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intended meaning of each passage and ascribe to it a more figurative or allegorical interpretation only when that is appropriate. The historical pervasiveness of allegorical interpretation highlights at the very least a persistent felt need for soul-nourishing engagement with Scripture as a medium of transforming truth and the living voice of God.

See also Bede; Symbol.

For Further Reading: G. Bray, "Allegory," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. K. Vanhoozer (2005); E. Johnson, "Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation," *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher et al. (1984), 407–30; M. Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible?* (1987), republished in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation* (1996).

Brian C. Labosier

Allen, Richard (1760–1831)

Founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Allen was born into slavery in Philadelphia and raised near Dover, Delaware. He was spiritually awakened around the age of twenty. As a result, he began to exhort his friends and to experience doubts and temptations; and finally he had an emotional crisis—all these things reflecting the prevailing pattern of evangelical conversion. Having been influenced by Methodist preaching, he joined a Methodist society. He manifested a vibrant religious life, spending many hours in prayer and meditation, and often launching into prayer or preaching immediately upon waking from sleep.

Allen was allowed to buy his freedom after his owner was convicted by a Freeborn Garrettson sermon. From 1783 he spent several years in itinerant preaching that led to many people being awakened. In 1786 he returned to Philadelphia where he began preaching four or five times daily and started prayer meetings and religious society meetings. He and other Africans attended St. George's Methodist

Episcopal Church where they endured intensifying harassment from white church leaders. Many of these African-Americans eventually left St. George's and established the Free African Society and their own church (Bethel), which was dedicated by Francis Asbury in 1794. In 1816 Allen called together other African churches in the mid-Atlantic region for a conference at Philadelphia in which the African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded and he was elected bishop, having previously (1799) been ordained a deacon by Asbury. *The Life and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (1833), Allen's short autobiography with appended treatises, was published after his death. It provides insight into his Methodist spirituality, revealing his preference for plain doctrine, good discipline, and extempore preaching, and his strong emphasis on charitable works in imitation of Christ. An important aspect of Allen's legacy is the independent ecclesiastical space he created in which African-Americans could have their dignity validated, use their spiritual gifts, and develop their leadership potential.

See also African-American Christian Spirituality
Geordan Hammond

Alline, Henry (1748–1784)

Mystic revivalist of the Great Awakening in Nova Scotia. Born in Rhode Island, Alline moved northward with his farming parents to Nova Scotia in 1760. Fifteen years later, on the eve of the American Revolution, he experienced a profoundly emotional conversion that altered the course of his remaining years. Though relatively uneducated, and initially suspect for that reason, he soon began preaching the new birth throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with powerful effect. His own conversion had a strikingly ecstatic and mystical aspect; in the effusive language of his *Journal* (1806), "Attracted by the love and beauty I saw in his divine perfections; my whole soul was inexpressibly ravished with the blessed Redeemer. . . My whole soul seemed filled with the divine being."

For Further Reading: L. Ford, *Transforming Leadership* (1993); J. Kouzes and B. Posner, eds., *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge* (2006); T. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart* (2006).

Mark W. McCloskey

Lectio Divina

See *Spiritual Reading*.

Lee, Jarena (1783–after 1849)

African-American itinerant evangelist. Jarena Lee was born in Cape May, New Jersey, to free parents. She moved to Philadelphia in 1804 where she heard Richard Allen, later the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination, preach at the flagship Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and there determined, according to the *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee* (1849), that “this is the people to which my heart unites.” She was soon converted; subsequently she struggled with backsliding for several years, until she learned of the Methodist doctrine of sanctification and sought and received this blessing.

Lee was initially rebuffed by Allen when she asked to preach. He told her that the Methodist discipline did not allow female preachers. In 1819, after a six-year marriage to Joseph Lee, a pastor, and a continued struggle with her call to preach, Lee stepped up and preached at Bethel, seizing an opportunity created by the hesitancy of another preacher. From this point, Allen allowed her to preach as an official exhorter, though he was not willing to ordain her. Lee commenced her life of itinerant evangelism primarily in the Middle Atlantic and Northeastern states. Lee’s *Journal* contains frequent references to guidance from divine voices and visions. Her spiritual life was driven by her overriding concern for the salvation of souls. She was subsequently regarded as an inspirational and empowering figure for African-American

women desiring to be respected within the church and validated in Christian ministry.

See also African-American Christian Spirituality; Allen, Richard; Feminist Spirituality; Women.

Geordan Hammond

Leisure and Play

The most important principle underlying a Christian view of leisure is expressed in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work. . . . On [the seventh day] you shall not do any work. . . . For . . . [God] rested on the seventh day” (Ex. 20:9–11). Instead of being antagonists, work and rest are part of a harmonious cycle. God commanded both work and rest; if work is a spiritual calling, so is leisure. An important aspect of the very nature of leisure is also expressed in the quoted verses: leisure draws a boundary around a person’s acquisitive urges and clears a space for spiritual exercise and growth.

Definitions of the word *leisure* provide a helpful avenue toward understanding the spirituality of leisure. One derivation (Fr. *leisir*, from Lat. *licere*; Eng. *license*, from the same root) carries the idea of freedom from ordinary obligations. The other derivation (Gr. *skole*, Lat. *schola*; Eng. *school*, from the same root) carries the idea “to halt or cease” and implies time for education of the mind and development of the person. Applied to spirituality, leisure represents time beyond the obligations of physical and economic necessity that can be used as growing time for the human spirit and for spiritual exercises.

Leisure can also be defined by the activities that we perform in our free time. Leisure time can be filled with specifically spiritual activities, such as prayer, meditation, reading, private or public worship, and what the Puritans called “Christian conference” (godly conversation). Nonetheless, an important aspect of leisure is that it needs to be experienced as freely chosen and not done as a required duty; spiritual exercises can fall into the

Charles Wesley wrote no music, though he may have adapted classical and popular tunes to fit Methodist worship; his lyrics were his chief contribution to the Methodist movement. Establishing a discipline that must have amounted to writing one hymn or sacred poem every day during his frantic ministerial life, Wesley composed an estimated nine thousand hymns and sacred poems. Many were published in occasional hymnals, produced by his brother's editorship, over the course of their half-century of ministry together.

Charles Wesley was happily married to Sarah Gwynne in 1749; together they raised three children who lived to adulthood. After 1754 Charles traveled less and began to locate his ministry in the metropolitan centers of Methodism, first in Bristol and then in London after 1771. By this time, his hymns had begun traveling for him. The Wesleyan hymns became the congregational voice of Methodism. No only do they teach basic Bible doctrines and Wesleyan theology, but by using first-order, dramatic language, the hymns engendered the experiences of new birth, conversion, holy love, and inner cleansing that the lyrics spoke of. Methodist hymnbooks, most notably the standard *Collection of Hymns for the People Called Methodists* (1780), became the catechism, prayer book, and sound track for the Methodist experience.

See also Evangelism; Holiness; Methodist Spirituality; Revival; Wesley, John.

For Further Reading: *John and Charles Wesley*, CWS (1981); J. Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (2008).

John Tyson

Wesley, John (1703–1791)

Church of England clergyman, leader in the evangelical revival, and a founder of Methodism. Wesley was born in Epworth rectory, Lincolnshire, England, the son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. From an early age, the children were taught to pray and read Scrip-

ture and the *Book of Common Prayer*. Passive obedience and nonresistance to the ruling monarch were elements of the high-church Tory religious-political views that John Wesley adopted from his parents.

Wesley took his bachelor's degree at Christ Church, Oxford (1724). He was elected fellow of Lincoln College (1726) and took his master's degree (1727). Wesley was ordained deacon in the Church of England (1725) and later priest (1728). From 1729 he became a leader of Oxford Methodism, which consisted of several groups of students and townspeople who met for Christian fellowship and to encourage one another in devotional discipline and works of charity. Characteristic devotional practices included regular self-examination and prayer, meditation, devotional reading, fasting, and frequent partaking of Communion. Typical works of charity undertaken were care for the poor, the sick, and prisoners.

Wesley's reading at Oxford was wide-ranging, but with a particular focus on Anglican devotional writers of the 17th and early 18th centuries. Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law were key influences on Wesley's conception and practice of holy living based on grace-enabled purity of intention and singular devotion to God. Wesley was also attracted to the writings of Continental mystics but later reacted particularly against their "quietism" while continuing to draw on their piety. From 1732, he increasingly concentrated his reading on the church fathers and high-church Anglican liturgical works. The high-church/nonjuror tradition, with its stress on restoring primitive Christianity, was dominant through 1737 and remained an influence on Wesley throughout his life. Wesley's high Anglican view of the eucharistic sacrifice and real presence of Christ in the sacrament was strengthened during this period and was later vividly represented in Charles Wesley's hymns.

Wesley served for two years as parish priest of Savannah, Georgia (1736–1737), where he implemented what he believed were the liturgical practices of the early church. By the time of his

voyage back to England, he was undergoing severe doubts regarding the state of his soul. The Moravian emphasis on the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith combined with their Pietist emphasis on assurance of salvation influenced Wesley on the way to his “heart-warming experience” on Aldersgate Street on May 24, 1738. Subsequently, Wesley placed an increased stress on the new birth, justification by faith, and assurance, with a continued emphasis on Christian perfection or entire sanctification as the goal of the Christian life, now understood and expressed more clearly as subsequent to justification and solely enabled by God’s prevenient grace.

Wesley followed George Whitefield into itinerant open-air preaching, beginning in Bristol and later extending throughout the British Isles. Wesley organized Methodists into societies, bands (smaller groups of earnest Christians), select societies (for those seeking Christian perfection), and later class meetings (divisions of societies into smaller groups) for Christian fellowship with the aim of individual and communal growth in holiness and the renewal of the church from within. Evangelical preaching and hymn singing were central to the communal practice of Methodist societies. Society members were encouraged to attend their local parish church for worship and engage in works of charity and evangelism outside of the society. This outward orientation was also manifest in Wesley’s controversial use of lay preachers.

Wesley’s ability to minister to women was one of his greatest gifts. Women formed the majority of eighteenth-century British Methodists and were afforded limited opportunities to exercise spiritual leadership. They served as class leaders and were encouraged to speak about their spiritual experiences. In several “extraordinary” cases, Wesley allowed women to preach.

A central component of Wesley’s spirituality was his unusual love for the poor and concurrent mistrust of riches. His ministry to the poor, prisoners, and women helped create space for them to explore and express their spiritual experience.

Wesley’s *Journal* is primarily a catalog of his actions and a defense of Methodism, and therefore provides limited insight into his spiritual life. His diaries are somewhat more revealing of his devotional practices, but they are only extant for 1725–1741 (with some significant gaps) and 1783–1791. Wesley’s letters, particularly those to Charles Wesley and female friends, provide a somewhat clearer window into his personal spirituality. Of his treatises, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1766) is the most important work for gauging his spirituality. Here perfection was defined as pure love toward God and neighbor.

Wesley’s *Christian Library* (1749–55) and *Arminian Magazine* (from 1778) reveal the spirituality that he promoted among his fellow Methodists. Anglican, Puritan, Pietist, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox models all feature prominently. The *Arminian Magazine* contains many accounts of Wesley’s preachers that progress from conversion narrative to holy living and dying accounts.

The ascetical devotional practices of Oxford Methodism remained central to Wesley’s life. He defined the chief means of grace as prayer, Scripture (“reading, hearing, and meditating” upon), and the Lord’s Supper. Wesley spent time daily in private and public prayer (the latter generally drawn from the prayer book or extemporaneous) and devotional reading of Scripture, and during his lifetime he partook of the Lord’s Supper more than once a week on average. Wesley’s Aldersgate experience and subsequent leadership in the evangelical revival seems to have gradually led him to a more assured and steady Christian life with increased confidence in God’s providential guidance. Nonetheless, the emotional spiritual experiences common to early Methodists were the exception rather than the norm for Wesley, which he at times admitted to correspondents. Wesley’s spirituality is perhaps most clearly seen in what he did, that is, in his life of ceaseless evangelical activity in which he traveled over two hundred thousand miles and preached more than forty thousand sermons.

Wesley's clearest legacy is the subsequent creation of the Methodist and other Wesleyan churches present in most parts of the world. His stress on holy living cultivated through intimate and disciplined Christian fellowship has had a profound impact on Protestant spirituality. In addition to its continued significance in Methodist and Wesleyan churches, Wesley's emphasis on sanctification as the goal of the Christian life had (and remains) a major influence in the Pentecostal tradition, especially through its second blessing theology of Spirit baptism.

See also Evangelism; Holiness; Methodist Spirituality; Revival; Wesley, Charles.

For Further Reading: *John and Charles Wesley*, CWS (1981); H. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (2002); J. Walsh, *John Wesley 1703–1791: A Bicentennial Tribute* (1993); J. Wesley, *A Collection of Forms of Prayer* (1733); idem, *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial ed., 16 of 35 projected vols. (1975–);

Geordan Hammond

Whitefield, George (1714–1770)

Church of England clergyman, evangelist, and leader of Calvinistic Methodism. Whitefield was born in Gloucester, England; educated at Pembroke College, Oxford, where he took his bachelor's degree; and then ordained a deacon (1736) and later priest (1739) in the Church of England. At Oxford he had become acquainted with the Wesley brothers and joined them and other students in "Methodist" spiritual practices, such as small group fellowship, regular self-examination and prayer, devotional reading, fasting, works of charity, and frequent partaking of Communion. After engaging in months of extreme asceticism, which drove him to severe illness and nearly to despair, Whitefield experienced a life-changing conversion in which reading Henry Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (1677) played an important role.

Following his ordination, Whitefield quickly became popular in London and Bristol on account

of his powerful and effective preaching. Much is revealed about his spirituality in his first two published sermons of 1737—"The Nature and Necessity of . . . Religious Society" and "The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus, in Order to Salvation." In these sermons he stressed the importance of the new birth/regeneration, justification by faith, experientially felt inward religion of the heart, real as opposed to nominal Christianity, striving after God, doing good works, using the means of grace (such as prayer, fasting, and Communion), and Christian fellowship.

With the support of the Countess of Huntingdon, Whitefield became a leader among Calvinistic Methodists, who formed a smaller but significant alternative to their Wesleyan counterparts. His spirituality was intimately bound up with his life as an itinerant evangelist. He preached perhaps eighteen thousand sermons and itinerated in England, Wales, Scotland (fourteen visits), Ireland (three visits), and America (seven visits), where he spent nine years of his life. Contemporaries, including Benjamin Franklin, remarked about his powerful voice, eloquence, anecdotes, dramatic gestures, tearful pleadings, and ability to preach as if he were speaking directly to them. Whitefield's preaching was marked by traditional Calvinist stress on the glory of God and mystical union with God, along with a firm commitment to election. While having a strong sense of God's providential guidance in his life and ministry, Whitefield possessed a profound personal humility; and although he helped erect several chapels to support his ministry, he showed a lack of concern with leaving behind a personal legacy. As one of the greatest preachers in the history of the church, Whitefield played a central role in the transatlantic Great Awakening. He died and was buried in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

See also Evangelism; Reformed (Calvinist) Spirituality; Revival.

For Further Reading: A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2 vols. (1970, 1979); *George Whitefield's Journals* (1960); F. Lambert, "Pedlar in Divinity"

(1994); *Letters of George Whitefield for the Period 1734–1742* (1976); *Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, 6 vols. (1771–1772).

Geordan Hammond

Wilberforce, William (1759–1833)

British evangelical abolitionist. William Wilberforce was born to privilege in Hull, northern England, and was elected to Parliament at age twenty-one; later, in 1785, he experienced an evangelical conversion to Christ. This conversion, along with counsel from John Newton, a converted slave trader, contacts with abolitionists like Thomas Clarkston, and his close friendship with Prime Minister William Pitt, awakened Wilberforce to the urgent need for moral and political transformation, and the conviction that he was to live a useful life in politics. “God Almighty has set before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners [English morals],” he wrote in 1787.

Wilberforce and his influential associates, known as the Clapham Sect, called the country to weekly prayer and tirelessly led a movement to reform the state, the church, and the nation. Wilberforce wrote *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professing Christians* (1797) (also known as *Real Christianity*) to promote “real Christianity” among the middle and upper classes. Starting in the 1790s, evangelical conversions abounded in all socioeconomic groups, and crime rates dropped. Despite repeated defeats at the hands of entrenched interests and his own poor health, Wilberforce, Clarkston, and colleagues finally prevailed in 1807 with Parliament banning the slave trade. Slavery itself was abolished three days before Wilberforce died. His personal charm and oratorical skills were crucial in evangelical efforts to foster social, moral, spiritual, and educational changes, and to establish foreign mission agencies.

Wilberforce’s inner life fueled his public vocation. His spiritual disciplines included rising early

each day for solitary meditation, Scripture reading and memorization, praying the Psalms, confession, and journaling. He also practiced annual summer sabbaticals (until his marriage in 1797), pilgrimages, retreats, participation in small groups, Sabbath observance, and fellowship. Each Sunday after church and dinner, he retired to his study for spiritual reading, solitude, and likely tending his “Friend’s List,” which was found posthumously among his papers. Next to names of his acquaintances on that list, Wilberforce had written potential steps toward a fuller life in Christ for which he had prayed. Wilberforce also wrote family prayers for his wife and children, which were subsequently published.

An estimated three-quarters of the world’s population lived under forced labor in the late 18th century, while today the figure is less than a half percent. Wilberforce is buried in Westminster Abbey beneath his bust, which bears a moving tribute to his remarkable accomplishments.

See also Protest; Social Justice.

For Further Reading: K. Belmont, *Hero for Humanity* (2002); G. Lean, *God’s Politician* (1987); J. Pollock, *Wilberforce* (1977); S. Thompkins, *William Wilberforce* (2007).

L. Paul Jensen

Will, Human

Human beings possess volition—the ability to choose, the power to decide for oneself. Such freedom is an aspect of the image of God—it is an important part of what makes humans godlike. As volitional creatures, people are able somehow to transcend the shaping influences that impinge upon them, so that such factors, though powerful and influential, can never absolutely determine how one will respond to a given challenge or situation. Volition enhances human dignity and makes people, in effect, responsible moral agents. The Christian view of persons, while sympathetic to