

Weekly English Practice

Who is John Frum?



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English Coaching Projects

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TANNA: THE ISLAND WHERE PRINCE PHILIP AND A DEAD AMERICAN SOLDIER ARE GODS

On the island of Tanna, in the Republic of Vanuatu (a chain of islands in the South Pacific), there are two religious cults that believe that one day either an American WWII soldier named John Frum, or the Queen of England's consort, Prince Phillip, will come into possession of all the food, clothes, and guns that the West **currently owns** and deliver it all to them

currently: at the moment, now

cargo: goods (bienes) carried on a boat or aeroplane

currently: at the moment, now

to own: to possess, to have

to worship: express reverence or adoration (for a deity)

crafty: to be clever and deceitful, devious, calculating

to own: to possess, to have

network: an inter-connected group

This type of belief is called a 'Cargo cult'. Jamie Clifton of www.vice.com interviewed the Russian photographer Vlad Sokhin who spent a week living amongst members of the John Frum cult in the village of Yaohnanen.

Why do these Pacific Islanders worship an American soldier and the Queen's husband?

It all started in the early 20th century, when Westerners started going to Melanesian islands, like Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. I mean, imagine seeing planes and boats for the very first time. To them, it was literally a miracle from the sky—foreign beings appearing in

these huge, noisy things and bringing with them a lot of cargo such as rifles, clothes, and food.

But didn't the Westerners explain who they really were?

Yeah, they did, but some local prophets started to say that the islanders were the ones who truly deserved all the cargo—that it had been dedicated to them by the gods—but that Westerners were **crafty** and had unfairly taken possession of it all.

Was John Frum real?

Probably. Vanuatu was a British and French colony in the 30s, and in 1937 a man named John Frum apparently appeared on Tanna. He was a black soldier, probably from America, but I don't know if he was actually called John Frum. I think he might have said, "I am John from America," and the locals heard it as, "I am John Frum."

Did he actually speak to them?

Yeah, he supposedly told them that, if they stopped using all of the stuff that the Westerners had given to them – stopped drinking their wine and smoking their cigarettes—the cargo would come to them instead.

What is 'John Frum Day' like?

Yeah, every year, on the 15th of February they all dress up in American navy uniforms, wave American flags and paint the ends of their bamboo sticks red to represent American rifles. The idea is that John Frum will return on the 15th of February with an everlasting supply of cargo, meaning it will be paradise on Earth in Tanna while the rest of the world disappears.

What about the Prince Philip Movement?

They believe that Prince Philip is John Frum's brother and that he was born in Tanna as the son of a mountain spirit, but left for the West and ended up marrying a very powerful woman. They think that, once he dies, he'll return to Tanna in spirit form and bring all the wealth of the British crown with him. This fulfils an ancient prophecy.

More info: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Philip_Movement

This story was adapted from:
www.vice.com

“ Something to chat about ”

- What are 'Cargo Cults' and what do they believe in? What do you think about their beliefs?
- Who was John Frum? Did he really exist?
- What do you know about Prince Phillip? Where is he from and what did he do before he married Queen Elizabeth? (There are two versions!)
- Is this type of belief very different to other, more mainstream, religions such as Christianity or Islam?
- Where is Vanuatu? Have you ever been there? If not, would you like to visit? SEE PAGE 2!



“iLook, iThink, iSpeak” Express yourself better!

VISIT AN ACTIVE VOLCANO ON TANNA!

See a video [here](#)

If you're travelling to Vanuatu, it is definitely worth making a trip to Tanna to see Mt Yasur, one of the world's most accessible active volcanoes. It will almost definitely leave you awestruck. Here's some advice for your trip:

- ◆ You can get very close to the crater, close enough to feel the shockwaves and heat of each eruption. Most days, eruptions happen every 5 minutes or so, with volcanic rocks or 'lava bombs' flying into the air.
- ◆ Sometimes the wind can push the 'bombs' over the top of people's heads. Follow the advice of the guides, and if a bomb heads your way, don't run, but instead stand your ground, watch the bombs, and step out of the way if necessary.
- ◆ You drive up to the volcano in a 4WD (four wheel drive). Then there is a short walk up the slope through the ash - it's like walking up a sand dune. Make sure you wear closed-toed shoes.
- ◆ Mt Yasur is quite windy and (relatively) cold, so bring warm clothing. You'll also get dirty from the dusty roads and from the ash.
- ◆ Yasur is best seen at night so will have to stay overnight on the island. Remember to take your tripod and know how to use your camera's night settings.
- ◆ The people on Tanna are very poor. If you are travelling to Tanna, the schools would appreciate any stationery you can bring with you - even used pencils.



Speaking and/or writing practice

(You can do this in pairs or individually)

1. Read the text about visiting Mount Yasur on the island of Tanna.
2. One person imagines that they are a tourist planning on visiting the volcano and the other person pretends to be a local guide.
3. The tourist asks the local guide about the visiting Mt. Yasur. Ask questions about if it is dangerous, what type of clothes to wear, how you access the site and so on.
4. When you have finished, swap roles and repeat the activity.
5. At the end, explain to another person everything that the local guide has told you. Use expressions such as “She **told me** that...”, “She **explained** that...”, “He **warned me** that...”, “He **advised me to...**”, “She **recommended (+ing)...**”
6. Write everything in an email and send it to your ECP coach!



I was thinking about becoming an atheist but I thought, “No way! You don't get any holidays.”

