



NEWS LETTER

ISSUE 1 • July 2015

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Welcome to the South African Faith and Family Institute's first newsletter! We plan to keep you - our friends, donors, partners and interested public – informed about our work as it unfolds.

It is common knowledge that South Africa is one of the most violent societies in the world. Less well known is that it is also one of the most religious, with more than 90% of the population ascribing to religion. Yet, a woman is raped every 26 seconds and 1 in 4 women live in abusive intimate relationships.

Since 1994, when violence against women was identified by the government as a national priority, South Africa has made enormous strides in terms of legislation reform, training and monitoring initiatives for key government institutions. Various international commitments – such as the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa – have been adopted. The Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998) includes same-sex relationships in its definition and provisions.

SAFFI has responded to the gap between the enormous influence held by religious leaders and the lack of adequate support for victims of domestic violence by faith communities; or of interventions that hold perpetrators accountable. Our ultimate goal is to end violence against women through religious leaders of all faith traditions.

To date, we have reached up to 1500 religious leaders through sacred conversations, conferences, training and capacity-building programmes. A landmark contribution to our work was a 2014 report by KPMG's Human and Social Services, **Too Costly to Ignore – the Economic Impact of Gender-based Violence in South Africa**: its' most conservative estimate being between R28.4 billion and R42.4 billion per year or between 0.9% and 1.3% of the GDP annually. To quote: "It is widely held in the economic costing literature that the whole of society pays for the costs of not addressing violence against women: it is not a private matter."

SAFFI's work has been acknowledged with an invitation to me to serve on the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group of its Multi



AN OVERVIEW

Country Office of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; as well as through our participation in the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southern Africa's Beijing Plus 20 in South Africa (<http://za.boell.org/2015/06/13/beijing-plus-20-south-africa-reflections-status-women-south-africa-20-years-1995-beijing>).

In June, SAFFI won the Best Practice Award in the Faith-based organisation category at Gender Links South Africa's SADC Gender Protocol Summit and Awards.

We value your support as we respond to the ever-growing demand for our work by religious leaders. Our common quest is to cultivate Ubuntu in homes and intimate relationships.

May you and your family be blessed.

Elizabeth Petersen

Founder and Executive Director

OUR PATRONS



Archbishop Dr Thabo C Makgoba



Rev Canon Mpho A Tutu



THEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Emeritus Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane
(Patron)



Rabbi Greg Alexander
(Progressive Jewish Community)



Dr Miranda Pillay
(Circle of Concerned African
Women Theologians)



Guru Krishna
(Hindu Community)



WE COMMIT TO:

- Offer theological guidance and advice on easily misinterpreted Religious Texts and Teachings pertaining to gender-based violence

Prof C Lombard
(UWC Department of
Religion and Theology)



Njoli Dr Nokuzola Ndende
(Icamagu Institute -
African Traditional Religion)



- Be available to SAFFI and Gender-based Violence (GBV) service providers when faith-based guidance is sought to better assist victims, survivors, perpetrators and children in relation to GBV

Moulana Aftab Syed Haider
(Shi'ite Muslim Community)



Rev Alan Story
(Methodist Church of SA)



- Meet from time to time as a collective in sacred conversation and dialogue to address pertinent themes which emerge during preaching and support services to individuals and families who are afflicted by GBV

Ms Tahirih Matthee
(Baha'i Community)



Ms Nalini Gangen
(Hindu Community)



- Provide sound faith-based input to the development of resource material, denomination specific statements, policies and procedures in the quest to advance theologically sound prevention, intervention and after-care programmes, campaigns, etc.

Njoli Bongile Mose
(Icamagu Institute -
African Traditional Religion)



Dr Azila (Tzili) Talit Reisenberger
(Head of Hebrew UCT)



Rabbi Kalman Green
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Dr Genevieve James
(University of South Africa
Pentecostal Church)



Rev Nomvuyo Mhlongo
(Methodist Church of SA)



SOME SAFFI HIGHLIGHTS

Our national launch in 2010. As an extension of Elizabeth's participation in the Fulbright Hubert H Humphrey fellowship in 2008-9, the USA State Department sponsored a visit by Rev Dr Marie Fortune (Founder and Senior Analyst of FaithTrust Institute, Seattle, USA) to be our guest speaker. Rev Fortune pioneered the work of engaging religious leaders in the quest to end gender-based violence in the 1970's in the USA. SAFFI has secured a fulfilling partnership with the FaithTrust Institute.



Rev Dr Marie Fortune



Ma Leah & Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille at Ubuntu in the Home Project Launch



The Ubuntu in the Home Project was officially launched in July 2012, with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. The project was a response to the growing violence committed against women and children in South Africa; and was made possible through Swedish donor, United Postkod Lotteries.

SAFFI has been instrumental in building a national violence against women network. Together with the Western Cape Network on Violence against Women and same-sex rights organizations, we have held several dialogues with stakeholders from the faith, GBV and LGTBI sectors.

We recently met with Minister of Women, Susan Shabangu to discuss our shared concerns and ways of strengthening the relationship between government and civil society organizations committed to end violence against women .

"I Am Woman: Leap of Faith" is a 24-minute documentary about Elizabeth's personal journey which led to the founding of SAFFI. It was part of a series featuring women who have made a leap of faith that has ultimately had a positive impact on South African society.

The **Take a Stand** campaign is a series of nine 30-second video and radio messages produced by SAFFI that features faith leaders calling upon their counterparts and the country to 'Take a Stand' against intimate partner abuse and gender-based violence. The World Council of Churches and CABSA showed the documentaries at the 'We Will Speak Out' campaign at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict: London 2014.



Dola Nicholas Oluoch, ChemchemiYaUkweli, Nairobi Kenya

“Thank you so much for the session we had with you together with the other religious leaders from different parts of Africa. As the Kenyan crew we thought the model you use at SAFFI...would perfectly add value to the work we do here and even take it to the next level. We were all very happy to know that you work with religious leaders and hold them in high esteem and respect them... we really connected with that.”



Pan-African Muslim and Christian clergy visiting with Archbishop Tutu after a SAFFI training

Religious Leaders on **SAFFI** Training

Pastor Mnedisi Mpande

“SAFFI training changed my perception of what domestic violence is. I was not understanding violence if it was not physical violence. Now I understand the emotional, financial, psychological types of abuse...I now see the root causes of violence.”

*Christian Catholic Apostolic Church
(Khayelitsha)*

Pastor Elizabeth Isaacs

“It made me realize that I can’t be silent anymore; I must address the issue. To be silent is to harm. As a Minister, you are called to rectify things in this area. Even after counselling, you get to the point where you tell a person that they need to take a further step. Having contact with SAFFI is also helpful as a resource to get help in what to do next.”

*Apostolic Kingdom Tabernacle Church
(Atlantis)*

Reverend Selwyn Engelbrecht

“I would like to commend SAFFI for creating a new awareness of the reality of domestic violence and its consequences. This experience had challenged my own perceptions ...and in a positive way enabled me to pastorally approach any domestic violence situation sensitively. Awareness of the reality of scriptural interpretation and misinformed realities of domestic violence can lead to apathy and perpetuation of violence.”

St Andrew’s Anglican Church (Northpine)

Pastor Patric Pickering

“SAFFI helped me to understand new things. In the Pentecostal church, prayer is the answer. I now understand that I have to sit with people, engage them. Many people carry baggage. Not only the Lord will help, but I can help also.”

*Redeem Pentecostal Assemblies
(Atlantis)*

Pastor Zenzile Nkinqa

“We did not talk much in my congregation about domestic violence. But after the training I began to have conversations during the church hours about domestic violence. SAFFI has opened my mind.”

Church of the Holy City (Khayelitsha)

Faith central to fighting gender violence

South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI) recognises that faith is

SAFFI believes that the recent escalating crimes against lesbians and gays are essentially violence against women, said executive director Elizabeth Petersen.

SAFFI in partnership with Luleki Sizwe, Free Gender and Inclusive & Affirming Ministries led a group of religious leaders in a Walk of Witness to visit families who have experienced "corrective" and crimes against lesbians in Gugulethu.

This was followed by a Community Meeting where survivors, their families, LGBTI NGO leaders and LGBTI activists told religious leaders their pain of being ostracised and marginalised because of their sexual orientation.

deeply and respond with insight and compassion," said Ms Petersen of SAFFI.

Fr John Oliver, an Anglican priest and chair of the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum (WCRLF) said: "The WCRLF recognizes that the faith community is not of one mind when it comes to the issue of same sex relations.

"We know of the sensitivities and the varying perspectives, both cul-

tural and religious. We acknowledge also that we have often failed to be true to the call for responsible interpretation of sacred texts on this issue.

"For this we apologize particularly to those who have been hurt and whose dignity has been denied by the harsh interpretation of scripture....

"We are here also to speak to the

young men of our communities. We want to state clearly: Sexual intercourse whether forced, consensual or repetitive does not change a person's sexual orienta-

tion. "We need to speak more openly about this in our schools and in our churches and of course in the home".



■ Ndumie Funda, Elizabeth Petersen, Fr John Oliver, Imam Rashied Omar and Reverend Suzanne Peterson representing Archbishop Makgoba.

Imam Dr Rashied Omar from the Claremont Mosque said: "We strongly condemn the growing phenomenon of so-called 'corrective rape' and the brutal killings of people to punish them because of their sexual orientation.

"The idea of raping a woman in order to 'cure' her is an abomination to say the least. For people of faith – whatever our tradition – these horrific events must serve as a tragic reminder of our need to continue to witness against violence directed at women and of our parallel commitment to assist in the building of a non-sexist South Africa."

● You can reach Elizabeth Petersen of the South African Faith and Family Institute on her email at elizabeth@saffi.org.za or visit: www.saffi.org.za or call 021 462 2277.



Pilgrimages, Walks of Witness and Sacred Conversations



LGBTI and women of faith on pilgrimage on Robben Island

Robben Island Pilgrimages in partnership with the St George's Cathedral Justice and Reconciliation Group and the Restitution Foundation. SAFFI is intentional about using these sacred journeys to address the scars apartheid has left on us, as well as the gender-based violence experiences of women of all races and classes.

Through Sacred Conversations, SAFFI hosted women from diverse backgrounds to share experiences and challenges. Participants included women leaders, women living on farms, in townships, in shelters and women in government.

Men's Pilgrimage in celebration of International Men's Day, in partnership with the St George's Cathedral Justice & Reconciliation Group and Robben Island Museum as part of *16 Days of Activism Campaign to End Violence against Women*.

Walks of Witness were arranged for religious leaders to visit with families of lesbians who were raped and or killed because of their sexual orientation. About 60 religious leaders and LGBTI activists and NGO's participated.



In conversation with Jewish women about the Holocaust

WE THANK OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

For Financial Support:

Breakwater Lodge
Community Chest Western Cape
Department of Social Development
Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation
FaithTrust Institute
Foundation for Human Rights
Groote Schuur Rotary Club
Joint Gender Fund
Ms Venessa Padayachee
National Lotteries Distribution Board
Rev Dr Marie Fortune
Sanlam
South African Breweries
St Anne's Homes

For Partnerships and Collaborations:

Artscape
Cape Town Interfaith Initiative
Circle of Concerned African Woman Theologians
City of Cape Town: Mayoral Office
Department of Religion & Theology: University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Theology: University of Stellenbosch
FAMSA: Klein Karoo
Western Cape Network on Violence against Women
Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum



WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

Request Training or Invite us to speak at your faith community

BANK DETAILS

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