

Reverence for Life



**The life of Dr. Albert Schweitzer
1875 - 1965**



The green valley and the village of Günsbach where Albert grew up.



Born in 1875 in the Alsace, here he is aged 16 or so, with his family.

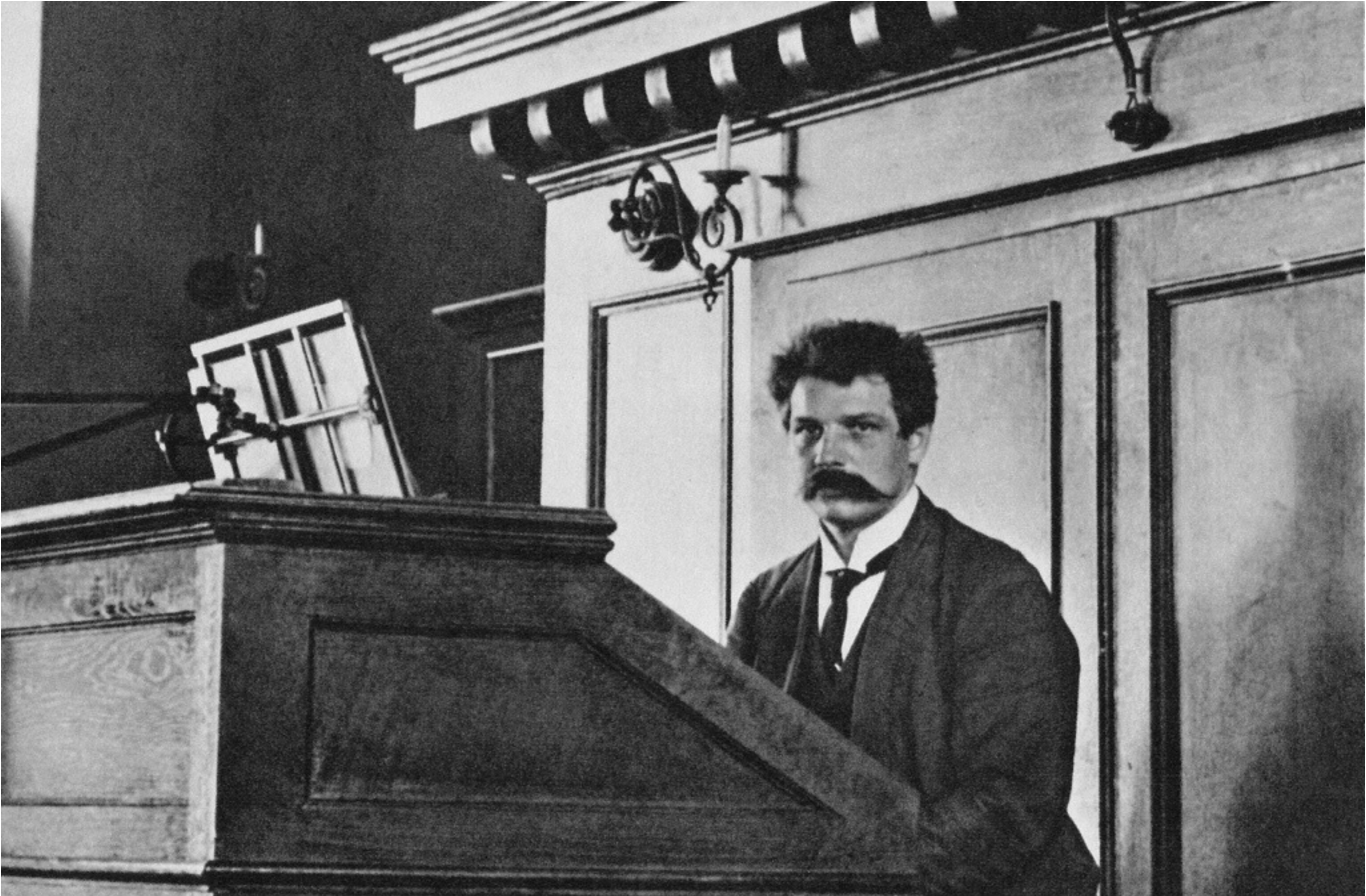


When he was 21, Schweitzer made a decision which shaped the rest of his life. One fine Spring morning, looking out across the beautiful green valley, he thought that he was a very lucky man - and he made a promise to himself:

He would continue his academic career until he was 30 and then find some way of serving humanity without having to use words.



Here you see the 29 year old university professor of philosophy and theology and housemaster with his students.



As his 30th birthday approached he decided to go to Africa as a Doctor.
He gave organ concerts to earn money to build a hospital there.



8 years later he qualified as a medical doctor, married his friend Helene Bresslau and together they sailed for Africa in 1913.



Albert and Helen settled in Lambarene, in a country called Gabon.
They founded a hospital there.



Soon after their first arrival in Africa, Helene and Albert learnt how to navigate on the river Ogowe in a dug-out canoe.



They started treating their first patients in a chicken coup.



Within months, hospital buildings at the river's edge, where patients arriving by canoe with their families had good access, had started to take shape.



Albert Schweitzer the builder up on the ladder.



Sometimes you just have to see for yourself to decide how to proceed!



Reconstructing a stove for boiling hospital linen.



The vegetable garden at the hospital in the dry season - when the river has receded and exposed the fertile planting banks.



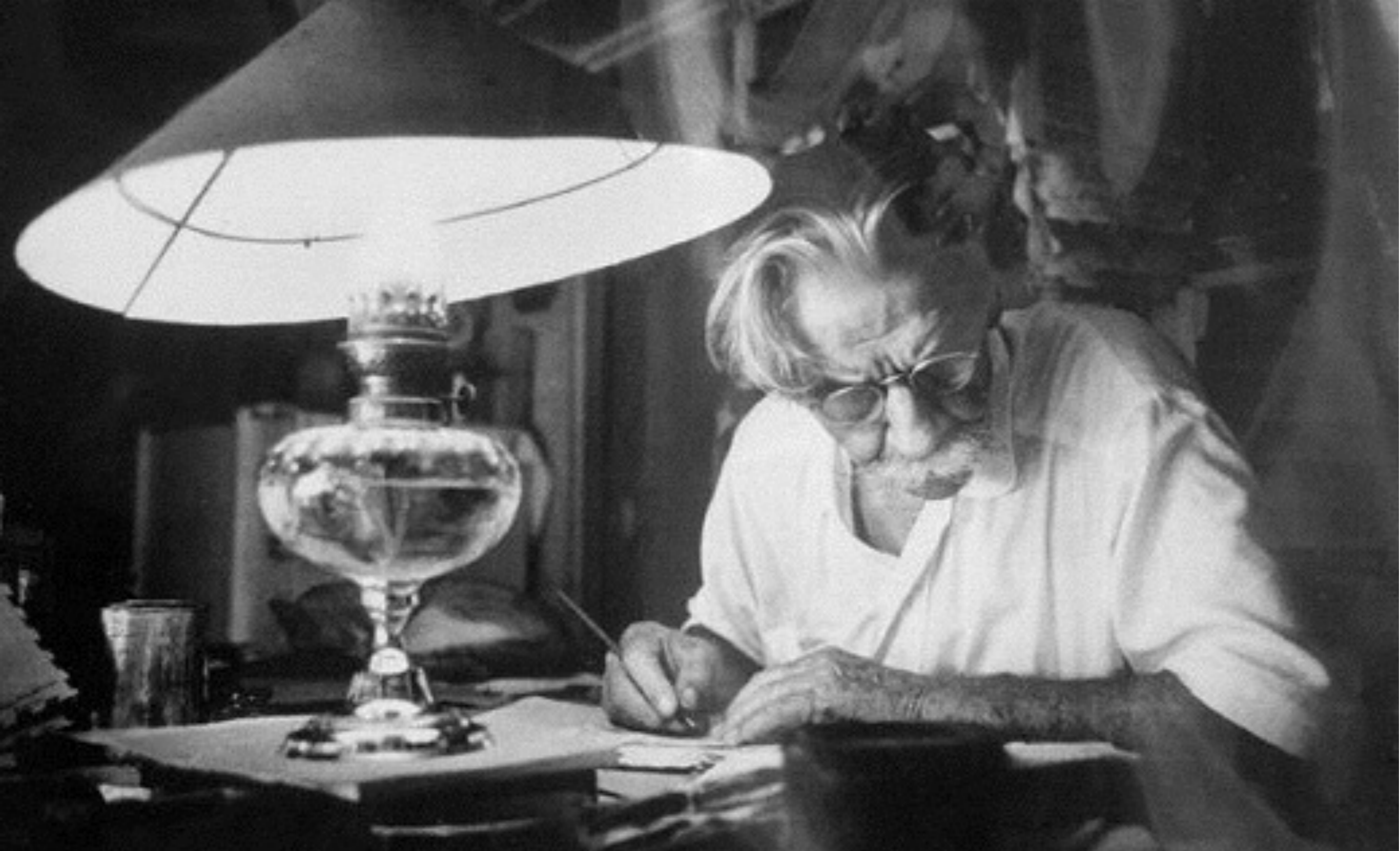
A typical scene in Lambarene hospital in 1963.



From
his early youth,
Albert saw himself as a
citizen of the world,
a member of the
whole human
family.

Now,
looking back at
Europe from the depth
of the African jungle, he
recognised the deep-
seated problems facing
humankind.

And he developed
a way forward through
'Reverence for Life'.



Having given up a flourishing academic career to become a medical doctor, and to finance, build and run a hospital, he nevertheless found time to continue with his philosophical writings for the rest of his long life.



Schweitzer
looked out into
the world 50 years
ago.

What
kind of a
world will we
be looking out into
in 50 years time?

And what will you
be telling your
grandchildren
then ?



The Lambarene hospital Schweitzer founded continues to flourish – here is the maternity unit in 2003.

