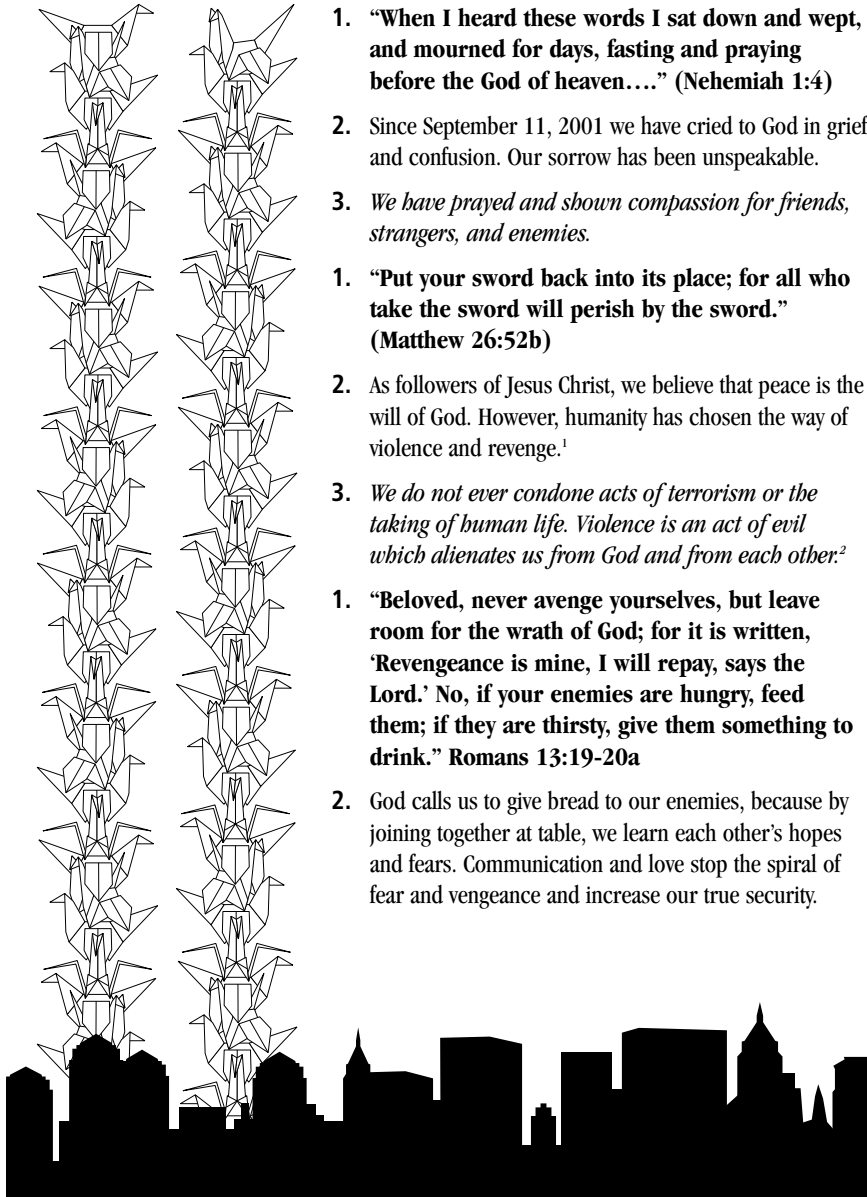


Litany for many voices

Statement of faith following September 11, 2001



1. **“When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven....” (Nehemiah 1:4)**
2. Since September 11, 2001 we have cried to God in grief and confusion. Our sorrow has been unspeakable.
3. *We have prayed and shown compassion for friends, strangers, and enemies.*
1. **“Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52b)**
2. As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that peace is the will of God. However, humanity has chosen the way of violence and revenge.¹
3. *We do not ever condone acts of terrorism or the taking of human life. Violence is an act of evil which alienates us from God and from each other.²*
1. **“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Revengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink.” Romans 13:19-20a**
2. God calls us to give bread to our enemies, because by joining together at table, we learn each other’s hopes and fears. Communication and love stop the spiral of fear and vengeance and increase our true security.

1. **“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly....” Isaiah 58:6-8a**
2. Under each act of violence lies a tangle of roots, contextual reasons that led to the act of despair. Until we find and acknowledge this context for the September 11 events we will be offering only surface reactions and solutions.
3. *There is never an excuse for violence, but we need to understand how other countries perceive our foreign policy and international commerce.*
1. **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9**
3. *We choose nonviolence not out of cowardice, but out of conviction.*
2. Truly practiced, it is not an easier way than the way of taking up arms for battle.
1. **““You know the message [God] sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.” Acts 10:36**
4. ***Let us learn to listen with the ears of God, and speak with gentleness and integrity, so that those looking for a voice of peace bear an invitation from us.***
1. **“Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority.’” Acts 5:29**
2. “As Christians, we are to respect those in authority and to pray for all people, including those in government, that they also may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”³ We believe in clear separation of allegiance to church and state, yet are willing to serve our country in peaceful ways.
3. *We pray for and correspond with our national leaders, offering them hope in alternatives to armed military response and strength and courage as they make difficult decisions.*
1. **Our only security is Jesus Christ.**
4. ***We are people of God’s peace.***

¹ *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1995), Article 22.

² *A Mennonite Statement on Violence: “And No One Shall Make Them Afraid”* (1997).

³ *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1995), Article 23.

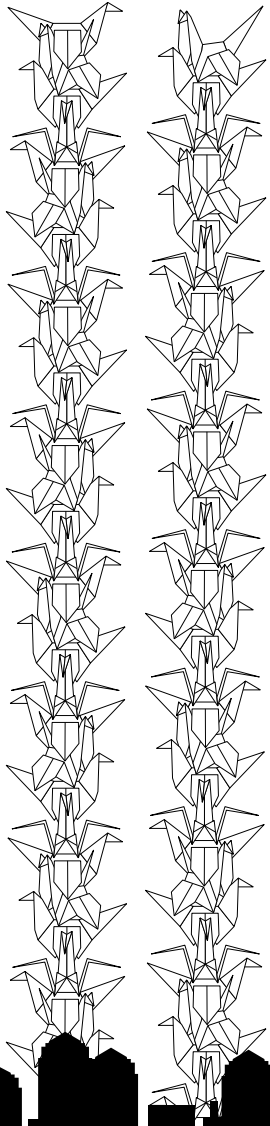
Words come from the (former) Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee September 11 statement, available on the Peace and Justice Support Network web site <http://peace.MennoLink.org>



Lined by Susan Mark Landis, Executive Board Peace Advocate, and Malinda Berry, Peace and Justice Support Network Reference Committee member

Litany for many voices

Suggestions for Use



Several people can be chosen to read or memorize the Bible verses.

1 = Reader One 2 = Reader Two
3 = People 4 = All

Visuals to accompany the litany might include:

- coming to the front and lighting a candle with each verse or
- creating a banner or table with symbols that correspond to each verse. A banner might serve a congregation as a lasting reminder, but a table might be easier to create and allows for more movement.

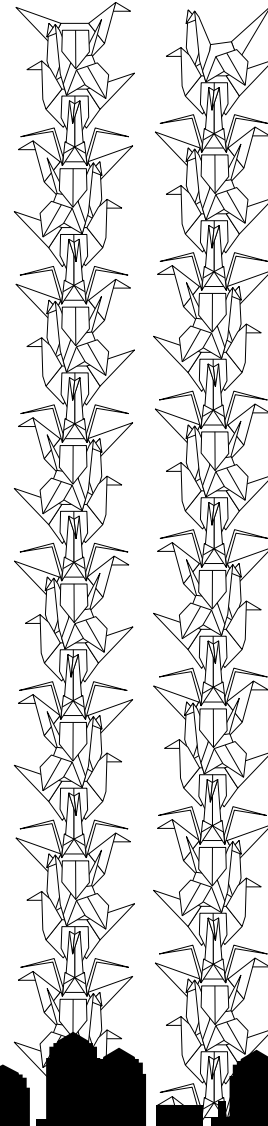
Possible symbols for the verses:

- Nehemiah 1: 4—sack cloth and ashes or a black cloth
- Matthew 26:52b—a broken sword
- Romans 13:19-20a—water poured from a pitcher into an empty glass
- Isaiah 58:6-8a—a loaf of bread and a colorful cloth to wrap around the naked
- Matthew 5:9—a dove or vase of flowers
- Acts 10:36—a globe
- Acts 5:29—Bible or broken chains

Mourners have hung posters and memorabilia on the fence of a church across from the World Trade Centers site. Strands of peace cranes from around the world are draped here, linking our tragedy to that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and uniting us in our desire for peace. Directions for folding peace cranes can be found at <http://www.sadako.com/howtofold.html>

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