

# Abella, José (Joseph) (1892–1928)

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NELSON SALGADO

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José Abella was a pioneer of colporteur ministry in Algeria and the first Spanish missionary to carry out pastoral work in Portugal.

## Early Years and Education

Abella was born in Grañena de las Garrigas, Lérida, on January 24, 1892.<sup>1</sup> When he was still a child, his parents moved to the city of Sabadell, where he enrolled in a school opened by the first Adventist missionaries to Spain, the Bond brothers.<sup>2</sup> In 1904 he was baptized in Barcelona by Pastor Benjamin G. Wilkinson, with Maria Serra and Lola Casals.<sup>3</sup>

## Ministry

After studying at the missionary school in Gland, Switzerland, Abella was sent, together with Ulysse Augsburger, to Algeria, North Africa, as a colporteur. A year and a half later, he was sent to Lisbon, Portugal, where he worked with Charles Rentfro, the first Adventist missionary in that country. In 1910 he returned to North Africa and worked as a colporteur and evangelist.<sup>4</sup>

Abella married Antonia Mateu in 1910, and eight years later he was ordained to the ministry at the session of the Latin Union, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1920. Then he went to Porto, Portugal, where his dedicated service brought many converts to the church.<sup>5</sup>

Abella died of tuberculosis in Felgueiras, Portugal, on May 4, 1928, only a few months after contracting the disease.<sup>6</sup> A descendant of his also served as a pastor in France.

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## SOURCES

Tejel, Andrés. "José Abella, primer misionero español." *Revista Adventista Española*, September 1978.

Valls, Jonathan, ed. *Compartiendo la esperanza, Cien años de adventismo del séptimo día en España*. Madrid: Safeliz, 2003.

## NOTES

1. Andrés Tejel, "José Abella, primer misionero español," *Revista Adventista Española*, September 1978, 52.
2. Jonathan Valls, ed., *Compartiendo la esperanza, Cien años de adventismo del séptimo día en España* (Madrid: Safeliz, 2003), 52.
3. Tejel, 52.
4. Valls, 52. Doru Pleniceanu reports the growth of the denomination in Algeria, where the church was composed almost exclusively by French immigrants: "L'implantation du mouvement Adventiste en Algérie, 1905-1962" (M.A. thesis., Adventist Faculty of Theology, Collonges-sous-Salève, 2002).
5. Tejel, 52.
6. Valls, 52.

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