

PREFACE

This book began by accident. Working on another project, I wanted a few colorful examples to illustrate how early Pietists employed conversion narratives. Everyone seemed to acknowledge the paradigmatic nature of August Hermann Francke's autobiographical conversion narrative and how important it had been. With some strategic forays into the archives and Pietist publications, I planned to locate a number of vivid examples that were similar to Francke's and move on. My investigations found, however, far fewer descriptions of conversion experiences than I expected, and despite its supposedly model character, Francke's autobiography was not something Pietist contemporaries regularly cited. The accounts I found often did not fit the so-called *Bußkampf* model well, even those from Halle. There were other oddities. Many of the Pietist "patriarchs"—such as Joachim Justus Breithaupt, Joachim Lange, and Paul Anton—had written short autobiographies, but they did not mention a distinct conversion experience. Pietists, to be sure, wrote and talked a great deal about conversion as a goal. They printed grisly tales of conversion of convicted criminals, but, it seemed, they were remarkably circumspect about publishing the experiences of ordinary individuals. When they did appear, it was almost always after their death, and the authors clearly selected and shaped the narratives in quite deliberate ways. In many respects, conversion emerged as much a problem as it was a solution to the spiritual issues that Pietists raised. Questions about Pietist conversion and the standard narrative continued to nag at me, and what began as a background chapter turned into something more substantial.

Much of the work on this project was completed on sabbatical in Berlin in 2010–11, where professor Dorothea Wendebourg graciously welcomed me as a visiting scholar at the theology faculty of Humboldt University. I am grateful to my colleagues at Emory's Candler School of Theology and especially Dean Jan Love for affording me time away from teaching to devote to this project. I have benefited from the advice and counsel of many friends and colleagues as this project has emerged. Brooks Holifield has always been an engaging discussion partner on the issues I have encountered, and I am particularly grateful for his perceptive reading of the manuscript. Two

anonymous reviewers carefully scrutinized the text and provided suggestions that strengthened the book throughout. Craig Atwood, the series editor, provided much needed encouragement and direction at critical junctures, and Kathryn Yahner has been wonderfully supportive in shepherding the project to fruition with Penn State University Press. Ulrike Guthrie was a delight to work with on editorial issues. Candler students Mary Button and Nicolette Paso Schoemake provided superb research assistance. Many others have been generous with their advice and suggestions, including Hartmut Lehmann, Wolfgang Breul, Markus Meier, Doug Shantz, Peter Yoder, Sabine Pettke, Ben Marschke, Hans Schneider, Johannes Wallmann, Klaus vom Orde, Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen, and Kelly Whitmer. Their insights have improved the project in countless ways.

I am especially grateful for the assistance of archivists and librarians at the institutions where I have been privileged to conduct my research. Like almost all scholars of Pietism, I have come to appreciate the marvelously organized and supportive atmosphere of the library and archives of the Franckesche Stiftungen. Other archives and libraries were instrumental for this project as well, including the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin–Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Universitätsarchiv Rostock, Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin, Landesarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt in Wernigerode, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle, and Landesarchiv Thüringen–Staatsarchiv Gotha. German archivists and librarians are remarkably generous to international scholars, for which I am deeply thankful. Here in Atlanta, the staff at Candler's Pitts Theology Library have given every assistance.

This is dedicated to my wife, Siri, and my daughter, Solveig, who over the years have tolerated more discussion of Pietism than is healthy for anyone. Their good humor and support made this book possible.

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