



MINUTE FOR MISSION

March 15, 2005

Doing Mission Together 8,000 Miles Apart!

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Members of the Sulfa Bay congregation gather in front of their church building.

The relationship between Westminster and PCV began in 1998 and has grown and blossomed ever since. PCV is very active in mission, and part of its mission outreach was accomplished in partnership with Westminster.

During World War II there was a large American presence in Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides), and because of that presence, the strange John Frum "cargo cult" sprang up in the village of Sulfa Bay on Tanna Island. American soldiers stationed on the island shared much of what they had with the local people. From that generosity came the belief that someday "John" "frum" America would return and provide them with everything they needed. It also, unfortunately, led to the banishment of all churches in the village.



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Several years ago PCV began to negotiate with the village elders in Sulfa Bay to return and reestablish a church there. Finally, a small church was begun by Lay Pastor Maliwan Tarwei, the grandson of one of the first pastors in the country who was born on Vanuatu.

In 2001, Westminster was able to provide funds to build a women's ministry building for the Sulfa Bay church. Then, in 2002, a group of sixteen people from the church visited Sulfa Bay as part of a mission immersion trip to Vanuatu. They were welcomed as old friends, participated in a local ceremony, and then on Sunday morning worshiped together in the local language. Although much of what they said to each other was not understood because of the language barrier, the hymns, prayers, smiles, and laughter were easily understood by all.

PCV and Westminster, 8,000 miles apart, are working together to help bring the gospel to this village, and their work is beginning to change lives there forever.

David Walter
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For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-7228, ext. 5689, or Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org.

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