

We're Africa Too

How Africa Will Save America ~ Perhaps the World:

In 1994 I was late. I was late for most things because, becoming a mom at 38, caught me a little unprepared for – well...life! Or at least life with a child, I am the 7th of 9 kids, and I have only 1. Gee – there's a mystery...

Our son, Denvir (my fraternal grandmothers maiden name), then 4, and I were in dreadful traffic going into the city. He could sense my frustrated "vibe" and asked from his little car seat in the back; "Mom, are you angry"? Yikes, how did he know, I wasn't saying anything.

"Yes honey, but not at you, it's the traffic, it's really buggin' me". And without dropping a beat, my little Backseat Buddha replied:

"Mom, we're traffic too".

And so we are.

I don't imagine there's a person reading this that does not wonder what on earth, or in Heaven's name for that matter, we're going to do about Africa, especially the horror in The Sudan, or how to continue to help New Orleans and the Katrina victims. Every time I see the faces of those children, or see Oprah working with all the celebrities to *help*, I think; "surely there is *something* I can do".

So, I start thinking. A portion of the proceeds from my CD sales (I'm a recording artist) can go to the cause. Then the negative voice chimes in - "oh sure...that's gonna make a big dent BONO"! Yep, that's the demon I fight, the "Not enough" monster. But it's a step in the right direction. And then I start talking to Denvir who is now 15 and goes to a fantastic High School. I say: "Denvir, do you guys discuss this (Africa, New Orleans) in school"? No, not really he grunts/whispers. I am trying to get him involved. After all, I come from the 60's man, we're all about changing the world. How can I get my teenager to see things the way *I think he should see them?*

Yeah, good luck...(see, that voice...it's so subtle)

So, I meet him where he lives. We talk about the music he loves. Naturally, being a white kid from the suburbs of Chicago, he digs hip hop and rap mostly. I feel somewhat obligated to hate the music he likes, simply because I'm his mom and I believe in the natural evolution of things, but I actually love a lot of it. And it opens up a dialog about the culture of black music, the meaning of the music, and, albeit circuitously, Africa. We talk about the injustice in the world, and how we are here to help. We have so many blessings... Mind you we don't talk long, but we talk.

One day not long ago I told Denvir; "you know Africa will save us, because it is the need of others that takes us outside of ourselves, and our self centeredness. Africa's need is so deep and wide that it will save us from thinking only of ourselves, and make us focus on giving. He said, who said that? I smiled and said; "I did".

We went to the theater a couple nights ago to see Frank's Home, a play about our favorite architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, and every year around the holidays after final bows, a cast member steps forward and tells the audience about "The Season of Concern" where donations go to help people in the theater community living with HIV. Then a couple cast members go from the stage to the lobby to collect contributions and thank you for giving. My husband and I put some money in, got our red ribbon, and then Denvir came up behind and put \$10 in. He said; "It was a little hard to part with, but it felt good to give" Well, I could have wept with pride. (You know, "the Irish are only happy when they're sad." – but they have medication for that now).

Now, I'm not sure how long this will last, or if our son is going to keep the memory of that *feeling* of giving, but I think he will. After all he gets – "We're traffic too" My little Backseat Buddha.