

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (CAMM)

Lilongwe, Malawi

February, 2018

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

Greetings from the warm heart of Africa,

Are you a planner? I am. At this time of year many people plan what they'd like to accomplish during the year and beyond. As I finish my term of service with Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi, I am starting to plan for what comes next. Though planning of at least some degree is wise and sensible, what happens when plans are upset? Do you feel frustrated or angry, wondering where you went wrong?

The Israelites, to whom this promise in Jeremiah was first made, certainly wondered what went wrong. Being defeated and carried off into exile wasn't what they expected to happen. One day they were making plans and going about their lives and the next they were captives in a foreign land.

Some of the rural Malawians that the Lutheran Mobile Clinic serves are wrestling with very grim situations, just like many other people throughout the world. Grave illnesses, the death of the main breadwinner, flood and drought, the breakup of families and other consequences of living in a sinful world have snuffed out the survival plans of some of these people. In these circumstances it is easy to forget that God is watching and intervening for their good. Hope is fleeting and a prosperous future seems impossible. They may be tempted to think that God is guessing and hinting, rather than knowing and declaring His plans for their lives. They may wonder if God's promises apply to them.

How about you? Do you ever wonder if God's promises apply to you? Perhaps unexpected circumstances have led you to seek another job, though you loved the one you had. Has an illness or the death of a loved one taken the joy and contentment out of your daily life? Maybe most of your plans have evaporated along with your wealth and you are wondering what your future holds.

Be assured that God's promise in Jeremiah is to us, just as it was to the Israelites. But it is not just **to** us; it is also **about** us. Do you define prosperity by what you have, or by what you share? What is “enough” and in what or whom do you hope? Are you prosperous because you have a certain net worth or because you have all you need? Is it “enough” to maintain the hope of eternity in heaven and live at peace with God through Jesus, or is your time and energy centered on how much you can acquire?

God is the source of every blessing and everything belongs to Him. But He places us and gives to each of us as He sees fit, expecting that we use His gifts to benefit others. No matter what your situation is, you can always do something for someone in need, whatever that need looks like. If you have time, offer it; develop your talents, and use them; if you have money, share it; if nothing else, be a prayer warrior.

As we make our plans, let's remember that God knows what we need for our lives and He promises to provide it as we are focusing on Him, His ways and His kingdom. Everything else is just details!

Your sister in Christ,

Amanda Artz, Clinic Administrator  
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