

VISIONS BEYOND THE FAR HORIZON

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All human interactions are opportunities either to learn or to teach
M.Scott Peck (Lloyd, 2000)

INTRODUCTION

You and I are very fortunate for we have been provided with opportunities to see beyond the obvious. At any given site a soil has a sequence of horizons, and there we sense the importance of history as we dig deeper into the genesis and evolution of a soil landscape. As we look across a landscape there are boundaries of the surrounding area; they obviously are visual horizons. Through training and experience, each of us has learned how to “see beyond the obvious”, how to anticipate what lies beyond those horizons; and to recognize the deep-seated values associated with the temporal and spatial horizons of our world.

It is a humbling experience to comprehend the frailties of our own species and our apparent unwillingness to think and to act as rational beings. Consider this phrase – ‘nonmaterial needs of human development’ (Meadows *et al.*, 2004). Is this jargon from a new trend in sociology? No, this phrase is about a critical aspect of being human. It simply means that we don’t need big fancy houses and cars, we need admiration and respect. A steady flow of new fashionable clothes isn’t needed, but we do need to feel that others consider us attractive. We need excitement and variety and beauty. We need something interesting to occupy our minds and emotions. Trying to fill these needs for a quality life with material things is a set-up for failure. Too many material goods are false solutions to never-satisfied longings. Such actions create an unquenchable appetite – more, more, more - more growth for the sake of growth (Gardner, 2004). Beyond this short sightedness is a much larger need – the far horizon of Hope – hope to provide a sustainable habitat for the continuous development of humankind in harmony with the available environmental resources.

I’d like to tell you several stories and link their lessons together as a way to explore some potential horizons that are presently beyond the obvious.