

# MORAL REGENERATION MOVEMENT HISTORY

The origins of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) date back to a meeting in June 1997 between then-President Nelson Mandela and key South African Faith Based Organisation leaders, the then Deputy Minister of Education and the SABC, to discuss spiritual transformation. At that meeting, President Mandela spoke about the role of religion in nation-building and social transformation, and the need for religious institutions to work with the state to overcome 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” President Mandela stated.

Mandela then called upon religious leaders to become actively involved in a campaign, which would subsequently become the moral regeneration initiative. At a moral summit in October 1998, he outlined some of the problems the moral regeneration campaign would have to tackle, as follows:

“The symptoms of our spiritual malaise are only too familiar. They include the extent of corruption both in the 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.”

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.

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

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offices in Johannesburg. Another senior government figure associated with the early moral regeneration initiative was Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa (a key religious figure within the ANC, former deputy minister of education and former Chairperson of the Commission of Religious Affairs Tshwane).

The President, the Deputy President and then Deputy Minister of Education met in February 2000 and expressed 'deep concern about the worsening moral situation'. In early 2000 a Moral Regeneration Workshop was convened to renew interest and energy in the campaign.

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. Some of the events held around the country after the national launch were:

1. Religious parliament' held in the Northern Cape, May 2002;
2. Day of Prayer & Moral Regeneration Rally in Tshwane May 2002;
3. Religious parliament' held in the Eastern Cape, July 2002;
4. Moral Regeneration Summit in the Western Cape, August 2002;
5. Prayer Day for Moral Regeneration, Northern Cape, Sept 2002; and
6. Moral Regeneration meeting in Wesselsbron, Free State, October 2002.

'In September 2002 then Deputy President 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". 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 Mdhladhla, 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. Mdhladhla described as 'time-consuming' the process of 'unpacking what moral regeneration is about', and, indeed, the new organisation had to define its role carefully in relation to the earlier

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formulations of the moral regeneration campaign, particularly in relation to government and the religious sector.

At the end of 2002, Zuma told Parliament that this was evidence ‘that the MRM is taking root at every level’ In the same speech, Zuma also re-emphasised that “the moral regeneration movement is multi-sectoral and not confined to the religious sector only”.

January 2003 saw the start of the Charter Process which was aimed at finding consensus on the common values that South Africans shared. The launch of the Charter for Moral Communities Campaign was addressed by then Deputy President JG Zuma in his capacity as Patron of the Moral Regeneration Movement. A consultative period which took roughly five years in all started in earnest. The Maurice Webb Research Institute was engaged to facilitate the process of speaking to the various stakeholders to find consensus. The consultations were nationwide and involved members of civil society, faith-based structures, traditional leadership, labour, political parties, youth and women formations, government, academia, etc. In 2007 the Charter of Positive Values was finalized. With nine moral themes, the booklet was developed such that it complimented any and every initiative that sought to bring about positive change in our society. The aim is for the Charter to serve as a moral compass for all South Africans when making decisions of whatever nature.

On 25 July 2008, the Charter of Positive Values was presented by the MRM Board to former President Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela, who was instrumental in ensuring the start of the discussion on “the reconstruction and development programme (RDP) of the Soul”.

29 July 2008 saw the entire spectrum of MRM stakeholders gathered for the formal adoption of the Charter of Positive Values, with approximately three thousand delegates from all over South Africa coming to witness the event. The keynote address was given by former Deputy President, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in her capacity as Patron of MRM and both she and the Chairperson of the Moral Regeneration Movement adopted the Charter on behalf of all South Africans.

Chronologically the highlights and milestones of the Moral Regeneration Movement have been as follows:

- 1998: A Moral Summit was called by former President Nelson R Mandela where he called for the “RDP” for the Soul
- 2000: The first consultations with stakeholders: Department of Education, SABC, Faith-Based Organisations and the Presidency were initiated
- 2001: A Working Committee was set up and consultations were broadened to include additional stakeholders

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- 2002: The Moral Regeneration Movement was officially launched under the Patronage of then former Deputy President Hon JG Zuma at the Waterkloof Airforce Base
- 2003: A small Secretariat under the Chairmanship of Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa was employed
- 2003: The Charter process to find common values agreed upon by all South Africans was begun
- 2004: The Moral Regeneration Movement had its first National Conference officiated by the Patron; then Deputy President JG Zuma
- 2005: The Moral Regeneration Movement had its second National Conference officiated the Patron; then Deputy President Hon Ms P Mlambo-Ngcuka
- 2007: The Charter of Positive Values was finalised
- 2008: The Charter of Positive Values was presented to Former President Nelson Mandela by the Board of the MRM and formally endorsed and adopted at the Water Kloof Air Force Base by the Patron; then Deputy President Ms P Mlambo-Ngcuka
- 2009: The Moral Regeneration Movement launched its first MRM Month in July in Polokwane, officiated by then Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms L Xingwana. The closing of MRM Month was held in Mpumalanga.
- 2009: The MRM had its third National Conference at Ekurhuleni in November 2009. The delegates were addressed by then Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms L Xingwana at the gala dinner and keynote address given by Patron; Deputy President Hon PK Motlanthe
- 2010: The second MRM Month was officially opened in the North West Province by then Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture Mr P Mashatile and was hosted by then Premier of the Province Ms Maureen Modiselle. The official closing was held in KwaZulu Natal , hosted by the Premier of the Province, Dr Zweli Mkhize with the closing address delivered by the by the Patron; the Deputy President, Mr PK Motlanthe
- 2011: The third MRM Month was officially opened in the Northern Cape Province, hosted by the Premier of the province, Ms Hazel Jenkins with the official opening addressing delivered by the Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr J Phaahla. The official closing ceremony was held in the Eastern Cape Province, hosted

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by the Premier the Hon Ms Kiviet and ceremony itself held at the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. The Patron of the Moral Regeneration Movement, the Deputy President Mr PK Motlanthe delivered the official closing address.

2011: The Moral Regeneration Movement piloted a Youth Project targeting both in school and out of school youth and contracted sixteen [16] Youth Coordinators, two from each province as part of job creation and skills transfer programme.

The programme was run for six months and generated a great deal of interest from the Project Coordinators and the communities they served.