

**New Tribes denies three missing missionaries are alive in Colombia**  
**By Kenneth D. MacHarg**

**Quito, Ecuador**--A spokesman for New Tribes Mission has denied a recent report that three missing missionaries have been confirmed to be alive in Colombia.

Guy Sier, International Contingency Coordinator for NTM told NNI from Bogota that while there have been unconfirmed reports concerning the missionaries over the past six months, none have come from reliable sources. Sier said that all recent reports that the men are alive had come from what he termed "indirect sources," and, he said, none of them were "substantial."

Three New Tribes Mission missionaries, Charles David Mankins, Mark V. Rich and Richard L. Tenenoff were kidnapped in Panama on January 31, 1993. Sier said that his mission believes the men were taken to Colombia where they are being held. Wycliffe Bible Translator's missionary Ray Rising was kidnapped in Colombia on March 31, 1994, and is still missing.

Sier said the unconfirmed reports are encouraging, but not solid. He told NNI that it had been over a year since the mission organization had received any reliable information on the captives, and over two years since there had been actual radio contact with the men.

Asked to comment on a recent Associated Press report that the men are believed to be dead, Sier said he thought that indication had come from the U.S. embassy in Bogota. He said that the embassy had indicated from its inactivity in the case that it believed the missionaries were dead.

Sier said he believes that the embassy has "written off" the missionaries.

The spokesman said that NTM has attempted to make contact with the guerrillas believed holding the men on several occasions during the past year. He said the attempts were made via intermediaries, but none had led to any confirmed information.

Sier said he was still hopeful, in that it is common for Colombian guerrillas to hold missionaries for a long time.

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