



THE TRAVELER'S PALM

Evangelism among the Malagasy People



November 2017



Ruth Marie Cuthbertson

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Dear Co-laborer,

I want to express my deep gratitude to you for your constant love and concern for my family and me over the years – and particularly over the last several months. Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support. I am profoundly grateful and humbled to think that God has led you to partner with me in the ministry of winning souls and planting churches in Madagascar. I have been very encouraged by God, His Word, and His people.

As you know, God blessed Charity and me with a beautiful baby girl on March 13th and then God saw fit to call Charity home on April 4th. Charity was not only a wonderful Godly wife and mother, but she was also a great partner for me! The past seven months have been a time of spiritual stretching and growth for me as I have seen God at work to meet our needs as we grieve and adjust to the immense void left in our lives! During these months, God has given me the privilege and joy of continuing to minister to others in many ways. I have had the opportunity to reach out to and help others who are going through a loss. I have preached at several new churches and supporting churches and have even been involved with teaching a discipleship class for middle school boys several days a week at the local Christian school where my kids are enrolled.

In July, I took all 5 children and returned to Maintirano for the month. I must admit that it was a very hard thing to do, not just because I travelled nearly 24 hours by plane with 4 youngsters and a newborn, but also because I returned to a place that had meant so much to Charity and me. It was a very emotional time; everywhere I turned, I was reminded of Charity! Some individuals have stated to me that there were places that they could not go after the loss of their spouse. Though there will be difficult times, I know that by God's help and through His strength I can go back. God has and continues to be the Solid Rock on which I stand through the changes and storms of life. Yes, it still hurts, but God is bringing healing.

The trip accomplished many things:

- I was able to go through some of our belongings that I had hurriedly packed when we left Madagascar.
- I was able to renew friendships with the people in the church in Maintirano many of whom Charity and I led to a saving knowledge of Jesus.
- Charity was the first believer that had died in our church. One Sunday I preached on the passage in I Thessalonians 4:13, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." We all cried and rejoiced together as we experienced and were comforted by this precious promise – we sorrow, yet we have hope.
- One of the most important things that this trip accomplished was to allow the Holy Spirit to reaffirm in my heart and mind, my calling to Madagascar as a missionary. **I came back to the United States with a renewed commitment to return and continue the ministry, knowing that God's grace is more than sufficient.**

The purpose of this letter is to tell you specifically about how God has been leading me as it relates to my future life and ministry. I have been trying to get my thoughts organized, which has prevented me from writing to you sooner.

At the end of last May, I was asked to speak to a group at Ambassador Baptist College in North Carolina that is interested in missions to Madagascar. While there, I met a young lady named Ruth Cuthbertson. She was born to missionaries Dan and Joan Cuthbertson in Liberia and raised on the mission field in Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa. When she was young, she gave her life to God to use however He desires and

she believes that full-time foreign missions is the place that God wants for her to serve Him. She has been preparing for and training to be a missionary in many ways, one of which was becoming a CPM (Certified Professional Midwife). Ruth has been delivering babies for 7 years in the Philippines, Ivory Coast, and Thailand. She has a desire to use midwifery as a means of reaching souls with the gospel. She is 27 and the eldest in a large family who were all home-schooled on the mission field (she has many experiences with living on a foreign field, taking care of kids, home-schooling, etc.). She loves children and all of my children absolutely love her and are very favorable toward our relationship. Currently, Ruth is at Ambassador Baptist College finishing up the requirements for her Elementary Education and Bible degree (she graduates in May).

I have told many people that were I to get remarried, God would have to bring a very special individual for me (with 5 kids, a continuing love for Charity, and a desire to return to Madagascar). I am being very careful to make sure I am not in this relationship as a relapse to replace my love for Charity, to get a mother for my children, or just to get back to Madagascar. However, I know that God has blessed me beyond measure with not just one wonderful woman, but two. I love Ruth, for who she is and I know that God has put us together in His timing. For weeks before she passed away, both Charity and I were praying for a new wife for me. I believe that Ruth is the answer to those requests. I thank the Lord daily for His answer to my prayers in Ruth. I have seen how God has led and prepared both Ruth and me in this rapidly developing relationship. Ruth's parents are in favor of my dating their daughter and pursuing a relationship with her. Both my parents and Charity's parents are also very approving of my building this relationship and are supportive of me as I spend time talking to Ruth and taking trips to see her in NC. Please keep us in your prayers as we see how God continues to lead us. His plans are always so perfect and in precise order. It is amazing how He, in His wisdom, puts things perfectly together! God has given us peace about moving forward in this relationship by answering specific prayers for both Ruth and me. We believe that this is God's will for our lives.

I am planning on making a trip to the Ivory Coast with Ruth shortly after Christmas in order to meet Ruth's parents and other siblings, who are still serving there as missionaries. After spending almost 2 weeks in the Ivory Coast, Ruth and I will be taking a quick trip to Maintirano so she can see the ministry there first hand. This will be a very important trip for us and I strongly covet your prayers on behalf of this trip.

I have been seeking counsel from many Godly men who have given me wise counsel. The pastor of my sending church, Pastor Skip Furrow, has met Ruth and approves of our relationship: the timing of it, the way we are nurturing this relationship, and the plans that we are making. He has encouraged me to continue down the path that I am on. If you have any questions or suggestions that you would like me to answer or consider, please feel free to call me at (470) 266-9597 or email me at jertberg@mad4christ.org or write me at Richard Jertberg, 100 Greenwood Drive, Stockbridge, GA 30281.

I know that this has been a very long letter, but I wanted to make sure that you are up to date on all that God has been and is continuing to do on my behalf so that you can pray more specifically for me. I am still actively planning to return to the ministry in Madagascar that you have been participating in these many years. Again, let me say that I love you and deeply appreciate your continued support and care for my family. I greatly desire that God receive all glory as I continue to follow His direction for my life.

As part of the preparation to get back to Madagascar, Lord willing, in the later part of 2018, I am trying to schedule a few meetings and raise my support level before then. When I initially raised support, it was for a family of 3 and without an aviation ministry. If you would like me to come to your church and share my burden for the people of Madagascar, please feel free to contact me. If you would like me to come share how God has been working in my life and give a testimony of His greatness, I would love to do that too.

I am sending a short letter from Ruth, so you can hear from her about this relationship.

In Christ Alone,
Richard Jertberg



Hello,

I have never met most of you, but I would like to thank you for your prayers for Richard, his kids, and his ministry; because in praying for them, you have prayed for me. To be a Christian is such an honor that I don't deserve; it means that I am part of a family that is all over the world – the family of God! We have a connection that is deeper than a mere friendship or acquaintance; we are co-laborers for God and joint-heirs with Jesus. What a privilege to serve the Creator of the universe and King of kings!

I would like to praise God for what He has been doing in my life. Sometimes God works in ways that I would never have thought and never expected; however, if it is truly God at work, then I can have peace and confidence that it is the very best thing for me! I cannot do a better job of planning my life than God does! God is so wise that I cannot fathom His creation. He is so loving that I cannot comprehend His sacrifice! And He is so powerful that I stand in awe of His works! If I completely surrender my life to such a God, how could He do anything but the best for me with my life?! God has brought Richard Jertberg into my life. For the past few months we have been building a relationship; and from the very first time that we dated, I have seen God at work! God's timing is perfect.

I will admit that there are times that I have gotten overwhelmed with everything that is involved in the relationship with Richard: with becoming a wife, with becoming a mother to 5 kids, with going to an unknown country, with learning a new language, and with so much more that I am not even aware of. However, despite all these factors, I have peace that moving forward in a relationship with Richard is God's will for my life. I know that He is more than able to give me the strength that I need, to give me the patience that I need, to give me the comfort that I need, and to give the understanding that I need to do that which He has called me to do. 1 Thess. 5:24 "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." Looking back on my life, I can see how God has been preparing me for "such a time as this," by: the place where I grew up – the mission field in Africa (If you want to read about my parents' ministry that I have been involved in for many years, you can go to their blog at: <http://www.cuthbertsons.org>); the language that I learned to speak there – French; the family that God put me in – oldest of 12 kids; the time that I spent in the Philippines – learning Asian culture and another language; the training and experience as a midwife – a skill to use; the elementary education training – to teach kids and people; and so many other things that can be used by God. I have been very blessed! Many times, I do not know why God does certain things in my life, but He has a plan and purpose for them. All I need to do is trust in God and let Him have control of my life. My desire is that God would be glorified with my life.

God has sustained Richard and his 5 kids through this difficult time of grief and loss. Richard Jertberg has maintained his Godly testimony as he continues to trust God through this intense trial. I have wondered, how would a person get through something so difficult as the loss of a spouse without a personal relationship with God?! Richard Jertberg is a man who is following after God and who desires to continue serving Him as a missionary to Madagascar. I am so thankful to God for the friendship that He has given to me in this special man and for the love that He has planted and continues to grow in my heart for Richard! I don't deserve the blessings that God has bestowed upon me! Thank you to all those who are praying for us as we seek wisdom for our lives that only comes from God.

In the Service of the Creator,

Ruth Cuthbertson