

Our teenage generation

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Ah, you surely remember the 70's. Bell Bottoms, drugs, and Woodstock. Our teenage generation then, our 'future' was becoming enveloped in a drug and sexual revolution, where rebellion was encouraged. Sound familiar? The teens living in the new millennium aren't much different; in fact, they have turned out worse. The future of America, this great nation, is looking toward this young generation to lead The United States, and sadly, we are being disappointed.

Take a closer look at our high schools- even middle schools around the country. Kids fresh out of elementary school are sporting the latest clothes from Abercrombie and Fitch, or Express, or American Eagle. Why is this bad? Well, there is nothing wrong with liking certain clothes. However, the sheer amount of students buying multitudes of these outrageously priced clothes just to fit in not only points to the deterioration of school as a place for learning, but also points to the lack of leadership by parents to guide their children in the right direction. Parents should be there to regulate what their children buy, and if they give their children money to spend mindlessly on a lot of expensive clothes just to 'fit in,' this also points to parents' loss of what being a parent is. School used to be a privileged place, for example, in the early 20th century, it was considered very lucky for children to be able to go to school. Now, it is different; students no longer take school seriously, it is considered a nuisance that will pass someday. Children do not recognize the value of ensuring a bright future for themselves through education. They are satisfied with 'C's and 'D's, also due to the fact that parents' expectations of their children have dropped. It is surprising and sad to see students coming home from school, and instead of hitting the books, practicing an instrument, or another useful activity, they call up a friend and spend hours at the mall, walking around looking at beautiful pictures of models which they strive to dress like, look like, and walk like. Sadly, the fashion industry has brainwashed our kids, surrounding them with images of perfection- of stunning men and women- urging children to buy their products so that they too can be like the models. Too bad that emphasis now is being placed on outside appearance rather than the content of one's character. Fashion companies take advantage of the fact that

everyone would like to be beautiful and feel good, and thus they crank out skimpy and revealing clothes for women and women buy them to make themselves feel 'good.' Sometimes the temptation is too great for the male race, thus leading to major issues such as teen sex, AIDS, rape, abortions, pregnancy, and teenage mothers.

Clothes are not the only place to look in school to see that the values upheld by previous generations are rapidly fading. As mentioned before, school no longer is considered a privilege, or a 'special' place to be. Teenagers see school as a place to get together with their friends, a place to socialize. Classes are not being taken seriously, and the United States no longer produces as many stellar scholars as it had before. All the talk in school surrounds local gossip, the happenings in Hollywood, last night's TV show, or new fashions. Maybe that is because trying to learn what they did wrong in last night's math homework was too 'nerdy' and not 'cool.'

Consider some of the icons of today's youth. Bad boy Eminem- real name Marshall Mathers- decides to rap about killing his wife, cursing his mother, and ridiculing other artists. Although I must admit he has a knack for rhyming and smooth talking, the content of his songs is just plain disgusting. He's still considered very highly by our teenagers because of his 'no authority' attitude. His albums top the music charts, and although he often repeats 'f*** you' and pokes fun at killing other people, teenagers still love him. Mr. Eminem sounds like he may be taking the class: How to be an Anti-Christ 101.

You would think that mostly the teenage males would be the ones who would be fans of Eminem's music. In an article written by Joan Anderman of the *Boston Globe*, studies found increasing number of teenage girls becoming followers of 'hard, coarse, venomous rock.' Some women fans claim that listening to the angry, hateful music helps them calm down and that these artists are releasing the anger the best way possible. I beg to differ. The worst way is to broadcast your anger to the whole world and thus leading young people to indulge in profanity, and make a joke out of serious crimes. The bottom line is, the lyrics of a song make a world of difference, and even if you try to ignore the lyrics, which is very close to impossible, you are bound to be influenced by what the artists are expressing. There-

fore, not only are our teenage sons falling, but our daughters are also.

Nothing wrong with smiley blonde Britney Spears who has taken the music world by storm, right? Wrong. Although it is hard to find good, Christian artists in the world today, Britney Spears is seemingly completely opposite from Eminem. Britney Spears and her successors, i.e. Christina Aguilera and Mandy Moore all are cover girls, who may or not be able to sing well. However, all are extraordinarily beautiful, and have been trained to be give the supermodel smile. All wear very revealing clothes every time they perform. What impact does this have on young people? Boys fall in love with her and worship her like an idol, and girls believe they must be like her for boys to like them. Most of these 'teenyboppers' mention that they love God and thank God in their album just to 'fit in,' but when questioned about their actual beliefs, they do not mention that the only way to heaven is through Jesus, but they say that religion is different for everyone. These artists' sole purpose in producing music is to make money, as indicated by their relative inability to sing as compared to greats such as Celine Dion, the fact that they do not write their own songs, and the fact that they seek to hook teenagers on them, just because they are outwardly attractive and have learned the tricks of the show business, to always put on a smile and act cheerful. These teenage singing 'sensations' are merely being used as covergirls to make money at the expense of leading young people down the wrong path. They cannot be called 'artists' but rather entertainers.

So, not only has the fashion industry made a negative impact on our kids, but also the music they are listening to. In the past days songs used to sing about wars, of heroic struggles. Now, songs are sung about sex, death, and all the different ridiculous aspects that can be squeezed out of mushy love. Eminem is obviously leading our teenagers toward more sex, violence, and profanity while Britney Spears is approaching it more subtly, allowing the young population to become obsessed with her instead of being in love with others and themselves.

While rape, abortion, and divorces plague families around the nation, our kids are falling into traps set by the fashion and music industry, to name a few. It is time for our teenage generation to take responsibility for our actions and begin making positive change in the world instead of being obsessed with the next fashion item or idle pursuit.

Lil' George

ALEC GIBSON AND COOPER REY

African-American judge Ronnie White, branding him "pro-criminal" and causing him to lose his nomination for a federal judge-

On January 20, George W.

Bush was sworn in to office as the 43rd President of the United States. He pledged to "create a single nation of justice and opportunity," and called for national unity. Yet the presence of numerous anti-Bush protesters suggested that grinning and nodding his way through four years of office spouting such general platitudes will not be enough to appease the citizens of the divided nation Bush has inherited.

Just as Bush called for the Republican party to embrace "new faces and voices" his cabinet nominations do not suggest an effort to create a bi-

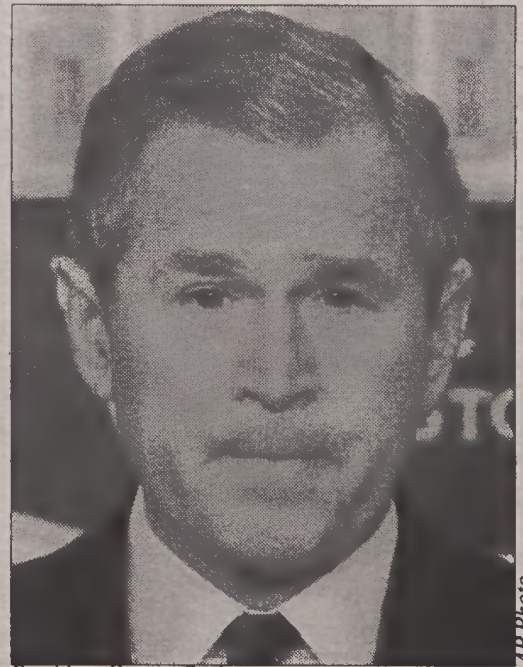
ship. Ashcroft's political history makes it apparent that he does not represent a "new face" and has no intention of allowing "new voices" to be heard in Washington.

For Secretary of the Interior, Bush has nominated Colorado State Attorney General Gale Norton. Norton Plans to cut back restrictions on the use of federal land and allow businesses to exploit federal property for raw materials. She even refuses to support the Endangered Species Act. These facts as well as her close ties to the oil and mining industries cast a shadow of doubt over her intentions and competency in taking control of approxi-

mately half a million acres of federal land.

If by "creating a land of... opportunity" Bush is speaking specifically about "opportunity" for rich, white Americans, especially those that have special interest in industry, then he is well on his way to accomplishing his goal.

President Bush needs to either seriously reassess his political appointments or stop appealing for "national unity." The men and women that he has chosen to lead the country have never demonstrated a desire for unity, but rather for what satisfies their political ambitions. There is no way to achieve this unity with men like John Ashcroft as Attorney General.



President George Bush



Attorney General John Ashcroft