

Freedom will aid Africans more than continued welfare

The G-8 summit is over; the leaders of the world's most powerful countries gave us a great show. So did Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder and U2. They were just a few of the performers at "Live8," a series of concerts intended to influence the G-8 leaders to help fight poverty in Africa.

Once again, the world's attention is focused with the power of music. Once again, the world's most fortunate are trying to help its least fortunate. And once again, rock and roll has galvanized passionate but naïve people to act on the strength of their convictions. I'm referring, of course, to the Parents Television Council.

Yes, the guardians of "family values" are at it again, protecting my teenagers from the f-word. Last week they filed an indecency complaint with the Federal Communications Commission over their broadcast of Live8. During The Who's classic rendition of "Who Are You," the network failed to edit out the well-known expletive in the chorus.

The FCC issues licenses for all radio and broadcast media; you can't operate a radio or TV station without their permission. This gives them the power to regulate content by threatening license revocation. Anyone can file a complaint with the FCC about things they find offensive. If the FCC finds the complaint has merit, the station can be fined and ultimately lose its license.

Sound like censorship? Sound unconstitutional? Alas, no. For reasons that have long since been steamrolled by technological progress, First Amendment protections for radio and broadcast media are far weaker than those for books and newspapers.

It's all so ironic. The problems with using government to raise a country are exactly the same ones with using government to raise a family. Erosion of responsibility, unintended consequences, creation of dependent relationships, they're all there.

The more parents rely on government or watchdog groups to uphold their standard of TV watching, the less likely they are to take responsibility for enforcing it them-



OPINION
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selves. The more poor countries rely on aid from rich ones, the less likely they are to take responsibility for their internal violence, crippled economies and corrupt governments.

In the past 50 years, Africa has received almost \$1 trillion worth of aid. Yet you only have to listen to the advocates for more aid to see how miserable the poor of Africa remain. That's because aid is a government-to-government transfer of wealth, and many of Africa's governments are notoriously inefficient, corrupt and unfree. Some countries

receive as much as half their budgets from foreign aid. They become dependent on it.

It's the same when we turn to government for help in childrearing. Why surf the Web with your kids if it's the government's job to police cyberspace? Why worry about how many kids you have out of wedlock if the government will pay for them?

American families and African families need the same thing: Freedom. We have more of it than they do, which is why our lives are better. But we all need it. We need the freedom to trade with one another. We need the freedom to raise our children the way we think best. We need the freedom to live our lives in peace, to know our loved ones and property will be safe and to conduct any peaceful economic activity we want without interference. Why is this so hard for the PTC and Bono to understand?

If I had my fantasy, I'd get Pete Townshend and the boys together for my own special concert. I'd invite the people of Africa to gather in front of the Parents Television Council, with a simulcast to the brutal dictators, corrupt bureaucrats and socialist fools who run their lives.

Together, we'd all sing. And when it comes to the chorus, it'd be louder than ever:

Who the *#!@ are you?

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