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Part I: A Vital Predecessor - LDS PGA

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Early Beginnings

As far back as 1960 there was talk among Latter-day Saint members of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) of the formation of some type of forum where counselors who had the common bond of the principles and standards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints could get together and share ideas about both religious and professional concepts and practices. The times and places where this theme was articulated most frequently were during the APGA Convention in the Spring of each year where LDS members of APGA gathered in informal groups either at the convention site or when they traveled to and from the convention city.

Little was accomplished beyond the talking stage until the latter part of 1963 when Joseph C. Bentley first took the initiative to pull ideas together and put them into the form of a letter. While living near Boston and teaching at Clark University, he distributed the letter proposing that such a forum be instituted and that it begin with a meeting of LDS members to be held during the time of the 1964 APGA Spring Convention in San Francisco. Those to whom copies of the letter were distributed included Henry L. Isaksen, Vern H. Jensen, Clyde A. Parker, and E. Wayne Wright. The positive response which Bentley received from the letters he sent was indicative that the time was ripe for such a meeting.

Each of the respondents not only offered encouragement but gave their support by volunteering to assist in preparing a program for the first meeting. Both Isaksen and Wright held significant offices in APGA at the time and gave assistance in getting the LDS meetings into the convention program. Bentley assumed the leadership in organizing a program for the San Francisco meeting.

After suggestions had been received by the above “informal” committee, Bentley extended invitations to several LDS professionals to be participants on the program. Two separate meetings were scheduled in the Vanderbilt Room of the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. For March 26, 1964 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. and the other from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon March 27. With respect to the program content of the meeting held Jensen reports the following in his journal:

"Thursday, March 26: Had a meeting with Clyde Parker, Henry Isaksen, and Joseph Bentley at noon to discuss matters pertaining to LDS members of APGA. Returned to the Fairmont Hotel at 2:00 p.m. for the starting of our meeting with the LDS group. There was a fairly large crowd in attendance. Victor Cline presented his research project on religion and personality. Joics Stone and Weston Morrill also gave a formal reaction to the project."

Friday, March 27: Was back with our LDS group at 9:00 a.m. Wayne Wright presented information regarding a paper by Elder Spencer W. Kimball. Joe Christensen then presented a paper "Sin and Guilt". We then had a discussion for about an hour."

Part of the meeting time was given to business. Several conclusions were reached at that time in terms of the direction which the LDS group should take. It was "the expectation that this would be an informal group without things like constitutions and presidents. The expectation was that we would meet at the time of APGA and the leadership for the program would be selected from someone living close to the convention site." Since the convention was to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1965, Clyde A. Parker became the chairman for the coming year. It was further decided, at least for the time being, to simply label the informal group as LDS Members of APGA. Since the LDS meetings in San Francisco were scheduled at the end of the conference. Parker made this statement in his invitation letter to LDS members of APGA:

Some concern was expressed with regard to holding the group over past the end of the convention, and so it was decided to attempt a pre-convention meeting this year. As we gain more experience with this group, we will probably be able to settle on a definite time. For this year, at least, we will meet Sunday, April 11, 1965 beginning at 9:00 a.m.".

Thus, the second annual meeting of LDS Members of APGA was held during the 1965 APGA Convention in Minneapolis on April 11 in the Taft Room at the Leamington Hotel with Clyde A. Parker presiding. A morning session was held from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon and an afternoon session from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. During the morning session BYU professor Kenneth Hardy presented a paper entitled "An Appetitional Theory of Sexual Motivation". Selby G. Clark, Portland State, and Don E. Norton, University of Minnesota, served as discussants. During the afternoon a panel discussion was conducted on the topic "Counseling Students With Moral Problems". Those who participated on the panel were Henry L. Isaksen, Lexing-
ton, Massachusetts; Burton C. Kelly, BYU; and Wesley R. Burr, University of Minnesota. Norton and Burr not only served as discussants, but also presented papers. Norton’s paper was entitled “The Church Counselor and the Scriptures”, and Burr’s was “Certain Implications of Appertitional Theory for Counseling Those With Premarital Sexual Problems”.

Those who were invited to attend the meeting extended beyond LDS members as indicated by the following letter:

We intend to invite not only LDS members of APGA to those meetings but members of the church in the Twin City area who hold “counseling” responsibilities in the church. In all likelihood they will not be interested in the morning session, but it is likely that a number will be interested in the afternoon session. I see this as an excellent opportunity to bridge the gap between church leadership and the profession.

During the business meeting Henry L. Isaksen was designated as the new chairman, since next year’s convention would be held in Washington D.C. This appointment was in compliance with the agreement that efforts would be made to select a chairman as near as possible to the convention site. At the time, Isaksen was Director of Pupil Personnel Services of the public schools in Lexington, Massachusetts.

A New Title

One of the more important developments which occurred while Isaksen was chairman was to change the label from the Meeting of LDS Members of APGA to the LDS Counselors’ Conference. The 1966 program for the third annual LDS Counselor’s Conference held in Washington D.C. was under his direction. The two sessions scheduled from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. April 7 and 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon April 8 were held in the Heritage Room of the Shoreham Hotel. Both sessions were given to panel discussions under the broad topic of “Matters of Concern to LDS Counselors”. Panel members included Klea Worsley and Howard T. Reid, BYU; Dean C. Andrew, Southern State College, Magnolia Arkansas; Oscar G. Mink, Basic Systems, Inc., Huntington, West Virginia; Ralph C. Packard, University of Utah; Joe J. Christensen, LDS Institute of Religion, University of Utah; William L. Smith, Webster School System, Webster, New York; and Joseph C. Bentley, Clark University, Worchester, Massachusetts.

With the 1967 convention scheduled for Dallas, Texas, Dean C. Andrew from Arkansas was appropriately selected as chairman of LDS Counselors’ Conference to follow Isaksen.

By the Fall of 1966, Dean Andrew was well underway in preparing for the Dallas meeting as indicated by the following paragraph taken from an October letter:

I sent a notice in to Mr. Robert J. Dollar, Program Chairman, requesting space for an afternoon meeting, from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and an evening meeting on Thursday from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Vern Jensen has agreed to try to work out an interdenominational panel for Thursday afternoon. I have also written Dale Tingey requesting that he be responsible for organizing a fireside meeting on Sunday evening.

The following also indicated that Vern H. Jensen was moving ahead after being invited to plan and organize a program for one of the 1967 sessions in Dallas:

Since receiving your letter of September 28th we have made some headway in the program I wrote you about before. We have received commitments from three persons plus the moderator which I think should give us sufficient confidence to move ahead. I am still awaiting a response from two other individuals, but if you think it is all right we could likely move ahead now; even if we only had this many to start the ball rolling. I informed the participants after receiving their consent that I felt we should plan to move ahead . . .

I received a good suggestion with respect to the improvement of our title. This suggestion is that we use the title ‘Counseling in Church Related Colleges’ rather than ‘Counseling in Religious Colleges’.

Contents of the following post card sent to LDS counselors by Clyde A. Parker gives the plan and topic for a second session:

Dean Andrew suggested that I lead the discussion on Thursday night at APGA. I think we would have a useful time together if we were to focus on ‘The Possibility of Honest Expression in the Church’. As background please read Cline, Menlove, and Burtenshaw in the first issue of Dialogue.

A letter from Dale T. Tingey also showed that plans were underway early for a Sunday evening fireside:

On the third weekend in March there will be a National Counselors’ Convention meeting in Dallas and in this group there will be approximately 50-60 LDS counselors.

We would like to arrange to have a fireside on Sunday, March 19. Would it be possible for you to secure comfortable accommodations in one of the chapels, possibly a Relief Society room, for that evening. Also, would you arrange for some nice refreshments. We will
cover the cost of the refreshments.

If your schedule permits, it might be valuable for you to be in Dallas and attend part of the convention at that time and I will arrange to meet with you also as I plan to participate.15

The fireside mentioned in the letter was held in the Dallas Ward Chapel, 4027 Turtle Creek Blvd., Dallas, at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday March 19, 1967.

The first session of the fourth annual LDS Counselors' Conference was held from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. on March 23 in Civic I of the Adalphus Hotel with Vern H. Jensen serving as chairman of the session. The intent of the program was to obtain views on counseling from individuals whose orientations were from different religious beliefs. Faiths represented by these counselors included Jewish, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Mormon.

Each panel member was asked "to make a fifteen minute presentation with respect to counseling in his own situation in light of his own and/or his institutions religious philosophy" with the following questions as guidelines:

1. What is the nature of the relationship of your institution to the church?
2. To what extent does theology enter into your counseling interviews, such as quoting from the scriptures?
3. How is counseling theory influenced by ecclesiastical authority at your institution?
4. What has been your success in reconciling your counseling theory and practice with your religious philosophy?
5. To what extent are the standards which govern the students of your institution prescribed or influenced by the church?
6. Do you see your role as a counselor at your institution any different than it would be at a non-church related college.
7. As a counselor, do you make any attempts to convey your religious values to your clients? 16

The discussants who comprised the panel included Edward Diamond, Yeshiva University, New York City; Daniel M. Boland, Holy Cross Fathers Seminary; Robert M. Stewart, Westminster College, Salt Lake City; I. Reed Payne, BYU; and Elaine M. Tracy, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. The second session was held in the evening in Parlor D of the Adalpbus Hotel with Dean C. Andrew presiding. Clyde A. Parker led the discussion as planned on the topic of "The Possibility of Honest Expression in the Church". During the business part of the meeting Joe J. Christensen was elected chairman for the coming year.

Under the leadership of Chairman Christensen, therefore, the fifth annual meeting of the LDS Counselors' Conference was held during the 1968 APGA Convention in Detroit, Michigan. Two sessions were held on April 11 in COBO Hall. The first was held from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. The presenter for the session was P. Wendell Johnson, Director of the LDS Institute of Religion in Ogden, Utah who spoke to the subject, "Psychological Services Utilized by the LDS Church". The second session followed from 10:15 a.m. to 12:00 noon with Harold T. Christensen of Purdue University speaking to the topic "New Morality and Personal Adjustment". A business meeting was then held until 12:30 p.m.18

Organizational Structure

During the Detroit meeting a new development occurred. Up to this point it was the desire of LDS Counselors' Conference to have an informal organizational structure with a single officer serving as chairman. Now there was sentiment among the group to become more formally organized with a group of officers and a set of by-laws or a constitution. In anticipation of a constitution the group decided to select a set of officers for the Las Vegas Conference to be held in 1969. Joe J. Christensen was elected to be the first president of the LDS group which now became called the LDS Counselors Association instead of the LDS Counselors’ Conference. This was actually a two year term for Christensen since he had served as chairman of the 1968 conference. Others preceding Christensen had also served as chairmen rather than presidents. To assist the new president, P. Wendel Johnson was elected President-Elect, Keith Checketts the Vice President, and Ralph E. Packard, Jr. the Secretary-Treasurer. Vern Jensen was assigned to take the responsibility of drafting a constitution to be ready for a vote at the Las Vegas conference. Thus, a formal organizational structure was beginning to materialize.

Another first appeared as preparations were being made for the Las Vegas conference. The following excerpt from a letter by Burton C. Kelly gives the event and the details regarding the program:

By now you will have received the announcement of the first Utah Breakfast at APGA. We wish you not only to be with us, but also to present us with some points of view from out there. That is, we'd like to hear some of the new and exciting things that you are doing in the field of Counseling and Guidance and/or some of the exciting innovations that you see in the field, plus also a few of your personal feelings on being out there instead of here. We are also asking Clyde (Parker) to respond in a similar manner, with another point of view from out there and Louine Hickman, our current UPGA President to give a few thoughts on what's happening in Utah and UPGA. Inasmuch as our total time for breakfast will be only at maximum, one hour and fifteen minutes, this means that each respondent will have only five to ten minutes.20

A further exciting prospect evolved as preparations were underway for the sixth annual conference at Las Vegas. The new officers accepted the idea of inviting a General Authority of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, particularly since the convention site was now in
the West and near to the LDS Church headquarters. Thus, Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, was invited to be the fireside speaker.21

The Sunday night fireside on March 30, 1969 was, therefore, the first meeting of the sixth annual conference of the LDS Counselors Association. The meeting was held with a capacity crowd from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the LDS chapel at Tropicana Road and Burnham. The topic on which Elder Packer spoke was “The Church and the Professional Counselor”. A question and discussion period followed his presentation.22

The breakfast scheduled at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 11 under the direction of Burton C. Kelly at the Comstock Room, Flamingo Hotel proceeded as planned with Vern Jensen as Master of Ceremonies and Louine Hickman, Henry Isaksen and Clyde Parker as speakers.23 From 5:10 to 7:40 p.m. on the same day a business meeting was held in the Board of Governors Room of the Stardust Hotel with Joe J. Christensen presiding.24 The major items of business were the ratification of the new Constitution and the election of officers. After drafting a constitution during January of 1969, Vern Jensen had submitted the draft to the officers of the LDS Counselors Association for their suggestions and comments. With the input from the officers the document was revised and put into final form for presentation to the members. Jensen introduced the new Constitution and after a discussion it was put to a vote.25 Several minor amendments were made and the document was adopted with a unanimous vote. The work for a formal organization was now completed and its new name became the LDS Personnel and Guidance Association. (See Constitution in Appendix A.)

Following the business meeting, Addie Fuhriman presented a paper on “Group Processes and the Church”. Lynn Eric Johnson also made a presentation regarding the “Educational Information and Guidance Center for LDS Students”.26 After Johnson’s presentation, “a panel of four discussed Elder Boyd K. Packer’s talk which he gave during the fireside on Sunday”.27

With the adoption of a new Constitution, elections were now ready to go forward on a more formal basis as follows: “The elected officers of the Association shall be the President, President-Elect, and the Secretary-Treasurer who shall constitute the Executive Committee.” P. Wendell Johnson of the Ogden LDS Institute of Religion, was therefore, the first president to be elected under the new Constitution and the new organizational name, LDS Personnel and Guidance Association. Although Johnson had served as President-Elect during the past year under the old system, it was necessary that an election be held to elect a new president since the Constitution now indicated that a transition from president-elect to president was not automatic. Nevertheless, because of the experience he had had in that office it seemed appropriate that he should be nominated for president and as a consequence he was elected by acclamation. Alan R. Andersen of the University of Minnesota was subsequently elected to be the president-elect for the coming year according to the Constitution which read, “Elected officers shall assume office at the conclusion of the annual meeting of the Association and shall serve for a period of approximately one year until their successors are elected”.28

The site of the 1970 APGA Convention was in New Orleans and two meetings had been planned and scheduled for the seventh annual conference of the LDS Personnel and Guidance Association. The first was a fireside held from 9:30 to 11:00 p.m. in the Jung Hotel and the second was a business meeting from 5:45 to 7:00 p.m. in the same hotel with Wendell Johnson presiding.29 With regard to the fireside Jensen states, “We attended the LDS Personnel and Guidance Association Fireside. A Dr. Johnson (Thesba T.) was the speaker and spoke on the problem of minority groups, particularly the Negro, since she was teaching at Atlanta University”.30

During the business meeting officers were elected. Alan R. Andersen automatically took over the office of the president, since he had served as president-elect during the past year, and Addie Fuhriman became the new president-elect with Ann Hamilton as secretary-treasurer.

After the business was completed, members were separated into three groups. Three presenters then rotated from one group to the other. The following quote gives some information on procedure and content as experienced by one of the presenters: “I presented my information on the influence of the Counseling Center in the Church. I gave my presentation to three different groups since we were divided up into groups”.31 Another business matter of significance was a decision by the group to have “a get-together breakfast during the October conference. It was anticipated that possible a General Authority could join with us. It was also decided that due to the ‘not too plentiful budget’ that each person attending the breakfast would pay his own expenses”.32

The suggestion for the breakfast proceeded according to plan and the event was held Saturday, October 3, 1970 at 7:30 a.m. in the Pioneer Room Hotel Utah with Addie Fuhriman, President-Elect, presiding. Elder Marvin J. Ashton, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, spoke to the group on Church matters which were of interest to LDS Personnel and Guidance workers. At that time Elder Ashton directed the Unified Social Services of the Church which included Youth Guidance, Adoption, Indian Student Placement, Unwed Parent, Drugs, and Alcoholic Services. This event had considerable significance for the future of the organization because it demonstrated that a gathering of this type could be successfully held in Salt Lake City during General Conference time.

The eighth annual conference of LDS PGS was held during the APGA Convention on April 6, 1971 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. A workshop and a business meeting were held between 5:45 and 7:30 p.m. in the Marlborough-Blenheim Hotel.33 Since Andersen was unable to be present, Addie Fuhriman, President-Elect, presided during the meeting. At the business meeting Joseph L. Daly, Colorado State University, was elected president-elect.

Another item of business was that of holding another
The next meeting following the third annual breakfast in Salt Lake City was held during the APGA Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. The eleventh annual LDS PGA meeting, therefore, began at 5:45 p.m., April 9, 1974 in the Fairmont Hotel. In the capacity of President, Norma Rohde conducted the meeting. Clyde A. Parker, one of the founders of the Association, was the keynote speaker. The following quote reflects the outline of the content of the meeting:

1. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Parker, will challenge the membership as to some of the concerns and needs on a national as well as local level as related to our profession and organization. What kind of an impact do we as an organization need to be making—particularly in relationship to the kind of input we could give because of the uniqueness of our unifying value system? Why are we failing to make this kind of impact—at what cost to ourselves and others?

2. Group participation in identifying organizational goals, barriers to reaching these goals, and concrete steps for the implementation of the goals—culminating in a direct charge to next year's president, Dr. Lynn Johnson, as to what the membership expects by way of accomplishment for this organization during the coming year.

3. Business meeting.

The 1974 New Orleans meetings had a very significant impact on the future events as far as LDS Personnel and Guidance workers were concerned. Rohde had assumed the major leadership responsibility of the LDS PGA for a period of two years. Through her experience she became aware that something needed to happen in order for the organization to have any kind of impact in terms of what we had to offer the Church and the professional world. It was a point in time that the organization either had to get into or out of the “act” if it was to have any influence. It was for that reason that the program was geared to move into this issue head on and to invite Clyde Parker who was in a key position at the time to provide the necessary inputs and stimulation to get ideas flowing and an action program off the ground. The presentation and the lively discussion which followed was the beginning of the sowing of the responsibility as being a General Authority in charge of the Social Service area of the Church. His presentation, therefore, followed the guidelines given him by the LDS PGA officers which were geared to the following concerns:

(1) that as an LDS organization we be made fully aware of the Church Social Service programs and (2) that we as professionals be apprised as to how we could best serve the Church membership in a cooperative capacity with the Church programs."
For the first time since 1964, the agenda for the program of the Association was excluded from the 1975 convention program of APGA held in New York City. Of LDS PGA was still to have its major thrust at the 1975 scheduled and announced through the LDS Personnel and Guidance Newsletter. In order for members to be aware of a planned program, Michael Lambert, a Counseling Psychologist from BYU, had been invited to be the speaker early in the year and proposals were presented in the Newsletter for discussion during the meeting. The meeting was conducted in the P.G. Wadehouse Room at the New York Hilton Hotel from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. on March 25, 1975. Dr. Lambert spoke to the topic, “Therapist Induced Determination.” Since the group who attended the meeting was small in numbers major decision making was left to the Fall meeting.

As new developments were being anticipated, there was considerable enthusiasm among the members as the annual October breakfast was approaching. Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, was invited to be the guest speaker. The membership of the organization now exceeded 200 members with at least 80 expected to be at the breakfast. The breakfast proceeded as planned and the LDS PGA members gathered at 7:00 a.m. in the Junior Ballroom of the Hotel Utah on Friday October 4, 1974 to hear Elder Sill, a General Authority who was well known for his inspiring, eloquent and knowledgeable addresses, and to conduct some matters of business. Elder Sill had been asked to give “guidance on ways we can use our particular skills to build the Kingdom as well as the inspirational insights you share so beautifully.” In addition, Elder Sill shared some of his own personal experiences with which members of the Association were able to identify. The major item of business following Elder Sill’s talk was to formulate an ad hoc Committee as indicated above.

Footnotes
1. Interviews with Joseph C. Bentley, Henry L. Isaksen, Clyde A. Parker, and E. Wayne Wright.
2. Ibid.
5. Letter, Parker to Jensen, June 9, 1977, AMCAP Historical Files.
6. Letter, Parker to LDS members of APGA, AMCAP Historical Files.
8. Copies of Norton’s and Burr’s papers in AMCAP Historical Files.
12. Letter, Andrew to Isaksen, October 27, 1966, AMCAP Historical Files.
13. Letter, Jensen to Andrew, October 27, 1966, AMCAP Historical Files.
14. Post Card, Parker to Colleagues, AMCAP Historical Files.
15. Letter, Tingey to Williams, November 4, 1966, AMCAP Historical Files.
16. Letter, Jensen to panel members, December 8, 1966, AMCAP Historical Files.
22. Ibid.
23. Journal of Vern H. Jensen, April 1, 1969
32. Ibid.
34. Letter, Fuhriman to members of LDS Personnel and Guidance Association, September 9, 1971, AMCAP Historical Files.
36. Convention Program (Chicago), "Involved for Human Development", Washington D.C.
38. Letter, Officers of the LDS Personnel and Guidance Association to Association members, February 6, 1973, AMCAP Historical Files.
41. Letter, Rohde to LDS PGA members, March 22, 1974, AMCAP Historical Files.
42. Letter to Association members, October 3, 1974, AMCAP Historical Files.
43. Ballot for Proposal to members of LDS PGA, February 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
44. Letter, Johnson to LDS PGA members, AMCAP Historical Files.
45. Letter, Johnson to Wright, February 27, 1975, AMCAP Historical Files.
47. Letter, Johnson to Sterling W. Sill, September 12, 1974, AMCAP Historical Files.
48. Letter, Johnson to LDS PGA members, September 19, 1974, AMCAP Historical Files.