**What is necessary for restitution to lead to healing?**

For restitution to lead to the healing of relationships and communities, a number of steps are helpful.

Acknowledging past wrongdoing and the ways we have either been victimised by it or benefitted from it is valuable in laying the foundation for open, honest dialogue and future relationship. While this can be uncomfortable, particularly for those who have benefitted in the past from unjust structures, it is important to be alert to our own defensiveness and to try to put it aside to hear others speak.

It is crucial to recognise that everyone has something of value to contribute and everyone has something they are lacking. We are seeking to develop interdependent webs of mutuality, in which everyone has something to give, everyone has something to learn, and everyone has something to receive. This keeps us from recreating unhealthy dynamics in which an advantaged community is seen as having all the resources and all the answers and a disadvantaged community is again left feeling like the ‘beggar at the gates’. Additionally, one who has suffered loss must focus on what they still have and can contribute in order to heal and move forward.

We must seek to rebuild relationships from a point of equality, whether of race, ethnicity, language or culture. Small but concrete steps such as making friends across racial barriers and learning another’s language and culture help us move out of our old paradigm into a new one.

Look for ways to create concrete acts of restitution. Advantaged communities should remember that they have not only financial resources, but the resources of social and educational capital as well. It is okay to start small. Helping one person find a job that will enhance that person’s self-worth will have benefits for the entire community, and out of that effort the communities may decide together to launch a job creation initiative. Don’t be afraid of small beginnings and small acts of obedience.

Have a common foundation, values and vision between the parties involved. Be clear about why both parties are engaging and what they seek to give and gain in the restitution process.

In making restitution, the responsibility of the “receiving” person must not be taken away lest they lose their dignity. Restitution is highly contextual: knowledge of one’s self and the other people is vital. Restitution is personal and must “fit” the person/s and situation.