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The Role of AMCAP and the AMCAP Journal: Past, Present and Future

A conversation with Burton C. Kelly, PhD

by Carrie M. Wrigley, LCSW

Burton C. Kelly, PhD, has been one of AMCAP’s most faithful and fruitful contributors since its earliest years. He served from 1977 - 1978 as AMCAP’s third President, and from 1982 - 1987, as Journal Editor, during the journal’s most prolific season to date. He has also served in a number of leadership capacities in other professional organizations. He earned a PhD in Human Development and Psychology from the University of Chicago and has served in many Church capacities over the years, including Bishop and Stake Mission President, and has served four full-time missions. Dr. Kelly retired ten years ago from BYU after thirty years. He is the father of nine children, and is married to JoAnne Barfuss. This interview was conducted at his home in Orem, Utah, on February 2, 2001, by Carrie M. Wrigley, LCSW, of the AMCAP Governing Board.

CW: Burton, you have been involved with AMCAP and its predecessor, the LDSPGA, for more than three decades now. What do you think drew people to AMCAP in those early years?

BK: I think what drew them then is what draws them now. It’s the chance to interact with fellow Latter-day Saints with good gospel perspectives in professional helping relationships.

CW: That is really unique to AMCAP.

BK: Yes, it is. And many people have said that over the years. “This is where I really feel spiritually at home in my professional endeavors.” And that is, I think, what keeps them coming.

CW: What do you think is the motivating force behind AMCAP? Where do you think it came from?

BK: I feel the Lord wants this organization to be.

CW: Why?

BK: Well, I’ll share a couple quick anecdotal statements. When I was at the University of Chicago, where I got my PhD, I was talking one day to one of my fellow PhD students. When he found out I was LDS, he said “Well, that’s very interesting. I never have found a Mormon in this field who was really active in his Church.”

CW: In what field?

BK: In the helping relationships field. Of course, that was in Chicago, not here.

CW: About what year?

BK: Back in the late 50’s. We have needed something like this organization, through the years, to help strengthen Latter-day Saints who are serving in helping relationships. Though you don’t notice it so much here in Utah, in locations where there are few LDS, it was really noticeable. I had completed my Master’s degree at BYU, and of course didn’t notice any real belief conflicts there.

CW: There are plenty of other LDS helping professionals at BYU!

BK: Yes. But when I got to the University of Chicago, even though it had been founded largely as a religious institution,
it was not a religious atmosphere. I ran into lots of questions there, lots of challenging issues. One of my favorite teachers was Carl Rogers. I really liked him, for a variety of reasons. He was one of the reasons I wanted to go to the University of Chicago. I enjoyed talking with him, about a variety of things. But his father had been a minister, and he had gotten turned somewhat against religion himself [see Monte, 1999, pp. 755-759]. He raised some questions, though not in an antagonistic way. And Bruno Bettelheim [see Pollak, 1998]; I worked with him at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School. (When the school was established it was thought the mentally ill had to have their genes straightened out to enable them to recover.) When he interviewed me for the job, he said “Where are you from?” and when I told him, he said, “Are you a Mormon?” and I said “Yes.” He said, “Well, are you a practicing Mormon?” I said, “Yes, I’m a practicing Mormon.” Then he said, “Well, you may want to consider carefully whether or not you want to work here. I’m an atheist, and I don’t believe in religion. And there will be questions raised, and I may do some things with which you may soundly disagree.” And further, “Several people who have worked here have lost their faith in the process. Are you sure you want to work here? Think it over!” I told him yes. And he did raise some questions, as did a number of other people. As I went through my program, at times I thought, “Some of these ideas sound really good, and yet, they don’t really agree with the Gospel. And consequently, how do I handle these things?” I thought, “Has anybody done a study of the scriptures, or of the teachings of the prophets, to see what they have said about human behavior and how to modify it, to improve it?” Well, I couldn’t find anyone, so I decided, then and there, I would do that study. It took me about five years to analyze the scriptures, verse by verse, to see what it seemed to me they were saying about human behavior. I also have analyzed the General Conference addresses of the past 40 years for this purpose, and the other writings of those sustained as prophets, seers and revelators in the Ensign and the Improvement Era since the 1960’s. Later, while serving with a Curriculum Committee, we reviewed all of the published writings of the prophets, from Joseph Smith to that time.

CW: What would you say is your basic conclusion about the difference between the words of Christ [see 2 Nephi 32:3, 33:10-11; D&C 18:34-36] versus the things that are being taught in other places, in regard to dealing with human problems?

BK: In my graduate program, I really learned that when a research finding or theory was presented, if you couldn’t find fault with it, somebody else could! There were many oppositional views, all kinds of questions. I wanted to find ideas and approaches that I could really have confidence in. The more I studied, the more I recognized, “I can’t have the kind of confidence I’d like to have in the research, let alone in the theories;” there were so many contradictions between them [compare JS-H 1:8-10].

CW: Between the different theories?

BK: Yes, and in the research, too! This illustration is in a totally different field, but it demonstrates the issue. I have been quite interested in nutrition and other health issues over the years. While in Denver attending a conference, I read in The Denver Post that now nutritionists are expressing exactly the opposite view regarding several foods they had expressed strong opinions about five years ago! That is the kind of thing found even more abundantly in the field of behavioral science. If you find that in a more exact scientific field like nutrition, the certainly it’s going to be more prominent in the behavioral science field; and that’s what I did find.

CW: You found that the theories contradict each other, and weren’t consistent?

BK: That’s right. Even research articles would express contradictions and inconsistencies.

CW: You mean, every theory has different omissions and small distortions that take it away from the truth?

BK: That’s right. So, from my own experiences, and from other students and professional people reporting similar things through the years, I have concluded: that’s why we need something like AMCAP, so we can get the additional insights and truths from the Gospel. Several years ago, I wrote an article for the AMCAP Journal titled, “The Case Against Anger” (Kelly, 1979; see also Kelly, 1980); there was a lot of opposition to it.

CW: Was that because anger is something that you’re “supposed” to express, to “get it out of your system,” in order to be healthy? That was not the conclusion you came to after reviewing the scriptures.

BK: Yes. But one BYU professor, as reported to me by one of his students, told the class, “I cannot imagine a psychologist writing an article like that.” So there is a lot of opposition to certain ideas!

CW: Ideas that aren’t consistent with deeply-held values of the psychological world?

BK: Yes, right.

CW: What are some other ideas that you see bringing up that kind of opposition?

BK: Well, nearly the whole field of sexual behavior. To be
specific, most of the people in the psychological field think extramarital sexual behavior is not necessarily a big deal.

CW: You mean they say it is not harmful between consenting adults; it's fine to express that urge, that appetite within you?

BK: Yes, it's considered a human appetite—“so you eat together, so you sleep together.”

CW: Meaning, it's a human appetite that has to be satisfied, or else it leads to dysfunction?

BK: That's right. Yet there are other non-LDS professionals who don't agree at all with those non-Gospel views. But here again, this illustrates the contradictions within the field.

Then there are the differing views on mental illness. There are many who claim that bipolar disorder is genetic. There is a genetic component, no question. But if only one-fourth of the children of one bipolar parent are bipolar, and one-half where both parents are bipolar, there got to be other factors involved. What are they? There has got to be something besides the genes at work here. But there are those who don't believe that. For some, genes are entirely it— it is a solely genetically determined illness.

Also, consider the issue of medication. I think medication has its place, in special circumstances, under special conditions, but usually for only a brief period of time. But I don't agree—rarely, if ever—with prescribing medication for all of one's lifetime; that medication is the only way to treat the problem. That view, in my judgment, discounts agency. It discounts the ability of the individual to choose and to change.

CW: You mean it creates dependency, rather than self-reliance?

BK: Yes, that's right—and that's a big issue. In 1975, Elder Boyd K. Packer gave a classic address at BYU on self-reliance (Packer, 1975). A year or two later, he addressed the same basic thesis in General Conference (Packer, 1978). He knew there would be a lot of questions raised about the talk. It's a concept that flies in the face of a number of practitioners in the field. Some professionals foster (perhaps not always intentionally, but sometimes intentionally) a dependency in their clients, rather than self-reliance.

CW: What do you think is the motive behind that kind of professional behavior?

BK: Well, I think there are two or three motives behind it:

Consider psychoanalytic theory and the concept of transference. Within that relationship there is at times a conscious effort to establish dependence, to facilitate the patient doing certain things deemed desirable by the analyst. I think that's one of the possible motives. I think that view of dependence still has some adherents, though it's not advocated as much now as it was.

Another thing is that some helping persons just don't know any better. They don't recognize what they're doing, nor do they recognize the harm in it.

And of course, the Adversary may sometimes whisper a suggestion to a well-meaning therapist.

So it ranges anywhere from thoughts such as “that's how to help people,” to ignorance, to unwittingly following someone else's promptings.

CW: You said before that you truly feel that the Lord wants this [AMCAP] organization.

BK: Yes.

CW: Tell me more about that.

BK: Okay. I think He wants it to combat some of these ideas, and to give strength to the LDS practitioners, especially those that are out in Timbuktu—so to speak—who may be the only LDS there. For example, when I was at the University of Chicago, I was the only LDS person in the program. When I joined the faculty at Illinois State Normal University, I was the only LDS faculty member, and that's a good-sized university. So here you are, off in Timbuktu all by yourself, and you have all these other people with differing and oftentimes divergent, and oft-times contradictory views. So, I think AMCAP is needed to strengthen our LDS practitioners.

Then I think it ideally would have an impact on other professional organizations. There are some individuals who have had a very significant impact, like Allen Bergin, for example.

CW: How would you describe that impact? What has Dr. Bergin done, exactly, in your view?

BK: Well, he's written a number of things, both in books and in articles—for example, Bergin, 1980, 1983, 1988—which have suggested that religion promotes healthy rather than pathological behavior, and that there are certain practices in religious circles which strongly promote emotional health. He has made presentations at major conventions, such as APA, on those topics. He and Scott Richards have written books [Richards & Bergin, 1997, 2000] that have been widely circulated, and I think are having a positive impact.

CW: So, support for the LDS practitioner and making a difference in professional organizations are two of the factors you see.

BK: Yes, right.

CW: Are there other reasons that you feel like Heavenly Father might be interested in an organization like this one?

BK: Well, yes. Let's go back to the statement I gave you earlier, from that fellow doctoral student at the University of
Chicago, who was surprised to meet a committed Latter-day Saint. I see another purpose of AMCAP as to help the LDS practitioners remain faithful.

CW: Because so many get lost?

BK: Yes, right.

CW: Because of the alternate ideas they learn to espouse?

BK: AMCAP not only helps them in their professional learning, but in their spiritual lives, their personal lives. A General Authority once told me, "We oftentimes invited people in the behavioral fields to help us in writing about some topics. But oftentimes, the more input they have had, the more negative the impact." And that's because I think they have sometimes been more influenced by the teachings within their field.

CW: They accept the philosophies and the ideas of their training rather than the Gospel as their guide?

BK: Right. So I think AMCAP's purpose is to help keep LDS practitioners active in the faith. It is to help us make a greater contribution as LDS practitioners. It is to help us make a greater contribution in the professional organizations. The whole concept of agency, for example, which is critical to the Gospel, is not consistent with a number of psychological theories and practices.

CW: Tell me about that.

BK: In fact, it's discounted. Behaviorism, for example: behavior is believed to be modified by external influences, and very little by internal influences; behavior is to be modified by medications and gene alteration and things of that nature. This is not to say that some of those things may not be very helpful, because they have been and will be. But some of these practices and views discount the agency of the individual. For example, marriage and divorce: if you don't get along with your spouse, if you're not happy — just get a divorce!

CW: You mean "if you love them but are not 'in love' with them anymore"?

BK: Yes, they advocate "you don't want to spoil your whole life, to ruin it."

CW: As in, "why ruin your own happiness, and decrease your own self-fulfillment, and self-expression?"

BK: That's right. Hedonism is a prominent view in a lot of behavioral science theories [see, for example, Safouan, 1983].

CW: In what way?

BK: Well, pursuit of pleasure, as individuals.

CW: Yes, pursue pleasure and avoid pain.

BK: Yes, that's right. But without considering consequences for the future. Truth is a knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they will be, not just as they are now [see D&C 93:24].

CW: Not, "as they appear at the moment, based on the current research."

BK: Yes, that's right — current theory and research.

CW: Going back to hedonism: you talked about pleasure and pain. What are your thoughts on the view of pain in our society, and especially in our field? How does that view impact the way that people get treated?

BK: A lot of marriages, for example, ought to be maintained, not because the individuals are receiving a lot of comfort and pleasure from the marriage, but because it's what the participants need! That is, this is a growing experience for them. So, you're a little unhappy, you're going to experience a little pain in your relationship.

CW: So, it tries your patience a bit and stretches your boundaries?

BK: Yes, sometimes a great deal, not just a little bit! But that doesn't mean that you ought to get a divorce. It means you ought to check things out. For example, when I talk to people about divorce, I suggest to them that they consider very carefully what the pros and cons of remaining in the marriage are, talk with their Bishop (if they are LDS), pray about it, and come up with an answer [see D&C 9:7-9]. If you get a confirmation that divorce is all right, then follow it. If you don't, then don't. And the Lord will be with you, and strengthen you, and you'll grow in this relationship — and you'll find the marriage a blessing.

For a lot of people, the answer to all of problems is — swallow a pill. You get a little headache, don't take the time to figure out what may have caused the headache, what you can do to reduce the probability of its recurrence. You may want to take an aspirin to lessen its effect now, but maybe there are some important lessons associated with it.

A few years ago, I woke up with a pain in my lower back, which was not mitigated and in fact increased over time. It was very difficult. I got some help on it, through a physical therapist and a chiropractor. But for months, I had severe back pain. I couldn't sit very long — on the bus, in church — I'd have to stand up and walk. It was severe pain. An MRI indicated I had a herniated disc. An MD friend suggested, "I know a good back surgeon; he'd take care of it, just like that,” clicking his fingers. But I don't like surgery: the few surgeries I've had generally not turned out that well. So I went to some physical therapists, prayed about it, read books about the back, etc.; I monitored my back extremely carefully. When I did an exercise — if it hurt while I did it, I stopped; if it hurt afterwards, I stopped it; if it hurt the next day, I stopped it. Pain was the guide.
CW: Rather than the enemy, pain was the teacher?

BK: Yes! So I monitored my back very carefully. I thought often of Mosiah 4:30, which says you must watch yourself, your thoughts, your deeds, etc., or you will perish. It’s a great statement on monitoring oneself. So I monitored my back situation very carefully. That back problem lasted for a good solid year. And yes, I took a few pills over that time to reduce the pain. I had gone to my primary physician. I also saw for a few times a psychiatrist specializing in non-invasive pain control techniques and got some good ideas from him. But I think the most helpful ideas I got came from the Lord, from praying about it, from monitoring, etc. And my back has been, since then, very healthy. I can sit as long as you can, I think! And I go backpacking, still.

CW: How old are you now?

BK: Seventy-four.

CW: Seventy-four and backpacking?

BK: Yes, in the High Uintas.

CW: That’s quite an achievement! So, you backpack, you sit, you’re able to do all of these things because you chose to learn from your pain rather than escape it.

BK: I don’t have any problems with my back now. If I’d had surgery, I think I would still periodically have problems, because I investigated the typical results of back surgery. The majority of people who have back surgery, within five years will need another back surgery; problems continue.

CW: You mean, pain always comes back if it’s not resolved?

BK: Yes. Now don’t misunderstand me. I’m not against medical doctors. I’m not against medication, and all the wonderful contributions of modern medicine. Because where the truth is, that’s part of the gospel. So I’m in favor of all of those things — in moderation, and to the degree that they fit with the Gospel. Where they don’t, I’m opposed to them.

So back to pain: I think pain has a purpose. There are great lessons to be taught in pain. And I learned a lot about my back, and about backs in general. It helped me to become more empathic with other people who are suffering pain. It did all kinds of things for me. There is great learning to be found in pain. So it may not be best in most cases to immediately stop it. Learn the lesson that is there for you within that pain. And typically, be sure you learn it well, before you take any shortcut procedures — if there are any that are adequate — to shorten it. In all of these things, we can learn.

Again, I am not in favor of pain! I don’t like it any better than anybody else. I don’t want it. And I’ll avoid it wherever I can. But I think there are great lessons to be learned. And we shouldn’t sacrifice the lesson for quick relief from the discomfort. I believe pain is a great teacher. We don’t want to overlook the blessings that lie within it. Let’s learn from it, and only when we have learned all we need to know from it, should we give it up — whether it’s painful relationships, physical pain, or emotional pain of one kind or another.

CW: You mentioned hedonism when we started this section. One of the other philosophical forces Elder Maxwell has identified (Maxwell, 1995, p. 67) as one of the “malevolent isms” of our time, is secularism: the removal of God from, among other things, our profession. What do you think has been the impact of that influence, and how can AMCAP make an impact for good in dealing with it?

BK: Well you see, of course we put Christ right in the center.

CW: Yes, we do.

BK: And, rightfully so. I think we need to remember what Elder Neal A. Maxwell said in his address in 1976 (Maxwell, 1976).

CW: That we should maintain our citizenship in the Kingdom of God and our passport to our professional fields, not the other way around?

BK: Yes, that’s the phrase. I think he’s right on. And we haven’t done a very good job of that. I have not done a very good job in terms of reaching out, in terms of writing, in terms of speaking much to other professional organizations. There are things that we can do, and that we need to do. I think that AMCAP — by helping us feel good about our own selves and the ideals that we espouse; by helping us harmonize our ideas with the Gospel, and be free from the ways of the world — can have an influence on the whole profession, the whole field.

CW: I think you’re talking about the same things that our last two presidents, Jan Scharman (1999) and Lane Fischer (1998), have talked about: identifying truth and extending outreach, rather than just privately enjoying the things that we have.

BK: Right. Yes. We’re too much ensconced within ourselves. It’s easy to be that way because it’s comfortable. If we stick our necks out, there will be those who will want to shoot us down; no question about that.

CW: In the environment of the 21st Century, when we have a website that can speak to the world, when we have all the amenities of modern society — publications, e-mail, and so on — what do you see as the future of AMCAP?

BK: If our articles or presentations are going to be suitable for sharing with other professional organizations or journals, in most cases they are going to have to have some modifica-
tions made to them. And that can be done without any damage to the truth. But I think on the Web, you don't necessarily have to modify them.

CW: Just share the ideas straight up?

BK: Yes. You can certainly put the modified ideas on the Web, but you can also put on the straight ones — the undiluted ones, unmodified.

CW: So that people can share ideas in a free exchange, sort of a worldwide forum?

BK: Yes, that's right. And you never know who might pick up on them. There are some sub-organizations of the professional organizations that do espouse religious concerns and issues [such as APA Division 36 – Religion and Psychology]. And they could be approached more directly, and more readily, and more frequently. So, there's just a number of ways that we could reach out.

CW: What are some of the other forms of outreach you envision in AMCAP's future?

BK: Well, in terms of reaching out to other professional organizations, I think the best way to do it is through members that know influential members of those organizations.

CW: Through personal networking?

BK: That's right. Like the old saying goes, "It's not what you know but who you know." There's more truth in that than we'd like to acknowledge! Anyway, if we're really going to have an impact with professional organizations, I think we need to work through people who are members of those organizations, and who know people in somewhat prominent positions within them. Then they can open the way to get some of our material out, particularly to some of the religious sub-organizations within the professional organizations. I think making an impact in those larger organizations really is possible, over time, step by step.

CW: What are some ways that we as AMCAP members can extend outreach and provide support to Church leaders?

BK: One way is to work through Ensign articles. Some of us have submitted articles to the Ensign that really reflect some of this work. I think that's a good way to reach out, working through the Church publications. But working through people we know is still the best way to make an impact.

CW: That personal networking is at the heart of AMCAP in a lot of ways, in creating a forum for the sharing of ideas. Reaching out to students and to other professionals is another area where personal networking seems very important.

BK: Yes, it really is; that's typically how you have the greatest influence.

CW: Why is that?

BK: Well, people are very busy; they've got lots of things to do. If they don't know you or your organization, they're often not going to take time for you — even to find out if you could really bless their lives or add something meaningful for them. They won't take the time to even look at it.

CW: But to meet a flesh-and-blood person, that's able to say, "This has been helpful to me" makes a bigger difference.

BK: And I know you, and I have confidence in you, so I'll consider it!

CW: One of the other dimensions of outreach that you've been involved with in a major way is the AMCAP Journal. You were the editor of the Journal during what many regard as its most productive and exciting time. You got a lot of material in, and you published more issues and more articles than any other editor during the years that you served. What were some of the factors that helped you create a publication that appeared so regularly, and that was so appealing and meaningful to such a wide diversity of AMCAP members?

BK: Well, thank you. First of all, I spent a lot of time at it; it took a lot of time. And I listened carefully to the AMCAP presentations, and then I'd contact those who had made the presentations, "Have you written this up?" "No, at least not in publishable form." "How about writing it up for the AMCAP Journal?" Some of them I may have needed to contact two, three, four, five times to get it, OK? But I did. I kept after them until they did it; not in an antagonistic way, but in a very encouraging and supportive way. "This would really help many of our readers, and could make a great contribution; we'd appreciate it if you would take the time to do that. And if you can't get it in quite the shape you'd like it, and don't have the time to polish it, send it like you can and let's see what we can do with it."

CW: You would provide editorial support for developing it?

BK: Yes, right. And in addition to the members of our Editorial Board, BYU had a class and individuals designed to help students and faculty publish articles and materials. I got acquainted with that teacher, and asked if she and her students would be willing to help us edit and develop the AMCAP Journal, and put it into shape. And they gave a lot of support, spent all kinds of time on our journal, all for free!

CW: How many people would you estimate were involved in the creation of each issue, and what was the nature of your Editorial Board at the time?

BK: Well, the Editorial Board just consisted of three of us. All three of us read all of the articles. The other members would send their comments back to me, and sometimes I'd...
send them back to the writer, saying "It was suggested that this be emphasized or modified," or spell out what we saw as needing corrections. There were only three of us on the Editorial Board, and we were the primary ones. But this faculty member who taught the editing class, and a varying number of her students, also worked on our Journal.

CW: Reviewing your editorials through those years, it appeared that the number one problem that you faced, time and again, was the challenge of getting enough submissions.

BK: Yes.

CW: What were some of the strategies you used to deal with that persistent problem?

BK: Well, in addition to personally contacting the AMCAP members who had presented, I contacted the Area Coordinators, and asked them to look at who they had in their area who might be able to write an article for us, or who had made a presentation that they had heard and thought it may be suitable.

CW: Now, particularly, since many of our areas have area conferences or meetings where information is presented, that could be even more useful.

BK: Yes. We had only a few Area Coordinators at that time and only one or two areas held any special meetings where presentations were made.

CW: Now there are many more areas and area coordinators, bringing even more potential yield from that strategy.

BK: Then, sometimes we'd see an article in another journal that seemed appropriate. So we'd contact the person. And I'd make pleas before the AMCAP Convention at times: "We need articles!"

CW: So you very actively recruited material.

BK: Oh, very actively, yes! And you need to. After a time, if you've got enough articles submitted, you don't need to do that as much. But until you get them flowing in, you really need to recruit, you need to request articles, from every possible source that you can.

CW: So it sounds like that same person-to-person networking that you talked about earlier was really crucial with the Journal.

BK: Yes, it was very crucial.

CW: What would you say is the role of the Journal in AMCAP, and how important do you think it is to its members?

BK: It's very possibly, at least potentially, the most unifying factor in the organization. Because, you see, we had four issues a year.

CW: Yes.

BK: And if you have regular issues, it helps keep the members interested in the organization. It helps keep them mindful of what's happening. It stimulates their own thinking, and their own ideas, and their own creativity: "Hey, maybe I could write an article that good!"

CW: That's especially crucial for people in the outlying areas who can't attend the conventions.

BK: Yes, right. And of course, most of our members don't attend the conventions, really.

CW: Right - maybe 25% of members.

BK: So, I think the Journal is a very unifying factor, and a stimulating factor. And an intellectual feasting factor, too. It's one that helps develop the members, and builds a cohesiveness that you can't get just from two conferences. Not to minimize the conferences' importance, because I think they're very important; I really like them; it's one of the reasons I'm still active in AMCAP, because I like to go to the conferences. I like to meet the people I know, to talk with them again, to see what they're doing; what's happening.

CW: To renew that fellowship?

BK: Yes.

CW: Why else are you still involved in AMCAP, after all these years? What has AMCAP meant to you?

BK: Well, it's been to me a place of intellectual stimulation, spiritual enrichment, friendship enrichment, associations; those are the things that keep me going, things I still find enriching, sometimes in the hallways as much as in the presentation rooms. It's a very good experience.

CW: What happens "in the hallways" for you?

BK: What happens "in the hallways" is, you talk with people that you haven't seen for at least a few months, maybe longer than that: "How have you been? What have you been learning and doing lately?" I get a lot of stimulation from those kinds of exchanges.

CW: The stimulation of sharing ideas, and of renewing fellowship?

BK: Yes.

CW: Why do you think AMCAP can be important in the development of the LDS therapist? There are many committed, gospel-based LDS therapists throughout the world in a variety of settings. What can LDS therapists do in the context of AMCAP that they can't do all by themselves?

BK: Well, they get feedback from others on their ideas. And they also get stimulation, and strength and support — inspiration — from the ideas of other people. So it's very valuable, I think, to be active in AMCAP, to rub shoulders with those who are doing things similar to you and have similar views. And you can speak more freely, rather than having
to evaluate and modify your language; you can speak very freely with most of the AMCAP members.

CW: Also, there’s the promise the Lord gave: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I also” [see Matthew 18:20; D&C 6:32].

BK: Yes.

CW: There is a spirit in AMCAP when we gather.

BK: That’s right.

CW: A spirit that is hard to match by yourself?

BK: That’s right. And there’s a spirit there with the members, just one on one, as you talk with them too — people with common values, and common goals.

CW: As we enter the 21st Century, with the various opportunities and technologies and challenges that people face in our time, what do you think AMCAP can do and needs to do, within this very special context?

BK: Well, I think there’s a wonderful opportunity for putting ideas on the Internet. I don’t know, for example, how long it will be after a Journal is published before it goes on the website.

CW: I don’t think it will take very long, since they’re now created electronically. The entire 25-year archive of the AMCAP Journal was created in less than six weeks.

BK: Really?

CW: Yeah, because there was an electronic copy in existence already that could just be adapted for an online format. So I don’t think single new issues will take very long at all to get online; a lot of things are expedited by doing things electronically, because material doesn’t need to be retyped and readjusted. You just plug in the text. Documents don’t need to be submitted on paper anymore; they can be submitted as email attachments to the editors, and then sent on to the website people electronically — all of which saves a lot of trees, and a lot of time and effort for everybody involved.

BK: Amen! I like saving the trees! Through our professional publications, we can really share gospel-based ideas with a much wider audience. I guess we still put them in some of the libraries, don’t we? That’s very important.

CW: Yes. And on the website [http://www.amcap.net], the AMCAP Journal will be available to anyone and everyone who chooses to log on. So that little convention presentation that was originally given for maybe fifty AMCAP members on one particular day in Salt Lake City can go to hundreds of AMCAP members and others through the published Journal. It can then potentially go on to thousands of additional individuals through the website, regardless of time or place, to share these pure ideas with many, in a time when there is so much confusion and distress throughout the world.

BK: Yes.

CW: Are there any last words you’d like to share about AMCAP, and its role in sharing the words of Christ?

BK: There is no other professional organization that even accepts, let alone promulgates, the words of Christ and their application to helping relationships. So AMCAP has a very unique position, and it’s very much needed. For our world is not getting less troubled, it’s getting more troubled. So I think AMCAP has a very important role to play. And with the continuing breakdown of the family and other related trends, the need is going to be greater rather than less.

CW: Do you mean the need for pure truth that can guide people securely, and in which they can feel confidence? [see Helaman 3:29-30, 5:12]

BK: Yes. And, every member of the Church has the responsibility (though the Church leadership has the primary responsibility) to be preparing for the return of the Savior [see D&C 34:5-6, 35:4]. And that means that a lot of work needs to be done. To prepare for His coming is a very important obligation. Now, AMCAP members have both the professional skills as well as the intellectual and also the communication skills, to accomplish much in that effort. So I think AMCAP can have a very big role (as long as we don’t assume that we are the ones with the primary responsibility, because we are not). But it is our responsibility to assist the Church in this.

CW: That is, to contribute within the sphere in which we’re set?

BK: Right — not to take over; I don’t want to be misunderstood on that!

CW: What specifically do you think we can do, as an organization, to help prepare for the coming of the Savior?

BK: Well, help promulgate His teachings as they apply to human behavior; and, virtually all His teachings do apply to human behavior. So, it is really not too much different from the role of the Church, except that ours is in a more professional area; the Church emphasizes one area, and we emphasize another area.

CW: When He comes, He’ll bring a kingdom of peace. And we can help establish that peace right now, in the individuals and the families that we work with.

BK: That’s right.

CW: And in that way, we help prepare the world for Him, so it won’t be a surprise when He comes. We will already know how to live in ways that are consistent with what He will establish when He comes.
BK: That’s right; that is correct.

CW: Are there any final thoughts you would like to express before we finish up today?

BK: Let’s keep moving forward — onward and upward!

CW: Thank you so very much for your comments and insight, and for everything that you’ve done for AMCAP for so many years. We love you!

BK: Well, thank you. It has been my joy, and I’ve loved it, and loved the AMCAP members.

CW: That love is very evident. Thanks again.

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