Review Symposium

Manuel Mejido Costoya (Ed.) (2021)

Land of Stark Contrasts: Faith-Based Responses to Homelessness in the United States

New York: Fordham University Press. pp. 363. €32.10

Review 1 by Joe Doherty, University of St Andrews

This is a remarkable book; remarkable for its candour in providing, alongside a recognition of their importance and influence, a frank assessment of the shortcomings and limitations of faith-based organisations that provide homelessness services in the USA. While this book is no 'hagiography', all contributors appear to have a faith affiliation, and all are advocates of faith-based homelessness organisations. Throughout this volume there is a prevailing attachment to the belief that religion has 'something to add': faith remains fundamental.

This 'tone' of critical assessment – prefigured in the book's title[1] – is established by the editor, Manuel Mejido Costoya, in a reflective introductory chapter. Mejido Costoya has a notable history of public service and is presently an associate researcher at the University of Geneva's Institute of Sociological Research. He is an exponent of liberation theology which he sees as 'germane to the theology of homelessness' in establishing a 'preferential option for the poor' and in prioritising the 'emancipatory interests [spiritual, corporeal and material] of homeless individuals'. Additionally, and crucially, liberationist doctrines embrace the concept of 'social sin' which, Mejido contends, directs religious ministerial practice to "the exposure of the systemic determinants of homelessness and not just the immediate needs of unhoused individuals" (p.14). The tension between faith-based organisations (FBOs) attending, on the one hand, to the welfare of individual homeless people (their 'compassionate' role) and, on the other hand, identifying and tackling

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[1]   The book's title was taken from: "*The United States is a land of stark contrasts… its immense wealth and expertise stand in shocking contrast with the conditions in which vast numbers of its citizens live.*" UN Report of Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to the United Sates of America (Alton, 2018, p.3).

the structural determinants of homelessness (their 'political' role) is a recurring theme of this book, dictating the framework of analysis and assessment for many of the authors.

Land of Stark Contrasts comprises 13 chapters organised in three Parts. Part I assembles five case study chapters which scrutinise the role of FBOs as civil society actors in the local development of homelessness services. In Part II, four chapters examine the manner in which religious views and principles inform 'conceptions of justice and the common good'. Part III comprises a further four chapters which consider how adherents of different faith traditions "understand and address the suffering of unhoused individuals in the light of their doctrinal systems and practices" and how collaboration with non-sectarian stakeholders is negotiated "without instrumentalising religious convictions" (p.20).

For the most part the text of *Land of Stark Contrasts* is accessible even for the theologically unschooled. It is, mercifully, largely devoid of canonical citations and only occasionally does arcane theological terminology interrupt the flow. Uniformly, each contribution displays both scholarship and an admirable commitment to the idea of praxis.

Part I: Public Religion and Community Revitalisation

James Spickard (pp.49-71) [2] opens Part I with a trenchant analysis of the "shifting discourses [on homelessness] and the appeal to religion" in San Antonio, Texas. Spickard focuses on 'Haven for Hope', San Antonio's city experiment which draws together in a demarcated campus setting, 1.5 miles from downtown, an amalgam of private non-profit organisations and FBOs [3] in an attempt to improve the efficiency and impact of homelessness service delivery. 'Haven for Hope' became fully operational in 2010. Its Impact Report of that year outlined the project's objectives: 'to tackle the root causes of homelessness' focusing on education, job training, day care, substance use and medical care. Spickard is critical of the narrow interpretation of 'root causes' which focuses on individual factors and the lack of attention to systemic issues – symptomatically in this report there is little explicit reference to housing provision. For Spickard, 'Haven for Hope' is a manifestation of a 'neoliberal discourse' which reduces city government involvement in homelessness by 'outsourcing compassion [4] to faith-based and private non-profit organisations.

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[2]   The book chapters are not numbered. Page numbers are used as identifiers.

[3]   Haven for Hope's website suggest approximately one-third are faith related, mostly local but including at least one national/international faith organisation – the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

[4]   'Outsourcing compassion' as it relates to homelessness services has a long history in the USA – beginning in the Reagan era and extending though the Clinton and Bush administrations.

Spickard readily acknowledges that outsourcing compassion has, over time, seen an improvement in service delivery which has moved from 'paternalistic' to 'person centred', empathy and compassion have tangibly increased. While Spickard is fulsome in his appreciation of the role of FBOs in leading and facilitating this shift, he is equally clear about their deficiencies. As he puts it, FBOs are good at "pulling individuals out of the river", but fail "to keep other people from falling or being pushed in" (p.66).

Manuel Mejido Costoya and Margaret Breen's chapter (pp.72-116) reports on a three year 'action research' project conducted by the authors in the Puget Sound Region of the American northwest, an area of nine counties centred on Seattle with a population of some 4.5 million. The Puget Sound region was of particular interest to the authors in that it is often cited as an exemplar of the decline of religiosity in the USA *and* has experienced a crisis of severe homelessness since 2015 (p.72). Working with 19 FBOs and three non-sectarian organisations, Mejido Costoya and Breen's research focused on the intersection of faith and civic capacity and examined the potential for FBOs to become more effective problem solvers –"cata-lysers" and "incubators" of social change (p.94) – through the development of community approaches to homelessness. Their research identified several successful initiatives particularly in generating local economic development and in fostering employment and training. Mejido Costoya and Breen argue that further progress is, however, inhibited by a 'disconnect' (conflict and tension) between the parochialism of local communities (providing voluntary labour and monetary backing) and the need to widen the potential pool of initiatives by working with denominational bodies such as diocese, synods, and conventions. Such 'up-scaling' of community activities, they suggest, is necessary if FBOs are to move beyond 'compassion' to address 'systemic and structural obstacles' particularly regarding the provision of permanent, affordable low-cost housing. The authors conclude: "It is remarkable given the legacy of public religion in America how little we know about the different organisational models in and through which FBOs operate and about the challenges that FBOs face as they strive to solve social problems at the community level" (p.98).

At the heart of Michael Fisher's chapter (pp.117-139) is an examination of the processes of urban redevelopment in Dallas, Texas which in his assessment have promoted 'disenfranchisement' and the 'criminalisation of homelessness'. Fisher contextualises his Dallas study with a succinct and insightful account of the historical and contemporary background to the emergence of criminalisation ordi-nances in the US demonstrating that urban development (renewal, revitalisation, gentrification) has disproportionally affected homeless people. Fisher's primary critique however is directed towards the legitimisation of these processes by the religious discourse of 'prosperity theology'. In this critique, Fisher goes beyond the

lament for the failure of FBOs to deal with systemic causes of homelessness which characterises preceding and following chapters in this book, to pillory a religious tendency (while of course recognising that this is not the prevailing or predominant tendency in public religious discourse) which lauds piety and sees "wealth as a signifier of one's blessed socio-economic status" (p.131). Prosperity theology attributes hardship to individual failure, to a lack of gumption, application and hard work, and has no regard for societal hazards and obstacles; for prosperity theology the absence of material wealth is attributable to personal moral failings (i.e. sin). Fisher ends with a forceful plea for the development of "a counter-religious discourse which challenges and confronts controversial theologies that condone selfishness and greed and incite criminalisation" (p.134).

In the penultimate chapter of Part I, Laura Stivers (pp.140-61), with an explicit focus on public policies that have contributed to homelessness among African Americans, addresses the interaction between white supremacy, racism and homelessness. In a similar vein to Fisher, she establishes a causal link between dispossession (eviction and homelessness) and gentrification, recounting also how historic public housing policies, zoning, redlining, block busting and mortgage discrimination have disproportionally affected black communities. In this context Stivers is critical of FBOs that focus on "changing people instead of changing structures" (p.153). Stivers ardently argues that effective responses from FBOs and allied groups need to adopt and actively promote an "ethics of social transformation" which builds on "values of solidarity and inter-dependence as well as on God's movement for freedom" – thereby extending religious engagement with homelessness beyond charity towards an advocacy that targets the systemic and structural causes of homelessness. In this Stivers reiterates the concept of 'prophetic disruption' developed at greater length in her book *Disrupting Homelessness, Alternative Christian Approaches* (Stivers, 2011).

Lauren Valk Lawson[5] concludes Part I (pp.162-92) with an examination of the 'challenges and opportunities' that face FBO services in addressing the interconnections between homelessness and health in Seattle. Of all the contributors to this book, Lawson comes closest to presenting an 'exceptionalist' (i.e. when compared with secular organisations) argument for the superiority of FBOs in dealing with homelessness (see also Coleman, pp.232-34, this volume). Citing Goldsmith et al. (2006), she asserts that FBOs are: trusted by the communities in which they operate, create and provide leadership, have access to volunteers and financial donations, act as community anchors, are more willing to adopt a holistic approach and are driven by

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[5]   Lawson is the only author to declare explicit membership of a particular religion, Bahā'ī Faith. Founded in Iraq in the mid-nineteenth century, the principal Bahā'ī tenets are the "essential unity of all religions and the unity of humanity" (p.355, this volume).

a 'higher calling' (p.163). Lawson does however modulate this assertion by admitting to some lacunae among FBOs especially with regard to 'challenges' in accessing funding and the lack of well-articulated policies, procedures and outcome evaluations. However, many of the same strengths (with the exception perhaps of 'driven by a higher calling') and weaknesses bear a striking similarity to the strengths and weaknesses that characterise most secular homelessness services (see Sheikh and Teeman, 2018). Apart from this niggle, Lawson's chapter is informative in demonstrating the relationship between health and homelessness. Her examination includes both a consideration of specific health problems – chronic illness, mental illness and substance use – and an examination of health issues specific to particular 'categories' of homeless people – veterans, women and families, and young people. Additionally, Lawson examines a variety of 'health care models' as they relate to homelessness: street outreach, community clinics, medical respite, trauma informed care and harm reduction. She concludes with several examples of FBO inter-faith partnerships that incorporated health services into community outreach programmes (pp.180-82). Regrettably, the precise message and instruction embedded in these case studies is somewhat obscured – at least for the uninitiated reader – by the proliferation of acronyms and a rather confusing concatenation of events.

Part II: Religious World views and the Common Good Reimagined

The first chapter of Part II by the anthropologist Bruce Granville Miller (pp.193-213) reflects on how the spiritual practices of the Pacific Northwest's Coastal Salish[6] could potentially be used to tackle homelessness among Indigenous peoples. Miller reminds us that homelessness is pervasive among Indigenous communities; for example, in Vancouver where Indigenous people comprise a mere 3% of the regional population, they constitute 31% of the unhoused. Miller carefully guides us through the religious cosmology of the Coastal Salish, identifying how concepts of 'kinship' and the practices and customs of 'claiming', 'covering', 'assembly' and 'contemplative longhouse meetings' contribute to a culture of belonging and inclusion which has ensured that historically there has been little[7] or no homelessness among Coastal Salish peoples. Miller suggests that there is potential for such concepts and practices to be extended beyond 'the kin and blood' of the Coastal Salish to embrace other Indigenous communities through their incorporation in outreach programmes. As an example, Miller details the achievements of the

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6   The Coast Salish comprise a large, loose grouping of diverse Indigenous nations, each ethnically, linguistically, and culturally distinctive living in British Columbia, Canada, and the U.S. states of Washington and Oregon.

7   Homelessness is the result of 'banishment', and that mostly short lived (Miller, p.193, this volume)

Sts'ailes First Nation who, during the Olympics of 2010, brought unhoused non-Coastal Salish Indigenous youth living on the streets of Vancouver to the Sts'ailes First Nation's rural reserve where a 'treatment programme' provided shelter, spiritual guidance, and eventually, referral back to the youth's Indigenous communities (pp.207-10). Miller is, however, acutely aware of the many obstacles to implementing such programmes, not least the historic and continuing disruptive effects of settler colonialism on the societal resilience of Canada's First Nations.

In the second chapter of Part II, Nancy Khalil (pp.214-25) considers the development of a nuanced understanding of homelessness emerging from an 'interfaith encounter' in downtown Boston. The 'encounter' is the cooperative relationship which has developed over 20 years between the American Episcopal Cathedral Church of St Paul and the Muslim owner of the neighbouring Black Seed Café. The relationship was founded on the provision of food by the café owner for the Cathedral's annual Thanksgiving celebration which welcomed participants from all faiths as well as homeless people. In a singular, and possibly unique (for Boston at least) development, St Paul's also provides a Friday prayers venue for the local Muslim population and accommodates Ramadan iftars organised and catered for by Black Seed's owner. In conversations with the café owner, Khalil ponders the meaning of homeless/ness as noun, verb and adjective, its pejorative and stigmatising iterations and its relationship with poverty. Conversations which – aided by quotations from Malcolm X's Letter from Mecca – see the evolution of the café owners understanding of homelessness from 'based in addiction' to 'systemic epidemic'.

John Coleman's chapter (pp.226-49) entitled 'Religion and Civic Activism Reconsidered: Situating Faith-Based Responses to Homelessness' reviews three decades of his research on the links between FBOs, social services and citizen activism. If I have understood Coleman's message correctly, he suggests that the interaction between religion and liberal society is characterised by a tension between the religious concepts of 'discipleship', on the one hand, and the secular concept of 'citizenship' on the other. For Coleman discipleship is the predominant ethos – the spiritual, cultural and behavioural expectations – that people of faith bring to their interactions with society and government, it is an ethos defined by their relationship with their God. Citizenship refers to the reciprocal relationship conjoining the rights and responsibilities of the citizen with protection by the state. In this representation, discipleship adds a key 'moral' dimension to an 'a-moral' citizenship. This juxtaposition is illustrated with reference to the work of Robert Putman whose concept of 'social capital', Coleman suggests, is disproportionally

generated by religion (p.232). Coleman ends with an account of the work of several para-denominational organisations [8] which, he argues, illustrate the beneficial linking of the 'energy of discipleship' with citizenship (p.238).

In the final chapter of Part II, Jeremy Phillip Brown poses the question, '[w]hat can be gained by turning to mediaeval religion in order to sharpen our focus on contemporary social phenomena [such as homelessness]? In this somewhat quixotic chapter Brown engages with the Hebrew writings of the 13th century sage R. Ezra Ben Solomon of Gerona and with Iberian Kabbalistic teaching [9] in an attempt to "historicise contemporary religious and public discourse on homelessness" (p.250).

He argues that these documents disseminate a mystical discourse of homelessness fashioned in both 'theosophical' and 'historiosophical' terms which offer a compelling version of social ethics. While undoubtedly a scholarly attempt to demonstrate the relevance of medieval text to contemporary debate on homelessness, it unambiguously shifts the emphasis of analysis into the theological realm. In this respect Brown's chapter foreshadows Part III.

Part III: Theological Insights for Homeless Ministries

The chapters of Part III explore the theological and doctrinal justifications that steer the work of FBOs. They focus specifically on how the adherents of Christian faith traditions comprehend and deal with the suffering of homeless people in light of their own doctrines and practices (Mejido Costoya, p.20, this volume). In this vein, Paul Houston Blankenship (pp.277-96) poses the question: "[w]hat difference do people who are homeless make in the spiritual lives of housed Christians?" (p.277). His answer is 'quite a lot, but more is needed'. Blankenship concludes his chapter with a plea that if Christians are to become 'more loving' they need 'to leave their houses' and join homeless people in the public spaces where they can generate "the political will to help people establish roots" (p.295). Echoing Blankenship's sentiments, María Teresa Dávila (p.297-315) draws on the Catholic concept of 'Integral Human Development' to structure an argument for enhancing 'soul work' by integrating its concern for the "spiritual wounds of the unhoused" with a regard for the "systemic challenges impacting a person's or community's ability to acquire access to housing" (p.299). In a quirky third chapter (pp.316-30) Roberto Mata juxtaposes Google's recently approved plans for a new campus – Googleville – in

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[8] Para-church or para-denominational organisations are Christian faith-based organisations that work outside and across denominations to engage in social welfare and evangelism.

[9] Jewish Kabbalah is a set of esoteric teachings which offer an explanation of the relationship between the unchanging, eternal God and the mortal, finite universe. It forms the foundation of mystical religious interpretations within Judaism (p.264, this volume).

San Jose with John of Patmos's rhetorical conception a 'New Jerusalem' (Book of Revelations, 21). Mata draws startling parallels based on the familiar conceits of 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. In the case of Googleville this distinction is based on 'wealth'. Googleville is in essence a vast gentrification programme that will uproot and dispossess the undesirables (i.e. poor) of the Latinx community that presently inhabit San Jose's Downtown East district, while welcoming residents with the wherewithal to purchase or rent accommodation (the promise of 1 000 'affordable' houses is conspicuously vague and possibly duplicitous). The deserving/ undeserving distinction in New Jerusalem is based on 'salvation'. New Jerusalem is conceived as the 'New Earth' where all true believers (God's chosen people) will reside at the 'end of time' to spend eternity with God; nonbelievers however will be excluded. Part III ends with Sathianathan Clarke's autoethnographic [10] assessment of nine years of bible study with 'homeless neighbours' at the Church of the Epiphany in Washington DC (pp.331-50). For Clarke, the study group acted as a 'dialogical alternative space' for seeking biblical meaning that enhancing religious understanding.

Overview

'Compassion is not sufficient' is the clear message of *Land of Stark Contrasts*. In Spickard's apt analogy "plucking homeless people out of the river and placing them on what passes for a safe shore" establishes FBOs' participation in a "homeless management industry" which focuses on "transforming individuals rather than transforming the city in which they live" (Spickard, pp.65-66, this volume). Each contributing author to *Land of Stark Contrasts* reiterates and endorses the call for FBOs to 'step-up', to engage directly and meaningfully in tackling the systemic and structural obstacles that cause and perpetuate homelessness; to engage in a praxis that not only saves individuals from drowning in the river of homelessness, but – to extend Spickard's analogy – effectively removes the hazard by draining the river. These are ambitious objectives which would require not only substantial resourcing but also – and perhaps more importantly – a change of mindset and overhaul of organisational priorities. [11] All this is recognised and acknowledged; however, what is disappointingly missing from this volume is any sustained attempt to provide a clear assessment of the composition and anatomy of systemic/structural causes or to delineate pathways towards achieving these laudable objectives.

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[10] Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. "This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just, and socially-conscious act" (Ellis et al., 2010, n.p.).

[11] For further insight on these issues see: Hackworth (2012) and Parsell et al. (2022).

There are numerous, though mostly fleeting, references to housing crises, to the need for low-cost affordable housing, to 'Housing First' projects, and to the 'right to housing'. The opportunities that these topics – and others – provided for charting an effective FBO praxis that goes beyond compassion are squandered. The call of the contributors to *Land of Stark Contrasts* to tackle causality remains, regrettably, resolutely at the level of exhortation and aspiration.

❯ References

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Review 2 by Siobhán Garrigan, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Like its title, this is a book of stark contrasts. Its ambition is macro, with its authors covering geographies encompassing most of the USA and posing swooping questions, but its overall feel is micro, almost a series of vignettes. It repeatedly calls for political change, but mostly takes an apolitical approach. On the one hand, it gives insights into grassroots organisations which, claiming faith as their motivation, give succour to those suffering for want of a house; this gives a marvellously 'in-depth' picture of a wide range of different projects and locations, evoking the great number and variety of faith-based social justice projects and the diversity of American spaces. On the other, it is surprisingly uncritical of the categories it uses; for example, what is 'faith' and what is it doing in these circumstances that non faith-based organisations engaged in similar work are not?

These contrasts might be due to the origins of the book, which were in a project that ran from July 2015 for five years in Seattle University's Center for Religious Wisdom and World Affairs, funded by the Luce Foundation ($450 000). Two symposia were held in 2017 and 2018 on homelessness that brought together a wide range of participants from academia, religious bodies, and non-profit organisations. Symposia are good things; they allow knowledge-sharing between grassroots agencies, theorists, and policy makers as well as idea-generation, problem-solving, and the possibility of ongoing mutual support. But not all symposia should be turned into books.

A memo that was included with the review copy of this book noted that it was approved for an advance contract as a co-production with the Center before the first symposium even occurred. The condition that an imaginative, inclusive, diverse gathering of people from very different walks of life will be required to produce a single academic volume for sale in order to justify its existence is a horrid example of how neo-liberal norms distort conversations and devalue their worth as conversations.

The normalisation of neo-liberalism is the hidden theme of the book, both in what it presents and in what is missing from it. What it presents struggles throughout with two themes highlighted by my fellow-reviewer: the tension between 'serving' and 'changing', i.e., : caring for those suffering in a bad situation while knowing that the bad situation is systemic, something interpersonal care cannot fix. Secondly, that people – very good, clever, committed and relatively powerful people like the authors of these chapters – are rendered so powerless in their own political system that all they can do to effect systemic change is exhort; nearly all the authors imply that someone else, elsewhere, should be able to ultimately alter things for the better; exactly how is left vague.

The normalisation of neo-liberalism that is not addressed in the book stems from this seeming obliviousness: the masking of big-money interests; the suffering of some individuals, and the scrabbling of some others (and not the State) to aid them as falsely normative; the ways that neo-liberalism evades being named (or even noticed) via its intersectional character. This is why Laura Stivers' article was a breath of air: naming white supremacy as a fundamental and ongoing problem. Stivers argues that if you want to fix homelessness in the USA you have to transform those policies and social structures that keep white supremacy intact, because it is they that continue to impoverish and imprison communities of colour. And the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in this?

> "… teaching parishioners that incarceration did not increase because of height-ened crime and that people didn't simply choose to live in segregated neighbor-hoods, but that intentional governmental policies created our current injustices. The good news is that no matter how complex and overwhelming, policies can be changed." (p.157)

But what about the role of Christian thinking in *creating* those policies? For example, are US American religious bodies ever going to take responsibility for, and pro-actively amend, put right, the divinised imperialist, colonising, white-settler concepts that firmly defined 'nice neighborhoods' as white ones with a church on the Green emblematising respectability while enforcing racialised, gendered, and class discrimination and papering over a legacy of genocide, lingua-cultural exter-mination, and land-theft?

Similarly, an account is much needed and missing in this volume of the ways in which churches and other religious organisations have *caused* innumerable people to experience homelessness; as but one example, Christian teachings against homosexuality prompting the eviction of youth from their homes.

And beyond re-educating congregations and taking responsibility for the errors in their past, why aren't more churches building social housing? Or are they? You wouldn't know it to read this book. Its aforementioned tension is in danger of becoming a false dichotomy between tending souls and changing policy; in the middle, however, there is a lot of scope for pragmatic faith-based action, such as building and running social housing or campaigning for affordable housing.

Furthermore, what of those *non*-FBOs, who are building and running social housing and campaigning for affordable housing? This book's focus on the grassroots is great but many people involved at the grassroots are also involved in wider-scale campaigns, and many people doggedly working on those campaigns are people of faith, even as their organisations run under 'secular' titles. Indeed, in my experi-ence, you can't work for long in this arena without a deep store of faith, albeit not

necessarily one affiliated with an institutional religion. Again, you wouldn't know it to read this book. There are long-standing organisations such as Habitat for Humanity, as well as an endless stream of newer ones, such as the many cities adopting Housing First. There are national organisations, such as the Rental Housing Action Campaign and NAHRO's Housing America Campaign, and there are local ones, such as H.O.M.E.S. in Delaware or PRRAC's Regional Housing Campaign in Baltimore, MD. Given these, and so very many more, the book gives an insufficient account for its selection of authors and the projects they represent.

If what was wanted was a focus not on people of faith (who are campaigning, and have long been), but on faith-based *organisations*, then how, if at all, are their approaches distinctive from others? Here especially the 'faith-based' definition and focus of the book need more explanation. With an admirable mix of compassion and grit throughout the book, core concepts of belonging, dignity, and companionship between those housed and those not are explored alongside a view of integral human development that includes spiritual needs and a querying of the relationship between discipleship and citizenship. But, with the exception of the latter, I'm not at all convinced of the distinctiveness of these ethics as being unique to faith-based organisations.

But I live in a very different social context and am perhaps inclined to forget that vast swathes of American Christians mimic a strict personal/political division in their imagination of their faith, are relatively wealthy, and habitually complacent about it (a far cry from the preferential option for the poor described by the book's Latin American editor), and the extent of their charitable giving, when adjusted for tax relief, is questionable. Maybe claiming the above approaches as a distinctive part of 'faith' will be recognisable and helpful in the context of the USA.

For all the amazing inter-personal, regional, and multi-religious stories recounted in this volume, one really has to remember that we are talking about the richest country in the world and the horrors it wreaks on its own people through its military-industrial complex, systematised poverty, lack of access to health care, and lack of affordable housing; these are techniques of its capitalist vision and not accidents. In this context, homelessness is a form of terror – both the experience of it and the threat of it; which perhaps helps explain why faith speaks so cautiously in the face of it, at least in this book. An analysis of this, their *national* context, evades most of the authors of the book (perhaps another neo-liberal-norm, avoidance of a state-critical view?). James Spickard's chapter is an exception, but remarkable there is his reliance on literature about the UK, a quite different context to his own, particularly in terms of racialisation.

Overall, at 364 pages and with many of the chapters taking over 8000 words to make mostly uncomplicated points, this is a book in need of a radical edit. Despite

an introduction that has been obviously re-written/expanded to try to put a structure on the material, there is too little connective tissue and the volume doesn't hang together as a whole. And yet the stories it tells have stayed in my mind, the alternative visions it desires and articulates have power to motivate and focus attention, and its many calls for change deserve to be heard.