



## Imagine

By Lucy Wall

The words and format of this poem were inspired by the song also entitled "Imagine" which was written by the late John Lennon. Although his death was now many years ago, the song is still very popular today and I hear it used a lot on T.V, the 2012 Olympic closing ceremony being a prime example. Whatever Lennon had in mind for the song when he wrote it, it certainly seems to have become the "atheist's anthem" in society today.

I have a huge respect for John Lennon and I share and appreciate his desire for peace and unity in the world but at the time of writing this song, he seems to come from the view point that if mankind can "erase" God then we can achieve this unity. I find this and some other ideas expressed in his lyrics to be extremely flawed.

For example, his first two lines read: "Imagine there's no Heaven. It's easy if you try." This statement makes no sense to me. "Imagine there's no Heaven? It's easy if you try?" Why would anyone want to imagine there's no Heaven when Heaven is a place of peace, comfort, love, encouragement and where people can dwell in happiness and contentment? A place that is the embodiment of all things good, where unity reigns and loved ones are reunited. Considering unity is what Lennon longed for so much, it seems very contradictory to want to try and erase the existence of such a place.

This brings me to the conclusion that Lennon didn't actually have a problem with Heaven itself but rather the premise on which a person might enter it. It isn't logical or in-keeping with his desire for unity and peace to then have a problem with Heaven. Rather it would seem, and this is just my opinion, that Lennon didn't take issue with the thought of eternal peace, he took issue with the thought of judgement and his accountability before God. It seems to me that Lennon was aware of his sin and the fact that it would keep him from entering Heaven. His first line would have made more sense if he'd said "Imagine there's no judgement. It's easy if you try."

It's an understandable position and one I know I've been in myself. The thought of dwelling in Heaven is appealing but the thought of acknowledging that I'm a sinner and repenting of my sin before a Holy God is not. These are, however, the God given requirements for gaining access to eternal peace.

As the Bible says in John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Also in John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

The good news of course is that God wishes that no one should perish and we can receive full forgiveness and pardon for our sins if we acknowledge them and repent of them.

As 1 John 1:9 tells us: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The Bible explains very clearly that as a result of our own sin and rebellion, we are born spiritually separated from God and we'll face Him as our righteous judge one day. A terrifying thought. Thankfully, God being a God of love as well as righteousness, hasn't left it there. He's provided us with a way where we never have to face Him as our judge because our sins have already been dealt with. We can attain this free gift of grace just by trusting in His Son Jesus Christ and accepting that all of our sin has been paid for through His sacrifice on the Cross. We need never fear or face judgement because our God has already dealt with it. To ignore this wonderful provision is a tragedy because to accept it is to have freedom and liberation from not only the fear of judgement but also from judgement itself.

It's clear Lennon was imagining an end to conflict and war. To do this however, we have to recognise the source responsible for all conflict in the world and that blame belongs to Satan. Therefore the only way strife will ever truly come to an end lies in the hands of the only One who can defeat him: Jesus Christ. However, as I mentioned earlier,



Lennon seemed to hold the view that the belief in the existence of God or "religion" as he confused it with, led to conflict amongst mankind and therefore to "erase" God would be to erase conflict. But the problem doesn't lie with God, it lies with mankind.

Firstly, there is a huge difference between "religion" and having a relationship with Jesus. These two things are often confused but are hugely different. Secondly, God exists whether we choose to believe in Him or not and thinking that by erasing all acknowledgment of Him will improve human nature and behaviour is a huge mistake. He's the One who created us and He's the One who died to pay for our sins. Ignoring this fact will only cause more chaos and heartache for everyone.

If there's no God then there's no authority to say what's right and wrong or what's true or false. If someone decides it's ok to kidnap and murder a child, who are we to tell them that's wrong if truth is relative? Who says it's wrong to murder? If we all make up our own truths, live by our own moral code and do what's right in our own eyes then it's just one person's opinion against another. To me that's a frightening thought. Erasing God from our society is not the answer. Embracing Him is.

The Bible shows us that this kind of behaviour has happened before as Judges 21: 25 says: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Proverbs 16:25 warns us of the consequences of this: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but it's end is the way of death."

The subject matter in Lennon's song runs so deep that really the lyrics only touch the tip of the ice berg and so too does my poem. He was clearly a great thinker and part of me feels that his song "Imagine" was in fact related to his interest and search for God.

There seems to be an on-going debate as to whether he was a Christian or not before his tragic death in 1980. I read an interesting article written by Jesse Carey who is the Interactive Media Producer for CBN.com. His article reveals that an interview with Lennon was unearthed recently. It took place in 1969 for a segment on a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation show and gives some very interesting insights into Lennon's thoughts and feelings towards Jesus in the years leading up to his assassination.

An excerpt from the article quoting the interview says this: "And though this is the first time many Beatles fans have heard this particular conversation, Lennon's interest in Christ was no secret in the early '70s. In his book, *The Gospel According to the Beatles*, writer Steve Turner said that there was a period in his life when the world's most famous songwriter deeply wanted to know who Jesus was. According to the book, in an effort to escape the chaos of public life, Lennon would often retreat to television and became a regular viewer of the era's most influential evangelists including Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and even Pat Robertson.

In 1972, Lennon even took part in a written correspondence with Roberts, in which he apologised and further explained his statement about being "bigger" than God. The Beatles frontman, who had experimented with a variety of drugs and spiritual ideas wrote this to Roberts:

"The point is this, I want happiness. I don't want to keep on with drugs. Paul told me once, 'You made fun of me for taking drugs, but you will regret it in the end.' Explain to me what Christianity can do for me. Is it phoney? Can He love me? I want out of hell."

Oral Roberts sent him a long response, giving him a copy of his book *Miracle of Seed Faith* and a detailed explanation of God's love for him.

Five years later, in 1977, Lennon became deeply moved by NBC's broadcast of the movie *Jesus of Nazareth* and told his friends that he had become a born-again Christian. A week after seeing the film, Lennon returned to church on Easter



*Sunday with his wife Yoko and son Sean in tow."*

*The article goes on to talk about the difficulties Lennon faced after professing Jesus Christ as his Saviour and although it may seem like he fell away from Christianity, we know that if a person truly has given their heart to Jesus, then they belong to Him eternally no matter how far behind they may fall in their walk with Him. He is faithful even when we are not and after all, we don't have eternal life temporarily!*

*I deeply hope to see Lennon in Heaven one day where there is no war and no "religion" too; only the peace and unity that he longed for on this earth. Thankfully peace is also the desire of Jesus and I look forward to the day when He brings an end to sin and its consequences once and for all. Only then will the whole world really and truly in the words of Lennon: "Live as one."*

Imagine there's no Heaven.  
No comfort when we die.  
We'll never see our loved ones  
No matter how we cry.

Imagine all the people, grieving life away.

Imagine there's no justice.  
No moral wrong or right.  
If there's no God above us  
Then who's to say who's right?

Imagine all the people, living life their way.

You may say I'm a dreamer  
But this doesn't sound like one.  
Godless lives won't unite us.  
They'll reap sorrow for everyone.

Imagine no possessions.  
How long would you survive?  
You'll never try to regain them  
As long as you're alive?

Imagine all the people, fighting every day.

You may say I'm a dreamer  
But this ain't kidding anyone.  
There's no point in pretending  
Without God we can live as one.



Imagine there's a Heaven.  
It's easy if you try.  
A place where love unites us  
And conflict says goodbye.

Imagine all the people, living eternally.

You see I'm a believer  
And when the final days have come,  
Peace will reign through our Saviour  
And the world will live as one.

*Revelation 21:3-6*

*"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."*