

MAY AND SETH AND A CHOIR OF FORTY KIDS!  
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Margaret and I had a busy summer. Our daughter got married in July, we spent a week with His Holiness the 17th Karmapa in Woodstock, and then went back again to the monastery in September for our yearly 10-day intensive retreat. And there were other smaller events as well. It was a bit like a dream, but as winter threatens to settle in, that particular summer dream is ending.

Perhaps that is why I am more reluctant than usual to call it a day as fall comes and things start to move indoors. Part of me just wants to keep on going and skip winter this year. Well, that does not seem to be happening.

One thing we have done is follow my daughter May (who is a popular singer here in Michigan) from gig to gig in the last few weeks as they launched a new CD across the Midwest. In previous blogs I pointed out how May and her husband Seth went to Ethiopia earlier this year as cultural ambassadors and played music at small towns and cities all across that country. In the end some \$200,000 was raised to build three new schools for Ethiopian kids who very much need them. During that trip they wrote a whole album of music which has just been released under the name "New Flower," which is the translation of the name of Ethiopia's largest city "Addis Ababa," where they spent a fair amount of time.

For the release of this new CD special shows are being given in cities all across the Midwest and each show is also a little bit like a party. Margaret and I just said, what the hell, let's go to a bunch of them and hang out. As so we did. It was fun and May, Seth, and the whole band made us feel so very welcome. May and Seth were joined for this tour by three other musicians who either have bands of their own or are well known in the area and they are: Joshua Davis on keyboards (front man for the band Steppn' in It), Mike Shimmin on drums (plays with Milish, Red Sea Pedestrians, etc.), and Brennan Andes (leader of the Macpods). The group was just wonderfully tight-knit and a joy to hear. We also visited other of our kids and relatives, staying here and there around the state.

We are back home just now and the CD-release tour goes on without us. They are playing tonight in Holland, Michigan and then tomorrow in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and so on. As I write this, there is considerable nostalgia in me remaining from the trip and I am left wondering why don't we jump back in the car and join them tonight for yet another performance. One reason might be that we are tired but I know they would be glad to see us and we almost feel like part of the band by this point.

All this running around has been fun, with many quick stops at co-ops when we could, and then there were the restaurants (good and bad). We were on the road folks and staying up late at

night. That sort of thing.

Last night we were in East Lansing Michigan where we stayed at our son Michael's house and attended a concert by May and Seth at the Timberlake Auditorium. What was different about this gig was that accompanying the band were a choir of some forty 40 kids from the fabulous Red Cedar Elementary School. They had learned two of May's songs and were thrilled to be there as a chorus and sing along with May and Seth. And it was lovely