

# South African Faith & Family Institute Launch Programme Report 2010



**Towards making Places of Worship, Sanctuaries  
of Hope and Healing for Domestic Violence Survivors**



## FROM THE ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF CAPE TOWN

The Most Reverend Dr Thabo Cecil Makgoba DD(hc) PhD(UCT)

BISHOPSCOURT CLAREMONT CAPE 7708  
SOUTH AFRICA

TELEPHONE: 086 1001171  
INTERNATIONAL: +27 21 763-1300  
FAX: +27 21 761-4193  
EMAIL: archpa@anglicanchurchsa.org.za

TCM/cjv

2 December 2010

SAFFI  
P O Box 13077  
Woodstock  
7915

Dear Elizabeth and benefactors of SAFFI –South African Faith and Family Institute.

There could not be a more apt time to launch SAFFI than now.

All South African citizens and citizens of the world join UN's call of activism to end gender based violence.

This particular call is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year and widely known. However, we need more voices and practical ways of encouraging faith communities to do likewise.

SAFFI is best placed to shape the community's voice.

Congratulations on your launch!

God bless

*Thabo Cape Town*

# Introduction:

South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI) seeks to establish Faith as an integral part of the Violence against Women discourse. Its main objective is to build the capacity of religious leaders and faith communities as they become a crucial partners in addressing issues of gender based violence in our communities and country.

The intervention focuses on unpacking theological teachings and interpretation of scripture as it relates to domestic violence (DV) through workshops, seminars, dialogues and conversation. SAFFI seeks to offer technical support to faith communities in developing denomination / faith specific prevention and intervention material e.g. policies and procedural guidelines for working with victims / survivors and perpetrators of DV.

Through its work, SAFFI encourages the faith sector to work closely with existing DV service providers and the justice system towards community based collaborative initiatives. The intention is that faith leaders are to join the quest as faith professionals who are committed to dispelling misinterpretation of scriptures and teachings with the focus on promoting sound / contextualized faith resources.

A second main area of SAFFI's work relates to prevention and breaking the cycle of gender based violence by offering gender education and reconciliation workshops for men and women. With this we hope to help institutionalize

a culture of harmony between women and men / girls and boys.

Thirdly, SAFFI places a strong emphasis on creating appropriate legislative frameworks that seek to introduce restorative justice programmes for perpetrators of intimate partner abuse.

In all our endeavours, SAFFI believes that if we truly want women to be safe and free from gender based violence, a stronger focus should be placed on addressing root causes including structural and legislative paradigms and frameworks. We must have central to all our strategies and programmes, how women (victims / survivors) interpret this safety and freedom.



# The launch

We chose to launch during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2010 with the intention of organizing a range of discussions where we invited victims, survivors, gender activists, religious leaders, government, civil society and academics. We worked in close partnership with USA State Department (Cape Town Consulate), WC Religious Leaders Forum, UWC Department of Theology and Religion, UNODC:VEP, WC Network on Violence against Women, KZNetwork on Violence against Women, Sonke Gender Justice, WE CAN and Bishop Lavis Religious Leaders Forum to launch SAFFI in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban.

The strategic focus of the launch programme was to raise and address Faith as a vital and complex issue in the lives of victims, survivors and perpetrators thus making it impossible for religious leaders and faith communities to be silent or marginalized from the quest to reduce, prevent and combat intimate partner abuse in the South Africa. We used round table discussions as a method for dialogue and had a Pledge for religious leaders to sign which indicated their willingness and commitment to collaborate with others to end gender violence.

The launch was guided by the voices of victims and survivors of intimate partner abuse as they make sense of their personal experiences in the light of their faith. Participants i.e. key stakeholders were invited to reflect critically on challenges,

opportunities and resources that faith communities bring to the discourse.

SAFFI was graced with the presence of Rev Dr Marie Fortune (Founder and Senior Analyst: FaithTrust Institute) at its launch. Rev Fortune and FaithTrust Institute started this work in the 1970's and partnered with SAFFI in the yearning to bring safety, hope and healing to individuals and families who continue to suffer in silence in their faith communities.



Rev Dr Marie Fortune & Elizabeth Petersen



# The Programme

## The objectives of the Launch Programme were:

- To raise the faith issues as experienced by Gender Based Violence (GBV) victims/survivors. These gatherings will hear about the challenges as experienced by Victims/Survivors; how perpetrators use Scriptures and Teachings to underpin their abusive behaviour.
- To share the work done with religious leaders and faith communities; and the extent to which the faith sector is a vital stakeholder in the quest to eradicate GBV.
- To share challenges experienced by religious leaders when addressing GBV.
- To discuss the challenges experienced by GBV Service Providers in working with clients who hold a strong sense of faith.
- To reflect on the resources within the faith sector and how it can be enrolled in GBV work.

Towards the end of each day's programme religious leaders were invited to sign a Declaration of Commitment to Collaborate to:

# End Violence against Women.



# 24 Nov 2010

## Domestic Violence Workshop for Religious Leaders

In partnership with the WC Religious Leaders Forum, we organized a Domestic Violence Workshop for Religious Leaders with the focus on Interventions with Victims / Survivors and Perpetrators at Saartjie Baartman Centre, Athlone. Sheikh Achmad Sedick, from the Muslim Judicial Council, joined the facilitation team. Over 40 participants from different faith traditions as well as key GBV advocates were in attendance. All present were keen on mobilizing the faith sector to address GBV as a matter of urgency.



Cape Town



29 Nov 2010

The US Consul General, Dr Alberta Mayberry  
and Elizabeth Petersen welcome  
**Rev Dr Marie Fortune** to  
Cape Town, South Africa at the Waterfront



## Introducing **Rev Dr Marie Fortune** to the Gender Justice environment in Cape Town, South Africa

Dialogue with NGO and religious leaders regarding  
gender violence

The day started with a visit to St Anne's Homes – the oldest shelter for abused and destitute women and children in South Africa who is also playing a leading role in the Shelter Movement in the Western Cape.

This was followed by a meeting with the Chairperson and Convener of the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum which provided an overview of the inter-religious and interfaith work in the province.



# 29 November 2010

## The Welcome Conversation at **Bishopscourt**

Hosted by the Cape Town US Consulate, this conversation provided an opportunity for Rev Fortune to meet with 15 leading GBV non-profit organizations, religious leaders and government. This discussion provided a very helpful overview of the contemporary situation of gender based violence in the Western Cape highlighting the severity of domestic violence and sexual assault. Participants discussed the impact of apartheid on gender violence and agreed that faith communities had a pivotal role to play in addressing gender violence alongside government and NGOs.

*"What all women (across the world) have in common is either the fear of violence or the memory of violence"* Marie Fortune

*"It is rare that you find a community (in South Africa) that does not have a church"*  
Lingiswa Memela - WC Network on violence against women

*"Like with many churches; many resolutions are made at Synods; but everybody goes back to business as usual"* Rev Patrick Godana - Sonke Gender Justice Network



Cape Town

# 30 November 2010 Islamic Relief **SOUTH AFRICA**

Islamic Relief South Africa hosted a community awareness program during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and invited Elizabeth Petersen to address Violence against Women as one of their keynote speakers.



Cape Town

# 30 November

## Conversation with **WE CAN a grassroots women's group**

The meeting with WE CAN (**Women Empowered Committed Against Negativity**) provided a wonderful insight into lay women's efforts to improve their lives outside of the church. Mostly Protestant and Catholic, these women are committed to social justice and offer support to each other. WE CAN welcomed SAFFI and offered to support wherever they can – their first involvement was on 2 Dec 2010 at the official launch.



Cape Town

1 Dec 2010

## Conversation and Dialogue with the Bishop Lavis Religious Leaders Forum

Theme: Engaging the challenges of domestic violence within the faith community.

Both clergy and laity were present. The women spoke up regarding their experiences of violence and their efforts to intervene with their neighbors. One woman, an undertaker, told of the burial of a mother and child who were killed by the husband. As is the custom, he was the passenger in the hearse. "I could not take his sobs any longer. I said 'stop this crying ... you are the one who killed them...now they are gone...who are you gonna beat and bully now.'" This religious forum clearly understands that it takes a village to end domestic violence and they are doing their bit in partnership with SAPS and the department of Justice. The forum welcomes the presence of SAFFI and made a strong plea for the work to continue beyond the 16 Days of Activism: "We need 365 days of activism!"



Cape Town



# 2 Dec 2010

## SAFFI Official Launch hosted by the Department of Religion and Theology, UWC

SAFFI Patron, Imam Dr Rashied Omar, and SAFFI Chairperson, Rev Barry Isaacs, were the programme directors for the day.

A diverse gathering of close to 100 people attended the event. Prof C Lombard, Head of UWC Theology and Religion Department welcomed participants and pledged their commitment to work with SAFFI.

Two women who survived intimate partner abuse shared their experiences which set the tone for the day. We selected 2 songs which spoke about women's hope in their faith and the need for society to consider our children.

Participants were invited to join one of five roundtable discussions where they were asked to explore how faith communities are addressing GBV, the challenges they experienced and opportunities for faith communities to play a stronger role in combating GBV.

### The Five Roundtable Discussions:

- **Voices of Victims and Survivors (Lungiswa Memela and Loretta Joseph)**  
Facilitated by Fatima Ismail (Social Worker)
- **Perpetrators & Faith Issues (Dr Marcel Londt)**
- **HIV/AIDs & GBV & Faith (Rev Desmond Lambrechts)**
- **LGBT & IPV & Faith (Rev Dr Marie Fortune)**
- **Sacred Text, Teachings & GBV (Fr John Oliver & Dr Miranda Pillay)**

A Panel discussion followed the roundtable discussions. We were blessed to have Lungiswa Memela, Dr Marcel Londt, Dr Miranda Pillay, Rev Desmond Lambrechts, Fr John Oliver and Rev Dr Marie Fortune on the panel.

After a robust discussion between panelists and participants, religious leaders were invited to sign a Pledge of Commitment to collaborate with existing GBV agencies to end GBV. We had public commitments from SA Council of Churches and the Commission on Gender Equality to support the work of SAFFI.



Cape Town

3 Dec 2010

## Western Cape Provincial Government Stakeholders Roundtable Conversation- Challenges and Opportunities for collaboration with Religious Leaders and Faith Sector to End GBV

In partnership with the UNODC: VEP, SAFFI and the US Consulate hosted a gathering of senior provincial government stakeholders to explore the role of faith and religious leaders in addressing gender-based violence. Provincial officials affirmed the importance of the role of faith communities in addressing gender based violence (as well as HIV-AIDS and substance abuse). The group expressed a strong desire to explore interventions in domestic violence that speak to both victim and perpetrator, use a restorative justice model and work with cultural values as well as religious values. The need to cultivate social norms which reflects the spirit of ubuntu in how people treat each other in private and in public is essential. Rev Fortune used the opportunity to share their (FTI) experiences with government and stressed the importance for government to work with organizations like SAFFI when mobilizing the faith sector on the GBV issue.



Cape Town



5 Dec 2010

**Guest Sermon by Rev Dr Marie Fortune at St.Marks District Six Anglican Church**

Rev Fortune preached a sermon on the Good Samaritan for battered women. The congregation seemed fully supportive of 16 days campaign and SAFFI.



Cape Town

Johannesburg US Consulate and Sonke Gender Justice Network were the partners that hosted the SAFFI events in Gauteng.

6 Dec 2010

## Commission: Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities' Rights: Roundtable Discussion

This was a more in-depth discussion of the challenges presented by cultural values in reinforcing violence against women. Again, there is an interest in exploring restorative justice models with care so as not to let perpetrators misuse the process. It was stressed that gender based violence is not a women's problem; it is just women who have to live with the consequences. It's a men's problem and it is sad that it seems to still be "fashionable." How do we change this norm in a post-colonial, post-apartheid society?



Johannesburg

# 6 Dec 2010

## Conversation with Bryanston Methodist Church Minister and their Counselors from Diepsloot

The senior pastor and some of his staff welcomed Rev Fortune and Elizabeth Petersen to their church office where they shared their work in the congregation and local community. We learnt of their various programs and working relationship with some NGO's. When they encounter domestic violence situations, the Counsellors refer to local NGO's.



Johannesburg

6 Dec 2010

## Public Speaking at St. Augustine Theological College

(Audience: Faculty members and general public)

Rev Dr Marie Fortune spoke on the theme:

“Is There a Balm in Gilead for Victims?”

Focusing on the role of the church in addressing the real life experiences of women in domestic violence, Rev Fortune offered a compelling lecture on the damage done by the church’s silence when victims / survivors yearn for relief from their suffering. The audience actively participated and some raised critical theological concerns relating to certain teachings of the Church that still keep women oppressed. One woman lay minister spoke with great distress of her struggle to speak out in a context where it is expected of women leaders to uphold patriarchal teachings and practices. Rev Fortune pointed the audience to scriptural resources which can be used to offer support and guidance. She urged that offenders be supported to seek out professional help and for the church to be careful of providing quick fixes to men who abuse their partners.

## Radio Interview with

Rev Dr Marie Fortune was interviewed by  
Jenny-Crwys-Williams of Radio 702



Johannesburg

7 Dec 2010

## Roundtable Discussion: Breaking the Silence surrounding the Faith Issues in Addressing Violence Against Women

Sonke Gender Justice Network hosted the roundtable at the SA Council for Churches office, Khotso House

After presentations were offered by Sonke, Bothers for Life and SAFFI, Rev Marie Fortune rendered the keynote. She spoke on the accountability of men who abuse women and focused on men's role in leadership and in the church. Participants shared their frustration with existing social norms which accepts violence against women. The gathering heard the example of the experiment where people had a wild, noisy party in a house and neighbors called the police to quiet them. The next week they played a tape of a woman screaming for help. No one called the police. One female clergy participant stressed the urgency for religious leaders to take up their responsibility to demystify misinterpreted scriptures and teachings. SAFFI was welcomed as an important resource to the faith sector.

Although poorly attended, the discussion was vibrant and those present seemed keen to take the work forward.



Johannesburg

# 8 Dec 2010

The KwaZulu Natal Network on Violence Against Women, together with the Durban US Consulate hosted the Durban Roundtable Discussion on SAFFI's behalf.

Theme: Breaking the Silence surrounding the Faith Issues in Addressing Violence Against Women

The Consul General, Jill Derderian, welcomed participants to the consulate's office with a particular appreciation for Rev Dr Marie Fortune's presence. After Elizabeth Petersen gave input on the purpose and work of SAFFI as it relates to intimate partner abuse, several other inputs were made by the Department of Justice and the KZNetwork on the work done in Durban.

A robust discussion followed in which about 40 participants from different religious traditions and GBV backgrounds engaged the topic. A consensus was reached on the vital role of faith leaders and the need for them to be trained appropriately to respond effectively to individuals and families who experience domestic violence



U.S. Consulate Durban hosts roundtable discussion on gender violence issues with Reverend Doctor Marie Fortune & Elizabeth Petersen



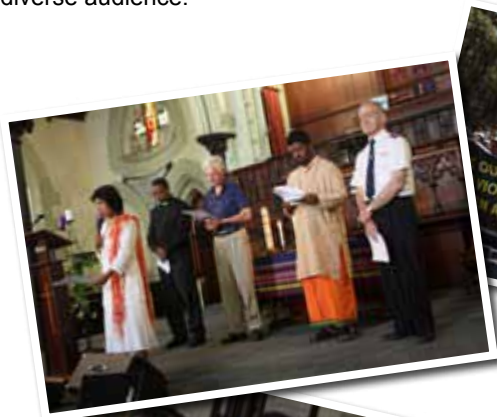
Durban

# 9 Dec 2010

## 16 Days of Activism March

SANGOCO, SAFFI, WCRLF and CTII

SAFFI (Elizabeth Petersen) was the Programme Director for the interfaith gathering after the march. This was an opportunity to again raise the faith issues while in the presence of national and provincial MEC's and government officials who attended. The SAFFI pledge for religious leaders was read at the event which was well received by a vibrant and diverse audience.



We also see SAFFI's patron, Imam Dr Rashied Omar together with other religious leaders lead the march to end gender-based violence

The National Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini and Provincial Minister of Social Development, Patricia de Lille are seen lighting candles in memory of the countless women who have been killed by their intimate partner



Cape Town

# 10 Dec 2010

## SAFFI launch Celebration Dinner

at Erin Hall, Rondebosch

A small gathering of about 30 people attended a dinner in celebration of the launch of SAFFI where Rev Fortune gave the keynote on lessons learnt from her journey in South Africa and the parallels with the USA. She urged guests to rekindle the spirit of ubuntu, "...a wonderful resource in the African tradition where people live in harmony loving and respecting each other." She encouraged those present to support the work of SAFFI and noted that the FaithTrust Institute is delighted to be of service to this important work in South Africa.



Cape Town

12 Dec 2010

## Way of Life Church, Khayelitsha

Rev Dr Marie Fortune preached at Way of Life Church in Khayelitsha



Rev Dr Marie Fortune and Pastor Xola Skosana

Added to the scourge of domestic violence, religious leaders and faith communities are faced with enormous challenges of poverty, unemployment, crime and substance abuse. Rev Dr Marie Fortune and Pastor Xola Skosana exchanged words of hope and inspiration after the service.



Cape Town

# 17 Dec 2010

## Rev Dr Marie meets members of the SAFFI Board

The Board thanked Rev Fortune and FaithTrust Institute for their generosity and willingness to partner with SAFFI. There was an exchange of shared insights shared to strengthen the emerging SAFFI. Rev Fortune shared important lessons learnt during the early years of the FaithTrust Institute's establishment. She reiterated that FTI is delighted to partner with SAFFI. Whilst FTI has a global reach, it is the first time that FTI forms an official partnership with another organization. Details of the partnership were discussed.



Cape Town



# A thank you note

**SAFFI WISHES TO THANK  
ALL THE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**  
FOR MAKING OUR LAUNCH PROGRAMME  
A GREAT SUCCESS

## Cape Town Partners



**Inclusive & Affirming Ministries**  
*By the Grace of God I am what I am*

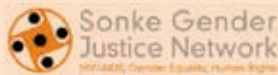


Women Empowered Committed Against Negativity  
WE CAN



**UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## Jonannesburg Partners



## Durban Partners



**the doj & cd**  
Department:  
Justice and Constitutional Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**Cape Town**

# Words of Acknowledgement to our Volunteers

The two women who coordinated and worked tirelessly behind the scenes on logistics of all the events are:



Jacky Hoorn



Rev. Gail Avery  
Episcopal Church  
New Hampshire USA

We also thank the WE CAN women and men for their hard work, welcoming presence and hospitality on the day of the official launch in Cape Town!!!



This picture was taken at a special Acknowledgement & Certificate Ceremony as an expression of SAFFI's appreciation.



Cape Town

# Contact Details:

NPO Reg. 074-935  
PBO Reg. #: 9300 34755

## Postal Address:

P.O. Box 13077  
WOODSTOCK, 7915  
Email: [info@saffi.org.za](mailto:info@saffi.org.za)  
[www.saffi.org.za](http://www.saffi.org.za)  
Tell: + 27 21 462 2277  
Fax: + 27 21 462 2276

## To make financial donations:

Bank Details:  
Account Name: South African Faith and Family Institute  
Bank: ABSA  
Cheque Account #: 407 631 5590  
Branch Code: 632005  
Swift Code: ABSAZAJJ

