



# Forest of Visions: Ayahuasca, Amazonian Spirituality, and the Santo Daime Tradition

*Alex Polari de Alverga*

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The story of Santo Daime--a new religion that blends elements of Christianity with older Amazonian indigenous spiritual practices--and the ecologically sound and spiritually centered utopian community it has inspired

- A true story of a classical spiritual encounter, as well as an intimate account of the genesis of an important religious tradition that continues to grow worldwide
- Edited and Introduced by Stephen Larsen, author of *The Shaman's Doorway*

Alex Polari de Alverga spent years as a political prisoner during the rule of the military junta in Brazil, enduring torture, brutality, and deprivation. On his release from captivity and in search of something to restore his spiritual connection to life, he had a transformative encounter with one of the two revered founders of Santo Daime, Padrinho Sebastiao Mota de Mela. Santo Daime--an Amazonian religion, born out of jungle entheogens, mediumship, and healing, that is a potent and unique synthesis of Christianity and indigenous practices--provided Alverga with an alternative to his disillusionment with modern society. His quest for spiritual initiation eventually led him deep into the heart of the rainforest to Mapia, one of the spiritual centers of Santo Daime, where he became a teacher and leader of the Daime community.

*Forest of Visions* is a story of a classic spiritual encounter comparable to the Tibetan Saint Milarepa's search for his teacher Marpa. It is also an intimate account of the genesis of an important religious tradition that from modest beginnings in Brazil has now spread throughout the world and continues to grow. It provides an inside look at the spiritually centered village of Mapia, a model for communities in the 21st century.

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