

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (CAMM)

Lilongwe, Malawi

October, 2017

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

John 15: 1-2

Greetings from the warm heart of Africa,

Did you plant a garden this summer? If so, did it rain enough for your plants or did you have to water it yourself? Either way, I'm sure you spent at least a little time pulling weeds! We have gardens at the Lutheran Mobile Clinic (LMC) house, and the gardener works very diligently to keep the grounds. However, last month, he took some days of holiday leave, and in my spare time I became the gardener.

We are now in dry season and faithful watering is necessary to keep the gardens and plants alive. The hours I spent tending the grounds brought to mind the attention and care our Lord spends on us. As I watered and weeded, I thought about how the Lord provides what we need when we need it and also diligently works to prune out of our hearts and lives what He finds harmful to us or those around us.

Here in Malawi, just like everywhere else, there are many harmful activities, beliefs and practices. Recently a Malawian acquaintance mentioned to me that she was going to the funeral of a small boy who had died because he had been bewitched. I'm sure my eyebrows were raised quite high as I asked this Christian woman what the child really died from. She told me that actually the boy had broken his leg and it became infected. However, since he seemed to improve for a bit before he died, some people decided he had not actually died from infection, but because someone had put a curse on him.

Death by bewitching isn't something you'll likely hear talked about in the U.S.A., but the devil is still pretty successful there. Is it more common for you to hear the Lord's name used in praise and thanksgiving, or in cursing someone or something? Does your heart feel heavy with worry and concern over your future or for those you love? Have you ever hesitated or neglected to talk about Jesus even when God gave you the perfect opportunity?

Though it's not always enjoyable, we need God's shears on us every day of our lives no matter where we live, because the devil is relentless in his goal to choke our faith. We equally need the Living Water of God's Word to feed and strengthen our faith when we are having trouble seeing the loving Son-light of Jesus Christ. Our Father promises that His shears never miss or prune more than is healthy. "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:15-16).

Right on schedule, the LMC gardener returned from his holiday. He walked the grounds, inspected my work and, much to my delight, confirmed that nothing had died in my care. And my vegetable salad never tasted so good!

Your Sister in Christ,

Amanda Artz, Clinic Administrator
Lutheran Mobile Clinic, Malawi