**What is the difference between restitution and charity?**

Perhaps the most significant difference between charity and restitution is simply a paradigm shift: recognising not that we are giving out of magnanimity, but that people continue to suffer because of actions and policies in which we were complicit or from which we have directly or indirectly benefitted. Restitution, then, is a way of trying to make right a historical injustice. It entails recognising that a wrong has been committed, that we were somehow complicit in it, and that its ramifications continue to be felt.

Restitution, unlike charity, is:

* Highly relational
* Potentially costly
* Long-term
* Developed in conversation with those toward whom restitution is being made
* An act taking place between two equal partners rather than one who always gives and another who always receives.

Restitution will involve the development of relationships in which we hear the needs of those toward whom restitution is being made. It involves repentance, in the Biblical Greek, *metanoia,* or literally “to turn away from.” It is a turning away from the conventional way of charity to embrace a different way of relating to each other, of recognising and owning responsibility and seeking to set things right. It is operating from a *justice* framework rather than a *charity* framework.