Pk's Perspectives …Imagine

John Lennon released a song in 1971 titled "Imagine" which some voices in our culture are suggesting would be a good replacement for "The Star-Bangled Banner" as America's national anthem. Seriously. I'm not making this up! There is certainly an alluring aspect to Lennon's song…the lyrics conjuring a vision of a utopia that really is fun to imagine. For those of you unfamiliar with Lennon's song, and as a refresher to those of you who can hear the melody in your mind, let me share the lyrics:

Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try
No hell below us, above us only sky
Imagine all the people living for today.
Imagine there's no countries, it isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion, too
Imagine all the people living life in peace.
Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger, a brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people sharing all the world.

You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us, and the world will be as one.

Who wouldn't want all the things mentioned in these lyrics? Lennon is basically describing a place void of all evil and human selfishness and human suffering - heck yeah! Who wouldn't vote for that? The irony is Lennon dismissing in the very first verse the ONLY place such an existence can be found - heaven! Followers of Christ understand from Scripture there will never be a perfectly balanced utopia on this earth owing to the presence of sin and evil in this broken world. You see, the problematic existence of evil is where every man-made religion or philosophy or social construct is revealed as a system of vacuous promises, based on erroneous assumptions, that actually lead only to deeper pits of despair and anxiety; the utopia Lennon describes can only become reality one of two ways. Either all of humanity is capable of making itself into better, altruistic people if we'll just try hard enough (which history clearly demonstrates is not realistic), or someone has to designate the "bad people" standing in the way of utopia and exterminate them. Sound familiar? This was pretty much the reasoning — label and exterminate the bad people — that led to the bloody Crusades in the Middle Ages; the mass extinction of about 6,000,000 Jews during WW II; and today catalyzes the agendas of extremist Muslim jihadists and far-to-the-left social justice warriors. Left to its own devices, humanity answers the conundrum of evil by subjugating, oppressing, ostracizing, or even exterminating individuals who resist the agenda of humanistic ideals…who refuse to drink the polluted Kool-aid of an impossible utopian dream.

God sent His son Jesus into our world to confront the problem of evil. The Bible says all have sinned…all of us are in bondage to evil. <u>Yet Christ did not come to our world to exterminate evil people — He came to destroy the power of evil and offer humanity the gift of salvation. He chose to die a substitutionary death for sinful humanity rather than insisting on the destruction of the sinners. Jesus came to show us the way home, the way to heaven.</u> There actually exists a paradise completely void of suffering, greed, hunger, oppression, and the Bible calls it heaven; receiving Christ's gift of salvation is the only way of securing residency in this eternal kingdom. Indeed, all who reject the good news of Christ can only imagine and dream of a utopia that will never materialize; all who place their hope in Christ can know with certainty that perfection exists just beyond this temporary valley of tribulation. Grace & peace, love you. PK.