

Pilgrims in Paraguay. The Story of Mennonite Colonization in South America. By Joseph Winfield Fretz. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953. Pp. 247, illustrated, index. \$2.75.

Since World War I Latin America has become a new home of many Mennonites. Next to Mexico which has approximately 18,000 Mennonites, Paraguay has the largest number with about 12,000. These figures refer to Mennonite population and not baptized members. The present work, as the main title, *Pilgrims in Paraguay*, suggests, deals largely with the Mennonites in Paraguay. The subtitle, however, is broader: *The Story of Mennonite Colonization in South America*. This enables the author to deal briefly with the Mennonites in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Colombia.

The author, J. Winfield Fretz, is professor of sociology and economics at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. As such, and as a student of other Mennonite colonization projects, he was well qualified to make this study which he calls a sociological report of Mennonite colonization effort in South America. This "is an attempt to present systematically the story of Mennonite migrations and settlements; their backgrounds, problems, and prospects. Special effort has been made to describe as vividly and accurately as possible the conditions as they are today." Not a history as such, the work provides, the author hopes, enough historical detail to furnish background for an intelligent understanding of present developments. "The chief purpose of this book is to give the reader a clear picture of the results of twenty-five years of Mennonite colonization effort in South America." An on-the-field study of several months in 1951 was made possible by a financial grant from the Social Science Research Council. The study was also carried out as an assignment by the Mennonite Central Committee.

In this reviewer's opinion the author has succeeded well in his purpose. Other accounts of the Mennonites in Paraguay have been written, including helpful eyewitness reports. But the present work is the most up-to-date and complete account of the sociological, religious, cultural, governmental, and economic conditions of the Mennonite colonists in South America, particularly in Paraguay. The story of the establishment of the new Mennonite colonies following World War II in itself makes the work worth while.

After a very brief introductory chapter on Paraguay, and two chapters on the founding of the various Mennonite colonies in the country, including a brief treatment of the Hutterites, there are chapters on home and family, education and the church, government and social welfare, manners and customs, health and medical facilities, agriculture, and economics and industry. One chapter is given to the Mennonites in Brazil, and another chapter deals very briefly with the Mennonites in Uruguay, Argentina, and Colombia. An additional chapter deals with the Mennonite Central Committee in South America, and the final chapter is on the future of the Mennonites in South America. One feature which greatly enhances the value of the work is the inclusion of 40 valuable statistical tables on population, immigration, emigration, church membership, various kinds of agricultural data, and other items, for the various colonies. The more than 50 photographic illustrations also add interest as well as information. There are also a few appendices, a bibliography, and an index. The few footnotes citing authorities are at the end of the chapters.

As a report on contemporary conditions among the Mennonites in Paraguay the work is quite complete and generally tells anyone interested in the subject what he wants to know. The author writes in a sympathetic and yet scholarly fashion. Obviously impressed by the courageous struggle of these South American pioneers, as other observers have

been, he does not hesitate to point out the weaknesses of his fellow Mennonites as well as their strong points. Some may be surprised at the large number of adults who are not church members—in Fernheim 18 per cent of the population over 17 years of age, in Friesland 28 per cent, and in Neuland and Volendam about 40 and 60 per cent, respectively, of the people 16 years of age and over. No doubt the years of antireligious teaching by the Russian communists had something to do with this.

In regard to the often-raised question about the future prospects of the Mennonites in Paraguay the author makes this interesting statement: "In the light of all the evidence at hand, past and present, visible and invisible, this writer is compelled to take an optimistic view about the future of the Mennonite colonies in Paraguay."

By way of adverse criticism this reviewer has little to offer. To say that style and clarity could have been improved at a few places is merely to state what is true of most writing. The work seems to be remarkably free of typographical errors and inaccuracies. A few were noted but most of these were of little consequence. The map following page 32, showing Mennonite settlements in Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay, shows the Bolivian-Paraguayan boundary as it was before and not after the Chaco War. United States government aid was given to Paraguay before 1950 (p. 7). *Mandioca* is used in the book as though it were an English word. *Mandioca* is Spanish. In English it is manioc. Table 31 (p. 84) is not likely to be understood with regard to the item on Argentina. The total church membership in Argentina is there listed as 669 but the total Mennonite population is listed as 500. Here and on pages 196, 197, and 208 the term Mennonite is used carelessly, as, for example, in the statement: "The total number of 'Mennonites' in Argentina is estimated at about 500." The author apparently means the total number of those not connected with the (old) Mennonite church in Argentina. Though Mr. and Mrs. Willard H. Smith secured more adequate quarters for the MCC center in Asuncion in 1944, and enlarged the work, they did not establish the first MCC home there (p. 207). The home was started in 1943 by A. E. Janzen and Robert Geigley.

Mennonites and others interested in the subject, including a good many in the world of scholarship, will be grateful to Dr. Fretz for producing this authoritative and informational volume.

Goshen College

Willard H. Smith

Christianity, Diplomacy and War. By Herbert Butterfield. Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury, n.d. (1953?). Pp. 125. \$1.75.

At crucial moments in history when old and cherished structures of thought and society are seen to crumble, God has focused His work on a point, or a man, where human reason and discipleship cross paths, where lucid intelligences coincide with commitments ready to burn their bridges behind them. To say nothing of the places of Abraham, Moses, and the New Testament writers in the divine economy, one may legitimately find cases in point in the clergy and young humanists who gave Anabaptism its specific form in Zürich as well as in the story of the rise of Methodism.

It is not too much to maintain that another coincidence of rationality and discipleship is beginning to take form in the way in which modern academic research tends to discover and confirm the New Testament-Anabaptist position. After a long period of destructive negation in reaction to orthodoxy, we now see the growth of a "post-critical" Biblical theology which sees discipleship as the purpose of God's revelation.



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