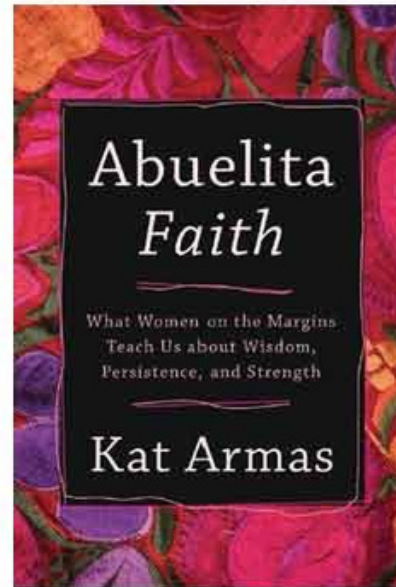


# Choosing to See

The power of  
sharing stories



BY **RENÉE JAMES**

‘OFTENTIMES the most overlooked and untold stories are those that teach us the greatest lessons and offer the truest examples of faith rooted in survival, strength and resistance.’ (p.122)

This quote comes from our book club title for May and June: *Abuelita Faith – What Women on the Margins Teach Us about Wisdom, Persistence and Strength*. Written by Cuban American Bible scholar Kat Armas, this book anchors readers in Bible stories, her own story and personal stories of her *abuelitas* – her aunts, mother, grandmothers – who embody what she calls abuelita theology.

I read *Abuelita Faith* at a time when I’d begun exploring what it means to lead as a woman of colour in fairly homogenized male-dominated spaces. I resonated with this book because Armas delves into the many stories of women like the Hebrew midwives, Esther, Tamar, Hannah, Rizpah and others, mining them to display what we’ve all probably missed (I know I have): these women, overlooked, often on the margins, forced to make difficult choices within the patriarchal culture of their day, or indeed muted because of that culture, still impacted thousands of lives. These women embodied justice and mercy. These women moved God to act.

While I found her use of Cuban-Spanish words distracting, you will love the stories she shares about her abuelitas; stories she places, along with the Bible stories, in the larger context of culture and society in which women of God are called to embody and proclaim the gospel.

Don’t read this book if you want an uncomplicated exegesis of women-of-the-Bible stories that keeps you removed from the reality - the real pain, suffering and hard choices to be made – within which these women survived. Do read it if you want a beautifully written, soundly reasoned and unflinching call to both see and hear those women on the margins in our churches, women’s groups, neighbourhoods and families who have much to teach us about God and how Micah 6:8 beats at the core of His heart for justice and mercy.

This is a great book to discuss with younger women leaders in your church – they will appreciate the urgency with which Armas invites readers to begin to share their collective cultural memory. **1**