



Monday Musing: August 31st, 2026.
Underneath...

Long ago I read a book that said that trees communicate with each other through the earth. It said they take care of each other. Though, that doesn't explain the crowding out of young trees that they can't get enough sun to grow. None the less, sometimes it sounds like they're speaking as their branches are moved against each other by the wind or when the wind blows through the leaves. Imagine if the forest did have a way of communicating. What would the trees say? What would they say about us? I wonder if their connections would be land lines underneath the ground or would they somehow pop onto the invisible radio waves our cell phones use?

I remember years ago at my grandparents' cottage they had an old wall phone, a land line, a party line actually. We had to know our 'ring' and Nan always said to be careful what you say as the others on the party line might be listening. Could they? Would they? Years later the cottage got a dedicated land line like at home, and at home, I got my own land line and my own phone and only because I was working and could pay for it. My

own installation costs. My own phone bills. My own responsibility. So grown up.

Now just about everyone has a cell phone, not the flip up kind like on Star Trek, but a flat cell phone, sometimes in a fancy personalized case, easy size for your back pocket or your purse. Smart phones too. And contracts and options and data and hefty monthly bills sometimes. Who pays for those? And our cell phones are so different than the telephones of yester-year.

Now our cell phones house us: our identities, driver's licences, health cards, credit cards, banking, calendars, pictures, contact lists, personal health information, and emergency family numbers. Cell phones are us. Just tap here and tap there, purchases are made immediately and zapped right out of your bank account. Cell phones go with us wherever we go. We no longer go home to hear if someone called looking for us. And unless we provide others with our numbers, no one can contact us either.

Remember the white pages of the phone books where we could look up anyone and get their full name, address and phone number - unless they had paid for a 'private number'? Remember the yellow pages? Remember the blue pages where we actually learned how government was organized by following the bigger bold headings?

Remember when our phones were about connection in a different way than they are now? They're so personalized now. Convenient yes, and so much me-focused. What lies underneath the evolution of our phones from what they were to what they are today? What lies underneath any of our modern-day technological advances? What lies behind the consumer driven culture in which we live?

Our phones connect us directly with the internet, social media, and the world. At our fingertips we have the answers we seek through AI. And we can chat away with the technology too. Yet, recently, AI gave me wrong answers. I knew the answer. I was just checking if AI did. And social media shares anyone's anything – facts, fiction, opinion - equally. When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, he said he was born into this world to testify to the truth. Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Today we might ask what is the truth that lies underneath the evolution of the cell phone? How is it a reflection of who we are or who we have become?

Prayer

Holy God of Truth, of life and of love,
Of compassion and community,
May we learn to turn our gaze away from ourselves,
May we look up and into each other's eyes.
May we see there the truths our souls reveal
That are otherwise missed, lost, hidden, buried,
Within the devices we hold in our hands. Amen.

Scripture This Week

Exodus 12:1-14	Instructions for the first Passover
Psalms 149	Sing to God a new song.
Romans 13:8-14	Owe no one anything but love.
Matthew 18:15-20	Where two or three are gathered.

TR Question (theological reflection)

'Have no other gods before God' is one of the commandments. How have we turned our technology into another god? What lies underneath? What do we give to and how do we worship this new god? Why?

May your days be filled with love and laughter, and may you spend time together in person, and in the forests of our spirits,

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