

Helmut Isaak, *Glaubet ihr, so bleibet ihr: Die Lebensgeschichte von Jakob und Elisabeth Isaak*. Loma Plata, Chaco: Verein für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay, 2013. Pp. 136.

This book tells the impressive life-story of the author's parents and their remarkable pastoral leadership within a group of Mennonites who fled Stalinist Russia in 1929 to settle in the "undeveloped" Paraguayan Chaco. The story demonstrates this couple's team leadership style in church and community well before the term was fashionable; Elisabeth's important contribution, which really enabled Jakob's unreserved dedication to community service, is explicitly recognized. Readers are shown how their genuine, unwavering Christian faith provided both the leaders and the community the needed strength and endurance in situations of oppression and persecution in Russia and in facing the challenges of their pioneering work in the isolated Chaco. And although not intended at first, this faith-centered life of the community spontaneously led to being a missional presence in their social surroundings, including among the region's Aboriginal peoples. A special chapter on the missionary work of Kornelius Isaak, the author's older brother, is also included in the book; Kornelius' early death by the spear of an Ayoreo (Indian) warrior, who subsequently became a Christian, would forever mark the Isaak family.

Though Helmut does most of the telling, it is a family story, "retold by the children and grandchildren," integrating significant portions from Ältester Isaak's own reflections on key occasions of Fernheim Colony's history. But the book is more than a family biography. This "family story" inevitably gives readers a significant window into the workings of *Gemeinde* (church) and colony including their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the book insightfully and skillfully contextualizes the story of these migrants within the larger 20th century history.

The Isaak family is to be commended for making this remarkable story of their family and larger community available to the wider Mennonite world and beyond.

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