

Anderson Godoy Salguero



My name is Anderson Godoy Salguero. I was born in Colombia and I am studying at the South America Nazarene Theological Seminary. I am nineteen years old and I am convinced that God has called me into fulltime ministry.

My story began July 7, 1987. When I was born, my parents were not married. We really never had any money and were poor. My father worked all the time to try and make ends meet. My mother also worked from morning until evening, leaving me in the care of another lady. When I was four years old, my father abandoned us and married another lady. For me it was difficult to think that I no longer had my father. I had idolized him and thought my mother was to blame. When I was eight, I learned that my mother was pregnant from my real father even though he was married to another woman. My sister, Eliana, was born and this created a lot of conflict in the family.

During my infancy I was alone, and now I was able to unleash my anger against another person, my sister. I physically mistreated her because I felt nobody loved me. Sometime later, my father had another daughter with his new wife. I lost all hope of our family ever reuniting again. When I reached puberty, I felt I could manage my own world and make my own decisions. The conflict I had with my sister and my mother was unbearable. I took most of my anger out on my sister. On a number of occasions, I physically threatened my mother and blasphemed the name of God. I was so confused, often thinking about suicide or doing other bad things. I tried to draw near to God through the Catholic Church, but this really didn't help.

I went to live with my father, hoping this would diminish my problems. During this time, he had separated from his second wife and was living alone. I was finishing high school and had earned some of the highest marks in our country on my exams. I was granted a scholarship to one of the most expensive universities in Colombia. My childhood dream was to be a scientist. I actually burnt part of our house down in one of my experiments.

The university did not offer a career in chemistry, thus I decided to apply at Colombia National University, the most prestigious in Colombia and the second best in Latin America. Many people in Colombia dream of attending this university, but the university only receives a small portion of those that apply. I was accepted and entered Colombia National University with a very high grade point average. I was only sixteen.

Life with my father was out of control. He worked all the time and had another woman. I continued my university studies and became interested in communism and absurd philosophies. Life had no meaning whatsoever for me; I had bought into the lie. I couldn't distinguish reality from the inventions of my own mind. I thought the entire world was a dump and it wasn't worth the pain to continue living. My father fought continually with his new girlfriend; they acted like children who did not deserve my respect. On the other side, my real mother worked all the time to support my sister. My little sister was living a lonely, sad childhood just like I had lived. It is somewhat curious that during the course of my shattered life, my academic grades were outstanding despite my emotional crisis. I was first in my class and continued to receive various scholarships.

One day I felt as if I had died when I found out that my father had another child with his girlfriend. Worse yet, when the child was born, they separated. In the middle of this desperation, I decided to go back and live with my mother and sister. I asked God to show me the truth about His existence.

When I was thirteen, a friend of mine brought me to the Church of the Nazarene in Bogotá, but my intellect would not permit me to believe in God. I left the Catholic Church and started to love God in my own way. Once again, this same friend invited me to church and I went with him. I asked God to forgive me of my sins and for ignoring Him for such a long time. One day while studying chemistry, my mother entered my room crying, telling me that my grandfather was about to die. On my desk were two books: one large volume about chemistry and the other was a Bible. I asked myself, "What good are my chemistry books in a time like this?" I began to cry out to God, asking him to reveal His purpose in my life. Ironically, one month later, my grandfather was well but my grandmother died.

I remember they sent her home to die in peace. None of her children were able to offer her spiritual support during her last days. But I placed her on my lap while her children asked for forgiveness for all the errors they had committed. Grandma wasn't able to hear or see them. They were waiting to receive her final blessing and forgiveness. I thought many people do the same thing with God, waiting until the end. They want to repent but it is too late. To see my grandmother dying changed my life.

When grandpa saw her body, he didn't cry. He began preaching repentance and forgiveness to all those that were present. This encouraged me, and God touched my life in a special way. God's word entered my life and I began preaching in the cemetery, the Catholic Church, and anywhere I could find an opening. But the question still loomed, "What is the purpose of my life?" On the 14th of December 2004, I went to a youth camp. I was in the bathroom and I said to God, "If you want me to give up everything and live completely for You, tell me?" His presence and words were so real to me that it was like the air I breathe or like the blood running through my veins. I made the decision to totally abandon my life to His service, no matter what other men would say.

December 24th, on Christmas Eve, I asked my parents to be with me so I could give them my Christmas gift. The gift was the notice that I was leaving the university and dedicating myself to the ministry. My parents cried, even though they supported me with their words. In time though, I could see that it was affecting our relationship. I began to work in the local church for little money. My father stopped supporting me financially. I went to the church everyday, even though it took an hour to get there. I rarely had sufficient money. My mother constantly reminded me about our poverty. In time, my father preferred not to speak to me. On many occasions, I went hungry because I had no bread to eat. Many times I walked or rode my bicycle long distances because I didn't have money for public bus fares. Nonetheless, during these times, I thanked God for calling me and claimed the promises He had given me.

In August 2005, I went to Quito, Ecuador to visit South America Nazarene Theological Seminary and felt God calling me to this institution to begin my ministerial preparation. After many months and overcoming different stumbling blocks, I was able to attend seminary. I am now in my second year of studies and able to see the hand of God supporting everything I do. It is incredible to see the way my life has changed. My mother and my sister are now Christians. My father has started to attend church and is seeking my prayers. He also asked me to forgive him for not believing in my dreams. I am compelled to preach and announce the good news to the world. God has called me to serve Him with all my strength and this is what I long to do. My future is somewhat uncertain. Yet, if I seek the kingdom of God, everything else will be added unto me.