

# Party at Dad's House!

My office has been flooded with hate mail since May when we published an article about Jay Bakker's unusual outreach to Atlanta's punk culture. Because Jay doesn't do evangelism the conventional way (he invites non-Christian punk bands to perform in his coffee-house so he can get to know them), and because he doesn't wear a three-piece suit like your average TV evangelist (Jay prefers T-shirts and a pierced eyebrow), many Christians went into cardiac arrest when they read his story in Charisma.

I was disappointed with the self-righteous reactions. I had hoped that by now we were ready to move beyond judgmentalism. But it looks like the Pharisees are alive and well:

\* Last year reports began to circulate that actress Jane Fonda had embraced Christianity. She later confirmed the rumors in an interview with Oprah Winfrey, but many Christians just couldn't get excited about this news. To them, Fonda is still "Hanoi Jane," and they can't forgive her for being a part of an anti-God, pro-choice, pro-communist Hollywood conspiracy—even though God has wiped her slate clean.

\* A pastor friend of mine has been praying with Bill Clinton for several years, and he is convinced that the Holy Spirit has been working in the president's heart—even in the aftermath of the embarrassing Monica Lewinsky scandal. But when Clinton's name is mentioned in most church circles, I

usually hear more condemnation than compassion. Doesn't anybody out there wish Bill Clinton could experience the depths of God's forgiveness?

\* We plan to run an article soon about soap opera stars who are leading Bible studies in their Los Angeles TV studios. But when the report is published, I predict lots of Christians will remind us that we are condoning the evils of daytime television by sharing the testimonies of these actors.

We're likely to hit a nerve this month with our cover story on born-again rock stars. Some religious people just can't handle the idea that God would extend His love to anyone who plays an electric guitar on a concert stage in front of thousands of pot-smoking fans. But if you read the story about Kerry Livgren (page 44), leader of the 1970s band Kansas, you'll learn that the Holy Spirit was drawing him to Christ during the days he was writing melancholy rock ballads such as "Dust in the Wind" and exploring Eastern religions.

Kerry's story should remind us that the Holy Spirit doesn't spend all His time boxed up in the four walls of our churches. He is out in the world drawing sinners to repentance. Like the Father in the story of the prodigal (see Luke 15:11-32), He leaves His house and runs down the road to embrace His wayward son—and then He brings him home to a party.

Today, the Spirit is wooing all kinds of people to Jesus—people you might reject if they sat in the pew next to yours. He's tugging at the hearts of punk rockers, pot smokers, dope peddlers, soap opera stars and even corrupt politicians. They need to know that Jesus is not only willing to forgive and restore, but that He's planned the world's biggest backyard barbecue to show how extravagant His love

really is.

There's a party at Dad's place, and all kinds of sinners are invited. Don't let a judgmental attitude keep you away.