



Bridges

Building relationships between Christians and Muslims



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From the Editor

During the past four months, we had to isolate and to keep physically distant from others for fear of being infected with or passing on the highly contagious Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus. This separation from others goes against human nature, for we are essentially social animals.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes about love drawing us out of ourselves and towards others:

Since we were made for love, in each one of us “a law of *ekstasis*” seems to operate: “the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another”. (FT, 88)

In other words, we become ourselves only by going beyond our selves.

Now that COVID restrictions are easing, it is important to reach out to others, to re-establish relations, to make new connections. This is especially so in interfaith.

A wonderful metaphor for this is “building bridges”. This newsletter is called “Bridges”, and its purpose is “Building relations between Christians and Muslims”. Building bridges includes highlighting the

role of women in the Abrahamic faith traditions (p. 2). Pittsburgh, with 446 bridges, more than any other city in the world, is dubbed the “City of Bridges”. A young Muslim artist there is promoting a “Pittsburgh Builds Bridges” campaign (p. 4). The bridge spanning the Danube inspired Pope Francis to invite the Christians of Budapest to be “builders of bridges” (p. 4). *The Sydney Statement* was recognised in the NSW Parliament (p. 9). Its sub-title, “Building Bridges Between Believers from Different Religions”, together with its logo, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, inspired “Bridge Day”. Building bridges is also between faith and science, between humans and the environment, between our generation and those yet to be born (pp. 6-7). It is solidarity with the people of Afghanistan who have suffered more than 40 years of war (p. 8). It is the interfaith friendship in 19th century Damascus which gave sight to a blind Muslim and mobility to a Christian paralytic (p. 10).

As we did in presenting *The Sydney Statement* to the Parliament of the World’s Religions (p. 3), we invite you to reach out and “Build Bridges Between Believers from Different Religions”.

REV DR PATRICK McINERNEY

Welcoming a new member to the team!

In September, the CCCMR team welcomed **Samantha Tom Cherian** as their newest member, in the part-time role of Youth & Networking Coordinator. Current coordinator **Ryan Epondulan** will hand over the role to Sam full-time in the new year. Samantha's primary responsibility is promoting interfaith relations among youth, especially Christians and Muslims. One of her major tasks will be coordinating the Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions) committee and their events. Upon graduating from the University of Sydney in 2020 with a Master's Degree in International Security, Samantha went on to work at STARTTS as Community Development Evaluation Assistant. Her primary interests are conflict resolution mediation, women empowerment and international humanitarian law. As Youth & Networking Coordinator, Samantha hopes to embody the values of CCCMR and promote an environment of acceptance, understanding, empathy and spirituality. We look forward to introducing you to Sam at our interfaith events.



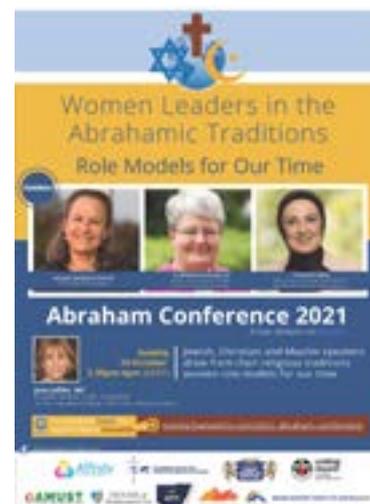
Presenting at Parliament of the World's Religions

On 18 October, **Kim Chong, Ryan Epondulan** and **Fr Patrick McInerney** presented an online workshop on [The Sydney Statement](#) to the Parliament of the World's Religions (PoWR). As one of the world's oldest and largest interfaith events globally, more than 4000 registrants attended 557 sessions and five plenaries over five days. Our presentation highlighted that the *Statement*, a new interfaith resource for building bridges between believers from different religions, is not just for Sydney but for the world. PoWR inspired the Centre's initiative, Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions). Content for *The Sydney Statement* was generated by the young adult members of Youth PoWR during consultation events across Sydney in 2019. It was a great opportunity to present the youths' *Statement* to

a world-wide audience and to highlight Sydney as a multicultural and multifaith city. If you haven't already, be sure to 'READ, SIGN UP and SHARE' [The Sydney Statement](#) with your family, friends and networks.

2021 Abraham Conference

On 10 October, the Centre co-hosted the 2021 Abraham Conference on Zoom. The theme – 'Women Leaders in the Abrahamic Traditions: Role Models for Our Time' – highlighted the contribution that Jewish, Christian and Muslim women leaders made in their time in the hope to inspire our time. The conference featured a speaker from each of the Abrahamic faiths. Jacquie Seemann Charak, co-founder and committee member of Or Chadash, a Modern Orthodox Synagogue, and the Sydney's Women's Tefila Group, shared the millennia-old stories of two women from Jewish texts, Devorah and Beruriah. Associate Professor Michele Connolly rsj, lecturer in Biblical Studies at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, spoke of two lay women and one group of women from the 21st century who inspire her as they live their Catholic faith. Yamamah Agha, general manager of Service Delivery Settlement at Settlement Services International, spoke of the wife of Prophet Muhammed and "the first woman of Islam", Khadija. The MC was Jane Jeffes, producer and director of a range of documentaries, and former executive producer of *The Religion and Ethics Report* on ABC Radio. You can view a recording of the Conference at <https://bit.ly/3pZ6R0u>.





Farewell, Ryan, you will be missed!

Ryan Epondulan has been the Centre's Youth & Networking Coordinator during the past four years. He bids us farewell to pursue full-time study and casual secondary teaching in 2022. Ryan has led the Youth PoWR committee in the planning, promoting and hosting of their events, which have brought together hundreds of young adults in the spirit of fraternity and friendship. This has culminated in producing Australia's first youth-driven interfaith charter, *The Sydney Statement*. He has graced us with boundless enthusiasm and energy filled with positivity and hope. Those of you who have met Ryan at our interfaith events will know his infectious smile, kindness and generosity – and that he's a foodie! While Ryan will no longer be working alongside us at the Centre, he remains an active advocate for interfaith as a member of the Interfaith Commission, Diocese of Parramatta. We look forward to his presence at our events!

Youth PoWR: Together in Isolation and in Action

On 21 October, Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions) held an online event with young adults from Sydney and around the world, called 'Together in Isolation'. This was followed by 'Together in Action', a second online event on 18 November. The first gathering focussed on the Dialogue of Life, the second on the Dialogue of Action, two of the four forms of dialogue treated in *The Sydney Statement*. 'Together in Isolation' looked at youths' experiences of the pandemic, particularly the impact of isolation on their mental, physical and emotional health. A panel of frontline workers from different faiths – Ehsan Farshid (Baha'i), Tu Le (Buddhist) and Faith Lam (Christian) – presented on the theme. 'Together in Action' also featured a panel of speakers – Jessica Harrison (Jewish), Ibrahim Khalil (Muslim), Maninder Kaur (Sikh) – each of whom spoke about a social justice issue important to them. More than 80 participants engaged with each other in small group discussions during the events, sharing their experiences and creating commitments to live interfaith in their everyday relations with others.



Advisor to the Plenary Council

The Australian Catholic Church is currently holding a Plenary Council. It is the 5th Council in Australia, the last one being held in 1937. Bishops and representatives of every diocese in Australia are meeting to discern what the Spirit is asking of the church in Australia in the 21st century. From mid-2018, more than 222,000 people participated in a year-long national consultation, contributing 17,457 submissions. This led to six discernment papers in 2020, followed by a summary

working document and agenda in 2021. The 1st General Assembly was held online due to COVID from 3-10 October 2021. There will be ongoing deliberations over the next nine months before the 2nd General Assembly in July 2022. **Rev Dr Patrick McInerney**, Director, Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, who contributed to the discernment paper on mission and the role of interreligious dialogue in mission, is one of 20 theologians from around Australia appointed Advisor to the Plenary Council. Detailed information is available at plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au.



Artist's work "builds bridges" in Pittsburgh

The artwork of a young Muslim artist, Ebtehal Badawi, is at the centre of a *Pittsburgh Builds Bridges* campaign to promote religious and racial unity across the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Central to the artwork is a bridge, a nod to "The City of Bridges" (Pittsburgh is home to 446 bridges, more than any other city in the world). The bridge is also a symbol of crossing divides to unite place and people.



Posters of Badawi's artwork are located throughout the city, such as in libraries, schools and cafes. Our very own interfaith charter, *The Sydney Statement*, is similarly represented by Sydney's iconic Harbour Bridge. It reflects the Statement's slogan, "Building Bridges Between Believers from Different Religions". You can read more about the [story](#) behind *The Sydney Statement* bridge logo at thesydneystatement.org.au. While you're there, make a pledge to commit

to interfaith action, such as [Commitment 21](#), "make the 19th of March 'Bridge Day' for building bridges between believers" (19th of March is the anniversary of the opening of the Harbour Bridge). Simply click the "[sign up](#)" button to pledge your support. *Pittsburgh article condensed and adapted from <https://bit.ly/3mUeBif>.*

Pope Francis in Budapest

On 12 September, Pope Francis addressed more than 100,000 people in Budapest, Hungary, during the closing Mass of the 2021 International Eucharistic Congress. The pope called on Church leaders "to be builders of bridges and promoters of dialogue" to create a more fraternal society. He also reminded the faithful that "the cross, planted in the ground, not only invites us to be well rooted but to also raise and extend arms towards everyone". He encouraged the nation of 10 million people, about 60 percent of whom are Catholic, to be open to encounters with others to build new bridges of dialogue.

Condensed and adapted from <https://bit.ly/3BXmCHs>.



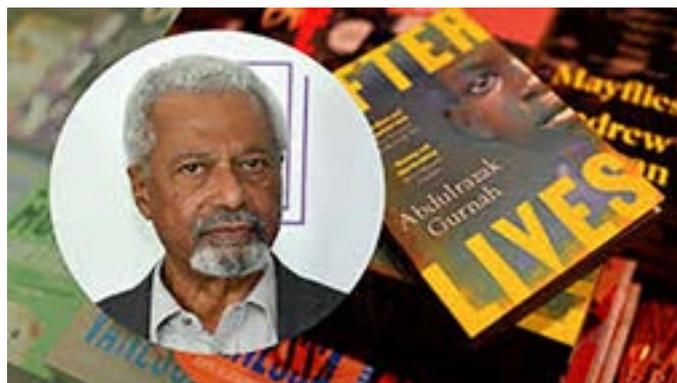
Algerian pastoral letter on fraternity

Bishop Jean-Paul Vesco OP of Oran, Algeria, has written a pastoral letter emphasising Pope Francis' call to encounter people of other faiths as a brother or sister. Titled *Building Fraternity*, the bishop's letter is an extended meditation on fraternity within an Algerian context. It was inspired by the [Document on Human Fraternity](#), co-signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Ahmed al-Tayeb, on 4 February 2019, and the pope's encyclical that followed in October the same year, [Fratelli Tutti](#). You can read Bishop Jean-Paul Vesco's pastoral letter in full at <https://bit.ly/3nSwCNa>.

Muslim wins Nobel Peace Prize for Literature

Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah has won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature for his “uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents”, announced the Swedish Academy. Born in 1948, the writer grew up in Zanzibar. After the island liberated itself from the British Empire in 1963, a violent uprising led to widespread

persecution of Arab-descended minorities. As a member of a targeted ethnic group, 18-year-old Gurnah was forced to seek refuge in England. “The thing that motivated the whole experience of writing for me was this idea of losing your place in the world,” he tells the *New York Times’* Alexandra Alter and Alex Marshall. Since 1987, he has published 10 novels and numerous short stories, many of which follow the lives of refugees as they reckon with loss, displacement and the lasting trauma caused by European colonisation of the African continent. *Condensed and adapted from <https://bit.ly/3FljQOX>.*



Islamic-Christian appeal for protection of holy places

In November, Jordanian Prince Hassan Bin Talal (pictured left, with Pope Francis) relaunched the international appeal for the protection of holy places from abuse and violence to protect worshippers. More than 40 Muslim and Christian supporters joined the appeal, including senior members of the Middle Eastern community and representatives of academic, theological and cultural institutions of various countries. The updated appeal is framed in part by the *Document on Human Fraternity*, co-signed by Pope Francis and

Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of al-Azhar, on 4 February 2019 in Abu Dhabi. Like the *Document*, the appeal insists on the need to foster dialogue between the different confessional and cultural identities that values human reason and the sharing of common values. Religious, archeological and historical sites, including museums, libraries and manuscripts, are symbolic places "of our humanity, our history and the shared traditions of people around the world", Prince Bin Talal said. "Without history we cannot sustain the future." *Condensed and adapted from <https://bit.ly/3D6XjEg>.*

Religions for Peace announces new pledge of solidarity

On 4 October, The Religions for Peace World Council, composed of roughly 60 top leaders from diverse religious institutions and faith communities, released a joint statement expressing interfaith solidarity against violence, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. “The human family faces numerous crises, from extremists who perversely justify gender-based and political violence on religious grounds; to unsustainable economic practices that threaten the environment and public health; to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has exacerbated global inequities,” said Dr Azza Karam, Secretary-General, Religions for Peace. “Never has there been a

more urgent need for interfaith cooperation to serve the common good of humanity. That’s why we’ve released this new statement of solidarity.” You can read the *Global Pledge by World’s Religious Leaders on Faith and Diplomacy: Generations in Common Action for Peace* at <https://bit.ly/3027fAc>.



Faith and Science: Towards COP26

Faith leaders join scientists at the Vatican to help step up climate action



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

On 4 October 2021, the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology, 40 faith leaders representing the world's major religions joined scientists at the Vatican to call on the international community to raise their ambition and to step up their climate action ahead of the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November.

The religious leaders included representatives from the major branches of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism. They signed a joint appeal which Pope Francis then presented to COP26 President-Designate, the Rt Hon Alok Sharma, and the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon Luigi Di Maio. As a symbol of their commitment to protect the environment, the religious leaders poured earth into a potted olive tree which will be planted in the Vatican Gardens.

Joint appeal: executive summary

Today, after months of dialogue between faith leaders and scientists, we come together united to raise awareness of the unprecedented challenges that threaten our beautiful common home. Our faiths and spiritualities teach a duty to care for the human family and for the environment in which it lives. We are deeply interdependent with each other and with the natural world. We are not limitless masters of our planet and its resources. Multiple crises facing humanity are ultimately linked to a crisis of values, ethical and spiritual. We are caretakers of the natural environment with the vocation to care for it for future generations and the moral obligation to cooperate in the healing of the planet. We must address these

challenges using the knowledge of science and the wisdom of religion. We must think long-term for the sake of the whole of humanity. Now is the time to take transformative action as a common response.

We need a framework of hope and courage. But we also need to change the narrative of development.

Climate change is a grave threat. We advocate for common but differentiated climate action at all levels.

The world is called to achieve net-zero carbon emissions as soon as possible, with wealthier countries taking the lead in reducing their own emissions and in financing emission reductions from poorer nations. All governments must adopt a trajectory that will limit the global average temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. We beg those nations with the greatest responsibility and present capacity to provide substantial financial support to vulnerable countries and to agree new targets to enable them to become climate resilient, and to adapt to and to address climate change. The rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities must be given special attention.

We appeal to governments to raise their ambition and their international cooperation to: favour a transition to clean energy; adopt sustainable land use practices; transform food systems to become environmentally-friendly and respectful of local cultures; end hunger; and to promote sustainable lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production. Full consideration must be given to the effects on the workforce of this transition. We call upon financial institutions, banks and investors to adopt responsible financing, and on civil society organisations and everyone to face these challenges in a spirit of collaboration.

We have inherited a garden: we must not leave a desert to our children

For our part, we underline the importance of:

- deepening our efforts to bring about a change of heart among members of our traditions in the way we relate to the Earth and to other people;

- encouraging our educational and cultural institutions to strengthen and prioritise integral ecological education;
- participating actively in the public discourse on environmental issues;
- engaging our congregations and institutions with their neighbours to build sustainable, resilient and just communities;
- emphasising the importance of reducing carbon emissions;
- encouraging our communities to embrace sustainable lifestyles;
- striving to align our financial investments with environmentally and socially responsible standards; and
- evaluating the goods we purchase and the services we hire with the same ethical lens.

Future generations will never forgive us if we miss the opportunity to protect our common home. We have inherited a garden: we must not leave a desert to our children. Scientists have warned us that there might be only one decade left to restore the planet. We plead with the international community, gathered at COP26, to take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship. We appeal to everyone to join us on this common journey.

Source: <https://bit.ly/31eqBth>. For the full text of the Appeal, see: <https://bit.ly/3Bk8xDG>. For reports of the event, see: <https://bit.ly/3BpPgk8> and <https://bit.ly/3pNyUQn>.



Pope Francis prepares to pour dirt into a potted olive tree during the meeting, “Faith and Science: Towards COP26”, with religious leaders in the Hall of Benedictions at the Vatican.

Pope Francis’ Address to Faith Leaders at “Towards COP26”

Pope Francis put aside his prepared speech to give more time to the other religious leaders. His text proposed “three concepts” to guide their joint efforts: “openness to interdependence and sharing; the dynamism of love; and the call to respect”.

Science, religion and spirituality all teach that everything is connected; everything is profoundly interrelated. “Recognizing that the world is interconnected means not only realizing the harmful effects of our actions, but also identifying behaviours and solutions to be adopted, in an attitude of openness to interdependence,” he wrote. He invited all to be open “to a future shaped by interdependence and co-responsibility”.

The openness of religious and spiritual traditions must “be driven by the dynamism of love”, which “creates bonds and expands existence, for it draws people out of themselves and toward others”, especially the poor.

Faith traditions, he said, can help break down “barriers of selfishness”, counter today’s “throwaway culture” and combat the “seeds of conflict: greed, indifference, ignorance, fear, injustice, insecurity and violence”, which harm people and the planet. “We can face this challenge” with personal examples, action and education, the pope wrote.

Finally, there must be respect for creation, respect for others, “for ourselves and for the creator, but also mutual respect between faith and science”. Respect, he wrote, is “an empathetic and active experience of desiring to know others and to enter into dialogue with them, in order to walk together on a common journey”.

He concluded, “COP26 [...] represents an urgent summons to provide effective responses to the unprecedented ecological crisis and the crisis of values that we are presently experiencing, and in this way to offer concrete hope to future generations. We want to accompany it with our commitment and our spiritual closeness.” For the full text of Pope Francis’ speech, see: <https://bit.ly/3EqBeRd>.

Costs of War in Afghanistan

Brown University provide sobering figures of the costs of war in Afghanistan

In late 2001, the US invaded Afghanistan to avenge the al-Qaeda-orchestrated September 11 terrorist attacks. The primary aim of the invasion was to hunt down al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and punish the Taliban for providing a safe haven for the terrorist group. On 30 August 2021, the US completed a pullout of troops from Afghanistan, providing an uncertain punctuation mark to two decades of conflict.

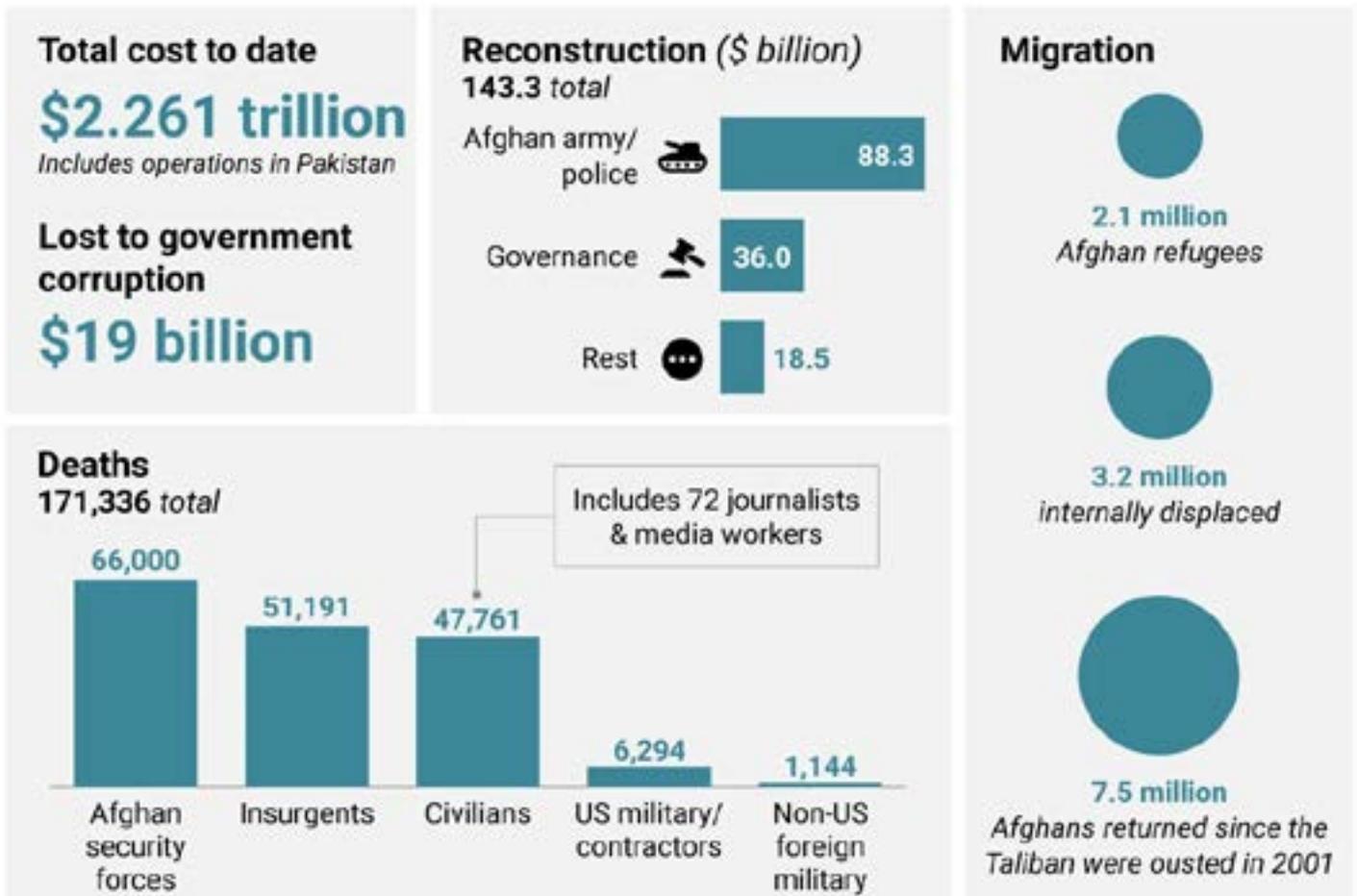
At 7,262 days from the first attack on Afghanistan to the final troop pullout, Afghanistan is said to be the US's longest war. Most Afghans alive today were not born when the US war began. The median age in Afghanistan is just 18.4 years old. Including their country's war with the Soviet Union from 1979 to 1989 and civil war in the 1990s, most Afghans have lived under nearly continuous war.

In today's dollars (adjusted for inflation) it's also the third most expensive US foreign war ever, surpassed only by Iraq and World War II. Yet, nearly 20 years

of American boots on the ground and more than \$2 trillion spent have failed to prevent the unfolding catastrophe as the last US troops left Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the human toll has been enormous: more than three million Afghans have been displaced, and tens of thousands of Afghan security forces and US military personnel and contractors have been killed in a war that's come full circle, with the Taliban now in charge once again. The graphic below shows some of the human and economic costs of two decades of US military involvement in Afghanistan. Of course, by themselves figures can never give a complete picture of what happened and what it means, but they can help put this war in perspective.

Condensed and adapted from 'The Graphic Truth: Was the US war in Afghanistan worth it?' by Carlos Santamaria and Paige Fusco, Gzero, <https://bit.ly/3wujphv>; and 'Calculating the costs of the Afghanistan War in lives, dollars and years' by Neta C. Crawford, The Conversation, <https://bit.ly/3HhZGXo>.



Source: Brown University, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The Sydney Statement recognised in NSW Parliament

Youth PoWR and their interfaith charter receive highest recognition to date

by Ryan Epondulan

On 19 October 2021, Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism and Member for Rockdale, the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, presented a Private Member's Community Recognition Statement at the Legislative Assembly of NSW Parliament. The subject of Mr Kamper's statement? The interfaith action of Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions) committee members and network, and the publication of their interfaith charter, *The Sydney Statement*!

Mr Kamper spoke highly of *The Sydney Statement* and acknowledged the significance of young adults from different faith backgrounds coming together to develop mutual respect and understanding in the multicultural and multifaith city of Sydney.

"*The Sydney Statement* is a magnificent example of the best aspects of interfaith harmony in our society," Mr Kamper said in his address. "I encourage all members of this house to go online and read it. There are significant and diverse communities of faith in my electorate of Rockdale, and I see the statement as a guiding beacon for building and maintaining a harmonious society.

"It is refreshing to see young, energetic, multifaith people working so proactively in this area," Mr Kamper continued. "A truly diverse multicultural community needs to embrace religious diversity, as well as racial and secular difference. It gladdens my heart to see this in action so close to my home."

Mr Kamper also highlighted the symbolic nature of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the *Statement's* logo and endorsed 'Commitment 21' of the *Statement* – to make 19th of March 'Bridge Day' (the 19th of March is the anniversary of the opening of the Harbour Bridge). "It is the hope [...] that the Harbour Bridge will become a recognised symbol of good relations between the faith communities of Sydney," said Mr Kamper. "To that end, starting with the 90th anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge next year, they hope to make 19 March every year 'Bridge Day' in Sydney as an annual encouragement to all peoples of faith to make an effort to reach out to each other."



The Hansard of Mr Kamper's statement to Parliament.



Youth PoWR committee meeting with the Hon Stephen Kamper MP.

Youth PoWR committee members met with Mr Kamper on 30 September 2021. The committee shared their experiences of developing *The Sydney Statement* and how the youth network are living out its values, principles and commitments in their local communities. Mr Kamper was impressed by the committee's democratic process and their initiative to engage with civic, political and religious leaders to help realise their hopes and aspirations for our multicultural and multifaith society. The committee also took the opportunity to thank Mr Kamper and his fellow ministerial members and predecessors for their continued support of Youth PoWR's interfaith work. It is encouraging to see members of parliament support and promote peace and harmony in our society.

You can read the Legislative Assembly Hansard of Mr Kamper's statement at <https://bit.ly/3F4crD0>. You can also read Youth PoWR's interfaith statement at thesydneystatement.org.au. We encourage you to lend your name (you can remain anonymous) in support of interfaith by clicking the "[sign up](#)" button.

A picture of interfaith friendship

Each man depended on the other to survive. Their extraordinary friendship literally completed them

The inspiring story of a Christian named Samir and a Muslim named Muhammad, who are said to have lived in Damascus in Ottoman Syria during the final years of the 19th century, is circulating on social media.

According to accounts shared by dozens of websites and social media posts, and even some news sites such as the *Egypt Independent*, Samir was a Christian who suffered from paralysis, and Muhammad was a blind Muslim.

Without the light of Samir's eyes, Muhammad had no way to get around the labyrinthine streets of ancient Damascus on his own, while the paralysed Samir couldn't get anywhere without Muhammad's feet. One depended on the other: Their extraordinary friendship literally completed them.

The accounts about the Christian and Muslim friends add that the two were orphans, shared the same poor dwelling, and always lived together.

When Samir died, Muhammad is said to have cried for seven days for having lost his other half. Eventually, he would die of grief over the death of his friend – which was also the death of his eyes.

There are no sources that document the veracity of the names and personal history of these two men. However, the photograph depicting them is genuine.

The paralysed Christian and the blind Muslim: a real photo

The image was captured in 1889 by photographer Tancredi Dumas (1830-1905), who was born in Italy to French parents.

Dumas learned to photograph in Florence and opened his photography studio in Beirut in 1860. He was hired by the American Palestine Exploration Society, precursor of the American Schools of Oriental Research, to document the regions east of the Jordan River.



Dumas also travelled with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which led him to adopt the title of "Photographer to the Imperial and Royal Court of Prussia".

His photograph of the paralysed Christian being carried by the blind Muslim is available from the Prints and Photographs Division of the United States Library of Congress under the digital identification number cph.3b41806. The image is also available from *Wikimedia Commons*.

May the paralysed Christian and the blind Muslim, whatever their true story was, be a real inspiration today, when we need to reach out to each other more than ever across differences of ethnicity, religion, and all other barriers. *Condensed and adapted from 'A picture of a friendship: The paralysed Christian and the blind Muslim', by Francisco Veneto, Aletei, <https://bit.ly/3CL6REP>.*

Coming Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

December 2021

- 08** Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic Christian)
- 25** Christmas (Birth of Jesus Christ) (Christian)

January 2022

- 01** The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God (Catholic Christian)
- 06** Epiphany of the Lord (Christian)
- 07** Christmas (Birth of Jesus Christ) (Orthodox Christian)

February 2022

- 01-07** World Interfaith Harmony Week, worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com
- 04** UN International Day of Human Fraternity, un.org/en/observances/human-fraternity

March 2022

- 01** *Al-Isra' w'al-Miraj* – The Night Journey and Ascent (of Prophet Muhammad) (Islam)
- 02** Ash Wednesday, Lenten fast begins (Christian)
- 07** Great Lent Begins (Orthodox Christian)
- 08** International Women's Day, internationalwomensday.com
- 19** Bridge Day, thesydneystatement.org.au
- 21** Harmony Day, harmony.gov.au
- 25** Feast of the Annunciation (Catholic Christian)

April 2022

- 02** Ramadan begins (tbc) (Islam)

