

Paterson of Cyrene: A Biography By David A. C. Walker. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1985, xii, 85 pp., illus., Z\$13.23, ISBN 0-86922-340-2.

Edward (Ned) Paterson was born in 1895 in Aberdeen, went to South Africa at the age of five and lived his early life in Noupoort in the Karoo and Benoni near Johannesburg. During World War I, he served in Namibia and East Africa. After this, he went to London to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts (1920-3). He then returned to Benoni. It was at this time that this former agnostic became a Christian, allegedly because he considered the Bible so absurd that it could only have such influence if it were true! Then, influenced by the Benoni vicar Edward Paget, he began his ministry with the Anglican Church. For the next fifteen years he worked in South Africa, as a railway missionary, at a training college for Blacks near Pietersburg, and Potchefstroom. During this time, his interest was in the Blacks and the underprivileged generally; he also put his artistic talent and training to good use in beautifying church buildings.

In 1938 he was invited by Paget, by then the Bishop of Southern Rhodesia, to start a school for Africans near Bulawayo. Thus began Cyrene. Though with unpretentious beginnings, and experiencing all sorts of problems, the school flourished artistically. By June 1944, Cyrene was holding a local art exhibition. More exhibitions followed, both local and national, and one was even taken to South Africa. Added publicity came during the Royal Visit in 1947. In 1949 a major exhibition of Cyrene art was held, first in London, and later throughout Britain, to much acclaim.

Paterson left Cyrene in 1953. From then until his death in 1974 he directed other artistic institutions. First, he taught art at Chirodzo School in Mbare. Here the art, though quite different from that of Cyrene, was again of such a standard that a consignment of paintings was exhibited widely in America and finally given to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. Secondly, he directed a government art centre called Nyarutsetso in Highfield (1961-71); here he taught 2,000 pupils a day, and, for the first time, girls as well as boys. Finally, he supervised the Farayi Art Centre in Mbare Musika (1971-4), now known as the Canon Paterson Craft Centre.

Paterson was something of a phenomenon — artist, archaeologist, silversmith, essayist, poet, teacher, priest. He was also something of a 'character'. He was always boyish, full of high spirits — by all accounts, April Fool's Day was a time to stay particularly clear of him. He was very human: he was so irascible that he could come down from the altar to wallop the boys, and at a time of rage could dismiss the entire staff at Cyrene, only to forget the whole business when he cooled down. His humanity also explains his warmth, both within his family and for all his pupils, even the 98 per cent he knew would never be great artists. It also explains his religious life, his ecumenical spirit, long before that was fashionable, and his unpretentious, anti-ritualistic, inclusive spirituality.

The book is not just a personal portrait. It also tells of Paterson's place in art in Zimbabwe. It mentions the people who influenced him most: Ruskin, William Morris, Laurence Binyon, Eric Gill. It explains his philosophy of art, his encouragement just to 'fill the page', his expectation that only a few could produce great art but that all would derive from the experience real benefit for practical living. Paterson's philosophy of art is well expressed here in a section (pp. 82-4) outlining the differences between his approach and that of Frank McEwen, the

first director of what is now the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. It describes what constitutes Cyrene art, and what distinguishes it from other 'schools' such as that of the Serima art fostered by Paterson's contemporary, Fr Groeber. This book assesses Paterson's influence, and records the further work of his best-known pupils, artists like Job Kekana, Adomech Moyo and Sam Songo. It tells of the impact overseas of Cyrene art — it is of considerable interest to read the many excerpts (pp. 53–5) from the critical acclaim given the London exhibition in 1949.

The book is well produced and the text is ably supported with illustrations. This is a generous tribute to someone who was both an intriguing personality and an important influence in Zimbabwe's recent cultural history.

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Now I Call him Brother *By Alec Smith*. Basingstoke, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984, 128 pp., £1.75 (p/b), ISBN 0-551-01079-7.

This is the personal story of Ian Smith's son, Alec. A problem schoolboy, he became a disastrous student at Rhodes University where he immersed himself in student rebellion and the drug culture, spectacularly failing his exams and being expelled at the end of his first year. Back in Rhodesia, he did little, spending his time 'high' on drugs. His father — 'to "clean up" his hippie son' (p. 22) — ensured that he did not evade his military call-up. He hated his military training; the high point of this period was being caught in possession of drugs and convicted by a military court. After this training he made his living pushing drugs, but was eventually caught smuggling marijuana in from Mozambique. Amid considerable national and international publicity — 'Premier's Son on Drugs Charge' (p. 35) — he was convicted, but escaped with a relatively light fine.

Then came conversion to Christianity and Moral Re-Armament (MRA). This brought about a personal change of heart, some insight into the injustice of Rhodesian society, and dedication to reconciliation within the country. At an MRA Conference on Reconciliation, held at the University of Rhodesia in 1975, his recounting of the story of his conversion brought about a similar experience in the life of Black nationalist, Arthur Kanodereka. Soon afterwards, Smith and Kanodereka began to tour the country preaching reconciliation, using their friendship as a sign of what could happen nationwide if others took the same step. Apart from time spent on military service and at MRA headquarters in Switzerland (where he met his Norwegian wife), Smith worked with Kanodereka until the latter's murder in 1978. Smith has continued working for reconciliation, since 1981 helping to unite the three former warring armies into the new Zimbabwean army.

Basically, the book chronicles a conversion to Christianity. It tells of the previous dissolute life, the initial reluctance to change, the personal reorientation, and the subsequent involvement. He admits that he became 'higher' on Christianity than he ever was on drugs — 'my father did ask me one day if I ever did anything in moderation!' (p. 47). The book's theme, as the back cover explains, is 'how God can take a dedicated life and help to change the course of