



0. Early Life of Albert Schweitzer - Story Preface

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As a child, Albert Schweitzer showed a talent and passion for playing the organ and was accepted as a pupil by some of Europe's finest musicians. He later became the world's leading expert on organ building.

Attending the University of Strasbourg, he received a Doctorate in Philosophy in 1899. In 1900 he obtained an advanced degree in theology and soon was appointed as principal of St. Thomas College in Strasbourg.

At the age of 21, Albert happened to [read an article in a French magazine](#) indicating an urgent need for physicians in the French colony of Gabon in Africa. Of all the men and women who read this article, none was more affected than Albert. He knew immediately what he needed to do with the rest of his life. He later wrote about this turning point in his life:

It struck me as inconceivable that I should be allowed to lead such a happy life while I saw so many people around me struggling with sorrow and suffering...One brilliant summer morning at Günsbach, during the Whitsuntide holidays - it was in 1896 - as I awoke, the thought came to me that I must not accept this good fortune as a matter of course, but must give something in return.

While outside the birds sang I reflected on this thought, and before I had gotten up I came to the conclusion that until I was thirty I could consider myself justified in devoting myself to scholarship and the arts, but after that I would devote myself directly to serving humanity. (See [Out of My Life and Thought: An Autobiography](#) - Chapter 9, "I Resolve to Become a Jungle Doctor," at [page 82](#).)

It was at this time he promised God that the last part of his life would be dedicated to mankind.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

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