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ALONG THE PURUS RIVER, Brazil

When the rains finally receded, Father Moisés Oliveira pulled his motorboat out into the swollen Purus River and pointed it downstream. Chugging down muddy waters toward the next community on his schedule, the Catholic priest felt uncertain. He'd heard all about the problems in São Miguel.

Like so many other isolated settlements scattered throughout the Amazon rainforest, São Miguel was historically Catholic. Not that long ago, when Father Moisés would make his annual journey there, his presence was a community event — the only time when the people of São Miguel could attend Mass, have their babies baptized and make confession. The squat church could never fit all the faithful.

But that was before the arrival of an evangelical Protestant pastor in early 2020, before the opening of the community's first evangelical church, before a fever of conversions split the community and turned it against itself. Longtime friends stopped talking. Families fractured. Suspicion and rumor spread about the Devil and death. When a 12-year-old girl was found dead in 2020, hanging from her porch rafters, Catholics saw a terrible accident. But evangelicals whispered of suicide and a demon that the pastor said was stalking the community.

The priest looked across the waters and saw São Miguel up ahead, a line of shacks rising upon an escarpment. At the far end, where forest nipped at the village, was one of its newest buildings. Painted white and blue, the pastor's evangelical church gleamed like a beacon in the day's falling light.

Father Moisés travels up the Purus River to visit remote communities in the Amazon.

Father Moisés hadn't met the pastor, nor heard him preach, but his charisma was no secret. Evangelicals said they'd never heard anyone speak of God as he did. Thin and

tanned, hands calloused from years of wielding a chain saw, the pastor looked no different from thousands of others struggling to survive along the Purus. But followers said he'd been touched by divine providence. He was rumored to have banished malevolent spirits and cured illnesses. He claimed to be illiterate but somehow read the Bible with fluency. Wherever he went, Catholics renounced their church and followed him.

Perils of reporting on the river



Reporting in the Amazon rainforest is always challenging: Crushing heat. Armed criminal gangs. Sparse cellphone reception. But this time, when Washington Post journalists set out to accompany a Catholic priest in a small aluminum boat, they also confronted violent rains and dengue fever.

A downpour had exploded over the river, hammering the small vessel. Afraid it would collide with something hidden beneath the rain-splattered surface and capsize in the strong current, the boatman brought the team ashore. They waited hours for the storm to pass before resuming the journey.

Wherever the team went, they heard people complain of fever and terrible pain. But the area was so remote — three hours from the nearest town — that they decided to press on. Mosquitoes feasted on them as they slept in hammocks or bare mattresses on the ground.

The team's security specialist was the first to fall ill. Slumped in the back of the boat one afternoon, he said he could go no farther and returned to the city, where he was immediately hospitalized. Then the photographer was stricken. And finally, after the trip ended, the priest and his assistant came down with the fever.

The next day, Father Moisés would step up to the altar of the Catholic church and be forced to reckon with the pastor's impact. He didn't know how many faithful he'd find in the pews at the annual Mass or whether the community could still even be considered Catholic. He could only be sure that whatever was happening in São Miguel was not unique to it.

In his 36 years, Father Moisés had witnessed a marked retreat of Catholicism across Latin America, where evangelical Protestants were increasingly challenging its historic

dominance. The collapse had been particularly swift in the priest's own Brazil — the church's strongest redoubt by measure of Catholic adherents. His vast, deeply Christian country, whose Catholic roots reached back to Portuguese colonization, was now being reborn evangelical.



A woman takes her son to be baptized at the Catholic church in the river village of São José do Divino. Only the priest, who visits once a year, can perform baptisms.

In the roughly two decades since he entered seminary, the number of evangelical churches had tripled, according to the [Institute of Applied Economic Research](#), and now accounted for 7 out of 10 religious establishments. Nearly 180 million of his fellow Brazilians — 84 percent of the population — were baptized Catholic, [Vatican statistics show](#). But so many had turned away from his church that soon, demographers say, if not already, Brazil would for the first time no longer be majority-Catholic.

Father Moisés left his boat on São Miguel's riverbank and walked toward the settlement. Something already didn't feel right. At a time when most Amazon communities would be alive — villagers delighting in the coolness of dusk — the village was abnormally quiet. No music, no laughter.



Christian symbolism marks many Catholic households in the village of São Miguel. Crosses mark a fence in São Miguel.

Father Moisés learned that the pastor had just taken 18 village converts with him to visit a distant evangelical church. Even those who'd once volunteered inside the Catholic church were now turning away from it and toward him — people like Rosa Costa de Souza, 23, once seen by church leaders as one of São Miguel's most promising Catholics. She'd attended Thursday night prayer. Contemplated a future in Catholic ministry. Woken up in the middle of the night to chant the rosary. But her family, one of São Miguel's most devout, splintered after hearing the words of the pastor. First went her aunt. Then her mother. Then she, too, began to waver.

Tomorrow, Rosa and the rest of São Miguel would have to decide. Who would go to the annual Mass? Which faith would the villagers choose?

As evening shrouded the settlement in impenetrable black, Father Moisés lowered his husky frame into a hammock. He sat looking out toward the river. Out there, in its dark waters, he heard something faint: the rumble of a boat engine.

"That's him out there," a villager said. "The pastor."



São Miguel, which sits along the Purus River, had been Catholic since its founding in the early 1900s. Then an evangelical pastor arrived.

In the autumn of 2019, scores of bishops from the Amazon forest traveled to Rome with an urgent warning for Pope Francis: The Catholic Church was losing its hold on the region. People were converting to more expressive forms of evangelical Christianity — sometimes called charismatic or Pentecostal — which often entailed speaking in tongues and faith healing and emphasized a daily struggle between good and evil. [One prominent poll](#) showed that slightly more people already identified as evangelical than Catholic across most of the Brazilian Amazon.

The unique challenges posed by the rainforest — immense size, wide dispersion of villages, few roads — had exacerbated the church's shortage of priests. Some communities were going a full year without seeing a member of the clergy. The bishops

urged radical change: Grant priestly powers to married men, breaking with the bedrock tenet of clerical celibacy, and increase the reach of the cloth. “We have to change,” [pleaded](#) one Amazon bishop, Wilmar Santin.

But the Catholic Church did not, and Father Moisés, one of only 78 priests in a swath of forest larger than Illinois, returned to the rivers of Acre state to do what he could.



A storm brews over one of the evangelical churches that have proliferated in recent years along the Purus.

Motoring down the Purus, several days before his visit to São Miguel, he rubbed his beard and squinted through rain-splattered glasses at the horizon. He was halfway through a religious expedition along the Purus, which, by some measures, was easier to travel than the three other rivers in his domain. Those trips often involved 10-hour boat rides down log-strewn creeks and jungle treks by donkey. But the Purus was challenging for other reasons.

He passed one evangelical church on the river's edge, painted brilliant blue. Then another, shining green. This entire river had once been Catholic. But now, many communities no longer even warranted a priestly visit. There were virtually no Catholics left.

He sped up the boat.

So much about this land had been foreign when he first arrived as a priest here in 2016 and assumed command of the parish in nearby Sena Madureira. Born in the wealthy southern state of Santa Catarina, he'd never before slept in a hammock or piloted a riverboat. He'd also never seen the Catholic Church in such trouble. In

Manaus, the Amazon's largest city, the number of evangelical churches had quadrupled in two decades, [according](#) to the Order of Amazon Evangelical Ministers, rising to a staggering 8,500. The situation of Catholics in the region's rural hinterlands, where he alone served 88 communities, was even more unsettling to Catholics.

Evangelical converts sing Christian songs as they wash their clothes in a small stream in São Miguel.

For the faithful in the rural Amazon, where many have almost no access to priests, Catholicism's most fundamental rituals were largely out of reach. Only the clergy can baptize children, marry couples, hear confession and offer Communion. These villagers were, in the words of the Catholic Church, "burdened" by unfulfilled religious obligations.

The rain was picking up, pinpricking his bare arms. He pulled on his black coat.

Part of Father Moisés wanted to believe that missions like his kept Catholics loyal. But most days, he felt he was on the losing side of Brazil's holy war. It had taken him 12 years to become a priest. Every new Catholic church had to be registered by the archdiocese. But anyone could pick up a Bible, call themselves a pastor and open an evangelical church. Pastors lived and preached in villages he visited once a year. Catholics, freighted by so much bureaucracy and history, couldn't compete. *He* couldn't compete.

Father Moisés had witnessed the fallout in places like São Miguel, where Catholic leaders complained with increasing bitterness about the slipping loyalty of people like Rosa, who was now saying the pastor had shown her God in a new way.



Religious imagery in the Catholic church in São Miguel.
Father Moisés Oliveira at a Mass in São José do Divino.



A child leans against a window in the Catholic church in São Miguel.
Children take part in a Mass in the village of Praia dos Paus.

And Father Moisés had seen it again earlier that very day, in the village of São José do Divino, where every year seemed to bring a new evangelical church.

“How many families are still Catholic?” the priest had asked several villagers.

Nervous laughter.

“I could count them on one hand,” a person had finally said.

Father Moisés hadn’t replied. He’d just lowered his head and later walked along the river to the village chapel. It had recently been built with parish money and painted a bright teal. But 10 minutes before he was set to celebrate the annual Mass, it had sat vacant.



Father Moisés walks toward the Catholic church in Praia dos Paus.

“People normally come at the hour,” he said.

Then, at the hour: “People should still be coming.”

And: “Let’s wait a little longer.”

Now, it was hours after that Mass, which had been attended by six families, and Father Moisés was trying to focus on the next community ahead, so small it didn’t even appear on the map. When he arrived at Praia dos Paus, he saw it had been swept by dengue fever. No one came down to greet him. Father Moisés began to worry. The conditions weren’t good for a high turnout.

But when he reached the church, the scene looked snatched from another time. It was overflowing with people. In the back, the faithful were standing shoulder-to-shoulder. An evangelical pastor had recently closed his church and moved away. This time, for this moment, it was the Catholic church that felt ascendant.

“This isn’t my work,” Father Moisés rejoiced. “It’s God’s.”

The sky outside began to darken. Father Moisés climbed into his boat. He motored onward to a community where he feared the reception would be different. As he came around the final bend, closing in on the village of São Miguel, he saw atop the bluffs a single wood-plank house. It was the home of his rival, the pastor.



Father Moisés baptizes a baby in São Miguel.

High above the river, Leudo Alencar could see nothing but forest, water and sky. After so many years of religious struggle along the Purus, he enjoyed the isolation of this house, where, he liked to say, “I hide myself away” from those who might wish him harm. Seclusion seemed particularly important in São Miguel, where Pastor Leudo, 50, knew that his work opening the community’s first evangelical church had made him powerful enemies.

He was no stranger to risk. That had been the life he chose decades earlier, when he attended his first evangelical celebration and, at age 18, found not only a new faith but his life's mission: to evangelize along the Purus and challenge the long dominance of Catholicism.

He had built his first church at the river's edge in the mid-1990s in the community of Novo Amparo. The reception was unlike anything he had expected. People came in droves, desperate for God. It convinced him, he said, of the weakness of the Catholic Church. Its priests, largely outsiders, were entirely absent. Their scholarship was another barrier. In a region where few had much formal education, people couldn't relate to them. But they did to him — an illiterate farmhand who hadn't needed the vow of poverty taken by some priests because poverty was all he'd ever known.



Pastor Leudo Alencar sits with his Bible in front of his house along the Purus River.

That first church led to another, in Ramal. And another, in Sardinha. His expansion along the Purus made him a figure of respect among the area's prominent evangelicals, but also plunged the river into religious division. The Catholics who didn't convert blamed him for it.

His wife, Charide Luz de Albuquerque, 48, often asked him to slow down. "They criticize and reject us," she said she told him once. "They won't let us up into their houses."

But he'd rarely encountered such disdain as in São Miguel. When he arrived in early 2020, Pastor Leudo found a community whose geographic isolation had largely buffered it from the religious transfiguration of the forest. The settlement's social and religious hierarchy was firmly established.



Father Moisés, at right at table, joins a family for lunch between services in São José do Divino.

At the top was the Queiroz family, whose members owned much of the land in São Miguel, lived in concrete houses and ran the Catholic church. Below them were impoverished congregants like Rosa. She resided in a wood-plank shack, laundered clothing in a creek below and didn't own a phone. She barely knew anyone from outside São Miguel.

Pastor Leudo, who believed God had granted him vision and the power to heal, said he saw a demon at work in the village. It had caused a woman to consider suicide. Driven a man to abuse alcohol. Left a housewife twisted by anger. When the village girl Mairla Campo de Souza, 12, was found dead, hanging from a cord tied to her balcony's rafters, Pastor Leudo was sure it had been the demon that had killed her. At her funeral, he warned the village: If it didn't find its way to God, he prophesied, others would perish.

His evangelical church grew, and his followers believed that God rewarded their faith. The demon, he said, was expelled. No one else died.



A woman at home with her son in São José do Divino.

But he knew that the Catholics, less likely to see the Devil in daily struggles, didn't view it his way. They called him an interloper, a charlatan. One man threatened to physically destroy his church, Pastor Leudo said, others to do it with a lawsuit. More painfully, he said, some blamed him for Máirla's death. They said he'd brought the demon to São Miguel. The leader of the village's Catholic church, Adelson Queiroz, would barely speak to him.

He wanted to tell Adelson they weren't enemies, but allies. Those whom Adelson couldn't reach with Catholicism, Pastor Leudo could bring to God through evangelicalism. But he didn't know if Adelson would listen. Many of the villagers attending Pastor Leudo's celebrations had been close to Adelson. Young Rosa, whom Pastor Leudo had seen more and more of in recent months, had been like a daughter to Adelson, someone he had been grooming for Catholic leadership.

Pastor Leudo's wife began to worry that with feelings so raw, people in São Miguel might want to harm them.

Adelson, she warned, was a dangerous man.



Father Moisés steers his boat toward São Miguel, where cattle rancher Adelson Queiroz, far right, is the leader of the village's Catholic church. With them is the priest's parish assistant, Raimundo Cruz da Roxa.

Unable to sleep, again, Adelson, 53, rose from bed just before 4 a.m. and padded through his darkened house to the television. He had never slept well. But lately, with Father Moisés's visit just two days away, worry seemed to keep him up every night. His thoughts would race, looping around a single question: How?

How had São Miguel, a community founded by his family in 1901, turned into something he no longer recognized? How had so many friends become strangers? How much more could he take before he packed up and left?

Adelson, a sturdily built cattle rancher with a large scar on his forehead, turned on Catholic programming. A prerecorded prayer service was on. He sat, folded his hands and joined in, chanting a chaplet he knew so well: "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and the whole world ..."

Adelson knew São Miguel had never been an easy place to live. Many of its 27 families had little to eat beyond what was grown, fished or hunted. Illiteracy was widespread. The nearest town was three hours away by boat. But to Adelson, São Miguel's wealthiest resident and owner of nearly 2,000 cattle, this had been a happy place, unified by a common faith and sense of community. He said he'd always tried to help those in need, slaughtering cattle to feed the hungry, providing internet access to anyone who wanted it, building a Catholic church beside his house so people had a place to pray. Then, in early 2020, a wiry outsider arrived looking for work, and everything changed.

Catholic Mass in São José do Divino.



Father Moisés offers Communion during Mass in São José do Divino.

Viera da Silva prays at the Catholic church in São José do Divino.

Adelson couldn't understand the pastor's appeal and, at first, didn't take him seriously. The pastor had none of the religious training of the Catholic priesthood. The services held at his church — which he built gallingly close to the Catholic church — made even less sense to Adelson. Just a lot of shouting and crying and indecipherable tongues. Adelson didn't know how anyone could see God in that noise. It stunned him that some did. And that even more then followed.

But Adelson recognized the extent of change in his community only after the girl Máirla was found dead. Adelson had known her. She had participated in his Catholic youth group. She had been happy. Her death must have been an accident. He knew how she'd loved to swing around on that balcony cord. So when the pastor stood before the community and said that a demon had killed her — and that its work wasn't yet done in São Miguel — Adelson was outraged by this outsider's temerity. Then disturbed by how many nodded in agreement.

He went home and prayed harder than ever before, that the pastor was wrong, that no one else would die. When he finally ended his prayers seven days later, he considered them answered. No one else had perished.

But other prayers would go unmet. São Miguel would not return to what it had been. The pastor, whom he called a "false prophet," would not leave. The village to which Adelson had committed his life would divide along religious lines.

“For the sake of His sorrowful Passion,” he chanted a final time, “have mercy on us and the whole world.”



With rain approaching, people prepare to leave São José do Divino after Mass.

He opened his eyes. Daylight poured into the house. He rose, turned off the television and went outside. The view from his balcony was expansive — verdant pastures, horses and cattle, a pond rich with fish. Nowhere made him feel closer to God. But Adelson increasingly felt like he’d let Him down. Catholicism had been brought here by his forefathers, but he hadn’t safeguarded that tradition. The people didn’t want his faith. They didn’t want *him*. The humiliation was almost more than he could bear.

Worst of all, he said, had been Rosa’s family. They were practically kin. He’d known Rosa’s mother, Maria Antônia, his whole life. He was godfather to Rosa’s sister, Maria Jesus. And he had looked at Rosa, who had so much potential, as another of his kids.

Then at dawn one morning in autumn 2022, Maria Antônia came to his house and told him: She’d searched her soul and had decided to convert. Afterward, he was sent a video. It showed her daughter Maria Jesus kneeling before the pastor in the Purus, babbling an incomprehensible tongue. His goddaughter, whom he’d sworn to shepherd in a Catholic life, had been baptized as an evangelical Protestant.

And finally, there was Rosa — raven-haired, dimple-cheeked Rosa. He’d done so much to keep her in the church. Now he wondered whether she’d even come to the annual Mass.

Children play outside as they wait for Catholic Mass to begin in São José do Divino.

There had been a time not long ago when Rosa thought little of the pastor. Her family was one of São Miguel’s most faithful, and she recalled never doubting that her rightful place was in the Catholic Church. That commitment only deepened in spring 2022, as conversions spread through the village and Catholic leaders panicked. Hoping to rejuvenate the community’s church, Adelson had turned to Rosa, whom he

considered one of the faithful's most charismatic youngsters, and given her new responsibilities.

Rosa felt blessed. She said she'd grown up admiring Adelson and had often had lunch at his house after Sunday service. That he and his wife, Valcir, took special interest in her — counseling her to study Catholic services and encouraging her to explore a life in ministry — gave her the confidence to assume the lectern herself. While others abandoned Catholicism, she embraced it, rarely missing her Thursday night women's prayer group at the chapel.

The evangelical church was just a short walk away. She remembered hearing the shouts and cries of its followers from the Catholic church. But she never went, worried that their church harbored demons. She became curious only after one aunt, who'd struggled with depression, had converted and appeared to improve. So one Thursday evening, Rosa went to meet the aunt at her worship service. She looked inside.



A girl in São Miguel holds a rosary. On her belt is a keychain bearing the image of Nossa Senhora Aparecida, patron saint of Brazil.

Rosa Costa de Souza at her home in São Miguel. Once a devoted Catholic, she has now become an evangelical Protestant.

It wasn't what she'd expected. No demons. No pressure to convert. The pastor was thin and fatherly. He reminded her of a biblical prophet, illiterate and raw, but empowered by God to preach His word.

At the Catholic church, she began singing loudly and shouting — as the evangelicals did — until she was admonished. Catholics believed in somber reflection, Adelson said. Not outbursts of emotion.

Then, one day, while watching Catholic television, she learned of something called baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was fascinating. The process was similar to the experiential, fervent baptisms she'd seen performed by evangelicals, but it was allowed under the Catholic faith. She went down to the Purus and performed the act of worship. Others at the Catholic church mocked her for it. They said she was possessed by a demon, just like an evangelical.

“It was such discrimination,” she said.

The annual Catholic Mass in São Miguel village begins with a religious song.

Adelson and his wife supported her, she said. They told her they still believed in her future in Catholic ministry. But the ridicule made her question everything. She wondered, if unschooled evangelicals could become pastors, why Catholic ministers had to earn a certificate. Didn't the Word come from God, not school? She also questioned Catholic imagery: all the crosses, chalices and clerical vestments. Hadn't the Bible forbidden idolatry?

In late 2022, after her mother and sister converted, she stopped attending Catholic services. Her grandfather, who ran the local church with Adelson, said she'd betrayed them. Her father said he didn't understand. Adelson said nothing at all. This man she'd so respected froze her out, she said. When she passed his house, she'd call out to him, using the evangelical greeting of “Peace of the Lord.” In return, he'd only say that she needed to respect his religion.

The loss of that relationship brought her to tears. She wished that Adelson could see she was still the same person. Just because her religion was changing didn't mean *she* was. Just because she was rejecting Catholicism, didn't mean she was rejecting *him*.

But that conversation never happened, and over time, she began to see the village schism differently. For so long, she'd thought it was about religion. Now she believed it was really about power and control. This long-awaited Catholic Mass wouldn't decide just which religion was dominant in São Miguel. It would determine who held sway over the village.



The Catholic church in São José do Divino.

The morning of the Mass, a hard rain began to fall. The turn in weather made the Catholics who had gathered at Adelson's house uneasy. Mass was set to begin in half an hour, and the weather was sure to dampen attendance. Adelson, a tight smile on his face, noted who was already waiting on his porch and who was not. He saw his

nephew and his wife. He saw a fellow Catholic leader and his wife. He did not see Rosa, or her family.

“I’m not nervous,” Adelson said.

Father Moisés, sitting nearby, didn’t reply.

Ten minutes past the scheduled start time, the priest stood up. Father Moisés said he could wait no longer.

“Let’s go,” he said.



Father Moisés, seen here in Praia dos Paus, says he increasingly feels he's on the losing side of Brazil's holy war.

Far above the banks of the Purus, in a forested area people called the highlands, one of the absent was peeling cassava with a long knife.

Rosa had awoken early that morning, as dawn broke across the Purus, flat and gray. In years past, she would have been busy preparing for the Catholic church’s most important day of the year. But instead, on this morning, she had met with her mother and sister, and they’d set out into the forest. They’d walked for nearly an hour — over a creek, through a grassy clearing, up a hill and finally into the mist-cloaked highlands. Then they had stopped. It was far enough.

Rosa sat on a grassy patch, foraged for cassava and smiled.

“I’ve made my decision,” she said. “I’m evangelical. And I’m happy.”

Down below, where the rest of her village was deciding, Father Moisés entered the church. He stepped behind the altar and pulled on his priestly robes. He set down a gold chalice and, murmuring a prayer over it, closed his eyes. When he opened them, he saw that the pews were half-empty. Fewer than 30 people. Less than one-third of the community. Father Moisés asked those in the back to fill the empty seats in the front and, clapping his hands, began the opening hymn.

Adelson took a seat in the front row. He stooped his shoulders, pinched his nose and rocked back and forth in prayer. Not as many people as he'd hoped. But he tried to focus on those who were here: the last Catholics of São Miguel. The true believers. They'd been tested, and they hadn't gone over to the pastor. They would stay with him.

"At least," he said as the Mass ended and the long wait for next year's began, "I hope so."

Marina Dias in Brasília contributed to this report.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2024/brazil-amazon-catholic-evangelical-protestant/?itid=hp-more-top-stories_p007_f003

Oh, can't everyone have a field day with this: the Christians, the ecumenicals, the pagans, the secularists, the historians, the anthropologists. The Catholic Church continues to reap the wind of its complicity in colonialism.

Living once in Santiago de Querétaro in Central Mexico, working downtown in the *Centro Historico*, I was surrounded by magnificent old cathedrals. Mass it seemed was being sung in Spanish in one of them all day long. I am not Catholic, and I belong to no church—paraphrasing Groucho Marx, Why would I want to join a church that would let the likes of me in it?—but I loved just sitting at the back listening to the priest sing amidst spaciousness that made the splendor seem spare. Maybe that I couldn't follow the Spanish made it more lovely for me; I didn't get caught up in theology. The cathedrals varied in artistic style—one was chock-full of ornate Catholic idols and cheesy art—but everywhere one turned a gruesome crucified Christ looked back at you. (I give Catholicism credit for refusing to gloss over this terrible reality about being Christian.) Most Catholics worldwide live in grinding poverty and injustice, and suffering cannot but come with that. Faith must be secured in suffering.

The bare shack-like little churches along the Purus belie the prosaic reality of Catholicism. The Church may be closing in on two millennia old, with rich traditions built up too numerous to tally, but for most Catholics, everyday reality is not cathedrals or charismatic priests or Jesuit-honed theology or Franciscan miracle-workers to draw inspiration from. Rather, faith is pedestrian and Mass too often boring with a priest—no matter how long the preparation—of questionable apprehension and motivation. No wonder when the Protestant charismatics speaking in tongues arrive, converts flock to them.

A friend recently quoted Denis Diderot, the Enlightenment rationalist: "Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest." All fine and dandy, witty, and maybe fitting for the last days of *l'Ancien Régime*, but do you think Father Moisés deserves such a fate? Pastor Leudo? Shows how little comprehension there is of what "religion" can be all about. TJB