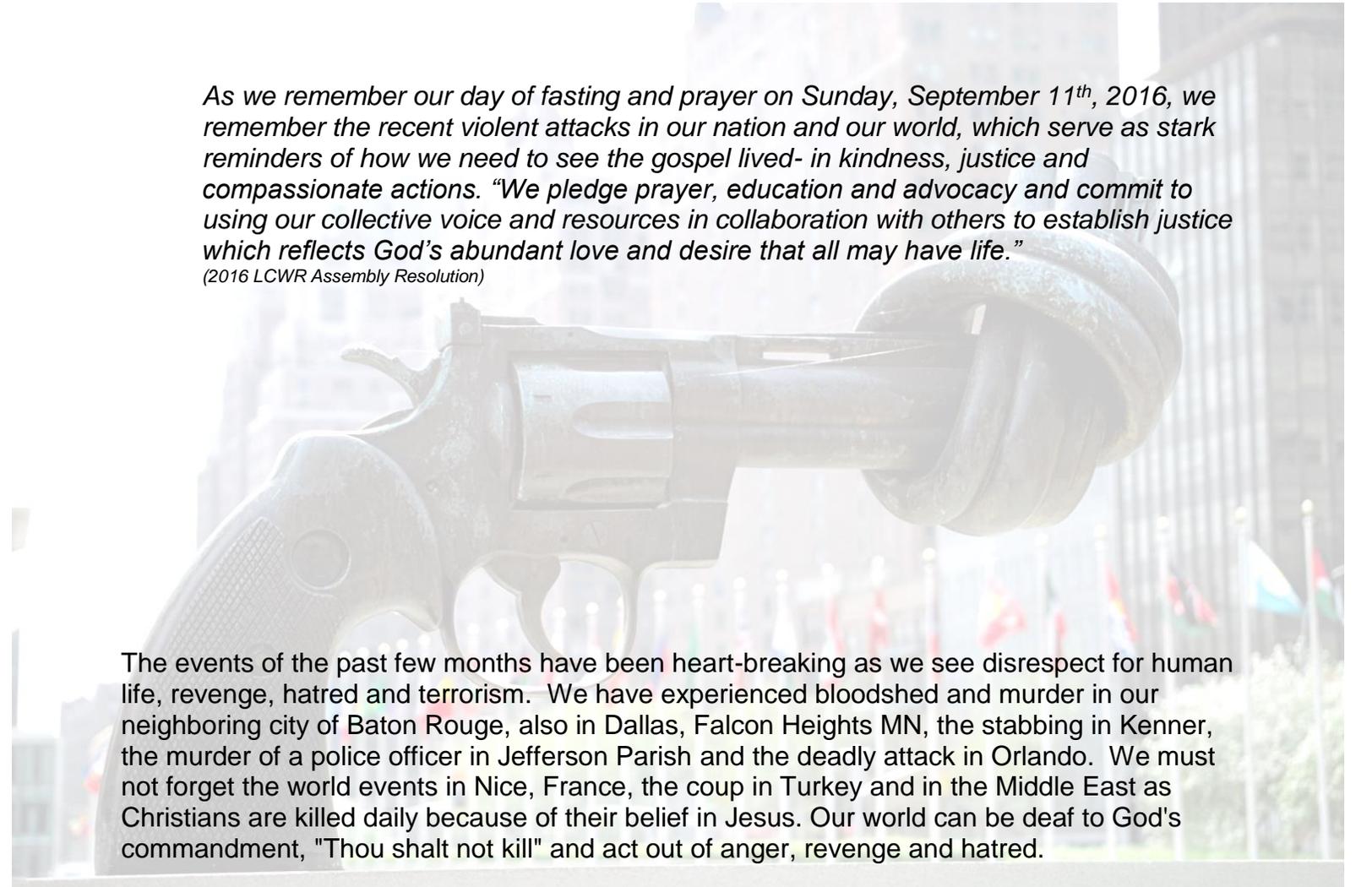


As we remember our day of fasting and prayer on Sunday, September 11th, 2016, we remember the recent violent attacks in our nation and our world, which serve as stark reminders of how we need to see the gospel lived- in kindness, justice and compassionate actions. "We pledge prayer, education and advocacy and commit to using our collective voice and resources in collaboration with others to establish justice which reflects God's abundant love and desire that all may have life."

(2016 LCWR Assembly Resolution)



The events of the past few months have been heart-breaking as we see disrespect for human life, revenge, hatred and terrorism. We have experienced bloodshed and murder in our neighboring city of Baton Rouge, also in Dallas, Falcon Heights MN, the stabbing in Kenner, the murder of a police officer in Jefferson Parish and the deadly attack in Orlando. We must not forget the world events in Nice, France, the coup in Turkey and in the Middle East as Christians are killed daily because of their belief in Jesus. Our world can be deaf to God's commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" and act out of anger, revenge and hatred.

What can we do?

Pray daily for eternal life for those whose lives have been taken, for their families that they know God's comfort and for the protection of those in law enforcement. Help our children as they try to make sense out of all this. They can be taught respect for human life and learn ways to express anger without violence. Continue to seek ways to end racism. We must look into our own hearts and ask God to take from us any hint of hatred and revenge.

Someone asked me, "Where is God?" My response is. GOD WEEPS! God weeps bitterly as we do not live out his dream for peace. Violence and Racism divide us locally, nationally and worldwide. We cannot lose hope. As people of faith we pray for peace and recommit ourselves to do our part to foster peace in our families and in our community.

Let us pray,

God have mercy on us in the United States and throughout the world as we refuse to follow your command of peace. Give your blessing to those who have died, their families, and to those who protect us through law enforcement. Lord Jesus we weep with you. Please use our prayers, hearts and hands to build peace in our families and in our world. Wherever in my heart there is a hint of violence and revenge, mercifully help me to a change of heart. Lord, let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. Amen.

(Archbishop Gregory Aymond – New Orleans, 2016)

Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd designed the knotted gun sculpture in 1980. There are 30 copies of the non violence sculpture around the world, ten of them in Sweden, and one in Beijing. The UN sculpture is the original.