

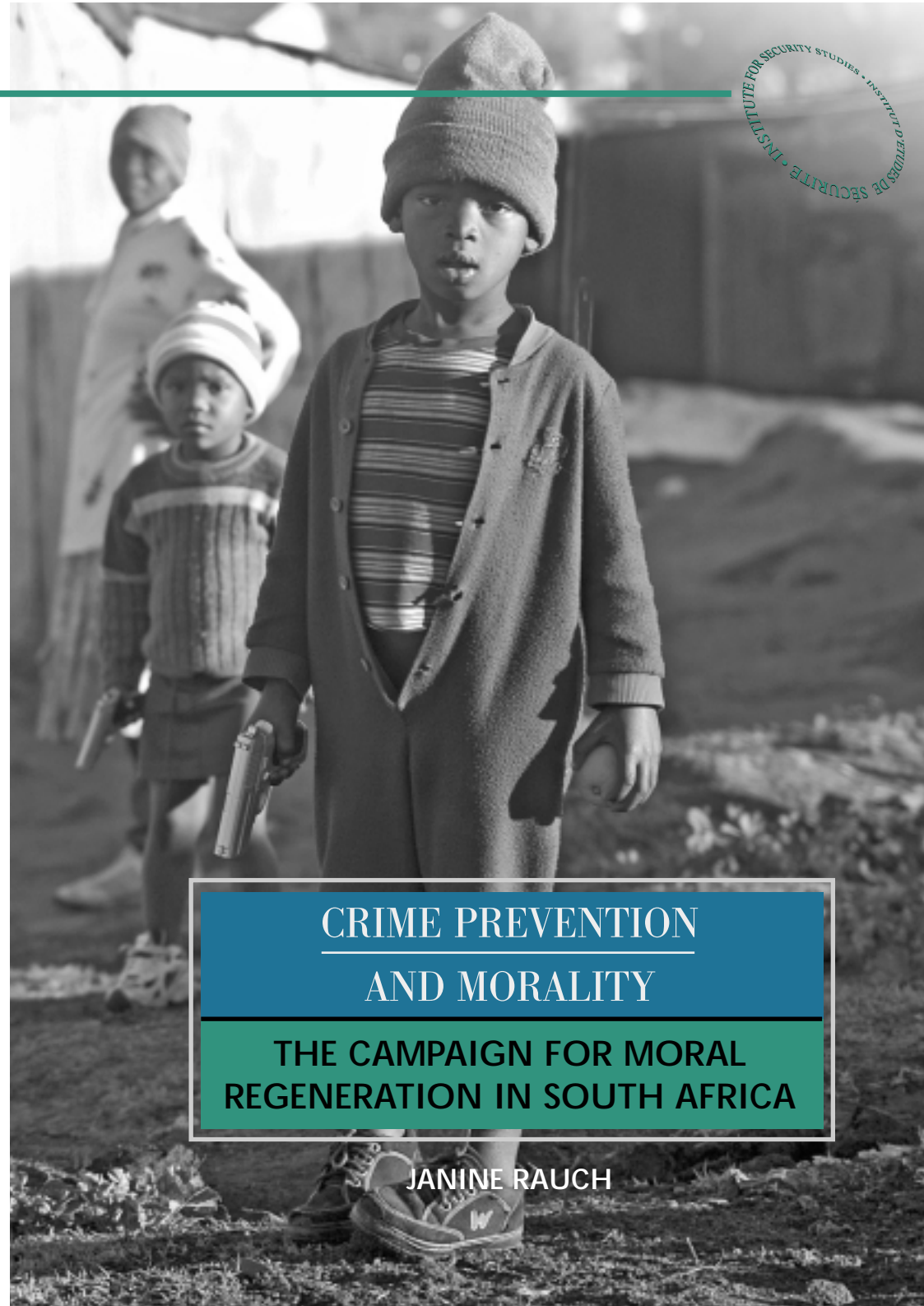
Politicians, religious leaders and social commentators have all spoken about a breakdown in morality in South Africa, with crime as the most commonly cited evidence. The moral regeneration initiative is one response to this crisis, emerging in parallel to countless other initiatives aimed at reducing crime, some of which have themselves contained explicit appeals to morals, values or ethics. This monograph traces the origins and development of the moral regeneration initiative in South Africa, and illustrates that the initiative has suffered from a lack of clarity about both its mission and its strategy. The movement's attempts to build meaningful civil society participation in the campaign have also been a key challenge. The monograph also considers whether a largely ideological campaign of this type will deliver any meaningful results in terms of strengthening social fabric and reducing crime.



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CRIME PREVENTION AND MORALITY

THE CAMPAIGN FOR MORAL REGENERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

JANINE RAUCH

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BAC	Business Against Crime
BASA	Business Arts South Africa
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
MRM	Moral Regeneration Movement
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCPS	National Crime Prevention Strategy
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRLF	National Religious Leaders Forum
QUANGO	'quasi-NGO'
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAPS	South African Police Service
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNISA	University of South Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Politicians, religious leaders, and social commentators have all spoken about a breakdown in morality in South Africa, with crime as the most commonly cited evidence. The moral regeneration initiative is one response to this crisis, emerging in parallel to countless other initiatives aimed at reducing crime, some of which have themselves contained explicit appeals to morals, values or ethics. In its strategy to tackle crime, the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) consisted of four ‘pillars’ – each one ‘a particular arena of attack against the factors which create or facilitate criminal activity’. One of these ‘pillars’ focused on public values and education, with the intention of tackling “the prevailing moral climate within communities, the attitudes towards crime, and the tolerance towards crime”.

The origins of the moral regeneration initiative date back to a meeting between then-President Nelson Mandela and key South African religious leaders in June 1997. At that meeting, Mandela described the ‘spiritual malaise’ underpinning the crime problem as “a lack of good spirit, as pessimism, or lack of hope and faith. And from it emerge the problems of greed and cruelty, of laziness and egotism, of personal and family failure. It both helps fuel the problems of crime and corruption and hinders our efforts to deal with them”. Mandela then called on the religious leaders to get actively involved in a campaign, subsequently to become the moral regeneration initiative.

One of the key sources of the moral regeneration initiative within the ANC was its Commission for Religious Affairs; the other was the concept of the African Renaissance, which was strongly promoted by, and associated with, Mandela’s successor, Thabo Mbeki. Subsequent to the 1999 election, with Mbeki as president and Jacob Zuma as deputy president, the moral regeneration initiative began to enjoy more formal attention from the Presidency. Zuma was allocated responsibility for this initiative, with his role being that of political patron and ‘front man’.

After a two-year lull in the moral regeneration initiative, the Mbeki government attempted to add impetus by convening two workshops with a broad range of

political and religious leaders in 2000. The workshop reports contain no references to the NCPS or other initiatives then underway, which may have been relevant to moral regeneration; and the approach taken was that moral regeneration should be a political ‘campaign’. This approach was similar to many other initiatives of its time, taking the methodology of the anti-apartheid organisations into a government-led initiative, with an emphasis on structures and process rather than on the content of the messages. What was envisaged was a mass mobilisation, harking back to the glory days of the liberation struggle, to a time when a large majority of people and organisations could be united against a common enemy – in this case, moral malaise and criminality.

In late 2001, a moral panic in the media about levels of child rape and sexual violence in South Africa revived interest in issues of moral regeneration, and it was decided to launch a Moral Regeneration ‘*Movement*’ in early 2002. This was done through the establishment of a Section 21 (not-for-profit) company—an NGO—which was funded by government.

The high-profile launch of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) took place in April 2002, with over a thousand people from government, parliament, provincial legislatures, political parties, religious organisations, traditional structures, and NGOs present. The speakers at the launch did not provide any guidance on exactly *how* ‘the people’ could get actively involved in moral regeneration, and this lack of clarity continued to be a key problem with the campaign. Approximately a year was spent on setting up the organisation and generating a vision of its role. The newly-formed MRM attempted to make clear its core messages, focusing on the South African Constitution as the source of moral values – a shift away from earlier discourses of spirituality or religion, with far less reference to crime.

An issue which began to dog the moral regeneration initiative was the increasing public discussion (both in media and in parliament) concerning allegations of corruption levelled at Deputy President Zuma, associated with the prosecution of Shabir Shaik, his financial advisor. The corruption allegations were often raised as a contrast or challenge to Zuma’s patronage of the moral regeneration campaign. As the trial of Shaik is currently underway, it remains to be seen whether any allegations will be sustained, and whether perceptions of corruption will adhere to Deputy President Zuma or, by association, to the MRM.

By mid-2004 the MRM was engaged in a re-visioning exercise for the campaign, acknowledging that not enough had been achieved in its first years. A great deal of energy had gone into grassroots mobilisation and facilitation work—many awareness-raising workshops were held all over the country—but the grassroots advocacy work was hard to quantify and its impact hard to demonstrate. Little had been achieved in the critical arena of public communication. Problems related to leadership and co-ordination resulted in the governing structures of the MRM being revisited, and an ‘expert-based board’ was created in place of the previous structures which had attempted to represent a range of interested ‘sectors’. A large annual conference was planned for the participants and affiliates of the MRM.

The new board of the MRM, in its presentation at the 2004 First Annual Conference, recommended that the MRM office become more focused on *advocacy* work, and identified five focus areas for the organisation’s future activities:

- Building the MRM;
- Leading public discourse on moral regeneration issues;
- Developing a national consensus on positive values that should be embraced;
- Promoting ethical behaviour congruent with these positive values; and
- Disseminating information on moral issues.

This appears to be a new approach to the vexed question of civil society participation in the moral regeneration campaign. It is underpinned by an implicit acknowledgement that there is a need to *advocate* around the moral regeneration issues, rather than assuming (as had been the case in earlier incarnations of the campaign) that there was organic public support for these issues.

A key challenge is that of sustainability – whether this campaign can be sustained as a ‘civil society initiative’ in the absence of a popular, organic support base, and, related, financial sustainability. The government grant to fund the establishment of the MRM was for an initial period of three years, to the end of March 2005; and it is not, at this stage, clear whether further funds will be forthcoming. If there were a significant ‘movement’ or ‘campaign’ evident, perhaps government funding would be easier to obtain.

The nature of the MRM’s activities will also be a key determinant of its future sustainability. Simply acting as co-ordinator of efforts taking place elsewhere has been seen to be unsuccessful, not least because an external co-ordinating

agency cannot *instruct* other organisations to act. The movement also faces the problem of defining and identifying activities as morally regenerative - it will be extremely difficult to empirically demonstrate that its activities actually enhance morality.

The government sector within the moral regeneration initiative appears to be regaining some momentum, and it will be interesting to see how this is sustained in parallel to the MRM itself becoming a more focused advocacy and communication organisation. Already the relationship between the MRM office and the national government departments has been a little difficult; this relationship will surely be one of the most interesting dynamics of the campaign in the next period.

Although no longer very religious in phrasing, the moral regeneration initiative is still associated with a religious initiative; and perhaps for that reason still viewed with some discomfort by those who are uncomfortable with the language and practice of organised religion. Conversely, however, the moral regeneration initiative may also have been borne out of a recognition that there is indeed an area of individual and social life beyond the material, which impacts on quality of life and the achievement of the government’s election promise to deliver ‘a better life for all’.

The moral regeneration campaign failed to ally itself with the 1996 NCPS (although this may have been wise, given that the NCPS subsequently fell into disfavour), but has engaged occasionally with other government anti-crime campaigns, notably against gender violence and child abuse. However, the MRM has also failed to engage significantly with the range of other NGOs doing crime prevention work that could be relevant to its efforts, resulting in significant lost opportunities.

The development of the moral regeneration initiative in South Africa has seen the concept defined in terms of both crime prevention and nation-building. In some incarnations, moral regeneration has had a distinctly spiritual and religious tone; in others, a strong flavour of African nationalist ideology. Remarkably, and probably only because of the tolerance for diversity that is South African, it has survived its own confusion and embraced a range of differing interest groups – conservative religious groups, some elements of the business community, political parties, government and intellectuals. What remains to be seen is whether a largely ideological campaign of this type will deliver any meaningful results in terms of strengthening social fabric and reducing crime.

INTRODUCTION

This monograph aims to chart the development of the moral regeneration campaign, and assess its relevance to the national crime prevention effort in South Africa. The campaign was initiated by former President Mandela in 1997, in an engagement with religious leaders from various faiths in South Africa. It has since taken on a variety of forms, and its messages have taken on political, religious and secular, ethical, and nation-building aspects. The campaign for moral regeneration, albeit difficult and diffuse, has been an interesting and unique effort in the context of crime prevention and the rebuilding of social fabric in post-apartheid South Africa.

While this monograph focuses on the moral regeneration campaign supported by the South African government, it is worth noting that there is a range of initiatives generated by NGOs that could also be described as contributing to moral regeneration. These include early childhood development and parenting-support interventions; restorative justice initiatives; various youth development programmes, especially those aimed at assisting teens with the rites of passage into adulthood; or projects which aim to divert and support young people who are at risk of involvement in crime. Elsewhere in the government sphere, efforts by the Revenue Service and by municipalities to encourage payment of taxes and service charges could also be described as contributing to the development of a new morality, but these will not be examined here.

This monograph will also focus on the crime preventive aspects of the moral regeneration initiative, noting that, although the campaign has been strongly focused on the reduction of criminality, this is not its only content. We are therefore not engaging with the full breadth of the campaign as it is currently evolving. It should be noted that the campaign is dynamic and changes direction and emphasis from time to time. This monograph should therefore only be taken as a reflection of developments up to the end of 2004.

CHAPTER 1 THE LINKS BETWEEN CRIME AND MORAL BREAKDOWN

There appears to be some consensus that there **is** a moral crisis in South Africa. Politicians, religious leaders and social commentators have all spoken about the breakdown in morality. The most commonly cited evidence of the crisis is crime – specifically crimes involving violence or those which involve citizens avoiding their basic duties and obligations to the state or to each other. The moral regeneration initiative was one response to this crisis, emerging in parallel to countless initiatives aimed at reducing crime, some of which have themselves contained explicit appeals to morals, values or ethics. The moral regeneration effort has, though, remained separate from the various crime prevention policies and programmes.

The link between crime and moral breakdown is a very old one in social theory, pre-dating modern western sociology, but most famously espoused by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim at the turn of the 19th century, and then by 1930's American sociologist Merton, in their theories of *anomie* or 'normlessness'. Durkheim described social systems of moral regulation as being in a critical or chronic state, near collapse, with severe consequences for individuals:

People are not endowed at birth with fixed appetites and ambitions. On the contrary, their purposes and aspirations are shaped by the generalized opinions and reactions of others, by a collective conscience, that can appear through social ritual and routine to be externally derived, solid and objective. When society is disturbed by rapid change or major disorder, however, that semblance of solidity and objectivity can itself founder, and people may no longer find their ambitions subject to effective social discipline. It is hard to live outside the reassuring structures of social life, and the condition of anomie is experienced as a 'malady of infinite aspiration', accompanied by weariness, disillusionment, disturbance, agitation and discontent.¹

The concept of *anomie* as a crisis resulting from social change, echoes with the explanations of crime put forward in South Africa's national crime prevention strategy (see chapter 2). However, sociologists are generally ill-

disposed to Durkheim's term *anomie*, arguing that even at their most devastated, for instance in conflict-torn and transitional societies like Sierra Leone, Bosnia or Rwanda, people are able to sustain a measure of social organisation,² and do not necessarily descend into a state of 'normlessness'.

More recent criminological theory suggests that the problems of moral breakdown are not specific to conflict-ridden or post-conflict societies, but instead are a key feature of late modernity:

The last third of the twentieth century witnessed a remarkable transformation in the lives of citizens living in advanced industrialised societies. ... a world of structural unemployment, economic precariousness, a systematic cutting of welfare provisions, and the growing instability of family life and interpersonal relations. And where there once was a consensus of values, there was now burgeoning pluralism and individualism. "... Market forces generate a more unequal and less meritocratic society, market values encourage an ethos of 'every person for themselves'; together these create a combination which is severely criminogenic. Such a process is combined with a decline in the forces of informal social control, as communities are disintegrated by social mobility and left to decay as capital finds more profitable areas to invest and develop. At the same time, families are stressed and fragmented by the decline in communities' systems of support, the reduction of state support, and the more diverse pressures of work. These the pressures which lead to crime increase... Civil society becomes more segmented and differentiated: people become more wary and appraising of each other because of ontological insecurity (living in a plural world where individual biographies are less certain) and material security (a world of risk and uncertainty).³

Although Jock Young's description refers to life in advanced industrialised societies, much of it would be equally applicable to urban South African life. It sketches some of the structural context within which themes of morality and crime prevention have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa.

The role of moral degeneration as a risk factor for criminality has also been emphasised in the 'restorative justice' movement in recent years. Australian criminologist, John Braithwaite, one of the leaders in rethinking crime and punishment, touches on morality when he talks about situations "where conscience is not fully developed, approval of others is the primary motivator [for committing crime], not punishment or fear of punishment".⁴

CHAPTER 2 POLICY CONTEXT

The South African government's 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) linked the then-burgeoning crime problem most strongly with the process of political transition that the country underwent in the early 1990s. In its analysis of the crime problem, the NCPS pointed out that the transition from authoritarian to democratic government had had significant implications for social cohesion and values:

The period of negotiated transition [is one]... in which there appears to be a vacuum of legitimate social authority. When added to the extensive destruction of the family, the school and even the workplace as vehicles of social cohesion during the preceding era, the cumulative experience of many South Africans has been of a society without any cohesive fabric or legitimate sources of authority.⁵

The process of consensus-building during the negotiation phase – and even subsequent to the April 1994 election – was considerably less efficient and rather slow... in the building of legitimate, consensus-based vehicles of social authority, social norms and socialisation processes.⁶

The NCPS recognised some of the complexity of the problem of norms and values:

The transition to democracy has understandably served to emphasise new freedoms in South African society,in the absence of adequately engaging with residual cultures of violence and intolerance, and frequently failing to anticipate the expectations or sense of entitlement associated with these new-found freedoms. ...The necessary culture-change is a slow and gradual process and demands a targeted focus on the development of the norms and values needed to underpin any orderly democratic society.⁷

In its strategy to tackle crime, the NCPS consisted of four 'pillars' – each one a particular arena of attack against the factors which create or facilitate

criminal activity'. One of these 'pillars' focused on 'Public Values and Education', with the intention of tackling 'the prevailing moral climate within communities, the attitudes towards crime, and the tolerance towards crime'.⁸

The aims of the NCPS in respect of public values and education were to:

- provide citizens with a working understanding of the criminal justice system, to enable them to participate fully in the workings of the system;
- provide information which underpins the development of strong community values and social pressure against criminality or 'grey' activities which support criminality (such as the buying of stolen goods);
- promote the use of non-violent means of conflict resolution, hence reducing victimisation;
- promote awareness of gender issues and the empowerment of groups most prone to victimisation; and
- promote awareness of the steps that individuals can take to reduce the risk of victimisation and hence enhance the level of civic action directed at crime prevention.⁹

In the practical programmes it proposed for implementation in the sphere of public values and education, the NCPS proposed a comprehensive Public Education Programme, to focus, *inter alia*, on the 'creation of strong community values and low tolerance for criminal behaviour'.¹⁰ It was suggested that the Department of Safety and Security should lead this programme. In practice, this broad national programme never materialised, although many of its key messages (crime awareness, community mobilisation into local crime reduction initiatives, etc.) were contained in subsequent publicity campaigns by the various national criminal justice departments and by provincial governments.

The second programme suggested in the NCPS was a School Education Programme, which would enable some kind of education in 'values' to be delivered through the national curriculum:

The most important social process which determines whether individuals will be law-abiding is a stable family environment and childhood socialisation around values and norms. While it is rather difficult for the state to impact meaningfully on family dynamics and parenting, the formal schooling process provides an opportunity for the creation of responsible and empowered citizenship at an early age.¹¹

The NCPS proposed the development of new curricula to provide scholars with awareness, knowledge and skills that would enable them to 'play responsible roles as citizens in the prevention of crime'.¹² It mandated the National Department of Education to lead this programme. Again, the programme was never implemented in the form envisaged in the NCPS; but the Department of Education, with its provincial counterparts, has been involved in numerous efforts aimed at similar goals, most notably the 'Values in Education' initiative, which could cumulatively be seen to have matched the original intentions of the NCPS.

The failure to implement the public values and education programmes as envisaged in the NCPS may have been a result of the absence of dedicated funds for NCPS activities at the time of its launch, and the difficulty of re-prioritising departmental funds within the government's medium-term expenditure framework; as well as difficulties of co-ordinating the kind of inter-departmental effort envisaged in the NCPS.¹³ However, with the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to conclude that, in part, the intentions of the original NCPS *have* been acted upon by various government departments. There have been a variety of public education and social marketing initiatives related to crime prevention and criminal justice. These have ranged from 'Know your Rights' campaigns led by the South African Human Rights Commission, to the production of media advertisements which discourage citizens from purchasing pirated software and video products. Extensive public education work has been done by government and NGOs on issues related to sexual violence, often related to the broader campaign around HIV/AIDS. Government has spent significant resources on publicising new sexual offences legislation and the specialised courts that have been established to deal with these offences; and politicians and officials are vocal in condemning gender-based violence, especially against girls.

One problem with all these initiatives has been a lack of co-ordination, particularly in respect of messaging. Different government departments and different spheres of government (from local municipal councillors to national ministers) often communicate different—and even competing—messages about crime, prevention and criminal justice. This situation may have been different if the NCPS had been more vigorously implemented at the time of its inception.

The other problem with these various initiatives (all of which *may* have impacted on public values, ethics and morality) is that their impact is

extremely difficult to measure. Some of the government-funded public education campaigns related to HIV/AIDS have been evaluated, but the impact of campaigns related to crime prevention and the strengthening of resilience and ethics has not been assessed. It is therefore impossible to judge whether these educational campaigns and social marketing ventures do, in fact, impact on community values and on delinquent or criminal behaviour in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3 ORIGINS OF THE MORAL REGENERATION INITIATIVE: 1997-1999

Mandela and religious leaders

The origins of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) can be traced back to a meeting between then-President Nelson Mandela and key South African religious leaders in June 1997. The meeting took place at the suggestion of various ANC officials, and was arranged by the ANC's Commission on Religious Affairs, a party structure which had been set up in exile and which continues to operate. At that meeting Mandela spoke about the role of religion in nation-building and social transformation, and the need for religious institutions to work with the state. He also described the 'spiritual malaise' underpinning the crime problem:

Our hopes and dreams, at times, seem to be overcome by cynicism, self-centredness and fear. This spiritual malaise sows itself as a lack of good spirit, as pessimism, or lack of hope and faith. And from it emerge the problems of greed and cruelty, of laziness and egotism, of personal and family failure. It both helps fuel the problems of crime and corruption and hinders our efforts to deal with them.¹⁴

Mandela then called on the religious leaders to get actively involved in a campaign that was subsequently to become the moral regeneration initiative:

We ought to be able to co-operate to transform the spiritual life of our country. Within our own constituencies, we seek to answer these problems - but we need to seek a more comprehensive answer. Specifically, can we devise a way for the leadership of all religions to come together to analyse the cause of this spiritual malaise, and to find a way of tackling it? And can this be done as a matter of urgency?¹⁵

It was perhaps Mandela's own status as a moral icon that enabled him to tackle the tricky matters of spirituality and morality, and throw down such a gauntlet to the most senior religious figures in the country. One of the consequences of Mandela's meeting with religious leaders was the establishment of a permanent body for interaction between them and the

government – the National Religious Leaders Forum (NRLF). This body still exists, facilitating annual meetings between the president and religious leaders.

Mandela began using the phrase ‘moral regeneration’ in early 1998:

To find a lasting solution to all these challenges requires a community spirit among all of us, a New Patriotism which is finding root within the populace. We must build our nation into a community of citizens who appreciate their civic duty as each one of us improves our well-being. We must be ready to give back to society part of what we gain from it. ... we need a campaign of moral regeneration. As we reconstruct the material conditions of our existence, we must also change our way of thinking, to respect the value and result of honest work, and to treat each law of the country as our own. This is our call to all South Africans to firm up the moral fibre of our nation.¹⁶

In these early references to moral regeneration, morality was alluded to fairly loosely, linking it to citizenship and patriotism, with few concrete suggestions of what could be done to rebuild the moral fibre.

The moral summit

What followed from Mandela’s call to religious leaders was a series of workshops between religious and political leaders, culminating in a ‘Moral Summit’ attended by both religious and political leaders.¹⁷ The Moral Summit took place in Johannesburg in October 1998, and was addressed by Mandela, who made explicit the kinds of problems the moral regeneration campaign should tackle. All these problems were, in fact, crime problems:

The symptoms of our spiritual malaise are only too familiar. They include the extent of corruption both in public and private sector, where office and positions of responsibility are treated as opportunities for self-enrichment; the corruption that occurs within our justice system; violence in interpersonal relations and families, in particular the shameful record of abuse of women and children; and the extent of tax evasion and refusal to pay for services used. ...

Mandela also alluded to the challenges the campaign would face in gathering support:

It was to be expected, given our past, that we would encounter problems of this [moral] kind; but not, I believe, how great they would

be. Nor that it would be as difficult to mobilise our society in a united effort to eradicate the problems.¹⁸

At the Moral Summit, the NRLF issued a variety of documents, including a Code of Conduct for Persons in Positions of Responsibility.¹⁹ This was aimed at furthering the ‘good morality’ campaign among elected representatives, government, legislative and public service officials, and those in authority in political, economic and civil organisations. The Code was signed individually by each of the religious leaders; but it is unknown whether it was adopted by any other of the target groups.

Significantly, much of the background and preparatory work for Mandela’s initial meeting with the religious leaders and the subsequent summit between a wider spectrum of religious leaders and political parties was done inside ANC (political party) structures, rather than through government. This enabled the necessary degree of flexibility, but perhaps also led to the initiative not being institutionalised in government.

The ‘RDP of the soul’

By the following year, Mandela was calling for the ‘RDP of the Soul’ – referring to his government’s Reconstruction and Development Policy (known as the RDP). In his opening of Parliament address in February 1999 (just ahead of the country’s second democratic election), Mandela attempted to give more clarity to the moral regeneration initiative:

South African society needs to infuse itself with a measure of discipline, a work ethic and responsibility for the actions we undertake. ... related to this is the reconstruction of the soul of the nation, the ‘RDP of the Soul’: by this we mean first and foremost respect for life; pride and self-respect as South Africans ... It means asserting our collective and individual identity as Africans, committed to the rebirth of the continent; being respectful of other citizens and honouring women and children of our country who are exposed to all kinds of domestic violence and abuse. It means building our schools into communities of learning and improvement of character. It means mobilising one another, and not merely waiting for government to clean our streets; or for funding allocations to plant trees and tend schoolyards. These are things we need to embrace as a nation that is nurturing its New Patriotism. They constitute an important environment for bringing up future generations.²⁰

The references to the RDP were perhaps intended to appeal to that section of the ANC electorate that had been fervent supporters of government policies in the early years of the new democracy; but who were becoming sceptical, fearful and cynical in the face of rising crime rates and ongoing inefficiencies in the criminal justice system. Although the RDP itself had been abandoned in favour of the GEAR economic policy, the term had retained positive meaning in the popular discourse.

The examples of morally regenerative activities cited by Mandela were, importantly, not limited to crime prevention or treatment of victims of crime; but referred more broadly to civic duties as being socially and morally beneficial. The rhetoric of this early phase of the campaign was motivated by the new government's need to inculcate social responsibility, and a new approach to the citizen-state interface among its electorate, which had emerged from a deeply divisive social system and a hostile relationship to the state.

ANC views on moral regeneration

The ANC (rather than the religious leaders who had been asked by Mandela to tackle the problem of spiritual malaise in South Africa) was strongly responsible for the formulation of the concept of moral regeneration in its early incarnation. There were two main aspects to this: religious and political.

One of the key sources of the moral regeneration initiative within the ANC was undoubtedly the initiative taken by its Commission for Religious Affairs to promote the re-examination of spirituality and morality as part of social transformation and the transition to a 'better life'. As has already been described, the ANC Commission was responsible for arranging Mandela's 1997 meeting with religious leaders, which gave birth to the moral regeneration campaign. Subsequently, the Commission drafted a statement that was issued by the ANC's highest policy-making body, the National Executive Committee, to coincide with the 1998 Moral Summit. The statement is characterised by a grand rhetoric, unsurprising perhaps, given its origins among left-leaning preachers, but somewhat out of step with the sober, bureaucratised voice of the ANC government at the time:

Both religious and political attitudes in South Africa are being reassessed in ways which promise a critical and constructive relationship for the nation. Transition is thus, by its nature, a situation of flux. Hope and anticipation walk side by side with uncertainty,

insecurity, and fear. Some seek to manipulate it for their own immoral purposes. The process of changing from an immoral to a moral society presents many opportunities for exploitation by those who are confused, those who wish to manipulate the situation for their own advantage, and those who are wilfully corrupt, criminal and violent. It throws up people of great vision and commitment, women and men infused by the spirit of ubuntu, who put their energies and enthusiasms into the collective good of the nation. Others, still dominated by the self-centred individuality of the past, will practice violence and conflict, corruption and immorality, hypocrisy and selfishness. They are victims of the struggle to build a moral climate, and the sooner we drive the nation through the storm to the other side, the better.²¹

The other aspect of the ANC's contribution to the early formulations of the moral regeneration initiative was related to the concept of African Renaissance, which was strongly promoted by, and associated with, Thabo Mbeki. One of the key sources for the ANC's African Renaissance discourse is a piece by Pixley Ka Seme which was delivered at an early ANC conference:

The African already recognises his anomalous position and desires a change. ... Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period! By this term regeneration I wish to be understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence. The basic factor which assures their regeneration resides in the awakened race-consciousness. This gives them [Africans, inserted] a clear perception of their elemental needs and of their undeveloped powers. It therefore must lead them to the attainment of that higher and advanced standard of life. ...The regeneration of Africa means that a new and unique civilisation is soon to be added to the world. ... The most essential departure of this new civilisation is that it shall be thoroughly spiritual and humanistic - indeed a regeneration moral and eternal!²²

This excerpt, in the prose of its time, marries the concepts of African Renaissance, pride in African-ness, and a new morality. The same themes were picked up, decades later, in a more contemporary ANC publication, issued by its Commission for Religious Affairs just prior to the 2004 general election:

But we are Africans! Whether by origin or settlement, millions of us have our own unique spiritual experience, derived from two sources.

Most people have their roots in traditional African beliefs, rooted in the substratum of basic human spirituality which pre-dates the emergence of all religion. ... The other unique spiritual experience we share is the struggle for liberation. ... Traditional belief and liberation theology both uncover the vital force at the heart of humanness. They are holistic, and see faith and politics as one entity, two sides of the same coin. Both express a communal spiritual awareness which had no need to become a religion: an expression of community-building relationship. ... This caring communal approach is the answer to corruption, crime and violence. Morality is not individual goodness, but a co-operative project of survival. It recovers a community consciousness which thrives because people feel involved with one another.²³

These somewhat essentialist references to African spirituality were, intended, no doubt, to woo both religious believers and secular socialists into the moral regeneration initiative, and to provide a spiritual reading of the ANC's 2004 Election Manifesto. However, while there is undoubtedly value in referring to, and reclaiming, historical traditions of African spirituality, the way in which this is done is often mythical, suggesting rather unrealistic images of harmonious pre-modern societies and idealised notions of communal social harmony. No reference is made to dynamics of conflict, difference and change which would be present in any community.

What has been striking about the way that ANC leaders refer to the moral regeneration issues is that they most often strongly link moral degeneration to crime, or cite crime as a result of this degeneration. A more recent address by Mbeki reiterates that the causes of moral degeneracy are historical, but also adds a warning about the new ethos of greed and entitlement:

[I]llegitimate rule, the perpetuation of an anti-social human order, and the elevation of the acquisition of money and wealth into the highest of the social values towards which our people should aspire, have combined to produce the social ills of corruption and crime.²⁴

The reference to the culture of enrichment is a theme that has recently gained prominence in the ANC-led tripartite alliance. This is significant because it shows the development of the analysis of moral malaise from one that was purely historical—looking at pre-transition South African history for the causes—to a more contemporary and nuanced analysis.

Moral regeneration was an ANC initiative

One of the important aspects of the moral regeneration initiative in this early phase was the ambiguity in the relationship between the ANC as a political party, and the ANC as the majority party in government. Some of this ambiguity related to the fact that the initial 1994 Government of National Unity was, symbolically at least, a coalition across parties, and the ANC was not the sole 'ruling party'. (This position altered when the coalition collapsed in 1996). Another aspect was the changing relationship of the ANC to 'civil society' in the post-transition period, where the ANC in government was now the state but previously had operated together with many civil society bodies in opposition to the (apartheid) state.

The role of the ANC in the initial meeting between Mandela and the religious leaders was significant – the meeting was arranged by the ANC on Mandela's behalf, and not by the President's Office. It took place at the ANC headquarters, not at a government building. Unsurprising, perhaps, given that the moral-religious initiative was conceptualised by political activists who were accustomed to designing political and ideological 'campaigns', its early form resembled that of many other ANC-led campaigns involving a wide range of political and religious role players both from within the party and outside of it.

Although Mandela was able to insert the moral regeneration concepts into the governmental terminology of the day—linking it to the RDP, the government's Masakhane Campaign and the NCPS²⁵—it was only in the second term of ANC government that the moral regeneration movement was formally adopted as a government programme. This may have been the result of a wait-and-see attitude to the initiative, or to a more profound scepticism among key ANC thinkers about how appropriate this somewhat vague and overtly religious initiative would be to the programme of a social democratic government concerned largely with the practicalities of social and economic development.

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MORAL REGENERATION MOVEMENT: 2000-2004

After the 1999 election, with Thabo Mbeki in office as president and Jacob Zuma as deputy president, the moral regeneration initiative began to enjoy more formal attention from the Presidency (this may have pointed to increasing interest in the moral regeneration approach; or merely to a more efficient administrative system). In dividing up political and administrative tasks between the president and deputy president in the early days of their term, Zuma was allocated responsibility for this initiative. Staff in the Presidency describe this as a routine division of labour, with no great political significance. However, the subsequent allegations of corruption levelled against Deputy President Zuma led to various questions and criticisms of his role in the moral regeneration initiative; often implying a greater political significance in his association with the campaign. In fact, his role is that of political patron and 'front man', and he only participated in the behind-the-scenes work from time to time.

Even though the Deputy President's Office has some responsibility for the political co-ordination of the moral regeneration work being done in government, this is a fairly arms-length relationship; especially since the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) with its own offices in Johannesburg. Another senior government figure associated with the early moral regeneration initiative was Rev Smangaliso Mkatshwa (a key religious figure within the ANC, former deputy minister of education and subsequent mayor of Tshwane).

According to a report on the moral regeneration initiative, the president, the deputy president and the deputy minister of education met in February 2000 and expressed 'deep concern about the worsening moral situation'. Not much had been done since the 1998 Moral Summit; and the government wanted to add impetus to the campaign, which seemed to have floundered. In early 2000 a Moral Regeneration Workshop was convened to renew interest and energy in the campaign. Some sources view the stagnation of the moral renewal campaign after 1998 as evidence that it should not be left in the hands of the religious leaders alone, for they failed to take it forward during that time.

Moral regeneration workshops

After a first moral regeneration workshop in February 2000, it was agreed that a second workshop would be beneficial, and this followed shortly in May of that year. There was considerable overlap between the two workshops, although the composition of participants in each was slightly different. Participants at both workshops were mainly drawn from government departments and religious institutions. The workshops were convened by the Department of Education under the auspices of the deputy president, with assistance from various religious and political organisations – but symbolically these were government-led events.

According to the official report on the workshops (published online at the government website), much time was devoted at the first workshop to the analysis of the moral problem. This was because it was felt that unless the workshop was able to clearly define that (morality) which needed to be revived, no effective intervention strategy could be devised. The workshop therefore focused on examining what was meant by morality and moral degeneration, as well as tracing the history of the problem.²⁶

The second workshop was meant to focus on establishing a national framework for action towards moral regeneration. This would entail the identification of national priorities, actions to be taken and forming a Steering Committee to take the process forward. Conclusions at the second workshop included the need to involve all government departments, rebuild strong social support and family structures, turn schools into ‘moral environments’, draw the business sector into discussion, and for religious organisations to play a prominent role in moral regeneration.²⁷ The workshop reports contain no references to the NCPS, or other initiatives then underway which may have been relevant to moral regeneration; and again the ‘campaign’ approach to moral regeneration emerged strongly:

The best way of taking the message to the rest of the nation was through a national campaign. In the past, campaigns have worked well because they sensitised the nation to critical issues facing it. ... It was agreed that the campaign for moral regeneration will consist of the following:

- Setting up of a co-ordinating committee
- Negotiating with print and electronic media for regular input
- Starting dialogue with identified possible partners
- Promoting the campaign through a simple leaflet
- Organising a workshop for all government departments

- Organising a joint conference with religious communities
- Training of community facilitators.²⁸

This approach was similar to many other initiatives of its time, taking the methodology of the anti-apartheid organisations into a government-led initiative, with an emphasis on structures and process rather than on the content of the messages. What was envisaged was a mass mobilisation, harking back to the glory days of the liberation struggle, to a time when a large majority of people and organisations could be united against a common enemy. However, there were (and are) many debates about morality among the diverse groups that make up South African society, and no consensus on what constitutes morally degenerative behaviour - hence no easy basis for mobilising a united front against it.

The SABC (the public broadcaster) and the national Department of Education were mandated to lead the process. A steering committee was established, consisting of those two bodies with representatives from the South African Chapter of the African Renaissance movement and an un-named ‘expert’. The first phase of the proposed campaign was to focus on ‘rooting it in society’ through enrolling a large number of partners, raising public awareness about moral issues, and establishing ‘shared values’ among all South Africans. The media were (naively, perhaps) expected to ‘tackle the campaign with great enthusiasm’.²⁹

Although the moral regeneration ‘campaign’ had been conceptualised as an ever-expanding partnership between government and civil society organisations (especially faith-based organisations), there was little support from organised civil society after the workshops held in 2000. Indeed, there is little evidence that any of the actions proposed at the workshop (above) were initiated, except that a steering committee was established, as were some provincial structures. The steering committee was made up of people with other jobs and other commitments; and once again the moral regeneration initiative floundered, either because of lack of dedicated person power, or lack of clarity, or both.

By early 2001, the discourse around the moral regeneration initiative shifted to begin describing it as a ‘movement’ rather than the earlier formulation of ‘campaign’. This was perhaps an attractive reference, aimed at former activists and supporters, to the broad international ‘anti-apartheid movement’, or to the ‘liberation movement’. The idea was that the Moral Regeneration Movement

(MRM) would be a broad coalition of individuals and organisations in civil society, engaged in campaigning and other activities that would rebuild the social fabric of society and improve the moral fibre of the nation.

Crime and corruption, hijacks and murder, abuse of women and children, racism and sexism, are all signs of a moral breakdown. It is important therefore to support efforts underway to build a national moral regeneration movement to be established in every sector of South African society, working through existing organisations. ... This movement should be an assemblage of concerned citizens from government and civil society, seeking to reinvigorate morality in South Africa.³⁰

This approach was promoted inside the ANC, perhaps because its officials—both in the party headquarters and in government—had grown weary of trying to manage the moral regeneration campaign, with its endless debates about what exactly the campaign should do.

The vision of moral regeneration developing into a 'movement' represented the attempt to extend interest in, and responsibility for, the campaign. This would spread the responsibility of leadership to a wider group of role players than just the government and the religious community, and would recruit a wider support base for the campaign than had been realised through political and religious organisations. The new formulation was, in some part at least, a response to the inertia of the period subsequent to the government-led workshops in mid-2000, in which the 'campaign' had been formulated.

Within the vision of a 'movement', there was a motivation for some sort of secretariat/base/organisation for the moral regeneration initiative. It had been decided that this should no longer rest within government, but in civil society. This was in part because the co-ordination of such a loose campaign was extremely difficult, especially in a bureaucratic government environment where the emphasis was increasingly on delivery; and where it was difficult to justify expenditure on campaign-type activities that could not demonstrate measurable impact. In addition, it was hoped that a dedicated institution and staff would add the required impetus to the campaign.

The proposal that the MRM should be based in civil society emerged at around the same time as the National Civil Society Conference in early 2001. This event provided an opportunity for dialogue and reflection on the state of civil society in South Africa, a decade after the unbanning of the liberation

movement and the beginning of the transition to democracy. The starting points for the conversation included:

Despite the fact that South Africa has a progressive Constitution, a democratically-elected local government, and a slowly-improving state machinery, the task of transforming it into a peaceful and prosperous democracy cannot be delegated to government alone, or to the private sector. Every single citizen can and should be involved in this challenge. Organising this public and voluntary commitment to transformation is the responsibility and privilege of civil society.³¹

The formulation of the moral regeneration campaign as something in which every citizen, family and community should participate resonated strongly with memories of the heyday of (anti-apartheid) civil society activism. However, the architects of the moral regeneration campaign may have failed to recognise some of the profound changes that had affected civil society in post-apartheid South Africa. Some of the ANC-aligned speakers at the Civil Society conference were blunt in their assessment of civil society capacity at that time. The former head of the President's Office, and respected academic, Jakes Gerwel, observed:

The conceptual challenge for a 'liberation movement in government' [like ours] is to identify, define and demarcate those areas of social life of its citizens that are largely outside of its sphere of responsibility and direct control, without thereby neglecting its historic obligation to fundamentally transform society. Conversely, citizenry have to identify, define and claim those areas where they take primary responsibility, being partners – though often critical partners – with the government. ...If we were to comment on the state of civil society with reference specifically to sectors like education, religion, culture, sport, community development and community life, one will have to conclude that the role played by civil society has diminished since democratic change."³²

Jayendra Naidoo, former trade union leader and peace activist, then head of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), South Africa's tripartite development forum, was even more frank about the state of civil society:

Following the 1994 elections ... civil society has generally become muted and less effective. The level of participation of rank-and-file

members on the ground has weakened. Today's challenge to civil society organisations is to re-establish the credibility and influence they enjoyed in the pre-democracy period.³³

These concerns about the viability of civil society appear not to have been heard by those in government and in the moral regeneration campaign, who were determined to remove it from the ambit of government.

Child rape brings new momentum

In late 2001, a moral panic in the media about levels of child rape and sexual violence in South Africa revived interest in issues of moral regeneration. A special debate was held in Parliament on the 'alarming incidence of child rape and abuse'. Deputy President Zuma, as the political figurehead of the moral regeneration initiative, made the following observations during the debate:

The apartheid history of this country left behind a legacy of a serious breakdown of the moral infrastructure of our society. Apartheid brutalised all - its perpetrators, victims as well as its beneficiaries. Through the migrant labour system and homelands, apartheid sowed the seeds for the breakdown of the institution of the family. The breakdown of the moral fibre manifests itself in many ways and in all sectors of our society, the rich and poor, urban and rural, black and white, young and old. The molestation of children and infants is a symptom of this degeneration.³⁴

In the same address³⁵ to Parliament, Zuma announced that a Moral Summit would be convened in early 2002, with the intentions of taking 'stock of the moral barometer of our country' and 'charting the way forward for a mass-based moral regeneration campaign'. This was undoubtedly also an attempt to reinvigorate the campaign, or, at least, to create the perception that it was still alive.

Shortly after the November parliamentary session a national consultative meeting of the Moral Regeneration Movement was called and a variety of intellectuals were asked to contribute inputs. The new approach was made clear—that the campaign should no longer be led by government or confined to the pre-existing partnership between government and the religious community:

The lack of respect for the sanctity of human life, for the next person, private property, disregard for the law of the land, lack of parental

control over children, and the general blurring of the lines between right and wrong are continuing to plague our communities. That is the reason why we are gathered here today, to begin to chart the way forward. Indeed, the time has come to move forward together. Moral regeneration is not something which can be left to either the Government or to the religious community alone. We require the participation of all sectors in this campaign, all spheres of government, labour, women, men, youth, business, academics, traditional leaders, traditional healers, the media and professionals.³⁶

After the November consultative meeting, the Moral Regeneration working committee was enlarged to include provincial representatives, political parties and other sectors of civil society. This was an attempt to expand leadership of the initiative beyond the early bilateral partnership between government and the faith-based organisations, and to insert new energy into the initiative. It was felt by some that it had been an error to put the campaign largely in the hands of the religious leaders, who appeared unable to agree on an appropriate strategic approach, or to turn the idea of the campaign into action.

The new working committee speedily made two key decisions. First, it decided to launch a Moral Regeneration Movement with a dedicated, independent base, outside of government. Secondly, it decided to establish a Section 21 (not-for-profit) company—an NGO—as this base, to house and lead the movement. One of the key reasons for this was to facilitate funding and expenditure—managing the finances of the envisaged coalition-type organisation for moral regeneration would be difficult within the administrative constraints of the government financial regulations. These decisions were presented by Deputy President Zuma to the year-end Cabinet *lekgotla*, and approved by Cabinet. This resulted in some speeding-up of the process—Cabinet requested that the launch should happen as early as possible in 2002, which was earlier than the committee had envisaged.

Establishment of the MRM

The high profile launch of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) took place in April 2002 at an air force base in Pretoria (a venue that provoked some debate). Over a thousand people from government, parliament, provincial legislatures, political parties, religious organisations, traditional structures, and NGOs were present. In line with the argument that the initiative should be devolved to civil society, the MRM was constructed as a

non-profit organisation with a small staff, to be based in the NGO heartland of Johannesburg. Its brochure describes it as ‘a movement and not an organisation’.³⁷

In his opening address at the launch, Zuma quoted from various sections of the Constitution, and emphasised that the Constitution “is the cornerstone which lays out the values we [the moral regeneration campaign] uphold”.³⁸ This point was made to emphasise the secular nature of the initiative, and to distance it from theological differences over ‘values’ between the various religious leaders.

The new MRM did not manage to be much more concise or clear about its content than the preceding initiatives.

The ultimate objective of the moral regeneration movement is to assist in the development of a caring society through the revival of the spirit of botho/ubuntu and the actualisation and realisation of the values and ideals enshrined in our constitution, using all available resources and harnessing all initiatives in government, business and civil society.³⁹

The MRM also failed to focus or target its strategy, instead describing an extremely broad spectrum of efforts:

what are the focus areas of the movement’s work?

- Development of Ethical Leadership ... moral regeneration must aim at developing and nurturing such leadership
- Youth ... moral regeneration must aim at harnessing and supporting the energy and creative spirit of youth toward moral renewal
- Education ... moral regeneration must aim at making our education system foreground moral formation as one of its core functions both in theory and in practice
- The Family ... moral regeneration must aim at strengthening the family unit
- Riches and Poverty ... moral regeneration must aim at combating poverty and reducing the inequality gap
- Crime and Corruption ... moral regeneration must aim at combating the root causes of crime and corruption in all their manifestations
- Religion ... moral regeneration must aim at fostering greater religious tolerance and co-operation for moral renewal
- The Media ... moral regeneration must aim at ensuring that the

media does also carry positive stories of moral courage and renewal.⁴⁰

The purpose of the MRM was described at the launch as “to facilitate, encourage, and co-ordinate the programmes in every sector of society, in working towards restoring the moral fibre of our nation”. Again the nature of the MRM as a ‘broad-based dynamic movement, to mobilise communities across the country to drive the moral renewal process’ was emphasised, as was the handing of the moral regeneration baton to civil society:

There can be no moral regeneration if ordinary South Africans do not drive the process. What is unique about this ‘full partnership of all the people’ we envisage is that it must mobilise every man, woman and child, at every level of our country, around an initial four-year Programme of Action. ... It is critical that all of us understand that the MRM is a movement of the people.⁴¹

The speakers at the launch did not provide any guidance on exactly how ‘the people’ could get actively involved in moral regeneration, and this continued to be a key problem with the campaign. At least in more orthodox crime prevention campaigns (or public health campaigns), leaders are able to give practical suggestions and examples of behaviours leading to the reduction of crime and victimisation. However, the grey area of morality did not lend itself easily to clear messaging; perhaps because of the religious and ideological connotations associated with the discourse of morality.

One of the most interesting aspects of this phase in the development of the moral regeneration initiative is that a dedicated NGO was established, with government funding, to take forward the campaign. This arrangement, with government as the sole funder, providing core running costs for an NGO, is quite extraordinary.

This arrangement commenced with government allocating R5m to cover the costs of the MRM launch in April 2002 and the first year of operation, and a further R2-3m per annum for running costs over each of the following three financial years.⁴² This allocation was made after the consultation process in late 2001, at which it was decided to launch the MRM. According to participants in the MR process at the time, Treasury approved the grant after Cabinet approved the plan to launch the MRM in a new form. Some sources say that Treasury made it clear that the MR initiative was not a financial

priority for government (and that initial requests for over R30m were trimmed down); others say that Cabinet took the unusual step of approving the plans for the MRM and instructing Treasury and the Department of Arts and Culture to facilitate resources for the plan, precisely because it was such an important priority for government. Whichever version is correct, it is obvious that the active political support of the deputy president was a significant asset in the quest for resources.

The government grants to the MRM are administered through the Department of Arts and Culture, under the auspices of its Programme 2 for 'Arts, Culture, Language and Society', and the sub-programme 'Promotion of Arts and Culture in South Africa'. The output is stated as 'Annual (matching) grants to playhouses and certain orchestras, for arts development, to Business Arts South Africa (BASA), and to the MRM'.⁴³

Building a movement

The months following the launch were described as 'a period of structural development and networking at all levels'. The main development was the establishment of the MRM as a non-profit company, and recruitment of its staff. Also, MRM Committees were established in all provinces and in some municipalities as a follow-up to the national launch. At the end of 2002, Zuma told Parliament that this was evidence 'that the MRM is taking root at every level'.⁴⁴ Some of the events held around the country after the national launch were:

- a 'religious parliament' held in the Northern Cape, May 2002;
- a Day of Prayer & Moral Regeneration Rally in Tshwane, May 2002;
- a 'religious parliament' held in the Eastern Cape, July 2002;
- a Moral Regeneration Summit in the Western Cape, August 2002;
- a Prayer Day for Moral Regeneration, Northern Cape, Sept 2002; and
- a Moral Regeneration meeting, Wesselsbron, Free State, October 2002.

In September 2002 Zuma announced in Parliament that plans were underway for the development of a national 'Moral Charter'. This was intended to represent a crystallisation of the central tenets of various documents, agreements and initiatives, ranging from the King Report on Corporate Governance to various codes of conduct in the public and private sector. The idea was that the Charter would be a 'concise pledge', which would contain "the essence of core good values and ethics we would all want to adhere to, and would be prepared to be judged against".⁴⁵

In the same speech, Zuma also re-emphasised that "the moral regeneration movement is multi-sectoral and not confined to the religious sector only".⁴⁶

By November 2002 the first staff appointments were made in the MRM. There are four full-time staff members; the Chief Executive Officer is Zandile Mdhlahla, formerly a member of management staff at the Durban Technikon in KwaZulu-Natal. Approximately a year was spent on setting up the organisation and generating a vision of its role, an extremely slow (and costly) process. Mdhlahla described as 'time-consuming' the process of 'unpacking what moral regeneration is about',⁴⁷ and, indeed, the new organisation had to define its role carefully in relation to the earlier formulations of the moral regeneration campaign, particularly in relation to government and the religious sector.

On the MRM website, the 'overall objectives' of the MRM are now described as follows:

- to develop strategies aimed at restoring social values in our new democracy;
- to encourage a dynamic mass movement that will support government and civil society, as they put into practise a plan of action from the renewal of our commonly-held values;
- to promote national advocacy for the creation of an ethical, caring and corrupt-free society.⁴⁸

On its website the MRM attempts to make clear its three core messages. These messages are:

- **High moral values**
Historically, South Africa is a nation with high moral values. This is expressed in part by how our people (black and white) were united and determined to fight against apartheid. We came to understand the problems of our country and how to solve these challenges through peaceful negotiation. The process of reconciliation and nation building, across colour lines, underlines the moral character of the South African nation.
- **Moral renewal**
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides a framework for the realisation of this country's moral values. All South Africans can play their part in promoting national morals and values. It is not just up to religious based organisations to uphold

these values. The contribution of citizens in the ‘moral renewal crusade’ is necessary and encouraged.

- **Sustaining moral communities**

The building of moral communities is a necessary requirement for the fight against immoral behaviour in our communities and public institutions. We need to build vigilant communities who can identify potential acts of immoral behaviour and refer to legitimate institutions with a mandate to deal with such issues”.⁴⁹

The phrasing of these core messages is far less concerned with spirituality or religion than the early formulations of the moral renewal initiative. The MRM had to overcome the perception that it was some sort of religious initiative, and shifted its focus instead towards constitutional values. Religion is described as one of the eight focus areas of the movement, but no longer dominates the moral regeneration agenda. There is also less explicit reference to crime than there was in some of the earlier formulations of the campaign. However, there is little explanation of what the ‘constitutional values’ are; and with fourteen ‘moral themes’ identified in the Constitution,⁵⁰ the danger of lack of clarity continues to loom large.

MRM in government

The Department of Arts and Culture was tasked with the administration of moral regeneration issues within government, including administering the grants to the MRM, and co-ordinating government-wide activity that could be seen as relevant to the initiative; while the Deputy President’s Office remains the ‘political’ co-ordination hub for moral regeneration issues within government. Apart from Zuma’s ongoing public speaking about moral regeneration, little momentum was sustained around the initiative inside government departments in the period immediately after the MRM was launched.

Officials in the Department of Arts and Culture found “not much political support” for the campaign, and described the heads of national government departments as “not strongly on board” for quite some time after the MRM was launched in early 2002. This was perhaps a result of the perception that the MRM—configured now as an NGO—would be taking responsibility for the campaign, thus enabling government officials to take a back seat. National government became one sector, among many, that reported on its moral regeneration activities at the regular meetings of the Movement. In

respect of national departments, the reports are co-ordinated through the Director of Special Programmes in the Deputy President’s Office, whereas provincial and local governments report through the provincial structures of the MRM.

According to some of the departmental participants interviewed for this research, the activities that they report on are often not activities that were conceived as morally regenerative. Instead, they often select from other, ongoing departmental programmes those things that might be most relevant to the moral regeneration initiative—most often these are related to families, women and children, or social crime prevention in its broadest sense—and report these as the department’s contribution to the campaign. For instance, a sector policing initiative in the West Rand, which has been successful in building positive police-community relations and facilitating various crime prevention partnerships, is identified by the MRM as a moral regeneration project. The MRM website describes the SAPS ‘Adopt-a-cop’ and ‘Captain Crime Stop’ projects under the heading MRM programmes, and describes these somewhat controversial efforts—which existed even prior to 1994 in the former South African Police (SAP) and whose crime prevention impact has never been scientifically evaluated—as “innovative programmes that provide life skills and educational programmes for young people”.⁵¹ The website also describes other ongoing government projects as part of the programmes of the MRM, including:

- awareness campaigns against substance abuse;
- the development of a National Drug Master Plan;
- the ‘Young Champions’ programme of the Department of Sports and Recreation, which targets young people in high-crime areas to involve them in sports;
- rehabilitation programmes in the Department of Correctional Services, aimed at offenders and their children;
- rehabilitation programmes run by the Department of Social Development, targeting young offenders;
- finalisation of TRC reparations; and
- victim empowerment and support to rape victims.

Key issues in this phase

A ‘civil society’ initiative with government support?

After the establishment of the MRM as a Section 21 company, the moral regeneration campaign was officially described as a ‘civil society initiative’

that has government support. However, the extent of civil society enthusiasm for the initiative is somewhat obscured by the extent of government support (both financial and political).

Concerns had been expressed about the state of civil society in South Africa. It was certainly ambitious to believe that a civil society ‘movement’ would develop around a moral campaign that had been initiated by political leaders, and had not originated organically from communities. It remains to be seen whether there will be sufficient grassroots momentum to sustain the campaign.

Another set of questions relating to the civil society status of the campaign concerns its origins and resources. The MRM—established as a small non-profit organisation, based in Johannesburg—could be described as a ‘QUANGO’ (a quasi-NGO), which is neither independent nor sustainable because of its financial dependence on government. Related to this are questions about exactly how government finances this NGO: whether it has to go through the same rigorous scrutiny that other NGOs face when tendering for government grants; and whether the procedure for allocating funds to this NGO is transparent and potentially replicable. The model of government establishing and funding a dedicated NGO to manage an important partnership campaign is one which is potentially of great interest to the crime prevention community—if government can set up and fund an NGO for one of its priority partnership projects, perhaps it could do the same for others?

The association with Zuma and corruption allegations

An issue that began to dog the moral regeneration initiative during this period was the increasing public discussion (both in media and in parliament) concerning allegations of corruption levelled at Deputy President Zuma, associated with the prosecution of Shabir Shaik, his financial advisor. The corruption allegations were often raised as a contrast or challenge to Zuma’s patronage of the moral regeneration campaign. As the trial of Shaik is currently underway, it remains to be seen whether any allegations will be sustained, and whether perceptions of corruption will adhere to Deputy President Zuma or, by association, to the MRM.

Slow progress

The NGO which was the later incarnation of the moral regeneration campaign (post 2002) had very little to show for its first two years of operation. Almost one full year was spent on ‘setting up’ the organisation and developing its

initial vision. With only four full-time staff, the administrative and organisational development processes could perhaps have been concluded more speedily. It seems that the visioning for the new organisation—which had ostensibly been done by the MR working committee when establishing the independent NGO—was inadequate or inappropriate, requiring the new staff to replicate a lengthy strategic planning process. This could bring into question the fundamental appropriateness of the decision to establish a new NGO.

The role of government in the MRM

After the establishment of the MRM as an independent NGO in 2002, government participation in the campaign appears to have declined. With the possible exceptions of the Department of Arts and Culture and the Deputy President’s Office, little original thinking or dedicated effort seem to have been directed at the moral regeneration initiative. When asked to report on their moral regeneration activities, most departments simply cited programmes that they were doing anyway and which were in some way relevant to the campaign.

This lack of dedicated attention to the campaign is a problem which faced many other interdepartmental initiatives: in the absence of dedicated funding and staff, a new campaign or initiative is unlikely to receive any attention from line departments which have pre-existing strategic plans and budgets on which they need to deliver and be evaluated against. Contrasted with such firm and formal incentives, an extremely woolly notion like moral regeneration stands little chance of being adopted, especially when the three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budget cycle means that there are little discretionary funds available for ad-hoc projects.

CHAPTER 5

RE-INVENTING THE MRM: 2004 AND ONWARDS

By mid-2004, the staff of the MRM, together with its trustees and a couple of its founding members, were engaged in a re-visioning exercise for the campaign, with some acknowledgement that not enough had been achieved in its first year. A great deal of energy had gone into grassroots mobilisation and facilitation work—many awareness-raising workshops were held all over the country—but the grassroots advocacy work was hard to quantify and reflect demonstrable impact. Little had been achieved in the critical arena of public communication: the MRM website describes the key operations of the MRM as being focused on communications, but few of the envisaged activities—road shows, a public relations campaign, dissemination of information promoting the visibility of the MRM—had actually materialised.

While there may have been some slow progress in clarifying the meaning of morals within the campaign itself in the period after the MRM was launched—with some convergence of ideas around the Constitution, citizenship and values rather than a religious interpretation—this clarity was not disseminated publicly.

Reflecting on its first year of operations, the MRM noted the following challenges:

- Moral regeneration remains a contested and easily abused concept.
- A common national view of what is moral and what is not is still elusive.
- Sufficient dialogue on the morality of the country is not yet taking place.
- Levels of moral intolerance remain high.⁵²

After two years, at its first National Conference, the CEO of the MRM reported on some key shortcomings and weaknesses:⁵³

- Fundraising was unsuccessful because “it became clear that donors wanted to fund tangible programmes in communities” (rather than contribute to the running costs of the MRM’s office).
- The capacity of the secretariat—both human resources and financial resources—was a problem. Donors did not respond positively as

anticipated, and the competencies of the staff did not meet the demands generated on the ground.

- Provincial capacity—it had been expected that provincial structures would design and implement projects; however, not many of the provincial committees were able to do this immediately and the lack of resources meant that the MRM was often not able to do much beyond launching structures and projects.
- Not many organisations or sectors that had earlier professed commitment to the MRM followed up with commitment to actually working together. This resulted in fragmented initiatives and a lack of impact.
- There is a lack of clarity about the nature of the partnership between government and civil society.
- There are no policies or positions to guide pronouncements and actions by the stakeholder organisations comprising the MRM.⁵⁴

The Moral Charter which had been in the pipeline since 2002 had been delayed due to the MRM full-time staff's view that there had not been sufficient planning for the initiative and that a great deal more groundwork needed to be done in explaining the campaign to the people; and due to a number of failed attempts to design an appropriate process for the development of such a Charter.⁵⁵

In a review of the effectiveness of the MRM, two key problem areas were identified. The first was a problem around leadership and co-ordination. The original idea was that the MRM would merely co-ordinate the relevant activities of the various participating sectors (e.g. government, religion, media etc.); but in practice very little happened in the sectors in the absence of vigorous leadership of the campaign. This related to the cumbersome structures that had been set up around the movement: governance and management structures representing all the participating sectors⁵⁶ such as government, media, civil society, and education. This led to the initial establishment of a very large board, which attempted to be inclusive and representative of all participants; and an executive committee that was not actually able to take decisions even though it was supposed to be involved in operational management.

Regenerating the MRM – Restructuring

The second half of 2004 saw the MRM holding numerous workshops and consultations with stakeholder groups to review and re-invigorate the campaign. One of the key actors in this process was the NGO Business

Against Crime (BAC), which brought a new approach to the campaign, emphasising the need to focus and to demonstrate measurable results. BAC's new CEO, Kenny Fihla, is an experienced ANC politician who was able to engage with the political nature of the MRM, and to bring BAC's concerns with crime prevention and effectiveness to the process.

The composition of the governing structures of the MRM was revisited. The 'broad front' approach on which the initiative had been premised at the outset had seen many of those participants losing interest and dropping out of the campaign. As a result, MRM staff and strategists were keen to limit the important decision-making structures to involve only active and appropriately skilled participants.

In 2004 the MRM CEO proposed the creation of a series of new structures:

- Council of Patrons;
- National Working Committee; and
- Management Committee, comprising the current executive secretariat and Board of Trustees.⁵⁷

She said that it had taken over a year of discussion for all the organisations participating in the campaign to agree that not all of them needed to be represented on its management structures. She proposed an annual consultative conference at which all the sectors would be represented, and a working committee made up of people who could bring relevant skills and contacts to the daily operation of the MRM.⁵⁸ After further discussions and workshops it was agreed that there should be an 'expert-based board', which would 'assume management oversight of the Movement, with an annual representative conference for strategising, networking and information-sharing.'⁵⁸ By late 2004, a new board, with largely new membership, was operational. It consisted of:

- Father Smangaliso Mkatshwa – Executive Mayor of Tshwane, ANC politician; Christian cleric;
- Moulana Ebrahim Bham – Muslim cleric;
- Rev Cedric Mayson – Co-ordinator of ANC Commission on Religious Affairs, Christian cleric;
- Ms Buyelwa Sonjica – Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry (ANC);
- Prof David Mosoma – Christian theologian and deputy Vice Chancellor, University of South Africa (UNISA);
- Ms Charlotte Mampane – SA Broadcasting Corporation (SABC);

- Ms Zandile Mdhladhla – CEO of MRM;
- Ms Thandile Nxumalo – business person (Daylite Capital);
- Ms Ellen Tshabalala – business person (SAPOS);
- Mr Mike Boon – business person (Vulindlela);
- Mr James Fitzgerald – business person (Rocketship Company); and
- Mr Xavier McMaster – Finance Manager at City of Tshwane Municipality.

At the first annual conference of the MRM the board presented a proposal on the way forward for the campaign, indicating that this new structure had indeed begun working and offering strategic direction.

Addressing the civil society mobilisation problem

The second problem addressed within the review process was the need for tighter focus and clarity about the activities of the campaign, and more effective ways of mobilising civil society into the campaign than the broad sectoral approach that had previously been used. Both the CEO and the MRM board had acknowledged the failure of the sectoral approach to mobilise civil society enthusiasm for the campaign; and in late 2004 Zuma in Parliament again referred to the need for improved civil society participation:

In terms of obstacles, given the magnitude of the campaign and what we seek to achieve, we obviously expect greater participation, particularly at civil society level.⁶⁰

At the 2004 conference the new MRM board recommended that the MRM office become more focused on advocacy work, and identified five focus areas for the organisation's activities:

- building the MRM;
- leading public discourse on moral regeneration issues;
- developing a national consensus on positive values that should be embraced;
- promoting ethical behaviour congruent with these positive values; and
- disseminating information on moral issues.⁶¹

This appears to be a new approach to the vexed question of civil society participation in the moral regeneration campaign. It is underpinned by an implicit acknowledgement that there is a need to *advocate* around the moral regeneration issues, rather than assuming (as had been the case in earlier incarnations of the campaign) that there was organic public support for these

issues. However, there is still little clarity about *how* this might be developed into a mass-based movement, and what kinds of activities are envisaged for civil society.

Renewing the campaign within government

In parallel with the revitalisation of the MRM team in Johannesburg, national government departments based in Pretoria also began reviewing their participation in the campaign in late 2004. A task team was established by the Department of Arts and Culture, with more enthusiastic participation from other social cluster departments than had been seen for some time. The task team's role was to identify government projects that would have an impact on moral regeneration, map a way forward for government in respect of the campaign, and get the government sector 'in order'.⁶²

This research encountered some scepticism in government circles about the work of the MRM, with various officials either suggesting that all the MRM had done in its two years of existence was to produce a charter; or that it needed to account for the money received from government in terms of the impact it had generated; or that it had been preoccupied with setting up structures and had lost momentum in respect of actual programmes. Some went so far as to suggest that government could have spent the money allocated to the MRM more effectively if specific moral regeneration programmes had been designed inside government instead of moving the campaign to civil society.⁶³

One department that continued to assert an aggressive campaign for moral regeneration was the Department of Correctional Services, which stated in its 2004 White Paper:

The DCS believes that the moral regeneration drive will be a major contribution to the efforts that the Department is confronted with and engaged in – that of cultivating moral values to those already convicted. The creation of an environment in which offenders are encouraged to discard negative and destructive values and replace them with positive and constructive values can be said to be the core business of the Department of Correctional Services. ... All departmental programmes are designed specifically to support a regeneration of morality for those who have strayed from the accepted norms and values of society. This marks a major paradigm shift – turning prisons from centres of punishment to centres in which an environment is created for moral/spiritual regeneration to occur.⁶⁴

Agreeing on content – The Moral Charter

The Moral Charter initiative announced by Zuma at the end of 2002 was delayed and restarted numerous times. By late 2003 it was being portrayed as a device for “defining the vision and laying the basis and commitment for united action towards building a moral society”.⁶⁵ In this version, it was envisaged as emerging from a ‘participatory and inclusive process’, which would include hearings or consultations in each province, and receiving submissions from a wide range of interested individuals and organisations. This approach followed earlier failed attempts at generating a Charter, one which was to involve a questionnaire to participating organisations/sectors and contracting with a service provider who promised to raise funds for a broad consultation process.

In late 2004, an ‘expert group’ was appointed to draft a Charter. The Charter was envisaged as providing a ‘basis for defining and measuring programmes and activities’ and ‘a framework within which all the moral regeneration activity would happen’.⁶⁶ However, by the time of the first annual conference in late November, agreement on the content and process for the Charter had not been reached. Some provinces had held consultation workshops to identify content issues for the proposed Charter, while others had not. The Charter as such was not one of the five focus areas identified by the new board—although it will likely be pursued under the ambit of “developing a national consensus on positive values”.⁶⁷

CHAPTER 6 CHALLENGES FACING THE MORAL REGENERATION CAMPAIGN

Sustainability

There are two (related) aspects of sustainability that face the MRM as it heads towards its fourth year as an independent NGO. The fundamental question is whether this campaign can be sustained as a civil society initiative in the absence of a popular, organic support base. Related to this is the other aspect, that of financial sustainability. The government grant to fund the establishment of the MRM was for an initial period of three years, to the end of March 2005, and it is not at this stage clear whether further funds will be forthcoming. If there were evidence of a significant ‘movement’ or ‘campaign’, perhaps government funding would be easier to obtain; but, at this stage, the MRM has to work rather hard to demonstrate the value and impact it has generated during the initial three years.

The new approach of the MRM board—for the MRM to become an advocacy group, rather than a mass mobilisation campaign—may be more strategic, but it is notoriously difficult to fund NGO advocacy work (in part, because its outcomes are difficult to demonstrate); and it seems questionable whether government should fund an advocacy organisation, albeit one which focuses on moral-social advocacy rather than policy advocacy.

In the short term, it is likely that the MRM will receive ongoing financial support from government—who cannot be seen to be abandoning the moral regeneration issue—and also from domestic business, thanks to the support of Business Against Crime (BAC).⁶⁸

Defining and measuring morally regenerative activities

The nature of the MRM’s activities will also be a key determinant of its future sustainability. Simply acting as ‘co-ordinator’ of efforts taking place elsewhere has been seen to be unsuccessful, not least because an external ‘co-ordinating’ agency cannot *instruct* other organisations to act; it merely relies on goodwill and hence cannot ensure outputs or impacts. (Various attempts at ‘co-ordination’ on single-issue, inter-agency projects have been undertaken

elsewhere within the crime prevention and criminal justice sectors,⁶⁹ and most of them have been equally unsuccessful.)

In addition to the problems associated with a co-ordinating role, the movement also faces the problem of defining and identifying activities as morally regenerative. While there is a potentially large 'feel good factor' associated with moral regeneration—all manner of activities could be seen as part of the campaign—it will be extremely difficult to empirically demonstrate whether any of these activities actually enhance morality. The range of activities described as having a moral regeneration impact⁷⁰ includes:

- a school feeding scheme and food garden project in Soshanguve;
- an ethical leadership training course run through the University of Stellenbosch;
- a project to promote sexual abstinence run by Diakonia (a Christian organisation) in KwaMashu; and
- a project of the Gender Commission dealing with men and gender, to advocate for gender equality and reduce abuse of women.

However, it is virtually impossible to tell whether any of these activities are having an impact on morality; and which one will have the greater impact (be the best investment for funders interested in moral regeneration).

As long as the entire initiative continues to be conceptualised as a broad movement, with a large number of participants contributing a range of morally regenerative activities, there will continue to be a problem of definition. The tendency to 'double-count' many of the moral regeneration activities may also lead to problems: for instance, the organisation running the school feeding scheme and food garden may want to claim that as a poverty alleviation project or a community development project, as well as a moral regeneration project. Similarly, in the government sector, the rehabilitation of offenders is one of the core functions of the Department of Correctional Services, not a moral regeneration project implemented since the inception of the campaign.

The government is commissioning research to be conducted by the parastatal Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which aims at assessing the 'social wellbeing' of the nation, and it is believed that this research will also provide some indicators of the state of morality. While this is surely an enormous methodological challenge, perhaps it will generate some data to

assist in demonstrating which kinds of activities actually contribute to improved moral fibre. This will be essential for the campaign, as its new focus on advocacy may lead back to an over-emphasis on 'preaching and speaking'; precisely the kind of activities that are hard to measure and sell to funders.

Government's role in moral regeneration

The type of programmes most recently described as government's contribution to the moral regeneration campaign are also those which are described as government's crime prevention programmes, or victim empowerment programmes, or women's empowerment programmes, or child rights programmes. Again this could result in the problem of 'double-counting'. The MRM might benefit from a more frank approach, which makes clear that some ongoing government programmes are seen as contributing to moral regeneration (and making explicit exactly how this contribution is made), rather than appearing to claim that government has initiated new programmes solely for the purpose of contributing to moral regeneration.

The government sector within the moral regeneration initiative appears to be regaining some momentum, and it will be interesting to see how this is sustained in parallel to the MRM itself becoming a more focused advocacy and communication organisation. Already the relationship between the MRM office, itself an offspring of government, and the national government departments has been a little difficult; this relationship will surely be one of the most interesting dynamics of the campaign in the next period.

Government's discourse around moral regeneration looks set to continue as an ideological campaign, with allusions to the anti-apartheid struggle intended to enthuse and mobilise its supporters. For instance, President Mbeki's remarks relating to violence against women and children during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in December 2004:

To make a real difference in the campaign to reduce the incidence of violence against women and children, we must work simultaneously to improve the material lives of our people, while working in these communities to convince them that they too must join the struggle to end violence against women and children. In this regard, we must engage in the kind of popular mobilisation we undertook during the

struggle against apartheid, reaching the people directly and showing them that freedom from apartheid must also mean the freedom of women and children from violence and abuse. ... as communities we need to create widespread awareness of how complicity with crime and criminal behaviour promotes crime. We must hold a mirror to the face of our society and demonstrate the cost of sustaining the market for stolen goods; of protecting and harbouring criminals and of colluding with abusive attitudes towards women and children. ... Clearly, if we are to defeat crime we must educate ourselves about our role in helping to stop corruption that steals from all of us and destroys the moral fabric of our society. We must ensure that every South African makes an informed choice whether they are prepared to be part of criminal!n [sic] and defeat of crime.⁷¹

Both government and the MRM in which it participates will need to refine and adhere to their own appropriate discourses around morality and crime. The shift by the MRM board towards a greater advocacy role for the organisation suggests the possibility of divergent approaches between the NGO and government.

The Zuma connection

The mid-2004 proposal for a 'Council of Patrons' could be seen as a response to the allegations of corruption which continue to be associated with the MRM's original patron, Deputy President Zuma, in an attempt to dilute his association with the campaign. It could also be a way of including some of the key religious leaders in the high profile structures of the campaign, but removing them from positions of executive influence over its operations, or simply of adding important representatives from various constituencies into symbolic positions where they will *not* actually directly engage with the operations of the organisation. In any event, the notion of the 'Council of Patrons' seems to have disappeared from the agenda, as only a new board was proposed at the conference at the end of 2004.

For the foreseeable future then, Deputy President Zuma remains the patron of the MRM. No change in this arrangement seems likely. However, if Zuma is charged with any corruption-related offence, the MRM would need to review the situation. Given the predominance of ANC-aligned members of the MRM board, it is likely that the MRM will follow a similar approach to the ANC in dealing with the corruption allegations associated with Zuma.

The religious-spiritual discourse

Although not religious in phrasing, the moral regeneration initiative is still associated with a religious initiative; and perhaps for that reason is still viewed with some discomfort by those who are uncomfortable with the language and practice of organised religion. For those with a left wing intellectual training (such as many in government and even in the MRM), moral discussion is generally considered ideological, hence, perhaps, the content of the moral regeneration initiative finding itself more often in the ideological terrain of nation building rather than the religious terrain of spirituality.

Conversely, however, the moral regeneration initiative may also have been borne out of a recognition by precisely this same group of ideologues that there is indeed an area of individual and social life beyond the material, which impacts on quality of life and the achievement of the government's election promise to deliver 'a better life for all'. As one of the South African experts on ethics put it:

In the heat of the resistance struggle I think a lot of us lost sight of the whole other side; of people's need for religion or spirituality.⁷²

The use of a religious-spiritual discourse has also been on the increase in first world political discourse in recent years. Conservative prime ministers like John Howard in Australia strongly promote 'family values', and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair uses a religious discourse more openly than any British prime minister in decades, but does so largely in the context of justifying and 'guiding' his own decisions. The rise in power of the conservative Christian lobby is widely understood to be associated with the return to the White House of the Republican presidential candidate after years of slightly more liberal Democratic administration.

United States President George W Bush initiated a faith-based approach when he first took office the first time, and created an 'Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives' in the White House. To lead the new Office, Bush appointed Professor John J Dilulio, the Director of an organisation called PRRAY (Partnership for Research on Religion and At Risk Youth). Dilulio was known for an approach that drew links between religious faith, faith-based activities and organisations, and various measures of socio-economic well-being and the strength of civil society. Much of his work has focused on the problems of young offenders and of imprisonment and rehabilitation. Dilulio resigned from the government Office after less than a year, but continued to

lead the PRRAY initiative and advocate for an approach to youth development and crime prevention which is based on ‘monitoring, mentoring, ministering’ and a “sense of moral obligation to America’s children that transcends conventional political pontification”.⁷³

CONCLUSION: MORAL REGENERATION FOR CRIME PREVENTION

It was shown earlier in this monograph that the campaign for moral regeneration was strongly linked, at its inception, to a concern about crime in South Africa. Even mid-way through the development of the campaign, the official report on the 2000 government-led workshops on moral regeneration made a direct link between the moral regeneration initiative and crime prevention:

We cannot expect the police to be social workers, parents and everything. Their task is to help apprehend lawbreakers (that is, to act upon immoral behaviour) whereas ours is to ensure that there are less, or no, lawbreakers (that is, helping people to make ethical decisions from the start).⁷⁴

Perhaps one of the central problems in maintaining a link between the moral regeneration and crime prevention initiatives is well-illustrated by the above quote: in fact, not all immoral behaviour is actually illegal or criminalised; and the job of the police is to apprehend those who engage in illegal behaviour, not those who engage in immoral behaviour. The relationship between law and morality is complex and debatable, hence it is not possible to simply conflate illegal behaviour with immoral behaviour. Indeed, a definition of what kinds of moral issues to focus on, and the drawing of any clear lines about what constitutes ‘immoral behaviour’ has not even been possible within the moral regeneration initiative. For instance, the movement committed itself to the broad promotion of ‘high moral values’⁷⁵ but has not taken a clear position on whether interpersonal violence is unacceptable (perhaps because corporal punishment of children is still widely accepted in South Africa?).

Unless the moral regeneration initiative is able to agree on and hold some absolute positions, it is likely to remain beset by the problems of misunderstanding and suspicion that have dogged it to date. Its attempts to be inclusive, and to allow all sectors of its membership and affiliates to hold their own views, mitigates against this need for clarity; and so, in the very nature of

the 'broad alliance' it has sought to create, the MRM has perhaps been its own worst enemy. This monograph has sought to demonstrate, in respect of moral regeneration, the problem that Xolela Mangu describes in respect of black economic empowerment:

A few years down the line we shall be lamenting that the concept is not working, forgetting that we did not define it in the first place.⁷⁶

A second dimension of the relationship between moral regeneration and crime prevention is the campaign's ambiguous relationship to existing crime prevention initiatives. It failed to ally itself with the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) (although this may have been wise, given that the NCPS subsequently fell into disfavour⁷⁷), but has engaged occasionally with other government anti-crime campaigns. In particular, the moral regeneration initiative has been associated with the campaign against gender violence and child abuse. This is evidenced, for example, by its participation in the annual Sixteen Days of Activism Against Women and Child Abuse, its participation in a Men's Dialogue project with the Commission on Gender Equality, and its endorsement of the HSRC's work around gender and fatherhood.⁷⁸ The MRM often cites the work of the Department of Sports and Recreation—notably its (almost-defunct) Young Champions project—as part of the moral regeneration under way in the country, but seldom refers to the Values in Education programme within schools. The selection of which government crime prevention campaigns the MRM works with may be a product simply of lack of capacity, or of some 'matching' of themes and issues with those prioritised by the MRM—issues of gender roles and families tend to be seen as critical for the production of morals.

The moral regeneration initiative has also failed to engage with other NGOs doing crime prevention work that could be relevant to its efforts. For instance, many efforts at early childhood development, youth development or diversion, parenting, and violence prevention may, in fact, be contributing to moral regeneration. But the campaign seems to have limited its engagement with these types of crime prevention work to a few of the NGOs dealing with family violence, or with parastatal organisations (such as the HSRC), or initiatives that are close to government, such as Business Against Crime and the Freedom Park Trust. The moral content of 'Restorative Justice' initiatives would offer significant partnership potential for the MRM, which has not been taken up. The MRM has also failed to profile or comment on, or significantly engage with, different foci on ethics in the business sector (many of which are

also non-state, or civil society, initiatives), or the implications of the King Commission on corporate governance and anti-corruption efforts in the private sector. Recent debates on empowerment and social values have also provided openings for engagements around morality in respect of wealth and inequality.

The campaign's failures to engage with non-state initiatives are significant lost opportunities. They may, once again, be a result of the organisation's limited capacity and consequent failures to build effective networks,⁷⁹ or may be related to the campaign's own uncertainty and ambiguity about the role of NGOs and civil society. The more mainstream crime prevention NGOs may also be wary of engagement with the moral regeneration initiative, because of perceptions that it is either (or both) a religious/spiritual initiative, or closely allied to government.

The development of the moral regeneration initiative in South Africa has seen the concept defined both in terms of crime prevention and nation building. In some incarnations, moral regeneration has had a distinctly spiritual and religious tone, in others, a strong flavour of African nationalist ideology. Remarkably, and probably only because of the South African tolerance for diversity, it has survived its own confusion and embraced a range of differing interest groups—conservative religious groups, some elements of the business community, political parties, government and intellectuals.

It seems that much of the survival of the moral regeneration campaign is due to support from the ruling African National Congress, (which is often not explicit) and from some actors within government. This is hardly surprising, given that the larger political project of the ANC is a nation-building project that would require also the building of a new social morality. Apartheid surely did not bequeath an attractive or hopeful moral legacy—of the need for moral regeneration there is no doubt. What remains to be seen is whether a largely ideological campaign of this type will deliver any meaningful results in terms of a more socially responsible and humane morality for South Africa.

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- 54 For instance, at the First National Conference, one regional committee put forward a strong anti-abortion position, arguing that abortion was a key moral problem; but this was not engaged with at all by the conference, perhaps because of the lack of a clear position on the issue, or because of a desire to avoid potentially divisive debates within the movement.
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