

In his major autobiographical work, *Out of My Life and Thought*, Albert Schweitzer, the ethicist, philosopher, medical doctor, and musician, wrote, "People are ethical only when life as such is sacred to them, the life of plants and animals as well as the life of their fellow humans, and when they devote themselves helpfully to all life that is in need of help." For over half a century Albert Schweitzer practiced this ethic, which he termed reverence for life, as a medical doctor and humanitarian at Lambaréné in Gabon in equatorial Africa.

The recipient of the Chapman University Albert Schweitzer Award of Excellence for 2004, Ria Fennema, director of the Spirit of Faith Children's Centre in Kenya, reflects the spirit of Albert Schweitzer in devoting herself to human lives in need of help. Founded by a missionary, Dick West, the Spirit of Faith Children's Center is an orphanage and school for children who have great need and great promise. The children sleep four or five to a bed and rise each day to milk cows, tend chickens, wash clothes, and attend classes. The stories of these children are deeply moving. John Githinji and his seven brothers and sisters lost both parents to brutal murders. David Mbugua's father died of an illness, and his mother suffered from mental illness. Stephen Muteria Mburu lost his mother to malaria; his father had died eleven years earlier. Jane Nduta's mother committed suicide shortly after her birth, and her father died three years later. Beatrice Wanjiru's unmarried mother and older brother died of cerebral malaria. Patrick Karongo Kaberi's mother was killed by his father. All of these young people, and many more, have lived at the Spirit of Faith Children's Centre. All of them have gone to school there. Patrick currently is a student at Chapman University.

A saying of Albert Schweitzer is displayed on our campus close to the bust in front of Argyros Forum. The saying is this: "Search and see whether there is not some place where you may invest your humanity." Ria, through your work with the Spirit of Faith Children's Centre, you have found a precious place to invest your humanity. You have found your own Lambaréné, and as a result the lives of children and young people are being changed forever. We thank you for your dedication and your work, and we acknowledge the profound significance of your work as we honor you today.

Marvin Meyer
 Director, Chapman University Albert Schweitzer Institute

Albert Schweitzer Award of Excellence

The Award of Excellence has been given since 1982 at the September convocation at Chapman University to an individual or organization that exemplifies Schweitzer's ethics of reverence for life and his dedication to a life of service.

Previous Recipients of the Schweitzer Award of Excellence		
2004	Ria Fennema	The Spirit of Faith Children's Centre
2003	Mary McAnena	Mary's Kitchen
2002	Harmon and Nadine Wilkinson	Chapman Trustee; advocates of peace and justice
2001	Habitat for Humanity	
2001	Southern Poverty Law Center	
2000	American Friends Service Committee	Quaker organization
1999	Givat Haviva	Center for Jewish and Arab discussion and education
1998	Fabiola Letelier	Human rights lawyer from Chile
1997	Dr. Helen Caldicott	Pediatrician and social activist
1996	Dr. W. Larimer Mellon, Jr. (posthumously) and Mrs. Gwen Mellon	Founders of the Schweitzer Hospital, Haiti
1995	Dr. Frederick and Mrs. Claske Franck	Dentist and artist
1994	Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis, Minnesota	
1993	Dr. Fred Hollows	Australian ophthalmologist

1992	Dr. Theodor and Mrs. Carmen Binder	Founders of Schweitzer Hospitals in Peru and Mexico and leaders of the Schweitzer Hospital in Paraguay
1991	Rhena Schweitzer-Miller	Daughter of Albert and Helene Schweitzer
1990	Ginetta Sagan	Writer
1989	Lee and Dottie Ellerbrock	Workers at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital, Lambarene
1986	Drs. Kurt and Alice Bergel	Chapman University professors
1984	Valerie Scudder	Chapman trustee and benefactress
1983	Norman Cousins	Journalist
1982	Linus Pauling	Chemist and social activist