



by Mattie Ann Callier-Spears

RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

Psalms 23

Hoping for a Chance to be Somebody

Former Prison Inmate Finds Life Outside Prison
Just As Bad As Inside-Sometimes Worse!

At the age of 41, Patricia Anne Ford believes she is finally getting her life together. In and out of prison since 1976, Pat (as she prefers to be called) claims she has made the unfortunate decision to temporarily disassociate herself from family and friends while she reorganizes her priorities. "I love my family and I want to remain friends with some of my associates. But right now, I must get my own life together and a secluded environment appears to be my best option."

If these are strong words from a family member, one needs only to listen to her reasoning to understand why.

Born in Portland to a single parent household, Pat was introduced early in life to the responsibilities of helping her mother to maintain a family intact.

Her mother married when she was eight months old and gave birth to four other children (a girl and three boys). The once blissful marriage between her parents terminated when she was eight years old, and her mother laboring under the strain of a broken marriage and caring for a born handicapped, entered a life of alcoholism. Thus the burden of caring for three brothers was thrust upon Pat at the "ripe old age" of eight years.

"I did the cooking, the cleaning, the babysitting, the washing of clothes, you name it and I did it", she claims. "If ever a family was earmarked for disintegration, it was mine. But somehow, with the help of the good Lord and strong family ties, we made it."

Pat attended Boise grade school but graduated from Highland. She later attended Jefferson High school but admits that the only goal she had was to get out of school. "In high school, I began smoking 'weed' as a sophomore. After the 'weed', came Robitussen, and eventually, a variety of drugs. I remember at graduation from high school of the graduating class was high on something", she claims.

After school, she worked at a variety of jobs, eventually ending up at channel 2 as a receptionist. One day a visit by a cousin from Los Angeles, California was enough to convince her that the land of sunshine was the place for her and off she went, quitting her job without notice and moving to the city of "glamour."

Shortly after her arrival, she received a call from her mother who informed her that she had been accepted by the Job Corps Program.

While in Job Corps, she enrolled in a beauticians course but developed asthma due to an allergy to the chemicals. She dropped out after 1 1/2 years and returned to Portland, working on various jobs. Eventually, she became a "mule, or drug runner for dealers."



"As a drug runner, you become involved in everything," Pat claims. "I was running drugs, selling drugs, and using drugs. After a while, I became my very best customer. And since my product was heroin, I was soon in a life of deprivation. When my supply was short or out, I began 'boosting' and forging checks to support my habit. By this time, I was in and out of jail on various charges and some how, always appeared before the same judge, who, showing compassion and leniency, always let me off on probation. Finally, in 1979, after years of stealing and drug use, I stood before the same judge who denounced me for trying to destroy my life, losing the respect of family and friends, and betraying his trust in my promises for rehabilitation. He sentenced me to the Oregon Women's Correctional Institute for forgery and burglary and told me to get my life together. Perhaps, if he had sent me to jail on my first or second appearance before him, my life as a law-breaker would have been considerably short."

Pat claims that it was in prison that she learned how to use her talents as check forger "go for the big dollar". "I was forging small checks individual personal accounts. But male inmates taught me how to use my skills to forge corporate payroll checks, and others for larger amounts. Everytime I was re-

leased, I put these newly acquired skills to work-mostly to support my family and drug habit."

According to Pat, prison time was your own. If you wanted to get involved in activities, it was available, if not, you could sleep your entire sentence away. "you are out of your room from 6am until 11pm, except for the 4:30pm head count. You could go virtually anywhere within the walls that you wanted to," she claims.

Eventually, she enrolled in classes to finish some college courses, was assigned to work release and worked for the parole board in Salem. She speaks kindly of former employees Hazel Hayes and Erma Hepburn, whom she credits with helping her to make a very positive adjustment while in prison. She speaks unkindly about some prison officials whom she claims sometimes treats inmates like sub-humans.

She remembers with sorrow one friend who died of brain damage because prison officials thought she was high on drugs.

She blames the system for showing a lack of concern for inmates who upon release are "shown the gate"-many with no way of getting home.

She recalls all too vividly her last trip to prison and getting on her knees and asking God for the help she could not get in prison. Help to rid her body of the drug habit-to be accepted by her family once again-the strength to provide love and security for her teenage son. Pat credits God with answering her prayers and cites as proof her going direct from prison after completing her last sentence to a residence where she is safe from drugs, alcohol, and a life of crime.

She is extremely proud of her son, a Jefferson High School honor student who will be going to college on scholarship to secure his degree in engineering.

She is ever grateful to her mother, who in spite of many past adversities has remained loyal and supportive.

Now active in the church, many volunteer activities, helping recovering alcoholics, drug addicts, and former inmates, she is thankful to God for answering her prayers and giving her another chance to be somebody.

United Methodist News

Changes in U.S. regulations to eliminate higher education scholarships based on race would "undermine years of work and commitment to the empowerment of racial ethnic persons through higher education," the top United Methodist education official said Dec. 14 here.

The Rev. Roger W. Ireson, chief staff executive of the nomination's board of Higher Education and Ministry, made the statement after a government announcement that such scholarships are discriminatory and would be prohibited. The decision, announced Dec. 12 by Michael L. Williams, an assistant secretary for civil rights in the U.S. Department of Education, touched off a firestorm of protest from education and civil rights leaders. After a week of high-level discussions reaching to the White House, the final decision remained uncertain. Dr. Ireson said the Bush administration "seems to have acted in a way that further limits opportunity...to those who have been underserved in the past." The Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, Board of Church and Society general secretary, called the policy "racist" and "regressive" and said it makes a "mockery" of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Richard Rosser, formerly president of United Methodist-related DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind., and now president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, said "a number of attorneys believe (Mr. Williams) to be on thin ice with legal interpretation."

A campaign for a national "Bill of Rights for Employees" was launched Dec. 18 by the American Civil Liberties Union with endorsement by a United Methodist specialist in economic justice.

Ira Glasser, executive director of the ACLU, told a news conference the "lack of civil liberties in the American work place" is a "national scandal." The Rev. George E. Ogle, a program director on the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, said rights of workers have been supported for decades in statements by the denomination and predecessor bodies.

A New Church is Planted In the City of Vancouver, Washington



Rev. Roderick C. Lightner
Pastor

Schedule of Services:

Sunday School 9:45 A.M.
Morning Worship 11:00 A.M.
Evening Worship 6:00 P.M.

Weekly Bible Study to be Announced

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Jesus Loves You!

Allen Temple CME Church



Psalm 34:3

4236 NE Eighth Avenue
(corner of 8th & Skidmore)
Portland, Oregon 97211

(503) 287-0261

Phillip S. Nelson, Pastor

Maranatha Church

4222 N.E. 12th Avenue Portland Oregon

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday School

9:00 A.M.

Morning Worship

10:30 A.M.

Maranatha School of Ministry

6:30 P.M.

Mid Week Service - Wednesday

7:30 P.M.



Rev. Wendell H. Wallace
Senior Pastor

MARANATHA CHURCH

Public Service Announcement

A Christmas Vesper Service under the auspices of the Cathedral choir will be held at Bethel A.M.E. Church, 5828 N.E. 8th Ave., Portland, on Sunday, December 30, 1990 at 6:00 p.m. The program will include Christmas music

selected by Mrs. Rochelle McElroy, director, and a candle lighting service. A free will offering will be taken. Refreshments will be provided at the conclusion of the program. The public is invited. Rev. Milton Green, Pastor.

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church

8101 N. Fiske Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97203

Church Phone: 289-0147

Study Phone: 289-1911

Sunday Service

10:45

Sunday School

9:30

Bible Study

6:00

Evening Service

7:00 P.M.



Pastor, Rev. James C.E. Faulkner

Theme: Whatever you're going to do for the Lord, do it now.

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MT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

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SUNDAY SERVICES
TO

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Bible Study, Wednesdays, 116 N.E. Schuyler
10:30 A.M. and 6:30 P.M.

Radio Ministry each Sunday, 8:00 A.M.-KBMS

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Church Office 116 N.E. Schuyler,

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Betty Cabine
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