



Church Alliance for Social Transformation



C·A·S·T·

MOVEBEYONDCHARITY

Annual
Report
2024



CAST Leadership & Chairperson Report

If we think back over the last couple of years, the picture that jumps into our heads is one of those 4-seasons charts that you find on the wall of many pre-school classrooms. Here in KZN, our seasons all look quite similar. We don't have the drastic changing seasons, but rather a timeless sky where warmth never fades; trees are evergreen; and a flower is always blooming. But picture with us, if you will, that pre-school chart with snowflakes, daisies, sunglasses and falling leaves.

We, at CAST, have come through a long autumn, with the winds of change blowing steadily through our spaces. We witnessed the colours of our leafy canvas changing. Green. Yellow. Orange. Red. Brown. Colours holding the promise of transformation. We felt the air grow crisp and released the odd shiver in the wake of changing temperatures. Leaves danced in the wind's embrace, and then, at just the right time, we watched them fall, shedding weight to make room for what was yet to come. In the quiet rustle of fallen leaves, change was written in every breath, in every meeting, in every email. And though unsettling, autumn carried for us a quiet knowing that all things must fall and fade before they can rise anew.

2024 felt like winter. But not because of a snowy surface or visible stillness. 2024 was a year of unseen growth; a year of formation unfolding beneath the surface. Our vision has worked its way deep into the hearts of our staff and partners, and has been fleshed out in the development of programmes and policies; workshops and word documents; financials and friendships.

Beneath the figurative frozen surface, we felt life stirring, waiting for her moment of birth. Hidden in the secret place, we have seen movement and growth and preparation and hope. Potential has been knitted into skill; partnerships have been forged; and dreams have been painted onto canvases awaiting the day when they'll rise to greet the light. It is growth that has bloomed in the silence, and in patience, waits for the world above to witness its transformation. Even in the illusion of seeming stillness of 2024, life has been quietly preparing to bloom, preparing for the coming spring.

As 2024 turns into 2025, it has been great to bear witness to the winter that has passed. And while there is beauty in every season, as we see spring arriving and the green shoots starting to break their way through the soil, we are filled with wonder at God's provision and faithfulness. He is always at work!

As we look back over 2024, we are grateful for the deep and firm foundation He has built in us. And as we look forward to 2025 and beyond, we are excited for a spring and summer full of colour and life and birth; seasons bearing MUCH fruit! Isaiah 43:19 – *'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?'*

- The Strategic Leadership Team

Alliance-building Ibandla Malivuke Conference 2024





Alliance-Building

Alliance-building is a core area of work for us. Being an alliance is something that's reflected in our name and we believe that in order to see the change we long for, we need a movement of people, sharing a heart and mind, and mutually working towards more of his justice and peace on earth.

Ibandla Malivuke was one of our major alliance-building moments in 2024. This very special gathering took place on the 13th & 14th September at Glenridge Church in the Durban CBD with almost 250 people in attendance. This is our annual "Church Arise" conference: a time of renewal, refreshing, envisioning and equipping for all of those passionate about local missions, community transformation and seeing His Kingdom come *"on earth as it is in Heaven."*

We heard from a range of incredible speakers, thinkers, practitioners and church leaders on a range of topics focussed around themes emerging from the Beatitudes and Jesus' early ministry as recorded in Matthew. This was the lens through which we considered our role and response as modern-day believers wrestling with living out our faith in our South African reality. Through all of this, we considered what the enduring call of the Kingdom is which echoes throughout the Scriptures, through time and space to us as believers gathered in Durban in September 2024... and how this call changes how we engage with the world around us.

The two days of the conference gave us much food for thought. Those who attended shared about how challenging, hope-fuelling, equipping and vision-expanding this time together was. Another great outcome from our Ibandla Malivuke Conference is the forging of new friendships and alliance-building with a broader network of churches and organisations.

"The highlight is the epic diversity within the room, from church leaders to people who work on the ground in small and big communities. It has helped to gain a deeper understanding of the real, on-the-ground problems in our country, and how the Kingdom of God being put in place in communities helps to solve those problems."

- Rev. John Benn, Home Ground Westville Baptist Church

"[The conference setting] gave me a picture of a pebble in a pond rippling. It's not easy out there doing justice work, especially social Christian justice work. Ibandla Malivuke – we need to wake up, speak up, and shake up, because there's work out there."

- Seth Naicker – Heartlines SA

"I've had some interesting revelations coming to understand how Christ worked, how He chose His disciples, and how we are all equal, with an emphasis on peace and Shalom. I would like to go back to my community and implement everything that I've learnt here, starting in my church."

- Nqobile Zindela – CAST Just Leader 2024

"It has been electrifying...to be able to experience such freedom in worship, and have the skills to explore the Kingdom, and to expand the Kingdom"

- Zoë Burrell – Brethren Church

The Journey with Churches

At the heart of our work in the world, CAST journeys with churches as they seek to see His Kingdom come, His will be done, "on earth as it is in heaven". As Jesus' prayer is answered, we will see Shalom - (holistic peace) filled communities, full of justice, righteousness and abundant life. The journey is called Masihambisane as it is an invitation to walk together towards the peace and justice of God in the world.

Over this last year, we have had the privilege of journeying with the leaderships of 8 different churches quite closely and a broad range of churches more informally. What has been important is that no Church-CAST journey looks the same, and yet a really helpful learning has been that it is extremely helpful to have some basic building blocks in place at the outset of the journey to help to develop a shared vision for the work...a vision rooted in scripture and prophetic imagination (God's dream for the world). This involves 3 initial steps at the outset of Masihambisane. The first two steps are geared around Bible study in order to develop a fuller imagination for the vision for our work - where does this particular church feel God leading them? The third step then involves action planning; both for taking the work forward within the church and then for taking missions and social outreach work into their neighbourhoods forward. For the latter, we then move onto the stage of Project Support which is detailed in the following pages. We've found that starting the work here allows for the greatest alignment and whole-church transformation.

Masihambisane involves a process developed by Latin American theologians known as the praxis cycle. This action-reflection cycle creates space to reflect on and hear from God and the world in a way that leads to direct action. And then have action which leads to further reflection and listening for even more impactful action. As we act and listen, we pay particular attention to those at the margins of our communities. It is a cycle that moves us and churches closer and closer to God's shalom and justice.

We have found this work to be most transformative for individuals and the world when it is leader-led but congregation-owned. This means that the work starts with leaders and then work is done to bring the entire congregation in. This is where we see the most transformative action.



Masihambisane - "let us journey together"

Leadership





Leadership

One of our core focus areas at CAST is around leadership development. This is because we believe that to see a church (the body of Christ) actively working towards peace and justice in the world, we need leaders from across different sectors who are able to integrate their whole-life transforming faith into their areas of leadership. To unpack this further, more than 80% of South Africa's population marked themselves as Christians in the last census. We also know that South Africa has the highest inequality rate in the world, one of the highest crime rates in the world, and one of the largest levels of unemployment.

These different stats do not seem to match up with the level of professed Christianity. At best, it seems that our faith is not impacting our world; at worst, the stats would suggest that Christians are involved in perpetuating indifference or injustice. The importance of raising leaders who are able to think about the problems our country and world face through a theological and faith-based lens is therefore essential. We need Christians who are able to bring Jesus' hope, love, peace and justice into every sector of our country. This is where our leadership work comes in.

Our leadership work involves growing leaders who are fully equipped to understand what justice and injustice in their local areas looks like; how to respond to the latter; and how to lead others in this work. These are leaders who are able to analyse - think theologically about - and then respond to the contexts they find themselves in - in eThekweni, KZN and South Africa - and then lead other people to do the same.

We work with Christian leaders across all sectors (church, business, public services, students and so on) to support them in thinking about their areas of leadership in light of the pressing justice issues that face our people.

Our Just Leaders Course was a major highlight for us in our 2024 leadership work. The 19 learners in our 2024-cohort were an incredibly special group. The diversity of the group (in terms of age, race, socio-economic background and geographic background) truly enriched our discussions and learning.

It was an incredibly heart-warming time for us, as a CAST team, as we observed learners' growth, transformation, academic questioning, engagement and connection to each other growing.

"I leave feeling charged up and ready to rest more and listen to God's plan, to work more in Shalom."

"Impacted my life big time and now I can see clearly!"

"It has encouraged and equipped me to be able to go do what I feel God is calling me to."

"It had a great impact on my life. It has renewed my mind and put into my mind the Kingdom of God."

"This course has developed my leadership skills and most importantly it has given me tools to implement what I have learnt."

Leadership

As we work towards our vision of seeing the peace and justice of God at play in the world, we believe that working alongside leaders from all walks of life is central to this. We believe that 'church' is more than just the building or the gathering and includes the full body of Christ. We would therefore love to see leaders from within this body leading others towards the peace and justice of God in whichever sphere they find themselves; Church, business, family life, school and so on. One of our key areas of work therefore involves leadership support and development around 'just leadership'.

Theology

Walking with churches towards the peace and justice of God in the world requires a theological grounding. In light of this, much of our time involves work with partner theologians to develop resources that the churches we work alongside can use to ground their work and thinking including Bible studies, sermon material, Sunday school material and so on.

The Journey with Churches

At the centre of all we do towards our vision is our work with churches - or "Masihambisane" as we call it. Here we walk alongside churches who are interested in local mission, community transformation or seeing the peace and justice of God in the world around them. We use a learning, reflection and action process known as the "praxis cycle" in this work. Journeying with churches is not a quick fix but a long-term relationship.

Project Support

As churches move through the praxis cycle as we journey with them, they very often decide to respond to various injustices that are present in their community. For example, they may start a project to respond to hunger or quality education. Our offer is then to walk alongside them (and bring practical support and guidance) as they do this so that we can move closer and closer to the peace and justice of God within these projects.

Local Advocacy

As we move towards peace and justice within neighbourhoods, very often transformation requires more than just projects; we find that we need to influence and include those with power to act more justly. Here we support local church groups to develop advocacy strategies and coalitions to be able to do this.

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Alliance-Building

CAST, at its heart, is an alliance of like-minded churches, individuals and faith-based organisations committed to seeing the good news of Jesus' justice and peace at work in the world, reconciling and restoring all things. All our work is built around this idea of a "movement" of people on this journey together - sharing with, learning from, encouraging and inspiring each other.



Project Support

As we journey with churches towards the peace and justice of God in the world, there are two journeys we take with them:

- A journey into the church. Our prayer is that every believer and follower of Jesus would take up the call to be a 'Kingdom-person' - a person who daily and practically lives out the values and vision of the Kingdom of God in every space He has put them, whether their workplace, their homes and their neighbourhoods.
- A journey into the community. As God's church, we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus and bringers of Heaven to earth. As a church looks at their immediate neighbourhood and does not turn their heads from the pain and suffering around them, we move towards being bringers of God's wholeness into these spaces. This will often involve developing a community outreach project to respond to the pain or brokenness that is witnessed in the neighbourhood.

We are passionate about projects that are sustainable and life-bringing for all, and are so excited about the support role we get to play alongside churches in this process. This role often looks like support with project design, linking with other subject-matter experts who are able to input into the project, support with funding proposals and project monitoring.

A beautiful example that has emerged over the last few months comes from Edamini Baptist Church who felt moved by the Genesis 1 invitation to "*Edenise*" their neighbourhood and decided to plant trees around their church.

Another example comes from KwaNdengezi Local Church. As this church's leadership team, led by Pastor Strydom Msomi, sat in scripture and asked God what "*on earth as it is in heaven*" looked like in their neighbourhood, the massive, and growing, issue of hunger has emerged as a major concern for them and through discussions and praxis-based work they have started developing the "footprint" project: a dream to ensure that no person goes hungry and that God's footprint is felt around their neighbourhood.

Through the CAST alliance, some of the church leaders connected with Dan and Kerry Wiens who run Inundo Development and Farming God's Way in KZN. This beautiful connection, in turn, led to the start of such a hope-filled project led by S'duduzile Nsibande and a team from the church where a food garden has been started with the harvest being used to support grandmothers in need. Watch this space to see where this group goes next!

As we have adjusted the way we work, many of the projects we used to run in communities have come to a close over the last three years, as we pass the baton to churches to own and run whatever projects they decide to. If a church so chooses, our commitment is to support this process through '**Masihambisane**'.



Project Support

The final of these projects to come to a point of closure was our food parcel programme, which culminated, in its old format, at the end of 2024, after much processing and conversation with our partner churches. This, in no way, means that we will stop focusing on food security and the issue of hunger, which is a growing issue in many of the communities we work in. Projects which tackle this significant issue will very much be a part of what we do, IF a church desires to focus on this area of work. The major shift here is that these projects will be initiated and managed by churches, with the SUPPORT of CAST and the Alliance, rather than being a CAST project.

We are so very grateful to you for your years of generosity towards our food parcel programme at CAST. Without your support, we would never have been able to have the reach and impact that we had. Since 2017, we have distributed 23 728 food parcels, impacting 105 412 people in 14 different communities.



Theology

As we think about how change happens, one of our core convictions is that our theology matters; what we believe about God, His world, His redemptive work in the world and all that goes along with this all matters for how we live and engage with others. If we are longing to see the church active and involved in bringing about God's justice and peace in the world, then our starting point needs to be theological; so that as people of faith, desiring to follow Jesus, we have a clear rationale for why we're doing what we're doing.

For this reason, whenever we start journeying with any church or group, our starting point is to sit in scripture together, chewing on the timeless truths we find within its pages. This, we have found, produces lasting change rooted in deep conviction.

This last year, we had the joy of sitting with 11 different groups made up of 137 people, using the Contextual Bible Study methodology, to delve into a range of complex social issues ranging from hunger and food, to gender-based violence, peace-making, and addiction. These discussions are always so rich and insightful and spaces where we learn so much from the participants.

It has also been a joy to work with and learn from a number of theologians, both academic and practical, to develop skills both in facilitating and writing these sorts of materials. Another amazing resource we have explored is Daniel Erlander's book, *Manna and Mercy*, as a resource for group work. All of these processes have yielded robust discussions and have been central in developing imagination for the work that needs to be done.

Imagination: The dictionary defines imagination as "the act or power of forming a mental picture of something not present, especially of something one has not known or experienced". In our work of journeying with the church towards God's peace and justice, the first step is developing an imagination for the Kingdom - an imagination for what our neighbourhoods would actually look like if they were "on earth as it is in heaven".

"I found the Contextual Bible Studies insightful, equipping, and informative. They truly provided us with tools for engaging scripture in ways that directly addresses the pressing issues faced by our surrounding communities...the session really encouraged a participatory approach where, as individuals and the church, we could reflect on Biblical texts in light of what our communities are undergoing. I believe that using such methods can really empower us as a church to become active agents of change in addressing systemic issues such as poverty, hunger, as well as injustices."

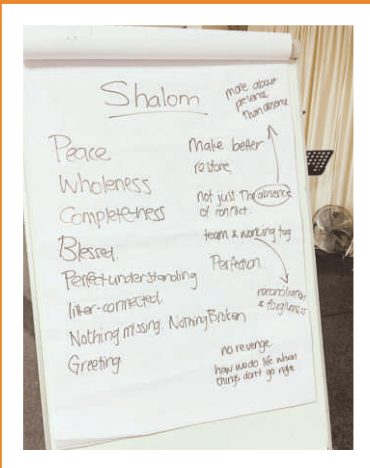
- Emmanuel Zondi, Associate Pastor at Redeemed Baptist Family Church in Noodsberg, Chibini, and Appelsbosch.

"In Savanna Park, we looked at the Exodus story to think about freedom from addiction and what liberation means. Mthobisi Mbutho commented "Ayi I really learnt a lot. When I did the Bible Study, I got a chance to really notice and see how the false gods [of addiction] have been controlling me, and the people out here." He went on to share how reading scripture together has given him a fresh understanding of tackling the challenge of addiction in their area."

- Mthobisi Mbutho, Savannah Park Baptist Church



Theology 



Local Advocacy

Our final quadrant of work is around advocacy. This is based on the deep conviction that change sometimes requires more than changed hearts and changed actions of individuals or small groups of people; sometimes the injustice or lack of peace we witness in our world are a result of systems which are unfair or broken. Changing these requires more than well designed projects. It requires advocacy; influencing those with power to change the unjust realities. This may involve local advocacy or broader levels of advocacy.

This is an area of work that we haven't yet fully walked into in CAST's new way of working, but it's one we're so excited to see where it leads as we progress. We were also privileged to get a glimpse of what this could look like in late 2024. Our team and the leadership from Savannah Park Baptist Church, who we are journeying with, attended the 2-day National Homelessness Conversation in Durban in November. This is a network of practitioners who are actively working to tackle homelessness in our cities across the country. The team from Savannah Park are feeling called to work in the space of addiction (which, in their community, is closely tied to homelessness).

Being at the Dialogue was an amazing opportunity to listen and learn from others doing the work, and importantly, from people experiencing homelessness themselves. This is a key part of our praxis-based approach - immersing ourselves before moving to action in order to really understand the situation well. One of the incredible things we were exposed to here was the power of alliance-building for advocacy - both for influencing local by-laws and national policy which affects those living in homelessness.

Here, NGOs, faith groups, churches, academics and homeless people worked together to influence policies and practices which are unjust. This was such a helpful time of learning for us and the Savannah Park team and we're so looking forward to seeing where their work takes them next.



Finance Report

Summarised Balance Sheet for the year ended December 2024				
	31 Dec 24	31 Dec 23	R Change	% Change
ASSETS				
Current Assets	811 979	2 253 949	-1 441 970	-64,0%
Fixed Assets	49 208	52 792	-3 583	-6,8%
Investments	5 137 048	3 416 718	1 720 330	50,4%
TOTAL ASSETS	5 998 235	5 723 458	274 776	4,8%
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Total Liabilities	18 082	15 758	2 323	14,7%
Capital and Reserves				
Funds	5 687 520	5 632 838	54 681	1,0%
Profit for the Year	292 633	74 861	217 772	290,9%
Shareholder funds	5 980 153	5 707 700	272 453	4,8%
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	5 998 235	5 723 458	274 776	4,8%

2024 was another solid financial year for CAST. Donation income increased 2,5% whilst expenses reduced 2,7% resulting in a surplus for the year of R293k. An increase in local donations offset the reduction in foreign income. Sadly during the year, Mission Hills informed us that they could not continue to support CAST. This longstanding relationship will be sorely missed, not only from an income perspective but also the strong relationships that have been formed over the years.

Investment income contributed significantly again this year. Strong expense management continues to be a hallmark of CAST's good governance processes. This is evidenced by the overall reduction in total expenses.

Summarised Income Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2024				
	Jan - Dec 24	Jan - Dec 23	R Change	% Change
Income				
Westville Baptist Church	373 275	476 228	-102 953	-21,6%
Local Churches	12 600	19 100	-6 500	-34,0%
Foreign Churches	535 162	785 359	-250 197	-31,9%
Local Income	2 862 153	2 394 943	467 209	19,5%
	3 783 190	3 675 631	107 559	2,9%
Investment Income	595 741	596 909	-1 168	-0,2%
Total Income	4 378 931	4 272 540	106 391	2,5%
Expense				
Personnel Expenses	1 593 761	1 679 410	-85 649	-5,1%
Property Expenses	57 828	56 832	996	1,8%
Operations Expenses	332 597	316 336	16 261	5,1%
Programme Expenses	1 283 535	1 531 391	-247 857	-16,2%
Marketing Expenses	50 109	55 022	-4 913	-8,9%
Other Expenses	768 469	558 687	209 782	37,5%
Total Expense	4 086 298	4 197 678	-111 381	-2,7%
Profit for the Year	292 633	74 861	217 772	290,9%

The financial position of CAST remains sound. Liabilities are all current and investments are well managed. Regular reviews are held with Alexander Forbes to assess risk profile of the invested funds. The financial structure of the Trust is solid with good liquidity and risk management.

2024 MAJOR DONORS

The Trustees, Board, Staff and Clients of CAST wish to thank all our volunteers, donors and partners for every gift of time, resources and finances in 2024.



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The Church Alliance for Social Transformation (CAST) is a registered NPO (085-077 NPO) operating in 14 communities in KZN with the mission to align, equip and empower the local churches to transform their communities.

Board of Trustees: John Benn, Peter Clark, Patricia Sibanyoni

Board of Directors: Debbie Austwick (Chairperson), Neville Dunn (Treasurer), Terri Clapperton, Sibusiso Mkhwanazi, Kercy Pillay, Emmanuel Zondi, Candace Davidson-Moolman

Cover Photo: Ngobile Zindela was a part of our 2024 Just Leaders cohort. Based in Savannah Park, she is a small business owner with a passion for seeing change in her community. This photo was taken when she attended the Ibandla Malivuke Conference in September 2024. Photo by: Rolan Gulston