Youth Minster Intern at Archangel Gebreil Ethiopian Orthodox Cathedral:

Executive summary

For the summer of 2011, I interned as a youth minster at Archangel Gebriel Ethiopian Orthodox Cathedral in Seattle, WA. I worked with Rev. Dn. Alemayehu Bahta who is currently the Sunday School director at the Cathedral. I was given the opportunity to design youth programs and serve as a deacon in the Divine Liturgy. In addition, I was given the chance to conduct research regarding Ethiopian youth who are incarcerated due to gang related activities.

I started my research by interviewing some youth who were involved in gangs in order to see why they joined gangs as well as to understand the church’s and their parent’s role. My research pointed to several problems, one of them being the language barrier between the youth, and their parents and the church. To see how the church could help heal this problem, I created a weekly fellowship program in English for the youth. The fellowship became a pilot program to see what kind of programs Ethiopian Orthodox Churches could create for their youth in order to keep them away from gangs and other unlawful activities.

I had a wonderful time working with the youth. To be able to see their hunger for the word of God has made me realize the need for youth ministers and programs for the youth. Ministry to the youth is not optional, but rather a must. We fail to see that these youth are the future of our church. They are the ones who are going to inherit the church. In ministering to them, not only are we saving the Church, but their lives as well!