**What is the importance for an understanding of self-awareness (e.g. Black Consciousness) in the restitution process?**

In restitution, as opposed to charity, people meet as free and equal partners. The model is not the well-resourced giving to the disadvantaged out of magnanimity or *noblesse oblige*. It is rather one in which, having recognised that in Christ we were meant to live *with* and *for* each other and that therefore when one part of the body suffers, all suffer, we seek a solution to the problems that plague us together.

But people who have been ‘in charge’ for a very long time naturally assume leadership roles as their right, and those who have been marginalised often don’t know exactly how to speak up against that. One of the most pernicious sins of the apartheid era was that it robbed black people not only of their material goods, but of a sense of self-worth and belonging. The conviction that one is uniquely made in God’s image and stands on equal footing with all other people is a conviction that must be restored to many affected by apartheid. Many have internalised the belief in blackness as ugly, inferior, and undesirable. Steve Bantu Biko addressed this when he said that “the most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.”

Black South Africans must regain a sense of their dignity and autonomy if they are to engage in the restitution process with white South Africans without letting white South Africans dictate the terms. This is critical to authentic restitution, which involves those who have benefitted listening to the victims and letting them dictate the terms of engagement. Some of this will evolve naturally as relationships are built and people get comfortable enough to speak honestly with each other. But without beginning with a baseline conviction that we meet each other as equals, we are unlikely to get to this point. Black churches and institutions must reclaim the conviction that God looks at blackness, as God does at the rest of creation, and calls it good.