

Ethiopian immigrants prepared to become world-changers

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Essaw Jagiso and his wife, Senedu Asfaw, arrived in the United States 14 years ago with a dream—all four of their children would take full advantage of the educational opportunities America offers. And with God's help, the couple determined to set an example for them to follow.

When the family arrived from Ethiopia, they experienced “culture shock,” Asfaw said.

Jagiso acknowledged he and his family found adjustment challenging.

“There were language barriers, of course. We worked multiple jobs to pay bills. We began right away to talk to our children about the importance of school,” he said.

Inspired by Nelson Mandela

He quotes Nelson Mandela, the renowned South African leader, who said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

If so, Jagiso and his family are well prepared to become world-changers.

In order for their children to value education, Asfaw said, “We knew that we must be the living example.”

So, both she and her husband entered college.

Faith saw them through

Working together, they managed to balance their studies with family,

church and work commitments. The family attends [Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano](#) and credits their faith in God for seeing them through some tense moments.

“Nothing is more important than Jesus Christ,” Asfaw insisted.

“We sought to instill that truth in our children’s DNA,” her husband added.

Each of their children graduated high school and entered college, too. At times, all six family members were enrolled in college simultaneously.

Higher degrees

After completing their undergraduate degrees, the parents determined to continue their studies, seeking master of business administration degrees from [Amberton University in Garland](#). Amberton is a private Christian university that focuses on working adults who seek higher education.

“Amberton facilitates people like us to go to school and earn their degrees,” Jagiso noted. “The university’s professors support and encourage adult students. They understand how employment and family issues sometimes interfere with studies.”

At the same time last month when both parents were completing degree requirements to earn MBAs, their youngest daughter Roza, now age 21, graduated from Southern Methodist University—earning baccalaureate degrees in political science, human rights and communications—and their other daughter, Bezunesh, completed a bachelor of science degree in nursing at Midwestern State University in May.

In addition, their two older sons—Yonathan and Nahom—both earned master degrees before reaching age 22.

Parents an example

"If we hadn't gone to college, I am not sure that our children would have," Asfaw said. "I wanted them to think, 'If my mother can accomplish this, why can't I?'"

However, the parents take no credit for themselves.

"We turn all the praise for our family's success back to our Lord, Jesus Christ. We have been remarkably blessed—blessed beyond our expectations," Jagiso said.