



Where Justice and Truth Meet

July, 2025

Rooted in our prayer for the life of the world, and in our care for our common home, we are strengthened by our Associates and partners-in-mission to walk together into a future of authentic intercultural living.

– 2024 General Chapter Statement

Cutting USAID Affects our Brothers & Sisters

In Peru



For thirteen years, support from the United States government enabled the replacement of

thousands of hectares of coca leaves (used to make the drug cocaine) in the Peruvian Amazon with alternative crops, primarily cocoa (beans used in making chocolate) and high-quality coffee.

Now, with the closure of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Peru, more than 87,000 farming families fear that years of effort will evaporate. USAID helped to rescue more than 114,000 hectares of crops from drug trafficking.



The National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs in Peru (DEVIDA), an entity attached to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, have budgeted a total of 220 million soles for alternative development in 2025 and project that this will increase to 265 million soles by 2026. But these funds are insufficient compared to US cooperation.

For more information see

<https://convoca.pe/agenda-propia/usa-id-fin-de-la-cooperacion-amenaza-mas-de-114-mil-hectareas-de-cultivos-rescatados>

Region San Martin, located in the Peruvian Amazon, is where many of these families benefited from USAID. With alternative farming,

the people in the region succeeded in mitigating the rate of poverty.

Without external support, poverty might increase as in other regions of the Peruvian Amazon. See <https://www.comexperu.org.pe/articulo/pobreza-monetaria-solo-siete-departamentos-estan-mejor-que-previo-a-la-pandemia>

In Kenya

Margaret Lombe, Springfield Dominican Associate and JPIC member, is Associate Professor and BRIDGE Program Co-Director at Boston University, with an expertise in social work and global health equity.



This summer students enrolled in my 'Social Work & Human Rights' course working in

collaboration with the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) had the opportunity to engage with refugees from over 21 Africa countries. Our work focused on addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities and creating a WorkerSpace for young men. During our visit I was intrigued by the generosity of the United States [for years the US has been the primary donor of the food aid that sustains the refugee population] alongside its current cruelty. [Millions of Children at Risk After UNICEF Reports Dire Funding Cuts - Kenyans.co.ke;](#) [Refugees in Kenyan camp face hunger after USAID funding freeze](#)

I share this experience with you because, what we witnessed in Kenya, Kakuma Refugee Camp, is only a fraction of the challenges faced by refugees worldwide as the result of the cuts in funding.

Christian Foundation: The Power of Love or the Love of Power?

Consider what we too often see and hear in the news: anti-immigrant sentiment; denials of structural racism; disenfranchisement of indigenous persons; antisemitism; anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment; othering people who are different in religion, skin color, nationality, ethnicity; support for patriarchal gender roles; and even support for political violence.

On the surface, these may seem like isolated issues and yet they are connected by strong beliefs and ideologies. Too often, they are presented under the guise of defending “Christian values.” Like an iceberg, we see facts on the surface while underneath they are grounded in a skewed understanding of who God calls us to be. Like idols they distort Gospel values.

In the Old Testament we find God calling us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Lev 19:18). Jesus also commands us to love God and our neighbor (Mark 12:29-31); and to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry (Matt 25:31-46). The Gospel constantly reminds us that every person is valued and loved.



From the time Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, there have been distortions of Jesus’ message of God’s inclusive love. Throughout history we have seen

ideologies develop that misuse Scripture and these gospel mandates: the Doctrine of Discovery; the belief that only Christians can be saved; apartheid; and a belief that the United States is a divinely ordained Christian nation.

This latter one, which has come to be known as Christian Nationalism, has become a growing political movement in the U.S. Other countries also are experiencing a rise in nationalistic politics. Asserting that Christians with a certain

set of political and theological views have exclusive access to God’s love can lead people to deny their neighbors the right to fully participate, can even be the motivation for acts of violence against them. Such actions ignore that God’s love is for the whole world.

Father Bryan Massingale, professor of theology and social ethics at Fordham University, suggests that the ideology is rooted in a misunderstood desire for belonging, the same human need that gangs tap into. Jesus showed us that if belonging is only for a privileged few, it will not satisfy the deep spiritual longing for community and belonging that is rooted in all of us. Father Massingale further suggests that what is needed is reconciliation.

Video Resources

Father Bryan Massingale, professor of theology and social ethics at Fordham University, in his talk *Redeeming the Soul of America: Racial and LGBTQ Justice*, connects Christian Nationalism to racism.

<https://www.uctv.tv/shows/39381> (88 min) (Nov 2023)

James Talarico, a Baptist seminary student in a sermon, clearly and unapologetically contrasts the message of Jesus in the Gospel and the power, fear, and violence of Christian Nationalism.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Blph_2RSBno (18 min.) (Oct 2023)

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Why I am against Christian Nationalism*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXEAZUA3JkM> (3:20 min) (Aug 2023)

Katherine Stewart, author of *The Power Worshipers*, as part of a panel shares how she defines Christian Nationalism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhGaNCqIWDE&t=1s> (3:30-8:40 on the video for her section)