



Patricia Williams-Harris: committed to instructional integrity and winning souls

BOL is very blessed to have **Patricia Williams-Harris** as its first conference-appointed Bible Instructor. Pat is an icon in this ministry, having served the Southern California Conference for the past 33 years—20 of those years spent at the Altadena SDA Church, where she was also an ordained elder. Over the decades, Pat has taught, nurtured and prepared hundreds of souls to accept the Lord and the Advent Message. As a way of introducing and welcoming Pat to the BOL family, we are featuring her in this Connections Interview. We asked her to reflect upon her experiences and to discuss her critical evangelistic role here at BOL.

BOL: *What is the role of a conference Bible Instructor, and how does it differ from that of lay instructors?*

Pat: My role is to minister to the church to which I am assigned, working hand-in-hand with the pastor. Together we study with prospective converts and prepare them for baptism. We particularly nurture and support new members and encourage them to become active in the life of the church. The only major difference between conference Bible Instructors and lay instructors is that the former are formally trained, full-time conference employees. They can also train lay instructors. By contrast, lay Bible workers may be hired by an individual church or may volunteer their time at a church. But the functions and responsibilities are essentially the same. It's all about Bible study, nurturing and evangelism.

BOL: *How many Bible instructors are there now in our conference and our region?*

Pat: I am the one and only remaining conference-employed Bible Instructor.

BOL: *How many souls have you helped cultivate and prepare for baptism over the course of your ministry?*

Pat: Over the past 33 years as a conference Bible Instructor—working with four congregations and in countless evangelistic meetings—I would say I have helped at least 1,000 souls prepare for baptism.

BOL: *How best can BOL members utilize your services?*

Pat: The best way members can help me to be effective here at Breath of Life is to notify me of anyone who is interested in Bible study. I will follow up on those leads. Names of candidates can be given directly to me or they can be given to the pastor, who will pass them on to me. In addition, when the pastor makes an appeal after his sermon, I will approach those who respond and get their contact information and arrange Bible studies with them. In addition, I will conduct baptismal classes at the mutual convenience of the candidates and myself. Our goal is to win souls and grow the church.

BOL: *With world conditions worsening, the grip of secular culture tightening, and earth's time winding down, do you detect more or less receptivity to the Gospel and the Advent Message?*

Pat: I've seen it go both ways. Some people almost right away see the need to get their lives in order and have God central in their lives. They want to go to heaven to live with the Lord. But I also see another trend where other people have become so hardened and resistant to religion and spiritual things altogether. And sadder yet, there are others—former believers—who have turned their backs on God, the church and religion. We are told that as time winds down, it will be harder to reach some people. And over these many years in the work, I have seen this prophecy being fulfilled.

BOL: *What aspect of your ministry brings you the greatest satisfaction?*

Pat: My greatest joy is to see people change their lives and live for Jesus. It is not just a "nice thing" for them to do, but they see it as a critical matter of their eternal destiny. It's pure joy to see people chose the Lord! ☞

PATfacts



Born: Nashville, TN

Parents: Pastor & Mrs. C.J. Williams

Siblings: 3 sisters, including BOL's Joyce Kyle

Children: daughter Brittani, a senior at Oakwood University; son Leslie II, a senior at San Fernando Academy

Education: B.A., Religion & Biblical Instruction, Oakwood

Professional Ministry: Southern California Conference Bible Instructor (33 years), having served Berean, Hobart, Pacoima, Altadena churches, and now BOL; worked with 10 pastors and numerous evangelists, including Vincent, Rainey, Brooks, Kyle, and Boonstra. Helped prepare at least 1,000 souls for baptism.

Leadership: President, PUC Bible Instructors Guild

Other Talents: Fabulous cook and singer

BOL GOAL: *Work with the pastoral team and members to help finish the work so we can finally go home!*