In Tahiti, Wilson urges spiritual leadership to President Temaru
Adventists should be 'modern-day Elijahs,' world church leader says

Network, standards growing for Adventist security professionals
Concealed arms discussion on agenda for third meeting

In addition to today’s bulletin stories, you may also wish to read an ANN Commentary by Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director John Graz, who offers an update on the situation of two Adventists in prison in Togo. The Commentary may be read HERE.

In Tahiti, Wilson urges spiritual leadership to President Temaru
Feb. 11, 2013
Papeeno, Tahiti
James Standish/ANN staff

Authentic spirituality is at the core of the Seventh-day Adventist message, church President Ted N. C. Wilson said during an official visit with the leader of French Polynesia last week.

The Adventist world church leader met with President Oscar Temaru and other French Polynesian government officials at the president’s office in Papeete, Tahiti, while on a tour of the South Pacific island groups.

President Temaru said he was grateful for the positive impact the Adventist Church has on French Polynesia, adding that Adventists are “good citizens.” Wilson, speaking in French, expressed appreciation for the religious liberty granted by the government of French Polynesia. As an overseas country of France, the island groups are given considerable autonomy, allowing for greater religious freedom than granted by laws in France.

Later in their conversation, Wilson illustrated the Adventist Church’s belief in holistic living. Gesturing toward a table in the president’s office, he said, “When one leg is missing, the table can’t stand. Similarly, people need their spiritual, physical, mental and social needs met. We believe God wants us to develop all of these attributes in harmony.”

Before praying with Temaru and his senior staff, Wilson read Micah 6:8, a Bible verse he has previously called a blueprint for leadership. The Old Testament passage encourages justice, mercy and humility. “That is the wish God has for you, your colleagues and your staff,” he said.

Earlier in the week, Wilson met with Gaston Tong Sang, the mayor of Bora Bora and former president of French Polynesia. Sang later made the 45-minute flight to Tahiti to attend an Adventist worship and evangelism rally that ran February 7 to 9.

During his Sabbath sermon, Wilson urged an audience of close to 4,000 to prioritize spiritual development, citing the Old Testament story of Elijah, who advocated a return to godliness. “God is calling us to be Elighahs in our modern world,” Wilson said.
Local Adventist Church leaders credited the strong turnout to members who brought their friends and neighbors to the rally. There are about 4,600 Adventists in French Polynesia, spread over some 130 islands.

“When we regularly meet in small groups, it can be hard to imagine the large worldwide community of which we are a part,” said Jerry Matthews, president of the New Zealand Pacific Union.

The day before, thousands more Adventists learned the history of the church in French Polynesia. Adventist missionaries first sailed to the island groups on a boat called the Pitcairn. The British colony of Pitcairn Island was historically an outpost of Adventism in the South Pacific.

Marcel Millaud, Communication director for the church’s French Polynesia Mission, reflected on reading the letters of early Adventist missionaries in the archives at Adventist-run Avondale College in Australia.

“You can feel their human emotions as they struggle, as they dream, as their faith is challenged. I only wish those early pioneers could be here with us today. They could see that all those hardships were not in vain. We haven’t forgotten their sacrifice.”

The Adventist Church operates 37 churches in French Polynesia, as well as a college and media center.

“This rally has been a profound blessing for us,” said Roger Tetuanui, president of the French Polynesia Mission. “It has brought our church family together … But most important has been the spiritual impact of the messages. We feel unified and spiritually energized.”

**Network, standards growing for Adventist security professionals**

*Oakwood University Security Director Lewis Eakins is interviewed by the local news affiliates on February 4 about an upcoming faculty and staff training series titled "Active Shooter Survival Training." The campus security team became a full-fledged police*
When Lewis Eakins learned about the mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2006, he wanted to increase the level of preparedness for his campus safety officers at Oakwood University.

Eakins, the director of Public Safety at the Adventist university in Huntsville, Alabama, embarked upon a state procedure that allows a private university to create its own police department. The move, he says, has enhanced training and now allows several of his 15 officers to carry a firearm.

“We don’t have crimes to justify having a police agency, but we wanted to make sure we have the highest level of training so we can deal with any threat that comes on this campus,” said Eakins, a former assistant police chief who holds a master’s degree in security management.

With recent mass shootings in Connecticut and Colorado, and increasingly similar incidents worldwide, Adventist security professionals say the issue of safety officers carrying firearms should be up for discussion. Though it’s a controversial issue in a denomination that has historically promoted non-combatancy and conscientious objection, top security directors at numerous Adventist institutions are urging a greater level of preparedness for responding to potential threats.

Moreover, they want the denomination to know that they are a resource for church leaders – there is a cadre of security professionals within the church who can offer experience, consulting and staffing to support public safety departments at campuses and institutions.

“Administrators don’t need to go to outside consultants. Many of us have 20 to 30 years of experience in law enforcement. We’re the missionaries who know this business,” said Paul Muniz, a former police chief and director of security for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

Muniz is a board member and chaplain of the Professional Adventists for Safety and Security (PASS), a group that will hold its third meeting from July 15-16 at Loma Linda University in California.

PASS launched in 2010 when nine Adventist security professionals met at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. After the group’s first meeting, PASS again met in 2012 at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, with roughly 15 in attendance.

PASS president Dale Hodges first organized the group as a networking opportunity for campus safety officials to share best practices and encourage standards for hiring staff.

Campus safety now more than ever includes working closely with information technology professionals to implementing tracking systems and immediate incident notifications. Officers also discuss methods of policing and stopping unidentified individuals. Despite advancing security
practices, many security directors admittedly still trade tips on the usual struggles of trying to enforce parking policies and clearing a building of students before closing it for the night.

Hodges, a former homicide detective who serves as director of the Office of Campus Safety at Andrews University, echoed other PASS members saying that standards for hiring security directors has improved over the years. No longer are a uniform and a badge given to someone without experience and training.

“Historically in the Adventist community they hadn’t picked out professionals in these jobs. I think in today’s day and age the Adventist community as a whole is recognizing that and trying to make up for it.”

This year’s PASS meeting is being organized by Suzy Douma, director of security at Loma Linda University. She was a police officer for 22 years and holds a master’s degree in public administration.

“Over the years the qualifications have improved. We’ve become more strict in hiring,” Douma said. She oversees a staff of more than 50, including three K-9 units.

Douma said she feels strong support from her university administration, but admits it’s sometimes still a challenge helping people understand the role of a campus safety officer. “We’re the ones who have to take control when others haven’t been able to get control,” she said.

Now that mass shootings and appropriate responses are in the public spotlight, she said the key issue is the “timeliness” of the response. “Problems can be so emergent that you can’t wait.”

At Oakwood, the first three officers upon a scene would be required to engage a shooter. At Loma Linda, campus safety staff are trained to respond to shooting incidents by helping people evacuate, finding shelter and setting up a perimeter to maintain safety until armed officers arrive. Currently, however, "We are not prepared, trained or armed to mitigate the danger of shooter," Douma said.

“It’s not my decision, but I think our university is open to that kind of discussion,” Douma said.

“I’ve been trying to have this discussion for years,” said Jim Vines, director of security at the Adventist Church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. He said five officers on staff are licensed to carry a concealed firearm.

“The Bible says the world is just going to get worse. We want to be proactive and be prepared,” Vines said.

The board members of PASS all work in the denomination’s North American Division, but they represent organizations of the world church. Oakwood, Andrews, Loma Linda and ADRA are all institutions directly affiliated with the Adventist Church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Muniz, ADRA’s security director, says the issue comes down to how to best protect workers. He sets up protocols for humanitarian workers entering new areas worldwide. He holds a master’s of divinity degree from Andrews and says the story of Nehemiah is an apt example of the current debate.

“The workers doing God’s work of rebuilding the wall each had their swords on them just in case. They weren’t looking to kill people, but they were ready to address the enemy,” Muniz said.
“That's more valid today than ever before. We need protection for our people who are involved in the upbringing of our children.”

For more information about PASS and its upcoming meeting, contact Dale Hodges either through email at dbhodges@andrews.edu, or by calling his office at 1-269-471-3321.

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United States of America
Monteiro’s ongoing nightmare – Adventist News Network

Feb. 12, 2013 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

John Graz

Editor's note: This week’s bulletin includes this ANN Commentary by Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director John Graz giving an update on the situation of two Adventists in prison in Togo.

Already one year and nothing has happened. I have been thinking about Pastor Antonio Monteiro every day since I met him in the Civil Prison of Lomé, Togo.

We all have periodic nightmares, but they never last too long. In the case of Monteiro, his reality has become an ongoing nightmare.

Monteiro was invited to Togo by the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Sahel Union to help families as a missionary in Togo. In May 2011, rumors spread of about 20 young women disappearing and being killed by a network of human blood traffickers in the northern part of Lome.

As happens in similar cases, people accused the police and authorities of doing nothing to solve the case.

Police arrested Monteiro on March 15 of 2012. His office, church and home were raided under heavy media spotlight. No evidence was found. He spent 14 days detained at police headquarters.

This whole case is based on the accusation of one person. Monteiro's accuser was an ex-prisoner who said Monteiro was a leader of the blood trafficking group. Monteiro had previously helped the man while ministering to him. It is believed that the man was taken into custody where police forced him under duress to name people he knew and with whom he had some contacts. This man, with a documented history of mental instability, offered any names he could readily think of.

The events were devastating for Monteiro's wife, children, colleagues and church members. The name of their husband, father and friend was on TV and on the front page of national newspapers.

After a few days, an investigation and a public confession of the accuser unfolded like a TV
drama. No evidence was found, and it became clear for many that Monteiro’s arrest was a mistake. Some also found it strange that a Seventh–day Adventist minister was suspected of using human blood for a religious ceremony.

The accusation against Monteiro lacked credibility. Most people thought that he would be released and the case dismissed.

But releasing him would have invited some questions: Who is responsible for such a big mistake? Who will speak to media saying: “Sorry, we messed up.” And the question of the people will be: “Who are the true criminals and why have they not been arrested?” It would be highly embarrassing for authorities to have to face these questions.

Monteiro is still in prison, along with Bruno Amah, a fellow Seventh–day Adventist also accused of the same crime. The facility is overcrowded where prisoners are trying to survive. Innocent people awaiting trial and criminals share the same space to sleep.

I remember when I saw Monteiro the first time. He wore a clean t-shirt, and I might have guessed he was a visitor. We prayed together. I explained the work that had already been done to grant his release, and it was our hope that he would be set free in a few days or weeks.

That was Saturday, September 8, 2012.

The men were in prison over Christmas. Some hoped that the authorities would have ended that tragedy. At this point it was a case of an arbitrary detention. He still had not had a trial. We contacted ambassadors, ministers and presidents. But nothing happened.

Our lawyers later received information that Monteiro would receive a trial on January 29 or 30 at the criminal court. It wasn’t great news, but at least Monteiro’s case would be heard and he would be able to defend himself with legal counsel.

But the trial was postponed. Nothing has happened, and they are still in prison.

We have sent letters to the president of Togo asking that justice be done.

New rumors are spreading about the imminent arrest of criminals. But until now Monteiro and Amah are still in prison. We will not give up. We want a fair trial, and we are certain it will prove their innocence.

On March 15, it will be one year since Monteiro and Amah were arrested. We expect that before this date they will be released. We are planning to launch a campaign to get
signatures and send letters from all around the world to the president of the United Nations Human Rights Committee and to the president of Togo.

Monteiro’s wife, his four children, and Amah’s family must know that we are doing everything we can to help. They are not alone. They are members of a great family of more than 30 million church members and their children.

We may feel powerless when innocent people are paying the price for free criminals. But we trust in God who will have the last word. His justice will prevail in the end.

—John Graz is director of the department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Seventh-day Adventist world church. He is heading up the Monteiro Working Group, which is addressing the situation from the world church headquarters.