

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2004

Carol Stream, Illinois-International Headquarters of The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)

With deep sorrow TEAM informs you that Neil Roesler (30) went to be with His Lord Monday, September 20, 2004. Neil and Sandy were appointed as missionaries to TEAM in July, 2000, seconded to Helimission in Papua (Irian Jaya), Indonesia. Together with their two children Kaila (2) and Micah (8 mos.), Neil and Sandy had recently completed six months of language study in Bandung, Indonesia and began ministry on-site in Wamena in May of this year. Please uphold the family in your prayers.

Dr. Charles A. Davis, Executive Director

Our most recent information tells us that Neil communicated with the base in Wamena on Monday afternoon, expecting to be home within an hour. When Neil had not returned by Monday evening his wife, Sandy wrote a letter requesting prayer for his safe return.

At dawn on Tuesday morning (September 21) the search and rescue operation for Neil began, as Simon Tanner, Director of Helimission explained details of Neil's flight that day: 16:00 local time: Neil took off alone from the village of Obukain heading towards the home base, Wamena. Around 16:15 he gave his position and ETA (estimated time of arrival) 16:30 to the base, via HF radio. This was the last contact with him. He still had fuel on board for more than 30 minutes. Search and rescue (SAR) operation was immediately organized. Because it was already too late in the day, the SAR operation could start not earlier than Tuesday morning. Airplanes picked up the ELT signal. Later a helicopter from a mining company rescued Neil's body. No other details of the circumstances surrounding the crash are yet known.

Rick Willms, MAF pilot, flew Walter Kennedy, TEAM ministry area leader, in to Wamena from Sentani (Jayapura). Along with many other friends, colleagues and co-workers, they are standing alongside Sandy and the children.

Neil's mother, Ruth retired from TEAM in 1988 and presently resides in Bradenton Missionary Village in Florida. Neil's father, Cal, went to be with the Lord on November 17, 1998, three weeks before Neil and Sandy were married, after being diagnosed with acute leukemia. Neil's sisters, Donna and Beth, reside in Virginia and Colorado, respectively. John and Jean Whittemore, Sandy's parents, also serve in Asia and were traveling in the Philippines at the time of Neil's death. Sandy's brothers, Christopher and Stephen, reside in Arizona.

Both Neil and Sandy attended high school together at Faith Academy in Manila, Philippines in the late 1980's. Neil went on to receive a BS in Aviation Technology at LeTourneau University in Texas while Sandy received her BS in Human Resources Management at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. Neil and Sandy's sending church is the West Shore Evangelical Free Church in Mechanicsburg, PA.

Together this extended family grieves the loss of Neil with great sorrow. Many missionaries, fellow MK's, supporters, and friends are responding to the news of Neil's home-going with love and concern. Lester Hirst, Regional Director for Asia-Pacific has

received many of these calls and has encouraged each one to continue to trust in God and His goodness. Together we are placing this precious family in God's hands, knowing that He will sustain them in this heartrending loss.

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