

Rick Warren Publicly Debates Renowned Atheist

Earlier this month 'Newsweek' magazine moderated a four-hour debate between Rick Warren and Sam Harris, a prominent atheist and doctoral student in neuroscience.



Newsweek magazine moderated a four-hour debate at Saddleback Church in early April between Rick Warren and Sam Harris, a prominent atheist and doctoral student in neuroscience whose latest book, *The End of Faith*, argues for a world based on reason. "Every specific science ... has surpassed and superseded what the Bible tells us is true about our world," Harris said in his opening remarks. When *Newsweek* asked him which secular source provides an acceptable moral code, Harris rejected all sacred texts and pointed to the "ethical impulses" of human empathy and compassion found in an atheistic experience. But Warren, mentioning the Inquisition, Mao Zedong, Joseph Stalin and Pol Pot, countered: "Far more people have been killed through atheists than through all the religious wars put together." Harris criticized "faith-based altruism" for being "contaminated with religious ideas that have nothing to do with the relief of human suffering." Warren struck a pseudo-conciliatory note with Harris to end the debate: "You're more spiritual than you think," the pastor said. "You [just] don't want a God who tells you what to do." In May Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron, from the popular evangelism show *The Way of the Master*, will debate two atheists about the existence of God. The debate will be moderated by Martin Bashire, streamed live on ABC's Web site and aired on *Nightline*.