**What about grace?**

For those in the church, grace is an indispensable part of how we understand the world and our relationship to God and each other. Receiving a gift we do not deserve is at the heart of the salvation narrative. But too often we turn to what Bonhoeffer called “cheap grace.” Cheap grace wants the gift without any of the attendant responsibilities of the relationship that come with it; it wants forgiveness to mean historical amnesia. Rather, Bonhoeffer argued, we must hold on to costly grace, where we recognise that the cost of what is free to the recipient may have been very high for the giver, and requires a response.

Cheap grace, says Bonhoeffer in *Cost of Discipleship*, is, among other things, “forgiveness without repentance;” it is “the grace we bestow on ourselves,” and it is “a deadly enemy.”

As South Africans, we might easily have gone the way of a violent revolution in the handover of political power. Instead, we received the grace of a negotiated settlement that allowed us to dream of a South Africa that would belong to all who lived here. Such grace requires a response. Those who benefitted from apartheid must reach out to those who still suffer from the wounds of the past. Gratitude and generosity are the natural responses to grace; restitution is a way of embodying those values.