

“BUT YE CANNOT DISCERN THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES”

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BOARD AND EDITORS
OF THE GOSPEL JOURNAL**

January 22, 2008

The Gospel Journal, Inc., Board:
Curtis A. Cates, President
Ken Ratcliff, Treasurer-Business Manager
Tommy J. Hicks, Member-at-large

The Gospel Journal Editors
Barry Grider
John Moore

Brethren:

In December 1944 Nazi Germany was on its last leg in World War II. The fierce winter, Allied advances, and German losses had produced a lull in the fighting, and the Allies had largely taken a Christmas break from the war. Hitler sensed that the Allies along the front were relaxed and inattentive. He was right. Over-confident Allied generals ignored their intelligence reports of a large concentration of German forces in the area of the Ardennes Forest of Western Europe. On December 16, they launched a huge offensive action, catching our forces by total surprise. The Battle of the Bulge resulted in over 19,000 allied deaths, many more injured, and about 30,000 captured as German forces overran them. Refusal to seriously consider the evidence led to an enormous and unnecessary Allied embarrassment and tragedy.

The Allied generals were neither the first nor the last to pay a heavy price for dismissing evidence. On one occasion, the leadership of Jewry challenged our Lord by asking for “a sign from heaven.” He ridiculed and rebuked them:

When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red.
And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times” (Mat. 16:2–3).

These blind Jews could read the weather signs, but obstinately refused the many signs the Savior had already given them. For refusal to “discern the signs of the times” that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, they, and all of those who followed them, met their doom (Mat. 15:14). Ignoring evidence is foolish and is fraught with great peril.

We remind you of the following matters, of which we know all of you men are now well aware concerning brother Joseph Meador:

- He ended his fourteen-year tenure as Director of Southwest School of Bible Studies (SWSBS), Austin, Texas, by resigning on July 20, 2007.
- He ended his seven and one-half year tenure as Vice-President of The Gospel Journal, Inc. (TGJ), by resigning on July 22, 2007.
- The elders of the Southwest Church of Christ led the congregation to withdraw fellowship from him on January 20, 2008—for impenitent adultery, in which he has admitted his involvement for four years.

All who have known the Meador family over the years are grieved beyond expression by this tragedy. We have great sorrow for Karen and all of the Meador children. We should pray for them. We sorrow also for Joseph, once a stalwart in the kingdom, but who has now jeopardized his own soul and perhaps the souls of many others. We pray that he will repent. Like King Manasseh of old, while he can be forgiven, he likely can never undo all of the damage he has done. We sorrow for the injury his behavior has caused and will cause to the Southwest congregation, the SWSBS, and to the kingdom in general. There is no occasion for joy and no excuse for exultation in any of these awful events. All who love the Cause are bowed in sorrow because of them.

All of the regret and dismay we feel concerning the tragic apostasy of brother Meador aside for the moment, your reaction to brother Meador’s resignation from TGJ Board is all but astonishing. All five of you men went out of your way to heap accolades upon him, some of which you Board members—if not you editors—**had to know were not true at the time you wrote them**. Except for the Southwest elders, you five men have likely been (over the past few years) in the best position to have called brother Meador back from the precipice over which he has now admittedly plunged. Instead, you have served as enablers of his mischief by your extended, inexcusable, self-imposed blindness and your recent unfounded tributes. Brother Meador, if still capable of embarrassment by the time of your plaudits, should have been embarrassed by your praise, knowing not one word of it was deserved and much of it was palpably false. We assume that none of you knew of his immorality before mid-January (as we did not), but evidence aplenty concerning his doctrinal and philosophical aberrations has been in wide circulation for years.

You board members eulogized him as follows (*The [New] Gospel Journal*, September 2007):

- He “served effectively and sacrificially as Vice President”
- He “brought...scholarship and soundness in the Scriptures”
- He “brought...administrative ability”
- He “brought...great ability as a gospel preacher”
- He gave “nearly eight years of distinguished service”
- “It has been a pleasure to work with him”

You editors were not to be outdone in the acclaim contest. You lauded him in the following similar terms, citing:

- “His many years of faithful service as a board member”
- “His insight, experience, and scholarship [on] *The Gospel Journal* team”
- “His love and concern for the Kingdom”
- “[His] biblically sound articles”
- “His many talents and good works [that have] refreshed the hearts of the saints”
- And stating that “He will be greatly missed”

We believe strongly in giving honor and praise where, when, and to whom they are due. It is enjoyable both to give them and to receive them. However, when one gives such, knowing they are not due or true, he not only engages in political flattery, pandering, and hypocrisy—he lies. Your praise was so far “over the top” that it almost appears that you were attempting to thereby justify your unwillingness to remove him from the board long ago.

We charge all of you men with the folly of ignoring abundant evidence relative to brother Joseph Meador’s flaws. His heresy and immorality aside for the moment, and long before you board members issued your gushing raves, you **very well knew** that your statements about his “effective,” “sacrificial,” and “distinguished” service to *The Gospel Journal* were far wide of the mark. From sometime in 2002 through June 2005, Joseph studiously avoided all board meetings, rarely responded to telephone or e-mail messages pertaining to the paper, failed miserably to do his board-assigned proofreading, and had little or no part in any board decisions. There is no evidence that he promoted the paper in any way during this period. His disinterest in *The Gospel Journal* was evident to the degree that he frequently was the subject of criticism and jokes in conversations between board members and editors, a fact of which all three of you are aware.

Brother Meador’s complete apathy concerning the paper was so obvious that others outside of *The Gospel Journal* principals noticed it. Brother Cates, you surely have not forgotten that a member of your MSOP faculty, brother Keith Mosher, once asked if there were some “political reason” to keep brother Meador on the board. (In case you’ve forgotten, he asked the question as seven of us ate together one evening during the Bristol, Virginia, Lectures, May 2005. Among the witnesses were your wife and all three of us whose signatures appear below.) You dodged the question then, which should have tipped all of us off—including Keith Mosher, incidentally—that you were unwilling to go where the evidence led. Ironically, as it turns out, brother Mosher “nailed it.” It is beyond question that you men kept Meador on the board only as a matter of “good politics.” Even earlier, brother Eddie Whitten, at that time a member of *TGJ*’s arbitration committee, had, with no prompting whatsoever, asked Dub McClish how Joseph Meador’s continued board membership, in light of his total inactivity, could be justified. How then could you men with a straight face say that he brought “administrative ability” to *TGJ*, when he refused even to communicate with the rest of us for the most part over a three-year period? **We challenge you to name one thing he contributed to *TGJ* in the realm of “administration.”** The board met and functioned and the editors got the paper out every month **in spite of** his failure to participate in our

efforts on even a minimal level, and yet you wrote as if just the opposite were true. On what basis could you say, “It has been a pleasure to work with him,” when he did not “work with” any of us on the paper after the first three years of its existence? To say “he served effectively and sacrificially” relative to *TGJ* in the period from 2002–2005 is ludicrous. It is way beyond hyperbole. While we three do not know his level of involvement and activity since that time, you men know, as do we, that your praise of his “nearly eight years of distinguished service” is a gross fabrication that bears no resemblance to reality.

You surely have not forgotten the first item on the agenda of the fateful July 19, 2005, board meeting. It read as follows:

Agenda For July 19-20, 2005

Organizational Items:

1. Joseph Meador: does he and should he continue to be on the board, is he an asset or a liability to *TGJ*?

The specific reason this item was on the agenda was (as indicated above) Meador’s profound indifference toward our efforts, as noted above, which was a matter of common knowledge and conversation among us (editors and board members) and others as well. On that occasion you had ample reasons and opportunity either to remove him or ask him to remove himself from the board of an enterprise in which he clearly had no interest. Only Michael Hatcher expressed doubts that he should remain on the board, while the rest of you quietly pretended to see no problems with Meador’s behavior. This unconscionable silence on your part reveals your irresponsibility. It has now come back to haunt you.

In what way did Joseph Meador bring “scholarship and soundness in the Scriptures” that had any bearing on *TGJ*? He certainly did not do so by any great volume of articles he contributed. Between January 2000 and July 2005, the 67 issues of the paper amounted to 2,416 pages. **His two articles filled a grand total of exactly five of those pages.** As to his contributing anything to the paper by means of his “scholarship,” we suppose you were merely expressing your reverence for the PhD he earned four or five years ago. You men surely learned long ago that *scholar* and *PhD* are by no means synonymous, especially when it comes to Biblical and spiritual matters. We challenge you to name not two or three, but **even one way** in which he used his vaunted “scholarship” to help the paper or advance the Gospel. By the time he earned that cherished sheepskin, his interests were apparently far afield from both the paper and the Truth. We suggest that he is a classic example of one who has been “educated beyond his intelligence” (and apparently beyond his spiritual depth).

As to his “soundness in the Scriptures,” you had to be thinking of his reputation for such several years in the past—the “old” Joseph, rather than the “new” Joseph. Had you opened your eyes to the evidence, you would have known better than to commend his non-existent “soundness in the Scriptures” of the last few years. Long before your

exaggerated endorsements, he had given signals that he was migrating not only in his interests, but also in his faith. Brother Cates, Dub McClish, *TGJ*'s Editor at the time, sent you notice by e-mail on March 9, 2004, of Meador's deep involvement in the Humanistic-based school of Gestalt Therapy. He told you of Meador's Gestalt Website (and furnished you with its URL), which revealed the depth of Meador's enthrallment with it. You ignored this warning, which, as board president, it was your responsibility to investigate (at the very least). **His infamous reference to us and others of like conviction, way back on July 28, 2005, as part of "a small, but no less toxic, loyalty circle...a small negative faction, who if they gain control, will only rupture fellowship in the church even more than they already have," alerted any who were not blind to where he had "progressed" in his convictions.** Why did this statement make no impression on you three men? (Was it because you agreed with his assessment of us?) On January 8, 2007, brother Kevin Townsend compiled a fourteen-page document that revealed Meador's deep entanglement with not only Gestalt Therapy, but with Hindu-rooted Yoga. This document was widely circulated, and we do not doubt that some, if not all three of you are aware of, if not familiar with, that material. How can you justify attributing "soundness in the Scriptures" to one who has succumbed to these Humanistic and Hindu philosophies? (Talk about "toxic"! Who now is revealed as the kingpin of toxicity but the very one who hurled the "toxic" charge at those of us who then and now stand where Joseph Meador once stood [or at least, where we **think** he once stood, but who knows now for sure....])? It is clear that, at the time he blasphemed us as "toxic" and as those who "rupture fellowship," **Meador had for some time been wallowing in a philosophical sewer (by his recent confession, we now know that he had also been wallowing a in moral sewer).** Yet you still lionized his "soundness in the faith." Have you men no integrity?

Your praise of him as a Gospel preacher of "great ability" is also greatly overblown. The last few years we have heard him preach, he has seemingly felt it necessary to flaunt his "scholarship" you so highly value. This tendency was especially evident in his use of the Hebrew language and of esoteric terminology he learned from infidel Hebrew "scholars," much of which went right over the heads of most folks. In recent years he had taken on an elitist, condescending, self-promoting attitude in the pulpit that only the naïve and/or self-blinded could not see. Yet you deceive your readers by acclaiming him as a Gospel preacher of "great ability." Ironically, the last few years, even when he preached or taught the Truth, he was doing it as a stage show, all pretense, neither believing (nor practicing) what he was teaching. We are fearful of how much influence on his students his preaching may have had over the past few years.

Could you editors do no better than merely repeat the undeserved praise the board members heaped upon our apostate brother (even using some almost identical terminology)? Your reference to "his many years of faithful service as a board member" is appalling, for you have no firsthand knowledge whatsoever of the matter beyond the fall of 2005 when you became editors. You obviously simply parroted the false claim the board members made in this regard. Both of you, as Southwest insiders, were in a better position to observe the tragic transformation of Joseph Meador than were any of the board members. Brother Grider, you doubtless were in close contact with him during

your tenure as the preacher at Southwest. Brother Moore, your many years of teaching on the SWSBS faculty (fulltime and part-time) placed you in intimate proximity to him. Surely, one or both of you brethren must have observed irregularities and/or deviations in his behavior. It is very difficult to believe that you did not.

Brother Meador's personality makeover seems to have coincided with his philosophical transition. This makeover had become obvious by 2003 at the latest, as by then SWSBS alumni were criticizing the extended length of his hair. By 2004, as mentioned earlier, he was so deep in Gestalt Therapy that he had his own Gestalt Website. Although only one of you (John Moore) still had direct connections with Southwest by then, surely you (and other faculty members) had to be aware of (and likely discussed) this involvement. We have difficulty believing that the alteration of his persona, which he was "telegraphing" by 2004–2005 (as seen in such things as his small wire-framed glasses, his growing of a goatee, and the length of his hair) went unnoticed by you and your fellow faculty members. Coupled with your knowledge of his Gestalt Therapy involvement, how could you **not** deduce that he was headed for doctrinal, if not moral, disaster?

Furthermore, beyond his Gestalt fascination, his participation in Hindu-based Yoga instruction has been widely circulated for more than a year (as mentioned above), knowledge of which we believe both of you men must have had. (Although this participation did not surface until a year ago, he had to have become its disciple much earlier, likely years earlier. One does not rise to the "instructor" level in such schools of thought without considerable investment of time and training.) In spite of these facts, you, as did your board, still upheld him for his "soundness in the Scriptures" and for "his love and concern for the Kingdom." So far as we know, none of you knew of his immorality at the time he resigned from TGJ board (which, we suppose he had the luxury of doing of his own will rather than being forced out by the board, incidentally). However, this brother sent so many signals of his "shipwreck concerning the faith" before this most recent shocking revelation that you are without excuse for not seeing them and/or for not acting on them. **The evidence was there in abundance well before his resignation.** That you would then commend him so unreservedly only multiplies your guilt.

All five of you men should be ashamed of yourselves for glorifying this apostate brother, given the extensive manifestations of his apostasy. Now, what will you do? Will you and your confederates (i.e., MSOP, GBN, AP, WVBS, Schertz Church of Christ—Schertz, TX, Southside Church of Christ—Lubbock, TX, Getwell Church of Christ—Memphis, TN, et al.) rally around Joseph Meador as you have rallied around Dave Miller and Stan Crowley? Will you ignore and/or rationalize the Meador evidence as you have ignored and/or rationalized the Miller and Crowley evidence? Will you tell brethren who question you about brother Meador's errors and sins to call him and talk to him in person about them, as you have done concerning Miller? If you and Meador are invited to speak on the same lectureship, will you do so and thus extend fellowship to him, as you continue to do with Miller and Crowley? Will you endorse and defend Meador as you have endorsed and defended Miller and Crowley? (Meador ought to consider suing

you for inconsistency if you don't.) Will you just “hunker down” and “lie low,” as you have attempted to do concerning your ill-founded defense of Dave Miller and Stan Crowley, hoping all of this will soon blow over and be forgotten?

What **should** you do? In the same venue in which you so exalted this utterly unworthy brother (*The [New] Gospel Journal*), you (TGJ board and editors) should publish an apology to your readers. Your *mea culpa* statement should include at least the following:

1. We have ignored the evidence concerning a fallen brother
2. We have defended (at least as early as 2005 when he first resigned) a brother who was/is indefensible
3. We have exalted and commended a brother whom we should have reprovved and removed from “*The [New] Gospel Journal* team”
4. We have enabled a brother to prolong his charade of being a Gospel preacher and a faithful husband and father
5. We have done all of this because it was more politically expedient to do so than to obey Romans 16:17–18 and like mandates of Scripture
6. Therefore, we humbly ask brethren everywhere to forgive us for writing these deceptive words of commendation

You brethren have sinned, and we call upon you repent and to announce your repentance as publicly as you committed your sin. Your forthright repentance in this regard might serve as the first step toward measures to heal the recent grievous alienation between once amicable brethren. To this end we sincerely and prayerfully submit this letter.

Faithfully yours,

s/Michael Hatcher (former Secretary, TGJ, Inc., Board [January 2000–July 2005])

s/Dub McClish (former and founding Editor, *The Gospel Journal* [January 2000–July 2005])

s/Dave Watson (former Associate Editor, *The Gospel Journal* [June 2002–July 2005])