



RCA Missionary Update

from Justin Majawa

Justin Majawa lost his dad when he was seven months old and grew up as an orphan. He worked hard on the farm growing vegetables, which he sold to go to school. In his 11th and 12th grades he was adopted by a pastor who mentored Justin and enabled him to go to college.

In 1996, while in college, Justin created Save Orphans Ministries. Moved deeply by the extreme suffering of so many orphans, Justin resolved to offer them help and hope. His message to the children is that God is the father of the fatherless. Today Save Orphans Ministries serves over 10,000 orphans in their communities through HIV/AIDS, Food Security, Evangelism, and Education Support.

Malawi facts:

- Population: 11 million
- Size: 45,745 square miles
- Major religion: Christianity



MINISTRY

Holistic Community Development

LOCATION

Lilongwe, Malawi

PARTNER

Save Orphans Ministries

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Dear Friends,

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Day in and day out, our routine is study, work, sleep, and go to church on Sundays. It seems weeks, months, and years go by doing the same thing. To keep our itinerary well, we write reminders in diaries, and some of us enter them with a stylus into a PDA. Computers have done the same. In these modern days cell phones are doing it all, too. With such busy itineraries as a missionary serving in my own country of Malawi I sometimes question what I am doing. Is this worth it? Am I making a difference? Is this just self wear-and-tear?



Children playing

I have also worn the shoes of those who support us as a missionary couple and found their questions would be the same. Does my support make a difference? Is it worth

my support? Are my prayers making any difference? Such questions do not easily have answers. The missionary you support is far away, many miles away. You don't often see the people you support. You may not hear testimonies of the difference your prayers are making.

Preoccupied with such questions and all other activities, you wonder if you are making a difference. You can also go deeper, asking para-

doxical questions and wondering if the purpose of life is eating, working, going to church, and sleeping. I have now spent eight months of my studies in seminary and my day is filled up with itinerary to do this or that, to study and to meet with my mentors. I bet my mentors have the same questions as I do.

In 1996 I started working with orphans and have worked with orphans since then. I always look back and ask the same questions. Is this making a difference in anyone's life? Day in and day out, I am doing this or I am doing that and my day is filled up. I started with six children then, and today 15,000 children meet in Kids' Clubs. I have seen some children growing, and they have seen me growing too. When I started working with them I looked young and did not have any beard. I have a beard now and look a bit plump. I have seen those I started working with grow to become teenagers and adults. I ask myself again, "Am I making a difference or is it just self wear-and-tear?"



Recently I was privileged to see 23 students I know from Save Orphans Ministries being sponsored for college education. I remember seeing some of these orphans very young in Bible clubs, playing and singing every time we met. A few years have gone by since then, and now they are in college. Some friends sent us some money to buy them scientific calculators for their mathematical or geometrical calculations—whatever that means! I started hearing their stories and could not imagine the same children I worked with in VBS are now in college.

One of the stories was the one I call "Angela and Rajabu Career Race." Angela has ventured into metal fabrication while Rajabu (a boy—this is hard to tell from African names) is in a secretarial course. Really? Secretarial for a young man? A career swap scenario apparently, or gender equity at work I guess! In Malawi traditionally, metal fabrication or anything hard is for men and secretarial work is for women. Secretarial is considered soft work in that sense. Although metal fabrication is an "ugly" career for girls, Angela (18) is falling in love with it. She is defiantly forging ahead.

Her class has 15 boys and she is one of only seven girls at Salima Technical College. The other girls are doing motor vehicle mechanics or carpentry. Asked why she chose this "strange" course of study, she said, "I wanted to show my fellow Malawian girls that women cannot be choosy anymore. Of course some boys do talk about me but I do not regret my choice." As I listened I thought to myself, "It must be fun to watch Angela while on duty in a rusty, rough workshop."

SOM is sponsoring the 22 students at Salima Technical College, including Angela and Rajabu, as part of its education sponsorship for needy orphaned students. This year the organization is sponsoring 600 high school students. Rajabu Matola comes from Kambalame and Angela from Songa village, within SOM's working area in Mangochi district. Usually vocational school training courses take two years. SOM is now assuming a double responsibility of supporting students both in secondary school and in tertiary institutions.

I thought about Rajabu and Angela and once again asked myself as a missionary, is it worth it? Does it make a difference at all? Is it just a self wear-and-tear, maybe? I then switched and wore the shoes of those who support us. Do my prayers and support make a difference in any way? What is the purpose of my life? I am learning slowly that the purpose of life is not just eating, working, studying, going to church, and filling up my diaries, but to make a difference. I may not see the difference instantly, but surely God is watering the seeds that we are planting.

Justin and Ruth Majawa
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