



Ethiopia: Zemen Endale

Zemen's Story

Born to Become a Priest

From my parents--Endale Lashetew and Nigmatwa Tolossa--I came into the world on July 28, 1975 in Bure, Ethiopia. And with my poor family of three brothers and four sisters, I grew up in Bure village, along with my extended family and relatives.

My father served as a priest in the Coptic Church. And as I grew up I held a diaconal (deacon) position in the church. My father expected me to become a priest like him. He took time to intentionally teach me all of the rules and teachings of the Coptic Church.

Born Again to Become a Pastor

While attending high school, one of my classmates who sat behind me, started telling me and kept on telling me about Jesus Christ. He opened my ears to Christian radio. Daily I listened. And finally, when I turned 16, the LORD gave me wonderful Life with Christ. I decided to follow Him. After I told my family about my decision to receive Christ, my dad and my relatives seriously persecuted me. They kicked me out of our home. I had a difficult struggle during this time. But the LORD and Bure Full Gospel Church took care of me. I have always had a thankfulness about how the Lord and the church did that!



Then after my conversion to my new faith, I quickly started doing ministry. Though I was very young I had the opportunity because at that time churches did not have many ministers who had the training to serve others, and only a few could read the Bible. They did not have the tools needed to teach and preach. The Lord had a plan all along to use my Coptic background. It gave me the background to read the Bible, and knowledge of God's Word. Even as a teenager I had an abundance of opportunities to preach and teach.

This desire to serve the Lord steadily grew in my life, as did the opportunities in many different villages and towns. Then when I joined the teacher training profession, they assigned me to teach in one village. As a result, I planted churches in that village and in many other surrounding villages.

After 11 years of experience in the teaching profession and church planting, the LORD led me to begin a radio program in the Oromo language—my language. From that time on I engaged in ministry fulltime. And in 2005-2006 the Christian media ministry sent me to Arusha, Tanzania to study media. After the media training the LORD helped me again to go to Bible College. I graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree (2008-2012). And in 2014 I graduated from Addis Ababa University having completed my masters degree in Social Work.

All of these opportunities have resulted in increasing my skills and abilities to minister to people. The LORD has opened doors and put me in networks to serve with the Evangelical Church, and He has given me opportunities to receive training in children's and youth ministry, discipleship, and prayer and life transformation ministry—all focusing on equipping leaders to help people to know Christ and to apply the Word of God.

Blessed to Become Reach Out's National Youth Leader

All of my previous ministry opportunities and training have lead me to this—to serve as Reach Out's Country Leader in Ethiopia. With 103 million people in Ethiopia, 70% are the teenagers. The vast majority do not know Jesus. So it is prudent that we train youth leaders with a simple, biblically effective approach so they can know Jesus and follow Him.

In 2016 I met pastor Fred Abok in Nairobi at a conference. Later he invited me to a Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry Forum in Ethiopia that same year. Not only did I attend that training, but I implemented it in my ministry, and then I returned again in 2017. After that I began introducing Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry (JFYM) to many of the churches in Addis Ababa. In 2018, Fred Abok and Mark Juma helped me to officially launch JFYM in Addis Ababa. The significant impact it has had in the southern region (Hawassa , Wondo Geneth and Aresenegele) has now begun in Addis.



JFYM came to me as a real answer to prayer. I had asked God for a tool that would help me reach out to young people in a culturally appropriate way. JFYM does that. The materials provide simple, adoptive and effective training for youth ministry in Ethiopia. How grateful I am to God for Reach Out, for JFYM, and for this opportunity to reach the young people in our country for Jesus. And I am convinced that with our team around the country already trained in JFYM, we will reach every corner of Ethiopia, and give every Ethiopian young person the opportunity to hear the Gospel, and to grow into passionate disciples of Jesus!

Connect with Zemen

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