# Q&A: Is religion the cause of evil in the world?

**by Alison Thomas**

Many people believe the world would be a better place without religion. They say religion leads to violence. After all, who caused the Crusades? Religious people. Who was in charge of the Spanish Inquisition? Religious people. The solution seems simple: get rid of religion, and we'll get rid of evil, right? Not so fast!

First, we have to admit that religion can be a cause of evil in the world, as when people use it to suppress others. As Christians, we should admit that evil things have been done in the name of Christianity. However, it is also important to remember that not everything done in the name of Chris-tianity actually reflects genuine Christian teaching. Christianity is misused when used as justification for violence.

Second, what about all the violence done in the name of secularism? If religion is responsible for all the violence done in its name, what about atheism? Religion is not the only cause of evil in the world. In fact, more people have been killed by atheist regimes in the twentieth century than in all the religious persecutions of Western history. Mao was responsible for over forty million deaths; Stalin for more than twenty million; Hitler's count is over ten million. And those are just the big three atheists—we-haven't mentioned other tyrants like Pol Pot, Enver Hoxha, Nicolae Ceausescu, Fidel Castro, and Kim Jong -il. In a single century, atheists have killed more than one hundred million people.

Secularist violence is the result of man playing God. It sees man, not God, as the measure of all things. Instead of seeing humankind as sinful and in need of redemption, secularism is convinced that humans can become perfect and create utopia here on earth. Secularist regimes do whatever it takes to achieve this, including taking control of society and murdering those who get in the way. Without God, anything goes. Without God, we cannot even distinguish between what is good and what is evil.

It is true that the pages of history are stained with the blood of religious violence. But those same pages are also stained by the blood of Jesus. On the cross, God the Son not only took evil on himself but gave us the hope and power to overcome it. Instead of blaming God for the world's evils, we must look to him for the solution.