



# JOURNAL

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

## A KNOCK THAT KEEPS ON KNOCKING: A LEGACY OF JIM FERGUSON

For 30 years, Jim Ferguson led Ethnos360 Aviation, even serving as a pilot in the Philippines for four years. After he retired from the organization, his work continued as he volunteered for many years on the aviation campus in McNeal, AZ. When their health started to decline, Jim and his wife, Edna, moved to Colorado to live with family and then to a care home in Nebraska. On November 11, 2021, Jim took his last flight — to be with his Savior.

Jim's work with Ethnos360 Aviation, along with the work of long-time co-laborer Forest Estelle, certainly had world-reaching significance. But one intriguing event in Jim's life happened before what was then known as New Tribes Mission Aviation even existed. Ethnos360 missionary Ed Casteel says of it, "I truly believe Jim was directly used by the Lord ... and I am so grateful for him and his wife, Edna."

**It all started when Jim and his brother-in-law Bill, as new believers, knocked on the farmhouse door where little Ed Casteel lived with his parents and sister.**

Ed was scared at first. He had never seen men at the door with Bibles in their hands. But Jim and Bill turned out to be friends of his parents. It was late enough in the evening, though, that the kids had to go to bed. Ed recalls, "I scurried upstairs to my bedroom and tried my best to hear what was going on downstairs, but the voices were muffled and it was hard to make out what they were saying. Finally, I drifted off to sleep."



After school the next day, Ed's mom, who was a believer and took the kids to church, told the children that their daddy had believed in Jesus. A couple of days later, he told his kids, and they assured him that they believed too.

Jim and Bill's ministry didn't stop there. Tuesday nights, they came to the Casteel's house for Bible study. Neighbors came too, and the night always included a lesson for the children. As he taught, Jim couldn't hide the fact that he was becoming interested in missions, wondering if he could use his flying skills in any way.

At church where they all now attended, missionaries often came to speak. Ed loved seeing their pictures, but he didn't feel it was for him. But at one meeting, he reluctantly committed his life to the Lord's service, knowing he did not want to be a tribal missionary.

Around that time, Jim started teaching Ed's dad to fly. Ed's parents started getting interested in missions too, even mission aviation. When Jim and Edna went off to New Tribes Mission (NTM) training, Ed's parents followed a year later. "Once my folks entered the training, we kids were really exposed to missions on a regular basis, and of course that had a big impact on our lives," muses Ed.

Throughout the years of training, the Fergusons and Casteels got together as often as possible. "Dad and

Jim would always look for opportunities to fly together where Jim could give dad further flight instruction so dad could obtain his commercial flying license," says Ed.

As his dad continued in aviation training, Ed entered Bible college.

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In this vintage photo, Ed and Jeanne (L) pose with teammates and Wana people in front of our Super Cub that served them.

## A LEGACY OF JIM FERGUSON (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

There, he says, “I gave up my fight with the Lord and told Him if He wanted me to be a tribal missionary then I was willing to do that.” Though Ed’s parents decided not to continue toward foreign ministry, “they never lost their zeal for missions and encouraged me [to continue] in it,” Ed recalls.

In 1977, Ed and his wife, Jeanne, and their little son headed off to Asia Pacific as missionaries. After a year of language study, they were asked to start an outreach to the Wana tribal people who lived in a very remote area. “We realized right away that we would need to have flight service to be able to serve there, as it was a three-day hard hike to the nearest outpost,” says Ed.

In 1980, Jim visited the Wana village where Ed and Jeanne worked. Though they were roughing it in a tiny, borrowed house while theirs was being rebuilt, Jim, unfazed, “found a corner of the house to curl up in that night.” As leader of NTM Aviation, Jim made other trips into the Wana village, always warmly welcomed with gratefulness at the Casteel house.

Indeed, all through Ed and Jeanne’s work among the Wana, NTM Aviation, with Jim Ferguson at the helm, provided flight service, allowing them to bring the gospel to the Wana in a timely and do-able manner.

**“I thanked Jim many times for that night back in 1965 when [he and Bill] made that ‘knock at the door.’”**



After teaching a village of their own Wana people, Sofian and Riana are now in training to reach cross-culturally to the Da’a people.

“I know if they had not come and led my dad to the Lord that I would have never been exposed to missions and likely never given my life to the Lord, and for sure never would have gone to the Wana tribe.” He added, “I truly believe Jim was directly used by the Lord to get the gospel to the Wana people.”

Now, that “knock” continues as the Wana believers, with the same zeal that Jim Ferguson had, take the gospel to their own villages. Not only that, Jim’s legacy continues as the Wana reach out with the gospel beyond their cultural and language borders. Trained Wana believers are now working in four other language groups including the Banggai, the Da’a and the Lauje.

As the Wana church grows and as their missionaries take the gospel to unreached people, Ethnos360 Aviation is privileged to continue to provide affordable aviation service, thanks to God’s faithfulness through your prayers and generosity.

To God be the glory for the ministry that “one knock” began.

## UNDER ORDERS!



Loading R66 #1 for PNG

**So many of you have said of Ethnos360 Aviation, “This is our work.”** As part of your mission vision, you have chosen to collaborate to provide aviation service for church

planters taking a clear gospel message to remote people groups. You have shown your intent by prayer, gifts, volunteer work and advocacy. Thank you! God has chosen to use your participation to finance the

aircraft — particularly Robinson R66 helicopters — to carry on the work. Be amazed with us at what God is providing! This is certainly His doing!

**Order Complete — R66 #1 for Papua New Guinea**, arrived January 23 in Lae harbor of PNG – months ahead of predictions. Praise God with us! And please keep praying that it will clear customs without being taxed. Pray also that the container will be trucked safely to the hangar in Goroka, where the Ethnos360 Aviation team will reassemble the helicopter. Thank you!

**On Order — R66 for Brazil**, due for delivery from the Robinson factory to McNeal, AZ, in mid-February 2022. See related story on page three.

**On Order — R66 for Asia-Pacific**, due for delivery from the Robinson factory to McNeal, AZ, in July 2022. This R66 will replace a LongRanger, owned by another mission, that will go out of operation in 2022.

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# A NEW HANGAR, A NEW PILOT — BUT NO HELICOPTER

**Cruzeiro do Sul, Brazil, September 21, 2021** – Winds of more than 62 miles per hour ripped through the city airport, collapsing a hangar on top of the Ethnos360 Aviation R66 helicopter. Ironically, the aviation team was just days away from relocating the R66 to a newly completed hangar on property that God had provided. Also ironically, the Brazilian pilot, who had recently finished his training in the USA, had just arrived that very day to begin his ministry. New hanger? Done. New pilot? Ready. New helicopter? Damaged beyond use.

**Through this incident, though, God gave clear glimpses that He was totally in control of the circumstance.**

At the time of the collapse, pilot Jeremiah Diedrich was sitting in the right seat of the helicopter, giving it a routine cleaning. The devastating wind not only brought the roof down, but it pushed the wing of an airplane through the helicopter's cockpit, sliding it right over Jeremiah as it pushed him onto the left seat, shielding him from the falling roof. After a struggle to unpin his leg, he pushed on the damaged windshield, popping it out. Then, without knowing how, Jeremiah found himself standing in the hangar beside the helicopter, virtually unhurt.

But the damage was undeniable. “Our team here is in shock,” relayed Jeremiah. “The helicopter that we worked so hard to acquire, which was just beginning to show us what a game changer it was to ministry teams, is suddenly demolished. ... One of the missionaries we serve actually cried when he was told the helicopter was destroyed. Because of health problems, this family almost had to give up on their ministry, but the flight service had made their ministry safe and possible.”

Once again, missionaries must depend upon frustrating land and river travel. The pilot can't fly groceries or supplies in. Consultants and leaders, not accustomed to the hardship of travel into remote areas, cannot visit to encourage and strengthen the team. And emergency medical service is unavailable.

Ethnos360 Aviation put out the call for prayer for insurance to cover the damage and for a suitable replacement to be found. All glory to God that insurance covered the \$1.2 million USD value of the helicopter, enough to purchase a brand new one, even though it would mean a delay, “waiting in line” at the Robinson factory.

Then a new plan emerged. With consent of the donor, the brand new R66 already on order for Indonesia would be diverted to the Brazil flight program. What an answer to your concerted prayers! The brand new R66 should arrive at the Ethnos360 Aviation center in Arizona in mid February. There it will be painted with red stripes and be outfitted for remote jungle use. (Don't worry – Indonesia will still get their new R66, due to arrive in McNeal in July.)

And don't stop praying! A complicated maze of paperwork lies ahead to export the R66 out of the USA and then import it

into Brazil. Only God can make the way.

Despite the setbacks, pilot Jeremiah says, “We are just as convinced as ever of how essential the helicopter is to bringing God's Word to people in this isolated region and are committed to getting the flight program back up and running. ... He's got a purpose and a plan and is controlling all the way down to the smallest details and the most perfect timing, just like He did with [protecting] me in that helicopter. So, praise God.”

Use the enclosed response card to let us know you are praying for the Brazil team.



# A MOVING EXPERIENCE: OPEN DOORS

Last year in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, God surprised the Philippine aviation team with an R66 helicopter available right on Mindanao, Ethnos360 Aviation's southern ministry location. You can read the marvelous story on the Ethnos360 Aviation website (<https://ethnos360aviation.org/stories/story/right-under-our-noses>). In October, the team needed to move the new R66 — “the gray one” — up the island chain to serve on Luzon in the north, replacing an older helicopter which is no longer flying.

Before moving day, though, pilots Brian Schaadt and Alex Minium practiced slingloading with the red and white R66 that will remain on Mindanao. They used a real-life scenario, carrying artisan-quality doors made by some craftsmen in the Banwaon tribe. Missionary Albert Castelijn and another skilled carpenter had taught the Banwaon men to make doors, taking advantage of the beautiful wood available in their location. The product gives the men an income, and the



A sling load leaves Banwaon village.

buyer, in this case the mission home in town, receives some top-quality doors to use.

Brian and Alex then set out for Luzon. Despite pandemic and rainy season concerns, God opened doors along the way. Literally. When one airport had very tight restrictions, God



Missionary Boris Bergen and a Banwaon man prepare the sling load of doors.

opened a private landing place where friends even opened their house for the pilots to stay the night, including sandwiches for the trip the next day. And not only doors were opened. God opened a window through a foggy mountain pass on their last day of travel!

God brought the gray R66 to Luzon just in time for a door of opportunity. A few days after its arrival, local police asked for assistance when a five-year-old boy on an outlying island suffered a serious head injury. Pilot Brian flew the R66 to bring the boy to Luzon Island, where an ambulance met the helicopter and took him to the hospital. The police department post about the medevac included this quote:



Pilot Brian Schaadt carries the injured boy.

**“Your good deeds might seem invisible, but they leave a trail that is imprinted on the hearts of others.”**

Now that the R66 is “home” on Luzon, missionaries can once again live in their remote ministry locations, knowing they have a supply line to sustain them as they study and teach. Thank you for your prayers and gifts that make flight a reality in this area of the Philippines.

**You can help keep flight affordable in the Philippines by going to <https://ethnos360aviation.org/projects/missionary-flight-sponsorship-3>**

## UNDER ORDERS! (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

**On Order — R66 #2 for Papua New Guinea**, due for delivery from the Robinson factory to McNeal, AZ, in August 2022. The LongRanger currently flying in Papua New Guinea is 43 years old. Our goal is to have three R66s to adequately meet and expand service when the LongRanger can no longer fly.

**The most important order of all! — Taking the Gospel message to unreached people, like the Maliyali, due to arrive in 2022!** Because of aviation service sustaining church planting teams, people like the Maliyali in Papua New Guinea are getting closer and closer to hearing the start-to-finish teaching of God's message. Late last year, a translation consultant worked with translator Nathan Mueller and his Maliyali helpers to check 351 verses from the book of Exodus alone. “All of those portions will be needed for our Bible teaching [in 2022]!” posted Nathan's wife, Rachel. “We are praising the Lord for being one step closer to [sharing] the WHOLE message with the Maliyali people.”

Pray that the greatest order of all — the gospel to those who need it — will be completed in 2022!