This week's bulletin is a four-part series of articles about Pastor Antonio Monteiro, who is in prison without any evidence brought against him or a trial. Many churches will hold a "500 Days of Injustice" ceremony on July 27. For more information, see the website Pray4Togo.com.

- FIRST IN A SERIES: Monteiro says judge told him he was innocent
  A chronological history of the Togo case based on emerging details

- SECOND IN A SERIES: Monteiro’s accuser sought to recant testimony
  Simliya, documented as ‘psychopathic,’ said police forced him to give names under duress

- THIRD IN A SERIES: After the arrest, the case for Monteiro’s release
  Behind the scenes, lawyers went to work, diplomacy intensified

- FOURTH IN A SERIES: In prison, Monteiro wants peace for church, Togo government
  Graz: more public affairs, media relations needed in all countries

FIRST IN A SERIES: Monteiro says judge told him he was innocent
Pastor António Monteiro has remained in prison for nearly 500 days without a trial. He is being held at the Lomé Civil Prison in Togo. [photos courtesy Monteiro family]

António and Madalena married in 1984, the year after he was ordained a Seventh-day Adventist minister in Cape Verde.
Pastor António Monteiro has remained in prison for more than a year now, accused of a crime his church officials say he didn’t commit. Monteiro, the Family Ministries director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Sahel Union Mission, based in Lomé, Togo, was in his office one day when a man came to ask for a job and money. That man, Kpatcha Simliya, would later accuse Monteiro of being the mastermind behind a blood trafficking network to gather blood for use in religious ceremonies. More than a dozen young women had recently been found dead in the suburbs. The public wanted justice. Despite no evidence of his involvement, Monteiro was imprisoned on March 15, 2012, and to date has not received a trial. Five attempted appeals by his lawyer, the Adventist world church and several foreign diplomats have failed to see him released. Government officials have made promises to church leaders and lawyers, but have not brought him freedom. The president of Togo Faure Gnassingbé last year declined to receive Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson when he made a pastoral visit to the country. For church leaders and other following Monteiro’s case, many feel there must be more to the story. Did someone need a scapegoat? Do judges in Lomé really have final say, or are they ordered by the government to make decisions? Indeed, in a written statement obtained by ANN, Monteiro says that on the day he was arraigned, the judge repeatedly told him in front of his attorney, “Pastor, I know that you are innocent. Your file is empty. But I can’t release you, since this doesn’t depend on me.” Monteiro wondered to himself, “So on whom does this depend?” Now, more than 16 months later, new details are emerging about the case, which has left lawyers, diplomats and church officials confounded over how to secure Monteiro’s release from a government
that is violating its own constitution by detaining him without a legal basis.

According to police reports, his accuser, Simliya, previously confessed to murdering young women for the use of their blood and luring young women into the woods on unlikely promises. Simliya also served time in prison after a rape conviction and has a documented history of mental instability.

Meanwhile, a police search of Monteiro’s home and office turned up no evidence.

When Monteiro was put in prison, newspapers proclaimed that the right criminal was caught. Some published his photo alongside pictures of vials of blood.

“Pastor Monteiro is innocent, period,” said John Graz, director of the Adventist world church’s department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. “The outrageous accusation against Monteiro is that he, as an Adventist pastor, conspired to have these women killed so that various body parts could be used in conjunction with a religious ceremony. It’s an absolutely unbelievable and bizarre charge.”

“This is a complete travesty of justice and one which would not be tolerated in any law-abiding society,” Graz said.

Church officials have continued to work both publically and behind the scenes to get their employee out of prison. The Adventist world church has held international prayer vigils for Monteiro, sponsored letter-writing campaigns to government officials and diplomats, and led a signature drive for a petition calling for his release.

But Monteiro still remains in prison.

July 27 will mark 500 days since his arrest.

This series of four articles is based on interviews with sources involved in the situation, a statement by Monteiro, emails, letters, newspaper reports, police records and court documents.

A spokesman for Togo’s Ministry of Justice declined to comment for this series. Simliya is in prison on various charges, including attempt to commit homicide, and unavailable to comment.

Monteiro’s mission

One day in early 2011, Monteiro received a receptionist’s call that would cause his life to later take a turn. He was in his office at the Sahel Union Mission headquarters, a three-story building in Togo’s capital city of Lomé.

Monteiro had worked there since 2009 after receiving an email from Guy Roger, the union’s president, asking him to come serve as the union’s director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department.

At the time, Monteiro was the pastor for 25 churches and companies on Fogo Island in Cape Verde. The Portuguese-speaking country is a 10-island nation located 350 miles off the coast of West Africa. He was born there in 1955.

After high school, Monteiro left home to attend an Adventist seminary in Cameroon. He returned to his home country in 1983 to begin work as a pastor. He married Madalena dos Anjos in 1984, and the
couple moved every few years as church administrators gave him bigger responsibilities and larger districts to shepherd. Four children were born to the pastoral couple over the years.

During his ministry, Monteiro would participate in three evangelism campaigns in Boston, Massachusetts, United States, and others in the West African countries of Guinéa Bissau and Benin.

The email from Roger in 2009 posed a fork in the road: either stay in the familiarity and comfort of home or go into an unknown place to serve as a missionary.

Monteiro decided to accept the request, honored to have the chance to support the spiritual development of citizens of Togo and in the 10 other countries in the denomination’s Sahel Union. It would be a challenge, he knew, the region being home to many religious practices, including one of the world’s largest bases of Voodoo.

Concerns aside, he was eager to more widely share Christianity, a religion he felt teaches of a loving God. His own Adventist faith and community – now comprised of 17 million members worldwide – had instilled in him the importance of healthful living and education, not only for members but also for people in the community interested in improving their own lives.

Monteiro came to Togo and served at Sahel Union’s request. In 2011, he was also assigned as director of the union’s Adventist Mission ministry and Family Ministries department.

That day in early 2011, a receptionist asked if he could receive someone wanting to talk to a pastor. Monteiro requested the man come into his office. He then offered a seat to Simliya, the man who went by several names and months later would accuse him of crimes that would lead to his imprisonment.

Simliya told Monteiro he didn’t have a job, money for transportation and sometimes not enough food.

"Are you Adventist?" Monteiro asked.

Simliya said he was, and that he was baptized by Pastor Eric Mensanvi. Roger, the union president, would later confirm that Simliya was baptized in prison while serving time for a 2006 rape conviction.

Monteiro didn’t know the man’s history. He invited Simliya to a church meeting and introduced him to elders of the congregation and went home.

Several weeks later, Simliya came to the union headquarters again to say hello. Monteiro asked him, “So how are you doing?”

Simliya offered him the same story of not having a job, money or food.

“It’s true, life can be difficult,” Monteiro told him, “but God will provide.”

In the coming weeks, Simliya would drop by in the same manner several more times, one day informing Monteiro that he had been in prison.

“I didn’t try to find out what had happened,” Monteiro later recalled. “I counseled him, ‘Now that you are free, focus and work to start a new life. What do you do for work?’”

“I’m a taxi-driver,” Simliya said.
“Do you have your driver’s license?”

“Yes.”

“May I see it?”

“No, I don’t have it with me. I will bring it next time,” Simliya said.

Next time, which was a few days later, Simliya said his taxi license had been stolen.

“Look for the copy,” Monteiro told him.

Simlyia brought up a new subject. He said Bruno Amah, an Adventist Church member, had offered to help him purchase a car for approximately 800,000 CFA francs (about US$1,600), Monteiro recalled.

“He [Simliya] asked me to talk to this brother to help him. I didn’t know [Amah] personally, but I had talked to him on the phone about assistance” requested by a theology student.

There in the office, Simliya called Amah on this cell phone and handed it over to Monteiro. Over the phone, Amah confirmed that he knew Simliya. Monteiro told him of the request. Amah responded, “If I can, I’ll help him,” Monteiro recalled.

Weeks later, Simliya called Monteiro asking if there was news from Amah. There was none.

Months went by, from August to March of 2012, before Monteiro heard from Simliya again. On Tuesday, March 13, 2012, Simliya came to the union headquarters, but Monteiro told the receptionist, “No, I’m very busy.” Still, he briefly talked over the phone to Simliya, who stood in the lobby using the receptionist’s phone. Monteiro thanked him for coming by, but informed him that he was busy that day.

**Detainment begins**

Two days later, on March 15, police burst into Monteiro’s home around 8:30 p.m. and arrested him in front of his family. Police told him he was involved in a crime.

“This is a mistake,” Monteiro said.

An officer replied, “Aren’t you Mr. Monteiro?”

“Yes,” he replied, “but involved in a crime? No,” he said.

They took him to the police station where he met Simliya. Monteiro was asked if he knew the man. He replied that he did and told police the brief history.

Three days later, Monteiro was told by an officer, “You entrusted him [Simliya] with a mission.”

Monteiro asked, “What mission? I have one mission that I’ve been fulfilling for 40 years. I’m a pastor and my mission is to preach the gospel.”

A police commander said, “You ordered human blood.”
Police kept Monteiro detained at an anti-gang facility in a police station for 14 days in a 6- by 4-meter holding cell without a window. He was stripped of his clothing most of that time.

On March 28, he was brought into court. Investigations of his home, office and church had turned up no evidence. His lawyer asked for the case to be dismissed. The judge denied the request. Bail was denied.

He’s been in prison ever since.

“It’s hard to know what’s really going on behind all this,” said Graz, the denomination’s public affairs director.

—click HERE to see the second article in this series.

SECOND IN A SERIES: Monteiro’s accuser sought to recant testimony

Jul 18, 2013
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

Pastor António Monteiro and fellow church members have been in prison for nearly 500 days based solely on the accusation of one man. But according to a court-ordered psychiatric exam, that man, Kpatcha Simliya, would later recant his accusation, saying he was beaten by police and forced to give names of people he supposedly knew were co-conspirators in a blood trafficking network.

That has left Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders, lawyers and diplomats wondering why Monteiro and other Adventists accused of running a purported trafficking ring are still being held in prison without a trial.

Article 15 of the Togolese Constitution states, “No person shall be arbitrarily detained or confined. Anyone detained without legal basis shall have the right to seek judicial intervention. The appropriate judicial authority shall immediately render an opinion regarding the legality and/or regularity of the confinement.”

Last month, an editorial in the local newspaper, La Symphonie, called for a “fair and equitable process” of detainees. “Dozens of people accused in these different cases rot in jails for a long time,” the editorial stated.
Five people are being arbitrarily detained in connection with the case, according to church leaders: Monteiro, who since 2009 has served as a department director at the Adventist Church’s Sahel Union Mission; church member Bruno Amah, an employee of Togo Cellulaire; church member Beteynam Raphael Kpiki Sama; Simliya; and Idrissou Moumouni, a Muslim, who voluntarily went to police testifying that Simliya was a liar.

The arrests and detentions unfolded following a string of homicides in May of 2011.

Depending on different newspaper and police accounts, more than a dozen bodies of women between the ages of 12 and 36 had been found in the northern Lomé suburb of Agoué. The bodies had stab wounds and some sexual organs had been removed. Blood and animal parts are often used in ceremonies of Voodoo, which is widely practiced in Togo.

When no arrests were made, the public demanded justice for the killings, church leaders said.

Simliya was later shown on television surrounded by police guards, telling the story of the series of murders he said that he organized and naming accomplices who collected blood and organs. But much of the story proved unlikely, including the number of victims and the methods used, according to Simliya’s medical examiner.

“Any informed and reasonable man would have doubts regarding his incredible outpouring or the feasibility of his crimes or supposed crimes,” a September 9, 2012, court-ordered medical exam stated.

Simliya’s original testimony raised many questions. The judge overseeing Monteiro’s case requested that a psychiatric exam of Simliya be given by Dr. Tchangai Tchatcha. In his report, Tchatcha described Simliya’s personality as “unbalanced” or “psychopathic,” and having “tendencies towards pathological lying.”

Of Simliya’s testimony, Tchatcha stated in his written medical evaluation, “The sequence of ideas appeared to be illogical and he often changed his statement and had even made conflicting statements.”

“He is manipulative and above all a liar, all those we have met confirmed this opinion,” Dr. Tchatcha wrote.

Guy Roger, president of the Sahel Union Mission said of Simliya: “He has widely used his ‘brotherly status’ in order to obtain help from the Seventh-day Adventist communities in the area he frequented according to his needs.”

Simliya was born in 1984 in Kara, according to police reports. Dr. Tchatcha said Simliya’s personality was the result of a “troubled childhood.” The identity of his father was repeatedly questioned by his mother who sent him “around living with different relatives as if he was a package,” Tchatcha wrote.

Tchatcha also stated that Simliya was arrested in the third grade for petty theft, and he was once beaten until he was “almost dead,” accused of being demon possessed.

He spent four years in prison, from 2006 to 2010, serving time for a rape conviction.

As late as March of last year, police documented Simliya trying to lure young female vendors into the
woods with the unlikely promise that someone was waiting to buy all of their remaining merchandise.

Upon his release from prison on June 25 of 2010, two names appear as his sponsors who wanted to help him – Bruno Amah and Pastor Essossinam Komlan Sagao.

According to a March 22, 2012, police report, Simliya had asked Sagao for help in obtaining a job at the port. Sagao said he didn’t know of any such jobs, but offered him work washing cars. Simliya’s work was poor, and he quit after a week, Sagao said, according to the report.

Simliya claims to have been abused by police while in custody and asked for names of people he knew in Lomé. He proffered several names of those who had recently tried to help him, including Monteiro, Amah and Sagao.

But after telling police the names of the men, Simliya later told Tchatcha in an interview in the prison infirmary, “I went to see the judge to confess that I had lied and he told me that if I would have changed my statements, I would have gotten a life sentence,” according to Tchatcha’s medical evaluation.

A police investigator once asked Montiero why he would associate with someone like Simliya.

According to a March 22, 2012, police report, Quartermaster Chief Marshal Gaté N’Zonou asked, “Why do you deal with such a man when your age and social level cannot be compared? Why do you deal with a wretched [person]?”

“This is my profile, a person who considers everybody without other distinctions,” Monteiro replied. “It is in order to show love toward that person and to help that person get away from sin.”

—click HERE to see the third article in this series.
The night António Monteiro was arrested, his boss, Sahel Union Mission President Guy Roger, took some colleagues to police headquarters to find out why. To their surprise, they were arrested, their keys were confiscated and their cars were impounded. No reason was given.

They were released two hours later, and Roger the next morning sought a lawyer’s help. Monteiro had been charged with murder, conspiracy and criminal association.

“We’ve been living in a real nightmare,” Roger wrote in an email to Yovo Sika Adjete, the Sahel Union’s legal advisor. “We were told only that he [Monteiro] had been arrested following an investigation and that our short custody was also part of this investigation.

“I appeal to you to try to discover the reasons for the detention,” Roger wrote.

So began the attempts to get Monteiro out of prison. The process has now continued for nearly 500 days.

Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders and national ambassadors have employed diplomatic efforts in Togo, throughout Europe and at the United Nations in New York. Local lawyers have attempted numerous legal appeals. Yet Monteiro, who came to Togo from Cape Verde to serve as a Christian missionary, remains in prison. Three other Adventist Church members are in prison with him, as well as a third person who volunteered information to the police that might help free them.

The next day, on March 16, 2012, Roger learned that Adventist Church member Bruno Amah had also been arrested in connection with the case. Both Monteiro and Amah had tried to previously assist a man named Simliya, who suffered a history of mental instability, according to a court medical exam.

In the coming days, Roger would alert colleagues at the Adventist Church’s West-Central Africa Division in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and at the denomination’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. He also wrote to Cape Verde’s closest embassy, in Dakar, Senegal.

Roger declared two days of fasting and prayer in the union starting Thursday, March 22.

For several months, the Adventist Church chose to keep legal appeals and diplomatic efforts out of the public media.

“At the time, we chose that tactic out of respect for the government’s process and safety of church members in the country,” said John Graz, the denomination’s director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty.

Monteiro’s lawyer, Yawa Sika Yovo, said she asked a judge on March 28, 2012, to dismiss the case. Her request was met with silence, she said.

She, along with Amah’s lawyer, Afoh Katakiti, went to the Ministry of Justice on June 21. The minister, she said, promised to view the dossier. Nothing happened, and they took the case to the Lomé Court of Appeals.
By July 6 of that year, the court handed down a decision, which said in part, “There is no basis on documents proving his innocence. He must still be detained.”

Yovo worked on further appeals to no avail. Outraged, on August 7, nearly five months since Monteiro and Amah’s arrests, she wrote to Togo President Faure Gnassingbé: “This scandalous decision is a grave injustice and inadmissible, as our clients are innocent since there is no proof showing that they’re guilty.”

Earlier that summer, Ganoune Diop, the Adventist Church’s United Nations liaison, met with Togo’s UN Ambassador Menan Kodjo on July 25. Kodjo said he would look into the case, Diop said. In a follow-up letter to Kodjo, Diop thanked him for his work on the matter, and emphasized that the Adventist world church wanted to respect the government’s procedures: “It is not in our interest to put before the international community of experts the judicial system of the country your Excellency ably represents.”

In September, the presidents of Togo and Cape Verde talked about the case on the sidelines of a UN General Assembly meeting, according to a July 9, 2013, posting on the Facebook page of the president of Cape Verde.

“I tried to interest him to the problem,” stated Cape Verde President Jorge Carlos Fonseca regarding his meeting with Togo President Faure Gnassingbé. “I told him that I did not want to interfere in the matter of Togolese justice, but that the Cape Verdan public is interested in the problem. So I told him that we would like that all that follows to be in an environment in which the security of defense was assured.”

On September 5 of 2012, a duo from the church’s headquarters flew to Togo. Graz, the public affairs director, and Associate General Counsel Todd McFarland met with Yovo and visited Monteiro and Amah in prison. They also read the newly released court-ordered medical report from Dr. Tchangai Tchatcha, who stated that Monteiro’s accuser had a history of mental insatiability and had only given the police names of supposed co-conspirators after being beaten while in custody. The report offered a glimmer of hope.

“I thought for sure he would have been out by the time Ted Wilson was scheduled to come visit,” McFarland later said, referring to the Adventist world church president, who would visit Monteiro in prison on November 12.

The church also worked through a representative of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty in Europe, who met with Togolese officials at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland, and with other officials at the European Union in Brussels, Belgium.

Still, nothing happened, despite diplomatic efforts throughout the summer and into the early autumn.

The Adventist Church then decided to go public with the matter. ANN released its first story about the situation on September 27.

On November 20, a working group for the case was formed at the world headquarters. The same day, Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson called for an international day of prayer on December 1.

“These are falsely accused, innocent church members and we are pleading with the Lord for his
intervention so that they can be reunited with their families and continue their work,” Wilson said.

On November 29, Roger, the Sahel Union Mission president, held a press conference in Lomé, amplifying the worldwide day of prayer campaign.

The men are “deprived of their liberty and detained in the civil prison in Lomé without proof of guilt, without any evidence or indication of their close or distant relationship with this case,” Roger told a group of reporters. “The Adventist Church cannot remain silent in what seems to be a gross miscarriage of justice.”

On December 1, tens of thousands of Adventist churches worldwide took time during Sabbath worship services to pray for Monteiro and others in prison. Some, including the Montemorelos University Church in Mexico, prayed for more than an hour during Sabbath worship.

By then, more than 7 million Twitter users had been reached with the campaign’s hashtag #Pray4togo and some 15,000 people had signed an online petition at Change.org.

The church sponsored a Christmas card campaign in a show of support. Monteiro received more than 1,000 cards, church leaders said.

At the beginning of the New Year, a development occurred that appeared to offer the promise of a January 29 trial date. It was later rescinded.

Diop, the church’s UN liaison, went to Togo in February and met with Togo’s prime minister. During a morning meeting, Diop said Prime Minister Kwesi Ahoomey-Zunu called the minister of justice and asked if he could receive Diop later that day. At 5 p.m., Diop was received by Minister of Justice Kokou Tozoun. “He gave us his word that this case was going to be settled before the end of March,” Diop recalled.

“I told the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister that we’re not trying to bend the Togolese judicial system or ask for a favor,” Diop recalled. “We were trying to ask that this case be resolved because it was a case of arbitrary detention.”

On April 18, the Adventist Church released video footage of Monteiro’s family, urging more people to sign the online petition.

In March, church leaders announced that a fifth legal appeal for Monteiro’s release had been denied.

—click HERE to see the fourth article in this series.

FOURTH IN A SERIES: In prison, Monteiro wants peace for church, Togo government
The Lomé Civil Prison is hot and overcrowded. It’s open air, like a crowded bazaar, but without shops. Prisoners sleep 80 in a cell, side-by-side, their bodies bumping against each other all night with each toss and turn. If they pay money, they can sleep in a cell with only 26 other inmates. Once in a while, Pastor António Monteiro has the luxury of sleeping on a mattress.

“I don’t know if many people could stay one day in there,” says John Graz, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department. He has visited Monteiro in prison.

“It’s crowded, it’s dirty, the hygiene is almost zero,” Graz says. “I don’t even want to think about what the toilet situation must be in there.”

In May, the blog “Citizens Movement for Truth” published photos following heavy rains that showed the prison flooded. Prisoners waded in ankle-deep water.

This has been Monteiro’s home for nearly 500 days. He and fellow Adventists Bruno Amah, Beteynam Raphael Kpiki Sama and Kpatcha Simliya have lived in this environment as they wait to be given a trial date or to be released.

Monteiro thinks the ordeal will one day be over – “in God’s time,” he says. For now, he says he’s concerned for the health of the prisoners – 1,000 are packed into a facility designed for 600.

A June 18 editorial in the local newspaper La Symphonie, stated, “If we believe the information on the continued degradation of the health of most of these prisoners, there is a strong fear that, one by one, they will die.”

The wives of Monteiro and Amah visit once a day to bring food. They pay $2 each time to come into the prison.

Members in the country have prayed along with the world church for the men’s release, but there is little else they can do.

Seventh-day Adventist work began in Togo in 1956 with an Adventist literature salesman, Georges Vaysse, according to the Adventist Encyclopedia. In 1964, a missionary from the Ivory Coast was sent to work with the fledgling group of Adventist believers.

Today there are nearly 6,000 Adventist Church members among the population of about 7.1 million. About 30 percent of the population is Christian, 20 percent are Muslim, and about 50 percent hold indigenous beliefs.
Many of those indigenous beliefs include animists and those who practice Voodoo, which often include the use of animal parts and blood in ceremonies.

Monterio is in prison on charges of murder and conspiracy in operating a blood-trafficking ring. Diplomats, ambassadors and Adventist Church leaders remain puzzled over how police and government officials could mistake Adventists for those who use blood in religious ceremonies.

“These practices are unknown in our church,” said Guy Roger, president of the Sahel Union Mission and Monterio’s boss.

Church leaders say there is a lack of understanding in Togo about the Adventist Church and its practices.

According to a March 22, 2012, police report, Quartermaster Chief Marshal Gaté N’Zonou asked Monteiro why his accuser, who has a documented history of mental instability, said blood was used in Adventist ceremonies.

“Being an Adventist, just like you, Mr. Simliya confirms that in your church blood has the secret of giving people riches and grandeur. What do you say?” N’Zonou asked Monteiro.

“I do not know anything about that, as our church is founded on the Bible,” Monteiro said.”

John Graz, the denomination’s public affairs director, said the accusation is “bizarre.” For him, a takeaway lesson is for the Adventist Church to vamp up its public affairs and media relations work worldwide.

In some parts of the world the Adventist Church is small in numbers and is incorrectly identified as a sect or cult, Graz said. “Unfortunately, not much has been done to change that perception in many places. The priorities of church leaders, therefore, must adjust for this.

“We have a responsibility,” Graz said. That’s one of the lessons to come out of this – to bolster our public affairs and communication efforts around the world. We need to know leaders of governments and other religious faiths, and we need a regular presence in the media. Cultivating isolation has never been a good strategy for minorities.”

Indeed, some church leaders feel the Togolese government arbitrarily picked people to blame for the May 2011 murders of several young women.

Gibert Wari, president of the denomination’s West-Central Africa Division, was quoted in a September 27, 2012, ANN story, saying, “At first we could see that the government thought they were just dealing with a small church in the corner, but now with this level of support and mobilization, they see that the Adventist Church is a worldwide church.”

Officials from Cape Verde – Monteiro’s home country – recently posted online their plans for continued diplomatic efforts to secure Monteiro’s release. Cape Verde President Jorge Carlos Fonseca is sending an ambassador to Togo specifically for this case, according to the July 9, 2013, posting.

The world church on July 27 will again hold a worldwide day of prayer for Monteiro’s release. Tens of thousands of congregations are planning to participate in a show of support on what will mark day 500
of his detainment.

However the situation turns out, Adventist leaders in Togo say members are eager to continue serving the community, sponsoring mentoring events for youth and helping those in need through charity work.

“We would want reconciliation with the Togolese government after Monteiro is released from prison,” Roger said. “But for now, we just want him out.”

—for more information, visit pray4togo.com.