

“Every thoughtful missionary has noted that while the gentiles [unbaptized people] procreate easily and are healthy and robust (though errant) in the wilds, in spite of hunger, nakedness, and living completely outdoors... as soon as they commit themselves to a ... Christian life, they become extremely feeble, lose weight, get sick, and die. This plague affects the women particularly, especially those who have recently become pregnant” (225).

- Letter from Fr. Mariano Payeras (circa 1820)