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# The IPM Newsletter

Michael & Sally O'Connor



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## **Roses Team Takes Flight**

Wednesday morning, September 16, small teams from Los Angeles and Minneapolis will board planes and meet up later in the day at JFK Airport, NYC. We will fly to Berlin where an amazing adventure with God awaits.

We covet your prayers for the team members, the mission, and especially our encounters with the people of Poland and Germany.

*"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in*

## **A Tour of Roses**

by **Sally Klein O'Connor**

As I try to sort out my thoughts about the trip to Poland and Germany, I realize I have been planning it for over a year (and thinking about it for another two or three). I am days away from getting on the plane for an adventure about which only God knows all the details. I have needed a lot of reassurance over these last few months, and the Lord has been more than gracious to provide that in countless ways.

I don't speak German, let alone Polish. But, thankfully, God blessed me with a kindred spirit in Oswiecim, Poland last year, Karen Forth. She speaks Polish, German, and English fluently. Karen has been my co-conspirator in the planning of this adventure and has helped me work through most of the practical administrative tasks as well.

*Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him."*

**2Cornithians 2:14**

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## Concerts



View a **calendar** of Sally's upcoming **concerts & speaking engagements**.

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## Sally's Music



Please **visit our store** for a complete selection of **CDs and books**.

Sally's CDs are also available in digital form at:

**Amazom.com**

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(You are required to register at Lala. Then you can listen to any complete

When I didn't have a clue how to make connections in the small, remote town of Bergen, she encouraged me to email their city council and put forth the idea to do a concert in the park. After a couple emails and a phone call someone responded who spoke English. It seemed no one had ever done anything like this in the park. The town council was surprised and intrigued by the idea. Katharina was put in charge and she has been one of those amazing reassurances of God. She went to our web site and listened to some of our songs and was "impressed." We began to email back and forth about doing a concert in the park at Bergen, which led to posters, flyers, a rented stage, and candles. Recently she asked me to write a press release. Here is part of my statement:

*In answer to your questions as to why Bergen and how I got the idea to do these concerts...*



song they sell once—not just a 30 second clip. Listen to a full CD before you buy!)

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- Open your iTunes software
- Click on "iTunes Store"
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*Bergen-Belsen was the first concentration camp I ever set foot in. I was deeply moved by what I saw there. So much death in such a wildly beautiful place. All those pink flowers were offensive at first, in light of the horror of what happened. I couldn't understand why there would be any beauty in such a terrible place. And then another thought entered my mind—that God is always about redeeming. Man may destroy, but God redeems. And there in Bergen-Belsen I saw God's love at work—not to obscure the horror of the past—but to give hope for the future. His love endures forever and His mercies are new every morning.*

*The songs that my husband Michael and I write, have always been about God's love and healing for broken people. But I never thought about German people being wounded. I only thought of what happened to the Jewish people and others who were being destroyed. I have to say I believe it was God who opened up my heart and mind in 2006, to realize that there is—and has been—pain and loss on both sides. And when I understood that, it completely changed my point of view. I realized that as a Jew, I needed to release Germany from my judgment—even prejudice—and whatever shadow of unforgiveness that might be in my heart for what happened in the Holocaust. I needed to see their humanity even as I hope God sees mine—and forgives me when I sin against Him and others. I realized that even the act of*

*remembering by only visiting the memorials had to be painful for German society. It seems to me that many of us who are Jewish have distanced ourselves from the Germans—and that distance creates more pain—even resentment—and the cycle of hurt and anger continues.*

*Love is the most powerful weapon mankind has against anger and hatred. If we can truly love each other from the heart there will be no place in our hearts to hate.*

Katharina recently reached out to the Orthodox and Reformed Jewish communities nearby, to invite them to the concert. Their response disappointed and frustrated her, but provided an opportunity for me to share with her about how God wants to heal hearts through His kindness. I am looking forward to meeting Katharina very soon now. As she said in her last email, “the countdown has begun...”

Karen suggested I talk to some friends of hers in Nuremberg who might know some people in Dachau because neither of us knew anyone who lived there. Of course Karen’s friends didn’t speak any English—really. And only if I am pressed, can I speak one phrase in German, which is pretty pathetic since it means: “Do you speak any German?” And I don’t! But I emailed Karen’s friends anyway in the vain

and desperate hope that we would somehow find a way to communicate. We even attempted to use Skype (a service which allows you to talk to each other for free on your computers), but it was to no avail. Still they were kind enough to refer me to a pastor in Dachau.

I emailed and then tried to call. It was pretty sad. The pastor's wife picked up the phone and, after stumbling around in each other's native tongue, we agreed to try Spanish. But after 4 years of high school Spanish the reality is that I am not much better at Spanish than I am at German. Finally, she gave me the phone number of someone in the church who supposedly spoke English. All I can say is that it is a good thing I remembered my numbers in Spanish! I punched in numbers, not even knowing the name of the person to whom the number belonged. Can you say desperate??? The person who picked up the phone did indeed speak English, and was very moved by my idea. She encouraged me, saying she would pass along my thoughts to her pastor. I never got back to her because somewhere in the next day or two I finally connected to Philip—another relocated Englishman.

Philip has a similar vision for Dachau, desiring to see God heal the hearts of the people and restore the town. He has a web site that he put together just for that purpose. In his own words: "*The vision is to see Dachau spring over its own shadow and*

*be known as a place of blessing, a place where God is, a place of power, peace, restoration, happiness and spiritual refreshing. A place where people feel the touch of Jesus on their lives. You can read more about it [here](#).*

Philip put together a Christian music/arts festival last year in Dachau and about 300 people attended. Philip was initially encouraged, but nothing more transpired after the event. Several months later he was amazed that someone halfway across the world had similar thoughts about Dachau and she wanted to do another event. Philip immediately set to work on our behalf—making connections in Dachau so that we could do a concert at the Palace.



As Philip was making different inquiries and sharing

the vision with some of the people in his church and other churches in Munich and Dachau, a German man in Canada—Jurgen—heard that we are planning to give away red roses in Dachau. Jurgen emailed me, overwhelmed that God had put such a vision in our hearts for Dachau. He grew up near Dachau, living there until he was 18. He moved away, eventually ending up in Canada. He shared how God delivered him from the shame he felt as a German. Ten years ago he started planning an outreach to Dachau—at the memorial—and then realized that it was not what God was doing at that time. Jurgen sent us a 7-day prayer guide for Dachau and a generous gift to buy the roses. Jurgen’s parents still live near Dachau. I am hoping we get a chance to meet.

Shortly after I heard from Jurgen, Joyce, a Jewish believer who now lives in Stuttgart also contacted me. She had heard me sing many years ago at a Messianic congregation in Monterey, CA. She wrote to me on Myspace asking if I was the same Sally she heard all those years ago. Well I wouldn’t say that I am exactly the same... It turns out she is now in a Bible study led by an American woman I met last year, on the flight from Krakow to Berlin. They were both talking about the same person and didn’t know it. Joyce, who originally contacted me through Myspace, said that she was still dealing with hard feelings toward the Germans, even though she lives there now. She read through **what I had written** about A Tour of Roses and listened to **Love is Walking** and the Lord touched her

heart. She felt convicted, realizing she needed to forgive. I am hoping to see Joyce at Dachau.

There are, of course, some difficulties that are presenting themselves as well, requiring wisdom, diplomacy, and kindness above all. For this I would ask your prayers. I am aware enough of my own shortcomings to feel ill-equipped to ford these waters. But this project belongs to the Lord and I need to trust Him to accomplish His purpose in all this. Each one of us needs to trust God to give us the words and the ways through the thorns and briars that present themselves as we walk this vision out with Him.

Giving out the red roses in each town, may very well be the most challenging thing any of us have ever done. It seems to be both an intimate thing as well as bold. Even though I had some experience of it when I gave out Three Red Roses last year near Birkenau, it is still hard to imagine what it will feel like to hold out a red rose to a stranger in the town square or market place of Oswiecim, Dachau, or Bergen and Belsen. Will there be smiles and tears, angry words and hostile looks—distrust? I have wondered all these things and realize there is nothing I can do to prepare for how people will receive our gifts and ourselves but choose to love as Jesus loves—unconditionally.

This is the crux of our mission, after all. We are to be vessels of the Lord's kindness and mercy, expressing His unconditional love in everything we say, do, and are, in the hope that healing may take place. It is our prayer that God will soften hearts, open blind eyes, unstop ears, and bind up the broken-hearted and bring life—His life—to those still living in the graves of the past.

Last summer Dusty Rose, our oldest daughter, spent a good chunk of time reading to me two of Walter Wangerin's books; *The Book of the Dun Cow* and *The Book of Sorrows*. There are few books I consider as powerful and profound as these. There is an exquisite scene near the end of *The Book of Sorrows* where the hero (a rooster) has fallen from grace but is restored by the least and most unlikely character (a coyote) in the book. It is in fact, the weakness of that character which allows him to become a vessel of healing to the fallen hero. Here is only a portion of their closing exchange.

*"Oh, Chanty-clear, there is a beautiful Cow. When I was hurting the most, this beautiful Cow came to me. And somebody maybe should have punished me, on account of all the troubles that I caused. But she loved me, Chanty-clear. Isn't that a mercy? She touched me, she fed me, she washed me, and that is how she loved me. Then this is how she forgave me: she did the same thing for my*

*daughter Hopsacking. All of the hurts, every one of the hurts, she took away from me with her eyes and with her tongue, and there was no reason for that, but she did it, Chanty-clear. Do you know this beautiful Cow? One horn on her head? She knows you, Chanty-clear. She said that she loves you, Chanty-clear. You didn't listen to her when she came to you, but that's okay, too, because look: she sent me. This is the main reason why I came. To forgive you..."*

*So Ferric Coyote pulls his own poor body forward until he is next to the Rooster. Then, like a mother and a newborn, he begins to lick Chauntecleer, stroke and stroke and stroke, nodding his head with every stroke, beak and neck and back and breast, washing him clean of a winter's filth—and smiling...*

*"Oh, God! Oh, God!" howls Chauntecleer. " Oh dear God, how can I stand this?" Every stroke of the Coyote's tongue wakens a wickedness in the Cock, draws it through his memory in order to wipe it away. It is a poor, pitiful life he remembers. No this is no soft tongue. It is rough as gravel and scours the Rooster, but he does not deny it, because it comes in kindness. Kindness. Kindness is the reason it burns so much. And kindness is his Keeper."*

Can there be anything more powerful than the pure, unconditional love and kindness of God perfectly expressed in His Son, Jesus the Christ? We who call ourselves His are to reflect that amazing love as we live it out where we are. We are to be bearers of that Kingdom of Mercy in the midst of a world that is, more often than not, ruthless and power-hungry. It is a vulnerable choice simply because many people will not respond in kind. But it is the only true healing choice. We love—because He first loved us...

I am haunted by a picture in my mind of holding out a single red rose in my hand extended into the darkness. Without shame, without defense, no argument or persuasion in my mouth, but choosing to be fully present and vulnerable before God and man, I am holding out a rose—a sign of the love of God into a vortex of human pain and suffering and all its emotional train. I am powerless to make people believe that the blood of Jesus can heal even the darkest corner of their pain.

A ROSE OF  
REMEMBRANCE

RED FOR THE  
BLOOD OF THE  
PEOPLE WHO DIED.

RED FOR THE  
SAVIOR'S BLOOD,  
WHICH WAS SHED  
FOR YOUR PEOPLE  
AND MY PEOPLE.

RED FOR HIS LOVE,  
WHICH MAKES LOVE  
BETWEEN OUR  
PEOPLE  
POSSIBLE.

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Each of us who choose to do so, can only stand with a hand extended, offering the rose, and in that posture we are putting our own hearts before them as well.

**Please pray for us:**

**Vincent Archer** – California (American)

**Magda Balcerak** – Warsaw, Poland (Polish)

**Philip Budden** – Munich, Germany (British)

**Diana Evert** – Minnesota (American)

**Karen Forth** – Oswieicm, Poland (British)

**Christine Graff** – Nuremberg, Germany (German)

**Katharina Hoopmann** – Bergen, Germany  
(German)

**Bozcena Jarosz** – (Polish)

**Noemi Miriam Kubas** – Oswiecim, Poland (Polish)

**Adam Malkiewicz** – Krakow, Poland (Polish)

**Renia Malkiewicz** – Krakow, Poland (Polish)

**Cindy Marty** – Krakow, Poland (American)

**Dagmar Menzel** – Nuremberg, Germany (German)

**Hannah Lynn Musap** – California (American)

**Sally Klein O'Connor** - California (American)

**Inna Pikman** – Berlin, Germany (Russian)

**Vladimir Pikman** – Berlin, Germany (Polish)

**Igor Shelest** – Essen, Germany (Russian)

**Steven F. Skoglund** – Minnesota (American)

**Monica Szkorla** - Krakow, Poland (American)

**Mark Warwick** – Krakow, Poland (British)

**Ulli Weber** – Nuremberg, Germany (German)

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