Patrick Matsikenyiri (July 27, 1937–January 15, 2021)

Patrick Matsikenyiri was born in Biriri, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and died in Mutare, Zimbabwe, near his home village a few kilometers from the border of Mozambique, as a result of complications due to the COVID-19 virus. His career included virtually all aspects of church music: singing, choral directing, composition, hymnal editor, festival leader, professor, and enlivener of global songs in venues around the world.

Patrick was a headmaster for schools for many years, and he was deeply involved with the leaders of Zimbabwe's movement for black majority rule. A Methodist layman, he was an active contributor to United Methodist church music in Zimbabwe. Among his most important contributions to the church in his beloved country was involvement in the hymnal, *Ngoma: dze United Methodist Church Ye Zimbabwe* (1964, 1995), where, given his encyclopedic knowledge of hymns, he was acknowledged in the Foreword for "noting mistakes in some songs and missed lines and verses in some songs." John Kaemmer and Robert Kauffman, groundbreaking Methodist music missionaries to Zimbabwe during the 1960s, recognized and cultivated his musical, compositional, and leadership gifts. Thus, Patrick's ministry in Zimbabwe expanded to include organizing annual Methodist choir competitions and directing Wabvuwi—a Methodist men's group whose repertoire included hybrid styles that combined western and traditional music—composing many songs himself. He served as conference music director for The United Methodist Church (UMC) in Zimbabwe from 1968 until leaving in 1990 to study in the United States.

In 1993, he completed undergraduate (B.M.E.) and graduate (M.M.E.) degrees at Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, Virginia. He then returned to Mutare, Zimbabwe, as a music lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities at the newly opened Africa University, a post he held until retirement in 2002. He developed a four-year music education major program beginning in 1996, the first of its kind in Zimbabwe. Choirs from Africa University appeared at numerous United Methodist annual conferences under his direction. He compiled *Sing! Zimbabwe* (1998), a collection of songs from Zimbabwean churches with Maggie Hamilton under the auspices of Zimbabwean Council of Churches and the Christian Aid Office in the UK.

Patrick gained international recognition through his work with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the United Methodist Church in the U.S. In 1979, just before the civil war for black rule ended in Zimbabwe. He was invited by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to Geneva to plan music for the 1980 Mission and Evangelism Conference in Melbourne, Australia. Continuing on the WCC worship committee in 1982, he served as *animateur* (music leader) with his friends I-to Loh and Pablo Sosa for the WCC Sixth Assembly (1983) in Vancouver, a watershed event in the history of WCC gatherings that fully integrated non-Western Christian song in the assembly's worship. A reprise of this event was held by the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada at its annual conference in Vancouver in 1999. In 1998 Patrick Matsikenyiri prepared the conference choir for the WCC Eighth Assembly held in Harare, Zimbabwe, and served again as animateur.

He had served as a member of the Global Praise Working Group for the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries, contributing songs to three *Global Praise* volumes, compiling the *Africa Praise Songbook: Songs from Africa* (1998), and conducting the companion CD recorded at Africa University. This publication was followed by *Njalo (Always): A Collection of 16 Hymns in the African Tradition*, edited by Dan Damon (2006).

Patrick Matsikenyiri received an honorary doctorate from Adrian College (Michigan) in 1999 and was recognized as a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada at its annual conference in St. Louis in 2018. He is survived by his wife Aves, four children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

--- C. Michael Hawn