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Dumbing Down Expectations for Today's Teens

Washington, D.C. - "Recent headlines, statistics, and stories continue to show that we have little regard and low expectations for young people today," says Timothy Eldred, CEO of Christian Endeavor International and founder of Pray21, a movement that believes in the huge potential of this promising generation of youth.

National headlines have shouted news of the controversy over Boulder, Colorado high school students under the tutelage of a panel of authoritative adults. "I'm going to encourage you to have sex, and I'm going to encourage you to use drugs appropriately," panelist Joel Becker, a Los Angeles clinical psychologist, told the students last month.

The news of Paris Hilton's "God encounter" in jail is another example of just how little we value our youth, Eldred insists. "Ms. Hilton says, 'God has given me another chance...' and the first response of the media, and even the church, is to discount or doubt her statement."

Is there really a close connection between the Boulder, Colorado debacle and the Paris Hilton headlines? According to Eldred there most certainly is. "While these incidents appear unrelated at first glance, they are not. It is all about the mindset that permeates our culture. We propagate and celebrate adolescence and adolescent behavior well into adulthood, so why are we so shocked when young people check into rehab or even check out of church? They become exactly what we expect of them."

"The same doubt we immediately cast upon Paris is the doubt an entire generation feels. Instead of doubt being our first response, we should get behind Paris Hilton and all young people looking to change their lives, their future, and their world—stand in the gap, praying with our youth, not just for our youth."

When asked if there is a remedy for the problem, Eldred states, "It's time to trust. Trust young people and trust God. He created them for a unique purpose. They have so much to offer, but we really don't believe that today." He continues, "Believing is putting your faith in to action. You can't say I trust you and never make room for them to take ownership in or be agents of change. This is true in the church, in the nation, and in the world."

"There's a generation of young people waiting for someone to believe in God's call on their life. Let's not let doubt be our first response!"

Eldred's message for the students of Boulder, Paris Hilton, or any other amazing young person in the world is this: "There are people who care about you and believe in you. They aren't the ones telling you to do whatever you want. If you want to find out how important your life is you should

experiment—with God. He created you. So if you're going all the way, make the trip with him. That will truly be mind-blowing!"

To learn more about Eldred's response to this generation and his honest belief in their lives, check out the Pray21 movement recently launched by Christian Endeavor International (CEI) at Pray21.org. After 126 years as the recognized father of youth ministry, CEI is still raising the standard.

Pray21 is being endorsed by National leaders such as Congressman J. Randy Forbes (Chairman of The National Congressional Prayer Caucus), Josh McDowell, Dr. Tony Campolo, Jim Daly, Dr. Jack Hayford, Dr. John Ankerberg and many others have joined together in support of Pray21 including Christian musicians such as platinum award-winning artists, Mercy Me.

For more on this story, statements from other National leaders, free Pray21 materials or a media kit, please go to Pray21.org.

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