

England, his homeland, where he was given leadership responsibilities in Manchester. The calling was a step forward for Clayton. Then he became ill and one evening drank a glass of gin to give him strength to return to his lodging. The alcohol was too much for the weakened missionary. Ashamed of his lack of decorum, Clayton's leaders quickly disciplined his unacceptable behavior by taking away his leadership duties. Clayton was forgiven after explaining the circumstances but was nevertheless sent home without fulfilling his mission.

In demand as a secretary and accountant in Salt Lake City, Clayton helped organize the Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution. He zealously threw himself into the effort. But he was again frus-

trated by the contradictions of human frailties, especially those of his leaders, compared to the human potential in which he so firmly believed. These distractions from his own accounting and auditing business resulted in financial failure and further disappointment.

Allen admits a great admiration for Clayton, even while revealing his weaknesses as well as his strengths. I too learned to admire Clayton as an individual and as a participant in the formative years of Utah settlement. Allen's unique portrayal and interpretation of William Clayton, a disciple, and the records he left contribute as well to our understanding of the Mormon community under Brigham Young.

Before Constantine, After Joseph Smith

Ante Pacem: Archeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine by Graydon F. Snyder (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1985), 169 pp., \$19.95.

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FEW RECENT BOOKS substantiate the major claims of Restoration faith as well as Graydon Snyder's *Ante Pacem*. A professor at Bethany Theological Seminary, Snyder convincingly shows that the early church had structures and cultic forms remarkably similar to those of Latter-day Saints. This, of course, is not his purpose; he is not an apologist for Mormonism and never once mentions the Latter-day Saint faith. Rather, his aim is to describe the early church through archeological evidence dated before the era of peace initiated by Constantine in A.D. 313 (hence the title *Ante Pacem*).

Snyder sifts through the vast accumulation of archeological evidence now available from that period — data that has not been lost or eradicated, as many scholars

have assumed. He defines archeology in a broad sense as nonliterary remains; consequently, his study includes not just excavations and ground plans of buildings, but sculpture, frescoes, sarcophagi inscriptions, funeral tablets, papyri, and graffiti. He summarizes in English a vast fund of resource materials hitherto available only in French and German monographs. Focusing on the approximate date A.D. 180 — which he believes is when a distinctively Christian culture began to emerge — Snyder's book helps fill the time gap between the New Testament writings and formation of "orthodoxy" during the age of Constantine. Geographically, Snyder concentrates on Roman Christianity, where remains are far more massive and accessible than anything from the Greek-speaking world before the late fourth century (pp. 168–69). The following conclusions might interest Latter-day Saints.

1. *The Absence of Cross and Crucifix*

Snyder confirms contemporary findings that the cross is not found in the symbolism of the early church; instead, early Christians preferred to see Jesus as a strong, vic-

torious Christ who gave substance to their hope for surcease from Roman tyranny and who overcame illness, suffering, and death (pp. 15, 27–29, 165). Snyder emphasizes that “there are no early Christian symbols that elevate paradigms of Christ’s suffering . . . or even motifs of death and resurrection” (p. 14). Only after the state recognized Christianity could the cross be used for redemptive purposes (p. 29). Latter-day Saint author Robert Wells correctly argues that the Church should not be faulted for its failure to use the cross as a symbol. Speaking for Latter-day Saints in general, he says, “We remember Him as resurrected and glorified, having overcome death. We see Him as a strong, masculine, healthy savior of mankind, not an emaciated and suffering one” (*We Are Christians Because . . .*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985, p. 24).

In early art Christ was not the redeemer from guilt through his suffering on the cross, but rather a young heroic deliverer who rescued his followers from desperate circumstances of death and dehumanization (pp. 165–66). Only after Constantine was the image of Christ “changed from the youthful [beardless] wonderworker to the royal or majestic Lord. At that time, Jesus shifted more to a bearded, elderly, dominant figure.” Snyder further suggests “that the price for orthodoxy was the ultimate loss of this attractive young Jesus” (p. 165).

2. *The Communion of the Saints*

And yet early Christianity was not as centered on youthful vitality as the above portrayal might indicate. Snyder notes that before the time of Constantine, Christianity was as much a “cemetery” religion as it was a “house-church” religion that met in the home, hall, or marketplace. “In the cemetery they celebrated their kinship with the Christian special dead [saints of a later period] and with each other” (p. 83). This gathering was highly social and included an agape meal (which Snyder differentiates from the Lord’s Supper, as illustrated below). Here, “prayers were

addressed to the dead on behalf of the living” (p. 83). Rather than encouraging necrophilia, the church’s cemetery rites emphasized the triumph of life over death. This recognition of special kinship with the dead can be likened to the ethos Latter-day Saints have established through temple ordinances and sealings.

3. *New Light on an Old Issue: Are Mormons Christians?*

In the struggle between the two major forms of early Christianity—the “urban” and “cemetery” factions—the urban authorities won, and the preeminence of saints (usually worshipped in catacombs at the edge of the town) gave way to the authority of bishops in the city churches (pp. 165–66). According to Snyder, controlling the cult of the dead paved the way for orthodoxy, which was more a political compromise than a doctrinal development (pp. 123, 165). This discussion helps illuminate how orthodoxy and heresy should be perceived today and clarifies the relative position of Mormonism to traditional Christianity. Here, Snyder supports Walter Bauer’s thesis in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971)—that Christianity was not initially a uniform orthodoxy from which heretical movements deviated. Says Snyder, “Heresy was that variety of Christianity that was repressed rather than the factor that eroded pristine orthodoxy” (p. 8). In other words, through pluralistic competition, orthodoxy became the heresy that won—coercively, I might add.

4. *“Families Are Forever”*

The most widespread portrayal in early Christian art is the *orante* symbol—usually a female figure in a Roman toga with arms extended upward in praise. Snyder challenges the usual interpretation of this figure as the soul of the departed praying to God. Rather, he believes that it represents filial piety, corresponding to its use in the surrounding pagan environment. For the Christian it also expressed the security and joy found through adop-