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On God's Team

BY MARIA DELGADO

I was blessed to be born into an Adventist family. I grew up believing in God and actively participating in the church, but it was at the age of 17 when I had an encounter with God that changed my life.

I was 11 years old when my parents decided to move to Belgium. In the beginning, it was not easy to adapt to a new culture without losing my origins. I did not know what I wanted to do with my life until God came into my heart and put in me the desire to prepare myself to serve Him.

The last year of high school was difficult because, for my classmates, I was just the girl who did not go to the parties on the weekends and did not drink or smoke. But I had the conviction that God had called me for something special.

After high school, I went to study theology at the Adventist University of France, supported by the Belgian Federation. My father was happy with the news but, for my mother, it was hard to accept my decision. Members of my Hispanic church were amazed because it is not common in our culture to have women as ministers. But pastoral women in Europe are very well accepted, and it encouraged me to continue.

The years I spent in France were enriching for my personal life and ministry. It was also important for me to find a partner who could support me in my decisions, and God placed in my life a wonderful man with the same vision and commitment to the ministry as I.

I am currently the only student of theology from Belgium in our

Adventist church. Unfortunately, Belgium has no more young people interested in the pastoral ministry; if things continue like this in the future, there will be no Belgian pastors who know the culture and speak the official languages of French and Dutch. That's one of the reasons why I chose the M.A. in Youth & Young Adult Ministry. It is my desire to work with young people because they are the future of our church. I want them to see that God has big plans for their lives. Another motivation in my ministry is the opportunity I have in Belgium to serve Muslims and be their friends. They are one of the large people groups that exist in Belgium.

The mission class at the Seminary made me realize it is a privilege to share our faith; all of us are missionaries where we are. I am blessed to be part of God's team, and have the assurance that God will help me in this big challenge. We all have different goals and challenges, but one thing remains the same: If we put our plans into the hands of God and we do His will, He has promised us that all things work together for good to those who love God (see Romans 8:28).

Maria Delgado is 23 years old. She was born in Colombia and grew up in Belgium. She received a degree in theology at the Adventist University of France. Since August 2011, she has lived in Berrien Springs, Michigan, with her husband, David Carballo. Currently, Maria is earning an M.A. in Youth and Young Adult Ministry at the Seminary.



Esther Nooner