include Sabbath rest, saying grace, and time for silence. If we are to bear a disruptive witness we must adopt a new movement which involves "a shift in ends from ourselves to a transcendent God, and then letting that shift shape us in every aspect of our lives" (p. 90). Chapter 5 explores the outworking of this shift through "Disruptive Church Practices." The practices of the church speak to our desire for belonging and meaning and interrupt the distraction and aid in the movement of focus from ourselves back to God. Chapter 6 is clearly written by an English professor. In it, Noble explores what it looks like for us to engage in culture in such a way that we can disrupt the distraction and use culture in order to point people to the goodness of God. He argues "Our calling is not to invent allusions to God in our lives but to reveal and affirm the ones that are already, necessarily there" (p. 171).

I applaud Dr. Noble's work in this book. He does a wonderful job alerting us to something that is wrong in our culture and provides a helpful way for us to think about how we are to do our job as Jesus' witnesses within this secular culture. Due to his heavy reliance on James K. A. Smith and Charles Taylor, though, it felt at times as though I was reading them and not him. Overall this is a commendable work that can help people to be more effective witnesses in our distracted 21st century culture.

Brian J. Wright, *Communal Reading In The Time Of Jesus: A Window Into Early Christian Reading Practices.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017. (293 pp.) ISBN: 9781506432502

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Brian J. Wright's *Communal Reading in the Time of Jesus* sets out to explore the communal reading practices of the first century, focusing particularly on the writings of the New Testament. Wright begins in his first chapter by outlining the lack of previous scholarship on both the practice of communal reading among early Christians and how such practices impact the shape of the texts that were read. In this volume, he is looking in particular for historical evidence that communal reading events took place in a range of different geographical locations throughout and beyond the Roman Empire to lay the foundations for further study into the impacts these events and their traditions would have had on the context that produced the New Testament and the early church.

In chapter 2, Wright begins by justifying his choice of "*communal* reading event" over "*public* reading event." He notes that "*communal* is to be preferred because it both highlights the social aspect of reading and defines the reading event as one in which two or more people are involved. In other words, 'communal reading' can be public or private, but not individualistic" (p. 12, italics in original). This distinction removes an individual silently reading from the picture. He goes on to outline the extent of his study with its focus primarily on the literary evidence and defines some of the key Latin and Greek terms found in first-century literature that refer to communal reading events.

In the next two chapters, Wright turns to how the context of the first century would have supported the widespread proliferation of communal reading events. In chapter 3, he discusses the

economic and political factors, drawing on archaeological evidence from Galilee which suggests the area was prosperous in the first century, countering the usual narrative that the area was poor. He argues that the political stability of the Pax Romana also contributed to the abundance of communal reading events as it was easier to travel than previously so literature could spread faster and festivals and other entertainments were common.

This background is followed in chapter 4 with an analysis of the features of the social context of the first century that allowed communal reading events to flourish. Wright argues that such events were so common it began to impact negatively on the quality of literature produced and that texts could be read in many different contexts. He draws on primarily Greco-Roman literature here but has a short section that also focuses on Jewish communal reading events, particularly those that took place in the synagogues as the early church builds on many Jewish practices, including those of the synagogue.

Chapters 5 and 6 are the heart of Wright's study. In chapter 5, he looks closely at an extensive, but not exhaustive, selection of texts from the first century which describe or refer to communal reading events. This analysis is divided into Greek and Roman authors, followed by Jewish authors and demonstrates that communal reading events were common throughout the Roman Empire. The variety of authors surveyed allows for a variety of opinions on communal reading events to come through, from those wholeheartedly in favour to those who looked on them with disdain. Wright shows that people in the first century had many opportunities to hear or read texts communally. This proliferation meant that, in some places, quality controls were beginning to appear due to the proliferation of such events. These quality controls were one of the features that intrigued me throughout Wright's book and it is nice to know that snobbery and plagiarism have always been features of the authorial landscape. They deserve a study all of their own.

Chapter 6 turns to the New Testament and Wright painstakingly looks at every book in the canon (albeit looking at the Synoptic Gospels together with a primary focus on Luke) for evidence of communal reading events in and behind the text. This approach has a tendency to be a little more tedious than chapter 5 as considerable sections of the New Testament were written by a smaller number of authors and with similar aims than the wide range of Greco-Roman and Jewish authors surveyed. Wright concludes that the New Testament also provides considerable evidence of the widespread nature of communal reading events taking place in a range of locations and that they share many features with those found in Greco-Roman literature.

However, I found that in some cases Wright overstated his case in arguing for a communal reading event in the New Testament. One instance that particularly struck me was his argument that Jesus may have had some form of scriptural notes when "opening the scriptures" to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27, 32). I found his arguments in support of a literal reading of "opening the scriptures" unconvincing as it was based on a connection between verse 32 and 45, ignoring verse 27 which uses different language and suggests that the traditional image of Jesus verbally walking the disciples through the narrative of scripture without any notes. While the same language of "opening" is used in verses 32 and 45 it is figurative in the later, which suggests it should be figurative in the former. Instances

of such overstatement appear elsewhere as well and although they were distracting, I found they do not subtract from the overall value of this study. They are certainly a symptom of the need for more scholarship in this area.

Wright sees the widespread nature of communal reading events raising questions about many of the assumptions made in New Testament scholarship around literacy levels and access to texts in the first century. On this level, I found Wright's study very thought-provoking because his evidence suggests that literacy and access to texts were much more common than is usually assumed in New Testament studies, which in turn shapes our understanding of the early church. Overall, Wright has made an important contribution to the study of the New Testament through his work on communal reading events which should cause all those researching in this area to reconsider the assumptions we make regarding the impacts of communal reading in the first century, particularly how we assume illiteracy for a vast majority of the population while also arguing for intertextual allusions and echoes that require knowledge of and exposure to an array of other texts.

Dyron B. Daughrity, *Rising: The Amazing Story Of Christianity's Resurrection In The Global South*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018. (242 pp.) ISBN: 9781506421827.

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Looking for an accessible text on the growth of Christianity in the global south, *Rising: The Amazing Story of Christianity's Resurrection in the Global South* seemed like it might fit the bill. However, this work was not quite what I expected. Its central focus is not so much the story of Christianity's growth in the global south, but rather the potential for reverse mission which this growth represents. *Rising* is written with very specific cultural particularity, by a citizen of the United States, for citizens of the United States, which did create something of a sense of disengagement for myself as a New Zealand theologian. This could have been easily avoided had the language been slightly more globalised.

Nevertheless, Daughrity's voice sounds an important prophetic note that needs to be heard, particularly in an age of separatist politics heralded by Brexit, and the ongoing debate around American borders and walls. Daughrity rightly acknowledges that Christians hold a very different range of political opinions on immigration and border policy. His own position is made clear when he states that "immigration is good for Christianity" (p. 212) and that "doing the work of Christ is a responsibility that supersedes our national citizenship … Christ urges us to look after the immigrant" (p. 213). These are particularly pertinent comments considering the significant impact of the American government shutdowns in early 2019 due to partisan disagreements over funding for border control.

Chapters are organised by geographic area for the most part, beginning with a focus on the decline of Christianity in Western Europe. Daughrity describes the sad juxtaposition of beautiful, large churches which have become "empty, cavernous temples" (p. 3) lacking the vitality of active, worshipping