

The World I Come From

I come from a world where ambassadors are chauffeured along dusty, unpaved roads in shiny black cars while donkeys trot complacently on the pavement. I come from a world where hollow-eyed, open-palmed beggars knock relentlessly on the window of the taxi I'm riding in with my friends. I come from a world where I attempt fragments of the language to get myself around and people on the street yell fragments of my language back at me. I come from a world where school is a united nations of cultures brought together by a common dislike of French class and I debate the proper time for dinner with an Italian friend, the correct spelling of 'favorite' with a British friend, and politics with a group representing at least five different countries. I live in a world where there is color and confusion, prosperity and poverty, dust and development. I come from a world that is far different from my country of birth.

Growing up as a missionary kid in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, has been an exciting, incomprehensible, eye-opening, instructive and challenging experience. It has revealed the huge world that exists beyond me and the possibilities it holds. It has taught me to see the beauty of the differences amongst people and cultures and to cope well when things don't go according to plan. It has given me the opportunity to look AIDS and poverty in the eyes and realize that I care - and that I can do something to make a difference. And, of course, it has brought confusion as I realize that I am completely American but, at the same time, so incredibly not. Where I come from can be a struggle, but it has shaped me and taught me and I would have it no other way, for it is my home.

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