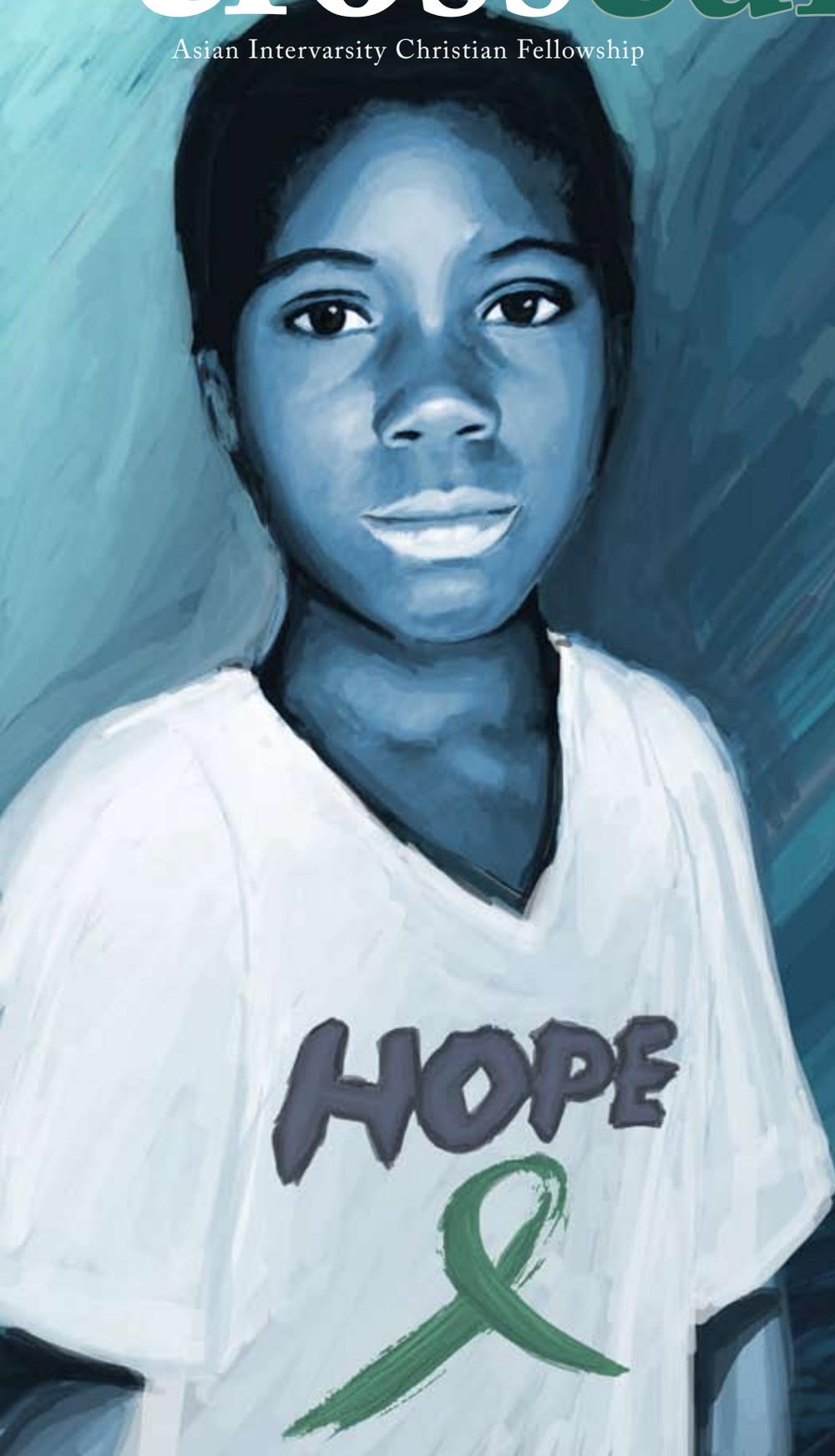


# crossculture

Asian Intersarsity Christian Fellowship

October 2007 | Issue 1.3



# The Heart of God

a post-LG interview with  
Melodie Marske

by Rose Tian, *Sophomore*

As the lights turned back on overhead and AIV Large Group's worship team left the stage, a woman with short hair and a black T-shirt approached the microphone.

Melodie Marske looked up into the sea of faces filling the auditorium and began to define "social justice" for them.

She started her talk Friday night by explaining that, to her, social justice was being able to bring justice and truth to places lacking in those two, places with pain and injustice. Africa has a lot of those places.

Marske, who has been involved with InterVarsity since 1988 (when she was an undergrad) and who has been the staff worker for the graduate chapter since 1993, is also an active volunteer with WorldVision.

"WorldVision is a worldwide community developmental organization, and their goal is to promote sustainable developments in communities around the world and to seek the welfare of children and women in particular. Their hope is to create ways for children and women to

## InterVarsity Purpose Statement

*In response to God's love, grace, and truth:*

The Purpose of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA is to establish and advance at colleges and universities witnessing communities of students and faculty who follow

Jesus

as Savior and Lord:

growing in love for God,

God's Word,

God's people of every ethnicity and

culture and God's purposes in the

world.

*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)*

have their needs be met. In spring of 2005 I went to Tijuana, Mexico with WorldVision. We served the Mexicans near [there], and I saw a lot of needs,” she said. “God’s been growing my passion about it for many years; I’ve been involved with WorldVision for the past 3.”

Not only does she go on mission trips, but she also helped out at WorldVision’s Step Into Africa exhibit at UM’s Alumni Center for the last two weeks. The exhibit showed a movie where the viewer experienced living with AIDS through the eyes of a young woman living in Africa. This woman was raped twice by one man (the first time when she was 17), and she became pregnant each time. The second rape gave her and her second baby AIDS. Her intense and emotional story is only one among millions.

These issues of AIDS on social injustice drive Marske.

“I think [these issues] show us the heart of God,” she said. “About 100 years ago, there was a split in the churches. More liberal churches talked about social justice, and conservative ones talked about the Bible. I want to bring those together, because the God of the Bible cares about social justice.”

Marske spoke about the heart of God at Friday’s Large Group, saying that God is for the voiceless and for the helpless.

“He calls us to be a voice for the voiceless,” she said. “God loves the widow, the aliens, the orphan and the fatherless. God calls us to be like Jesus.”

She also talked about the hope of the world, that we, as Christians, are called upon to adopt orphans, to

aid widows, to do something about the AIDS pandemic and to serve the poor.

She encourages us to get engaged in social justice: “Learn more about it through things like Step Into Africa and find ways to get involved, either locally or through organizations like WorldVision. It’s good to ask God how you can be involved. There’s the AIDS week, different follow-up events AIV and IV are doing, and sponsoring children through WorldVision and Compassion,” Marske said. “My hope is that more and more people will understand that the God of the Bible is a God of social justice and that He cares deeply for widows and orphans. My hope is that our hearts would care as well. I hope that each of us will touch another life. Keep getting to know God better and ask him to change our hearts to be more like His.”



### AIDS AND ORPHANS: HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

- 39.5 million people worldwide had AIDS in 2006. The figure was up over 2.6 million from 2004. over 4.3 million new HIV infections occurred in 2006.

- Sub-Saharan Africa is the most heavily AIV-infected area in the world. Over 24.7 million people there have HIV, which is two-thirds of all HIV-infected people in the world. 75% of deaths due to AIDS occur in this region

- Since it was discovered, AIDS has killed over 25 million people. Every week, AIDS claims as many lives as American fatalities in the entire Vietnam War.

- Currently, 12% of kids in Africa are orphaned. 52% of these orphans are 11 years old or younger.

- Everyday, 6,000 kids are orphaned by AIDS, joining the 15 million who have already lost parents to AIDS.

- If all these children held hands, they would stretch across the US 5.5 times. By 2011, this chain will stretch around the world.

### RELATED PASSAGES

On the heart of God:

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Isaiah 1:15-17

Isaiah 58

Zechariah 7

Malachi 3:5

Matthew 25:31-46

On the hope of the world:

John 3:16-21

Luke 4:16-21

For more information,  
visit:

[worldvision.org](http://worldvision.org)  
[sharelaurashope.com](http://sharelaurashope.com)

# In Combo's Heavy Shoes

my experience at the WorldVision exhibit

by Jasmine Zheng, *Junior*

"Take a deep breath." I breathed.

"I'm going to ask you to leave your world behind for a moment." I saw myself racing over ocean, away from Ann Arbor.

"Please, move through the doorway. You are now Combo." I arrived in a small makeshift room, a tiny metal bed shoved against the side wall and barely covered by a ragged, colorless sheet.

"You are an 8 year old child, a boy living in Uganda." I saw myself smaller, with eyes of innocence that only the youth can ever have.

I was going through the World Vision AIDS Experience in Huron Hills Baptist Church. World Vision is a Christian humanitarian agency dedicated to helping children and communities by addressing poverty and other pressing global issues. One current project focuses on the AIDS pandemic and the development of awareness and active engagement in the fight against the disease.

So here I was, in Ann Arbor—no—in Uganda, taking an emotionally heavy walk via the stirring voices from my headphones and the faux, but also frighteningly real, props in each room. Where was God?

I was Combo. Here, was my

grandmother's restaurant, where she served meals to truck drivers on their stops. Here, was my mother's bed, where she died one night from AIDS as I slept curled next to her. Here, I was tested positive for HIV. Where was God?

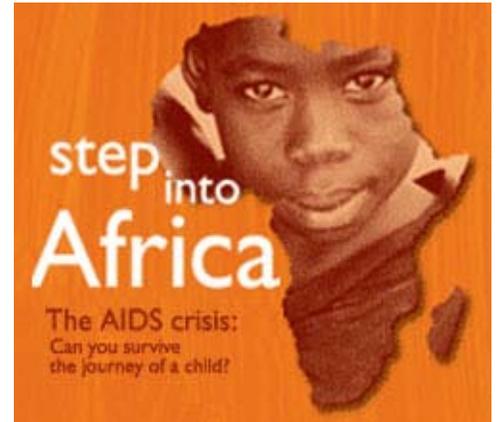
Combo's eyes of innocence had fled.

As I ended my journey through the portion of Combo's life that World Vision had shown me, I walked out of the room with a heavy heart. Combo's haunting eyes were engraved in my head. There was too much darkness in my head, too much—

Where was God?

There was another room, a wall posted with pictures and updates on Combo, and other children who had had experiences like his. Combo now has proper medication and education, with help from his World Vision sponsor. He was doing well, and although the updated photo showed him walking down a road, his back to me, I could see his possessing a lighter gait and relaxed shoulders.

And finally, I saw hope. For the past half hour that I'd learned about Combo and the AIDS pandemic, I'd seen solely death, and a continual spiral towards more death and



more darkness. How could I ever do anything to help Combo, or other children like him? How could I ever put up a battle against something as terrifying as AIDS? But as I stared at Combo's last photo, I knew.

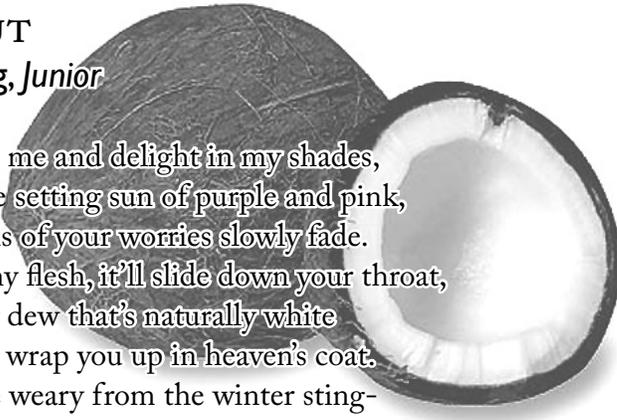
I didn't walk out of Huron Hills Baptist Church that night hopeless. God is here. God was there, with Combo, with the AIDS sufferers. God has given World Vision, given us, given me, awareness and courage to reach out to those in need—to spread hope and together, heal His broken earth.

I can help lighten Combo's shoes. We all can.

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:28-9*

## PROSE

## COCONUT

by Sky Yang, *Junior*


Come under me and delight in my shades,  
Then like the setting sun of purple and pink,  
Let the burns of your worries slowly fade.  
Indulge in my flesh, it'll slide down your throat,  
With sugary dew that's naturally white  
Let my milk wrap you up in heaven's coat.  
Your legs are weary from the winter sting-  
So rest on my net in the breezy blue,  
While my trunks hold the world still as you swing, swing,  
swing.

Forget those years that you once painfully cried  
And surrender to my green lullaby,  
That have adorn your houses that I've tied.  
Layers of shell and I've got plenty of husk  
Made to shield you as it suddenly pours.  
Falling to the ground for being close to you I must,  
Yet still you're not convinced that I've always been yours.

## CULTURE

## SHINTOISM in Japan

The primary and native religion of Japan is Shintoism, which originated in prehistoric times, as a religion with respect for nature and in particular certain sacred sites. These sites may have originally been used to worship the sun, rock formations, trees, and even sounds. Shinto as an indigenous religion has no holy book, no founder, and no canon; the deities in Shintoism are known as "kami," which are spiritual beings. A waterfall, the moon, or just an oddly shaped rock might come to be regarded as a kami; so might charismatic persons or more abstract entities like growth and fertility.

Shinto began to fall out of fashion after the arrival of Buddhism, but soon, Shinto and Buddhism began to be practiced as one religion. Most Japanese people do not believe in just one exclusive religion; instead they incorporate the features of both religions in their daily lives in a process known as syncretism.

## PEOPLE

DAILY PRAYER MEETINGS  
(DPM)**Monday**

Ken Tang & Bonita Goh  
7:00pm, in the MUG at the Union

**Tuesday**

Johnny Lin  
7:00pm, Angell Hall Posting Wall

**Wednesday**

Dan Chen  
7:00pm, Psych Atrium of East Hall

**Thursday**

Betsy Lau  
8:00pm, lobby in Bursley

**Friday**

Lily Li  
5:30pm, Palmer Commons on 3rd floor

**Friday**  
Stephanie Chen  
5:30pm, Palmer Commons

Topics: campus, political/current events,  
social justice, global missions, and peer  
relations.



## 1 CORINTHIANS 3:6-9

**I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.**

# “Do You Want to Win?”

Games + Food = Fun and Fellowship

by Margaret Yi, *Sophomore*

ASIAN INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (AIV) HAS UNDERGONE A NUMBER OF CHANGES SINCE LAST YEAR. Our name has changed, our staffing has changed, and our partnership with the Multi-Ethnic Chapter (IV-ME) is growing stronger. Our approach to new student outreach, therefore, has reflected these changes. Most prominently, a former event called “Food, Fun, and Fellowship” was replaced by “Do You Want to Win?” - the game night held at East Hall on Sunday, September 2nd. Many people, myself included, lamented the loss of “Food, Fun, and Fellowship”. However, looking back now on “Do You Want to Win?”, the new event proved to be a valid substitute, accomplishing the same purpose in a different way.

Last year, “Food, Fun, and Fellowship” was the event that clinched my decision to join AIV, then known as InterVarsity Chinese Christian Fellowship (CCF). At the event, the spirit of welcoming, the familiar Asian-church culture, and the presence of God beckoned to me. For the first time since arriving on campus, I met people with which I felt completely comfortable.



*AIV-ers and new students at “Do You Want to Win?” game night*

*photo by Greg Lau, Senior*

Reflecting on “Do You Want to Win?”, I feel that the same alluring aspects of AIV’s culture were present. Prior the event, several worries about the event existed – would people stay around so that friendships might be forged? Would people get the wrong idea about the fellowship because of the emphasis on games? “Do You Want to Win?” overcame both obstacles; the diverse activities lured people to stay longer, and the attitudes of the fellowship members ensured that Christian culture (as opposed to casino culture) was prevalent.

Furthermore, the event went further and achieved goals that “Food, Fun, and Fellowship” could not have achieved. Most prominently, the event showcased AIV’s partnership

with IV-ME. The dual emphasis on food (dominant in AIV culture) and activities (dominant in IV-ME culture) testified to our blended vision. Additionally, the great variety of activities made the event enjoyable to diverse people groups – those who play cards, those who play board games, those who play Guitar Hero, those who eat, and those who sit and talk. This diversity in activity preference contributed to diversity in people’s ethnic and religious backgrounds – something that both chapters wish to pursue.

Finally and most importantly, “Do You Want to Win?” was a successful event because God was present. As I meandered from activity to activity, I could see, hear, and feel the Spirit working through our activities. “Do You Want to Win?” planted seeds for relationships with God and with one another. Praise God for what He has done!

## A PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS

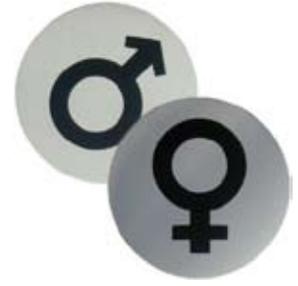
**Good and Gracious God,  
You sent your Son to call all people to  
become his disciples.**

**Inspire us to grow as  
followers of Christ.**

**Send us to boldly reach out,  
invite, and grow into Jesus  
and the community that bears his name.**

**In Jesus’ Name we pray, Amen.**

# Intentionality



by Jack Wang, *Sophomore*

LAST YEAR, IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO ADJUST TO COLLEGE LIFE, AND ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH THE YEAR I ALSO REALIZED THAT BASICALLY ALL OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS WERE GIRLS. Whether it was because no AIV guys were in my classes, or whether it was just easier for me to relate to girls, the reason didn't matter. It happened through a nearly imperceptible process; by the time I realized what was happening, I felt like I was already stuck in a role in which I had unconsciously placed myself. This is my story of my strug-

gle in making more intentional relationships as well as in trying to open up to guys.

Near the beginning of second semester, I realized that most of my friends were girls, and I tried to validate it since I wasn't intentionally trying to make only female friends. I came up with the excuse that we were doing schoolwork together, because some of the girls were also in my classes. However, as the year progressed, I felt that it wasn't right to have a majority of women friends, and I was forced to examine why I really hung out with them so much. In part, I was more comfortable with them because they were the first people I came to know here at school. However, I also realized that sometimes I would hang out with them under the pretense of schoolwork because I was lonely. Another reason was because I wanted to feel special or needed. Because of this, when they would go hang out with other guys, sometimes I would feel discarded, and feelings of jealousy would arise. Consequently, my relationships with other guys suffered because of these feelings that came up. Finally, I did a lot of things that could have been taken the wrong way or as being "flirty" because my relationships with girls were based around having fun and being silly.

Not really knowing what to do, I decided to talk to a few people

for guidance. In particular, I vividly remember a conversation I had with Jeff Liou, one of our former staff workers. He told me that I had to be very intentional in my relationships, in my words and in my actions. However, it was a full six months until I sincerely started to implement these words in my life.

I've learned that to be intentional, I must put Christ first in my life, for it is only through Christ that I am able to truly relate to others. It is good to enjoy each others' company, but when it gets in the way of what we are called to do, it becomes a bad thing. We need to root our identity in Christ, and not in what other people think of us. Through growing our relationship with God by reading God's word, praying, and fellowship, we learn how to see Him as our best friend, as well as Lord. Consequently, we also learn how to see others as brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than just people that are fun to hang out with. As brothers and sisters in Christ we are called to build each other up and encourage each other. I have found that this is the basis of my intentionality towards relationships.

I pray that we will be intentional in how we relate to each other to help us see God more clearly.

## LOCAL CHURCHES

(On campus and off)

Ann Arbor CRC  
 Cornerstone CRC  
 Grace Bible Church  
 Harvest Missions Church  
 Huron Hills Baptist Church  
 Knox Presbyterian  
 New Life  
 University Reformed Church  
 Vineyard Church

If you'd like to visit any of these churches,  
 Enid Chan (enidchan@umich.edu)  
 or Timothy Li (timli@umich.edu)  
 would be happy to visit with you!

# A Study in Fantastic Trope

by Bonita Goh, *Sophomore*

WHEN I WAS 16, I WISHED, MORE THAN ANYTHING, MORE THAN LIFE, MORE THAN RICHES – I WISHED TO GO TO AMERICA. At the time it was not a tangibly realistic wish. Then again, I was not alone in entertaining such fantastic wishes. Literary history is littered with them.

I wish to go to the festival.

I wish I had legs instead of a tail. I wish to dance and not to swim.

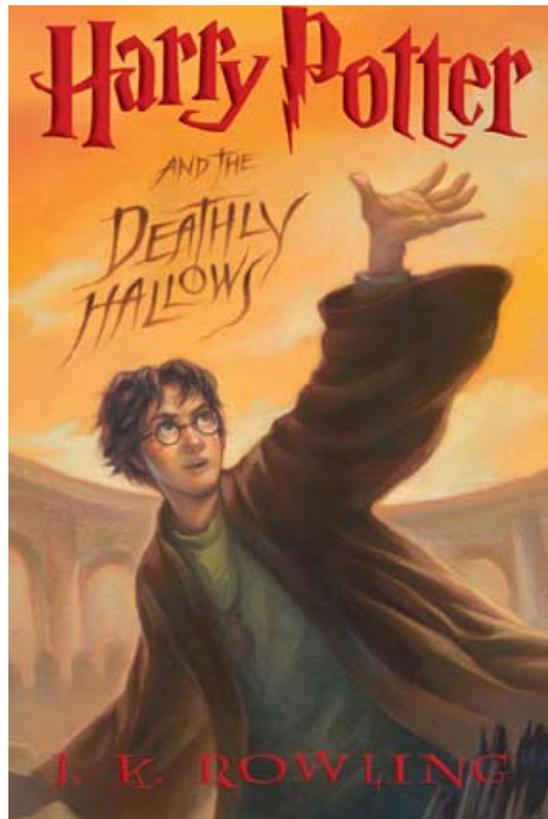
I wish the Shire was not so boring.

I wish to wed a maiden, and make her queen.

I wish they'd let my people go.

Some dismiss fairy stories as, to use the words of E.E. Cummings, “nothing and nonsense”. However there is a sizable base of readers who, in spite of adulthood, is still captivated by fairy tales and like fantasy literature; and it is this base that will vehemently argue that fantasy is an intellectually valuable genre of literature. But what nutrition does fantasy literature provide to the Christian in his reading diet? After all, there were preachers who were adamant that their flock should avoid L.F. Baum’s 1900s tale *The Wizard of Oz* for supposing that witches can possibly be good (namely, Glinda the Good Witch of

the North), and more recently, J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, for having a practitioner of wizardry as not merely a protagonist, but as the story’s hero, possibly influencing malleable child minds to believe



that witchcraft is acceptable as long as one meets other secular moral standards. In fact, my very own aunt and uncle, who are missionaries in Vanuatu, denounce J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* as “demonic”. Are Christians to treat the fantasy genre with trepidation and select stories to read with discretion, or should we pluck out the entire genre from our reading diet lest it poison us and has our “whole

body thrown into the lake of fire”?

From *Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy* by Matthew Dickinson and David O’Hara (IV Press) does a valiant job of providing some answers to the earnest seeker. It offers a framework for Christians to use in their attitude towards the Bible. If one’s mind is open enough, it shows how the Bible is a literary piece with both myth and factual history. Sometimes the two elements remain distinct, as in the book of Numbers, which is rather a factual recount of the descendants of the kingly line in Israel; some books exhibit a very explicitly mythical nature, such as Genesis, Job, and the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation; and yet some books such as the four Gospels (which linguistically has its roots in the old English word “God spell”, literally meaning “God’s story”) can be viewed as either mythical or historical, but to interpret such books exclusively as either would impoverish the reading thereof.

Homer to Harry Potter’s foremost achievement is to dispel (pun neither explicit nor intended) the notion that “myth” connotes “fabrication” and therefore necessarily “untruthfulness” due to its lack of factuality. A simplistic summary of Dickinson and O’Hara’s interpretation of “myth” would be congruous to the device that Art employs, in which

it tells a “lie” in order to illustrate a deeper, more important truth, in pretty much the same way that Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger*, though a poor likeness of the actual women, brings out the wretched beauty of the nude prostitutes.

Take for example, the story of Job: the wager between God and Satan over the virtue of a man and Job’s suffering that ensues is the vortex of powers and principalities in the heavenly realms: Pestilence, Famine, Death, Violence. To use the words of John Milton, the story of Job is a tale that is beyond “what words or tongue of seraph can suffice, or heart of man suffice to comprehend” (*Paradise Lost*, VII:113-114). It seems far too fantastic for us to treat as “factual history”. Were there mortal scribes in the heavenly court? Or was this a vision bestowed on an unknown prophet? I once argued with a friend of mine, who is currently pursuing a PhD in English Literature in New York, over whether the book of Job is actual history, or a fictitious parable. I kept receiving the answer “it does not matter, because it does not change its effectiveness as a tale”, and it bothered me a great deal, because it seemed as though the epitome of godly faith exemplified by Job would not be realistically justifiable were this a mere parable, a fiction. However, upon further rumination of the story, I realized that my imagination relished the liberty it had to interpret the tale. Perhaps the council of God is ordered, with all His host assembled in parliament or congressional seats; perhaps they swirl in flight around God’s throne, their angelic robes billowing in majestic chaos. Moreover I could also appreciate the alternative paths that Job could have decided to

take. What if he had taken his wife’s advice, cursed God and died? Were the analyses of his friends logically sound, and if so which systems of morality are in consideration? I would suppose this is the hallmark of a “myth” that Dickinson and O’Hara are proposing: a myth, a fairytale, works its magic by its plot, and transcends the language used in the retelling. (A very, very possible reason the Bible has survived incessant literary revisions with its integrity intact). They remove the obstacle of overt realism to our consideration of a particular paradigm, which more often than not, has a significant moral component to it: Can a witch be right? Can a giant be good? Does a wolf’s mother have the right to lament the death of her son by woodsman’s axe? Is it ever right to steal from the rich to give to the poor? Fairytales fling us into a world that is dark and wild, with nothing but a handful of breadcrumbs to guide us on our path, and upon emerging, we know things we never knew before.

And as the plane descends, my tray-table’s stowed and a world I know begins to grow, I realize that it is no shame to be enthralled by fairy tales in a childlike manner. In fact, I believe it is an intellectual heritage “which shew the work of the law (of morality) written into (our) hearts” (*Romans 2:15*) wisely manifest as eloquent tales that capture the complex ramifications of moral decisions that humans make, in a way that clumsy exposition often falls short of. Because it is such tales, rather than annals upon annals of doctrine, to which children will listen.



## OCTOBER LARGE GROUPS: COLLEGE ISSUES

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”  
(Colossians 3:15-16)

**Every Friday, 7:00pm,  
at the Forum Hall  
in Palmer Commons**

10/5 | **Catalyst**

10/12 | **Lock-In**

Speaker: Bob Lynn  
Location: Vineyard

10/19 | **Academics**

Speaker: Dave Collins

10/26 | **Body Image**

Speaker: Jon Shah

## SMALL GROUPS

## MONDAY

BURLSEY: Margaret Yi

EAST QUAD: Jeff Bennett &amp; Sky Yang

MARKLEY: Michelle Liang &amp; Spencer Chang

## TUESDAY

BAITS: Eric Chen &amp; Tammy Yang

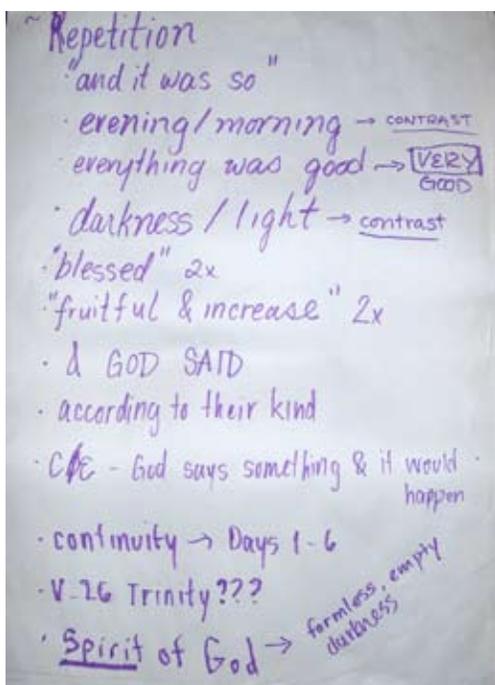
COUZENS: Albert Ma &amp; Tim Li

WEST QUAD: Shannon Qin &amp; Jon Go

## WEDNESDAY

SOUTH QUAD:  
Steven LuSTOCKWELL:  
Janice Chen & Melissa Chenthe book of  
GENESIS

drawings from Stockwell small group (right) and Couzens/Lloyd small group (bottom right, bottom left) based on Genesis 1



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Questions? Comments? Submissions?  
Email: [crossculture@umich.edu](mailto:crossculture@umich.edu)