

I've got him relaxed, I lean over, look him square in the eye, and say, 'What's your purpose in life?' It's amazing how top executives fall apart at that question. Well, I was interviewing this fellow the other day, had him all disarmed, with my feet up on his desk, talking about football. Then I leaned up and said, 'What's your purpose in life, Bob?' And he said, without blinking an eye, 'To go to Heaven and take as many people with me as I can.' For the first time in my career I was speechless" (source unknown).

Our purpose here on earth is to go to Heaven and take as many with us as possible! Paul said, "For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). This thought should be in our conversations and prayers every day! Heaven is so worth it! God is there! Jesus is there! Your faithful brothers and sisters in Christ will be there! Your Christian grandparents will be there! Are you leading your family there?

*Think.* November 2012

Back issues are posted at  
<http://saffordchurchofchrist.org>



## Announcements

The Safford church will be hosting a **Bible Bowl** on January 12, 2013 at the church facilities.

### **Prayer List:**

**Healing:** *Christie, Mike Cavasos, Sandy Cavasos, Ben Atchley, Faye Atchley, Nicolas Self, Annie Self, Douglas Gardner, Brandon (Gerry Clark's grandson), Inez's son Lee, Dave Morse, Richard Tuey.*

# Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

**23 December 2012**

## **Sermon Topics:**

**AM: The Birth of Jesus**

Luke 2

**PM: A Rebellious Nation**

Isaiah 1

Evangelist

*Ken Knowlton: 428-5974*

Elders

*Ben Atchley: 428-2246*

*Greg Briggs: 428-8756*

*John Cunningham: 428-0895*

Services

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

## **Myth that Religion is the #1**

### **Cause of War**

**By Robin Schumacher**

**edited by Matt Slick**

Atheists and secular humanists consistently make the claim that religion is the #1 cause of violence and war throughout the history of mankind. One of hatetheism's key cheerleaders, Sam Harris, says in his book *The End of Faith* that faith and religion are "the most prolific source of violence in our history."

While there's no denying that campaigns such as the Crusades and the Thirty Years' War foundationally rested on religious ideology, it is simply incorrect to assert that religion has been the primary cause of war. Moreover, although there's also no disagreement that radical Islam was the spirit behind 9/11, it is a fallacy to say that all faiths contribute equally where religiously-motivated violence and warfare are concerned.

An interesting source of truth on the matter is Philip and Axelrod's three-volume *Encyclopedia of Wars*, which chronicles some 1,763 wars that have been waged over the course of human history. Of those wars, the authors categorize 123 as being religious in nature, which is an astonishingly low 6.98% of all wars. However, when one subtracts out those waged in the name of Islam (66), the percentage is cut by more than half to 3.23%.

That means that all faiths combined – minus Islam – have caused less than 4% of all of humanity's wars and violent conflicts. Further, they played no motivating role in the major wars that have resulted in the most loss of life.

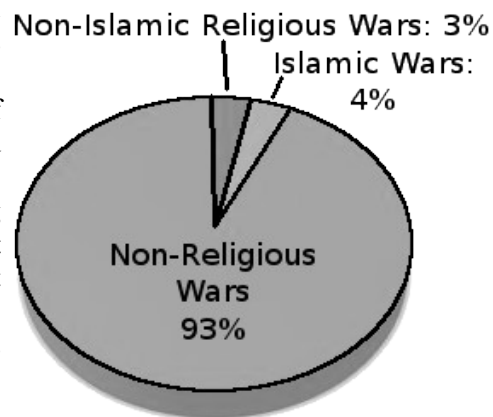
Kind of puts a serious dent into Harris' argument, doesn't it?

The truth is, non-religious motivations and naturalistic philosophies bear the blame for nearly all of humankind's wars. Lives lost during religious conflict pales in comparison to those experienced during the regimes who wanted nothing to do with the idea of God – something showcased in R. J. Rummel's work *Lethal Politics and Death by Government*:

#### Non-Religious Dictator Lives Lost

- Joseph Stalin - 42,672,000
- Mao Zedong - 37,828,000
- Adolf Hitler - 20,946,000
- Chiang Kai-shek - 10,214,000
- Vladimir Lenin - 4,017,000
- Hideki Tojo - 3,990,000
- Pol Pot - 2,397,000

Rummel says: "Almost 170 million men, women and children have been shot, beaten, tortured, knifed, burned, starved, frozen, crushed or worked to death; buried alive, drowned, hung, bombed or killed in any other of a myriad of ways governments have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners. The dead could conceivably be nearly 360 million people. It is though our species has been devastated by a modern Black Plague. And indeed it has, but a plague of Power, not germs."



The historical evidence is quite clear: Religion is not the #1 cause of war.

If religion can't be blamed for most wars and violence, then what is the primary cause? The same thing that triggers all crime, cruelty, loss of life, and other such things. Jesus provides the answer very clearly: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23).

James (naturally) agrees with Christ when he says: "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel" (James 4:1-2).

In the end, the evidence shows that the atheists are quite wrong about the wars they claim to so desperately despise. Sin is the #1 cause of war and violence, not religion, and certainly not Christianity.

<http://carm.org/religion-cause-war>

## Is Your Family Looking to the Reward?

By Steven D. Minor

Are we families who are laying up treasures on earth or in Heaven? In other words, are we spending our time, money, energy, and affections on earthly pursuits, pleasures, or possessions, or are we investing in spiritual matters?

Remember these two things. First, the pleasures of sin are fleeting. They will not last. Sin never fulfills its promises. It comes and goes. Sin is so disappointing in the end. It leaves you high and dry. Sin brings bondage. Paul said, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin..." (Romans 6:17). The pleasures of sin will turn a family into slaves. Slaves become the possession of the one in charge, that is, the master. Has the world become our master? Have we given our hearts over to idols of pleasure? Is every weekend full of something new or do or buy? If so, the fleeting pleasures of sin may have a grip on your family.

Second, let your reward of Heaven be your motivation for living a righteous life. An executive "head-hunter" once told this story, "When I get an executive that I'm trying to hire for someone else, I like to disarm him ... I offer him a soft drink, take my coat off, then my vest, undo my tie, throw up my feet and talk about baseball, football, family, whatever, until he's all relaxed. Then, when I think