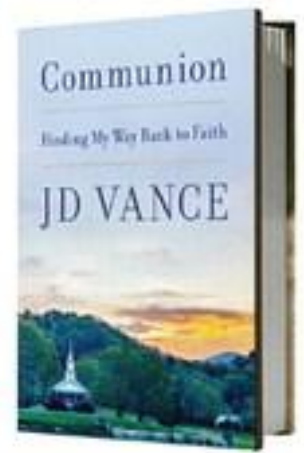


J. D. Vance's fulfilling life beyond politics

An in-depth follow-up to 'Hillbilly Elegy'

COMMUNION: FINDING MY WAY BACK TO FAITH by J.D. Vance

[Washington Times Book Review](#), By Anthony J. Sadar, August 11, 2026



There are much more important things in life than achieving a momentous position of authority, and Vice President J.D. Vance confirms this in his latest book, “Communion: Finding My Way Back to Faith.”

In it, Mr. Vance leads the reader thoughtfully through his deep reflections on relationships, achievements, family and the secular/spiritual meaning of it all. He moves from a challenging Christian upbringing to early adulthood atheism and back to Christianity after very careful contemplation.

Mr. Vance’s introspective lifelong progression is chronicled in 12 chapters that stretch from early years through his time in the Marines, at Ohio State, at Yale and to his professional, political and family life.

Mr. Vance’s wife, Usha, figures prominently in the vice president’s spiritual sensitivity, reawakening, deliberations and growth. Mr. Vance reveals that the meritocracy derived from his remarkable achievements despite his disadvantaged past “had focused [his] mind on the crude and superficial — credentials, careers, money. These things might have been necessary, but they could never form the basis of a truly good life.”

Mrs. Vance’s inspiration forced Mr. Vance to follow a different, better path — one that led him back to God.

To arrive at a solid theory of life and public service, “Communion” travels through a wide range of perspectives, from ancient sophists and Christian apologists like Augustine and Aquinas to modern secular philosophers like Antony Flew and Rene Girard.

Deep exploration, serious consideration and eventual practical application are the book’s overarching themes. One conclusion: Christianity strongly influenced not only America’s history but also our effective operation and good governance.

In making the case for gaining reliable, applicable understanding, the book emphasizes the importance of trust.

So often, Mr. Vance writes, our knowledge “comes from some source — a book, a newspaper story — that we actually trust and not from independent verification ... The

point is that no matter how well-read you are, how thoughtful you fancy yourself to be, most of the knowledge in your head is mediated by people and institutions you trust. ... This is especially true when the things about which you're expected to form an opinion are uncertain, or even impossible, to truly 'know' in any meaningful sense. Religious beliefs are less like certainties ... which can be verified by testing ... and more like claims about complex systems."

One complex relationship Mr. Vance addresses with a Christian perspective in "Communion" involves economics and the gross domestic product. "If the goal is to promote economic activity, the interests of families will often take a back seat to the demands of businesses. A Christian approach to economics would demand something different: concern for GDP, yes, but only insofar as it promotes human flourishing. The economy is a means — an important one — to enable people to live good lives. The point at which we see the economy as an end in itself is the point at which we dehumanize ourselves."

Mr. Vance's personal history, perspective, humility and openness further confirm what I have observed for a long time: Political conservatives are much more liberal than political "liberals." Conservatives, like Mr. Vance, are more willing to consider opposing viewpoints and change as necessary, whereas far too many educated so-called liberals are more rigid, condescending and close-minded to alternative viewpoints. Today, a university mindset seems to have replaced traditional religious beliefs with political religiosity that faithfully adheres to unyielding party lines.

Nonetheless, "Communion" is exceptionally in-depth and authentic and a superb sequel to Mr. Vance's bestselling first book, "Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis."

"Communion" reveals that the pursuit of "a truly good life" is a worthy endeavor not just personally but for the commendable politician seeking to uplift the community.

Furthermore, "America simply doesn't work if our business leaders don't know the people they hire, if our politicians are ignorant of the people they serve, and our philanthropists are disconnected from the people they allegedly support."

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