



**ETHNOS360  
AVIATION**



# JOURNAL

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God's  
Word is  
reaching isolated  
people groups  
around the world,  
and Ethnos360 Aviation  
is there to help.

## HOW LONG CAN I WAIT?

Pilot Nathan Willems asked that a lot in the last five years. The future looked so bright when in one single day in June 2021, Ethnos360 Aviation received the total purchase price for an R66 helicopter for Indonesia.

That was music to Nathan's ears, as he would be one of the pilots to fly it. But it took five years for the R66 to get to Indonesia, finally arriving in December 2025. Nathan put

his journey into words, speaking for his wife, Emily, and their girls, as well as co-worker pilot Reuel Yeow, his wife, Gracia, and their boys, and many others on their team:

“At various points over the past years, we have battled strong discouragement and the temptation to give up or wonder if this was really God's will. After all, we've never been promised in His Word that He would provide a helicopter for our field of Indonesia. On our own strength, we would very likely have long ago given up. Only God gets the glory for keeping us steadfast and granting us the ability to persevere and wait – and also to continue to push and work!”

### So many people trusted God with Nathan and his team as they waited.

For example, pilot/mechanic Alex Minium and his family in faith traveled from the Philippines to Indonesia December 2025 to help with the reassembly of the R66 – *even though the helicopter was still in port with no guarantee of getting it to the hangar while they were there.* “We had a brief window when our family could travel before Christmas, but

we weren't sure that the helicopter would even be out of customs during those weeks,” wrote Alex's wife Elizabeth. At the very end of their stay, the R66 was released from customs and arrived at the hangar. Alex got to be on the team to help assemble it and do the required inspection.



Pilots kneeling (not visible) while people dedicate them and the R66 for service.  
photo by Brian Pruett



photo by Brian Pruett

Then, again in faith, International Rotor-Wing Chief Pilot Brian Pruett traveled to Indonesia to do the field checkout for Nathan and Reuel – *even though the helicopter still didn't have its permissions to fly.* Surely, the paperwork would come through! In faith, the team held a *syukuran* – “a gathering to give thanks, committing the helicopter and the remainder of the import to prayer,” even though it looked like the field checkout wouldn't happen before Brian would have to return home. The last possible day for the checkouts to begin came and went. Can you feel the sigh of disappointment?

But then, 24 hours later, in a move explainable only by God working through the prayers of His people, permission was granted for the flights needed for the pilots' checkouts. The final permissions were granted March 12, and the training was completed “just in time for our inaugural ministry flight March 18 to take Ed Casteel, one of the pioneering missionaries from the Wana area, and his son who came from America, for a church conference held there twice each year,” wrote Nathan. The yearly conference is a huge boost for the Wana people group as they reach out to isolated villages of their own people and others.

Many of you waited with Nathan and his team these five years, wondering why anything could possibly take this long. Thank you for not giving up. God once again has the victory!!

To serve the indigenous church planters of Indonesia with the R66 will take continued teamwork. They have the skills and the heart to take the gospel — but the flights that would make their work go forward are out of their reach without help. ***Can you be on the team with them? Go to Missionary Flight Sponsorship at [ethnos360aviation.org/mfs](https://ethnos360aviation.org/mfs) or scan the QR code.***

Thank you so much.



# BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS: A LONG PROCESS

**“Jesus also did many other things.** *If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.*” John 21:25

With that strikingly significant verse, Jonathan Bamford completed drafting the New Testament translation in the Southern Isnag language in July 2025. “We have months of editing ahead of us,” posted his wife, Heidi. “But this is a milestone.” Happily, on February 15, 2026, the “months of editing” were over! “The final consultant check ... is complete,” posted Heidi.

**In case anyone ever thinks your partnership with Ethnos360 Aviation is insignificant, let’s take a look at the high level of work that goes on in translation.**

First, what Jonathan had just finished for that last verse in the book of John (and, previously, all the other books of the New Testament) is called the *exegetical draft*. That is, Jonathan studied the text and put it into the Southern Isnag dialect. After that, his language helper, Devis, went over it with him, editing for clarity and fluency.



Jonathan (standing) and JJ (seated) with skilled Isnag language helpers at the final translation check.

photo by Heidi Bamford

Once that is done for any book, the “months of editing” ensue.

- *Recording draft* – A group of Isnag people listen to the draft, audio-recording what they understand as each section is read. Jonathan listens to their comments, makes improvements, and again goes over it with Devis.
- *“Back to English” translation* – Heidi translates the Isnag draft back into English, comparing it to an English translation. Is anything missed? Is anything added? Heidi’s English translation is sent to the consultant, in this case Jogvan (JJ) Rasmussen in Italy, who makes sure it communicates what the author intended. He also checks for anything that may trip up the readers. Jonathan goes over JJ’s notes, makes edits, and checks it again with Devis.
- *Comprehension checks #1, #2 and #3*: Jonathan, Heidi and co-worker Vicky Martin go over the draft with Isnag people who have never read it before. After the comprehension

checks (more than three, if needed), Jonathan considers the sections where confusion or misunderstanding has become evident, and he makes additional edits. Again, this is checked with language helper Devis.

- JJ Rasumussen comes at intervals from Italy to the Philippines to do onsite consultant checks of translated work.

This present year, Jonathan plans to work on Genesis, Exodus and other Old Testament portions – about 1,200 verses – which they plan to have checked by JJ in April 2027.

Are you tired yet? It’s not over! Proofreading the text takes another year. Then they’ll audio-record and compare with written text, typeset, print and – finally – distribute it to the Isnag people.

## THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

After one of the major consultant checks, Jonathan likened the whole translation process to a jigsaw puzzle. “I can’t help it: I’m very interested to see who will put the last piece in. We have worked very hard to get all these pieces to come together. But alas, I was not the one to put in these last pieces. It was our pilot, Ryan de Roos. At the last minute, he swooped in with a highly skilled language helper and the consultants,” wrote Jonathan. With the team all in place, they could do the work.



photo by Jonathan Bamford

Now that all the steps besides proofreading are done for every book of the New Testament, the Southern Isnag team has a new goal to look forward to. “Sometime in the spring of 2028,” wrote Heidi, “we hope to have an audio and printed Bible ready for distribution. Won’t that be a great day!”

We greatly appreciate your participation in *making flights affordable* for church planting and the accompanying Bible translation. **To give to the Missionary Flight Sponsorship fund, scan the QR code or go to [ethnos360aviation.org/mfs](https://ethnos360aviation.org/mfs).**



# PILOT – AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN

Every family working in a remote and isolated setting loves a pilot who shows he cares about them. When Steve (now CEO of Ethnos360) and Sharon Sanford worked with a remote people group in a South American country in the 2000s, Steffan Pyle was one of the pilots who flew for them.

Steffan was the kind of pilot who would interact, sit down and talk, have lunch with them at their house, and even at times intentionally end his day at their location to spend the evening watching a favorite movie together. Steve and Sharon considered Steffan a close friend, and so did their three preteen/early teen boys, one of whom was named Seth.

**When the Sanfords were about to be expelled from the people group among whom they served, the people were distraught. And how would they keep growing as believers?**

But the Sanfords had to leave, though their work was far from done. Steffan, in a Cessna 206, came to take them out for the very last time.



Steffan unloading the precious cargo.  
photo by Steve Sanford

On that last flight, Steffan brought copies of the newly printed book of Titus. Paul's teaching to Titus was just what the leading believers needed to continue providing godly oversight of the church. With those Scriptures in their hands, the people were no longer worried about the missionaries leaving. As Steffan unloaded the booklets, the people stood around reading them. And, because they had never practiced reading silently in their literacy classes, they all read out loud!

After pilot Steffan and his wife, Julie, were also forced to leave the South American country, they and their family transferred to the field of Indonesia. Steffan flew the Ethnos360 Aviation Kodiak and also Bell helicopters owned

by another mission. When they left Indonesia to settle their children in the USA, Steffan and Julie weren't done with missions. They went on loan for a number of years to Moody Aviation in Spokane, WA, with Steffan training future mission pilots and Julie doing administrative work.



The Sanford family. Seth is on the left.  
photo courtesy of Sanfords

Several years later, with the empty nest soon upon them, Steffan and Julie realized they could return overseas. Steffan still had some "flight" in him. So, they signed up to go to Papua New Guinea. And that's where their past came to meet them.

A recent flight connected them back to the Sanford family. Steve and Sharon's son Seth now works as a church planter among the Konomala people group in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. In the past, Seth and his wife, Kaitlyn, and their three girls were able to use roads to get to a larger town and fly back to the mainland. But now, roads have deteriorated, bridges are washed out, and they must rely on the helicopter to take them in and out of the village.

Who should be their pilot for a recent supply flight but Steffan Pyle! Seth wrote: "Great moment with Steffan today. We only had a minute to chat, but he's as genuine and kind as I remember him 20 years ago. His faithfulness is a true encouragement."

Ethnos360 Aviation is grateful for pilots, mechanics, church planters and other personnel – as well as you who pray, give, encourage and volunteer – who have hearts to faithfully go the "long haul" together to reach isolated people groups with the gospel.



Steffan (r.) with the Seth Sanford family.  
photo courtesy of Sanfords



Pilot Bruno Siqueira and the R66 on the land.

## BRAZIL HANGAR: GOD AT WORK

God has given astounding glimpses into His provision for the new hangar that is needed in Rio Branco, Brazil. To bring you up to date, our aviation team there will soon lose use of the current borrowed hangar space, and no other suitable hangar is available in that city. Without an adequate base of operations for the R66 helicopter, aviation service cannot continue.

**God’s people are stepping up to the challenge, and we are humbled to see ordinary people putting their treasure where their hearts are – to further the goal of reaching the unreached.**

As the team in Brazil waits for enough funds to continue, the project is not at a total standstill. The mission entity in Brazil paid for the helipad to be poured so the landing site can be legally registered. They are also sending a film crew to make a promotional video to connect interested Brazilians with the need. In addition, the first payment on the land has been made, with two payments to go. Once the land is paid for, construction on the hangar can begin as funds come in.

Flight service is more than just a luxury to church planters in Brazil. Without it, difficult and dangerous travel by land and river hinders work among remote people groups. Teams become exhausted, health issues increase, supplies are hard to get, consultants can’t endure the trip. Isolation and discouragement increase. Progress in language, translation and teaching languishes, and people never get to hear the Good News.

In contrast, “with the helicopter,” wrote church planter Josh, “I can put in 40-60 hours of language study to be able to reach the point of teaching faster, instead of worrying about trying to supply food for my family ... .” Samuel, who remembers how hard it was without aviation, concurs: “The helicopter is essential for keeping the flow of our ministry focused.”

The prospect of no flight service makes church planters wonder about the future: “What if work that is finally gaining momentum,” wrote church planter Rachel, “suddenly has no helicopter service, the work becomes sluggish and the many difficulties become too great for some of the missionaries to continue their work in the villages? Will there be indigenous groups wondering if God is strong enough to get His message into their language, or to do so before they die or before their children are grown?”

*Is your heart set on reaching isolated people groups in Brazil with the gospel? Take a look at [ethnos360aviation.org/projects/brazil-hangar-1](http://ethnos360aviation.org/projects/brazil-hangar-1) or scan the QR code. Thank you!*



Reviewing hangar plans.



The new helipad is painted bright blue. All photos by Bruno Siqueira