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## Introduction

Allen E. Bergin

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# INTRODUCTION

Allen E. Bergin,\* Ph.D.

According to the evaluations turned in at the conclusion of our October 1981 convention, the panel on sexual intimacy was highly rated. This reflects both the quality of the presentations and the keen interest we have in this subject. Like professionals everywhere, we have been forced to deal with the salient sexual issues of the times as they manifest themselves in the continuing flow of problems our clients, friends, and colleagues refer to us.

We have sponsored occasional presentations over the years on topics in this realm, and members have been involved in an array of additional relevant activities independent of AMCAP. During the past two years, however, there has been a growing interest in having our organization develop programs that would bring a gospel perspective to what appears most promising and fruitful in the burgeoning field of sexological studies. Among those expressing such interests have been our AMCAP colleagues in California. They were under pressure from a new state law requiring a specified amount of training in human sexuality in order to maintain certification to treat sexual dysfunctions. David Coombs, AMCAP Area Coordinator for Southern California, proposed that AMCAP put together a workshop that would both meet the requirements of the state law and also be in harmony with Church standards.

Coincidentally, Victor Brown Jr., an AMCAP Board member, was developing materials in two areas: (1) human intimacy and sexuality broadly defined and (2) homosexuality. When the AMCAP matter arose, Vic and his colleagues at the BYU Values Institute had been working on these problems for some time, and Vic had been applying the ideas gained therefrom in a number of LDS case situations. Some of this work has now been published (Brown, 1981 a; b).

Our Executive Committee - Richard Berrett, Richard Johnson and myself - decided to ask Vic, who had in the meantime moved to California, to assist in designing an AMCAP program on human sexuality in collaboration with the Southern California group. This decision was ratified by the Governing Board (now known as the Advisory Board) and Vic went to work with David Coombs and Paul Bramwell to develop a workshop.

There were to be two products: (1) a workshop on sexuality was to be developed which harmonized gospel values and professional techniques. This was then to be

presented at a subsequent AMCAP meeting. The format has been developed and thus far presented to two groups of AMCAP members in California. (2) A conceptual position paper on sexuality was to be written by Vic Brown representing his viewpoint and to be presented in an AMCAP symposium as a starting point for discussion and commentary by others. This paper was not presented in last Fall's intimacy panel because Vic was committed by Church Welfare meetings throughout our October convention. Richard Johnson and Paul Cook, the convention coordinators, decided to go ahead with a panel for the convention without Vic. Brother Brown's paper has, in the meanwhile, been superseded by the publication of his book on this subject. That volume, *Human Intimacy: Illusion and Reality*, covers the subject so fully that we consider the book to have fulfilled our request for a position paper. It is, however, Vic's own work, and is not an official AMCAP statement. In addition, Vic consented, at our request, to share some thoughts for inclusion in this issue of the *Journal*, and this brief set of comments appears herein.

The papers that follow in this issue of the *Journal* provide an array of suggestions for addressing these matters. They represent several views on how to approach sexual difficulties with clinical skill and appropriate reverence for the sacred and private nature of intimate behavior. Future faithful effort will continue to expand our understanding and our capacity to serve those who need help in this realm. In the meantime, it is urgent that we do no harm to those we serve.

AMCAP was founded on the premise that we "support the principles and standards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." If we are guided in our approaches to the sensitive topic of this issue by such principles and standards, we will be fruitful and will find our efforts rewarding. On the other hand, if we take our lead from the philosophies and methods of the world, then we are sure to fail in our spiritual objectives, for the words of the brethren on these matters are far from the standards of the world. May we have the ingenuity, discernment, and courage to set our own standard and style of intervention and develop effective approaches that would please the Lord.

## References

- Brown, V. L., Jr. *Human intimacy: Illusion and reality*. Salt Lake City: Parliament Publishers, 1981. (a)  
Brown, V. L., Jr. Male homosexuality: Identity seeking role. *Journal of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists*, 1981, 7, (No. 2, April), 3-10. ff. (b)

\*Brother Bergin is Professor of Psychology, Brigham Young University.