

In our largest music section ever, we . . . **unveil** our 1999 Contemporary Christian Music Chart, **help** you with strategies that will transform your kids' favorite music into ministry tools, **reveal** new research into what teenagers' music preferences say about them, **take** you to the Cornerstone Christian music festival for insider observations about music's impact on young people, and **interview** Michael W. Smith about what makes music Christian.

# rock'n'roll

# tool time

by bryan belknap

we all know teenagers live and die by their music—so why are we so reluctant to bring it within our church walls? here's how to transform kids' passion for music into opportunities for powerful ministry.

**when mtv asked teenagers** to choose which adolescent staple they'd rather give up for a day—food or music—more than half said they'd give up their munchies before their tunes. So when the *Jeopardy* answer is "Popular Music," you can slap the buzzer with . . . "What is more important than food to teenagers?"

If kids would rather rock than eat, isn't it strange that we often banish their music to a sideline role in our ministries? And, even more disturbing, do we poison our kids' relationship to the church when we refuse to engage them in respectful discussions about the mainstream music they inhale? In effect, kids

## full access

When kids see few overlaps between their two worlds, they never learn that Jesus wants access into every area of their lives. And isn't the core of our calling to teach young people a new way to live—to filter all they say and do through the heart of Jesus? Aren't we hoping to impact the way kids act and think not only at church but at work, school, the movies, the grocery store, on dates, and cruising in their cars on a Friday night?

Paul wrote to the Philippians: "This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. . ." (Philippians 1:9-10).

When we model to kids that their music—the cornerstone of their culture—is off-limits at church, I think we circumvent the active role God wants them to play in discerning which cultural influences are positive and which are negative. The Holy Spirit's job is to convict us of sin and lead us into righteousness, but our young people rarely learn how to listen to the "still, small voice."

We simply must help our kids to be discerning fish in their cultural ocean. We must help them learn how to analyze and evaluate what they see and hear in both the sunlit plazas and dark corners of their lives.

learn that the church and the world don't mix. We're unintentionally teaching them to live a double life—their everyday "normal" life and their church life.