

### From Our Heart-Home to Yours

Trust is the backbone of relationships.
And relationships, to us, are everything.
Building strong, trusting relationships with
activists and organizers on the front lines of
social change is how this small organization
is able to make a major impact on the
landscape of Religious Right violence.

This is why your trust in our stewardship during our first year of leadership at Soulforce means the world to us. We love Soulforce ferociously, and we know we're not the only ones. This organization has done miraculous work for over 20 years to save lives and transform cultural & institutional conditions for marginalized people all across the United States and in many places beyond.

Ending religion-based violence and discrimination is critical work, and we know that we can do it, as long as we are in it together and trusting one another. So thank you for loving the work of Soulforce through the years, and thank you for being a part of Soulforce as we vision and craft a world free from religion-based harm.

With ferocious love & spirits unyielding,

Yaz Mendez Nuñez & Rev. Alba Onofrio
Co-Executive Directors



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# Indomitable Spirits. Uncomprising Politics

#### Do you believe we can transform the spiritual conditions of our world?

Sabotaging Christian Supremacy is a high stakes endeavor. For centuries, certain forms of Christianity have been weaponized as a tool to moralize wide-scale injustice. Today, the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed and magnified the consequences of these fundamentalist theologies on LGBTQI people, Women, and People of Color, who are disproportionately affected by the social, economic, and public health consequences of the virus.

In spite of this, we believe that another world is afoot.

This year, Soulforce has made great interventions on fundamentalist ideologies and sewn hope into the spirits of queer and trans people and our allies around the world. In this programming year, we have collaborated with 49 organizations, faith communities, and coalitions in hostile contexts to live out our beliefs in a world free from Spiritual Violence. We are developing and delivering accessible resources that hone theological imaginations. We are partnering with Latin American

activists across borders, sharing and cross-pollinating strategies and tactics for confronting fundamentalism.

With all we have seen and all the people we have met doing transformative work, we can't help but feel optimistic about the future of our movements.

At Soulforce, you will often hear the phrase "Indomitable Spirits" and "Spirits Unyielding." These refer to our overarching vision as an organization- that we may so deeply fortify our peoples' spirits that we will collectively refuse ideological domination that tells us our lives are worth less.

We support our movements by breaking open the lies that have been told about the humanity, dignity, and inherent worth of marginalized people, thus fostering an unshakable certainty in our own worth. We believe that with great faith and the right tools, our movements can and will sabotage Christian Supremacy.

# The Power of Symbols: Soulforce's Serpentdove

On a cold winter's morning in 2016, a group of Soulforcers gathered in the living room of an old farmhouse in Virginia and blessed each others' study Bibles in preparation for confrontation.

We were preparing for the Beyond Equality Ride, where a group of young Black and Brown Southern Youth would confront administrators at Christian colleges across the Bible Belt over their discriminatory anti-LGBTQI stances.

There in that cold room, we sparked all the warmth we needed. We were young, but we had honored the legacy of our elders and ancestors, and their spirits were close. We were Queer and Trans, a group of people spiritually battered by religion-based violence, but we were healing each others' wounds with truth-telling, wisdom, music, ritual, and community. We had spent the last six months meeting together in fellowship to learn about Christian Supremacy, liberatory theologies, and spiritual reclamation.

We had what we needed to be brave. We had knowledge, we had courage, and we had each other.



As our benediction, we chose to read Matthew 10:16 — a chapter often interpreted as the first Christian assignment to spread the Gospel. Here, Jesus tells the Apostles: "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so **be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves**."

This was the mandate we gave to each other: to keep clear eyes andfull hearts as we demand our dignity in the face of religion-based violence. It was from then on that the serpentdove became our unofficial mascot, and we began emblazoning its plumage and scales like a badge of courage onto our booklets and outreach.

From the serpent, we learn the perception, adaptability, and wisdom we need to see systems of oppression and spiritually violent narratives for exactly what they are. From the dove,

we learn the courage, integrity, and optimism we need to hope for new worlds where the rights, dignity, and equality of marginalized people are uncontestable.

Together, they give us power to imagine and create, and the will to act from our ethics and beliefs. The serpentdove represents a kind of beautifully-complex, integrative power that Soulforce cultivates for activists, people of faith, and our communities: to be equal parts spirit and politics, ferocious and loving, disruptive and constructive.

Soulforce's work is unique because of our unwavering commitment to political and spiritual resistance in equal measure. We know that social justice movements will sabotage Christian Supremacy by attending to both the minds and the spirits of our communities.

### Spiritual Resiliency during Quarantine

### We are growing relationships and building spiritual fortitude in a time of being physically apart.

Global quarantine presents unique spiritual challenges for Queer and Trans people, as many us know the spiritual trauma of isolation and exclusion due to our gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Creating intentional space to connect with one another under these conditions is critical to the health and well-being of our people.

For the safety of their members, many LGBTQI-affirming organizations and faith communities have moved online to gather with each other under quarantine. This has made even more collaboration possible with groups who trust us and believe in our work. And because Soulforce has practiced cultivating online spirit space for isolated queer communities with great success throughout the last four years, we have felt confident in saying yes to co-facilitating online workshops and and spirit spaces.

Our communities are incredibly versatile, pushing existing technology and social media to its limits to stay connected. Since March, we have offered spiritually-reclamatory programming for 8 digital worship services with community groups in Chicago, Oakland, Mexico, and Cuba.

Each of these has taken place over video calls or text.

Though the global quarantine has presented many challenges, we have been able to grow deeper relationships with activists who traditionally organize in-person rather than digitally.

We also adapted the format and production timeline for our newest digital media project called Teología Sin Vergüenza (page 18), to reduce isolation for a newly-quarantined community of Latinx feminists and activists to keep growing and strategizing together. In this new format, hundreds of users joined us twice a week via Facebook Live for real-time Spanish-language conversations on theology, feminism, queerness, and activism.

With this experience, and with all of our political & theological resources available on our website, we are well-prepared to continue crafting heart-centered digital spaces to forge courage and wisdom throughout the duration of this pandemic.



**Top**: Staging and streaming the altar we created for la Comunidad Espiritual Cuir de Puebla, a queer youth group in Puebla, Mexico, during their LGBTQ Pride service, We pour our hearts and fullest creativity into each of our digital spirit spaces.

**Bottom**: Kinship Minister Grace Nichols flaunts their serpentdove feathers during a drag performance for our Soulforce community during our Pride Month digital celebration.

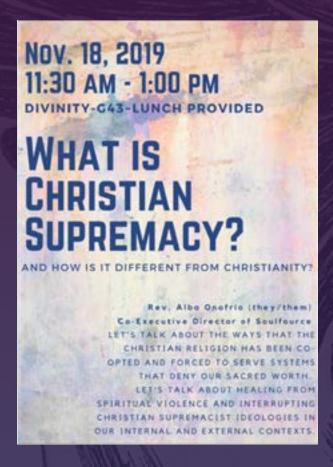


### Sabotaging Christian Supremacy

We are decoding Christian Right ideologies for activists and human rights defenders so that our justice movements can respond courageously to religion-based violence.

Some highlights from this year:

Equipping current and future leaders with the skills to identify when Christianity is being co-opted for violence: Our workshops with students and leaders in the Carpenter Program at Vanderbilt Divinity School helps graduate students, community leaders, and pastors make connections between Christian Supremacy, white supremacy, patriarchy, and colonization.



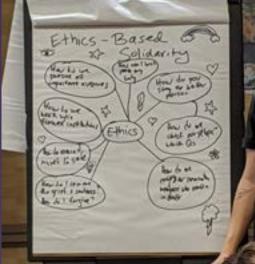


MED SERVICE

Training activists to counteract the systems that harm LGBTQI people globally: January's International LGBTI Solidarity Institute at Creating Change was the third annual convening for activists wanting to be in solidarity with Queer & Trans communities around the world.

For US-based activists, being in meaningful relationship with changemakers in the Global South means identifying why and how we come to this work. In Soulforce's panel on ethics-based solidarity, organizations collaborating across borders share their experiences, and activists leave more confident in their commitments to ethics-first global solidarity.







### Leading workshops that give ethical and spiritual alternatives to mainstream fundamentalist narratives:

Did you know that Clownfishes can change their sex, and that 25% of all Black Swan couples are homosexual?

At Highlander Center's annual Southern movement homecoming this year, we led organizers in a deep playful dive through the queer creatures that naturally defy fundamentalist narratives about sex, gender, and sexuality.

This workshop, based on our digital Vacation Bible School program, fortifies Southern organizers with the information and self-assurance we need to organize here in the heart of the South.





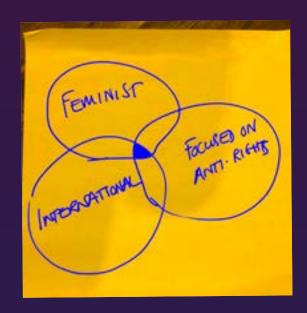
"This was a life-altering, life-affirming workshop."

-Vahisha Hasan, about our Vacation Bible School workshop Executive Director. Movement in Faith Offering strategy consultations to organizations and coalitions that are intervening wherever Christianity is weaponized to obstruct human rights for LGBTQI people and Women

The Observatory on the Universality of Rights (OURs) aims to monitor, analyze, and share information on initiatives that misuse religion, culture, and tradition to undermine the universality of human rights. This coalition of 13 feminist and queer organizations from around the globe strategizes regional and international

responses to a well-funded, highly-organized Right Wing.

Soulforce's role in OURs is two-fold: to offer analysis on the anti-rights Christian rhetoric that human rights defenders experience locally to globally, and to deliver counternarratives that are queer-affirming, feminist, and faith-informed.



"We Queer and Trans people have been wounded by White Christian Supremacy. Soulforce is helping us do the heart & soul work we need to love, live, and fight for the future we want to see."

-Jelani Drew-Davi, Soulforce Board Member



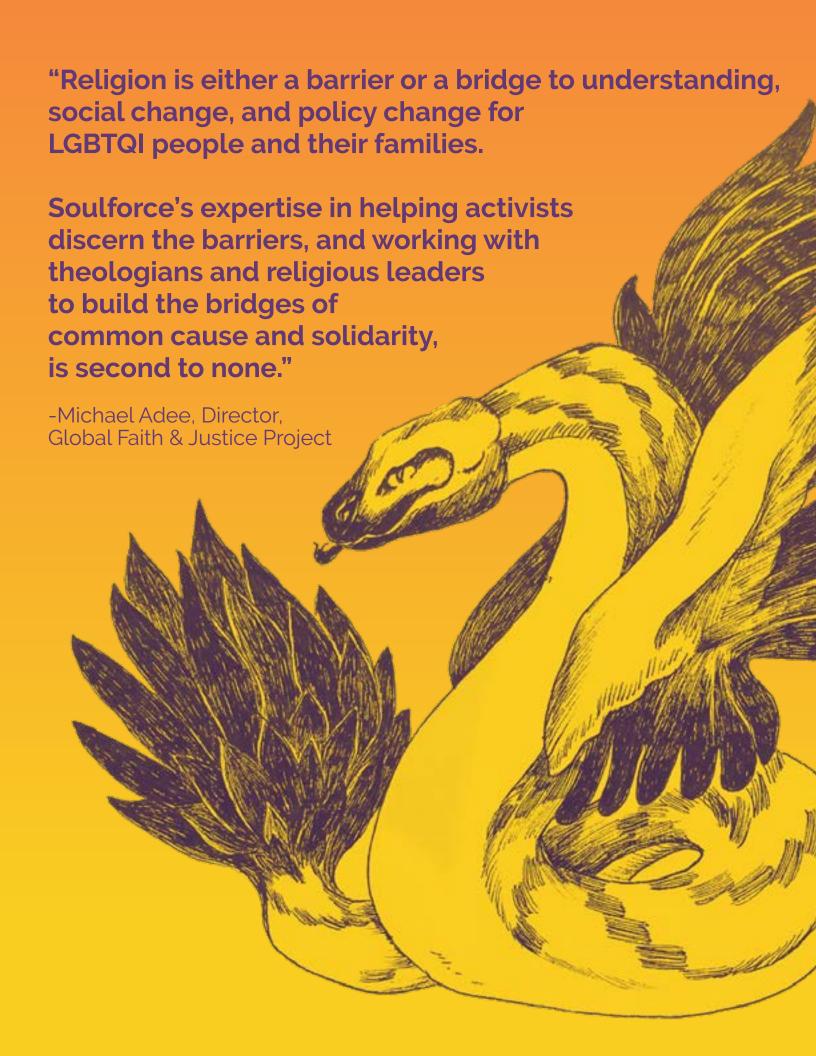
## We Are Never Alone

### All we do is in service to larger movements for social justice and equal human rights.

Soulforce is a strategic partner to activists and organizations moving social justice work where Christianity is being used to degrade or deny equal human rights. These strategic partnerships with organizations and coalitions range from one-off strategy sessions to ongoing, sustained collaborations.

We are so honored to be trusted by strategic partners and friends who are taking up the work of combatting Christian Supremacy and ending Spiritual Violence against marginalized people:

The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries • Highlander Research and Education Center • The Global Faith and Justice Project • Transform Network • Political Research Associates • Action Canada • Bend the Arc • Showing Up for Racial Justice • Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (GIN-SSOGIE) • International LGBTQI Association (ILGA) • North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) • Wild Goose Festival • The LGBTQ Taskforce • Southern Poverty Law Center • Haüswitch • The Mothership • Kaleida Collective • First Parish Malden UU, Massachusetts • McCormick Theological Seminary • Guilford College Friends Center • Vanderbilt Divinity School Carpenter Program for Religion, Sexuality, and Gender • Demos • Center for American Progress • Auburn Seminary • Exhale • Women's March • El Ministerio Latino, Plymouth United Church of Christ Oakland ICM Libres por Amor, Mexico • Grupo Espiritual Cuir de Puebla, Mexico Lutheran Church of Costa Rica • Universidad de Costa Rica Escuela Ecuménica Abriendo Brechas de Colores, Cuba • Q de Cuir Revista, Cuba Las de Magdala • HeyXorje • Association for Women's Rights in Development • Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women ARC International • Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir México • Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies • Due Diligence Project • International Civil Society Action Network • International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific • Ipas • Planned Parenthood • Musawah: global movement for justice and equality in the Muslim family • Muslims for Progressive Values Sexual Rights Initiative • World Council of Churches





### Transforming Hearts & Minds

49 PARTNERSHIPS & MOVEMENT COLLABORATIONS

725 HOURS OF TRAINING WITH 388 ACTIVISTS IN 4 COUNTRIES

700+
POLITICIZED
THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES
DELIVERED TO ACTIVISTS IN
41 STATES &
22 COUNTRIES

650 NEW FOLLOWERS OF TEOLOGÍA SIN VERGÜENZA FROM 27 COUNTRIES & 30,000 VIEWS IN 3 MONTHS

### Defending Our Movements: Right Wing Extremism Across the Americas

We are investing our political & theological content to address the needs of our comrades fighting fundamentalism in Latin America.



Cuban LGBTQI activists and people of faith celebrate the ordination of a queer woman clergy into the first openly-affirming church in the country.

We who are sabotaging Christian Supremacy are up against a wellfunded global Religious Right infrastructure that is unconstrained by borders.

Across Latin America and the United States, anti-rights actors funnel regressive Spanish-language educational resources, preaching materials, and money to local pastors who continue to propagate

anti-LGBTQI and anti-woman theology. This consolidates the cultural and political monopoly that fundamentalism has on Christianity.

Radical sects of Christian evangelical fundamentalism continue to grow across Latin America, even in confessional countries where conservative Catholicism is the official state religion.

Queer and feminist activists throughout the Americas continue to struggle, defending our lives and dignities against Right Wing rhetoric every day.

Our Latin America-centered programming:

- Creates and shares accessible,
   LGBTQI-affirming, feminist
   theological education by and for
   traditionally under-resourced Queer
   Latinx activists and faith leaders
- Supports the work of human rights defenders by visibilizing alternative Christian theologies that defend their activism
- Builds bridges across difference in Spanish-speaking communities that are positioned to align in the struggle for justice for LGBTQI people and women

# Why Soulforce, why Latinx communities, why now?

- Latinx activists and organizations we have built relationships with for 6+ years have told us that **Soulforce's work is needed right now to bolster local, national, and regional efforts**.
- For many years, with the help of our Soulforce community, we have been **building the Spanish-language capacity** necessary to support LGBTQI and feminist Latinx activists in fundamentalist contexts.
- LGBTQI Latin American human rights defenders are targeted with religion-based rhetoric concocted by Right Wing groups, like Focus on the Family and the National Religious Broadcasters, that Soulforce has been confronting for over 20 years.
- Our new Co-Directors bring their visions as Queer Feminist Latinx Southerners into their roles. As children of immigrants, they see Soulforce as a vital partner in the movements that Latinx communities are forging for spiritual healing and political self-determination.

### Queer Feminist Theology from the Margins

We are sabotaging Christian Supremacy in Latinx communities by amplifying the truth-telling of bold feminist & queer theologians.



The project is hosted by Rev. Alba Onofrio, our Co-Director, and Rev. Dr. Lis Valle-Ruíz, Professor of Homiletics at McCormick Theological Seminary.

For Latinx communities across diaspora, there are few public models of queer feminist clergy or theologians whose work can counteract the conservative Christian discourse that attacks our people. Those who are engaged in that work publicly are not only targeted by political suppression, but also are drowned out by the loud platform of Right Wing extremists and their moderate enablers.

In response, we collaborated with Latinx feminists and Queers to create and launch Teología Sin Vergüenza: a North-South queer feminist media project by and for Latinx communities across the continents who experience Spiritual Violence from weaponized Christianity in our homes, communities of faith, and in society at large.

Teología Sin Vergüenza is a Spanishlanguage series of conversations between Latinx theologians who unabashedly live out queer feminist theologies in their life, communities of faith, activism, and/or their academic institutions. Our two co-hosts invite academically-trained theologians each episode to share their guiding theologies and answer the core question of this media project: Together across the Americas, how can we transform the religious conditions that are denying equal rights to our communities and killing our spirits?

Since our launch in March, we have hosted 21 live episodes with 14 Latinx theologians rooted in 10 countries.

These conversations take on urgent

These conversations take on urgent political concerns of this moment — issues like abortion access, domestic violence in quarantine, transgender experiences of faith & spirituality, and sex & sexuality — all from queer feminist theological frameworks in an interview-style format.











"Estoy feliz de encontrarlas, casi al nivel de llorar. Era tan feo sentirme solita en ser feminista y católica. Pero, ver todo lo hermoso que están haciendo me hace super feliz." // "I'm so glad to find you, almost to the point of tears. It has been so awful to feel alone in being a feminist and Catholic. But, seeing all the beautiful things you are doing makes me so happy."

-Teología Sin Vergüenza viewer in Aguascalientes, Mexico

### Costa Rica

We are disrupting global fundamentalist Christian hegemony with queer, feminist religion-based strategies.



Soulforce partnered with the Lutheran Church of Costa Rica -- the country's only affirming church -- to facilitate a conversation about Spiritual Violence and Christian Supremacy with the pastoral team.

This May, Costa Rica became the first country in Central America to codify marriage equality into law. However, the new law is still hotly contested in the country. Costa Rican activists who organized tirelessly for marriage equality for decades continue the necessary culture-change work amidst a surge of religion-based backlash, fueled by a confluence of global Christian Right money and political power.

At the request of the University of Costa Rica's Ecumenical School, our Co-Director Rev. Alba Onofrio delivered workshops on gender-defying women and diverse families in the Bible to community groups and national media outlets — including one of the largest daily readers in the country. Local activists leveraged Rev. Alba's position as ordained American clergy and a trained theologian to **amplify bold** theological claims at a national level and challenge the ubiquity of regressive religious ideologies.



Top: Rev. Alba poses with lecture attendees at La Escuela Ecuménica.

**Bottom** (left to right): Rev. Alba is featured in La Teja, the country's best-selling and most widely circulating daily newspaper, on diverse families in scripture. // During the recording of Las de Magdala podcast, where Rev. Alba shares our analysis about Spiritual Violence and Christian Supremacy. // A local women's group gathered for a workshop on gender-defying women in the Bible.









### We are living out solidarity in relationships with radical queers from fundamentalist contexts.

Soulforce traveled to Matanzas, Cuba, in December to visit the activists with Abriendo Brechas de Colores (ABC). These activists worked tirelessly to block Christian fundamentalists from outlawing marriage equality in the Cuban constitution. Soulforce was excited to support these efforts in 2019, and in December Rev. Alba was asked to speak at a conference of 60 activists and theologians, presenting on the concepts of Spiritual Violence and Christian Supremacy.

Rev. Alba also had the honor of participating in the ordination of an MCC pastor into the first openly affirming church in the country — ICM Cuba.

Building trust through shared work has created an enduring relationship with their core organizers; their support has been instrumental in developing the format for Teología Sin Vergüenza. Despite internet bandwidth restrictions that make it difficult to stream video, Queer Cuban activists regularly participate in live episodes with feedback and questions.



**Top**: Rev. Alba joins Latin American theologians and ministers on the cover of Q de Cuir magazine in Cuba. **Bottom**: The ordination service of Rev. Elaine Saralegui of ICM-Cuba





#### We are growing comradeship across time and space.

When Rev. Alba met one of the lead pastors of a queer faith community in Puebla, Mexico, he was already familiar with Soulforce and our theological materials. He was ready to invite our Co-Director to facilitate a spiritual retreat for his church community, ICM Libres por Amor Puebla, during Holy Week to co-facilitate spiritually reclamatory healing space.

When the pandemic hit, they regrouped to discern how to continue building this new relationship. Rather than a single week together, Rev. Alba was asked to give the Easter Sunday sermon for the church group. Since then, this church community has used our theological resources to host a Bible study for their congregation. We're looking forward to more collaboration!

Through this faith community, we have connected with the organizers of Comunidad Espiritual Cuir de Puebla, a youth-centered queer group reclaiming their voices and narratives in the face of Spiritual Violence. Our political and spiritual alignments made us fast friends. We have offered them a workshop on Christian fundamentalism and Spiritual Violence, and held an altar and two meditations for the group's Queer Pride service.



A digital flyer for a Queer Pride service hosted by Comunidad Espiritual Cuir de Puebla, where Rev. Alba held an altar and offered meditations.

### Spiritual Healing for People in Diaspora



Painting by Co-Director Yaz Mendez Nuñez

Since 2014, Soulforce has prioritized the spiritual healing of LGBTQI People of Color, whose experiences of white supremacy in the United States are inextricably tied to Christian Supremacy.

After hundreds of hours of healing space and spiritual accompaniment, we understand more intimately the ways we as Queer and Trans People wrestle with being told that we do not belong: to God, to our faith communities, to our families, to US culture and institutions, and even to our ancestral lineages and homelands.

In a US context where People of Color are told that we do not belong here, alongside the exclusion we face in our traditional communities of faith, we often find ourselves doubly displaced.

As Queer and Trans People of Color, we often find ourselves choosing between our authenticity and our families' traditional cultures. Learning how Christian Supremacy erased a diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities through colonization helps us understand what it means to feel displaced: both physically and religiously.

Amongst staff and trusted comrades, we have started unpacking what it means to be Queer People in Diaspora: living and loving on stolen land, distanced from our ancestral places because of forced and chosen migration and enslavement.

These conversations sit at the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, geography, colonization, and spirit. Together we strategize how we as Queer and Trans people in diaspora can cultivate the courage to reclaim our histories, geographies, cultures, kinships, and spirits in pursuit of healing from Christian Supremacist violence.

### Community-Grown Resistance

For 22 years, Soulforcers have offered their gifts and talents because we believe we can collectively end religion-based oppression against LGBTQI people.

Our staff, based in North Carolina and Texas, creates and directs all of our programs and resources. We cultivate Soulforce community through beauty and intention alongside sharp political analysis.

We are backed by our Board of Directors and by a small group of specialized volunteers & consultants who bring their expertises to political & theological education programming like Teología Sin Vergüenza.













All of this work is made possible by our diverse community of supporters. This year, **98% of our contributions** came from **290 donors** who support our work. This means that Soulforce is accountable to our community members and our values; NOT to any religious institutions, governments, or private corporations.

### Financial Resources: A Snapshot

In 2019, we had an exceptional programming year that spanned many continents and contexts. Our community rose to the challenge of funding these programs; we are so grateful to all of our donors for making all of this year's programming possible through your contributions!

"When I first became interested in the work of Soulforce, I knew it as a organization dedicated to addressing the oppression of conservative Christian churches against any and all institutions who supported LGBT rights.

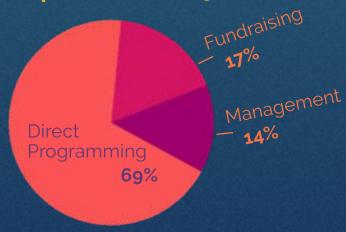
Since then, faces have changed, as well as backgrounds and fields of battle. But the goal remains, and **as long as Soulforce leads the charge against hate-filled oppression,** and my retiree income permits, **I'll continue to send my periodic donations to support your work.**"

Eunice Fisher, Soulforce Legacy Donor since 2002

#### Income FY2019

# Earned Income \$5,229 Individual Donations \$212,036 Family Foundations \$125,500

#### **Expenses FY2019**



In this unprecedented year, we have shifted to meet the moment. Because we are community funded, anything that impacts our economy will also impact Soulforce's financial landscape in equal part. To weather the economic storm brought on by the pandemic, we have reduced our staffing levels in 2020 and will be seeking new funding sources through reaching out to our existing networks of organizations and donors.

If you are interested in supporting Soulforce with financial resources or fundraising connections, we welcome your support. You can contact us at Hello@Soulforce.org,

# Be Wise as Serpents. Innocent as Doves

We want you to be a part of our community of activists, advocates, healers, and people of faith around the world.

We tend to a network of grassroots activists, organizations, faith communities, and coalitions who need to sabotage Christian Supremacy and heal from Spiritual Violence to win our collective liberation.

Visit our website, www.Soulforce.org, to:

- Join our mailing list and receive regular updates
- Learn more about Christian Supremacy & Spiritual Violence
- Read our political and theological resources
- Bring a Soulforce workshop to your community
- Stay updated on our digital workshops and courses
- · Watch the newest episodes of Teología Sin Vergüenza
- Give a gift to support Soulforce's work
- Help us fundraise to grow our movement

Find us on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter at @soulforceorg.

