

SAFFI, in partnership with the US Consulate General Cape Town, had the pleasure of hosting **Ted Bunch**, co-founder of *A Call to Men* (New York, USA) in Feb 2010 at a gathering with religious leaders at St. Mark's District Six Church Undercroft.

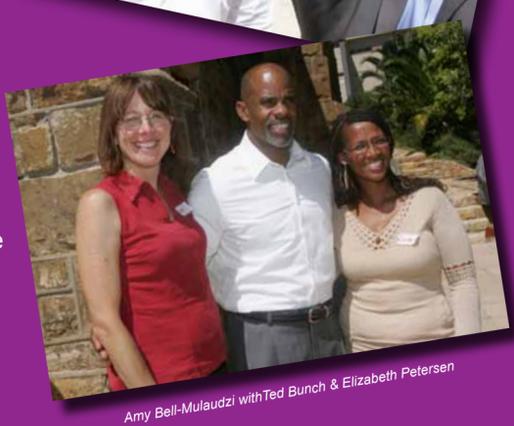


Ted Bunch spoke on:

“Men Calling Men to Account for the **Violence** Against Women”

Elizabeth Petersen, founder of SAFFI, sketched the context in which South African women live their lives. One in four women finds herself trapped in an abusive relation, every 26 seconds a woman is raped, Abused women are at greater risk of contracting HIV, a woman is killed by her intimate partner every six days according to respective studies. This is the challenge that was presented to the small gathering of mostly religious leaders keeping in mind that more 90% of the SA population affiliates to some faith tradition.

Ted presented some of the key fundamental beliefs needing to be challenged i.e. women seen as property, objects and for the sexual gratification of men. He suggested that the traditional manner, in which we even talk about the abuse of women, leaves men out of the picture. He categorically stated that the language we use to describe the problem must point to the fact that it is men's abuse of women.



Amy Bell-Mulaudzi with Ted Bunch & Elizabeth Petersen

Some participants' **REFLECTIONS** of the conversation with Ted:

You were also asking about a reflection on the talk by Ted Bunch. Thanks for that, because that forces me to clarify my inner processes while listening. Here is a try: Generally, I agree with the content and thrust of his message. Specifically, I liked the sensitization in terms of language; and also the thought of men's groups to include systems of accountability by working with women.

But I also had ambivalent feelings and was wondering about some aspects. Let me try to explain (I'm not so clear about it myself):

He was presenting from his context - USA - but this context may be different in some ways to the South African context with its complexities around history, culture(s), politics etc. If people are aware of this, then one can work with it. But a direct transfer I find difficult. I think a talk wasn't sufficient. It would have been good to have more workshop elements with opportunities to share some of the South African experience with him.

At some stage he said that he is not interested in reasons for say a man beating his wife. While I agree that it is important to stop the abuse first, I am uncomfortable with discounting reasons. It sounds to me too behavioural, and I have big problems with behavioural since I believe that an exclusive focus on behaviour can drive a person 'underground': one only learns to avoid the punishment, shaming, ostracising etc. without a real inner change. Violence may then re-surface in form of verbal / psychological violence, auto-aggression etc.

Altogether, I agree with Ted that it's ultimately about changing the 'man box' or image of the ideal man. For me modelling, finding and portraying 'new-style', 'alternative', 'partnership' men seems to me most important. But also providing those men who are stuck and confused spaces for self-reflexion. And there, I think that religious communities are ideally placed to assist in this regard.

You may sense that I am stumbling. It probably has to do with the enormity of the topic.

Christoph Baumann



On behalf of the Western Cape Network on Violence against Women, I would like to thank SAFFI very much for the opportunity to be part of the "A Call to Men" presentation by Ted Bunch. It was a great opportunity and the presentation was excellent and well organised.

This comes at a time when WCNVAW is trying to put lots of focus into working with men and the way Ted presented the topic gave us an open door to enter into this specialised focus. He is a great speaker, very articulate and very knowledgeable about the target group.

I wished there were more men though I was happy that the men that attended were more than women. The discussion afterwards was also valuable. It will be great to have a seminar or something like that on this focus and include this presentation as part. This gives us something to think about.

Lungiswa Mamela

It is always good to have our experiences broadened and also our perceptions challenged. Addressing a group of community leaders, including some from the faith sector, Ted Bunch was a speaker of note in making his call to men to end violence against women. He was able to convey his message not by, as he said, 'indicting but by inviting.' While calling on all men to take responsibility for the violence, yet it was conveyed in a manner which left you empowered to do so. There was unfortunately a constraint on time because it was obvious that the issues raised needed further exploration given that we all work from preconceived notions which Ted referred to as "the Manbox". The role of the faith community was stressed given that some men use their Scriptures to justify the abuse of women with reference to "submission". Ted called on Religious Leaders to challenge these concepts. Elizabeth Petersen and the new foundation, South African Faith and Family Institute are to be commended on this exciting initiative moving beyond our usual sixteen days of activism.

Dean Rowan Smith

SAFFI VISION:

To see individuals live their full potential in intimate relationships and families in a society that is free from gender based violence

SAFFI MISSION:

To advance a coordinated, multi-sectoral, culturally competent restorative justice response to violence against women and children by ;

- Being a resource to religious leaders, institutions and faith communities as they hold offenders accountable and ensure the safety and empowerment of victims / survivors by offering opportunity for truth telling and healing of individuals and families; and
- To challenge from a theological perspective patriarchal traditions and other root causes of intimate partner abuse and violence which destroys the dignity of women, children and men; and
- To encourage the promotion of scriptural and theological teachings that encourage intimate relationships that set people free to live their full potential in supportive unions.



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