Caldwell, Melissa. *Living Faithfully in an Unjust World: Compassionate Care in Russia*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017. xviii + 260 pp. $85.00. ISBN 978-0-520-28583-5.

This beautifully engaging book draws upon decades of participant-observation research in Moscow faith-based volunteer communities serving people who are homeless or displaced, poor or infirm. Melissa Caldwell tells a story of faith as it is practiced by some in contemporary Russia: the dedicated protagonists of her deeply moral reflections upon the lives of people who struggle to walk alongside those in need are neither individuals imbued with missionary zeal, nor servants of Caesar. Instead, they are communities of volunteers hailing from a variety of faith traditions and national origins who, mainly setting aside doctrinal differences, place genuine service to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, and the unclothed at the center of their practice. She follows them as they navigate complex relationships between their faith communities and the state; the politics of interfaith coordination; tensions between affective and structural relationships of care; and many other elements of the networks of informal welfare provision that sustain life for many in the metropolis.

In addition to offering readers a fine-grained analysis of how groups of volunteers care for those in need amid a global ebb in welfare-state provisions, Caldwell intervenes in conceptual language scholars have long used to think about exchange in Russian society. She offers many fascinating asides that ground discussion of analytical concepts in the worlds she presents in the book. Caldwell encourages readers to think carefully about analytical distinctions treated in the literature in anthropology to which she provides new context: for example, what it means to give, rather than to gift; what it means to receive, rather than to take. Caldwell takes seriously the subjectivity of her interlocutors and the values they assign to the moral and spiritual ideas that motivate their work. She grounds the analysis in emic concepts emphasizing solidary foundations for action and deliberately shared experience—*sochuvstvie* (empathy); *sostradanie* (compassion); *soperezhivanie* (commiseration) (p. 69).

Amid political controversies surrounding changes in the institutional structure of Orthodoxy and attendant geopolitical shifts, readers who wish to understand the realities of faith-based social-justice work in Russia will learn much from this book. Caldwell shows how faith-based communities embody an alternative to liberal models of development and civil society, occupying a space in which voluntarism is not a link between state and society, but rather a way of compensating for state withdrawal (p. 111). She attends to the transformative potential of this epistemology, emphasizing how the agonistic and humane engagement of faith-based communities might produce "a society with greater civility" (p. 113).

Living Faithfully raises a number of key questions about politics and society of interest to audiences both within and beyond the study of Russia. In his 2019 New Year's message to citizens of Russia, President Vladimir Putin emphasized the importance of spiritual generosity and merciful care (*miloserdie*) for others in need. As politicians make policy choices that reduce welfare protections and even politicize access to humanitarian assistance, what are the longer-term moral and ethical stakes of compensating for those choices through civic action? What forms of sociality does a world united in the practice of neoliberalism require? And amid politicians' attempts to capitalize on public discontent with inequality by advocating a turn from state-based welfare to nation-based caritas, how might researchers navigate complex relationships between official ideology and individual practice?

Jessica Pisano, The New School for Social Research