

23 August 2020

‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18, KJV)

Mr Creed-Newton, my physics teacher at school, used to quote this verse whenever we failed to understand the topic he was teaching. I’m not sure this was a valid use of scripture but it is a wonderful verse though it comes out rather differently in modern (more accurate) translations. We need vision, now more than ever.

Below is a photo I took from the top of Mayar in the southern Cairngorms. Alison and I have just returned from a lovely holiday north of the border where we ‘bagged our first Munro’ i.e. climbed a Scottish mountain over 3,000 ft. My daughter had showed me how to take a panoramic photo and this is the one from Mayar, one of the 282 Munros. Although there was high cloud, we had a clear view from the summit and I wanted to capture the scene with large boulders in the foreground and the folds of the hills in the distance (and, if you can see it in the centre on the horizon, a loch). However, our vision turned out to be partial.

We were doing a circular walk climbing up through the spectacular Corrie Fee (where my legs were attacked by midges – I wondered why no-one else was wearing shorts!) and then to the summit of Mayar. We thought we could see the path to take us back through the Glendoll forest and set off towards it. Eventually we realised we were going in the wrong direction!

Traversing uncharted territory did have its compensations. The ground off the path was teeming with wildlife and we disturbed a mountain hare which went racing off across the heather. And Alison assured me that walking over the springy turf was very good for my fitness. Eventually we got back onto the right track. It might have been a different story in bad weather but fortunately our lack of vision didn’t cause us to perish!

In the current pandemic, none of us has perfect vision, not even the epidemiological experts. We’re having to make decisions about emerging from lockdown and reopening our churches and we can’t be sure what the right path is. As St. Paul says, ‘For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face’.

Don’t be put off by my physics teacher – none of us has all the answers. But working prayerfully and collaboratively, we can piece together God’s vision for us and that’s a vision we can have total confidence in.

I wish you well in the next steps in your journey,

Roger.

