

A good friend of mine e-mailed me today writing:

I have a question…and since you are the Cuban Dalai Lama, I thought I'd address it to you. If the government has the money to (possibly) lend the automakers a gazillion dollars … why doesn't it have the money to fund our schools, provide medicine for the sick, feed the hungry and house the homeless? I'm thinking of writing a letter on this very subject to our President-elect. Because these are issues that truly bother me. I have a family in my development that is facing serious economic problems. These are honest, decent, hardworking people. He had two accidents, one work-related, another was a car crash, and was unable to work for almost a year. She works cleaning houses, takes in sewing, laundry, you name it, she does it. Because of the economy, two of the houses she cleaned weekly have stopped using her services. She's down to one house. She made pillow shams and seat covers for my sofa, did a splendid job and charged me a very reasonable rate. Then I thought, well, I go to the laundry and spend money there, maybe she could do that for me and I'll pay her what I pay the laundry. Done deal. She also makes and sells croquetas (I'm a steady customer). He can't find a job (he's a welder). They have exhausted their savings and were unable to meet their rent for this month, so they got an eviction notice. They are expecting a settlement check from one of his accidents, to the tune of approximately $5,000 (the attorney got the larger chunk). They went to their attorney yesterday, eviction notice in hand, to see if he could do something about getting their money now. He said there's nothing he can do, it's a process. The other case is still in the settlement process, or so their attorney tells them. So … they could be out on the street. They went to the management office and explained their situation, they gave them until the 15th and then they'll start eviction proceedings. They don't live in a luxury apartment, their place is identical to mine, one bedroom/one bath. It's a blue collar neighborhood. It hurts to see this. It hurts even more to see the government mulling over the possibility of lending billions to automakers who gad about in their private jets. In the words of Chris Rock "that ain't right." I am having a very hard time dealing with this, it's very frustrating. At their church, their pastor got him a job delivering newspapers, minimum wage. You should see them, they have such faith and

> *they know they will get through this.*
> *Okay, I have vented … I have unloaded. Feedback please.*
> *B.*

I happen to share in my friend's frustration. This family's story is one I hear often nowadays…about friends of my friends, about friends of my mother's…it's everywhere, it seems most of us know someone being put through the wringer by this economy. Meanwhile, our government gets in bed with these mega-companies, I think not so much to save the day as to get to own a piece of the pie, as this latest deal indicates. There is no piece of pie to be had in funding schools, providing medicine for the sick, feeding the hungry, or housing the homeless. Do you see? The standing economy will make the rich richer (as there is much money to be made off the inopportuneness of others), make the middle class sweat it out (as most of us consider gambling with our children's future too high a risk), and make or break the poor (as necessity is the mother of invention).

As for this family she talks about, we should take comfort in knowing that they are so faithful, because that is precisely the one thing that will get them through this, not our government. Because the only words I hear lately from the political powers that be, reverberate that old familiar Spanish saying that goes: "Salvese el que pueda."

It is frustrating indeed. But, just because our government's thinking is "every man for himself," doesn't mean ours, the people's, has to be, no? We can certainly have a hand in bailing out one another.

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