



Black Eyed Peas: Where is the Love?

One morning the other week, I was woken up by the awesomely uplifting 'Where is the Love?', and, for the first time in ages, totally lept out of bed feeling energised and inspired. OK, so a slight exaggeration, but it does have a mental get up and go kinda feel to it, with one of those 'oh-so-familiar' basslines that I'm sure is nicked off some classical piece somewhere.

AND it's the first time (at last!) that Mr Timberlake is featuring on somebody else's song without trying to convince everybody else to feature on his stuff in his cunning plan for world domination. So... the Black Eyed Peas emerge onto the British scene with this gentle-rap collaboration, and the end result is this fresh-sounding shoulder-shaker with a good message.

The Lyrics

Well... I'm not really sure whether it's some kind of attempt to cash in on the events of the 11th September 2001 and in Iraq, but the song's really pitching at that kind of level... With phrases wondering about the reality of our commitment to peace and tolerance, the whole segments of rap are questioning *where we're at*:

*If love and peace is so strong /
Why are there pieces of love that
don't belong?
Nations droppin' bombs /
Chemical gasses fillin' the lungs
of little ones*

*With ongoin' sufferin' as the
youth die young / So ask yourself
is the lovin' really gone?*

All this speculation is built around the falsetto-Justin chorus, which really adds the personal element to an otherwise depressing message:

*Can you practice what you
preach / And would you turn the
other cheek?*

*Father, Father, Father help us /
Send us some guidance from
above*

*'Cause people got me, got me
questionin' / Where is the Love?*

And so the themes of the song are brought close to home, and not only do we acknowledge that we play a part in all of this, but also we acknowledge that we can't do it on our own without the help of God.

To think about

One guy in the Bible that I reckon would be singing JT's part along with the Black Eyed Peas if he were around today is Moses. He's kinda a hero of mine, mainly because of his desire to keep focussed on our need for God when everyone else around him forgot.

But Moses also went a step further in his relationship with God - he chose to 'intercede' for the people around him. There's an awesome scene in the Book of Exodus (chapters 32 and 33),

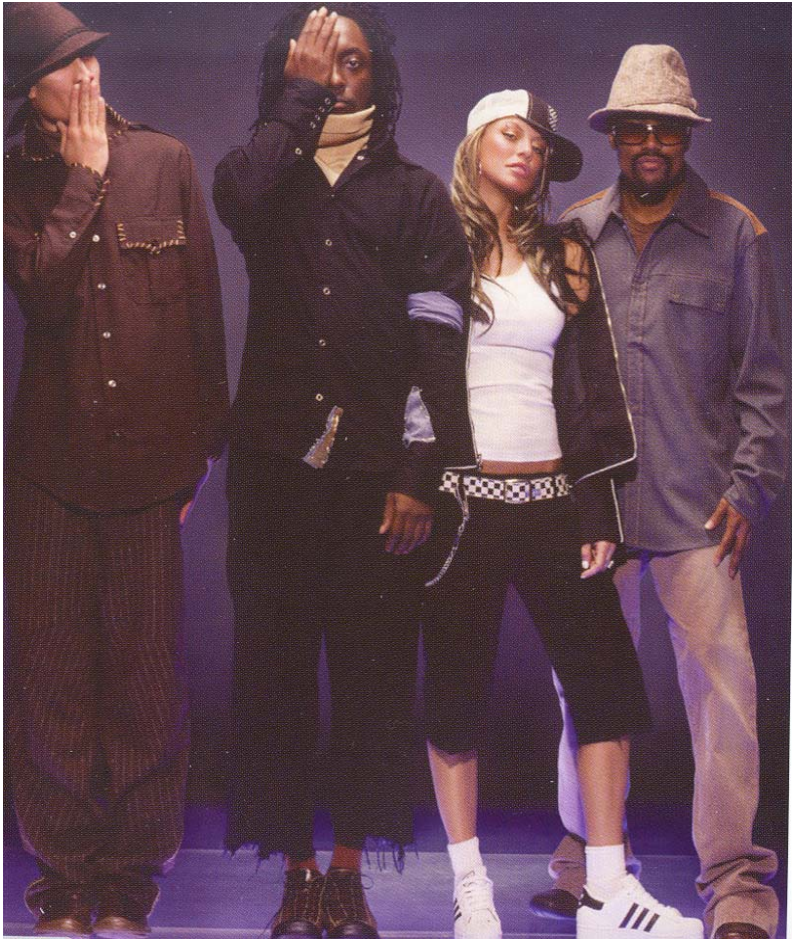
where basically everybody loses the plot and starts worshipping this Golden Cow, despite the fact that God's just totally performed all these Grade-A miracles for them. Moses then curses them out for being so disloyal, then there's a bloodbath, and then, at the end of it all, Moses returns to God to apologise on behalf of what his people have done.

This is what's really at the heart of 'intercession' - taking the opportunity to stand in the gap between a wrong situation and God, and to ask God for forgiveness or to intervene in this wrong situation. And this is also what's really at the heart of 'Where is the Love?' - an acknowledgement that we need the help, guidance, forgiveness and intervention of God in these difficult times.

To do

OK... so this song is gonna be on the radio and tv a lot over the next few weeks. I dare you (and I'll do it too) that every time you hear it, to sing along as a kind of 'intercession' for peace, understanding and God's love to come into the world. Who knows what might happen if we all do it?

Check out the 24/7 website at www.24-7prayer.com/ It's about a bunch of people getting together and taking it in turns to pray 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They've got loads of



THEBLACKEYEDPEAS WHEREISTHELOVE?

different examples of ways that we can pray for situations that affect our world.

At Mass every week we have the 'Prayers of the Faithful', which is our chance as a community to intercede for the world. Next time you're at Mass, listen carefully to the words of the prayer, and really try to take on board what is being said - it's an amazing challenge and responsibility that we're trusted with to be able to pray for our world!

To pray

Father, thank you that you challenge me to pray for the world around me. Holy Spirit, come and teach me how to pray when I'm not sure what to do. Jesus, thank you that your whole life was a prayer for me. Amen