

A Spirituality Streaked With HUNGERING!

In the last issue of Selah, we dwelt on the THIRSTS in our life. These arise from within us in the form of questions about our faith, our inner melancholy and dissatisfactions with the way things are. **Yeah, all these are built-in thirsts that call us back to God!!** They call us to examine our routines and ritual performances and seek an inner, private spirituality, a BEING with God.

But, when it comes to food, it is a different matter. We hardly feel our hunger. After all, Malaysians never go hungry. Why? Because we are always eating. Remember, it has been said of us that we eat only one meal a day?! (And that's because we never stop, once we start eating) ☺

WAH! ALL THAT FOOD!!

Wah lao! Better be careful. Dunno what may be lurking in our food. We eat so much, we hardly feel hungry. Once in a while we get put off our food, cos' we found a cockroach beneath the pile; or we're on a diet to look good and feel good. Obesity and high cholesterol are high on our list of ailments.

Hey, how much different is eating with all that I'm feeding myself? The newspapers which I gobble down and hardly digest? My lecture notes, some reference books, and a novel or two? **Huh?! Some more? Where got space left to eat, so full already?**

YUCKS! LADY'S FINGERS, CHICKEN FEET AND RAT'S TAIL.

Ever wonder if a name has ever put one off? I have been put off. I never eat lady's fingers because of its name. Psychologically I can't eat it and have never done so. Chicken feet or 'kai kiok'? Err, I tried it once to please a friend. It was so delicious. But, I couldn't eat it again, cos' every time I think of doing it, I see chicken running around bare feet, and I feel sick. Now, one fear that I conquered was and is, rat's tail or 'loh shi fun'. It looks horribly like a rat's tail, but it tastes so good. I love it. ☺

How many of us get put off the good stuff, just because the name sounds yucky, or boring or even frightening? How many of us eat the harmful deep fried stuff just because we don't like lady's fingers? Haha. I am one of them.

What about the hungers of our life? Pornographic materials, romantic novels, sadistic tear downs of society are what makes up most of our diet. Sadly, the real food needed, a.k.a. 'lady's fingers' (haha) ~ the 'double edged sword', God's Word has become either so untasty to swallow! We may discard it also because we feel it is boring or no longer relevant. We too may have felt the abuse from people who read the Word out of context. Or maybe, we are victims of Bible battery.

You know the health hazard we are risking? **We are walking round living our lives, with a LOST COMPASS!** No more urgings and kicks in the butt. No more pointing out the way. It can get comfortable but highly dangerous without the Word in our lives.

EAT HIS BOOK

Hey, don't you get it? Maybe we have been **eating it all wrong**, swallowing it like a bitter pill; misunderstanding God's loving feeding for a can of worms? We selectively hear what we want to and it tastes like honey to the lips, and like Jonah, we run away from anything fishy or difficult.

Don't you see we are getting sick by the moment and our generation is diseased too? **Only His Word, lamp unto our feet can give us life!** (Psalm 119:33-37) Real life. Radical life! Do you think it is going to be boring when we attempt to turn the other cheek or wash the wounds of others like the Good Samaritan? We can only eat, as we bring our lives under the Word and let His Word rain down on us. And like rain that waters the earth, new life grows. (Isaiah 55:10)

'Selah' an isolated word found in certain psalms (e.g. Ps 3, 4, 62 etc) and Hab 3 has uncertain meaning. Most likely though, it is a liturgical notation that calls for a brief musical interlude or for a brief liturgical response by congregation. Therefore 'selah' may mean "stop and listen".

'Selah' is chosen as the title of this newsletter based on this understanding. Here we would like to call for a time of pause and consider on what is said here regarding our spirituality, our life as Christian.

Source: NIV Study Bible: Psalms: Authorship & Title. Zondervan.
Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: Selah.

FEASTING ON THE REAL THING

Come, eat and live. Come, stand under the Word and savor the real taste of His Word – **bitter sweet, spicy and hot, sweet and soothing, all at different times.** This is a call to feast. And usually, the best way to feast is with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other (the world and all its needs). Our fore fathers called this practice, LECTIO DIVINA (as seen below), presenting our whole self and our whole life and,

- 1 ~ LET THE WORDS FLOW DOWN as we read again and again His Word in a posture of readiness and expectancy. Listen for the word or phrase that speaks to you. What is the Spirit drawing your attention to? (LECTIO)
- 2 ~ LET US CHEW THE MEAT as we dig our teeth and heart into the words in Scripture that call out to us, be it in comfort or in rebuke. Repeat aloud the word or phrase to which you are drawn. Make connections between it and your life. What is God saying to you by means of this word or phrase? (MEDITATIO)
- 3 ~ LET US GUSH FORTH in prayer, offering our heart's honest response to God, His world and all that He is saying. What is God leading me to pray? (ORATIO)

"The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home."




Augustine of Hippo, or Saint Augustine (354-430) was one of the most important figures in the development of Western Christianity, there considered to be one of the church fathers. He framed the concepts of original sin and justwar.

Augustine became a Christian at the age of 33, much owed to his mother's prayer and tears. He became a priest at 36 and a bishop at 41. Yet in his life, it was God himself speaking to him in the Scriptures redirected Augustine's *love of life to a life of love.*

Augustine is still acclaimed and condemned in our day. He is a prophet for today, trumpeting the need to scrap escapisms and stand face-to-face with personal responsibility and dignity. Born in present day Algeria as the eldest son of Saint Monica, he was educated in North Africa and baptized in Milan. His works—including *The Confessions*, which is often called the first Western autobiography—are still read around the world.

The Bible Read by a Prodigal



On one occasion, traveling in the West, John Vassar, one of the most powerful personal evangelists of the 19th century, visited the home of a praying wife whose husband was an infidel. She begged for a Bible, and Vassar gave her one and went his way. He had no sooner left when the husband, coming home, saw the book and was enraged. Seizing the Bible with one hand and the ax with the other, he hurried to the woodpile where he placed it on the chopping block and hacked it crosswise in two. Returning to the house, he threw half of the destroyed Bible at his wife, saying, "As you claim a part of all the property around here, there is your share of this." The other half he tossed into his tool shed. Months later on a wet winter's day, the man, wanting to get away from his Christian wife, retreated to his shed. The time passed slowly, and in boredom he looked around for something to read. Thumbing through the mutilated Bible, his attention was caught by the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He became absorbed in the parable only to discover that its ending belonged to his wife's section. He crept into the house and secretly searched for the bottom half of the book, but was unable to find. Finally he broke down, asked her for it, and *read the story again and again.* In the process he came to the heavenly Father like a penitent prodigal returning home.

- 4 ~ LET US DIGEST IT INTO OUR LIVES as we become the Word alive, as we live out our lives in a crooked and depraved generation. We can do this through resting in God's presence. Staying open to Him, listen and remain in peace and silence. How is God revealing himself to you? (CONTEMPLATION)

Are you hungry? I am.

REFLECTIONS

1. *What have you been 'feeding' yourself on everyday?*
2. *What taste does God's Word leave in your life?*
3. *What is preventing you from living the LECTIO DIVINA?*

Try out this passage. James 1: 22-25

Books to Read:

1. Peace, Richard. *Contemplative Bible Reading: Experiencing God Through Scripture.* NAV Press.
 2. Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina.* St. Paul Pub.
-
-