

A Giant Called N'Tschambi

The *Perspective* for Wednesday chronicled the laudatory life of Albert Schweitzer, medical missionary to Africa. An incident that was widely reported gives an important insight into the man's philosophy and practice.

One day the Pahouins, a tribe of Africa, brought a giant native in chains to Dr. Schweitzer's hospital. In a fit of madness, N'Tschambi had killed a woman. Reaching down to help the man to the landing, Schweitzer saw fear and sadness in his face.

When others refused his order to remove the man's chains, Schweitzer did it himself. He then explained sedatives to N'Tschambi, and the fearful man gratefully accepted them. That night, he slept for the first time without nightmares.

N'Tschambi became a model patient, and soon Schweitzer gave him periods of freedom outside his room, to which he often returned voluntarily as he became agitated. Still, any task he was given, he tackled with a fierce energy that frightened the staff.

On one occasion, Schweitzer gave him an axe and asked him to help him make a clearing. N'Tschambi drew back in alarm, stating he was afraid to touch the axe for fear of what he might do with it. Schweitzer replied, "If I'm not afraid, why should you be?"

The two then went into the jungle as the entire hospital watched. Hours later, they returned, N'Tschambi's big body dripping with sweat but a radiant smile on his lips. The giant inside him had been felled by kindness and the faith another human being had put in him.

Most of us are like N'Tschambi in that we tend to respond positively to the faith that others place in us. Such a principle becomes important as we practice human relationships.

There is another application, as well, to the story about N'Tschambi and Dr. Schweitzer's response to him. When confronted with a Goliath-sized problem, as was Dr. Schweitzer, how do you react – "He's too big to hit" or, like David, "He's too big to miss?"

--Beecher Hunter