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*Women, Men, and their Experience of God: Comparing Spiritual Autobiographies*

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***Introduction: Archetypes for Men and Women in Spiritual Autobiography?***

The study of autobiography is still, relatively speaking, a new field of endeavour.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the 1950s the genre served as a kind of service literature to other disciplines. It was seen as little more than “a special variety of biography and as a kind of stepchild of history and literature, with neither of those disciplines granting it full recognition as a respectable subject for study in itself.”<sup>2</sup> Study of autobiography began to come into its own in the 1950s and 1960s. Jill Ker Conway has highlighted in summary fashion the two main stages of development in the growth of this scholarly field:

In the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s the focus of attention was on whether autobiography was a genre in its own right, or just a defective form of fiction. In the 1980s new forms of literary analysis—deconstructionist and poststructuralist—changed the way we view texts and analyze narrative. Developments in linguistics changed the way we look at metaphor and symbol, and the field of cultural criticism led us to discourse analysis... Since the late ‘70s there has been an equally profound theoretical and critical shift in the way feminist scholars assess women’s autobiography and understand its reception, so that feminist questions have required new readings of narrative by and about women.<sup>3</sup>

In recent decades the autobiography field has seen impressive growth and vitality. In various disciplines scholars have come to realize that autobiography offers “a privileged access to an experience (the black experience, the female experience, the African experience) that no other variety of writing can offer.”<sup>4</sup> The history of Christianity, in particular, is being written and understood very differently these days as scholars make greater use of autobiographical sources, and as women’s experience is taken more seriously.<sup>5</sup>

The recent academic interest in autobiography is matched by a growing, broadly based popular interest as well. Christian people today are discovering spiritual autobiography—reading those of others, and writing their own. As testimony to this fact witness two massive anthologies that have recently appeared: *Pilgrim Souls: An*

*Anthology of Spiritual Autobiographies* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 543 pages, and *The Norton Book of American Autobiography*, ed. Jay Parini (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999). Conway suggests a reason for the wide appeal of autobiography: "... what really grips us is the inner reflection on our own lives the autobiographer sets in motion." In a day when questions about what it means to be human are examined in the technical language of psychology, literary criticism and philosophy, autobiography tackles these questions in nonspecialist language.<sup>6</sup>

In the Roman Catholic tradition, *Lives of Saints* and the autobiographies of mystics such as Teresa of *Avila* have long held popular and scholarly interest. However, among Protestant traditions that traditionally downplay the role of saints, the current interest in reading and writing autobiography as a spiritual exercise appears as something comparatively new. One Protestant author, Evelyn Diephouse, observes:

One of the Reformed tradition's sins of omission is the absence of appreciation for the lives of the saints. In their zeal to remove from the church the excesses of adoration... the reformers tossed out the heartening rituals of listening to the stories of the faithful.<sup>7</sup>

A Reformed Church minister, Diephouse finds "a blind spot in the Reformed tradition" when it comes to appreciating the value of story to communicate truth. The irony is that 17th century Reformed Protestants, both English Puritans and German Pietists, were very much devoted to the genre of life-writing, both as authors and readers.

Diephouse has described her own journey of discovery of spiritual autobiography as she searched for spiritual companions. The journey has led her to the stories of Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila.

I found these autobiographies irresistible...for their integration of life experience with faith. From them I learned...particularly that theology and experience are inextricably woven, whether in the life of St. Paul, Martin Luther or Margery Kempe.<sup>8</sup>

Diephouse found hope in reading women autobiographers who struggled with the disparagement of the feminine such as Vera Brittain, Simone Weil, and Dorothy Day. Dogged by the fear that writing her own autobiography might cater to pride and overly privatized faith, Diephouse eventually came to see such writing as prayer, as "a discipline

that brings us onto holy ground, as a practice that opens us up, deeply and honestly, to the nurturing of the Spirit...to the cleansing and healing of grace.”<sup>9</sup>

Women’s autobiographies have been the particular focus of academic study since 1980.<sup>10</sup> In 1986 Estelle Jelinek published her influential book, *The Tradition of Women’s Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), arguing that women and men write different kinds of autobiographies in terms of content, form and self-image. Two recent studies have taken differing positions on the question of gender difference in the way spiritual autobiographies are written. Jill Conway has argued that in the history of autobiography in societies under Western European influence, “there are [distinct] archetypal life scripts for men and for women which show remarkable persistence over time.” For men the pattern is adapted from the story of “the epic hero in classical antiquity.” Life is portrayed as a journey with many trials and tests that the hero must face with courage. In Christianity the classical pattern is adapted by moving the odyssey “from the external world to the inner consciousness of the narrator.” Thus the journey of initiation becomes one of conversion, as illustrated in Augustine’s *Confessions* (ca. 400).<sup>11</sup> In the secular autobiography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*Confessions*, 1770, publ. in 1789), “the trajectory of his life moves not toward God but toward worldly fame and success.”<sup>12</sup>

Women have inherited a different tradition of autobiography, rooted in monastic religious life. Instead of promoting a sense of agency and heroism, the focus is upon women's mystical experiences of divine illumination.<sup>13</sup> St. Teresa of Avila’s *Life of St. Teresa by Herself* (1562-65) is taken up with the story of her relationship with God and the working of grace in her consciousness. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this took the form of the secularized romance where instead of seeking God, the story is of the erotic quest for the ideal mate. Most important are the woman’s emotional responses, not her intellect; she has no agency—things happen to her. “Her life story ends when she encounters [her hero], because her existence thereafter is subsumed within his.”<sup>14</sup>

Ellen Ross takes a different approach than Conway, warning against too quickly separating autobiographical writing according to gender. Her comparative reading of women’s and men’s stories found “a great many exceptions that raise questions about many of the current categorizations” of gender differences. Ross thinks it is premature to

say how self-writing might differ for men and women. “A long road of comparison lies ahead for scholars of this genre...”<sup>15</sup> Ross advocates an approach to the issue that requires observing “the patterns of order-making and the dominant metaphors in women’s and men’s autobiographies.” How do these images convey the authors’ self-understanding before God and the world? How do they conceive the self and society? How do they express their spirituality?<sup>16</sup> The goal is to determine whether observable differences are due more to gender than to economics and social status. Are men and women really seeing the same thing, but using different language?

Applying this methodology in her study of Margery Kempe, Ross highlighted three metaphors that lie “at the heart of Kempe’s construction of her life story.”<sup>17</sup> Ross showed how Kempe’s use of social relationship categories, identification with a tradition of holy women, and continual, implicit identification with the tradition of the biblical prophets provide keys to her religious self-understanding.<sup>18</sup> This last identification may well represent a common category of religious autobiography, pointing to “the danger of premature categorization of autobiographies as men’s or women’s.”<sup>19</sup>

In this study I revisit these issues as posed by Conway and Ross and apply them to two selected autobiographies by late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century German Pietist figures: August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) and Anna Nitschmann (1715-1760). My purpose is to test recent scholarly assumptions about gender and autobiography. Do the notions of God and self that characterized the works of German Protestant autobiographers point to any differences that can be traced to the factor of gender? I argue that while the two Pietist autobiographies under examination demonstrate some contrasting features that reflect gender differences, even more impressive in these writings is the way various metaphors and themes cross traditional gender lines. This mixing of archetypes goes against Jill Conway’s idea of “distinct archetypal life scripts” for men and women.

### ***The Context: Pietism and Popular Autobiography in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century***

We should consider first the historical context of Pietist autobiographical writing. Along with English Puritanism, German Pietism represents the most significant religious movement within Protestantism after the Reformation. The movement found its greatest influence between 1670 and 1760 under three generations of leaders: Philipp Jakob

Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) and Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). Pietism's beginnings are generally traced to the conventicle gatherings for spiritual nurture that Spener established in Frankfurt in 1670, and also to Spener's famous programmatic essay of 1675, *Pia Desideria*. The Pietist movement reached institutional greatness with August Hermann Francke's foundations in Halle, Germany, including mission society, bible society, orphanage, schools, and printing press. The third generation Pietist, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (d. 1760) left his mark on the Moravian Church and its successful worldwide mission efforts. Johannes Wallmann has identified two key marks of German Pietism: conventicles and eschatology.<sup>20</sup> The Pietists would meet in small gatherings in homes during the week for prayer, Bible study and mutual encouragement. Pietist eschatology generally included the postmillennial conviction that "better times are ahead for the church," a conviction sometimes elaborated with a detailed calendar of coming eschatological events.

Scholars have traced the origins of the modern self to "the experiential piety" found in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> The writing out of one's life story was widespread within Pietism.<sup>22</sup> Thousands of handwritten autobiographical life writings have been preserved from this period. In the Moravian archive in Herrnhut, Germany some 10,000 hand written autobiographies are extant. Of these only a few were ever printed.<sup>23</sup> These autobiographical works were not intended for public reading but as an aid to personal reflection on one's life as one sought "clarity concerning one's path in life before God and before one's conscience." This writing activity reflected the Pietist interest in the self, examining one's experiences and feelings in order to discover God's will and to seek after God's presence.<sup>24</sup>

### ***The Stories and Analysis***

#### **Two Pietist Autobiographers**

The authors of these autobiographies deserve some introduction in terms of the setting in which they wrote their life stories. As the energetic founder of the various Pietist enterprises in Halle, Germany, August Hermann Francke was the most influential disciple of Spener. Francke composed his autobiography sometime in 1691 at age twenty-eight, before coming to Halle a few months later to assume the dual offices of preacher and professor. Francke had been dismissed from his position as Deacon in

Erfurt due to opposition from the Orthodox Lutheran preachers. In September 1691, at Spener's invitation, Francke spent two months residing with Spener in Berlin.<sup>25</sup> It may have been during this Berlin period that Francke took the opportunity to reflect on the steps that had led to his conversion and new way of life.

Anna Nitschmann was a prominent member of the Herrnhut Moravian community established on the lands of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. She would eventually become the widowed Count's second wife. Anna composed her autobiography in 1737, at age twenty-one. By this time she had weathered seven years of conflicts and challenges in the role of *Ältestin* or women's "elder" within the Herrnhut community. Even more significantly, the Herrnhut settlement had grown by that time from small beginnings to a large well-organized community of "many hundreds."<sup>26</sup> In the year 1737 Anna travelled to France and England with Countess Zinzendorf and found that she "was often alone and had the time to reflect on the wonderful ways of my Saviour."<sup>27</sup> Her autobiography was probably composed during this extended period of reflection.

That Anna should undertake leadership responsibilities and life writing was not an unusual phenomenon within Pietist circles. Spener's rediscovery of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers inspired a host of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Protestant women to assume leadership positions and to move into public prominence.

In Pietism women played leading roles: they led at private devotional gatherings, they appeared in public making speeches, preaching sermons and offering up public prayers. They wrote books of theology and devotion and they composed hymns. While one can name only ten or twenty significant women from the Reformation period who appeared in the public eye, in the age of Pietism there were dozens.<sup>28</sup>

Women were especially active within the Herrnhut community. "In the inclusion of women in church work the Herrnhuters were far ahead of their time."<sup>29</sup> And so Anna's life and work should be seen as part of this larger Pietist phenomenon of women in positions of leadership.

For each autobiography we shall first provide a concise summary, and then consider the interpretive key to the life story and the central literary metaphors. Finally, we shall ask if there are observable differences due to gender in these accounts.

### **August Hermann Francke (1663-1727)**

Written in 1691, Francke's *Lebenslauff* covers just the first twenty-four years of his life. Francke writes that he was born in the city of Lübeck on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 1663. His father, Johannes Francke, served as a lawyer in the court of the Prince of Saxony. Francke's mother was Anna Gloxin, daughter of the mayor of Lübeck. While still in his youth August Hermann had a love of Bible reading and planned to study theology and become a preacher. His father died in 1670 when Francke was just seven years old. For a period of some years he was educated privately in the company of other children. At the ages of eleven and twelve he was deeply touched by the example of his pious sister Anna and began to despise the occupations, friends and games of his childhood and to seek out more worthwhile occupations.<sup>30</sup> At age thirteen he attended gymnasium in Gotha. He was a diligent student, priding himself on his Latin ability, emulating more the "heathen" than the Christian style of expression.

Francke went to the University of Erfurt in 1679 at age sixteen,<sup>31</sup> and studied Hebrew, geography, logic and metaphysics. The more he studied, the more concerned he became with worldly praise and honour. "I deviated far from the earlier good beginning in true Christianity which I had had in my childhood."<sup>32</sup> He then spent three years at the University of Kiel, the city of his mother's brother. There he studied philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, physics, Latin eloquence and authors, and read Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Francke began study of theology in Kiel with professor Kortholt, including exegetical and polemical theology, and early church history. "My theology I kept in my head, not in my heart."<sup>33</sup> He then moved to the University of Hamburg where he could study the Hebrew Bible without spending time in extensive study of grammar. In Leipzig he studied with famous professors including Gerhard Meyer and Professors Cyprian, Olearius, and Johann Benedict Carpzov.<sup>34</sup> Francke improved his abilities in the French, English and Italian languages through daily conversation. In 1685 at age 22 he completed the Master's degree.

Every Sunday, from 4:00 to 6:00pm, Francke met with his friend Herr Antonius in a tutorial in which they read from the Hebrew Bible and from the Greek N.T., and then explained and applied the sense of the passage.<sup>35</sup> Spener sent them words of approval and encouragement. The number in attendance grew to the point where their rooms became

too small. Prof. Alberti in Leipzig agreed to hold the meeting in his home. “This seminar gathering I reckon the most useful and best that I experienced in university. For this introduced me to careful textual study, so that I could better recognize the great treasures which are hidden for us in the holy Scriptures.”<sup>36</sup>

In 1687 Francke left Leipzig, a city that had placed such temptations before him, and went to Lüneburg at the suggestion of family members, in high hopes of becoming a true Christian. He found a room with a Christian family where he could be alone with God. Shortly after his arrival he was invited to preach in St. John’s Church in Lüneburg, and decided to speak on the text in John 20:31: “This is written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and by your faith might have life in his name.”<sup>37</sup> He realized that he himself lacked such a faith. “Of everything that I had learned of God and his revealed being and will in over eight years of theological study, there was not the smallest thing that I had believed from the heart.”<sup>38</sup> Francke called upon God to show himself; God heard his cry and removed his doubts.<sup>39</sup> He was able to preach the sermon with great joy of heart.<sup>40</sup> It was soon after this, he writes, that “the world began to hate me and bear malice towards me.”<sup>41</sup>

Francke’s autobiography is really comprised of two overlapping stories within the one narrative: the outward story of his life in the world, described above, moving from Francke’s childhood, schooling, university studies, to his academic work and preaching; and secondly, and most importantly from Francke’s perspective, the inward story of what was going on with his life before God. A frequent refrain throughout the *Lebenslauff* is Francke’s reflection upon the state of his soul, with frequent references to *Gemüht* (soul), and *Hertz* (heart). The present author counted *ten* uses of *Gemüht* and several uses of *Hertz* besides.

The interpretive key to the inward story in Francke’s *Lebenslauff* can be located in the humble way he portrays his conversion of soul and heart not as the achievement of his own work and reason, but as God’s work. Francke’s story reminds one of C.S. Lewis’s *Surprised by Joy* with its dramatic moment of coming to assurance of belief in God. Francke wrote:



When I knelt down I did not believe there was a God; when I stood up I was ready to defend it at the cost of spilling my blood...All my doubts were gone, and I was assured in my heart of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.<sup>42</sup>

In similar fashion C.S. Lewis wrote:

I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken. I was driven to Whipsnade one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did.<sup>43</sup>

This inward story has *Two Acts* for Francke: his misery of heart, including those things that stood in the way of his soul's rest in God, and then the steps by which he eventually came to find rest of soul in God. To make his miserable condition as a young man more dramatic, Francke described his "fall" from grace after a period of innocence. He noted the "good beginning" of his spiritual life as a young child marked by love for God's word and for preaching.<sup>44</sup> He was faithful in daily devotion and prayer to God, and covenanted to devote his life to God's service.<sup>45</sup> By age sixteen things had changed for him. "I now found in my soul little rest and joy because I recognized that I had departed far from the former good beginning of a true Christian faith which I had had in my childhood."<sup>46</sup>

Francke noted several aspects of his misery of heart. A prominent theme in his story was his giving in to worldliness, and a worldly way of life. He observed the principle that, "The more I turned my heart from God and became worldly minded, the more I became caught up in error."<sup>47</sup> "Worldliness" included the "lusts of youth and the outward attraction of the world,"<sup>48</sup> which he experienced as a young man. In retrospect he considered the ages thirteen to fifteen the years of special vulnerability to temptations.<sup>49</sup> Worldliness for Francke also included pride in his academic accomplishments. "In beginning my academic studies I had little regard for the proper goal; rather my soul became more and more caught up in the world and its vanity, so that I made it my goal to gain worldly honour, great scholarly knowledge and a good life."<sup>50</sup> He was guilty of "love of the world" rather than love of God.<sup>51</sup> Francke observed, "I was inwardly and outwardly a man of the world, and rather than decreasing had actually increased in my evil life...I loved the world and the world loved me."<sup>52</sup>

Francke found that his university studies in theology contributed to his misery, since this study was scientific and not personally practical. He could define faith and new birth, but had no personal experience of them.

My theology I understood in my head but not in my heart; it was more a dead science than a living acquaintance. I knew well how to define Faith, New Birth, Justification and Renewal, and how to distinguish one from the other and to support it with passages from Scripture. But from all this I found nothing in my heart...I had no other notion of theological study than that a person should have in his head the theological discussions and theological books and be able to discuss them intelligently. I knew that theology was defined as a practical discipline (*habitus practicus*) but I was more concerned with the theory.<sup>53</sup>

Later on he noted: “My knowledge had increased but along with it I was more and more puffed up [with pride].”<sup>54</sup> Francke highlights here an issue that goes back to the beginnings of Pietism in the writings of Johann Arndt and Philipp Jakob Spener. These Pietists, including Francke, called for a dramatic change in theological education, away from polemics and scholasticism towards nurturing students in the practice of prayer, love and Christian ecumenism.

Furthermore, Francke observed his own hypocrisy as a theological student and how it contributed to his misery. He could engage in theological discussions and partake in the sacraments, yet he had no ability to live the Christian life.

I many times formed the intention of tearing myself from the world and its vanity, and I saw and recognized that the life of students as it was generally lived, and as I was living it, did not accord with the word of God...In all my studies I was nothing more than a hypocrite, who in fact did go to church services, to confession and to the Lord’s supper, sang and prayed and engaged in edifying discussions and read good books, but did not derive from these the strength to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live modestly, righteously and godly, not only outwardly but also inwardly.<sup>55</sup>

Francke summed up his condition as a twenty-four year old: “I was little better than an unfruitful tree which bears many leaves but for the most part rotten fruit.”<sup>56</sup>

This brings us to *Act Two*, his soul’s conversion to God. Francke described several aspects of this conversion. It began with his “outward searching” for God in such things as devotion and study, but this brought only further misery and doubt.

Then I began anew to seek God with sincerity. But my search consisted more in outward things than inward. I would sing and pray often, read much in the

Scriptures and other religious books, went often to church, repented of my outward sins and came with tears to confession, but my heart remained convinced that honours, wealth and a good life were not really sins.<sup>57</sup>

Even his study of the Bible was an unsatisfying experience. After completing his Master's degree he met regularly with other theology students in a seminar setting that he called the *Philobiblicum*. They would study a chapter of the Old Testament and one from the New, analysing them in the original Hebrew and Greek languages. Spener himself encouraged them with suggestions. Soon the group outgrew its small setting in the home of a friend of Francke.<sup>58</sup> However, while this was “the best and most valuable seminar that he experienced in university,” nevertheless he later saw that their study was more concerned “with the shell than with the kernel and heart of the matter.”<sup>59</sup> On one occasion as he was reading scripture the thought suddenly came to him: “Who knows whether the [Christian] Scriptures are God's word; when the Turks believe this of their Qur'an and the Jews likewise of their Talmud, who can say who is right?”<sup>60</sup> This kind of question one also finds in a Puritan such as John Bunyan, reflecting the new climate of Enlightenment scepticism.

Francke identified one author's writings in which he found much useful and edifying material—the *Spiritual Guide* of the Catholic mystic Miguel de Molinos (1640-1697). Molinos was a famous Spanish Quietist whose 1675 book showed the way to annihilation of the human will and oneness with God. In 1687 Molinos was arrested, tried and forced to recant by Pope Innocent XI.<sup>61</sup> It is noteworthy that Francke found such works of value:

It bothers me that many condemn him [Molinos] when they do not understand him, indeed have never read him...I find much of use and of the greatest edification contained in his book, which I can neither reject nor condemn for eternity.<sup>62</sup>

Francke translated Molinos' work from Italian into Latin and in so doing also consulted other mystical writers.<sup>63</sup> Molinos' “Quietism” bears comparison with Francke's own experience of God's grace.

Francke finally experienced deliverance from the intellectual impasse at which he had arrived. It came under great duress. As noted above, Francke had been invited to preach at St. John's Church in Lüneburg. He chose as his text John 20:31, then realized

he himself did not have the faith of which the text spoke. He wrote, "I would gladly have believed everything, but I could not. I sought to help myself in this way and that, but achieved nothing."<sup>64</sup> In a moment of complete resignation of heart, a kind of mystical experience overcame him.

Then in the midst of such utter denial of God, which was in my heart, my whole life to that point came before my eyes, just as if one were to look out over a city from a high tower... Then my whole life, and everything I had done, said and thought, was presented to me as so much sin and a great horror before God... This misery caused me many tears, something to which I was not normally prone. I fell to my knees and called upon him whom I still did not know. Then I prayed, if there really were a God, that he might take pity on me.<sup>65</sup>

The next Sunday evening Francke, in great anxiety of mind, fell to his knees in prayer, and cried out to God to save him from his miserable condition.

Then the Lord heard me, the living God, from his throne as I knelt... For as someone might turn over their hand, so all my doubts vanished and I was assured in my heart of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. I could address God not only as God but as my Father. In an instant all my sadness and unrest of heart were taken away, and I was suddenly overwhelmed as if by a stream of joy, so that I praised and magnified God with a full heart, who had shown me such wonderful grace... When I had got down on my knees, I did not believe that there was a God; when I got up I would, without any fear and doubt, have confirmed [it] with the spilling of my blood<sup>66</sup>

When he went to bed he couldn't sleep for joy.<sup>67</sup> Three days later he preached his sermon "with great joy of heart."<sup>68</sup> Francke reckoned this to be his true conversion, a conversion that "was not my work but God's work."<sup>69</sup> Here is Francke's interpretive key to understanding his own life.

Francke cited as conclusive evidence of his conversion that from that moment on, "it was easy for me to renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live modestly, rightly, and godly in this world and [to consider] worldly advancement, honours, wealth, and outward worldly happiness to be worth nothing." And from then on, "the world began to hate me."<sup>70</sup> Another evidence of his new faith was a new attitude towards academic life and scholarship, towards faith and reason. He now saw academic study in a new light.

And while once I had made an idol out of scholarship, now I saw faith as a mustard seed which is worth more than a hundred bushels of scholarship, and that all the

scientific learning gained at the feet of Gamaliel was to be considered as worthless compared to the abundant knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>71</sup>

As a professor at the University in Halle, Francke would pass onto students his new views on theology and faith.

There are two sets of metaphors that Francke employs that can be considered central to his life's story, one relating to his condition prior to his conversion, the other to God's role in delivering him. Some of Francke's most picturesque language he used in portraying his helplessness of soul. He described himself as "ensnared," "caught in deep mire," "someone bound hand and foot."<sup>72</sup> Prior to his spiritual awakening, "It was as if I had spent my whole life in a deep sleep, and had done everything in a dream."<sup>73</sup> He several times referred to his condition as that of "a weak child."<sup>74</sup>

In describing his deliverance, Francke's favourite metaphors for God were the loving Father and Mother.

God took me by the hand, as it were, and lead me as a Mother leads her weak child. So great and overwhelming was his love that he would seize me again when I had torn myself free from his hand, and so caused me to feel the rod of his correction (punishment)...God had patience with me and helped me in my weakness.<sup>75</sup>

Francke noted just after his conversion, "O how pleasant to me was this first milk with which God feeds his weak children!"<sup>76</sup>

In another passage Francke preserved the idea of God's tender love, but changed to the Father image. In answer to his prayers,

...the Lord, the living God, heard me from his throne...So great was his Father love that he did not gradually remove my doubts and unrest of heart, but so that I would be even more convinced and a bridle laid upon my unruly reason, he answered me suddenly. As easily as one turns over one's hand, so quickly were all my doubts removed...I was assured that I could call God not just God but my Father.<sup>77</sup>

Such images bear the weight of the strong emotions that accompanied Francke's change of heart.

A final metaphor we should note is one that pertains to the perennial issue of faith and reason. Francke employed the vivid image of *the military victor* to portray his views on the relative place of reason and faith in Christian thought. He wrote that in the process of his conversion, "my reason stood as it were at a distance; the victory was snatched out

of its hand for the power of God had made it subordinate to faith.”<sup>78</sup> We have the image of faith as victorious and reason as its servant.

In Francke’s *Lebenslauff* we have observed that he hardly portrayed himself as the hero of his story; on the contrary, it was when he *stopped* trying to find God by reason and had a kind of mystical experience that he found God and freedom of soul. His story is shaped by personal ineptitude overcome by God’s intervention. Francke’s preference for metaphors of familial intimacy, portraying God’s motherly and fatherly care in response to his own weakness is noteworthy. One can see the possible sensitizing influence of being raised in a home shaped by the influence of his mother and the devotional influence of Johann Arndt’s *Wahres Christenthum* and the writings of the Puritans.<sup>79</sup>

#### **Anna Nitschmann (1715-1760)**

Anna tells us that she was born into a Catholic family on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November in the year 1715 in Moravia, now the eastern part of modern Czech Republic. Her father David was a farmer and craftsman, her mother was also named Anna. Young Anna grew up with a fear and reverence for God and spiritual things, but also felt a desire for things in the world. Anna speaks of how the “hidden hand of God” kept her from seeking her fill of pleasures in the world.<sup>80</sup> At age eight, in winter, a revival and awakening came to their region, with gatherings of over one hundred people in their home for prayer. In summer, Anna’s task was to watch over the sheep in the fields. While doing this she would sing Moravian hymns and pray that the family might move to a more tolerant place. The family did move, to Herrnhut, the community for religious refugees on the estate of Count Zinzendorf.<sup>81</sup>

About age ten Anna experienced a conversion, marked by a keen sense of guilt and love for God. She found pleasure in nurturing the faith of others. At age fourteen she was chosen by lot to be the leader of women in the community. She joined other young women in a covenant to be “true maidens of the Lamb.”<sup>82</sup> In 1733, at age eighteen, she left her parents’ home and joined thirteen other single women in living in a large house for maidens on the Herrnhut property. She suffered a serious illness, followed the next month by the illness and death of a good friend. She experienced two years of despair in

which she experienced a time of testing and maturing, her “spiritual foolish years.”<sup>83</sup> She spent almost a year living alone in a small room.<sup>84</sup>

Anna received two offers of marriage by the time she was twenty, but refused them both on grounds that she was married to Christ, and “Christ was everything to me.” “For him I refused the whole world, much less a man.”<sup>85</sup> Anna writes that she devoted herself to reading Catholic mystical writers such as Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) and Madame Guyon (1648-1717). She identified completely with Teresa except for a couple of small points: Teresa said nothing of the doctrine of justification, and life in a cloister was not for Anna.<sup>86</sup>

When Zinzendorf was forced by authorities to leave Herrnhut on May 8, 1736, Anna travelled with the Count and Countess to Frankfurt and Marienborn and finally to the castle Ronneburg to oversee a community of religious refugees that had settled there. The castle was full of owls and bats.<sup>87</sup> She also accompanied the Count and Countess on travels to Holland and England. She observed that God had enabled them to triumph over the attacks of the enemy in spreading Christ’s kingdom.<sup>88</sup>

In Anna Nitschmann’s autobiography the interpretive key to her story lay in God’s call to forsake family and world in order to serve the Herrnhut community, supported by God’s help and love.<sup>89</sup> Anna’s vow to serve the community in the office of *Ältestin* would frequently be put to the test, sometimes because of her own weakness, other times because of obstacles placed in her way by others. We find six references to difficulties, trials and testings. But Anna always received from her “bridegroom” the comfort and strength she needed to carry on. We shall examine first Anna’s strong sense of a calling to forsake the world in order to serve God; we shall then consider four occasions when trials and temptations made it difficult for her to fulfill her calling, and how God met her needs in these situations.

Anna’s idea of forsaking the world may well have been rooted in her family’s experience as refugees. In 1724, when Anna was nine years old, her father David and older brother Melchior were both imprisoned by Catholic authorities in Moravia on account of their Pietist practice of meeting in small conventicles for prayer, singing and Bible study. First her brother, then her father, left their home; a month later, on February 5, 1725, the mother and children followed them into exile, finding refuge on the lands of

Count Zinzendorf in a community called, “The Lord’s Protection” or *Herrnhut*. This literal forsaking of all for faith became a kind of model for Anna. When she experienced her conversion to faith in 1727, she described how her heart burned in love for God and she wished “to go completely out of the world.” “It was too insignificant to me. I thought that eternity was more fitting for me.”<sup>90</sup>

On March 17, 1730, when she was just fourteen years old, the lot fell on her to become the women’s “elder” or leader in the Herrnhut community. It did not occur to her to object; she replied in the words of the mother of Jesus: “I am the Lord’s maiden, be it unto to me as He has said.” “And so I took it on and relied upon my trustworthy friend, that he would see me through, which he has indeed done.”<sup>91</sup> “Everything appeared revolting to me apart from my devotion to Christ my bridegroom.”<sup>92</sup>

This single-minded devotion to Christ and duty lasted some two years. Then in her third year in office she experienced “a year of testing” and confusion. She described it as a period of stubbornness that alienated her from family and friends, “which I did not immediately recognize and so did not repent of.” Through the advice of her brothers and sisters at Herrnhut she came round. She interpreted this as the thorns and hedges she must encounter in finding her way with God.<sup>93</sup>

There was a second time of “many trials” which she later attributed to her spiritual immaturity. Again her relations with the brothers and sisters in the community whom she was to be encouraging became embittered. She was constantly upset by the frivolity and every day cares that seemed to occupy most of her Herrnhut colleagues. “I was like a bashful deer before the Saviour and my brothers and sisters.”<sup>94</sup> She came to see that it was all part of God’s testing “so that I might become pure gold for Him.”<sup>95</sup>

This was followed by a third trial, when the weight of her responsibility brought Anna to the point of wishing she could somehow be free of it. She saw others who were capable and could perform the duties better than she. But in the course of her reflections, she discovered that by God’s grace she loved her brothers and sisters for Christ’s sake, and knew she must fulfill her duty to her office.

I committed myself to serve the Lord and the community as long as He needed me. For I knew that serving Him was truly a gracious reward...He makes my yoke light.<sup>96</sup>



If she were to fulfill the calling, it would have to be by God's strength.

The fourth time of testing, "a difficult trial," came when on February 15th, 1735, community leaders in Herrnhut decided that Anna and a brother in the community should marry "in order to be of greater use to the community, especially among the married brothers and sisters."<sup>97</sup> Anna held the community and brother Leonhard Dober in high esteem, yet in her frame of mind she could not bear the thought of marriage.

It was a difficult trial for me. But I trusted my Bridegroom, that he would indeed help me and permit nothing that was not in accord with His perfect will. The Lord knew how much I loved Him [the Lord]. And should something in the least get in the way of my love [for Him], I would not take the whole world, much less a husband. The Lord was everything to me, and I had long ago sworn my unbreakable fidelity to Him.<sup>98</sup>

She soon found that Mr. Dober shared her anxieties about the proposed marriage. Together they brought their concerns to the community. They assured the community that though unmarried, Anna would not neglect the married women, and he would not neglect the married men. The community agreed to free them from the planned marriage.

From these experiences one sees how Anna's sense of calling became clear, and triumphed over difficulties. Clearly this calling served as the integrating key to her reflections upon her life.

Four metaphors stand out as central to Anna's life story. First is her identity as the sworn Bride of Christ; closely related is the image of the Lamb; thirdly, the images of pilgrim and soldier; finally, we observe the metaphor of "following in the way" of pious women. The central image in her life story is her identity as the devoted bride of Christ. There are some *ten references* to this image in her short autobiography. The first reference relates to events in 1730 when Anna, at age fourteen, joined with other young women in the Herrnhut community in making a covenant to become "maidens of the Lamb." Anna composed a hymn at the time in which she referred to Christ as her "Bridegroom." "I swore my unfailing faithfulness to my Bridegroom."<sup>99</sup> On the first occasion when marriage presented itself, she determined that "marriage was not for me," and somehow escaped unscathed. Her favourite songs were concerning "marriage with Christ."<sup>100</sup> On the second occasion she wrote: "I trusted my Bridegroom... He was everything to me, and I had long since sworn to Him my unbroken faithfulness."<sup>101</sup> Anna

found encouragement for such thinking in mystical writers such as St. Teresa of Avila. She concluded her life story with a song in which she exclaimed, “O my Beloved, here you have my soul...”<sup>102</sup>

The image of the Lamb was also a popular one with Anna. This is not surprising when we recall that in summers her task as a young girl had been tending her father’s sheep.<sup>103</sup> She often identified herself, especially in her songs, as the “bride of the Lamb.”<sup>104</sup>

A pair of images suggest a heroic pattern to Anna’s self-identity. She described herself as the “*Streiterin Christi*” or the fighter, combatant for Christ.<sup>105</sup> In contrast to Teresa, she would not be encloistered, but active in the world. Later, as Anna described her experience in moving from Herrnhut with Zinzendorf, she observed, “The Lord had lead us truly into the desert!” She later reflected on her “pilgrimage years”<sup>106</sup> that included separation from family and many trials. So much for Conway’s non-heroic archetypes for women.

Anna devoted herself to reading Catholic mystical writers such as Madame Guyon and Teresa of Avila:

The *Life* of St. Theresa I especially liked. *I wanted to follow in her way...* It was all good, and there are precious truths in her book, with only one small point lacking, the point at which everything comes together for us [in the Herrnhut community], namely the eternal ransom for us, the redemption for our sins. Also, life in a cloister is not my calling, although I do have some inclination for it. To be a bride of Christ the Lamb is so beautiful, and that I too certainly want to become. But to sit there, enclosed, that does not suit me very well as the fighter for Christ whose reason for living is that I might exalt Christ in all the troubles and insults of life.<sup>107</sup>

We observe here the metaphor of *following in the way* of previous women. We see Anna’s close identification with Teresa of Avila in her words, “I wanted to follow in her way.” This suggests that Anna found in the lives of Madame Guyon and Teresa “a female tradition that provides categories for naming her experiences and models for pursuing religious life.” We noted above Ross’s argument that, in the case of Margery Kempe, the female saints “inspire her, deepen her spirituality, and offer legitimacy and precedent for her lifestyle of preaching and travelling in connection with her faith.”<sup>108</sup> This was evidently so for Anna as well. What is especially noteworthy is the inspiration she found

in *Catholic* saints, probably because a Protestant tradition was not yet available to her. We know of only four women writers and preachers from 16th C. Protestantism.<sup>109</sup>

Several of the above metaphors combine in the concluding poem to Anna's life story:

O my *bridegroom*, here you have my life!  
From this day on may I learn to stay  
By your spear-pierced side,  
There to rest for all my days.  
The decision has been made,  
To follow you in trust under heavy burdens' weight.

And if through the years of my *pilgrim life*,  
I must endure many testing times,  
Then you true *Lamb* will keep me safe,  
That I may steadfastly keep you before my eyes.  
So I will ever find my needs are met,  
And feel forever safe within God's sight.<sup>110</sup>

In Anna's life story we have seen that the interpretive key lay in God's call to forsake family and world in service to the community, supported by her Lord's loving care. The predominant image in her experience was her identity as Bride of the Lamb. She also found her identity in "following in the way" of pious women before her, notably Madame Guyon and St. Teresa. Especially noteworthy is the way Anna identified herself as soldier and pilgrim. These metaphors suggest a heroic pattern to Anna's self-identity. This pattern certainly makes sense in the context of Herrnhut where Anna exercised so much leadership responsibility. We have seen that, "In the inclusion of women in church work the Herrnhuters were far ahead of their time."<sup>111</sup> Anna's life and writing reflect this larger phenomenon of women in leadership. Self-sacrificial service and a sense of identity as soldier and pilgrim fit this context nicely.

### ***Conclusions: Comparisons and Lessons***

This study of two Pietist autobiographies has found some contrasting features that reflect gender differences. For example, "the world" was a problem to both autobiographers but meant different things for each. For Francke the world connoted academic reputation and pride in knowledge; for Anna, on the other hand, the world represented family and marriage. Anna's identity as the Bride of the Lamb and as one

“following in the way” of pious women before her also reflect her gendered situation in contrast to Francke’s.

More impressive in the study has been the way that the autobiographers’ metaphors have crossed gender differences. Francke’s use of metaphors of family intimacy, in his portrayals of God’s motherly and fatherly love, are an example of this. This may relate to the fact that he lost his father at age seven and grew up in a household of women. As well, we noted that Francke hardly appears heroic in this account. All his efforts to please God are portrayed as failures; it was a kind of mystical experience that brought him to God. This again is closer to Conway’s female archetype. On the other hand, it is significant that the metaphors of fighter and pilgrim should appear in Anna’s story. Along with the interpretive theme of forsaking all to serve God, these represent something close to the heroic archetype. This evidence suggests that the Pietist autobiographies portray a mixing of archetypes in a way that goes against Conway’s theory.

The study begs the question, was there something about Pietist faith that prompted these autobiographers to display such a mixing of gender characteristics? On Francke’s side, the intense Pietist concern to overcome all pride in personal achievement would go a long way to undermining the heroic aspect. On Anna’s side, the leadership opportunities for women in the Herrnhut community provided the occasion for her to demonstrate heroic and assertive characteristics. The presence of a Protestant mysticism in these Pietists is another factor. It is noteworthy that both of our Protestant Pietist autobiographers identified with the Catholic mystical-Quietist tradition of Madame Guyon and Molinos. Here are two instances of the perennial discovery that differences among Christians at the level of doctrinal definition often find a meeting place in their common experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen M. Ross, “Spiritual Experience and Women’s Autobiography: The Rhetoric of Selfhood in *The Book of Margery Kempe*,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LIX/3 (Fall 1991), p. 529. Ross calls autobiography a “relatively new field of endeavour.”

<sup>2</sup> James Olney, “Introduction,” *Studies in Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988),

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p. xiv. Olney observed that prior to 1950 autobiography was not viewed as “a mode of writing with an interest of its own and demanding the sort of philosophical, rhetorical, and linguistic scrutiny that would be given to any other variety of literature.”

<sup>3</sup> Conway, p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> Olney, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ross, p. 543. “Autobiography offers us women’s voices describing their spiritual lives and ways of experiencing religious belief. Listening to these voices... may contribute to and even reshape scholars’ characterizations of the history and living faith of the Christian tradition.”

<sup>6</sup> Jill Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography* (New York 1998), pp. 17f.

<sup>7</sup> Evelyn Diephouse, “The Peculiar Treasures of Spiritual Autobiography,” *Reformed Review* 51/1 (Autumn 1997), p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> Diephouse, pp. 45f.

<sup>9</sup> Diephouse, pp. 49.

<sup>10</sup> “Introduction” to *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (University of Wisconsin, 1998), p. 5. Cf. p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Conway, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Conway, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Jill Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography* (New York 1998), pp. 7, 11, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Conway, pp. 12-14.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen M. Ross, “Spiritual Experience and Women’s Autobiography: The Rhetoric of Selfhood in *The Book of Margery Kempe*,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LIX/3 (Fall 1991), p. 529.

<sup>16</sup> Ross, pp. 529, 543.

<sup>17</sup> Ross, p. 531.

<sup>18</sup> Ross, p. 540.

<sup>19</sup> Ross, pp. 542f. Ross shows how Kempe’s use of familial language and identification with holy women “expands and empowers her spiritual transformation and witness to the world.” (p. 544)

<sup>20</sup> In elaborating what was new and essential about Pietism, Wallmann wrote: “Das Neue... ist erstens die Idee der Sammlung der Frommen (Konventikel, ecclesiola in ecclesia)... zweitens die—häufig chiliastische—Zukunftshoffnung, d.h. die Abkehr von der Eschatologie des nahen Jüngsten Tages und die Hinwendung zur Erwartung eines—nicht selten in der Form des ‘tausendjährigen Reichs’ vorgestellten—künftigen Reichs Christi auf Erden.” See Johannes Wallmann, *Der Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), and Bret Carroll, Review of *The Self and the Sacred: Conversion and Autobiography in Early American Protestantism* (1998) in *Church History* (March 2000), p. 214.

<sup>22</sup> Martin H. Jung, *Frauen des Pietismus* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998), pp. 61f.

<sup>23</sup> Martin H. Jung, “Vorwort,” *“Mein Herz brannte richtig in der Liebe Jesu”*: *Autobiographien frommer Frauen aus Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 1999), p. IV.

<sup>24</sup> Martin H. Jung, “Vorwort,” *“Mein Herz brannte richtig in der Liebe Jesu”*: *Autobiographien frommer Frauen aus Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 1999), p. IV.

<sup>25</sup> Johannes Wallmann, *Der Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), p. 66.

<sup>26</sup> Anna Nitschmann, “Lebenslauf der Schwester Anna Nitschmann” (1737), in Martin Jung, ed., p. 167.

<sup>27</sup> Nitschmann, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Jung, “Vorwort,” *“Mein Herz brannte richtig in der Liebe Jesu,”* pp. III, IV. “Im Pietismus spielten Frauen sogar führende Rollen: Sie leiteten Privaterbauungsstunden, sie traten in der Öffentlichkeit auf mit Ansprachen, Predigten und öffentlichen Gebeten, sie schrieben Bücher theologischer und erbaulicher Art und die dichteten Lieder. Während man aus der Reformationszeit nur von zehn oder zwanzig interessanten Frauen berichten kann, die öffentlich hervorgetreten sind, waren es in der Zeit des Pietismus dutzende.”

<sup>29</sup> Jung, *Frauen des Pietismus*, p. 51. Jung writes, “In der Einbeziehung der Frauen in die kirchliche Arbeit waren die Herrnhuter ihrer Zeit weit voraus.”

<sup>30</sup> *Herrn M. August Hermann Franckens vormahls Diaconi zu Erffurt... Lebenslauff* (1691), p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Herrn M. August Hermann Franckens... Lebenslauff*, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> *Herrn M. August Hermann Franckens... Lebenslauff*, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 12.

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- <sup>34</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 14f.
- <sup>35</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 16.
- <sup>36</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 18.
- <sup>37</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 26.
- <sup>38</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 26.
- <sup>39</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 29.
- <sup>40</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 31.
- <sup>41</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 31.
- <sup>42</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 29.
- <sup>43</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (London: Collins, 1955), p. 189.
- <sup>44</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 5.
- <sup>45</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 6.
- <sup>46</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 10. "Indessen fand ich auch in meinem Gemüht wenig Ruhe und vergnügung, weil ich wol erkante, daß ich von dem ehemaligen guten anfang eines wahren Christenthums, den ich in der kindheit gehabt, weit abgewichen." (p. 10)
- <sup>47</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 7.
- <sup>48</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 7.
- <sup>49</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 7.
- <sup>50</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 10.
- <sup>51</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 13.
- <sup>52</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 21f.
- <sup>53</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 12. "Meine theologiam faste ich in den kopff, und nicht ins hertz..."
- <sup>54</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 21.
- <sup>55</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 11f.
- <sup>56</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 22. "Demnach kan ich anders nicht sagen als daß ich wol vierundzwanzig Jahr nicht viel besser gewesen als ein unfruchtbarer baum, der zwar viel laub aber mehrentheils faule früchte getragen."
- <sup>57</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 13.
- <sup>58</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 16f.
- <sup>59</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 18. "...da ich zwar vorhin auch die bibel fleissig tractiret, aber mehr um die Schale als um den kern und die Sache selbst war bekümmert gewesen."
- <sup>60</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 26. "Ich meynte, an die H. Schrifft würde ich mich doch halten können, aber bald kam mir in den Sinn, wer weiß ob auch die H. Schrifft Gottes wort ist, die Türcken geben ihren Alcoran, und die Juden ihren Talmud auch dafür aus, wer wil nun sagen, wer recht habe."
- <sup>61</sup> J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), p. 670. See also: Owen Chadwick, "Indifference and Morality," *Christian Spirituality* (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 203-230; Arthur Broekhuysen, "The Quietist movement and Miguel de Molinos," *Journal of Religion and Psychological Research* 14 (July 1991), pp. 139-143.
- <sup>62</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 20.
- <sup>63</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 19f
- <sup>64</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 27. "Wie gerne hätte ich alles geglaubet, aber ich konte nicht. Ich suchte auff diese und jene weise mir selbst zu helffen, aber es reichte nichts hin."
- <sup>65</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 27.
- <sup>66</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 29.
- <sup>67</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 29.
- <sup>68</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 31.
- <sup>69</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 25.
- <sup>70</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 31.
- <sup>71</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 31.
- <sup>72</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 23.
- <sup>73</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 29.
- <sup>74</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 24f, 31.
- <sup>75</sup> *Lebenslauff*, pp. 25, 24.
- <sup>76</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 30.
- <sup>77</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 29.

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<sup>78</sup> *Lebenslauff*, p. 30.

<sup>79</sup> Martin Brecht, "August Hermann Francke und der Hallische Pietismus," *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. Martin Brecht (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), p. 440. Brecht writes: "Francke bekam nun seinerseits Arndts "Wahres Christentum" und puritanische Erbauungsliteratur zu lesen. Die daraus gewonnenen strengen Kategorien bestimmen die Darstellung des Lebenslaufes..."

<sup>80</sup> Anna Nitschmann, "Lebenslauf der Schwester Anna Nitschmann" (1737), in Martin H. Jung, "*Mein Herz brannte richtig in der Liebe Jesu*": *Autobiographien frommer Frauen aus Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 1999), p. 151.

<sup>81</sup> Nitschmann, p. 153.

<sup>82</sup> Nitschmann, p. 155.

<sup>83</sup> Nitschmann, p. 159. Anna refers to this time as her "geistlichen Tölpeljahre." On p. 159 n.6 the editor Martin Jung notes: "Die Tölpeljahre waren eine schwierige Zwischenzeit, der Pubertät vergleichbar, d.h., der Fromme war geistlich nicht mehr kindlich, aber auch noch nicht erwachsen" ("The foolish years were a difficult interval of time, comparable to puberty, when the godly person was spiritually no longer a child, but also not yet grown up").

<sup>84</sup> Nitschmann, p. 161.

<sup>85</sup> Nitschmann, p. 162.

<sup>86</sup> Nitschmann, p. 163.

<sup>87</sup> Nitschmann, p. 165.

<sup>88</sup> Nitschmann, p. 166.

<sup>89</sup> The story of her choice by lot as *Ältestin* on March 17, 1730, at age fourteen, comes on page three; the rest of her autobiography unfolds her seven years of service to the Herrnhut community.

<sup>90</sup> Anna Nitschmann, "Lebenslauf," p. 154. "Wie brannte mein Herz in Liebe zu Ihm!... Alles was ich tat, das war eilig. Denn ich wollte ganz aus der Welt gehen. Es war mir alles zu gering, nur etwas anzusehen. Ich dachte, mir gezieme die Ewigkeit"

<sup>91</sup> Nitschmann, p. 154. "Und so nahm ich's an und verließ mich auf meinen Freund, den Treuen, daß Er mir durchhelfen würde, welches Er auch getan und die Niedrigkeit Seiner elenden Magd angesehen hat."

<sup>92</sup> Nitschmann, p. 155.

<sup>93</sup> Nitschmann, p. 157.

<sup>94</sup> Nitschmann, p. 159.

<sup>95</sup> Nitschmann, p. 160.

<sup>96</sup> Nitschmann, pp. 160f.

<sup>97</sup> Nitschmann, p. 162.

<sup>98</sup> Nitschmann, p. 162. "Es war für mich eine schwere Probe. Ich traute aber meinem Blutsbräutigam zu, Er würde mir gewiß durchhelfen und nichts zulassen, was nicht Sein vollkommener Wille wäre. Er wüßte ja, wie lieb ich Ihn hätte. Und sollte mir hierin etwas im Geringsten hinderlich sein, so nähme ich nicht die ganze Welt, viel weniger einen Mann. Er wäre mir ja alles, und Ihm hätte ich längst unverbrüchliche Treue geschworen."

<sup>99</sup> Nitschmann, pp. 155, 156.

<sup>100</sup> Nitschmann, p. 159.

<sup>101</sup> Nitschmann, p. 162.

<sup>102</sup> Nitschmann, p. 167.

<sup>103</sup> Nitschmann, p. 152.

<sup>104</sup> Nitschmann, pp. 155f, 163, 168.

<sup>105</sup> Nitschmann, p. 163.

<sup>106</sup> Nitschmann, pp. 165, 168.

<sup>107</sup> Nitschmann, p. 163.

<sup>108</sup> Ross, pp. 539, 536.

<sup>109</sup> Jung, *Frauen des Pietismus: Zehn Porträts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998), p. 8. Jung notes: "Erinnert sei insbesondere an die Flugschriftenautorinnen Argula von Grumbach, Margareta von Treskow, Katharina Zell und Ursula Weida."

<sup>110</sup> Nitschmann, pp. 167f.

"O Bräutigam, hier hast Du meine Seele!

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Gewöhne sie von diesem Tage an  
An Deine liebevolle Wundenhöhle,  
Darin ich ewig sicher ruhen kann.  
Der Schluß ist einmal fest gefaßt,  
Zu folgen Dir getrost auch unter aller Last.

Soll ich dann auch in meinen Pilgrimsjahren  
Noch manche schwere Probe überstehn,  
So woll' st Du mich, Du treues Lamm, bewahren,  
Daß ich nur unverwandt auf Dich mag sehn.  
So wird es niemals fehlen mir,  
Und ich bleib alle Zeit sehr wohl verwahrt in Dir.”

<sup>111</sup> Jung, *Frauen des Pietismus*, p. 51.



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*a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 12, no. 2 (1997): masthead page.

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*Gerichtliches Leipziger Protocoll in Sachen die so genandten Pietisten betreffend; samt. Hn. Christian Thomasii berühmten J. C. Rechtlichem Bedencken darüber; und zu Ende beygefügtter Apologi oder Defensions-Schrift Hr. M. Augusti Hermanni Franckens an Ihro Chur-Fürstl. Durchl. zu Sachsen; ... von einem vornehmen Freund communicirt und herauß gegebenen. 1692.*

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