

# Inquiring Minds: A few reflections over the month

"Nature is pleased with simplicity. And nature is no dummy." [Isaac Newton](#) Issue #24 June 2013

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## STILL SEEKING SIMPLICITY

Having spent eight years in a boarding school where I studied and slept in a simple 8 x 12 foot rooms, I've always felt most at ease with a minimalist lifestyle. Life was so simple then.

I guess I'm kind of a dinosaur. I prefer to mow my own lawns, and do as many household repairs as I can. I drive 4-cylinder fuel-efficient cars, and keep them for at least a decade. I do not shop; I buy what I need and limit my desires. I dislike dealing with Comcast, and am trying to find a better way to regain my independence from that monopoly. I hate flying, mainly because of the hassle, the expense, and the wait. I love my privacy, and hate being on a cell phone leash. I conserve everything, take short showers, and hate to throw things away. I don't do Facebook, take five minutes to check my email, and prefer to phone than text. I realize I'm a bit eccentric, and am pretty OK with that. Yet, I may get a "dumb" cell phone for emergencies, and that's because phone booths are no more. I *am* a dinosaur, but a *happy* one.

## RE-EVALUATING FAITH

I just finished reading a very informative, interesting, and well-documented twenty-two page [objective essay](#). It examined age-old question now being revisited by honest biblical scholars: the historical accuracy or not of the New Testament Gospels. Such questions and conclusions could be



Joseph Campbell, circa 1984

threatening to believers who base their faith on a very literal interpretation of the Gospels rather than the wisdom gleaned from the stories therein. I found this essay refreshingly credible like the Frenchman [Alexis de Tocqueville](#)'s view of America in 1835, but even less subjective. It also helped me to have been prepped by books like Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*, and a few others to see beyond dubious literalism of the revisionist gospel writers, and to marvel and wonder at the good which emerged from the Christian story over the ages. Not, of course, the serious problems arising when religious fanaticism overruled common sense and decency then and now. Truth is so multi-layered.

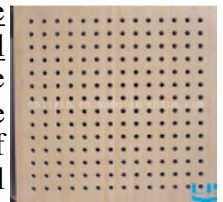
## DEALING WITH NEGATIVITY

Some sour with age, and others mellow and shine. My challenge, of late, is to deal patiently with older friends who have soured, and not be sucked into their negativity and anger. They are also shadows of myself, making me ask if I am this way, too, at times if not often. Some have lost friends because of their oft righteous indignation and ranting. Have I also? Am I becoming opinionated? Good questions to ask of oneself, for I seek the intersubjective validation of my associates and friends to

help guide right thought and action. These associates and friends are oftentimes my socio-feedback tools. I can learn from our them if I know what to look for.

## MAKING NUMBERS REAL

To give my former students an idea of the scope of the 600,000 deaths in our country's Civil War (recently revised to 720,000), I had them look at and compute the holes in the acoustical tiles in our classroom ceiling. There turned out to be some 437,000 holes there, So it would take almost all the holes in two full 30x30 foot classrooms to equal the number of deaths caused by the American Civil War. These are more than all the casualties of Americans in all wars before and after. We were so amazed with the magnitude of the number, and, together, we pondered the widespread pain and suffering war can bring.



Acoustic Ceiling Tile

## A MORNING WAKEUP CALL

*A billion plus heart beats now  
bring this battered body and  
failing mind beyond middle age  
where I ponder more and more  
the meaning of it all... until  
I hear hear that gleeful voice,  
"Papa, where are you?"  
And my heart flutters  
mindlessly with joy.*

**PERSONAL UPDATE:** We are looking forward to taking care of Lois one day a week this summer. Hope you are faring well on your journey whatever that might be. Drop me a note if you can relate to any of this. -J