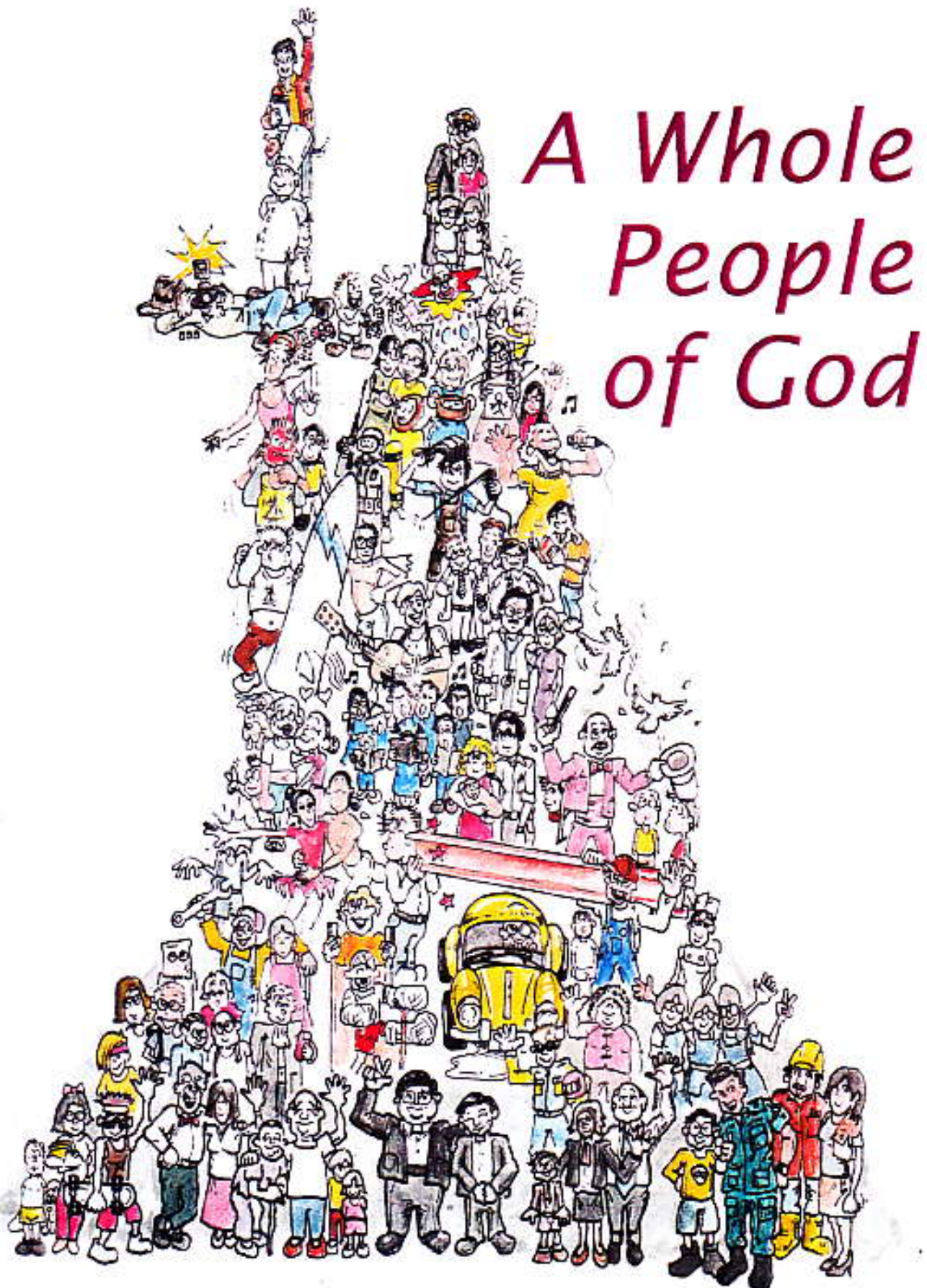


# THE SALTSHAKER

Mita (P) 113/04/98  
April 1998



*A Whole  
People  
of God*



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## ... Pastor's Word







Have you received the book-mark that gives you a two-month sermon calendar? Did you pick up a booklet called the "At Home Pack" from the ushers which gives you some ideas in following-up on the Sunday worship? Did you notice new logos in our church news bulletin?

They are all part of our new Christian Education curriculum which was started in January this year. Called "**Whole People of God**" or **WPOG** for short, it is designed to help us worship and learn as a whole, as one unit or body. The curriculum is applicable to all in the church from toddlers, children and youth to adults and seniors. Each week the same Bible theme will be the focus for Sunday worship, the Church school and even small groups.

However after receiving these pamphlets mentioned earlier, you may not have noticed any significant changes pertaining to our Sunday worship. The "**Whole People of God**" curriculum is designed following the Common Lectionary. We have been following the Common Lectionary for Sunday worship for the last three years. The lectionary is a schedule of scripture readings which help us to observe the Christian year and gives us a balanced study on the books and themes of the Bible. The Common Lectionary is observed by many churches; Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist.

One important feature is that the lessons taught in the church school are in tandem with the preaching calendar. Similarly, some small groups are also studying on a topic that is similar to the theme preached on Sunday.

# The Christian Year and the Lectionary

The Christian Calendar		
SEASON	LENGTH	COLOR
Advent 	4 weeks preceding Christmas	Purple (or Blue)
Christmas 	Dec. 25-Jan. 6 (13 days: Christmas Day to Epiphany)	White & Gold
Season after Epiphany (or ordinary time) 	Jan. 7-Shrove Tuesday (length varies)	Green*
Lent 	46 days and 6 Sundays preceding Easter	Purple
Easter 	The Great Fifty Days beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with Pentecost	White & Gold (Red on Pentecost)
Season after Pentecost (or ordinary time) 	Sunday after Pentecost (Trinity Sunday) to Sunday preceding Advent (Feast of Christ Sunday)—length varies	Green*
* Designates that the season color is green except for the first and last Sundays, which are special days and their color is white. Churches who do not celebrate Transfiguration as the Last Sunday after Epiphany have green here also.		

There are many great advantages in having such a Christian Education curriculum. Firstly, it helps integrate worship and education. It has always been difficult to bring our youth in Church school programmes to the more adult-type Sunday Worship service. We have one church but the two systems seem to run in different directions. Thus some youth in Church school feel uncomfortable and even lost during Worship services. We hope that sharing the same lectionary-based curriculum will facilitate the phasing-in of our youth from Church school to Sunday services.

Secondly, it enables the church to grow together. What brings us together? The WPOG draws us through a common curriculum of study and growth. We are all exposed to the same topic of Scripture each week. What is preached at the service is taught in Church school and discussed at small group meetings. The WPOG enables us to have a common ground for sharing and discussion.

Thirdly, it encourages family interaction. The child, parent and grand-parent are learning the same passages from the Scriptures each week. Families and extended families can share their Sunday experiences. You may ask your child or nephew about their Sunday's lesson and add what you learnt in the Worship service. The family can discuss their Sunday experience over lunch. The "At Home Pack" is a further step to help individuals and groups grow.

We have adopted this curriculum because of its potential in uniting us as one body; with a common focus, similar Scripture lessons and shared experiences. It is not a cure-all. The curriculum merely points the way for us. It remains for each of us to respond as faithful disciples of Jesus and build the "Body of Christ".

Jen Huat



## ... Symbols of Easter

The existence of Easter eggs and bunnies has become a all too familiar sight at Easter. Few people are aware of the history behind Easter symbols. The egg has been an object of religious adoration symbolising the transition from non-existence to life. More importantly, the egg has been used as a symbol of resurrection. The egg is seen as a life giving tomb and the hatching chick as a representation of Christ's resurrection from the tomb.

The bunny came to be associated with Easter because it symbolises the moon, which is used to determine the date of Easter (Easter falls on the 1st Sunday after the first full moon). The helplessness of the rabbit also represents Man, whose only defence is Christ himself.

Few of us are aware however, that the origin and character of Easter came from old pagan influences. The worship of Tammuz (which was the worship of nature, life and reproduction), first used the egg as an appropriate symbol of life. The churches of the 3rd and 4th centuries adopted these practices (ie. "Christianised") to cater to the prejudices and customs of their heathen associates, with the hope to win the favour of the unconverted and bring them into the fold of the Church.

Despite this pagan origin, the symbols and traditions used at Easter today are long stripped of all paganistic connotations and are instead used as a rich symbol of the passion of Christ. Different cultures celebrate Easter with their own special traditions and symbols. In Greece, people paint and exchange crimson red eggs to honour the blood of Christ shed for sinful Man. In Germany and Austria however, the eggs are strangely not exchanged at Easter but are painted green and exchanged on Maundy Thursday to mark the last supper and the crucifixion of Christ.

In Russia, beautifully decorated porcelain eggs were linked with royalty. The intricate and precious masterpieces of Faberge were commissioned by the Tzars as presents within the royal household at Easter. The exchange of intricately decorated porcelain eggs is a fundamental component of Orthodox Easter tradition not only as a symbol of resurrection but of Christ's royalty and kingship. Romanians have a unique way of celebrating Easter. Their Easter tradition calls for the cleaning of houses, wearing of new clothes and the partaking of the ritual bath before going to church. These are used to signify a new beginning for mankind following the resurrection of Jesus Christ which promised the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of souls. Romanians also celebrate with a feast and painted eggs to mark the end of fasting and Lent.

No matter how Easter is celebrated in its many forms all over the world, the symbols used at Easter today serve as a rich reminder of the Saviour that was crucified and who died for the sins of all Mankind. They have come to represent for Christians all over the world the death, resurrection and the beginning of new life for Christians who have come to believe in Jesus Christ and who claim a new life in Him.

Elaine





SUNDAY	March 1 Bapt & Memb Class	8 • Bapt & Memb Class • SS tchrs' retreat	15 Baptical counsellor try • Bapt & Memb Class	22 * W S C S handicraft Cambodia prayer mtg	29 spiritual retreat Bapt & Memb Class	5 • new Member Reception Gleeclub	12 EASTER!	19 caring Baptical Cse	26 * W S C S Exco mtg
MONDAY	2	9	16	23 Bapt & Memb Class	30 Holy wk Service	6	13	20	27
TUESDAY	3 WPOG coord mtg	10	17 LCECmtg	24	31 Holy wk Service • Harri Rryr haji	7	14	21	28
WEDNESDAY	4 prayer mtg	11 prayer mtg Parish mtg	18 prayer mtg	25 prayer mtg	April 1 Holy wk Service prayer mtg	8 prayer mtg	15 prayer mtg	22 prayer mtg	29 prayer mtg
THURSDAY	5	12	19	26 AFLM: OT survey	2 maundy thurs service	9 AFLM: OT survey	16 AFLM: OT survey	23 AFLM: OT survey	30 AFLM: OT survey
FRIDAY	6 WSCS bible study * S S tchrs' retreat	13 Baptical counsellor try	20 WSCS bible study	27 WSCS bible study	3 GD FRI	10 caring Baptical Cse * W S C S bible study	17	24 Labour dy	May 1
SATURDAY	7 WSCS handicraft * S S tchrs' retreat	14 Baptical counsellor try	21	28 spirituality retreat	4 WSCS handicraft & baptism & SGL gathering	11 WSCS talk	18 caring Baptical Cse * W S C S handicraft * Cambodia prayer nite	25 SG introd Cse	2 WSCS handicraft GHC Seminar

retreat

10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28
Vesak Day			* W S C S food fair	Church camp			
Mothers' dy		social concern	* SS tchrs' conference				
11	18	25	June 1	8	15	22	29
Public Hliday				Church camp			
12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30
		W P O G coord mtg		Church camp			
prayer3 mtg	20	27	3	10	17	24	July 1
Parish mtg	prayer mtg	prayer mtg	prayer mtg	prayer mtg	prayer mtg	prayer mtg	
	prayer mtg		* Parish mtg				
14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2
15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3
W S C S bible study		W S C S bible study	Church camp	W S C S bible study		W S C S bible study	
16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4
social concern awareness Trg		W S C S handicraft	Church camp	W S C S handicraft *Cambodia prayer nite		W S C S handicraft & SGL gathering	
AFLM: methodism							

## ... So How?

### Letters to Uncle Chin Kek Sim

Hi all! Starting from this issue, we have a new column where our resident Agony Uncle Chin will listen and dish out advice liberally as you pour out your woes. Recently, many of you young people have written to him about the affairs of your aching heart. No worries, Uncle Chin Kek Sim will undo the thousands of knots in your heart. Read on and you may learn something from the sorrows of others.

#### The hunk and the best friend

Dear Uncle Kek Sim,

I am a junior college student and I really, really like this hunk in my JC. He's got the looks, the height and such good, good manners. These days, how to find guys like that under 60! Okay, so he is not really that brainy, but... I digress. Coming back to my point, my best friend just told me that she is fiercely "bio-ing" him as well. She likes him too! Ever since she told me that, I have felt this resentment against her growing in my heart. Yet, she's supposed to be my best friend. What should I do? I don't feel very Christ-like when I'm like this.

LeAnn Lim

Dear LeAnn,

First of all, you have to recognise that both you and your best friend are most probably just infatuated with this chap. Truth is, you don't even know him, right? So why let a guy whom you don't know spoil a good friendship? I would suggest that you tell your friend your feelings and admit that you've felt this resentment against her which you're not proud of. Being your best friend, I'm sure she will make an effort to understand. Both of you should try to get to know more boys in your JC. Very often, the best chaps don't come very well-packaged in terms of looks, but once you get to know them, they're worth their weight in gold. Don't just keep "bio-ing" the good-looking ones, okay, otherwise you'll short-change yourself!

\* 'Bio-ing' – a Hokkien term for observing members of the opposite sex from afar with a view to 'tackling' them. If you don't know the meaning of the word tackle, you can skip this entire article.



## **Ulterior Motives**

**Dear Uncle Chin,**

**I like this girl in my school. Last month, I managed to talk to her and I found out that she's attending Trinity Methodist Church. After that, I quickly also started attending TMC. BUT I feel so shy every time I see her, I wish the church floor would open up and swallow me. How to get to know her? Also, I feel very guilty. I am attending church every week in the hope that I will see her and get to know her. That's not being very holy and I don't feel like I'm honouring God very much. Please say something to make me feel better.**

**Andy**

Dear Andy,

It's quite usual to feel shy in the presence of someone we like very much. Perhaps you're trying too hard to get to know this person! An easier way may be to join the youth group or the activities which she is engaged in (of course you should also like the activities, otherwise you'll be torturing yourself). That way, when you do things together, you'll have more things to talk about.

I understand your feelings of guilt about coming to church with an ulterior motive. Many of us sitting in the pews do not come to church with totally honourable intentions or purely to worship God. You are not alone. Having said that, do pray about your attitude when you come to church. As you take the important step of going to church every Sunday and joining in the worship, I am sure God will bless you and you will find the services more and more meaningful.

In the meantime, don't get too strung up about this gal, okay?

## UFS SOS!

Dear Uncle Chin,

I am a teenager. Whenever I see guys who are nice looking, I will look at myself and feel UFS – Ugly, Fat and Stupid. An incredible sense of unworthiness and unattractiveness sweeps over me. I like this guy in church and these feelings of being UFS paralyse me completely. I can't seem to bring myself to join in the activities which I would like to be in. Actually, many people tell me that I'm quite slim. However, I think my hair style is awful and my specs make me look like an owl. This guy I like will never give me second look. I'm in despair! What should I do?

Linda





Dear Linda,

It's quite natural for teenagers to be concerned about the way they look. Often, teenhood is also the time when lots of problems break out – like pimples. The media does everything to enhance the feeling that if you are not rake-thin with perfect cheekbones, you must be Ugly, Fat and Stupid.

Ask a good friend to tell you honestly what it is about yourself that you can improve... without plastic surgery! Then plan what you can do about it. Hairstyle and specs can easily be changed and if you hit the right styles, you can look dramatically better already.

Aside from improving yourself, you should try to remember who made you: God! You have been wonderfully fashioned by God and there is no reason for you to hate yourself and let your feelings cripple you. Instead, bring your feelings of being UFS to the foot of the cross in prayer and ask God to give you a different perspective, even as you work at tangibly improving the things which you can improve upon. Some things cannot be altered without doing serious damage to your health, so accept the things you can't change, because NOBODY's perfect except God!

When you stop griping about the way you look and refuse to let yourself feel obsessed about it, you will develop a much more attractive personality. To get a guy interested in you, be interested in him and in others around you. People who want friends must first show themselves to be friendly, remember?

Let me know the outcome, okay? I'm sure you are not UFS at all. I don't know any teenage girl in church who's like that!

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### **\*\*\* Introduction to small groups**

It gives us great pleasure to inaugurate the feature on small groups. While we are neither the oldest group in existence nor the most developed group, we are certainly one of the groups most in need of grace and mercies. Formed primarily out of the need to entrench ourselves in a fulfilling Christ-led lifestyle within the family of God, we got together to embark upon journeying the path of light as travelling companions with God as our guide.

Known to many as the "Hougang" group, we are pleased to proclaim that we are most blessed living under the promises of the new covenant. Borrowing, if we may, from a popular maxim, our life has never been the same again after this revelation. The transformation that we have undergone is a continual process as we eagerly await His mercies new every morning. This renewed freshness that is added to our lives comes to many of us at different points in time and it is through our meeting and sharing that we encounter the touch of God and are mightily encouraged. This often gives us the strength and know-how to face each new day and week within our very busy life-



style, especially in metropolitan Singapore with its emphasis on productivity.

We meet every Sunday after lunch for a time of corporate praise as it is by praise that we open up the gates of heaven for the wealth of God to come pouring into our lives. Amongst many things, God blesses us with assured victory and deliverance. Do join a small group to discover the many truths for us Christians. Following this time of praise, we enter into a time of inquiry for the trials life presents us and the promises of God for a victorious life on earth. This activity does wonders for the building of our Christian faith as ordained by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). This is the purpose of our small group; that we may encourage one another. Just as iron sharpens iron, thus do we serve the mission of being the light for others. Do we need to be in a small group to achieve all this? No. However, even if our faith is strong and unwavering we tend to fall short every now and then. Hence we find Paul addressing us to meet together constantly, this being the premise of small groups.

A word of encouragement if we may, that YOU embrace the Word of God wholeheartedly with all its promises and blessings for He delights in showering us with much more than is enough.

Cedric

Shalom,

Khia Teck & Daphne  
Liang Heong & Grace  
William & Lillian  
Edmund & Check Siew



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