

**B**eginning also in Patti's childhood and extending even beyond high school was the weekly influence of Bethany Baptist Church where she was also taught and disciplined by the finest of Christian servants. In God's own mysterious ways, He chose to use the means described in the story just told to capture the spirit of this little girl for eternity.

In 1961, Patti enrolled in Moody Bible Institute to major in Christian Education. She graduated in 1964, married classmate Doug Bastian, and served the Lord as a pastor's wife enjoying ministry to children, youth and women throughout her life. She instilled her love of the Savior into her four children. She was called home to the Savior on Christmas Day, 1996, at the age of fifty-three.

*Out in the highways and byways  
of life,*

*Many are weary and sad;  
Carry the sunshine where darkness is  
rife,  
Making the sorrowing glad.*

*Tell the sweet story of Christ and his  
love,  
Tell of His power to forgive;  
Others will trust him if only you prove  
True, every moment you live.*

*Give as 'twas given to you in your  
need,  
Love as the Master loved you;  
Be to the helpless a helper indeed,  
Unto your mission be true.*

**Chorus**

*Make me a blessing,  
Make me a blessing,  
Out of my life may Jesus shine;  
Make me a blessing,  
O Saviour I pray,  
Make me a blessing to someone today.*

"Make Me a Blessing"  
by Ira B. Wilson, 1880-1950

## The Conversion of Patti Bastian

written November 14, 1996



*Patti about 1951*



## A Testimony to God's Work In the Heart of a Child

“Wolcott,” mumbled the bus driver. There was never much emphasis in the driver's voice for such an insignificant stop along 35th Street. But for those who stepped off the bus it was a world unto itself. On one corner the well-groomed Longfellow Grammar School stood proud and grand, like its namesake, nurturing the lively souls inside who were taught to recite the great poet's works with pride.

Overseeing the playground from across the busy street was a rather large apartment building, for those days, with the typical shop tucked into its front corner. Gus's barber shop supplied one of the many old country touches in the neighborhood. Children peeking over the low, starched, cafe curtains were fascinated by Gus's greyish paintings of European castles. They surrounded the barber as though members of his orchestra as he raised his batons of comb and scissors to begin his snippy tunes around the ears of a neighborhood blue collar.

Even more personality was added to the building by his wife who would tell the resident children of days when the now cemented-in circles on the front stoop held glass “jewels”, and when the back yard had grass and trees and the neighborhood was so nice that you didn't need to lock the doors.

The pride of this infamous crossroads was the new National Foods store with the first automatic doors many people had ever seen. Inside was the new promise of stamp books, premiums and new low prices.

And, on the last corner with prices not so low, was the Mother Goose shoe store with its tantalizing displays of patent leather shoes that

only the better-to-do families could afford. Stamp books and prizes were promised here as well along with the perfect fit, guaranteed by the x-ray machine that let you see the bones in your toes. For Patti, the pretty window displays were an artistic adventure and this one intersection was nearly her entire world.

Then, one year, her world widened. Once a week she could actually depart the school building during the day and march in the care of patrol boys to a local site of religious instruction. Her particular released-time class was held at a nearby Mennonite church that drew upon young, devoted Moody Bible Institute students to teach. Sometimes these marvelous bringers of illustrated stories would be marching along on the other side of the street toting their flannelgraph boards, big picture stories, puppets and Bibles and things beyond imagination. It got to be as exciting as Christmas every week.

The very first day was etched in Patti's memory in two ways. First was the program itself. The hour began with exciting music and even prizes. Then thick, velvet curtains were drawn around teaching areas and a most wonderful lesson begun about the place God was preparing for those whose names were written in His book. She heard about how the books were opened, the Book of Life, and of the judgment. She heard about the New Heaven and New Earth and descriptions of a place filled with things like jasper and crystal and every kind of jewel in a city made of pure gold. The place was so wonderful that the gates of the city were never shut. Oh, did she ever want to get her name in that book.

The second memory from that first day came at the end. Her teacher, Jerry, was called by the director over to the side for a chat that they thought velvet curtains would contain. But, Patti's ears were hearing a discussion of her immediate destiny. Jerry was being asked if he wanted a different assignment since he had only this solitary student, Patti. After a near eternity of silence, Jerry answered that he believed God wanted him to disciple this one little lady. And, that was the beginning of a life-changing course of teaching that would bring Patti to understand the Cross and to love the Savior and His promises.

Each Wednesday Patti would be filled with visions of the Kingdom before returning to doors that rusted and were carefully locked and to the unredeemable back yard that failed to respond to the dead branches the children dragged home and the uprooted weeds they sprinkled on the dirt in their beautification program. Attempts to hammer pretty bottle caps into the old stoop failed, and the dimly lit hallways made the radiance of God's city all the more inviting.

Week by week knowledge of God's Word and His grace was measured into an open heart. While other children might visualize only Longfellow's Village Chestnut Tree, Patti was visualizing the Tree of Life which now was within reach. On one of those magical Wednesdays, quietly and confidently Patti responded to God's grace through His Son on the Cross. Through the faithfulness of a young man to a little girl lost and hidden away in a Chicago neighborhood, that one little girl now knew that another name, her very own, had been written in the Book of Life. □