

# *Vision-2020*

Be a Hero for Humanity



by  
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**Vision-2020:  
Be a Hero for Humanity**

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For the men, women, and children who choose to travel the path to peace and build a better world for all in the human family.

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*“We must learn to live together as brothers or  
perish together as fools.”*

*Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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# **Part I: Vision-2020**

## Chapter 1 The Other Path to Peace

*“I’m offering you the choice of life or death. You can choose either blessings or curses.”*

Deuteronomy 30:19, New International Version



**O**n my office wall just over the copy-machine hangs a black-and-white framed photograph taken in a Frankfurt studio more than eight decades ago. The portrait shows a young German soldier wearing a World War II-era uniform. Attached to the right breast is a Nazi eagle pin with a swastika clutched by the talons. The face on the photo shows a scared teenager who finds himself forced by fate into joining the army. His eyes reveal a deep sense of sadness. He holds no desire to go into battle. He does not want to die for a cause the leaders of his country have commanded him to believe is a good and just one: the honor of the Fatherland.

The young man is my uncle, my mother’s brother. His name was Gerhard Drückler. My parents gave me the middle name of Gerhard to honor his memory. He liked simple pleasures: joking with friends, drinking beer, flirting with girls. With tears in her eyes, my mother told me that, as a boy, her beloved brother had a dream to work for the German railroad as a train conductor. Hitler gave him two other options for his future, the choice of life or death. He could either join the military or face a firing squad. As most young men might, the teenage Gerhard took the first option. It offered a chance at life. He died fighting under the command of General Erwin Rommel in North Africa. His remains now rest in a soldiers’ cemetery somewhere in Libya. His hopes and dreams of one day working for the railroad lie buried with his body. War has long been a destroyer of men’s hopes and dreams.

As the publisher of a couple of community newspapers in the southern area of Silicon Valley, I keep the photo of Gerhard in my office to remind me every now and then of what happens to ordinary people when a society loses its senses. If the free press fails, then democracies fall. If democracies fall, tyrants rise. The resulting escalation of tensions between nations as autocrats gain power produces conflicts between people. These often lead to wars, causing the loss of human life and the destruction of cities. The hatred and anger we might feel toward an “enemy” will grow as cancers in our souls. Cynical leaders will use these emotions to fuel violence and keep themselves in power. Too often we humans realize too late a terrible moral price must be paid when we clash against each other in wars between nations.

Gerhard’s photo also reminds me of a hope and dream we members of the human race have long held in our hearts but have yet to make real. For thousands of years, people have longed to live in a world forever free of war.

Now humanity is on the verge of achieving that goal at some point during the next 10 to 30 years. Fate has given us the option of two paths to our at long last gaining true global peace. The first path is the one we are now following, a fact demonstrated by the events we see unfolding in the news on nearly a daily basis. If we continue along the current path of growing conflict between the nations of America and China, we will eventually face a war between these two super-powers. We also face the very real possibility of that war releasing the energy contained in atoms to cause a world-wide extinction event not seen on Earth since the end of the age of dinosaurs 65 million years ago. The self-annihilation of our species will indeed bring an end to all human wars forever, resulting in a tragic form of a permanent peace on our planet. It will be, literally, “the war to end all wars.” Deceived by a dangerous optimism of the future, many of us don’t realize yet we are an endangered species – if we choose to continue to follow our present path.

The other path is our better option. It won’t be easy for us to follow this path to peace, but there is no real third alternative for the human race. The journey requires all of us, all men, women, and children in all the nations, to join together as one worldwide community to create a hope for humanity. The road is long but it leads us *homo sapiens* at journey’s end to not only survive as a species but thrive on our beautiful home world for centuries to come.

Here is the part where I ask for your assistance in changing the course of the human story. We need to transform our thinking in order to continue moving forward to a better world for all in the human family. If you in your heart want humanity to achieve a forever freedom from war, I ask you to decide it’s now time for us to step off the old path and start to follow a new one. It’s a big request. I am asking you to take your place on a team made up of millions of Americans and other people around our planet in starting a global movement. The lives of billions of human souls in all the nations of the world are at stake. I ask you to join a movement starting in the year 2020 to achieve true and lasting peace on Earth and goodwill toward all humankind. If we start now, we can achieve this goal twenty years hence. I challenge you now to change yourself to change the world. I challenge you to become a hero for humanity. Together, let us adventure forward and bring by Christmas Day in the year 2040 an end to all wars, acts of terrorism, and other social violence.

We need you and everyone else who cares about the human race to make this ancient dream a reality. The Vision-2020 movement intends to save our human family in the next decades from a self-imposed extinction, one brought about through our own folly. We *can* do it. We’re now at a point in time where technology and the other benefits of a global industrial civilization empower us to finally achieve a true and lasting world peace. For the first time in our history, the overwhelming majority of the people in our world can be connected in a vast network of information, a system that enables us all to grow increasingly interdependent and interconnected with each other for our mutual benefit. If enough people decide to join in this endeavor, these digital tools can empower us to build a world forever free from war.

This second option for a permanent peace on Earth is a blessing God in his heart truly wants for us, the members of the human race. It's useless to just sit on the sideline and wait for a miracle from heaven to happen to bring this blessing to our planet. Hope requires movement. We must join together and take action to make global peace a reality. We must move forward as a united humanity to achieve this goal because, as the saying goes, "It takes a team to save the world." Achieving a forever freedom from war will also take time. That's a resource we have in limited supply. The doomsday clock is ticking. The hands are now closing in on midnight. That's why humanity needs to start on this venture immediately if we are to succeed in this endeavor.

People of all religious beliefs have been praying for a global peace for many centuries. Whatever you might believe about the supernatural realm, divine intervention alone will not bring this goal into reality. We need to use the intelligence and imagination in our brains – the creativity of our amazing mind power that we have been given by God – to transform our society and make this long-held dream a reality. More than that, it will take people of all faiths and belief systems to set aside any animosity they might hold toward those of other religions. They need to reach into their hearts and find within themselves the golden spirit of *agape*, a true love of humanity that can lighten our souls. Agape serves as the bedrock for all the world's major religions. It can serve, as well, as a moral foundation for those who by the dictates of their conscience choose not to follow a specific faith. It empowers the "Golden Rule," a principle taught by most religious leaders that, if deliberately practiced by many of their followers, will serve as a moral compass for Vision-2020 and the pursuit of a forever freedom from war.



### **The Lesson of Francis of Assisi**

The region of Northern California where I make my home, the San Francisco Bay Area, was named after a good man who lived more than eight centuries ago in Italy. The world knows him as Francis of Assisi. The current Roman Catholic pope took that man's name when he took on the job of serving more than one billion Catholics as the Holy Pontiff. The man of the Middle Ages had devoted his life to a mission of building bridges for God between all people on the planet. He brought together people of diverse backgrounds: the rich and the poor, Christians and Muslims, those with power over the world and the nobodies of the world. Francis of Assisi understood that all people share a common humanity. He knew that by celebrating that humanity in the spirit of agape, we humans can eventually produce peace on our planet.

Some cynics say Francis of Assisi was wrong and the aspiration of world peace is an impossible dream. They believe war is an inevitable product of civilization. These people say that this ancient and audacious goal is impossible for humanity to ever achieve because nature built into our human psychology a drive to turn violent toward one another in the struggle for resources and in conflicts over ideologies. We have never achieved true global peace in the past, they say, so we will not achieve it in the future. Francis of Assisi would

tell them their logic is flawed. The facts counter-argue that pessimistic view of our humanity. Our past is *not* a prelude to a dark destiny. Nothing in the laws of science – not one fact in the fields of physics, chemistry, and biology – prevents humankind from ever reaching the noble goal of a forever freedom from war. No doubt the human mind can be programmed for a propensity for war by those who hold power over a people. But the neural wiring of our brains is flexible. It can also be programmed in millions of people for non-violent behavior and a sense of compassion for all humanity through the spirit of agape.

We possess in our minds as a species a vital key to opening the way leading the entire human race to finally achieving the most noble prize of peace. That key is choice. Once the world achieves a critical mass of people who honestly choose to emancipate all human beings in our present time and in the future from the threat of wars, that key will ignite the Vision-2020 movement on a global scale. To succeed, it will take about one percent of humanity to make that choice. Here in the closing month of the year 2020, the world's population stands at 7.8 billion people. Thus, Vision-2020 needs the active support of 78 million heroes for humanity to make the hope and dream of global peace a reality. No doubt, 78 million individuals are a lot of people. Decades ago, bringing that many people together in the endeavor of global peace would have been extremely difficult if not impossible. But we now live in an age of extraordinary opportunity. For the first time in history, the human family possesses the technology to unite the world around the ambitious aim of a permanent end to war. Our amazing digital devices and Internet connections have been used in recent years by those who are deceitful in their self-serving purposes to polarize us into opposing tribes based on our conflicting ideologies. What if we can instead use these communication tools for the greater good, for a purpose of ending our artificial divisions? What if we can be creative enough to use electronic technology to bring the people of all nations together in a spirit of a lofty enterprise? If we would only do that, we could change the tale we now tell ourselves. And, in reframing the future, we will transform the world.

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### **The Hero of the Story**

Do you want, in your heart, to be a hero? Every hero must go through hell. In every story, the hero must face monsters and overcome the agony of obstacles both internal and external. In this the ultimate adventure story of achieving global peace, the frailties of our human nature must first be overcome. The impediments of our ineffective thinking – our doubts and fears – are often the hardest barriers to hurdle. There are those among us who always resist change – even change we must take for our species' own survival – because they lack the courage to create a new world. But imagine if we can use our technologies to connect at least 78 million people around our planet, joining together ordinary individuals who have the courage to be active in this bold endeavor. We will have the power to bring forth a rising tide of leadership in

the millions of men and women and children who possess a confident and courageous vision for their future and thus seek to give humanity the greatest gift of peace on our planet

We *can* make a forever freedom from war a reality in the next two decades. Of course, we must be realistic and acknowledge that securing a global peace that lasts forever will not be an easy endeavor to accomplish. But with the impressive advances in digital commerce and communication we have made through the benefits of science, we humans now have within our technological ability the power to enhance the quality of life for every person on planet Earth. The fields of medicine, farming, manufacturing, and energy production allow many individuals to enjoy longer, healthier lives compared with previous generations. Computer and communication technology enable us human beings in the 21st century to connect with each other regardless of where we might be geographically located. These media innovations built on the power of electricity running through silicon chips can now bring all nations together in ways that would have seemed to people in past centuries like magic. Our tools of digital technology have been used for both good and evil purposes. They can provide society with fact-based news and opinion that can help people make wise decisions for the benefit of themselves and others. Or they can be used to send into the public discourse the toxins of misleading information and outright lies that make people fall into the traps set for them by unscrupulous leaders who seek for their own personal gain material profit and power over others.

Our brains have created many tools we can put into good service to build a better world for all people. Through Vision-2020, we can use advanced technology in integrated ways to bring all humanity substantial benefits including the stability and sustainability to the politics, economics, society, and culture that form the foundation of our global industrial civilization. All these goals can be accomplished when a critical mass of individuals makes a powerful decision: follow the path to peace led by the spirit of agape. We can learn from the story Jesus of Nazareth told of the Good Samaritan the importance of showing compassion for all people regardless of what “tribe” they might happen to belong to. Once we learn that lesson, we will start to realize we all belong to one tribe – the human family. We need each other and thus we need to care for each other. Technology can create connections between us that previous generations would never have been able to achieve, enabling humankind to join truly together by using the devices that we have cleverly invented to communicate with one another across oceans and continents. These mechanisms empower our human race to share our stories with each other, stories that show we all have so much more in common than most people might realize.

Unfortunately, some of our human family – including many of the leaders among us – see this interconnectedness of all people as a threat to their power. Our brains being wired as they are by evolution, many people have the habit of seeing anyone who is not exactly like themselves as a potential menace or even an enemy. We’ve seen it in previous points in history where powerful leaders have used the information mediums of newspapers, magazines, radio, and film to turn the minds of their followers against the less fortunate of society

and manifest an illusion that they are sub-humans. They spread propaganda that caused targeted ethnic and religious groups to carry the burden of blame for any poor quality of life experienced by a nation's citizens. That manipulation of minds, history teaches us, can lead to violence – and even the brutal deaths of tens of millions of men, women, and children. Humanity learned that painful lesson during World War II with the destruction of cities in Europe and Asia and the murder of millions in the Holocaust.

The dangers of fascism still dwell hidden in our own 21st century society. It exists even now at various levels in America and other democratic nations where political figures are increasingly using the media – including the relatively new information distribution platform of social media – to plant the seeds of distrust and hatred in their followers. Those seeds, if not weeded from the mind by the spirit of agape, will result in the rise of violence and social injustice. Sadly, we're seeing that happen in our modern America with the growth of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-immigration, misogyny, anti-science, white supremacy, and extremism of political ideologies leading to nationalism.

The Golden Rule taught by most religions can serve as a cure for these ills of our 21st century society. That guiding light principle is based on the spirit of agape, a love for humanity. Unfortunately, many of the leaders of the world – the men and women in politics, business, media, and even religion – seem to focus their activities more on the love of power than the power of love. I make my home in the southern area of Silicon Valley, one of the most economically-polarized regions of America. Millionaires and billionaires live in massive mansions and drive expensive cars. Just down the road from their homes, under highway overpasses or along creeks or in old recreational vehicles parked on side streets, the poor and homeless scratch out an existence with little hope for help. The same is true for much of the San Francisco Bay Area. The compassionate friar beloved by Catholics as St. Francis of Assisi would no doubt be deeply ashamed that the region of Northern California bearing his name holds such an extreme financial dichotomy.

Francis was a man of peace. He would look at America today and wonder how people in power – men and women who hold in their hands the means to make the world better for all humanity – could spend so much of their time and wealth abusing their positions of trust. He would be disgusted by the corruption in the leadership of our politics, our business world, our media, and even, I'm sad to say, our religious organizations, which by the teachings of their founders have a moral mandate to be guided in benevolent service to others by the spirit of agape.

The corruption in our political leadership in America and internationally is taking the people of the world down the way to war. Between the years 2030 and 2050, if we continue along this direction, the citizens of America and China will highly likely find themselves in a global conflict with each other, one far worse in casualties and destruction compared with all of the death and devastation the world experienced through the wars in the 20th century. The Chinese-American War is a war no one wants and no one can win. With the potential threat of the ultimate day of reckoning for humankind, that conflict might grow

beyond borders into a global war that draws in Russia, North Korea, Iran, and other nuclear powers into the maelstrom. The conditions that will create a conflict that brings about the annihilation of our civilization are now emerging throughout the world. The extinction of the human race as the resulting product of radioactive dust destroying our home world's biosphere might not be inevitable. But it is truly possible – and the possibility is every day growing ever more probable.

Francis of Assisi would encourage us to follow a wiser way – the way to peace. If we wish to take that path, we must start our journey now and together. The spirit of agape can serve as the guide to our desired destination. Vision-2020 is powered by this highest of all forms of love. It is the love that God holds for us humans and the love we humans hold for God and each other. It's a love willing to sacrifice everything we possess – our fortune, our reputation, and even our life itself – for the benefit of our fellow humans. It's a love that drives people to, regardless of personal consequences, do the right thing for the common good.

America's soul is at stake. The republic of the United States is now declining into a division caused by our own actions of incivility and insanity. Much of the rest of the world is foolishly following us into this state of divide. The people of the United States faced a contentious election in 2020. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of leadership in dealing with this peril of a rapidly-spreading microbe during this year, we are now a democracy in jeopardy. The dangers of losing our democracy will grow only worse as more violence stirred by hatred tears our people apart into extreme ideological tribes. That's why I present you with a challenge that will transform your life as you transform the world. Be a hero for humanity. Join the Vision-2020 movement. Let us join in an endeavor to save the soul of America and preserve our democratic traditions from decay. Starting on Christmas Eve in the year 2020 and spanning the next twenty years, let us unite together and start acting civilly toward one another. Let us use the power of agape and the guidance of the Golden Rule to enable the human race to not only survive but thrive in the coming centuries by creating a much higher quality of life for all the people on our planet. On December 25, 2040, let us give the world the greatest Christmas gift in human history – an end to all wars and the start of a future where all humanity across the world is blessed with a permanent period of concord.

Consider my uncle Gerhard, a teenage boy turned by evil men into a soldier of a war he never wished to fight in. The loss of his life is a lesson for us, a reminder of the price young men must pay when national leaders sow the seeds of hatred. History now presents our entire humanity with two fates for our future. Gerhard Drückler would encourage us to be wise and avoid the first fate. He would say we must avoid the path to a global peace that comes about as a result of the death of civilization and extinction of the entire human race by our own self-annihilation. He would encourage us to choose, instead, the second and smarter option. Let us be teamed together to give future generations a

lasting legacy of a world united by love. Let us be guided by the spirit of agape to follow the other path to peace.