

Success of Albert

by Mike Tucker *

Albert Schweitzer was born in 1875. He was a sickly child who was slow to read and write and was a poor scholar. As he grew up, he forced himself to master subjects that were particularly difficult, such as Hebrew. He turned out to be a genuine music prodigy, playing the organ at age eight, and by nine, he was substituting for the regular organist in a church service.

By early manhood, Schweitzer had several professional lives proceeding concurrently. At the University of Strasbourg, he earned his first Ph. D. in philosophy, then another in theology, followed by one in music theory. By the time he was thirty, he had a successful career as a concert organist and was publishing a stream of books in selected fields. Suddenly, one day, he decided to stop his academic career in order to study medicine. It was a dramatic move inspired by a decision to devote the rest of his life to being a missionary. His decision was made after he read a magazine article about the Congo. "While we are preaching to these people about religion," the article had said, "they are suffering and dying before our eyes from physical maladies."

Schweitzer knew what he wanted to do and began to lay plans to go to Africa. Friends and academicians protested: If Africa needed help, let Schweitzer raise the money necessary to increase their quality of living. He certainly had more ability than to wash lepers with his own hands, they believed.

Someone once said, "Success is doing what you want to do because you feel called to do it." Others questioned Schweitzer's dreams, but he maintained a plan of action that he knew would enhance his life. No one could take away what he believed was right for him.

Schweitzer fell in love with Helen Bresslau, the daughter of a Jewish historian. His proposal to her was, to say the least, unique: "I am studying to be a doctor in Africa. Would you be willing to grow old with me and spend the rest of your life with me in the jungle?"

Helen's response was not of the usual nature. "I love you, Albert. Therefore, I will become a nurse. You will not be able to go without me." So, on Good Friday of 1913, Schweitzer and his wife departed for a lifetime of service in French Equatorial Africa. In over 50 years of service, Albert Schweitzer became a legend in his own time.

For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:6-8

With Love,
Mike

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Faith Moment

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