

**Tapiwa Praise Mapuranga (ed.), *Powered by Faith: Pentecostal Businesswomen in Harare.***

Eugene: Resource Publications, 2018.

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<sup>1</sup>SHORT BIO

Prof Maria Frahm-Arp completed her PhD at Warwick University in the UK. She is the author of *Professional Women in Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in South Africa* (2010) and co-editor of *Development and Religion from Below: Exploring Religious Spaces in the African State* (2010). She has written several articles and book chapters on Pentecostal Charismatic Christians in South Africa. Her current research is focused on the ways in which religious women use their faith to make meaning of the work experience and politics and religion in South Africa. Prof Frahm-Arp is currently the Executive Director of the Libraries at the University of Johannesburg. She has taught at Wits University, the University of Johannesburg and St Augustine College of South Africa and is an Anglican (Episcopalian) minister.

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This interesting and timeous book examines the relationship between faith and economics amongst Pentecostal businesswomen in Harare. Four churches were studied in this book: Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries (PhD), Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), United Family International Church (UFIC), and Christ Embassy Church. These are four of the largest and most popular churches in Zimbabwe at the moment. The book shows that in the churches investigated by the contributing authors, faith played an important role in helping businesswomen to set up and run their businesses in a variety of ways.

The book can be divided into two sections. The first section contains a collection of chapters by Ezra Chitando, Fortune Sibanda, Nancy Mazuru, and Richard Maposa, giving a detailed overview of the history of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe and a history of the socio-economic and political reality of Zimbabwe leading up to and during the crisis of 2010 to 2017. The second half of the book contains a chapter on UFIC's "Victorious Ladies" by Molly Manyonganise, women at Christ Embassy Church by Fungai Chirongoma, businesswomen at PhD Ministries by Tabona Shoko, and the engagement of women in business at ZAOGA

by Richard Maposa and Tapiwa Mapuranga. These four chapters all draw on qualitative interviews done with businesswomen in these churches and explore the relationship between faith and business in the lived experiences of the women being interviewed.

All the chapters point to the multiple ways in which these churches help women as they try to negotiate the maze of financial and social challenges that face women trying to run a business in contemporary Zimbabwe. A key feature of the help that these churches offer is training in managerial skills. These include both soft skills like leadership, conflict resolution, and listening skills, as well as more technical skills like learning how to use current technology, keeping accurate records, and developing financial literacy. The churches also encourage women to use the space of the church as a platform for advertising. At UFIC, for example, women use the parking lot outside the church to advertise their businesses by distributing flyers and pamphlets. A third important way in which these churches help women is by offering them endless motivational material. Similar to the findings of Maria Frahm-Arp (2010)<sup>1</sup> in South Africa, the pastors at the Zimbabwean churches in their sermons, TV programmes, CDs, and books offer women a wealth of motivational material that helps to encourage them through the difficult process of starting and maintaining a business. Fourth, these churches help women by connecting them to social networks of support that assist them to develop self-confidence and learn from each other. While some women have enjoyed financial success, the book makes it clear that many women work hard to establish a business, tithe, and attend church regularly, but are not able to enjoy any of the promised prosperity that these churches preach.

One of the important contributions that this book makes is to show how women have been marginalised from the business world, echoing some of the findings of Linda van der Kamp (2016)<sup>2</sup> in her work on women in Maputo, Mozambique. At Christ Embassy, Chirongoma's chapter shows how many husbands were against their wives starting with a business, how they refused to give their wives capital to invest in a business, and how hard it is for women to get a loan from a financial organisation. As in

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Frahm-Arp, *Professional Women in Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in South Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Linda van der Kamp, *Violent Conversion: Brazilian Pentecostalism and Urban Women in Mozambique* (Woodbridge, James Currey, 2016).

the case of Mozambiquan Pentecostalism, Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches are helping women to gain access into this male dominated world. A significant way in which they do this is to preach that it is morally and socially good for families and the country as a whole when women are involved in business.

Through their preaching and the powerful examples of female pastors or pastors' wives who have succeeded in business, these churches are changing the way that the larger society perceive women in business and are taking away many of the negative stereotypes associated with women and trade in Zimbabwe. While opening up a new space in which it is acceptable for women to trade and run a business, the book also shows that these churches expect women to behave in a particular way, usually centred on the example of the head pastor's wife and her behaviour. At UFIC, "women in the church who desire to be successful are told to copy the way she [head pastor's wife] does her things."<sup>3</sup> The book would have been significantly strengthened if the authors had been able to unpack the implications of this in more detail. E.g. what does this mean for the constructions of gender that are shaped by these churches?; what are the power dynamics that have emerged with the rise of very wealthy pastors' wives who have been able to achieve their wealth through the businesses they run, which are directly marketed at their husbands' churches?

While this study covers a lot of ground, it is limited by the thin fieldwork that it is based on. In the chapter on UFIC women, only five women were interviewed. Very little information is given about the research process: how, when, and where the data was collected and how it was analysed. The different chapters give interesting reports of what the authors observed and heard from interviewees in their interviews. Sadly, this is not followed up with an in-depth engagement in a theoretical way with the findings, or does it try to offer a broader analysis of social, economic, political, or theological shifts that may be occurring in Zimbabwe or within contemporary Pentecostal Charismatic churches in Southern Africa? While the book does have these limitations, it offers a very interesting overview of women, Pentecostalism, and economics in Zimbabwe at the moment.

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<sup>3</sup> Tapiwa P. Mapuranga (ed.), *Powered by Faith: Pentecostal Businesswomen in Harare* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2018), 71.

It is a pity that the copy-editing of the book was not done well, resulting in many typos throughout the book, but this should not detract scholars of studying women, Pentecostalism, or Christianity from purchasing this book as it adds some valuable insights into our understanding of the role of religion in the context of State and economic crisis in Africa.