

November 9, 2026

Sharing Hope

This “Faith Matters” is not what I was writing during the day on November 3, Election Day. I wrote something altogether different on November 4, but I decided not to finish that piece either. In truth, original thinking is not really my strength, and I am humbly aware that nobody is waiting for my wisdom. My ideas tend to be derivative, and the most I can hope for is that they derive from the quality expressions of others. It’s true that I am still thinking about connections between our Christian faith and our national midterm election, but for now I mean to share two examples of commentary that I found particularly meaningful.

Probably many of you have followed Heather Cox Richardson’s popular *Letters from an American*, which she has been writing and sharing on Substack since 2019. A historian and history professor at Boston College, Richardson was raised as a Catholic and lives in rural Maine. She is unmistakably liberal and recently campaigned with Troy Jackson, ultimately the successful opponent of longtime Maine Senator Susan Collins.

You might recognize in her title the allusion to Hector St. John de Crevecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer,* a series of letters begun in the 1760s and published in 1782. These letters describe colonial life in America and define for Europeans what it means to be an American. In her own “About Letters from an American,” Richardson says that she intends a “chronicle of today’s political landscape,” but that “what it means, and what it has meant, to be an American” is necessarily among her greatest concerns.

During the recent months leading up to the midterm election, one of Richardson’s many topics has been our constitutional protection of religious freedom and separation of church and state. One

example is her “letter” of June 8, 2026, in which she says, “Madison and those who wrote, debated, passed, and ratified the Bill of Rights believed that making people’s religion—their right of conscience—depend on the approval of the president would destroy self-government.” Her connection to the present involved Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth’s controversial list of recognized religious faiths, mostly including Christian nationalist, evangelical denominations and omitting the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints and many other Christian denominations. Richardson maintained, with support from a former Army chaplain, that Hegseth had been representing MAGA in trying to impose upon the armed forces a Christian nationalist dogma. You can read the entire “letter” at https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/june-8-2026.

Peter Wehner is someone with decidedly more conservative credentials. He was a speechwriter for Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush. He has contributed articles for a wide variety of publications and is the author of *The Death of Politics: How to Heal Our Frayed Republic after Trump* (2019), and, with Michael J. Gerson (whose writing I always admired), *City of Man: Religion and Politics for a New Era* (2010). He is a contributing writer for *The New York Times* and for *The Atlantic.* He is a senior fellow of the Trinity Forum.

I know Peter Wehner mostly through his essays in *The Atlantic*. Today, November 5, 2026, *The Atlantic* published his article, “A Good Night for the Christian Faith,” in which he celebrates the election to the U.S. Senate of Adam Hamilton of Kansas and James Talarico of Texas. Wehner notes that Adam Hamilton founded the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, now the largest United Methodist congregation in the country. He also observes that James Talarico earned a master’s degree in theology from Austin Presbyterian Seminary and interrupted further theology studies to run for the Senate.

Wehner has never approved of Christian nationalism, and he particularly appreciates that both Hamilton and Talarico are believers in decency and kindness. He says that in American politics, the supposed Christians too often “have slandered the name of Jesus in their words and their deeds. Even unbelievers can see that the politics of cruelty is at odds with Jesus’s command to love your enemy.” He complains that in recent years, the Democratic Party has become “increasingly secular” and sometimes downright hostile toward Christianity, so Hamilton and Talarico represent a welcome and positive direction. He notes that the exception to Democrats’ increasing secularism has been Black Christians, as represented by Senator Raphael Warnock of Georgia, but Wehner thinks that more Christians might now reasonably find a home in the Democratic Party.

Peter Wehner concludes his essay with “Something deep and good is stirring in our land.” You can read Wehner’s whole piece here:

https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/2026/11/midterms-christianity-talarico-hamilton/689299/?gift=EBsqDEsfpQiBYeU4_KM4jqWtz0ZHpcPPmC_Oe3qhrCU&utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=share.

I have little original thinking to offer, but I am certainly encouraged to think that more Americans will understand the history and current relevance of our First Amendment rights. Further, I appreciate some welcome signs of a revitalized Christianity among our leaders in the U.S. Senate, where they can also begin to make common cause with senators (and Americans more broadly) who are Jewish or Muslim.

~Written by Maurine Slaughter



8190 Lincoln Rd. Beulah, MI 49617
231.882.4241
www.benziestandrews.com

Benzie St. Andrews | 8190 Lincoln Rd | Beulah, MI 49617 US

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice

Constant Contact

Try email marketing for free today!