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EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

It's Time to Kiss the Church Hello Returning to the Simple Truths of God's Design for His People

by Gary E. Gilley

By now the details about Joshua Harris' divorce and apostasy are old news and every cheesy pun associated with his best-selling book, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, has been trotted out ad nauseam. But perhaps a positive pun is in order — "It's time to kiss the church hello" — because I think ultimately the focus is on the wrong issue.

Harris experienced the world of evangelical celebrity early in life. As a youth, he assisted his parents in their leadership in the homeschooling movement, traveling to home school conferences, and selling his father's materials. Still in his teens, Harris was speaking at these conferences and produced a magazine for homeschoolers called *New Attitude*. At age 21, he published his signature book, which not only sold over a million copies, but also launched a campaign sometimes called the "purity

culture" movement, although defining "purity culture" has proven elusive.



There are several issues that merit attention: First, at 21, Harris had no business writing a book telling people how to date — or not to date — and whom to marry. Second, his publisher, Multnomah Books, was culpable for publishing such a book. And third, Christian leaders who promoted the book were guilty of not protecting the sheep. All of this seems to have gone unnoticed to a gullible readership anxious for a manual that might aid in the cause of purity.

(continues on page 15)

Inside this Issue:

THE NOAHIDE MESSAGE OF UNIVERSALISM	PAGE 2
BENNY HINN RENOUNCES PROSPERITY GOSPEL	PAGE 3
A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO PREACH: IS IT BIBLICAL?	PAGE 4