



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

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GOOD THINKING FOR THESE DAYS

(Note: The events of this story happened before the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Would you hike four hours again and again to help with a building project? One Kovol man did. Why? “We’re not thinking of anything else. We want God’s Word.”

He joined other eager Kovol men in building houses for an anticipated church planting team.

“I want to let you know,” the man told the missionary, “that the reason we’re helping you is because we really want to hear God’s word.”

This Kovol village of Papua New Guinea is remote. It’s so remote that a person would need to hike 12 hours through the jungle from the closest road to get there, writes Miriam Eikelboom, a Swiss missionary

who runs the Ethnos360 Aviation parts department in Papua New Guinea.

Twelve hours of hiking is grueling in itself. “And on this exhausting hike you only are able to carry the essentials, at most about 10 kg [22 lbs.],” says Miriam. Maybe that’s

ok for a recreational hike. But imagine moving all your construction materials – and then your whole household – 22 pounds at a time. It’s just not going to happen.

“That’s when our LongRanger helicopter comes into operation,” says Miriam. “The helicopter only takes 25 minutes from Madang, the nearest town, and can carry 450 kg [992 lbs.] at a time.”

So, it’s no surprise that the helicopter has flown many shuttles of building materials into the Kovol village —and also shuttled in a building crew — to construct serviceable houses for the church planting team. The idea is to make houses sturdy enough that the team can dedicate themselves to full-time language and culture study for the next four years — and then stay there ten to fifteen years after that to teach God’s Word and establish a thriving church.

A few months ago, the houses were at a point where the team could move in and begin interacting with the Kovol people.

They are settling in for the long haul of



photo courtesy of Reach Kovol

language learning, teaching literacy, translating scripture and teaching the message the Kovol have waited so long to hear.

Thank you for praying and upholding the Kovol team in this huge task. Pray that, once the COVID-19 crisis is past, the helicopter can once again serve the Kovol village. Pray also that God will provide three smaller R66 helicopters to continue uninterrupted, reliable flight service in Papua New Guinea.

To help, **go to** ethnos360aviation.org/projects/helicopters-for-png.

photo by David Uttley

AN AWESOME TOOL

By Beka Burns, pilot/mechanic's wife

God is such a provider. The Ethnos360 Aviation fleet now has more helicopters than airplanes!

In many of the remote locations we serve, transitioning from airplane to helicopter allows us to make the switch from long airstrips to small landing zones. Helicopters can land almost anywhere, and that makes them an awesome tool for the job God has given us.

Here's the problem: Most of our missionary aircraft mechanics spent their training focusing on airplanes, so they come to us with no experience working on a helicopter.

Cody Burns, a new pilot/mechanic on his way to serve with Ethnos360 in Papua New Guinea, explained:

"Prior to my training here, I worked for about two years as an aircraft mechanic. In that time, I never once touched a helicopter."

So, what is the best way to prepare our trainees for the work they will do overseas? A good start would be to completely disassemble the type of aircraft they'll be working on and rebuild it from scratch!

But does it make sense to tear apart a perfectly good helicopter? Well, sometimes, that's just what a helicopter needs.

Another aviation mission that serves Bible translators just ran into this scenario when one of their R44 helicopters "timed out." For it to continue flying legally, it had to be torn apart, inspected, and rebuilt — an extremely time-consuming process.

Here's where we really see God's hand at work: Right about this time, that mission organization was also searching the world over for a low-hour Cessna to serve their Bible translators in Cameroon. Ethnos360 Aviation offered to sell them one of the training



Trainee Cody Burns gets the R44 down to the bare hull. photo by Ryan De Roos

airplanes we no longer use; we bought their timed-out R44; and now both aircraft continue serving the work of getting the incredible message of Jesus Christ to unreached people groups. Everybody wins!

At Ethnos360 Aviation's main hangar in McNeal, AZ, our current class of aviators spent a good part of each day working on that helicopter until it was totally rebuilt.

"Being able to overhaul the R44 has been a huge help as we have stepped into the world of helicopter maintenance," said project leader Jeremy Dunn, a maintenance specialist who is also planning to serve in Papua New Guinea. "We have grown and learned so much through this immense and awesome project. Each of the mechanics involved has been stretched to accommodate new skills and knowledge that will be invaluable on the field."

Ryan De Roos, a pilot heading to the Philippines adds, "Being able to rebuild this helicopter from basically nothing really gives us so much knowledge on how things work and go together."



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Like you, Ethnos360 Aviation has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. In this situation, we want to continue to do our best to care for the people God has called us to serve. We are trusting Him to give us His wisdom to ensure that we do everything possible to prevent any spread of the disease while following government mandates and meeting requests for assistance.

- At our Ethnos360 Aviation main office in Arizona, we are following the stay-at-home order of the state of Arizona. We have closed our offices. Those of our staff who can do their jobs from home are continuing to work.
- Overseas, our aviation personnel are following all the directives of the locations in which they serve. In some countries, that means no flights at all. In others, if a flight is allowed by the government, our personnel follow tight restrictions and precautionary measures to provide essential medical help or necessities to villages that request it.
- When requested by the government, our aviation personnel stand ready to make humanitarian flights to deliver food, medicine or medical supplies and to make medical evacuations as needed.
- Our aviation families are following the established government protocols where they live and work, coordinating with their local leadership teams. Most of them are isolated in their homes in a “shelter-in-place” mode.

From the skids to the rotors, from wiring to interior, from shaping sheet metal to putting the final touches on the new paint job, our trainees have gotten hands-on experience with every inch of this aircraft. Several of us were holding our breath the other day as the rotors slowly started turning, picked up speed and finally pulled the helicopter upward on its first test flight since the overhaul.

“To see the helicopter fly when just months before it was a set of parts scattered all over the hangar — it’s a whole new level of excitement!” Cody grinned.



Trainees Brad Richert (L) and Cody Burns reassembling the R44.
photo by Ryan De Roos

This project has been an incredible way to gain experience and instill confidence so that our trainees can step forward into all the changes ahead and excel in the work God has called them to. What a creative God we serve! We continue to stand in awe of what He has made possible.

As you partner with Ethnos360 Aviation, you ensure that the training of these excellent pilots and mechanics accomplishes its purpose.

We are thankful that God is not bound by the restrictions of COVID-19. His Word and His Spirit are at work in all our lives, despite the quarantines, isolation, lockdowns, travel bans and so on.

Pray that in this current situation, we will continually look for opportunities to safely assist those around us who will need supplies, comfort or a helping hand. Most of all, pray that this pandemic will end quickly.

To help with humanitarian flights, **go to** ethnos360aviation.org/projects/disaster-relief-emergency-fund-1.

TEN TIMES ITS WEIGHT

It's just a little bird, the R66 helicopter. It only weighs 1,270 pounds. So how could it possibly carry 10,000 pounds of cargo in one day – plus 14 passengers??

The kids are too young and impressionable to move to the city where they would face exploitation and temptations they are not prepared to handle. The parents also don't want their kids to lose sight of the Christian way of life that has so influenced the Banwaon villages.

To prepare for the sling loads, trucks and other vehicles brought the building materials to a designated spot. A ground crew, trained by the pilots, organized the cargo into suitable loads and weighed it.

“Then we trained them to rig the loads in nets,” said Brian.



photo by Brian Pruett

In November 2019, the R66 in Mindanao, Philippines, did just that. As pilot Brian Pruett was teaching pilot Brian Schaadt advanced techniques for slinging loads beneath the R66, they made it practical by hauling five tons of supplies to help construct a high school building in the Banwaon tribe.

“The alternative was for the Banwaon people to bring all of this on motorcycles on a slippery, muddy road that requires pushing the bikes about as much as riding them,” wrote Brian Pruett. The outlay of time and effort would have been staggering. And though they can pile a preposterous amount on one bike, it still would have taken an enormous amount of energy to move 10,000 pounds safely, especially since many of the building supplies were long and unwieldy.

Though the sling loads transported materials to build a high school, Brian adds perspective: “This was a blessing to the Banwaon indigenous church.”

Why? Because the believers themselves are spearheading the school projects, in the hopes that their children can get an education right in their home village.



photo by Brian Pruett

When the loads were all ready, he cranked up the R66. “Once we started flying, we kept the helicopter running until everything was moved,” he said.

That included 26 landings and 12 refuelings!

“The whole project was better than we'd hoped!” said Brian. “The weather was perfect, the helicopter and equipment functioned flawlessly, we had a great ground crew, and supplies were delivered when we needed them to be. Thanks for your prayers!”

It took a team to accomplish this project. Many invested time, skill and energy to make it happen. And that team includes you who support Ethnos360 Aviation and stand behind all of our personnel. Thank you! To help make flights like this affordable, [go to ethnos360aviation.org/projects/missionary-flight-sponsorship-3](https://ethnos360aviation.org/projects/missionary-flight-sponsorship-3).