



SIEBENQUELL

I apologize



SOURCE: INGO BELLER, KOBLENZ 2016

I recently attended a concert of the world renowned clarinetist and Klezmer musician Giora Feidman. It is a habit of his to make a few very brief remarks between the pieces he plays and to give vent to his heartfelt desire to promote peace and understanding between the peoples of the world. At one point, for example, he spoke of his desire for reconciliation and understanding and then played a haunting medley that beautifully blended the national anthems of Germany, Israel and Palestine. He wanted to bring together in melody and rhythm what we have yet to bring together in flesh and blood.

At one point in the concert, Mr. Feidman returned to the microphone to introduce the next two pieces of music to be played, the Gospel spirituals »Go down Moses« and »Swing low, sweet chariot«. In his soft spoken manner and with his charming melding of German and English, he began to tell the tale of a group of people who gathered in a church in Charleston, South Carolina to study the Bible together. »It is something so beautiful, to gather and to sit to together to study the Bible, the Word of God. It is something so beautiful!« But then a young man, who had sat quietly in the small group sharing the Bible, suddenly pulled out a gun and shot 9 of these people to death. It was a terrible actor racism and violence directed at people

who had come together to read and share the biblical stories. They had come together to turn their pain into narrative, so that they could bear it and find solace. They had come together to turn their experience into narrative, so that they would remember it and honour it. They had come together to turn their joy into narrative, so that they could deep and prolong it. And thus, while entering into the great biblical story, they found their death at the hands of a man filled with the hatred, violence and enmity of which the biblical stories speaks stern words of warning.

Giora Feidman shook his head in sadness and disbelief and then he paused. Then he said, »I play the following two pieces as my way of saying to the Creator, I apologize.« Then he played the spirituals. We heard this remarkable man tell us a story. Then we heard him play us a story. We listened attentively, raptly, indeed, prayerfully.

We live in a world in which there is much for which we could and should apologize to the Creator. Yet, I find it profoundly comforting and deeply encouraging that there are still weavers of stories in the world like Giora Feidman. Where others let blood flow and bullets fly, he lets remorse find a language, love find a melody and hearts soar to new hope.

The next morning I turned to the Bible and entered once more into the biblical stories I love so dearly. And I remembered my 9 brothers and sisters who died in their shared passion for these stories of God and of faith. From the depths of my heart arose a simple prayer. I apologize.

Erik Riechers SAC
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