Store for Japan Camera. I also joined the 48th Highlanders of Canada as an Officer Cadet in the Reserve Officer University Training Program, and subsequently spent my summers either being trained or training others.

Deciding what to do with my life was something of a dilemma, having decided law was not it. I wrote the foreign service exams and was eventually accepted; but by then had “been recruited” by Canada Life to become a Life Insurance Agent. After several years in personal sales I joined North American Life (Nalaco) as a Field Training Specialist in their Head Office.

On qualifying for the Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) designation I was transferred to Nalaco’s Financial Planning Division, and assisted in providing case and technical assistance to the Field Force across Canada. I became the Manager of the Division, ran agent schools, published a financial planning library, authored a series of financial planning articles and spoke at various meetings and conferences.

When Nalaco was undergoing reorganization I accepted a buyout, and took the opportunity to establish a financial planning partnership - Bartley, Payette & Company - in Hamilton. I also co-founded a computer software firm, R.O.I. Strategies Inc., to create financial planning software. The latter took most of our attention. However, we could not establish sufficient market penetration and the company was closed; along with the practice. I Relocated to Toronto as Regional Vice-President of Integrated Financial Services, a financial services brokerage company; and established another financial planning partnership, B/A Capital Management. During this time I also qualified for the Chartered Financial Consultant (CH.F.C.) designation.

After years of commuting to Toronto, I wanted something where I would be able to spend more time with my family; and so bought a financial planning practice in Belleville – a self-contained community – in 1989. However the move precipitated the breakup of my marriage. The practice in Belleville failed due to

the strain; combined with the bankruptcy of my business associate, which put an intolerable financial burden on me. I relocated to Toronto in late 1992, and joined Leon Frazer & Associates in Toronto as a financial planner. By 1995 I was appointed Vice President of Leon Frazer Executive Financial Consultants. In 1996 was granted the Registered Financial Planner designation (R.F.P.) and licensed as a Certified Financial Planner (CFP).

Leon Frazer was sold in 1997. Coincident with this, Kay and I were experiencing ennui, and decided to change the focus of our lives from success to significance; accepting a request to become involved with the Paynter Children's Home in Sri Lanka. The Home and Mission had been established by Kay's family, and we were being asked to take our turn in providing leadership. As a result of that decision, I joined Canadian Investment Consultants as a representative to Canadians resident abroad; expecting to do some business with Canadian expats in South and South-East Asia to help with our expenses. The Mission could not afford to pay us. We were expected to look after our ourselves; and after some calculation, thought that we would be able to do so.

Military Service

I served with the 48th Highlanders of Canada, a reserve regiment, for twenty years. Along the way I served as Platoon Commander, Signals Officer, Transport Officer, Quartermaster, Company Commander and Operations and Training Officer. I also served on staff at Area Headquarters. I grew a company from a small nucleus to full strength as the commander of the Recruit company. Subsequently I commanded an all-arms mechanized combat team consisting of a complete infantry company and a complete armoured squadron, plus attached elements of artillery and engineers. I retired with the rank of Major.

Religious Adherence

My first wife, Gayle, was from a United Church background. At the beginning of our marriage, we tried both church traditions, seeking a home; but did not find one in which we were both comfortable. When our children were born we discovered Grace Church Milton (Anglican), with which we were both comfortable, and which warmly welcomed young couples with children. After

some time, we both became more involved. The Rector drafted the baseball team, of which I was a member, onto the Parish Council. I served as Treasurer, Chair of Parish Council and People's Warden. During this time I also served as a Planned Giving Officer for Diocese of Niagara.

After my marriage broke up and I relocated to Toronto, I sought help in the form of a support group, and joined The Beaches Separate Support Group (BSSG) which met at St. John the Baptist Norway. There I met my current wife Kay. The first meeting I attended was also her first. We are the only 'graduates' of that program. Kay attended St. Crispin's Anglican in Scarborough, and it seemed natural, since I was interested in her, that I attend there also. We both became members of Parish Council. She was Rector's Warden, and I was the Lay Delegate to Synod.

Since moving back into the centre of the City in 1997, we have attended St. Thomas's Huron Street, an Anglo-Catholic shrine. In fact, we had had been drawn to it some years earlier when we were courting. We attended a midnight Stations of the Cross on Maundy Thursday, and the experience enthralled us. As a result we began to attend mid-week noon hour Eucharists together, several years before joining the congregation.

Volunteer Service

During my first marriage, I was career oriented; striving for success in both the business world and my principal avocation, the Militia. However, over time, my church life began to be more important to me. By the time I was Warden, I was beginning to make decisions about my Militia service based on how it affected my going to Church. I retired from the Militia during the period of my marriage breakup. Only then was I aware of how destructive of my relationship my military service had been. It had required a lot of time taken from my family life.

After my marriage failed, my perspective changed and I sought service opportunities that allowed me to help make a difference. Kay and I both assisted with the leadership and programs of the BSSG. Given my experience of business failure, I started a subsidiary support group, Looking for Work, for

unemployed mid-life adults. Financial hardship stemming from job loss had been the triggering factor in the separation and divorce of many members.

My experience with Looking for Work led me to King-Bay Chaplaincy (KBC) – a workplace ministry in downtown Toronto. KBC had run a re-employment program in the early 1980's, called Operation Bootstrap, under the leadership of Graham Tucker, an Anglican priest. I was seeking their help with our program. They offered me a position on their Board, and the responsibility of re-launching Operation Bootstrap. As leader of the project, I served as advocate for the unemployed with other organizations, groups and government. I also assisted with and conducted Serendipity small groups on Grief, Divorce Recovery, and Mid-Life Crisis. As a member of KBC, I attended Discovery, a co-educational Cursillo program, and became a regular participant in a 4th Day Group.

Kay was a member of the School of Philosophy (SOP) in Toronto when I met her. Looking for something we could do together, I also joined. At SOP I was introduced to the contemplative life, mantra meditation, and a rule of life – a balance of study, meditation, work and leisure that I was later to discover modeled the Rule of Benedict. As a senior member of the School, I served as a volunteer Tutor.

While we were still at SOP, Kay and I began to question the importance of what we were doing with our lives; and began to search for meaning. That search appeared to have been fulfilled in late 1996 when we were asked to serve at the Paynter Home for Children in Sri Lanka, and help to save it from closure. We accepted, and sold our home in Canada; prepared to move permanently to Sri Lanka. However, as it turned out the immigration laws would have made it very difficult for us to achieve resident status – me because I was a foreign man (foreign women can be sponsored for resident status without difficulty), and Kay because although born in Sri Lanka she did not have Sri Lankan citizenship. Parents of children born at Independence from Britain had the option of choosing either British or Sri Lankan citizenship for them. Kay's father chose British.

Never-the-less, we committed to the Paynter Home, and over a period of years have struggled to rebuild its reputation and decaying buildings. Both of us are members of the Trust Board. Up until I entered Divinity we spent almost half the year in Sri Lanka, working at the Homes two to three months at a time. The balance of the time we spent in Canada, earning the funds for our next trip, and doing deputation work to raise funds to support the Homes, staff and children.

At the Home I took on the responsibility for twice daily chapel services, because there was nobody else to do so, and thus began to plan and lead worship, and prepare and deliver sermons. Fortunately I had the theological library of two generations of priests – Kay’s father and grandfather – and several inspired lay leaders – Kay’s Aunts and cousin – all of whom had been involved in the “family enterprise”, to guide me.

During our involvement with the Paynter Home, Kay and I continued to be members of the School of Philosophy. Because of our experience in Sri Lanka, and our efforts to re-establish a children’s school there, we were asked to head-up SOP’s effort to start the children’s day school in Canada referred to earlier. The school was aborted, as it was about to accept registrations, when the financial backer withdrew. That withdrawal, essentially stemming from a lack of faith the school could survive without the presence of the backer, crystallized our decision to leave the School of Philosophy; coincident with my applying to the Divinity program.

I am still officially Managing Director of the Paynter Home, although we now have a very capable Sri Lankan woman providing day-to-day management and direction.

Paradigms

One of the paradigms that emerges in my life after entering the work force remains that of leadership. In just about everything I have been involved in I became a leader of one sort or another.

However, there is a second paradigm, that of ennui, that is not seen so clearly until one looks at the overall pattern of the life. I never truly felt fulfilled

in what I was studying and by the work I was doing. I more or less drifted into the financial services industry by default, not by design. The industrial psychologists determined “insurance” was a field suitable for me, and employment counselors sent me to interview at insurance companies after I left University. Thus I began a career path I followed until the end of 2004. However, the history of my life illustrates that my heart and mind were truly elsewhere; for I gave a lot of my attention to things other than the sale of financial products and services. My avocations became my vocation in a manner of speaking ... but I never had the vision, or perhaps the courage, to leave the financial services field for some other career path.

MAKING MEANING

Grace

I believe that I have been granted considerable grace in my life. I have been gifted with many abilities, including leadership, and the confidence – if not always the social skills – to use them.

It is clear, at least to me, that I strayed from my appointed path at an early age; and that the ennui I experienced was the result of not doing what God really wanted me to do. I did not truly understand myself, and what gave me joy. The signs were there; but I chose to disregard them, and pursue my desire to be successful instead. Opportunities were given to me, time and again, to reconsider my career path; but I still did not listen. It took the failure of my marriage and my business for me to begin searching for meaning.

In endeavouring to solve my own problems, without much reference to God, I made a mess of my life. For several months I spent my own time in the wilderness, living on a boat on Frenchman’s Bay in Pickering; just me and my thoughts. I struggled with trying to understand why God had taken everything and everybody I valued from me; but curiously, I never denied him or ceased to believe. Finally, one day I determined that I could not manage my life by myself, and consciously gave it to God. From that moment my life changed. God gave me another chance at life.

I surfaced from my funk and determined to try to put myself back together again. My first step was finding a support group to help me deal with the issues surrounding my marriage breakdown that I had not yet dealt with or taken responsibility for. That search led me to the Beaches Self Support Group, and Kay who is my wife today.

Very soon after that I ran across Bill Tynkaluk, an old acquaintance from my days at North American Life, and was offered employment doing financial planning for his company. When I arrived at 8 King Street with my files and reference materials, all the desk and filing cabinet drawers in my new office were open, as if to welcome me to my new life.

My involvement with King-Bay Chaplaincy, and the Discovery program, exposed me to prayer, witness and sharing on a much deeper level than I had previously experienced. It also opened new networks of friends who helped me to rebuild my life and a sense of purpose and worth.

I was given the gift of time to rediscover myself, and a period of stability in which to do so, before God asked me to take the next step in following the path He had in mind for me.

Discernment

In 1996, Kay and I went to Sri Lanka for Christmas, to be with her mother and family at the Paynter Home for Destitute Children. On the plane we had been sharing the book "Halftime: Changing Your Life From Success to Significance", by Bob Buford. At the airport in Colombo we were met by a member of the Homes Trust Board, whose very first words to us were, "We need you here, please come!" Over the course of the next two and a half weeks, we were touched by the children and by the need, and we returned to Canada determined to see how it could be done. Both of us felt that what we were doing in Canada was not so special or important. We could easily be replaced by any of a great many people. We certainly were not indispensable. In Sri Lanka, however, they had desperate need of everything we had to offer. It appeared that the purpose for which we had been put on earth, and the fulfillment of the training and experiences we had been given, had been found.

Both of us decided to answer that call. Accordingly we sold our house and our possessions to finance our new life, and moved to Sri Lanka.

As it happened, we were not able to stay in Sri Lanka permanently, due to the immigration laws. Thus, we go and stay for several months at a time, and then return to Canada. As a result it fell to us to do the deputation work in the west which had not been actively pursued for some time.

My experiences in Sri Lanka led me into what can only be called lay ministry; and began to prepare me to accept the idea of taking the next logical step, that of ordination. It became evident fairly quickly that to continue to live at a children's home in Sri Lanka as a western man it would be necessary to acquire some qualifications that would provide an acceptable reason to the government authorities for my presence and involvement there. However, it was becoming increasingly evident that anti-Christian feeling in the country was going to make that precarious even so. In discussion with the Rt. Rev Duleep de Chickera, the Bishop of Colombo, I was brought to realize that for me the mission field is in Canada. The work in Sri Lanka must be in Sri Lankan hands going forward. The days of the Western "missionary" in such places are numbered. They do, however, still need western expertise and financial resources to become self sufficient. Our task is to help them get there.

Over the past eight years, with God's help, we have managed to put the Paynter Home back on its feet. We have reconstituted the Board and found competent Sri Lankan management. We have helped to reconnect the Home with donors and supporters, and find new ones. The old buildings of the Home have been renovated, and there is a renewed sense of mission. We have done in Sri Lanka what we were led there to do – complete the task of indigenization that Kay's family did not successfully complete.

The request we received to lead the School of Philosophy's development of a children's school in Toronto focused our attention back on Canada, and led me directly to Trinity College. The School's purpose in establishing a children's day school was to perpetuate our Christian heritage, the greatest civilizing influence of the past two thousand years. The School, however, lacked the faith

which made that development possible. That realization, together with the guidance received from Bishop Duleep, has led me to seek ordination in Canada, to play a part in the preservation of that heritage.

On reflection, it appears that the history of my life has been a process of nudges by God, to direct my path into the direction He wishes me to go.

Who is God for Me?

I suppose my concept of God is childlike, in the sense that one is always a child in his or her parents' house. How else can I describe the indescribable? How can I, the finite define the infinite?

God is the constant presence in my life; the one who is always with me, who listens to my troubles, shares my joys, and carries me when my burdens overwhelm me. God is the one who gives me the courage to risk, and to persevere.

God is the inner voice that tells me the truth of my decisions, even when I pretend not to hear. Yet, like the wise parent God lets me make my own choices, even when they may be the wrong ones; and is there to pick me up when I fall, if I but ask for help. Again, like the wise parent, God may not always provide the solution I am seeking, but the one that God knows is right for me.

In Christ, God is woven into the very texture of my being, incarnate in the core of my reality and present in my heart - a mystery that I cannot grasp by reason. I experience the mystery of Christ within by contemplation, meditation, reflection and prayer - the intercourse of the heart.

I am more closely related to God than to my own parents; for my parents were a constant presence in my life for the first two decades of my existence, but God is with me always.

Just as God is present in me through the immanence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, God is present in all other beings. In the presence of others, I seek to serve the Christ before me.

Vocation / Alienation

I believe that I have been called by God to ordained ministry. I believe that vocation has been confirmed in my experience of parish ministry during

my internship, and of clinical pastoral ministry during my CPE placement. I have been completely happy, and have felt completely fulfilled, during the course of my entire experience of the Master of Divinity program. It is my bliss.

Yet, there is some sadness now as my dream of ordination appears to be receding. I have attempted to be accepted as a postulant in three dioceses, and have been rejected on all three occasions. My sense of call is not discerned by others; and I must begin to search again for what it is that God is calling me to do; for I believe that He is calling me to do something, I just may not have heard Him clearly yet. In the circumstances in which I find myself, I can only agree with Cardinal Newman, who said:

God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of Peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep his commandments.

Whatever, wherever I am I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him He does nothing in vain. He knows what he is about. He may take away my friends, He may throw me among strangers, He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me – still He knows what He is about. Therefore I will trust Him.³

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³ Cardinal Newman, *A Meditation*, The Online Retreat in Daily Life, Week 11, Creighton University (www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html)