

The Life of an LDS Apostle

Working the Divine Miracle: The Life of Apostle Henry D. Moyle. By Richard D. Poll. Edited by Stan Larson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), xx + 240 pp., \$29.95

Reviewed by M. Guy Bishop, Woods Cross, Utah.

HENRY DINWOODEY MOYLE (1889-1963) lived a full life that has been well recounted by the late historian Richard D. Poll. Professor Poll achieved a solid reputation as a Mormon historian. He taught several years at BYU, leaving that institution in 1970 to assume the position of vice president for administration at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. Poll published a scholarly biography of Hugh B. Brown (with Eugene F. Campbell) in 1975 and was a coeditor of the popular *Utah's History* (1978). Perhaps his best remembered contribution to Mormon studies was a 1967 sermon he delivered at the Palo Alto, California, Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints entitled "What the Church Means to People Like Me." The text of this famous speech was later published in *Dialogue* 2, no. 4 (winter, 1967).

With the backing of Leonard J. Arrington, Poll had completed his biography of Henry D. Moyle under the financial sponsorship of the Moyle family by 1982. Tragically, however, the family found his study to be insufficiently "faith-promoting." Poll was

"extremely disappointed," so the biography was not published at that time (xiii). Like many professionally-trained historians, Poll believed that history was best told "warts and all," and he has portrayed Moyle in such a manner (xv).

As Poll writes, "Helping people cope with economic adversity was Henry D. Moyle's calling for the last half of his life" (82). Asked to help shape the church's response to the Great Depression of the 1930s, Moyle served as chairman of the General Church Welfare Committee during those trying times. Reportedly, all he wanted inscribed on his gravestone was "A Welfare Worker," a clear indication of the importance he ascribed to this undertaking (82).

Always a "builder," according to his biographer, Moyle felt a "particular" challenge to acquire and develop properties that might aid the cause of the church's welfare program (91). While maintaining a successful law practice, Moyle also acted as president of the Cottonwood Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Along with his religious and humanitarian activities, Moyle also had a talent for making money. "Money interested Henry Moyle," Poll observes. However, it was the challenge of acquiring and using wealth, rather than money itself, that brought him pleasure. "[H]e delighted equally in investing it, spending it, and giving it away" (97).

In June 1959, a few months after his seventieth birthday, Moyle was called to serve in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' presiding First Presidency as second counselor to David O. McKay where one of his chief assignments would be the church missionary program. Several factors had influenced President McKay's selection of Moyle as a counselor, including his proven business acumen and, surprisingly, his politics: Moyle was a Democrat. This was a "minor but not inconsequential factor" "for a church striving to present a bipartisan image to the world" (187).

His successes in this calling, however, appear to have led eventually to his fall from grace among some of his peers within the church hierarchy. Indeed, Poll compares this portion of his subject's life to a Greek tragedy (210).

The accelerating missionary program of the church demanded vigorous, enthusiastic leadership—qualities Moyle possessed in abundance. His self-confidence and his fervent belief that he was right did not always help him, however, in working among older, more conservative brethren. Many in church leadership came to see problems with the missionary program as Moyle's new quotas for missionary work led to so-called "baseball baptisms." These baptisms added

scores of unconverted youngsters to ward membership rolls, much to the chagrin of local and general authorities. Moyle himself saw this problem as "exceptional" and often preached against the practice (211). As he saw it, the real issue was member retention through active fellowshipping, not simply the increase in baptisms.

At first, President McKay approved most of the initiatives put forth by his second counselor, giving Moyle "considerable latitude" (215). Within a few years, however, and in response to concerns among the hierarchy, McKay decided to assume greater oversight for church missionary efforts since these were its most "visible" and "vulnerable" public activities (215).

Following a life marked by personal, financial, and religious successes, Moyle died quietly in his sleep on 18 September 1963. Considering that life, Poll writes, "Henry D. Moyle had more impact upon the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the current century than any other man who did not hold the office of president" (224). Some may disagree with this claim, but after reading *Working the Divine Miracle*, it would be difficult to refute it. Author Poll and editor Larson have provided a solid biography of an important figure in the twentieth-century church hierarchy.

Protocols of the (Other) Elders of Zion

The History of the Saints, 3d edition, by John C. Bennett, ed. Andrew F. Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 341pp., \$34.95

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ONE MAY IMPUTE two possible rationales to the decision by the University of Illinois Press to reprint an 1842 exposé of Joseph Smith and Mormonism. Its re-publication may represent an appreciation for its value as a window on anti-Mormon hysteria and hate-mongering in an era when the