**Albert Schweitzer: Biography Outline**

Albert Schweitzer was born in Kaysersberg, Upper Alsace, Germany (now Haut-Rhin Department, France) on January 14, 1875 into a family that had a long tradition of service in music, religion, scholarship and education. He initially seemed destined for a career in music, even receiving some advanced training in Paris, but later decided to follow the same calling as his father - that of becoming a pastor.

He was educated in Theology at the University of Strasbourg from 1893, was awarded a doctoral degree in 1899, and was ordained as the curate of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Strasbourg in 1900. A year later he became an official of the theological seminary of St. Thomas in that city - his own old college. His authorship of "The Quest for the Historical Jesus" (1906) brought him celebrity as a theological scholar.

Albert Schweitzer also gained international repute as an accomplished organist and authority on organ construction. His best-known musicological work, Johann Sebastian Bach, was published in French in 1905 and rewritten in German in 1908; an English translation appeared in 1911. In this work he emphasized the religious nature of Bach's music and advocated the simple, undistorted style of performing Bach's works that was accepted afterward as the standard type of presentation.

Following on from his reading about the medical needs of Africans in the Congo he decided to train in medicine so that he could serve as a medical missionary rather than as a pastor and between 1905-1913 he duly studied medicine and surgery at the University of Strasbourg.

He went to Lambaréné, French Equatorial Africa (now in Gabon), as a medical missionary accompanied by his new wife in 1913 under the aegis of the Paris Missionary Society. He set up a hospital based round an old chicken house where he cared for some 2000 patients during his first year.

In 1917-1918 Schweitzer, as a German national, was interned in France but wrote, during this period, two volumes of a projected philosophical study of civilization, The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization and Civilization and Ethics (both 1923; trans. 1923). Concerned in these volumes with ethical thought in history, Schweitzer contended that modern civilization is in decay because it lacks the will to love. He suggested that people should develop a philosophy based on what he termed "reverence for life," embracing with compassion all forms of life.

Schweitzer remained in Europe until 1924, when he returned to Lambaréné. In spite of many obstacles, he rebuilt his hospital and equipped it to provide care for thousands of Africans, including 300 lepers. He returned frequently to Europe to lecture and give organ recitals. His performances earnt substantial fees which were used in the building of better facilities at Lambaréné. Much money also flowed in by way of donation.

In another theological study "The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle" (1930; trans. 1931), he examined the New Testament from the eschatological viewpoint of its reputed authors.

In 1949 Albert he visited the United States and in 1952 he received the Nobel Peace Prize to add to such other recognitions as the Goethe prize of Frankfurt and numerous honorary doctorates awarded by Universities.

The monies associated with the Nobel Prize were expended towards the accomodation of persons afflicted with leprosy at Lambaréné.

In the early 1960's the medical mission at Lambaréné could accomodate some five hundred patients-in-residence.

Albert Schweitzer died September 4, 1965 and was buried in the grounds of the medical mission to which he had devoted his life. He was ninety years of age at the time and had remained actively involved in the medical mission at Lambaréné for almost fifty years.