The People

In a remote region along the coast of Papua New Guinea, a group of people lived in several tight-knit communities. They looked after each other, taking care of orphans and others in difficult circumstances.

But one July evening in 1998, their lives were suddenly disrupted.

A strong tsunami took them by surprise, killing more than 2,200 people in the Aitape West area. It was a terrible tragedy. Yet in the aftermath, love prevailed.

In the Arop community, a team of local men had been translating Scripture into their own language. Following the tsunami, these men felt a deep sense of urgency to help others nearby. Most people practiced traditional religion, and fear dominated their lives.

The translators knew their neighbors needed the hope of God’s Word more than ever.

The Plan

In recent years, the Aitape West Cluster teams have made great progress on several New Testament books.

But their work is far from over — your help is needed as they continue translating God’s Word into their languages.

During this three-year project, each team will translate and publish Galatians and the Gospel of John. They will also make headway on a handful of other New Testament books. In addition, most of the teams will publish Mark, Philippians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Peter and James.

The Arop team has an additional goal — they will draft a selection of Scripture passages that will later be used to create an overview of the Old Testament.

Because storytelling is a common cultural practice in the region, staff will train local people to craft and share oral Bible stories. Five workshops will be held, giving project leaders the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of storytelling for future projects.

The Impact

A Ramo man was standing outside with neighbors when some visitors to the area approached him.

The guests introduced themselves as Bible translation staff. They explained that, over the next two days, they would be selling copies of the first Scripture portions printed in the Ramo language.

The man’s heart stirred as the translators showed him their materials. But when the team suggested that he visit them later to purchase the Scripture booklets, he shook his head.

“You expect me to look only?” the man asked. “No way. We want to buy a copy now!” As quickly as he could, he bought the available publications from the team and sat down to begin reading God’s Word.

Like this man, many others in the region are hungry for Scripture.

Your prayers and gifts will help 11 Aitape West people groups access more of God’s Word in languages they clearly understand!