

'Reverence for Life'—Philosophy of Dr. Schweitzer

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Lambarene, Gabon — (RNS)—Albert Schweitzer, hailed as one of the outstanding men of this century, was buried here in a simple and quiet ceremony on the day following his death, Sept. 4, at the age of 90.

Workers and patients from his famed jungle hospital gathered along the banks of the Ogooue River as the body of the great physician, humanitarian, philosopher, scholar and musician was lowered in a plain wooden coffin into a grave marked by a cross he had made himself. The grave was next to an urn containing the ashes of his wife, who died in 1957.

Falling ill from exhaustion two weeks earlier, Dr. Schweitzer gradually weakened. His death was attributed to circulatory ailments brought on by advanced age.

With the passing of the jungle doctor—the winner of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders around the globe joined sumptuous figures in paying tribute to his long and varied life.

Among them, Archbishop Arthur Michael Ramsey of Canterbury, called Dr. Schweitzer "one of the great Christians of our time, or of any time," and Pope Paul VI expressed hope that the famed humanitarian's "fabled example" might always be a fruitful way for numerous others toward the cause of human and Christian fraternity.

At Lambarene, where the great missionary said he felt "at home" and where he chose to die, work at the hospital continued under the direction of his assistant, Dr. Walter Munn, 32, and Dr. Schweitzer's only daughter, Mrs. Rhena Eckert, as administrator.

The staff of the hospital includes about a dozen doctors and two dozen European nurses, who work as nurses with 25 native helpers.

Universally esteemed, Dr. Schweitzer this year was the recipient of tributes from around the globe as he reached his 90th birthday on Jan. 14. "This is the best birthday of my life," he said, acknowledging the gifts brought to him and the many special events held in his honor. He was noticeably moved by a radio organ recital of Bach music brought to Lambarene from Kayersberg, France, in the Alsace section, by the French and Gabonese radio networks. An outstanding organist in earlier years, Dr. Schweitzer was a leading authority on Bach.

Among his remarks on his birthday, Dr. Schweitzer alluded to criticism of his jungle hospital, called unsanitary and overcrowded and where family members accompany patients and cook and help care for them.

"Africans showed me the way," the doctor said. "At first I wanted to build a hospital like those in Europe. But Africans—two simple laborers—convinced me that here the conditions are different and necessities are different. I have built an African hospital for Africans."

One of the most honored of men in his own lifetime, Dr. Schweitzer was the subject of admiration by men of many religions. Father Dominique Pire, the Belgian Dominican priest who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1938, named one of his German villages for homeless refugees for the illustrious missionary.

In February 1960, students of Hebrew University in Jerusalem attended a mass meeting in Dr. Schweitzer's honor at which a special tribute was paid by the famed scholar, Dr. Martin Ruber. Dr. Ruber, at that time, also said that he had been a friend of Dr. Schweitzer for 65 years.

The son of a Lutheran minister, Dr. Schweitzer first embarked on a scholastic career that included organ lessons and theological instruction. He later attained doctor's degrees in medicine, philosophy and theology.

Pontiff Extols 'Noble Life' Of Dr. Schweitzer

Castel Gandolfo, Italy — (RNS)—Pope Paul VI sent a telegram of sympathy immediately on learning of the death of Dr. Albert Schweitzer at his jungle hospital in Lambarene, Gabon.

Addressed to Madame Rhena Schweitzer-Eckert, daughter of the world-renowned medical missionary, the Pope's message was relayed through Amleto Giovanni Cardinal Cicognani, Vatican Secretary of State. It read:

"His Holiness sadly affected at the death of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, whose noble life he esteemed. Expresses to you his heartfelt sympathy. Earnestly recommends to the Divine mercy the pious and generous soul of your father and expresses the hope that his noble example, on which a great number of missionaries have happily built their lives, may be ever fruitful in the number of followers for the benefit of human and Christian brotherhood."

Among his many books—which included two biographies of Bach, a treatise on the art of organ-building, several volumes on Africa, philosophical works and studies of Jesus and St. Paul—his "The Quest for the Historical Jesus," published in 1910, established Dr. Schweitzer as an important, if controversial, theologian.

In the book, Dr. Schweitzer said Jesus could not be detached from his time and believed that He would rule over a kingdom of God to come in His own time. "The truth is," Dr. Schweitzer wrote, "it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within man, who is significant for our time."

He also wrote: "Any one who has accustomed himself to regard the life of any living creature as worthless is in danger of arriving also at the idea of worthless human lives, the idea which is playing so disastrous a part in the thought of our time."



In Africa, Dr. Schweitzer often journeyed far to aid a sick or wounded native.

At the age of 30, Dr. Schweitzer dedicated himself "to the direct service of humanity" and decided to become a physician and go to Africa. After six years of studying medicine at the University of Strasbourg and a period of internship he gave a series of lectures and organ concerts to raise money.

He was married in 1912 to the former Helen Bresslau. She became a nurse to help him in his new career and they set off together for Africa. The early years were ones of hardship, building the hospital and overcoming native superstitions and fears. Also, during World War I, he was interned by the French as an enemy alien. He was classified as an alien because Alsace-Lorraine then was German territory.

During his internment, Dr. Schweitzer worked on his book on the mysticism of St. Paul. After the armistice, when Alsace-Lorraine reverted to France, he became a French citizen and for the next six years remained in Europe giving lectures and concerts and studying obstetrics, dentistry and tropical hygiene.

Returning to Africa in 1924, the Schweitzers found the hospital in ruins and set about building a new one. This time he was accompanied by several European doctors and nurses.

In the hospital, Dr. Schweitzer's simple "reverence for life" philosophy was vividly seen. Animals and insects were left alone and at one point a construction project was stopped in order not to disturb a nest of ants.

The doctor once summarized his philosophy in this way: "A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help..."

Dr. Schweitzer—who in 1949 was saluted as one of the great men of the century and in 1963 was named in a Gallup Poll as one of the 10 most admired world personages—died with his face "showing peace," his daughter said.



In 1959 Dr. Schweitzer met for the first time with Father Dominique Georges Pire, O.P., at the famed Belgian priests' villa in Alsace, France. Father Pire and Dr. Schweitzer both received Nobel Peace Prizes.

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"The passing of Dr. Schweitzer is a terrible grief to us all but in his spirit and memory we shall carry on to the best of our abilities the work in the hospital which he built and loved."

Expressing gratitude for the many expressions of sympathy received at Lambarene, she added: "Much remains to be done to bring the hospital further toward goals which Dr. Schweitzer set for us, but with your continued encouragement and help we hope to succeed."

At the graveside, Dr. Munn conducted the simple ceremony requested by Dr. Schweitzer.

"God has called him back," Dr. Munn said. "The great doctor was like a father. We want to continue his work here in his spirit."

White staff members sang the German hymn, Ach Bleib Mit Deiner Gnade (Rest with your grace). And Albert Bongo, representing Gabon President Leon M'ba, hailed Dr. Schweitzer as "the oldest and most famous Gabonese."

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Canadians Ask Dialogue With Church

Vancouver, B.C.—(RNS)—The Anglican Church of Canada approved measures which would initiate direct conversations with the Roman Catholic Church at the 22nd General Synod here.

In a report with implementing resolutions, the Synod's Committee on Anglican-Roman Catholic relations said that a "remarkable improvement" in relations between the two Churches prompted the need for talks.

The measures approved at a joint session of the Upper and Lower Houses of the Synod urged in part:

"1. That we seek to initiate direct conversations with the Roman Catholic Church in this country..."

"2. That this committee should continue its function of promoting good relations between the Anglicans and Roman Catholic Churches, and of increasing dialogue and encounter with Roman Catholics..."

The measures asked Archbishop Howard H. Clark, Primate of All Canada, and the House of Bishops—the Upper House of the Synod—to set up a "means of liaison." This would be in keeping with a recent Roman Catholic action appointing two of the bishops to act in a similar capacity.

During discussion of the committee report, Archbishop Clark observed that "our prayers go to the Roman Catholic Church and especially the Fathers of the Vatican Council... and we pray that God will show them the way to unity which makes visible our oneness in Christ."

Other members of the Synod spoke in cordial terms of the growing rapport with the Catholic Church, notably in Montreal and Quebec.

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In Africa, Dr. Schweitzer often journeyed far to aid a sick or wounded native.

Prelate Cites Need in Housing Law, 'Comply with Spirit and Letter'

Washington, D.C.—(RNS)—Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle of Washington told a congregation at the annual Labor Day Mass at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart here that "it will do very little good for Washington to have its non-discriminatory housing ordinance unless

"the citizens of this community are prepared to comply voluntarily with the spirit as well as the letter of its provisions."

Technically, persons offering housing are forbidden to re-

fuse a qualifying Negro the right of occupancy. Although the law was approved after a lengthy battle, strict enforcement of it is difficult in a city whose population is approximately 50 per cent Negro.

Archbishop O'Boyle said one of the major problems in administering social justice in the nation's capital is "mass poverty in the midst of plenty." He tied this with the problem of racial injustice which he said afflicts the city.

"By way of example," he said, "let me cite the problem of providing adequate and non-discriminatory housing, and its relation to the alarming breakdown in family life which we are witnessing today in this and other cities."

"We now have a fair housing ordinance in the District of Columbia. So far, so good. But this ordinance will fail to achieve its objective unless we, the citizens of this community, are prepared to comply voluntarily with the spirit as well as the letter of its provisions."

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