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Preface and Acknowledgements

Ned Paterson was one of the great characters of central Africa. He was a cheerful eccentric, a mischievous clergyman with a salty wit who loved to startle people and played outrageous practical jokes. He was a comic cleric who showed the world a happy Christ of love and gentle laughter. In addition he helped unleash the flood of modern Zimbabwean art, by teaching and encouragement.

The arts, he wrote, express the hopes and aspiration of people. He saw how great is the human need for loving appreciation, how easy it is to censure and hurt. The God of love is one who appreciates and enjoys us despite our faults. We serve Him by encouraging and taking joy in the work of one another. We bring His love to one another by encouragement, praise and caring.

Priest, artist, archaeologist, linguist, teacher, writer and family man, Paterson was a young man all his life. He brought into it gaiety, energy, enthusiasm, integrity, and love of God and men, women and children. He knew the child in us never dies. We all need at times to fool around a bit, for part of us is a child all our days. He enjoyed clowning himself, and if he seemed at times ludicrous, he did not mind so long as his clowning gave others a bit of fun. A friendly kiss for a majestic, world-weary matron, or a cheerful smile at a wedding or a funeral helped the sun shine a little brighter. He would have loved the laughter at his own funeral.

He won the love of all sorts of people by his cheerful simplicity of life. He accepted people for what they were, and accepted himself. He knew he had many faults, but accepted them and lived with them. He did not make claims for himself or try to

live selfishly at the cost of others. He did not thrust forward but was content to be himself; to live cheaply and honestly. He did not envy others' wealth or happiness but lived simply within his means and built up the self-respect of the people he met. He loved to make people laugh. Even in old age, blind and in a lot of pain, 'he always had a twinkle in his eye'. He was one of the most successful of his profession in inspiring local people to become priests and join him in the service of his Master.

What made Paterson the man he was? His Scottish poverty and close family taught him to value love and religion. The nearness of death in his childhood taught him not to fear it nor to place much value on possessions. He had a gift of caricature which was fortunately encouraged, and firm parents who taught him to value time. His mother once said 'What have I done that God gave me a mad son?' and there was one way in which she certainly had made him odd man out in the family. The Patersons were almost as fervent Scots as they were Christians. Ned's parents named his brothers James, Douglas, Leslie and Gordon — great old Scottish royal and noble names, from royalty, six earldoms, a duchy, and a marquisate. But in 1895, when he was born, the line of Queen Victoria had just been further secured through the birth of Prince Edward (VIII) to Prince Edward (VII)'s son George (V). Ned was given the English names Edward and George. He retained a fierce antipathy to the British monarchy till he met George VI's Scottish queen Elizabeth, later a valued ally of the arts of Central Africa especially Zimbabwe.

A book on Ned was first proposed about 1953. In 1972 the Rev R. Hambrook of USPG drafted a manuscript but died soon

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after. About 1980 the draft was brought back to Zimbabwe and a year or two later I was invited by Ned's widow, now Mrs Kathleen Garrs, to write a completely new biography making use of the Hambrook manuscript and many other sources.

My particular gratitude is due to Mrs Kathleen Garrs; to Mrs Mary Ball, Ned's eldest daughter; to their husbands, Jack Garrs and Barrie Ball; to Lady Violet le Gros Clark who lent me many marvellous letters; to Fr Albert Plangger and Lady Margaret Tredgold without whose driving energy and enthusiasm the project might never have been completed; to Canons R.A. Ewbank and R.H. Clark; to the late Douglas Paterson (Ned's brother); Ned's former pupils and students; and to the loving memories of Fr Reginald Hambrook and Dr Nicholas Paterson whose short life shone with the brilliance of a loving star.

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As this is perhaps my first publication, my gratitude is recorded to my parents. May they live long enough to see this work in print and to enjoy it.

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