Part II: A Broader Vision - AMCAP

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PART II
A BROADER VISION
AMCAP

A Period of Transition

After the LDS PGA October breakfast of 1974 in Salt Lake City, wheels were set in motion to take steps to expand the scope of the organization to include all helping professionals. "These are primarily counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other people whose work is similar to these fields."1 One of the first steps was to invite Henry L. Isaksen of Ricks College to serve as chairman of a committee on Professional Affairs.2 As a result of other developments a committee as such was never organized. Isaksen, however, served as a one-man committee. Among other things he was to become a member of the Ad Hoc Committee and met with such officials as Victor Brown, Jr. of the Church Social Services and his associates for feedback and their support.3

A second step was to schedule a meeting of the Executive Committee and to invite several influential professionals in the community who were also members of the LDS Church, for the purpose of discussing "the plans and suggestions for developing the LDS Counselor Organization into a more effective forum for LDS people in various helping professions". The meeting was held on January 9, 1975. Those who joined the officers of LDS PGA were Antone K. Romney, former Dean of the BYU College of Education and a Regional Representative for the Church and Allen Bergin, Director of the Values Institute at BYU.4 These two brethren were in a position to give feedback in terms of both the Church and the profession as to the feasibility of moving further in the direction of expanding the organization. This meeting was important because it gave further encouragement for the officers to move ahead as planned.

A third step was to carry out the plans for formulating an ad hoc committee. As the planning had moved forward, it soon became apparent that such a committee would need to represent a number of orientations if the organization was extended to include other helping professions. The current officers, Lynn Eric Johnson, E. Wayne Wright, and Robert Peters, had all been elected to the office as a result of their affiliation with APGA. It now became necessary to involve LDS helping professionals who had other affiliations with such organizations as the American Psychological Association, the National Council on Family Relations, the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, the American Psychiatric Association and the National Association of Social Workers.

In addition to the officers, therefore, the following eventually comprised the Ad Hoc Committee: Lynn Eric Johnson, Career Education, BYU; O. Kent Berg, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Salt Lake City; Ronald D. Bingham, Counselor Education, BYU; Gary Carson, Psychology, Weber State; Joe J. Christensen, Associate Commissioner of the Church Education System, Salt Lake City; Victor B. Cline, Psychology, University of Utah; Grant Hyer, LDS Hospital, Salt Lake City; Henry L. Isaksen, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, Ricks College; Donald Lankford, Division of Family Services, Provo; Robert J. Peters, Counselor, Career Advisement Center, BYU; Jan L. Tyler, Child Development and Family Relations, BYU; E. Wayne Wright, Counseling Psychologist, Utah State University.5

Immediately after the Committee was organized a meeting was scheduled by the Executive Officers for February 7, 1975. The members, including the Presidency were present except for one or two members who were unable to attend. Members of the Committee exhibited an atmosphere of enthusiasm and a spirit of cooperation as they began to fulfill a common commitment. As an outgrowth of the meeting, the Presidency recommended that the members of the Association consider the following changes:

1. Expand to include all helping professionals. These are primarily counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other people whose work is similar to these fields.
2. Retain the present constitution, with only the necessary changes to accommodate this development.
3. Change the name to reflect the new organization. The proposed name offered by the committee is Association for L.D.S. Helping Professionals.
4. Hold an annual convention in the Salt Lake City-Provo area each October preceding general conference; the first being at BYU on October 1-2, 1975, with Ron Bingham chairman.
5. Hold elections at that time for president-elect, secretary-treasurer, and executive committeemen comprising the disciplines represented; and possibly for areas (or district) leadership units to further the organization on local levels. The geographical units could then meet in conjunction with national conventions as well as separately.
6. Move forward as a unified group to lend the strength of our beliefs and training to our respective disciplines, the Church, and each other.6

The recommendations were presented to the members of the Association through the LDS Personnel and Guidance Association Newsletter (the first and only newsletter produced under LDS PGA) in February 1975.7 A questionnaire type “Ballot for Proposals” accompanied the
Newsletter in order to obtain the vote and comments from Association members. Also attached to the Newsletter was a copy of the LDS PGA Constitution with only the necessary changes written in to reflect the above proposals. Basically the changes at this point had to do only with changes in the name of the organization and the affiliation it had with the American Personnel and Guidance Association.

The response to the Ballot for Proposals was in general very positive. The negative votes and comments were directed mainly toward the title of the organization and parameters used to determine the membership in its expanded form. Although ninety-six percent of the members who responded voted to expand the organization, the comments indicated dissatisfaction in the wording pertaining to the expansion of membership. The lowest positive vote, eighty percent, had reference to the change in name. Again the comments showed that the opposition had more to do with the name as it was worded than in negotiating a name change. These concerns were reflected in the first and third proposals having to do with expansion and the title respectively. There was considerable resistance in using the term, to “other people” as well as the name, “The Association for LDS Helping Professionals”. The following are typical responses showing some of the objections:

1. I agree with the idea in principle, but I have trouble with the words ‘other people’. It seems too broad. To maintain identity and a sense of belongingness, we need to have more tangible boundaries. I would, therefore, suggest the last phrase read “Other professionals who have counseling responsibilities.”

2. This title is too all inclusive. I suggest Association of Mormon Behavioral Scientists (AMBS) or L.D.S. Behavioral Scientists (LDSBS).

3. “Helping Professionals” is too broad—it would include physicians and attorneys. Suggestions: L.D.S. Consulting Professionals or Clinical, or Therapists—or L.D.S. Behavioral Professionals.

A Name to Reflect Expansion

With respect to the comments to all six proposals as a whole, however, such comments as “a great idea, excellent idea, welcome the change, sounds good,” and so forth reflected the positive tenor of the members of the Association as they responded to the ballot for proposals. Another indication of the positive support was the fact that 100 percent of the members responding voted to move forward as a unified group: ninety-eight percent to hold an annual convention in the Salt Lake City-Provo area immediately preceding October General Conference; ninety-six percent to retain the present Constitution, with only the necessary changes to accommodate this new structure; and eighty-nine percent to hold elections for 1975 at the proposed conference time. As indicated above, only eighty percent voted to change the name to “The Association for L.D.S. Helping Professionals”, and many who voted in favor did so with reservations because of the broad nature of the title.

The responses from the Ballot provided ample “food” for discussion for the next meeting of the LDS PGA Ad Hoc Committee which was held at the University of Utah on April 18, 1975. The first order of business was to meet the challenge of creating a more appropriate title since the proposed name, “The Association for LDS Helping Professionals” had been rejected by many members. After considerable discussion the committee resolved the problem by coming up with the name, Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP), as a proposal for presentation to members for adoption at the convention to be held in Salt Lake City in October.

The significance of this Ad Hoc Committee meeting was obvious when considering the issues with which the Committee was coming to grips. Not only did committee members deal with a new title for the organization, but also struggled with the membership problem as contained in Article III of the proposed constitutional changes. The final resolution of this problem was left to the next Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

The following excerpts from the minutes reflect other issues which also had a bearing on setting the stage for the reorganization and the eventual creation of AMCAP:

1. A thorough discussion was held concerning a proposed conference with workshop programs to be held in connection with October conference. It was suggested that the convention be held from Wednesday noon, October 1st through Thursday evening of October 2nd. Also that we invite a keynote speaker (a general authority) to speak Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. with a business meeting to be held from 10:00 to 12:00. The rest of the time be devoted to workshop presentations and demonstrations which are designed to help Mormon counselors and psychotherapists. Dr. Victor Cline was authorized to make reservations and arrangements for the L.D.S. Institute on the University Utah campus. He felt this would not be a real problem.

2. Henry Isaksen, chairman of the committee on professional affairs handed out a “call for programs” which led to several suggestions of people and topics for workshop presentations. This will be discussed more thoroughly and invitations issued to individuals for the October conference.

3. It was discussed and decided that a thorough up-to-date mailing list be completed and that the Church News, word-by-mouth, etc. are possible ways of getting the word out. All names are to be sent to Robert Peters, secretary.

4. It was proposed that a call for demonstration and presentation be asked for. The responses to the call would probably be a good pool for this conference and subsequent conferences where different themes are selected.

5. It was proposed that the 1975 October Conference theme be ‘Current Issues Facing Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists’
Conference Planning

Full attention was now directed toward the October convention. This would be a very important event. Crucial proposals would need to be presented for adoption by the membership in terms of name change and reorganization. Furthermore, it would be the first convention of its kind to be held in Salt Lake City in the Fall. Prior to this, the meeting held during General Conference time had been the early morning breakfast with the major conference being held in the Spring during the APGA Convention.

Ronald Bingham of BYU and a member of the Ad Hoc Committee accepted the assignment as Program Chairman for the October Conference.

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was held at Weber State College on May 13, 1975. The more significant items considered in the meeting included the review of the tentative schedule of the October convention as reviewed by Ronald Bingham. Another matter was a charge to Henry Isaksen, Chairman of the Professional Affairs Committee, “to devise ways and means of enabling LDS counselors and psychotherapists to have a greater impact on their respective professions”. An immediate task was to take time in the October convention to discuss how to write program proposals for the various professional organizations having to do with counseling and psychotherapy. One of the major outcomes sought was to launch a cooperative effort with “The American Personnel and Guidance Association, The American Psychological Association, The American Psychiatric Association, The National Association of Social Workers, The American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, and other appropriate professional organizations for the purpose of re-establishing moral and responsible behavior of counselors and psychotherapists”.15

In addition to the above, several other matters of business were considered. Rather than making a general call for program proposals, the committee agreed to decide themselves who they desired to present programs and then invite them to participate. Gary Carson of Weber State College was invited to be the chairman of the Nominations Committee. The Committee was charged to come up with names to be presented for a vote at the October convention. It was also agreed that names would be accepted by other members of the Association. Ronald Bingham was charged with the task of rewording the tentative conference schedule for review at the next meeting. President Lynn Eric Johnson accepted the assignment for announcing the Conference for October 1 and 2, 1975, by way of letter and other materials.16

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was held at Brigham Young University on July 18, 1975 for the primary purpose of finalizing plans for the October Convention.

The Committee agreed that there would be a keynote speaker, a General Authority speaker, and four additional workshop presentations. A list of potential keynote speakers was developed, and Carlfred Broderick of University of Southern California was selected to be the first choice for a keynote speaker. Although he has previously declined through correspondence to participate in the conference, Ron Bingham will contact him personally to see if he will give the keynote address. (Contact was later made and Dr. Broderick agreed to be the keynote speaker.) He will speak on “Current Issues Facing Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists”.17

As plans moved forward, publicity regarding the October Convention was released, through the news media and by letter. The headlines of a newspaper article for example, in The Herald (Provo) dated August 10, 1975, read “Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists Plan First Workshop”.18 A letter was also sent to all Association members over the signature of the President, Lynn Eric Johnson. In addition to extending an invitation to attend the “Convention-Workshop” on October 1-2, it also gave some of the background of the developments which were taking place in formulating AMCAP. The letter also outlined a series of plans for the future of the organization as follows:

1. Expansion of the original organization to include professionals engaged in counseling and psychotherapy.
2. Renaming the organization to indicate this change. The suggested name is: Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP).
3. Unification of these members on a National and geographic basis for maximum contact and impact upon their respective professions.
4. Professional research, reports, and activities that will present L.D.S. values before National professionals.
5. Offering the strength of the organization to our Church leaders for the building of the Kingdom.
6. Development of programs for continued professional growth among the members.19

The First AMCAP Annual Convention

The fruits of the labors of those who faithfully and diligently prepared for the First Annual Convention of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP) began to materialize as members gathered on October 1, 1975, for two days of meetings at the University of Utah LDS Institute of Religion. The theme of the Convention Workshop was “Current Issues Facing Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists”. The scriptural basis supplementing the theme was:

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord;
And he delighteth in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down:
For the Lord upholdeth him with his hands.”

(Psalms 37:23-24)
Lynn Eric Johnson, President, called the convention to order at 1:00 p.m. After extending a word of welcome to the members, he introduced Carlfred B. Broderick, Professor of Sociology and Executive Director of the Marriage and Family Counseling Program at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, for the keynote address. Dr. Broderick's topic was "New Wine in New Bottles: The Contemporary Counselor in the Contemporary Church". The keynote address was followed by a presentation entitled "How to Make a Good Marriage Great: The Art of Effective Marriage Counseling". This presentation was in the form of a panel with G. Hugh Allred and Terrence D. Olson, both Associate Professors of Child Development and Family Relationships at BYU, participating. Dr. Allred also served as chairman in preparing and conducting the panel.

The afternoon program was climaxed with an address by Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone, 2nd counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. He addressed his remarks to the topic of "Transgression". As a sidelight to his address, Bishop Featherstone reminded AMCAP members of their awesome responsibility because they are "doing probably what the Savior spent His whole life doing, in just a little different way. You are healing souls".

The second day's activities began at 7:00 a.m. on October 2, with the traditional breakfast. Elder Victor L. Brown, Jr. spoke on the topic of "Truth, Sin, Guilt, Punishment, and Redemption".

The business meeting was the next item on the agenda for the Convention. This was a very significant meeting with the major proposals for the formulation of AMCAP to be presented to the members. The following proposals, therefore, were presented for a "yes" or "no" vote:

1. It is proposed that the name LDS Personnel and Guidance Association (LDS PGA) be changed to Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP).
2. It is proposed that the current LDS PGA President-Elect, Dr. Wayne Wright, assume office as President of AMCAP.
3. It is proposed that a president-elect and a secretary-treasurer be elected for AMCAP.
4. It is proposed that the current Ad Hoc Committee continue to serve as Executive Committee for twelve months, and perform the following assignments:
   a) Develop a proposed organization plan, and submit the plan to the membership of AMCAP on or before next year's convention.
   b) Develop a proposed slate of officers, and submit the ballot to the AMCAP membership on or before next year's convention.
   c) Develop a proposal for the organization and implementation of standing committees, viz., professional affairs, Interorganizational affairs, and Church affairs, and submit to the AMCAP membership on or before next year's convention.
   d) Select area representatives who can serve temporarily to gather information about prospective AMCAP members and needs in the following areas: New England, New York, Southern States, Midwest, Arizona, So. California, No. California, North-West, Alaska, and Hawaii.
5. It is proposed that a newsletter be created to inform the membership of current AMCAP, National, and other news; and other matters of interest, i.e. research, collaboration requests, research results, convention dates, employment needs and opportunities, etc.

All five proposals were passed by members at the convention. E. Wayne Wright, who had been assuming the office of President-Elect of LDS PGA now became the new President of AMCAP. Wright, therefore, was the first president to act for AMCAP in its official capacity as an organization. Lynn Eric Johnson had assumed the leadership in the monumental task of making the transition and had served as president while proposals were being made for the organization by the Ad Hoc Committee.

It now became the task of the members to cast their ballots for the other officers. Henry L. Isaksen, who had served as chairman of LDS PGA in 1966, was elected President-Elect of AMCAP. Isaksen was now at Ricks College and was in a good location to assume the key leadership position in 1976. Gary Carson, Weber State College, became the new secretary-treasurer.

After the business meeting, Isaksen gave a report on professional affairs. Three presentations/workshops were conducted during the afternoon. Two presentations were given on the topic of homosexuals. Robert D. Card, Clinical Psychologist in private practice, presented an address entitled "Counseling the Homosexual in a Private Practice Setting", and Robert L. Battner, Special Assistant to the LDS Commissioner of Personal Welfare in Salt Lake City, spoke to the subject "Counseling the Homosexual in a Church Setting". Following these presentations, Victor B. Cline, Professor of Psychology at the University of Utah, made a presentation on "How the Mass Media Effects Our Values and Behavior".

Putting the Plan Into Operation

With the First Annual Convention behind them and after experiencing the elation of congratulatory messages reflecting the success of the meetings and workshops, the Executive Officers with the Ad Hoc Committee set about to put into operation the many suggestions and charges growing out of the convention. One of the first tasks was to develop a newsletter to accomplish a variety of purposes:
(1) It would serve as a media for communicating matters of interest to members, (2) it could provide a means for exchanging information and collaborative research, (3) it could include news items to which members could respond professionally, (4) it would provide for the sharing of employment desires and opportunities, and (5) it would provide a means of informing members of new developments and oncoming events.

A second concern was to obtain accurate addresses and rosters of members and potential members. The current membership was drawn previously from the roster of LDS PGA members. Now, there was a need to obtain a roster of potential members from such other disciplines as social work, psychology, marriage and family counseling, psychiatry, school counseling, and so forth. Thirdly, there was the task of identifying and recruiting potential area coordinators in geographic regions throughout the United States. A fourth project which had already received considerable attention but still had much left to be done was to make further changes in the original Constitution to bring it in harmony with new developments, particularly those parts of the By-Laws having to do with membership. A fifth task was to get the Convention talks transcribed, printed and distributed to members at a minimum cost. Even though the organization was solvent, a sixth concern was to consider optional ways to increase the financial base since the annual dues had been previously only $2.00. Finally, plans for the Fall Convention of 1976 needed immediate attention as high quality programs were to be maintained as they had been in 1975.

Indeed, the time was ripe for launching an expanded organization to meet the challenges of being an influence in helping to stem the tide of the liberal positions taken by a number of professional organizations in terms of presentations at conventions and professional publications. One example where such a challenge was made pertained to a letter sent to the Editor of the APGA Personnel and Guidance Journal by Gary Carson. The challenge was directed toward the March 1976 issue of the Journal which in the opinion of some AMCAP members was "unprofessional and bordered on obscenity". Guidelines to meeting these and similar challenges were submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee to members of the Association through the August 1976 issue of the AMCAP Newsletter. These goals including the areas of professional, inter-organization, and Church affairs and encouraged members among other things to take an active role in their respective professional organizations; to be involved in professional research writing and publications which support LDS standards and values; to establish better communications systems with all LDS professionals; and "to share the expertise of their respective professions with each other to edify all members". The goals also charged AMCAP to "offer its services to the Church to serve in ways the Church leaders deem desirable"; to receive direction and guidance from Church leaders; and to "urge members of AMCAP to live the Church's standards".

Working under the handicap of time, the officers of AMCAP continued the further implementation of the assignments which had been outlined. One of the first was to bring the By-Laws in harmony with the policies and procedures of the new organization. The old Constitution of the LDS Personnel and Guidance Association served as a base but there were differences in the organizational structure which needed to be built into the new set of By-Laws. The major changes reflected the expanded nature of the organization. This included an extension of the membership, the creation of a governing board, the addition of standing and ad hoc committees, and an increase in the number of ad hoc committees. (See Appendix A and B for additional comparisons.)

A second major task was to publish the October Convention Addresses. Since the organization was to have a journal, it seemed advisable to have each address reported in the journal. Thus, the first AMCAP Journal was soon published containing the Convention report for October 1975. The contents included editorial comments, AMCAP executive notes, and addresses of the participants. Don Lankford was appointed as the first editor of the Journal.

The next assignment was to get a newsletter printed and distributed. It was decided that the format of the newsletter should include a President's page, Editorial notes, news from area coordinators, critical concerns from literature or professional meetings, employment opportunities, and executive committee action. The first AMCAP Newsletter, therefore, was issued in August 1976 and distributed to members of the Association. The Newsletter included the President's Report; three statements on "What AMCAP Means To Me", by Gary Carson, Henry L. Isaksen, Don Lankford, a statement of purposes and goals; a "Challenge to the APGA Journal" by Gary Carson; the By-Laws; and an attached membership application. The AMCAP Editorial Committee responsible for getting the Newsletter published were Flodie Brown, Lynn Eric Johnson, Don Lankford, and Lynn Tyler.

With the 1976 Convention approaching the Ad Hoc Executive Committee preparations gathered momentum as the group met on June 17. Jan L. Tyler had been appointed Program Chairman and had been doing some planning since the first of the year. Such national figures as Paul Harvey had been considered as possible speakers for the 1976 Convention. It was now time, however, to start firming up commitments for keynote speakers. A number of prominent local individuals were discussed during the June meeting and by mid July most of these commitments had been made along with those to serve on panels. A rough outline of the program schedules was presented to the Ad Hoc Committee during the July meeting with only a few minor details yet to be carried out.

As plans were moving forward for another convention, future newsletters and the AMCAP Journal, it became obvious that dues would need to be increased in order for the organization to remain solvent. The $2.00 dues were now inadequate in spite of the increase in membership. Some committee members during the June meeting suggested as much as $20.00 per member, but the committee
eventually approved $5.00 for regular membership and $1.50 for students. The 1976 Convention fees were set at $2.00 for members with students and spouses paying $1.00. At the business meeting of the 1976 Convention, dues were again raised, this time to $10.00 for professional and associate membership and $5.00 for student membership.

A fifth task was to organize a Governing Board in conjunction with Article III, Section 7 of the By-Laws. One of the major items of business during the July 15, 1976 Ad Hoc Executive Committee Meeting was to discuss the activation and functions of the Board. During the August meeting of the committee, Lynn Eric Johnson was charged with selecting names of persons who could be presented at the business meeting of the 1976 Annual Convention.

A final major assignment of the officers was to establish a regional organization with area coordinators appointed in various parts of the United States. This was discussed in the Ad Hoc Committee in August. The first action was taken by E. Wayne Wright when he appointed the first four area coordinators in September 1976. His first charge to these individuals is as follows:

An immediate need is for us to identify counselors and therapists in various disciplines and get an accurate, current roster of interested persons and/or members. We will also want you to consider ways the area coordinators can best help promote membership, regional meetings, state or regional chapters, or whatever seems feasible in your respective areas to promote our goals and unified efforts.

Those who were eventually appointed to serve as the initial area coordinators along with the respective states where they live are as follows: Richard Bashaw, California; Steve Bunnell, Washington; Alice T. Clark, North Dakota; Larry D. Droughan, Arizona; J. Richard Fletcher, California; E. Brent Frazier, New Hampshire, Jayne G. Garside, Hawaii; James C. Hurst, Texas; Richard Dean Yancey, Idaho; and Albert Dean Byrd, Maryland. During the AMCAP Board of Governors Meeting on December 28, 1976, all of the above names were cleared by the Board and letters were subsequently sent to invite them to serve as a communications link with the officers.

The Second Annual Convention

Under the direction of President E. Wayne Wright the Second Annual AMCAP Convention/Workshop proceeded according to plan on September 29-30, 1976, at the LDS Institute, University of Utah. The theme, “Current Issues Facing Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists”, was maintained as it had been instituted during the First Annual Convention. Three prominent individuals from the local area delivered addresses during the two day conference. The keynote speaker was Henry B. Eyring, President of Ricks College, who spoke to the subject, “What's happening in the Kingdom: Implications for Counselors”. Elder Wendall J. Ashton, Managing Director of the Department of Church Communications, was the dinner speaker for the evening of September 29. The title of his address was “The Image Building Program of the Church”. Finally, Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., First Council of the Seventy, was the pre-breakfast speaker for the morning of September 30. He spoke to the topic “Keeping the Kingdom Clean”.

In addition to these addresses three separate panels discussed pertinent issues. On the first day Henry Isaksen served as moderator of a panel entitled, “Latter-day Saints As a Subculture: Our Survival and Impact Upon the American Culture”, with Lowell Bennion, Joseph Bentley, Merritt Egan, and Margaret Hoopes as panel members. On the second day the topic “Changing Views and Status of Women: Implications Within the Church and the Professions”, was discussed by J. Joel Moss, Moyne Oviatt, and Jan L. Tyler. The third panel followed during the afternoon with Grant Hyer, Maxine Murdock, and Elvin Tanner addressing themselves to “Confidentiality and Privileged Communication: Our Responsibilities Within the Dual Roles as Church Members and Professionals”.

Other convention activities included entertainment by Blaine and Lee Vance followed by rotating discussion groups and a business meeting. Matters of business included voting for amendments to the By-Laws, election of officers, discussion of publications, area coordinators, and area meetings.

During the meeting, the members gave their sanction to the By-Laws with a passing vote. The first set of AMCAP By-Laws had appeared in the August 1976 issue of the Newsletter. The intent was to present them in order to get a reaction from the membership before the October Convention. As a result of the reactions, several changes and additions were made, particularly those in Article II having to do with membership.

A second major order of business was to elect the new officers. Burton C. Kelly, Director of the Counseling Center at BYU, became the new President-Elect, and Richard A. Heaps, BYU, Secretary-Treasurer. The new By-Laws indicated that Governors would “serve three years in a rotating basis; the year of the adoption of these By-Laws, two will be elected for a one-year term, two for a two-year term, and two for a three-year term. Thus, the first group members of the AMCAP Governing Board were elected at this meeting. Those elected for the one-year term were Margaret Hoopes, BYU, and Victor B. Cline, University of Utah; those for a two-year term were Delbert Pearson, Psychiatrist in private practice, Provo; and Don Lankford, Division of Family Services, Provo; those for a three-year term were Myrle Ruesch, Gila County Schools, and Richard D. Berrett, California State University at Fresno.
Reaching Solutions With the Church

When an organization begins to grow, expand and to have an impact it is bound to have its problems, its challenges. The launching of AMCAP was no exception. While the organization was small and under the title "LDS Personnel and Guidance Association", there were no questions raised about the title of the organization. As the impact of AMCAP was beginning to be felt, however, there arose concern about the word "Mormon", in the title. A question for example, was raised by the Church Law Department as to whether or not the use of such a word might be appropriate. The following quote from a letter sent by the Law Department illustrates the concern:

Having reacted positively to all that I have seen with reference to your association, I do bring you one question. In an accompanying memorandum to the newsletter sent to this office, the Presiding Bishopric questioned the wisdom of the use of the term "Mormon" in the title of your association. It would appear to some that the word "Mormon" in your title would give an improper impression of Church sponsorship. While everything that I have seen or have heard brought to my attention about your organization is praiseworthy, it does not follow that your association's methods and techniques and organization are sponsored by the Church.

I would, therefore, ask that you consider this matter with your executive committee, to see if it cannot be concurred that the association's name may be misinterpreted. 50

The problem was brought to the attention of the Brethren as a result of an article that appeared in The Salt Lake Tribune under the headline, "Mormon Counselors Seek to Change Image of Church". It quoted several who had spoken at the October Convention. In essence the quotes implied that "members of the LDS Church have not been sufficiently involved in group and community affairs". 51

The article brought a reaction from the Church Public Communications Department suggesting that the article was in poor taste for the image of the Church.

The Department suggested that a meeting be scheduled with AMCAP Officers to discuss "ways in which your excellent organization can handle its meeting in relationship to the news media in the future in the interest of enhancing the image of the Church". 52

By February, 1977, the problem in connection with the title had been resolved in favor of AMCAP's desires. Approval was given after a visit to the Law Department as well as a few telephone conversations and some correspondence. 53 Those who had been members of both LDS PGA and AMCAP had for obvious reasons a desire to identify themselves as Latter-day Saints or Mormons, but by the same token they did not in any way wish to embarrass the General Authorities of the Church. Approval to use the word "Mormon" was given on condition that a disclaimer appear near the Masterhead on all AMCAP correspondence and publications. 54 The following disclaimer was adopted: "AMCAP supports the principles and standards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; however, it is an independent, professional organization which is not sponsored by nor does it speak for the Church and its leaders". 55

Further reconciliations were reached when AMCAP President, Henry L. Isaksen, and former AMCAP President, E. Wayne Wright visited Elder Wendal J. Ashton, Managing Director of the Public Communications Department. "Brother Ashton suggested that AMCAP communications and speakers should always present materials as though the press is present and will use such material. Whenever concerned about possible misquotation, they should speak off the record." 56

Rounding Out the Organization

Much had been accomplished during the October 1976 Convention to add many of the finishing touches to the organizational structure of AMCAP. The new Constitution had been approved, a Board of Governors had been elected and a new set of officers had been installed. With the conference out of the way, the officers could now turn attention to some loose ends yet to be handled. The Editorial Board needed to be solidified and there was a need for establishing more definite editorial policies and procedures for AMCAP publications. Committee assignments also needed to be carried out and an up-to-date directory of the members seemed a necessity along with more effective methods for maintaining the directory. Finally, the nomination and election procedures needed to be spelled out.

Although a temporary Editorial Board had been established for publishing the first AMCAP Journal and Newsletter, it was not until the Spring 1977 that the board was actually solidified with Don Lankford and J. Reed Payne as Associate Editors; Wesley W. Craig, Jr., Lynn Eric Johnson, and V. Lynn Tyler as board members; and Flodie Lucretia Brown as student representative. 57 By September 1977 an Editorial Policy was adopted which reads as follows:

1. AMCAP will seek to publish articles that:
   • are distinctively concerned with or relative to LDS counselors and psychotherapists.
   • are authored by members of the Church and not apt to be published elsewhere.
   • have been published elsewhere but are of such distinctive quality and importance as to warrant republication by AMCAP.

2. AMCAP will not publish material which, in the opinion of the Editorial Board, might be construed as questioning, taking issue with, or contradicting established doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

3. Each issue of the journal will include, near the title on the outside cover, the following statement:
AMCAP supports the principles and standards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; however, it is an independent, professional organization which is not sponsored by nor does it speak for the Church or its leaders.

It will also include, in an appropriate place, the following statement:

"The ideas and opinions expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the association or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."58

When the AMCAP Executive Committee met on December 3, 1976 it recommended that the following individuals be appointed to chair various committees as follows: Burton C. Kelly, Historian; E. Wayne Wright, Elections; Richard A. Heaps, Membership; Don Lankford, Publications, and Victor Cline and Myrle Ruesch, AMCAP Convention.59 The appointments were then approved by the Governing Board when it met during the latter part of the same month. During the meeting each committee chairman gave a progress report regarding his or her responsibility.60

To facilitate the process of maintaining membership records, a computerized directory system from computer cards was adopted. Richard A. Heaps, Secretary-Treasurer, was charged with putting the system into operation.61 Methods were also devised for inviting those who were not members to become members and for collecting dues from those who were members. By December there were approximately 225 individuals who constituted the current paid membership and "approximately 500 additional names currently identified as potential members."62 During this period, members of the association were informed by letter of the three basic membership categories which included the (1) professional member, a member of the Church who had professional experience and training in one of the branches of counseling and psychotherapy and who was willing to declare his/her commitment to the principles of the Church; (2) a student member, a student involved in a formal program of professional training in counseling and psychotherapy, and otherwise eligible as in (1) above; and (3) Associate member, a person who need not be a member of the Church or be in the counseling or psychotherapy profession, but must subscribe to the purpose of the Association and may not vote or hold office.63

The By-Laws specified that there would be an Election Committee to "select candidates, prepare ballots and conduct the election", but it did not spell out the procedures by which this was to be done. In January 1977 the Executive Committee considered the matter and charged the Election Committee to have the procedures for the 1977 convention ready to announce in the next Newsletter in order to meet a deadline for the nomination of officers by April 15, 1977.64 Some of the major features of these procedures were as follows: (1) elections would be conducted at the annual conventions, (2) nominations would be selected from the membership at large with all members urged to nominate professional members in good standing, (3) the Elections Committee would prepare a slate of nominees and would contact these individuals to determine their willingness to serve, (4) nominations would not be accepted from the floor, since all members would have had an opportunity to nominate proposed candidates by mail, and (5) absentee ballots would be available and would be sent upon request to members unable to attend the convention.65

Strengthening the Organization

With the organizational structure completed, the officers of AMCAP could now turn more of their attention to that of making improvements and seeking for quality. A major issue that needed attention was AMCAP's relationship to the Church on the one hand and the professions on the other. This issue had begun to surface as the Executive Committee and the Governing Board deliberated on the Editorial Policy. Some of the major issues involved were presented by E. Wayne Wright, former AMCAP President. The global issue appeared to be whether AMCAP should be primarily a spiritual and religious affiliation of professionals whose point of view was in harmony with Church doctrine and leaders, or only a professional affiliation of LDS practitioners which would provide another open forum for discussion of social issues from a professional point of view. Wright's further concern was that unless AMCAP were to maintain a unique purpose with regard to social-professional concerns, there would be "no point in having just another professional association to maintain financially".66

The Executive Officers were inclined to support the purpose that "AMCAP" publications should be to support Gospel principles and facilitate the implementation of those principles in our professional lives", and that the "Editorial Board should consider articles for publication both prayerfully and carefully".67 One of the consequences of this point of view was a policy stating that convention addresses may or may not be published. This was to allow the Publications Committee "a greater freedom and avoid potentially embarrassing situations". It was conceded the keynote and General Authorities addresses would be published following each convention.68

A second matter for attention was given to the Directory of Members. Improvements had already been made with the distribution of a computer printed membership list. Concerns were raised, however, with regard to agencies which wanted the list for various reasons—for example, to determine the area where LDS psychotherapists were living. The following guidelines were established in handling such requests:

1. That only professional members be listed or, if the total list were to be sent that recipients attention should be called to the different types of member categories;
2. That a disclaimer be sent with each request to the effect that the specialty of the professional members is not given and we are not aware of such in many cases, and that we are neither recommending nor endorsing
any of the members to the recipient; and
3. That the cost for preparing such requests be carefully
determined and an appropriate charge be levied for
such.”

A major goal of AMCAP was to offer its members as
many benefits as possible. One of these had to do with
Continuing Education credit for state relicensure. Many
members were living in states where psychiatrists and
psychologists were required to obtain Continuing Educa­
tion credit in order to renew their licenses. Since the
AMCAP Convention/Workshop type program was of an
educational nature, Victor Cline was charged by the
Governing Board to investigate whether the convention
might be acceptable for Continuing Education credit. In
reporting to the AMCAP President, Cline indicated that
the convention would qualify for credit for both Utah
physicians and psychologists. With regard to other states,
however, he was unable to provide information. He did
recommend that AMCAP “provide a form which would
be signed by members of our Association for out of state
professionals which might provide proper documentation
for them”.

Another way in which AMCAP made an effort to ac­
commodate members was to obtain a tax exempt status
for the membership dues. President Isakseh was given the
assignment to contact the Internal Revenue Service to
make an official request. By the June meeting of the
Governing Board the request was approved for deducting
dues, but contributions were not deductible. Thus, some
headway had been made with IRS, but there was still more
to do with respect to contributions as far as members
were concerned. In addition to working out agreements relating
to membership, AMCAP officers were faced with obtaining
IRS cooperation in bulk mailing to members. AMCAP had
been denied a bulk mailing permit as a non-profit organiza­
tion because of its IRS classification as a “Business
League”. Eventually a 3rd class bulk mailing permit was
obtained which reduced bulk mailing costs by approxi­
mately one-half. Other changes in the IRS classification
continued to be pursued.

A fourth matter of attention was to encourage members
of various professions to do what they could to have an
impact on their respective professional organizations. One
way was to hold an AMCAP meeting for members at the
annual conventions of each of the professional organiza­
tions. Of course this was the major thrust for the LDS­
Personnel and Guidance Association prior to the organiza­
tion of AMCAP. Nevertheless, meetings now under the
direction of AMCAP continued to be held at the APGA
Conventions. Plans, therefore, moved forward again for
another meeting during APGA time. Two AMCAP meet­
ings were held at Dallas, Texas in March. At one of the
meetings a 30 minute slide/sound presentation on
AMCAP was presented which brought a positive reaction
from the few members who were present. With respect to
the small attendance, “it was thought that the smallness in
numbers was largely due to mailing problems”.

The Third Annual
Convention/Workshop

The Convention Committee, Victor B. Cline and Myrle
Ruesch, was well into planning by the first of the year. As
a matter of fact, an outline for the proposed 1977 conven­
tion was in the hands of the officers and Governors by the
early part of February. The place, time, and food arrange­
ments had been made. The following scriptural theme had
been chosen: “When ye are in the service of your fellow
beings, ye are only in the service of your God”. (Mosiah
2:17.) A keynote speaker had been suggested and several
General Authorities had been considered as possibilities.
At the meeting of the Board of Governors in April, Presi­
dent Spencer W. Kimball had been recommended as a
speaker for the 1977 convention. He was, therefore,
invited to speak, and accepted the invitation. On further
consideration, however, because of heavy commitments
during General Conference time, he indicated by a letter
dated May 27, 1977 that he would need to decline. He
did, however, express his willingness to speak to AMCAP
members at a different date. The letter, which he typed
himself, is quoted here as follows:

I am writing in further reference to your letter
of April 12, 1977, and my reply of April 22
responding to your invitation to speak to your
members and the Board of Governors of
AMCAP.

As I indicated to you in my letter, it would be
a great pleasure to meet with you and speak
briefly to your group. As you pointed out in
your letter, your convention is presently sched­
uled two days before our October Semiannual
General Conference, and this is, of course, one
of the busiest times of the whole year (although
it is difficult to tell one busy day from another).
On the day of your convention, Thursday,
September 29, I will be meeting all day in the
Temple with the other General Authorities. By
the time that day comes to a close, I fear that I
will be in no condition to do justice to a speak­
ing engagement. The next day, Friday, the
30th, we will have an all-day seminar for
approximately 150 Regional Representatives
of the Twelve who come from all parts of the
world for instruction. Then, of course, Satur­
day and Sunday will be our General Confer­
ence.

Again I say I will be glad to meet with and talk
to your group, but I am wondering if we can
make it another date when my time will be
freer and I would be able to do a better job
for you. I am just afraid that the September
29th date is not practical for me and will not
work out.

With kindest wishes.

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With preparations now complete, over 300 people gathered from various locations to attend the Third Annual AMCAP Convention/Workshop at the Institute of Religion on the University of Utah Campus in Salt Lake City on September 29 and 30. The Convention was called to order by AMCAP President Henry L. Isaksen at 1:30 p.m. of the first day. Those attending included counselors, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, chaplains, and others from throughout the nation and the world.

There were four major addresses given during the Convention. An unforgettable inspiration talk was given by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, of the Council of the Twelve, who delivered the “General Authority Address” during the evening banquet of the first day. In his remarks he said:

I endorse your worthy reason for existence. I commend you for uniting in a cause that’s worthy and a cause that’s just, and uplifting as you associate with each other in a common bond of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope that your association will not only endure, but fulfill the dreams and hopes that you have for it.80

The keynote speaker, Dr. Allen E. Bergin, BYU Psychologist, and Director of the Institute for Studies in Values and Human Behavior, spoke to the title “In Behalf of a Revealed Approach to Counseling”.81

Dr. Henry L. Isaksen addressed the group in his capacity as AMCAP President. His address centered around a declaration of belief concerning the divinity in the Church and the importance of applying the principles of the Gospel in assisting clients.82

Harold C. Brown, Commissioner of LDS Social Services was the speaker at the pre-breakfast meeting held on the second day. “Brother Brown counseled the group that it is not enough for LDS professionals to be ‘in the world’ we must set standards for living because we have the Gospel. He advocated that we continually sharpen our professional skills and utilize them in harmony with our religious values.”83

Four panels were also conducted during the convention. “How to Help People Cope With Being Single in the Church” was the first panel. Those participating included Blaine Porter, BYU; Julie Christensen, University of Utah; and Heber Robertson, Veterans Administration Hospital, Salt Lake City. The second panel was entitled “Treatment Strategies for LDS Marriages that are in Trouble” with McLaren Ruesch, Family Physician, Globe, Arizona; Christine Durham, Attorney in private practice, Salt Lake City; and Dean Hepworth, University of Utah. Those who participated on the third panel entitled “Frequent Behavior Syndromes and Problems seen in LDS Children: What to Do?” were Allen Procter, LDS Social Services, Delbert Pearson, Psychiatrist in private practice, Provo, Utah; and Tony LaPray, Psychologist in private practice, Salt Lake City. Those on the fourth panel were David Dangerfield, Murray Jordan, Mental Health Center; Mason Redd, Psychiatrist with LDS Hospital; and Courtney Black, Psychologist in private practice, Salt Lake City.84

There were a number of items considered during the business meeting, the concluding session of the convention. Gary L. Carson, Chairman of the Counseling Center, Weber State College, was elected Chairman of the Governing Board. Richard A. Haaps, BYU, was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer. LeRoy E. Porter, Director of Pupil Personnel Services for the Redwood City School District, was elected as a new member of the Governing Board. Porter replaced Victor Cline who had completed his term of office on the Board. Margaret Hoopes of BYU, who had been serving on the Board was re-elected to a three-year term. Burton C. Kelly of BYU, who had served as President-Elect during the past year, now succeeded Henry Isaksen as the new AMCAP President. As past President, he continued as a member of the Governing Board and E. Wayne Wright retired from the Board.85

Growth and Expansion

There was now ample evidence that AMCAP was a dynamic, growing organization. One of the major indications of this vitality was the growth in membership. For example, there were 335 dues paying members of the Association by June 1977.86 347 by August,87 357 by the last of September,88 and 428 by June 1978.89 Further indications of the growth in the organization was the increase in attendance at the annual convention. At the Third Annual Convention in October 1977, approximately 302 people attended the convention which included both member and non-member registrants. During the days of LDS Personnel and Guidance Association an attendance of 50 to 60 persons at a convention was considered a large crowd and the total membership clustered around 125. A goal was set to increase the membership to 600 during the coming year.90 It was, therefore, recommended that a larger facility be provided for the Fourth Annual Convention.

A second indication of expansion was the increase in the number of area coordinators and the encouragement for them to become more active in developing regional AMCAP activities.91 In addition to the ten area coordinators who were previously appointed plans were soon underway to appoint additional coordinators. Bonnie Gustafson was appointed coordinator to the Salt Lake City area, Charles Madsen to the Southeast United States, Gilbert Kocherhans to the Northwest United States, Garth Allred to Southern Utah, and Weston Morrill to North Central Colorado.92

A third indication was the decision to expand the responsibilities of Governing Board members by delegating special assignments. The responsibility of next year’s convention was given to Richard Berrett and Gary Carson, a Professional Information Questionnaire to LeRoy Porter, membership to Richard Haaps, elections to Henry Isaksen, publications to Don Lankford, By-Laws to Del Pearson, and Burton Kelly to serve as Historian. Although not a board member, Vern Jensen was requested to serve as Assistant Historian with the specific assignment of writing a history of AMCAP.93
Facing New Challenges

By the Winter of 1977-78 four issues of the AMCAP Journal had been published, one for each year since AMCAP was organized in 1975. A number of AMCAP Newsletters had also been printed and distributed to members of the Association. Don Lankford had served diligently as Editor from the very beginning. Robert F. Stahmann was appointed to assume the responsibility of Editor.94 D. Russell Crane of BYU was appointed Associate Editor and Editorial Board members selected were Joseph L. Daly, Colorado State University; Barbara L. Fisher, Purdue University, Jayne C. Garside, BYU-Hawaii, and James C. Hurst, University of Texas. As Director of the Marriage and Family Counseling Clinic at BYU and having served in other editorial assignments, Stahmann came into the position well prepared. AMCAP officers, however, were now confronted with several challenges in the realm of publications. First of all, Don Lankford tendered his resignation as Chairman of the Publications Committee and there was now a need to seek out a new chairman.95 There was also a concern with the insufficient number of articles which were being submitted for the AMCAP Journal. AMCAP had been committed to two Journals per year, but so far had only published one each year. Plans were initiated to make a greater attempt to solicit articles from members by enlisting the help of area coordinators as well as other AMCAP officers.96

The officers were also confronted with several other pertinent issues needing immediate attention. Among them was the problem of incorporation. The two major advantages of incorporation were that of providing greater security of AMCAP officers and the obtaining of tax deduction privileges. Plans were, therefore, initiated to draft articles of incorporation to be considered at a future meeting of the Board of Governors.97

Another area of concern was the boycott issue having to do with the Equal Rights Amendment. AMCAP President, Burton C. Kelly, had received a number of suggestions encouraging him to send a signed petition to professional organizations that had taken official positions regarding the boycotting of non-ERA states protesting such action. The officers, however, were of a consensus that AMCAP should not take this action as an organization but rather request individual members to write letters of protest as they desired. "It was, however, unanimously reaffirmed that AMCAP is committed to taking a stand on moral issues."98

With the extension of the area coordinators program it became advisable to give greater support to the coordinators. One of the challenges here was to have AMCAP officers avail themselves for visits to area meetings. It was, therefore, necessary to work out the logistics for the visits such as budget needs and responsibilities, procedures for making requests for visits, scheduling of visits and so on.99

Several other concerns needing attention had to do with membership status, awards, and professional organizations. With regard to membership, three categories were considered: Honorary, Emeritus, and Life Membership.100 Several awards were also considered for presentation at the annual convention. These included such awards as a service award, a professional accomplishment award, a humanitarian award, and a professional liaison or Christian counseling award.101 Finally, there was the challenge of strengthening the influence of various professional meetings. As a result of the meetings held under LDS PGA from 1964-1975, the holding of meetings at the time of the American Personnel and Guidance Association Conventions was well established. AMCAP auxilliary meetings had been continued after the organization of AMCAP. Efforts, therefore, were made to hold the auxilliary meetings at the conventions of the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors and the American Psychiatric Association. A chairman for each of the auxilliary meetings was to be appointed to prepare a program and conduct the meeting at the time of the respective convention.102

Plans for the 1978 Convention

No sooner was the 1977 Convention adjourned than preparations were begun for the 1978 Convention. Richard Berrett and Gary Carson, who had been appointed co-chairmen of the convention were charged to have a proposal for the formation and content ready for a discussion for the January 1978 Executive Committee Meeting in order that it might be presented to the Governing Board in March.113 The theme chosen for the 1978 Convention was, "Avoid Corrupt Communication, Be Edifying", taken from Ephesians 4:29, and was to focus on the family. A pre-convention workshop was to be held during the morning of Thursday, September 28, 1978 with the official convention opening at 1:30 p.m.

The major topics to be presented centered around family systems counseling, surmounting family disruption and forgiveness. The convention would continue through Friday with the usual early morning breakfast and the business meeting as part of the program. A General Authority was again considered for the dinner meeting on the evening of the first day and also an official from the Church for the breakfast on Friday.104

By May 24, 1978, the following individuals had accepted speaking and workshop assignments: Carlfred Broderick would be presenting the Pre-Convention Workshop, Lynn Scoresby the session on Family Systems Counseling, and Allen Bergen and Truman Madsen on "Integrating Professional and Religious Practices". Elder Neal Maxwell would be the speaker as the General Authority and Brother Quinn Gardner, the Church Official, to speak on forgiveness.105

The Fourth Annual Convention/Workshop

With President Burton C. Kelly presiding, the Fourth...
The recipient of the Distinguished Service to AMCAP Award was, therefore, President Spencer W. Kimball should be the recipient of this first Award. The Award was, therefore, presented at the conclusion of the afternoon session following a tribute to President Kimball by Burton C. Kelly. President Kimball was unable to be present because of a busy Convention schedule. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, therefore, accepted the Award in his behalf. During the Friday evening banquet, the Professional Liaison Award was presented to Allen Bergin along with a Citation by Henry Isaksen. The recipient of the Distinguished Service to AMCAP Award was Henry Isaksen, the immediate past president of AMCAP. This Award was also presented during the banquet with a tribute paid to Brother Isaksen by Vern Jensen.

The traditional early morning session began at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, September 29, with Brother Quinn Gardner, Managing Director of Church Welfare Services, giving the address. His topic was “Helping Others to be Forgiving and Learning to Forgive Ourselves”.106

The breakfast then followed Brother Gardner’s address. For the next three hours a variety of presentations were made simultaneously in different group sessions, allowing participants the opportunity to attend two or three sessions of their choice. The topics presented in each of the sessions were related primarily to “Surmounting Family Disruptions”. The presentors of the various sessions included Victor Cline, Ph.D., Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Utah; Madison H. Thomas, M.D. Neurologist, Salt Lake City; Lewis G. Moech, M.D., Psychiatrist, University of Utah School of Medicine; Dennis Dale Ashton, M.S.D., Coordinator of Parent Program, Northern California LDS Social Services; Carl M. Rowley, M.S.W./C.S.W., Director, ‘Counseling Program, Utah Valley Hospital; Charles H. Madsen, Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Florida State University; Terrence D. Olson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Child Development and Family Relations, BYU; Clark Swain, Ph.D., Marriage Counselor and Family Professional, Boise State University; and Keith Swain, M.S., Cancer Rehabilitation Counselor, Provo, Utah.108

The business meeting scheduled after lunch was conducted by President Kelly. A financial report presented by Richard Heaps indicated that the organization was in excellent financial condition with a balance of $8,783.44 (before paying convention expenses) which showed considerable progress since the time of LDS PGA and the early stages of AMCAP.

The major event occurring during the business meeting was the election of officers. When the ballot count was in, Richard D. Berrett, California State University, was now the new President-Elect with Richard W. Johnson, BYU as Secretary-Treasurer. Richard A. Heaps, BYU who had served two terms as Secretary-Treasurer was elected as a member of the Governing Board. Joe J. Christensen, Associate Commissioner of Education in the Church School System, who had previously served as President of the LDS PGA was also elected a Governing Board member. Heaps and Christensen replaced as members of the Board Don Lankford and Delbert Pearson, whose terms had expired.109

The AMCAP policy on “Officer Visits to Meetings” which had been previously approved during the Governing Board Meeting was presented to members as another matter of business. The policy statement reads as follows:

It is the desire of AMCAP officers to be available to visit as many AMCAP area meetings as possible each year to lend support to the members. An annual visit of AMCAP officers or members of the Board of Governors to major area meetings will be encouraged. Where practical the visiting officer will be the president or president-elect.

Desires for visits of AMCAP officers during the year are to be requested by area coordinators by or before the date of the annual convention. Visits will be facilitated by planning the area meeting adjacent to, both geographically and temporally, a major professional convention and by allowing for maximum flexibility in meeting time.

The area membership is to demonstrate the desire for an AMCAP officer visit not only by making a request but also by providing a portion of the visiting officer’s expenses—to be determined on an individual basis by the Executive Committee in coordination with the area coordinator.

There will be a fixed budget each year determined by the Executive Committee and approved by the Board of Governors for visits of AMCAP officers to area meetings. The officer visits, including expenses and value, will be reviewed semi-annually by the Executive Committee and Board of Governors.110

A number of appointments were also made either at the Business meeting or at the Board of Governors meeting.
After Fifteen Years

Much had been accomplished since the first meeting of the LDS PGA held at San Francisco in 1964. The membership had increased from less than 100 members to well over 400 at the present time with an anticipated membership of 600 within the coming year. Those attending meetings had increased from 50 to 60 persons in the middle 60’s to over 300 today. The organizational structure had evolved from a very informal type organization with a chairman serving as an only officer to a highly structured organization with executive officers, a governing board and area coordinators. During the first ten-year period there were virtually no records kept of meetings and activities, whereas during the past five years minutes of the various meetings were carefully maintained and a newsletter and journal were initiated and published on a regular basis.

While in its early years, the organization attracted very little attention from LDS professionals engaged in counseling and psychotherapy nor from the General Authorities of the Church. As the organization developed and particularly with extensions of membership an impact was begun to be felt by both professionals and the General Authorities. Some of the events and activities which turned the tide from obscurity to recognition were the following: (1) the extension of membership beyond those who had been involved only with the American Personnel and Guidance Association; (2) the holding of the annual convention in Salt Lake City during General Conference time; (3) the invitation of General Authorities and other key Church people to speak at convention sessions and to participate in other ways; (4) the increase in the amount of publicity through the news media; (5) an increase in the number of publications; (6) an extension and clarification of AMCAP goals; and (7) the increased formal structure of the organization.

Thus, with the reorganization in 1975, the development of AMCAP has continued to gain momentum. There is considerable optimism among the members in terms of its success as a vital organization which offers Mormon counselors and psychotherapists the opportunity to combine their religious and professional lives in a meaningful way and to offer its services to the Church wherever and whenever possible.

Footnotes

1. LDS Personnel and Guidance Newsletter, February 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
2. Letter from Johnson to Isaksen, November 6, 1974, AMCAP Historical Files.
3. Letter from Isaksen to Johnson, March 24, 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
4. Letter from Johnson to Wright, Peters, Romney, and Bergin, December 31, 1974, AMCAP Historical Files.
6. LDS PGA Newsletter, February 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
7. LDS PGA Newsletter, February 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
8. Questionnaire, Ballot and Proposals, February 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
10. Comments from Ballot for Proposals, February 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
11. Ibid.
12. Minutes, Ad Hoc Committee of LDS PGA, April 18, 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
13. Ibid.
14. Minutes, Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, May 13, 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
15. Charge to AMCAP Committee on Professional Affairs, AMCAP Historical Files.
16. Minutes, Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, May 13, 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
17. Minutes, Ad Hoc Committee Meeting, July 18, 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.