

HHA# 00791

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

University of Houston
Oral History of Houston Project
Houston History

Interviewees: Pamela Brazial Allen and Ruby Lee Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

Place: The Brazial Home

Interviewer: Travis Brazial

Transcriber: Michelle Kokes

Keywords: The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church, Houston Churches, African American Churches, Third Ward, Freedmen's Town, Bishop Bonds, Glass Ceiling, Trailblazer, Miracles, Miraculous Works, Raising the Dead, Entrepreneurial Spirit

Abstract:

Pamela Brazial Allen, daughter of Overseer Ruby Lee Brazial, talks with her son, Travis, about the life and ministry of Overseer Brazial, founder of the Third Ward's The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church. Brazial grew up in East Texas and moved with her husband to Houston for employment opportunities. When called by God, she started her own congregation and built two church structures, the second one without any bank financing. Allen recalls the highs and lows of Overseer's ministry, including the obstacles she faced as a woman pastor, the growth of her congregation, and the miracles she performed. Allen also discusses the current life of the church and the involvement of many members of the Brazial family and her hopes for the future.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Pamela Brazial Allen and Ruby Brazial

Interviewed by: Travis Brazial
Date: March 25, 2013
Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes
Location: The Brazial Home

PA: Okay, my name is Pamela Allen, and I will be talking with my mom, or on her behalf, Ruby Brazial aka Overseer R. L. Brazial.

TB: Okay.

PA: She is now 84 years old. State your name, Ms. Ruby.

RB: Ruby.

TB: Ruby, and your last name.

RB: L. Brazial.

TB: Brazial. Okay. We are doing an interview on behalf of Overseer R. L. Brazial, the Pastor, or the former pastor now founder, of the Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church, and her daughter is talking on her behalf, Pastor Pamela Allen of The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church; and I, Travis Brazial, am conducting this interview on behalf of Houston History since 1836 course at the University of Houston. And so, Overseer, do you remember when you were born? You were born August 12th.

PA: What month were you born?

RB: unintelligible.

PA: August?

TB: August.

PA: Were you born in August? Say August.

RB: August.

TB: 12th 1928.

PA: Do you remember? Do you remember?

RB: August 12th

RB: Uh uh. 1928.

TB: 1928. In Washington County, Navasota, Texas.

PA: Is that correct?

RB: I think it, yeah. I can't remember direct.

PA: It is. Washington County, Navasota, Texas.

TB: Okay, once again for the audience, Overseer Brazial is my grandmother, and Pamela Allen is my mother. So, Pastor Allen, when Overseer came to Houston in the late 40s what was her reason including her mother's reason for coming to Houston?

PA: One of the reasons that mom and my grandmother relocated to Houston was because of employment.

TB: Employment?

PA: Employment. They... you know Houston was moving and they were in a small town, and they had employment in Houston so they decided to relocate to Houston. Not only just them but other family members also relocated to Houston at that particular time.

TB: This is good to hear because this is something that confirms what we were going over in class. After World War II Houston, and many over cities but particularly Houston, had record amounts of employment after the Second World War, and it was a port city and many people

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

from small towns throughout Texas, including Navasota, Texas, where Overseer came from, were looking for employment so Houston was the premier city. What were times, like the 1950s, what type of times were those for blacks?

PA: Repeat your question again, Travis?

TB: Now that we know that Overseer Brazial, my grandmother actually her mother, I believe she came to Houston in the 1940s. In the late 40s and the early 1950s, how was the era in particular? So when Ruby Brazial moved to Houston, she was already married?

PA: Yes, mom and dad was already married when they relocated. Her and my dad plus my grandmother and my grandfather, they all relocated to Houston for employment. Dad was finishing up, he had finished up serving in World War II, so then came here to Houston looking for employment as well as my mom and my grandfather and my grandmother.

TB: Now we know that Bishop Burns was a critical person, individual in her life.

PA: Yes.

TB: Could you elaborate on her relationship with Bishop Bonds when she met him in the early 1950s?

PA: Well, it was almost love at first sight, if I could say. It was love at first sight at hearing the gospel in such a different way. You have to remember that mom originally came from being Catholic, and then they then they moved from Catholic. As a matter of fact in Navasota, Washington County, our family they built the Catholic church.

TB: The first Catholic church?

PA: The first Catholic church in Washington County, should I say the first black Catholic church in Washington County, so she was Catholic. So when they migrated to Houston to look for employment and everything they were invited to a Baptist church, and they, you know, they

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

liked the progression of the Word with the Baptist church; however, being a member of the Baptist church, she was still longing for a closeness and a deeper relationship with God. So one day she had a girlfriend or an associate to tell her about a preacher that was preaching. You know he was preaching in the night air, no tent just in the open air.

TB: In the open air.

PA: In the open air. You know so it was like he was in like in a church. It wasn't like they were in a facility. They were outside, and he was preaching outside in the open air.

TB: So this was the era in which John Osteen and Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman and other evangelists, they were preaching in open tent meetings.

PA: Correct. They were, and when she got invited her associate at that time was telling her, you have to come to church and hear this man, this man, this preacher. And then my mom says, "Oh I'll go another night." And then she says, "Hey, this man is like telling folks they are going to get money." You know and because of the hard times that my mom and dad was having, financial, my mom was like, "Well, I got to go see this man." Now, her whole intent of going to see this man was about what he could really do about their financial needs and things like that, but when she got there it was totally more satisfying with what she saw and received than what money could ever do. That particular time, you know, he was preaching the Word of God and the Spirit of the Lord was so powerful, and it just transformed her life from then on.

TB: She often spoke about the great miracles in which Bishop Augustus Bonds enacted. Could you give me three miracles?

PA: Oh, he worked so many miracles. Often times my mom would talk about the miracles that Bishop Bonds would do, and I can recall one being, and people may not think that this is a miracle, but this was a miracle because the spoken word that he gave changed her thought

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

process. So one of the times was that my mom convinced my dad to go to church with her, and at this time my mom and dad was really having some really, really major problems in their marriage, and my mom had every intent on leaving my dad, you know. She had already purposed in her heart that she was going to leave him, you know. When he go to work she was going to pack her bags and she was going to get my two brothers, their clothes and stuff like that together, and she was going to leave him and that was going to be it. However, her and my dad went to service that night, and I tell you, the spoken word that he gave on marriage that God can fix your marriage and He can fix your mindset towards one another, that changed her that night. So that was a miracle because before my dad had passed they had been together for 50 something years. We know that that was a miracle. However but to give you a tangible miracle something that you can actually see physically was one of the miracles, they brought a boy that was deaf, dumb and wild. He had been in the wilderness for some years. He had been abandoned by his parents. So didn't nobody really know him. You know, they knew that he was in the wilderness, in the forest. They had seen him and they knew that he was wild and they knew that he couldn't talk. They captured him and they had him bound and they bought him to Bishop Bonds. Bishop Bonds began to speak the word of God to him and laid hands on him, and Bishop Bonds told them to take the chains off of him and they was reluctant to do that but they did it anyway; and so Bishop Bonds walked back to the podium where he was and, from the truck because the guy was on the back of the truck, and he walked, after he laid hands on him and prayed from him and he told them to take the chains off of him, while they was doing that he just walked off of the podium and the guy jumped off the truck and he ran. And he touched Bishop Bonds and Bishop Bonds turned around and he thanked Bishop Bonds for loosening him from the Spirits that had him bound. And the next day he came back to the open air service

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

clean shaven with clothes on and could talk like anybody else. It was amazing to see that it doesn't take God long to do nothing once you pray the prayer of faith and the person that is praying believe what God is going to do. So that is one of the miracles that she talked about. She talked about how he would lay hands on the sick and they would recover, lay hands on the blind and they recovered their sights, and many miracles throughout his ministry, many miracles. People were blessed financially. People were blessed with the wholeness and the wholesome of their families and things like that. He preaches for so many years and so there were so many miracles that he worked.

TB: So essentially in many respects, Bishop Bonds was a faith healer.

PA: Oh, not only a faith healer but he... once he had faith then he operated in and he lived in by it.

TB: So you would considered Bishop Bonds classic in the Pentecostal movement?

PA: If I had to do the comparison from the New Testament, the Pentecostal movement in his day and time, I would have to say it was in the same realm as the Pentecostal movement because each time he had open air services more people came in and joined the ministry and many lives were changed.

TB: We understand that in the early 50s, Overseer got saved under the Gospel under the preaching of Bishop Bonds.

PA: Yes.

TB: And eventually she felt that God was calling her to preach. Could you elaborate on the challenges that she faced in her early ministry and with her, could you elaborate on the challenges that she faced as a woman preacher in the 1950s?

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: Well, I would have to say that when God, when she felt that God was calling her that was unheard of.

TB: A woman preacher was unheard of.

PA: A woman preaching the Gospel. So because back then when a woman got a calling they just felt that it was a calling to be an evangelist or a missionary and that was it. But she was already a missionary. She was already operating as an evangelist in the church.

TB: I was also told when I was younger that she used to travel often to Louisiana to hold revivals.

PA: Yes, yes so she was already operating as an evangelist and a missionary. He would send her to Louisiana. She would preach the Word of the Gospel to them. They would collect money for her at the end of the service, and then she would bring the money back and give it to the Bishop. So it was just like, you know, going out and doing the work and bringing the money that she raised on behalf of the mission that she was on and bring it back to the storehouse, to her Bishop, and to the house of faith that she was in. However, when God gave her the calling it was such a call, it was a higher calling than being an evangelist or a missionary that she was a little bit nervous about that calling.

TB: Being a woman pastor?

PA: Being a woman pastor in that day and time was unheard of.

TB: Unheard, that was unheard of.

PA: Unheard of. It was unheard of. Women could teach Sunday school. Women could be missionaries. Women could be evangelists, but it was unheard of for a woman to be a pastor.

TB: Yet alone in a few years an Overseer...

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

PA: Yes, correct and you have to remember when God gave her the calling, the Bishop ... well, one Sunday the Bishop was preaching, and the Bishop looked out in the congregation and he said, one day there's somebody here that God is going to use to do a tremendous work, and she said they all just assumed that it would be a male because you know it was unheard of that a woman would be in a pastoralship.

TB: Bishop Bonds had many male pastors under his bishopric.

PA: Yes, many. Many ministers. Many elders, many reverends and things like that underneath him. So people just automatically in the congregation and even ones that were missionary and elders and ministers and evangelists and reverends, they just automatically assumed that it would be a male that God would call from amongst them to do a tremendous work. However, when God spoke to her and she heard the voice of God and he told her that he had a work for her to do. Now you have to remember because even when God gave you a calling, you still are subject to whoever has authority over you at that time.

TB: Right.

PA: So she gave her Bishop, she talked to her Bishop and told her Bishop that God was calling her, and her Bishop told her he didn't believe God was calling her at that time. So because God was still doing the work with him as far as getting him to a place where he had to accept God calling a woman. And then in this process when mom left... Mom, you know, because mom would get emotional, and we attach our emotions a lot of time to the decisions that we are going to make, so with that being said, mom left from the Bishop's church. Three months and she was going to go out on her own. Well, because that's not the way you do it. You don't get to leave. You get to leave when God tells you to leave. A lot of times when God speaks to us, we've got to analyze when it is the appropriate time.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

TB: Right.

PA: Just because He spoke it today don't mean it's today. You know what I'm saying. And just because He spoke it yesterday don't mean that we're too late. So we got to really analyze the proper timing on when He gives us something. We've just got to clarify when it is that He wants us to move upon it. And any time that God is calling you out, because God is not an act of confusion, when you leave there won't be any confusion. So now the timing is not right because now he is not accepting her being called as a pastor or being called to do her own work, and she is not accepting his rejection of her calling. Does that make sense?

TB: Yes, makes much sense.

PA: So, three months passed, and God speaks to her and tells her, "You've got to go back and get that thing right." So she humbles herself and went back to her bishop. She apologized and she stayed there under him for three more years and worked the ministry. Now she got the calling, but she wasn't ready to do the calling. Does that make sense? Because even though he spoke to her that day, it's still a time frame in what he asks. Everything is not, "Right now." And a lot of people make that mistake. They think because they got the calling today that tomorrow they need to act upon it. No, you need to equip yourself for the calling until the calling is truly manifested to the fullness. So three years she goes back into the church underneath her bishop and she really works the ministry. Now she was working it before, but now there is a different type of work now because it's not just about me being mediocre of the missionary, now I've got to step up my level of that of workmanship in the church, of stewardship in the church because now, because now I've got a calling waiting on me. So she did that. She waited, she waited three years and the Bishop came to her this time. And said, "Daughter now it's time for you to leave and answer to the call that God has called you to."

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

TB: And could you tell us what was the neighborhood that Bishop Bonds sent her to?

PA: Well, the neighborhood that she went to was the Sunnyside area. Sunnyside/Blue Ridge. And at that time, you know, when you start off all you really have is your family. She had two boys and a husband and at that time she was working. She had her own beauty shop. So she had clientele. My mom could do hair with marcel curling irons. She could do some hair. So the whole time that she was working the ministry at Bishop Bonds, she had a beauty shop ministry going, her beauty shop business going, and she would minister to people in the beauty shop.

TB: Her first two members, Margaret Montgomery and Addie Williams, were her clientele.

PA: Were two clients that she did have at her beauty shop, amazing.

TB: And they became the first two members of The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church.

PA: They became the first two members of The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church. Not only the first two members but to establish the church charter and things like that. They were the first two trustees, as well as, you know, they just operated in the ministry to found themselves being busy where ever they could be because there was only so many of them. So it was them and their family which was their kids and their spouse. And then there was my mom and her kids. And my grandma didn't even come until later on.

TB: Oh, I remember this. Grandma had to get a letter from Bishop Bonds to release Mama.

PA: Right.

TB: Your mother.

PA: Grandmother could not drive and so and my grandfather could not drive either, so my mother would always take them places. They were really, you know, they caught the busses everywhere but my mom had a car. My mom and dad had a car, so they would take them everywhere. You know, pick them up and take them here and there and everything. So my mom

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

was telling Bishop Bonds that it was really difficult for her to go back and forth to have her here for Sunday morning services and then for her to be at her Sunday morning service trying to get that established. And so the Bishop released her, so he gave her the go ahead and help my mom out in the ministry.

TB: So The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church was founded in 1957.

PA: It was founded, the name was discovered, the charter was in place and everything in 1957.

TB: And it was also in 1957 that God spoke to Overseer to build him a true church?

PA: He spoke to her. However, her name had not changed. Her name was still missionary.

TB: It was still missionary.

PA: Ruby Lee Braziel. So when God spoke to her to build a church, even though it was a pastoral position however, she still had just the title of missionary. But it didn't matter about the title, it mattered about the calling.

TB: She was never interested in titles, right?

PA: Never interested in titles. As a matter of fact, when the church started to be erected, the first church... Actually, I have to say if I can back it up. There was one church that they had already. She went from a watermelon stand, you've got to get this. When her call became manifested and she started actually having service, she had her first service in a watermelon stand and an old raggedy tent this man gave her, this tent and this watermelon stand in a facilities right there where she can have church. And the tent had holes in it. They would put the tent up, and it would fall down. But they still was diligently working where she believed God had placed them. So still they took down the tent every night. They put it back up every night, you know,

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

until God said that was enough. Now it stayed in a tent for a little bit, and then God moved them on to a garage. So then she started having garage service in her home. That became overflowing.

TB: This was what, Chesterfield?

PA: This was their first house on Chesterfield.

TB: First house on Chesterfield.

PA: Yes, my mom and dad's first house on Chesterfield. They took the garage and made it.

She rocked it and everything and put chairs and stuff in there. It became the garage church.

Now, and then from the garage, God had led her to a church building, and this is where it gets really interesting because she became, she didn't build this church, but she became the Overseer person of the church. She was preaching the Gospel. She was winning souls in, because I don't know exactly if the church was abandoned or if they needed someone to come in, but I'll tell you that she began to overflow it. And then there was complications with men feeling that the role that she was taking was not supposed to be her role. So then with the complications she just kind of, because she didn't erect the church, build it, she just stepped away and left everything there.

Then God told her to build a church.

TB: To build a church.

PA: To build a true church. And when she build this church, she erected, and the ironic thing about it, you know God always works in mysterious ways, but He works in numbers. Because three years she had to stay at the church. Three months she went out there and tried the church on her own. God sent her back. Then she had to stay under her Bishop for three years, another additional three years. And now she gets here and for three years she erect a new church, the church that she founded, and three years she tried all kinds of men to be the pastor of the church.

Now, it's quite strange or the humbleness that it shows that you take your finances and you get

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

people to help contribute to it and people that are following you to build a church and you literally build the church, however you are not the pastor of the church. You are waiting. For three years. She waited for three years for God to show her who would be the pastor of the church. I think that is humble and humility that is so missing nowadays. Because anytime anybody that put their money and their time and their talent into something they automatically think that ought, that it should be theirs. And I think that shows humility and humbleness and shows that she had a genuineness. It wasn't like she was trying to be overbearing or she was trying to make herself be called. She was waiting. Ain't that something?

TB: That is something. Since the first, since the construction of the first church until it was built, since the construction of the first church until three years after it was built she basically tried the other pastors and preachers who were men?

PA: Yes.

TB: Because she believed at the time that God was not calling her?

PA: She believed that God at the time was calling her to do a work for him.

TB: A work for him but not necessarily pastor.

PA: But not necessarily being a pastor.

TB: But eventually God does confirm that she is the pastor of the church?

PA: After the three years.

TB: After the three years.

PA: God came to her and says, "The time is now for you to take the pastoralship of the church." Now you've got, now it's going to be very interesting because it's different. People are okay with you when God calls you as long as you're not stepping on anybody's toes. But now she's about to step on some toes. Because it's not going to just be Missionary Ruby Lee Brazial

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

but it turns to Pastor Ruby Lee Braziel, and then the more she proved herself to God and switched to Overseer, being the shepherds, being the overseeing wise master builder.

TB: Could you tell me a few challenges that Overseer had to deal with being a woman pastor in the 1960s?

PA: Well for one of the things, she was protested against. They used to be across the street. There were protest signs and you know, "Women wasn't called to preach." And in fact I'll tell you, George Foreman was one of the protestors.

TB: George Foreman the boxer?

PA: George Foreman the boxer protested against my mama because he didn't believe at that particular time that God could call a woman to preach.

TB: At that particular time.

PA: Yeah, I have, you have to say at that particular time because nowadays God has really opened up when I say, man I mean human understanding across the border. You know and so at that particular time they were going with what they thought they knew, and so she had protestors and she had some pastors who wouldn't associate themselves with her. You know, rejection from that. She had family members who thought she was losing her mind and developing a self-righteousness because God didn't call no woman. However, even though as many obstacles that she had going against her that was the more that God proved himself to her. That and it got people to notice that she couldn't have called herself if the more we talk about her not being and the more He shows us saying, "She is, she can, this is who I'm calling." She didn't have to fight her battle by herself or alone. He was fighting it for her. Yeah, it personally from a woman's point of view dealing with the struggle because now you are not dealing with the struggle that's outhouse, which is the people that's on the outside of your home, but now you've got to deal also

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

with what's going on inside your home because you've got males inside your homes as well. So you know, now your husband's got to be convinced that God is calling you to pastor and then your sons that you have has to be convinced that God is calling you to pastor. Now what makes this very interesting is that it didn't take them no time to understand that God had called her to be pastor because of the life that she was already living.

TB: And could you tell me the type of support that her husband William Braziel, your father, gave her?

PA: Oh, you know my dad was a big man and so he was a big man and you know he was a protector and so he would get with you when it came to his little wife. So a lot of people already knew not to cross certain boundaries especially when he was around. And so that eliminated a whole lot of people coming to her and saying crazy stuff face to face. They could say what they want to behind her back, but it would eliminate a whole lot of stuff of them getting in her face. Does that make sense?

TB: It makes a lot of sense.

PA: Okay, and so he was very supportive. If she said, "God said" or "God told her" he would act upon it and go with her, with it and if there was a question or concern about it he would ask her about it.

TB: Together they started their own business, Braziel's Tire Service.

PA: As they began to progress in the ministry, and now the idea is that my mom is having more kids, preaching, and having more kids, and so you know she is not able to do hair like she used to and spend the long hours in the beauty shop and do the ministry as well. So my dad did tires for a living on the side. What she did was being a wise master builder and a businesswoman that she was, she found a building and made my dad a legit tire man.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

TB: Could you give us the address of this tire shop?

PA: It's located off of 7138 Scott Street. It's used to be a hamburger stand and then my mom bought it and created, her and my dad created that to be the first Brazial Tire Service in the neighborhood. They didn't have tire services like it in the neighborhood. They only had the big tire companies that you had to go to like Sears and Montgomery Wards. So you had to travel to get to the stores. But when my mom and my dad came on the scene with the tire service, man it was blown out of the water because it was easy access for the people in the neighborhood to get good new tires and good used tires right here in the neighborhood. And so with that, that kind of supplied my mom and dad's needs as far as the household, you know, the money coming in from the household, to be able to sustain the household.

TB: So they've always been entrepreneurs?

PA: Always been entrepreneurs. She had her own beauty shop, turned around and had her own, her and dad opened their own tire shop. You know, always been entrepreneurs. My mom always had a mind to build and to own things. And my dad has been so supportive when it came to ideas that she had because it was for the benefit of not just her but for the entire family.

TB: So they came from the era of Houstonians like George R. Brown and the Cullens and Jesse Jones who were "can do" and "can do" women. Self-made, didn't have much education.

PA: Right.

TB: They were not expecting a hand out but a hand up.

PA: Right, right, and you have to remember that mom only finished the 8th grade so she never went to high school. And so here it is a woman that's up in age now. When I say up in age she's like about 30 now dealing with the ministry and everything and God is moving and here it is with the 8th grade education she opens up her own beauty shop. Not only that, but now the skills, God

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

gave her the skills and the knowledge to be able to erect the first church, which was awesome.

And to give her the understanding on how to purchase this building and create a tire business for my father where he can bring in income for the household. So then he had to quit his other job because this became the entrepreneur that their own, his own business, and it was such a success.

TB: It was a success?

PA: Yes, it was such a success. So you know, everything, that's why my dad knew without a shadow of a doubt, and people that followed the ministry knew, that God was with her. Because everything that he blessed her hand to do, it was successful.

TB: So it comes to grandma and grandpa, they moved to Houston. Grandpa was from Waco, Texas.

PA: Grandpa was from Waco, Texas. Which actually, they ended up living in Fort Worth.

TB: And when both of them met, they came to Houston, and they had watched Houston grow since the 40s until practically to the 21st century?

PA: Oh my goodness, they have seen Houston go through a tremendous transition.

TB: So they were one of the several 20th century pioneers in Houston?

PA: Definitely.

TB: In Sunnyside.

PA: In the Sunnyside area. Actually they were the first house built in the Sunnyside area.

TB: The first house built in the Sunnyside area?

PA: The first house built, and by the time they moved in it, they had a couple more houses already built, two by the time they moved in it. So, the neighbors were really a tight-fitted, you know, community. Everybody knew each other. Literally all of them were entrepreneurs, all of them had some type of business, whether it was lawn business, whether it was tire business,

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

whether it was the barber shop business, they had all of them had creative ideas. Some of them owned gas stations.

TB: So being a young girl growing up in Navasota, Texas, she heard about the great Fourth Ward in Houston and how there was Freedmen's Town ...

PA: Yes.

TB: ...and many black businesses in Houston...

PA: Yes.

TB: ...in the Fourth Ward and eventually Third Ward....

PA: Yes.

TB: And Fifth Ward.

PA: Yes.

TB: She heard about the thriving black community.

PA: Yes.

TB: That were trying to go somewhere.

PA: Yes. Well, they didn't try, they went somewhere.

TB: They did!

PA: They didn't try, they went. They had a will, they had a desire, and one of the things, they would work. They were not afraid to work. I have to say unlike this generation today, but that generation, they had a desire and a will and they were not afraid to work. They were not afraid of rejection. Rejection didn't slow them down. Rejection caused them to speed up the pace and to hit it a little stronger!

TB: So Ruby Brazial and her husband...

PA: W. C. Brazial, my dad.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

TB: We call him W. C. They were shaped and molded in the Great Depression.

PA: Yes.

TB: And the civil rights era.

PA: Right. You know mom and dad walked with Martin Luther King on a couple of occasions. And because they believed in what he believed in as far as the nonviolence and as far as the word of God. They were all on the same page when it came to things like that.

TB: What would grandma say to those who felt that Dr. King was weak for being persistent on the strategy of nonviolence in the civil rights era?

PA: Well, if anybody knew or if they had the correct understanding of what, of calling that being weak, wouldn't have ever called it being weak. If you are persistent about something then you are not weak. Because weak means you give in and you stop. Being persistent shows that you show that you've got strength. So that was strength, and mom quite often referred to, "You can only get that strength through the Word of God." Because even when you've got all of the obstacles of the world telling you, "You can't do it. It would always be segregation." When you've got the world saying, "No, women would always be at this level," and so if I could just speak from a woman's point of view and then I'll deal with from a couple's point of view.

Dealing from a woman's point of view and when the world says, "You can't preach. A woman can only do this, women can't vote," you know what I'm saying, dealing with all those obstacles? Then on top of, you know, in general of the black being held back or trying to, or people trying to hold them standing still, they were very on one accord and strong when it came to, "I shall not be moved. Truly like a tree planted by the water." The more people told them that they couldn't the more they said to themselves, "I can" because then the Word of God

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

kicked in and said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," so the more the negativity came the positive and the stronger they got to "I can."

TB: So, Dr. King and Overseer and the men and women of that generation, they believed in not fighting fire with fire.

PA: They believed in standing strong and being at peace.

TB: That's what...

PA: Being at peace because for after all, God is not the author of confusion.

TB: That's right.

PA: So whenever God is moving, that's clear and clarity. That's not chaos. That's not frustration. And yet we do get frustrated when we have to do it over and over again, but we still got to be persistent at it and we still got to do it in a peaceful manner. So they were really on board with what Dr. Martin Luther King said and did and as far as that aspects of it. And they were really persistent with it, and it was a sign of strength and not weakness.

TB: So today we can look back and say that Ruby Brazial put a crack in the glass ceiling for women.

PA: Oh I would go, I would say, I would have to go further than a crack. She put a hole in that sucker. The reason I say that is because she elevated it. She elevated it because now she has been a trailblazer and a pioneer in the women ministry. In the women ministry, when women couldn't do it God said she could. She did it in the Lord. Not only did she build one church, but she built two churches. Not only did she build two churches, but she also helped other people establish churches. She has a spiritual son in Germany. She has a spiritual daughter in Florida. She has other churches in surrounding areas that she helped them to be established and to do the work of God. So she didn't put a dent in it. She didn't put a crack in it. She put a hole in it.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

And every theology thing that they had and every historical thing that they had, she put a hole in it.

TB: She put a hole in it.

PA: She put a hole in it.

TB: So, it took, we know that the first church was built in 1961, and how long did it take for the church to pay off the first church's mortgage?

PA: Oh, in the first church when it was built, the mortgage, they paid off the mortgage in 12 years. It took 12 years for them to pay off that first mortgage. And you state the church was built in '61, however the completion of the church...

TB: The completion of the church?

PA: ... was '61. They was building before then. The completion of the church was before then.

TB: So did they start in 1960?

PA: Well, the reason I say completion was it took a minute, and the finances like that and everything you know in that day and time. So, but the completion of it was in '61, but that's not when they started. However, then it took them 12 years to pay for it. Now you get to 12 years and it's paid for now and then God gives Overseer R. L. Brazier another vision and said, "Another church." Now when it comes time to build the second church the vision is we pay for it debt free.

TB: Debt free?

PA: Debt free. From the chandeliers to the tile on the floor, debt free.

TB: Could you tell us about what led to the 12 steps of faith?

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: Oh, walk it out. This is what you, we say we have faith. And you know she knew that she had faith and she believed in what God had told her, so she had to literally walk it out. You can go to AA classes all you want to and talk about the twelve steps but until you walk it out it's going to be not effective, so she took the twelve steps of faith and walked it out and God gave it to her and she passed it onto the people and they worked it.

TB: She at first went to the bank.

PA: Yes, well...

TB: Could you tell us about that?

PA: Well, at first you know because we could really pay for this thing through the bank, that's how we did our other one. Because when God gives it to you and God tells you, you want it to be debt free. Well [REDACTED] (51.56) start coming in. The natural man start coming in. You know, "How are we going to do this debt free?" That's quite natural. And you know she went to the bank. They began to tell her all of this and added all this extra stuff to it and all of this she was going to owe at the end, and then there was going to be a lengthy time before she could get the loan, and then they wanted to subsidize the loan. You get the loan for the plumbing, you get a loan for the sheetrock, you get a loan for the concrete, you get a loan for this, you know what I'm saying?

TB: You get a loan for everything.

PA: Everything! They wanted to itemize it and then put it all back in the same pot and add more interest to it, and that just made her sick to her stomach because it seems as though it was so overwhelming but that was God's way of saying, "I said take it by faith!" Because when He told her to take it by faith when He told her the idea of building the church. When He gave it to her He told her "I wanted you to take it by faith." She took it upon her own self to go to the bank.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

So God had to let it be so humongous to her that she had to beg back and say, "I've got no other choice but to take it on faith."

TB: The 12 steps of faith refer to the 12 months in which she built the church and paid for it debt free?

PA: Paid for it debt free in 12 months. Work the church. I mean, the people of God worked, they fundraised, they gave. There was nothing that they didn't do.

TB: They cooked meals?

PA: They cooked, they baked, they had programs. They gave the 7th and the 8th. They just worked the ministry. We had families that donated so much as far as donated so much money to the church that worked the vision. I can remember one particular family. They were called the Creightons. One of their daughters, Sister Snell, she would, she was a business woman and she went away somewhere and found out that this Methodist church was getting new pews, and they were going to get rid of their old pews.

TB: Methodist or Catholic Church?

PA: It was a Methodist church, and they were going to give away their old pews and the pastor asked them, "Do y'all want the pews?" because she said we were erecting a new church and she says, "Yes, can we have them?" He says, "Y'all can have them for nothing. All you have to do is take them up and load them up." And when she came back and told Pastor and Brother W. C. Brazial, my father got the men. They worked that. They drove out of town, unscrewed those pews, and put them on back of all the different trucks, loaded them up, drove them back to Houston, brought them back here, and screwed them down. I mean, it was just, everything was just rolling.

TB: So those were the years when the departments in the church really worked.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: Oh, from the usher boy to the nurse boy to the youth department to the young adult department to the singing department. You name it. Whatever department was in place, they all worked together.

TB: They all worked together.

PA: Because they all had one agenda. It was to complete the work.

TB: To complete the work.

PA: It was the vision that God had gave Pastor. And because they had seen many miracles that God had worked through Pastor that they believed that God speaks through her. So they didn't question it. And they were able to work it, and it only took them twelve months to complete the work.

TB: And they walk into the church.

PA: They walked into the church debt free.

TB: Debt free August, the first Sunday of August 1982.

PA: August, the first Sunday in August of 1981.

TB: 1981?

PA: 1981.

TB: 1981. And today?

PA: And today we are still in that building. And you know, because the foundation has been set so great and our steady foundation and our firm foundation on the true Word of God that we are still there today.

TB: And the first church is primarily used for what?

PA: It is used for our fellowship hall. We have restored it to be a fellowship hall and also where we have our bible study, our weekly bible studies, and then any other type of fellowship

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

engagements that we have where we want to just have family night where we watch movies together or game night where all the families come and we play games together and things like that. So we still, and we invite the communities. So we still are yet building on the solid foundation. So one thing I like about it is that the foundation that mom and dad built according to the Word of God, it really was about family, about being structured together. Truly the family that prays together stays together.

TB: Stays together. The second church, when it was built, it was revolutionary.

PA: It was revolutionary because...

TB: People were...

PA: People were not building debt free churches for one thing, and a woman to build a debt free church was crazy.

TB: And the size that it was.

PA: And the size that it was. And the uniqueness of it because she is a woman. We are prissy so automatically she took to value when King Solomon built the temple.

TB: Right.

PA So she took to heart the beauty of the temple. So she put chandeliers in the temple, in the church. You know what I'm saying. And the woodwork was beautiful and you know so it was, it was awe and beautiful.

TB: So in 1981 when the church was finally built, it was bigger than most African American churches in Houston?

PA: Yes, yes it was for one that was not financed. For one that was not financed like over the years. This was one being debt free was a tremendous large size, and many people questioned it.

I can recall that Sunday when we marched in. We had people coming in from everywhere to see

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

the church, you know, because they were amazed that we were building a debt free church and to hear that it had chandeliers, beautiful chandeliers in it.

TB: And many male Bishops were coming out.

PA: Oh yes, from California, from North Carolina, from Georgia, I mean you name it. They were coming in the place.

TB: Could you explain the relationship between the Church of God and Christ and her having to build or deciding to build a balcony in the second church?

PA: Oh, originally when the church was built, we didn't have a balcony.

TB: We didn't?

PA: We didn't have a balcony. After they got through with the construction of it and everything, we didn't have a balcony and because mom, God had told mom to be independent to go under no organization.

TB: No organization, no denomination.

PA: So we are non-denominational. Even though the church says we are The Lord Jesus Christ Holiness Church, that is the name but it represents non-denomination because Jesus was just Jesus.

TB: Right.

PA: He was non-denomination. He wasn't attached to the Baptists. He wasn't attached to the Methodists. He wasn't attached to the Catholics, the Roman Catholics. He was just Jesus. He broke all of their boundaries.

TB: Right.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: You know, to get men and women to see that it's just Jesus. Holiness is not your religion. It's your conduct, your character, and your behavior. Pentecostal is not your religion. It's just the day that happened, and any given time you can have a Pentecostal moment.

TB: A Pentecostal moment.

PA: And so He wanted her to be independent.

TB: Independent.

PA: Non-denominational, and so Church of God and Christ which tried on so many occasion to not.

TB: And.

PA: Not Church of God and Christ, it was the Pentecostal of something, something. The Church of God and Christ didn't believe in women pastors and they are just now coming over to it. So it wasn't Church of God and Christ. It was, I talked about it the other night with Pastor Jefferson. It was...

TB: Was it Assembly of Gods?

PA: Something like that, but it was Pentecostal something of Assemblies of God, maybe something like that. I will have to give you the correct name for it. But mom was close friends with the Bishop that founded it, and his name was Bishop Patterson. Not G.E. Patterson of Church of God and Christ. But this was Bishop Mason Patterson here in Houston.

TB: Are you referring to Christ's Temple?

PA: Christ's Temple, yes, was his establishment. However, but it was its affiliation that he had.

TB: Affiliation.

PA: Yes, and but God told mom to stay independent.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

TB: Independent.

PA: And so they wanted to have their convention, and because she had the biggest church out of all of them to be able to hold a convention, they asked if she could hold it at her church and so she said her and my dad agreed on it and the board of directors and they held it at the church. And before they got ready for it, because they told them a couple of months, months ahead of time, they had the contractor that was a member of our church that helped build our church to add a balcony. Oh man, and when I tell you they added a balcony with a sparrow, the sparrow stairwells, beautiful. And she added it to be able to facilitate the amount of people, the capacity of people that were coming. And when I say this particular convention ran for 7 days straight, morning and night, and it was packed every day during the day and even at night service. It was awesome. Man, to see the saints of God coming in and out for different classes, and you know it was, and it was beautiful. But they really, really pressed real hard that she would join their particular organization. And she stayed friends with them and fellowshipped with them, but she could not attach herself with any denomination because she was non-denominational.

TB: Right. Her and your radio ministry is still going on strong today. Could you tell us, when did the radio ministry start?

PA: Oh my God! The radio ministry started back in the 70s.

TB: In the 70s.

PA: In the 70s. She was on one radio station, and then when 1360 came she immediately got a spot on Saturdays, and she had, we have been, we have been with 1360 AM well over 40 years now.

TB: Well over 40 years now.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

PA: Well over 40 years now we have been with the radio ministry of 1360. Well over 40 years now.

TB: And formerly you could hear her on 1360 AM on Saturdays at 2pm, but now we could hear you on 1360 on Saturdays at 2pm as well.

PA: Right. Either you get, it used to be just when mom was pastoring she'd be at 1360, you could get her all those years. As a matter of fact, people would call her their radio pastor.

TB: Their radio pastor?

PA: Yes, and so and that was good to hear because they had a relationship with her for a long time being their radio pastor. A lot of people that were not able to make it to church and still wanted to receive a profound word from God and from someone that was genuine and really had walked with God and was prayed, her prayer was so rich and so seasoned that they would anticipate for her to come on and pray and give them the word, and now with the day and time that we are living in, since she is no longer the pastor and God has allowed myself and my husband to be the shepherds of the church, so you would actually get either Elder Allen or myself on Saturdays.

TB: Right.

PA: At 2:00pm. And so now they refer to us...

TB: Their radio pastors.

PA: ... as being their radio pastors.

TB: And in addition to the broadcast ministry, we also have a television ministry?

PA: Correct, we are now back on television. Mom started on television and was on television for a couple of years and everything.

TB: This was the early 2000s, right?

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: The early, late 1990s and early 2000s, and so now God has blessed us to be able to get back on the television, and we are looking for God to do a lot more. So we are excited about the television ministry now at this day and time.

TB: If you had to get a few trademarks of your mother's ministry, could you give us maybe four or five great things that she has done over the years besides the building of the church that people will remember her for? Five great, awesome things?

PA: I remember, one thing about when you say that God is calling you, and you are walking in his will and in his way, it is so necessary that people see the God in you, and what I do recall one time is that she went to a funeral at Brentwood Baptist Church. Brentwood is an established Baptist church, and she went to Brentwood, and because it was at the era at the time that men didn't believe in women preaching, you know, and still there are some even today that don't. They still don't believe in women being pastors. But she was at Brentwood, and one of, the person that passed away, she was going to pay her respects and she went to get ready to speak where they had called her up to speak, and this was such an awkward moment but such a moment that now is the time to display who you are in the Lord, and the pastor of Brentwood and the deacons, they blocked the pulpit so that she wouldn't come up to the pulpit to speak. Now for us, that made us mad, but she handled it with so much grace and pause and so much of the character of holiness that she didn't get offended. I thought that was great. That was a profound statement right there because she went to the mic that was on the floor. She spoke gracefully, profound, oh with such a spirit of God that by the time she got through speaking, everybody was on their feet clapping, you know, which made the people, which made the men which tried, that blocked her from getting to the pulpit as though she was only going to have the anointed in the pulpit. She had it everywhere she went.

TB: Right.

PA: And so it made them look so crazy that even afterwards a couple of them had to apologize. You know, and so that was significant and such a powerful move. You know another testimony (there are so many testimonies). One of the testimonies, I can recall that when my mom was praying one time, she was praying and she was on her knees and God revealed to her, my brother then was a policeman, my oldest brother, and God revealed to her that he was going to get shot. Now as she was praying on her knee He revealed that to her and so and she continued to pray and you know and everything, and what He did He gave her forewarning that he was going to be shot, but that he was not going to die and everything, and it happened and when it happened she didn't panic. She moved accordingly. Because He had already forewarned her. And you know what was so odd about that, you know it wasn't until twelve years later that the bullet actually came out.

TB: That's amazing.

PA: It is amazing! I mean, he walked around with the bullet in him for about twelve, between twelve and fifteen years and then the bullet finally came out. You know and so that was amazing when God gives you, when He talks to you like you are His friend and He lets you know things that are going on before they even happen to give you that assurance that "If I brought it to you, I'll bring you through it." And so and that's having a relationship with Him. Another testimony is I can recall we had a musician. He had been with us since the age of 14. And this is when AIDS/HIV first came out on the scene and everyone was going crazy and people were dying, and you know they say if you are in the same room with them you would get AIDS and if they spit on you, you will get AIDS, just ignorant of the, of the knowledge.

TB: Right.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: Because it was new. Anyway, our musician he had contracted AIDS and everything, and mom went to him. She spent time with him because he was very, very sick. She spent time with him, and she began to wash him in the Word of God.

TB: Wash him.

PA: And when I say wash, I'm talking about reading the Word, discussing the Word of God with him, you know of him repenting, of him confessing his faults and things like that. And she began to just really pour out praying with him and everything, and I'll tell you, God healed him. Went to the doctor, and they couldn't find anything in his system, and they tested and tested and tested, and the man was healed from the top of his head to the sole of his feet from AIDS.

TB: What would you say to those who believed that is impossible today?

PA: With God nothing is impossible.

TB: Nothing is impossible?

PA: Nothing. Right now in the medical field there are so many different miracles that happen that the doctors can't even explain. Because it's beyond the doctors.

TB: It was also beyond the doctors understanding in the case of Herlene Banks.

PA: Well, you're, you told me to give you five, right? You know, and so I'm working my way up, okay. Because before we even get to Herlene, there was a baby. His name was Christopher. His mom's name was Centrelle, and Centrelle had Christopher, she had four boys and one girl, or three boys and one girl, and Christopher was, was his name Christopher? I think it was Christopher. Well, whatever the case may be. Christopher was some months old and got really, really sick, and he was so sick he was on to death. The baby died, and they were able to bring him back to life, and he died again. They was able to bring him back to life, and here it is, she sent for the pastor. My mom said, "I'm on my way." So her and some of the saints went up to

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

the hospital, and what is so awesome about this because the doctor said, "There's nothing we can do. He's on his last leg. We keep bringing him back to life. The next time is a for sure thing. He's, you know, there's nothing we can do." But the doctor says, "Because I believe in the God that you serve, before you go pray for the baby I need you to pray for me." So my mom stops and prays for the doctor that the doctor will increase his understanding when it comes to the medicine that he is giving men and to be able to give this doctor information. You know what I'm saying and everything with the rest of his patience and just increase his faith in God. And so mom prays for the doctor, and mom went into the room and prayed for the baby. Now, the baby was dead at this time.

TB: The baby was dead?

PA: The baby was dead. So mama prayed for the baby and everything, and the baby came to life and that baby right now is still living and never died again.

TB: Never died again.

PA: Took the baby out of the hospital because there was nothing could be done. He was healed.

TB: I believe he is 20.

PA: He is 22 years old!

TB: My age, right, or almost or a year younger.

PA: Probably, probably, he is 20-something years old. So still living today. Still living today. Still living. Happy go lucky. Ain't ever been sick again. Ain't that something?

TB: That is something.

PA: Because when God heals, He does it completely!

TB: Completely!

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: There's nothing half-stepping about God.

TB: Right.

PA: Not only that, not only that, but I can also recall that mom baptized a lady in a wheelchair. It was awesome. She baptized a lady in a wheelchair. Took the wheelchair down with her. Do you hear me? In the water.

TB: In the water.

PA: In the water, and they got her out of the water, dried her up and everything, you know, got her clothes and stuff changed, and the lady was healed. Not only that, one time, in service there was another lady. Her name was Sister Aileen. Sister Aileen was confined to the wheelchair for many, many years. The power of God was so thick in the service, the Glory of God was there, service was so powerful the Spirit of the Lord was just people were up just praising God. She got up out of her wheelchair and started shouting and never got back in the wheelchair again.

TB: Again!

PA: Oh man, you talking about miracles. Now you're talking about Minister Banks. That's just another miraculous miracle. Minister Banks went into the hospital. She went into the hospital for a hysterectomy. But while she was there, she had an aneurism. My God, had an aneurism. The doctor said that she had been plugged up to the machine for weeks.

TB: For weeks.

PA: They said they were going to unplug her, she would be a vegetable. Mind you, mom went up to the hospital, she done prayed the prayer of faith but God ain't did nothing, you know, and she went and talked to the family, but God ain't changed nothing. So this is the time that

because, you know, you've got a relationship with God that you just wait on Him. His timing is

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

never like our timing. His timing, He may not come. You know how the old folks say He may not come when you want Him but He's definitely on time. Well, weeks went by. She still in the coma. She is a vegetable. The doctor says, "Even if she lives, she's going to be a vegetable.

There is no activity on the brain."

TB: No activity in the brain!

PA: Not at all. But let me tell you what God did. It was a Sunday morning. The doctor said to her the family, get your closure stuff together, come this Sunday, come this is the, we are going to unplug her from the machine. This is the time for you to say your last good-bye. Make sure that you have your funeral arrangements and stuff together, and I'll tell you the family went in there. We're at church. Mom is preaching. And I'm talking about she is preaching. I mean she is giving an edifying word to the body of Christ. She stops in the midst of her sermon, and she says, "People of God stand on your feet and give God a praise because God is about get Sister Banks out of the Coma." Now this is the exact same time that the doctor is unplugging her from the machine. And the doctor says she has about three minutes. Three to five minutes to breathe on her own. If she don't breathe on her own, we are calling it a quits.

TB: So man said she had three or five minutes.

PA: Man said she had three to five minutes. And they said if she did happen to breathe on her own that she would be a vegetable. She would never be able to talk. She would never be able to feed herself. Well, I got news. Because that is why I love God because He is a wireless God.

TB: Wireless.

PA: He's wireless. He's wireless. The Holy Ghost can go anywhere. So while we are, while she is giving us instructions to magnify God and to give Him glory because He is bringing her out of the coma, the hospital is bringing her out of the coma at the same time. And they waited,

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

and before it even got to three minutes, she sits up in the bed, breathes on her own and says, “Go down the hallway. Overseer is preaching.” The doctors are so baffled. The family members, someone else ran out of the room because this was not what the doctor said would happen!

Because the doctors don’t have the last say so, God does! Oh that’s why I serve the same God that my mama serves! Because you can’t size him up in a box. You can’t squeeze him in a jar.

He is unlimitless. You is unsearchable. He is past kind enough. You can’t understand him.

That’s why! The same God that kept her all those years! That called her to manifest her calling and did so many miracles and had her to live a life of holiness and simplicity and with Godliness is the same God that’s keeping her now at the age of 84.

TB: At the age of 84.

PA: At the age of 84. Enduring hardship. Enduring tribulations. Enduring good times and bad times, and she is still here today to say God is good.

TB: God is good. So today she earns her rightful spot.

PA: In the Hall of Fame.

TB: Especially in Houston.

PA: In Houston, Texas, as being a woman trailblazer for women being preachers and pastors in the church.

TB: And in, was it 2000 that she was honored by Bishop Sheldon Bailey?

PA: Back in 2000, Bishop Sheldon Bailey, the Bishop of Harvest Time.

TB: Harvest Time.

PA: He had begun to look up and research women pastors in the Houston area, and he caught ahold of mom’s story and was just blown away about what all she had done, and he honored her for the work that God did in her life. You know, and how she paved the way for the women that

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

had worked in his ministry now. And that was awesome. But not only that, Pastor Lawson that has resigned or retired should I say from Wheeler Avenue.

TB: He was the founder of...

PA: Founder of Wheeler Avenue.

TB: Which is less than half a mile away from the University of Houston.

PA: He, one time, he's my mentor. He was my first mentor outside of my mom, and the first time that I actually met him he talked about the wonderfulness and the awkwardness when God raised my mom up. Because it was at a time that men did not believe in women preachers, and then he said, "You know what this..." and he said, he had to look at this and say, "Wow, she built a debt free church" and he said, "All of us men was like, 'what?'" and then he said, "When I got a chance to hear her preach, I was like, 'wow,'" he said "no theology school. She was strictly by the Spirit." So he said, "That is such a compliment." And he said, "God had to do it that way in that day and time to prove a point to everybody that I still rule and I can use whomever I want to use." So I thought that was very profound coming from someone of that degree in the church industry.

TB: And especially the black church.

PA: Especially the black church that is established in the church industry.

TB: And today Reverend Lawson?

PA: Has passed on his mentorship to Pastor Cosby.

TB: Pastor Cosby. And Pastor Lawson, the founder of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church is a few yards away from University of Houston. He is revered throughout the black church in Houston, the black church industry.

PA: Right, and he is a Civil Rights activist.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

TB: Activist, yes.

PA: And so that was a very profound statement that he made when I was speaking with him concerning my mother.

TB: So, today how is Ruby Brazial doing? How are you doing today?

RB: Fine.

TB: You doing fine?

PA: You doing fine?

RB: I'm fine, yeah.

TB: What do you have to say about the ministry that God gave you over the years?

RB: Well, what they said is just right.

TB: Just right?

RB: Uh huh (in the affirmative).

PA: Did God use you in a mighty way?

RB: He let me know that He's still using people.

TB: He's still using people.

PA: Yes.

TB: He's done a mighty work in you.

RB: Oh yeah.

PA: And still is huh?

RB: Uh huh (in the affirmative).

PA: That's right, that's right.

TB: So today the church is still going on strong. We're still at 3701 Barberry.

PA: Yes.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

TB: And to set, well, the first church is on the same drive 3717. Both churches are still standing strong.

PA: Yes.

TB: I should say both sanctuaries. So wrapping up this session, as the pastor of the church, where is the church currently and where are we headed to?

PA: Well, I am excited. My husband and I we are excited about what God has done, what He's doing right now in this day and time, and what he is about to do, where he is taking us. We are honored to have the privilege to be able to continue to build upon such a solid foundation. And our prayer and our hope is that we continue to stay on this solid foundation that has been established. It's not about us. It's about God being manifested in us, showing the love of Jesus Christ, and giving people the understanding of God's Word. So we just pray. Our prayer is that God will keep us humble in our walk, keep us steadfast, unmoved, always abiding in the work of God. And that as we continue to teach people that they will grab ahold to have a strong relationship with God and become the people that God is preparing himself to come back for.

TB: When Overseer handed you the mantle in 2006, how did you feel in stepping in her shoes and becoming pastor with the type of work that she had done for the church?

PA: That was scary. I was, I definitely knew that I was, I didn't have the status. I didn't have the knowledge that she had. I knew that I didn't have the amount of the Spirit that she had. I knew that those were big shoes to fill. So I was scared out of my mind, troubled in my spirit. Because not only do we put expectations on ourselves, but people put expectations on you. But when I had a talk with God, He says I created no two people the same. So just because she did it that way does not mean that I want you to do it her way.

TB: Right.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

PA: Because I have called you for who you are. I want you to do it the way that I'm giving it to you. However, since it's been 7 years what I have found out, because I serve the same God that my mom served, not only do I have the Spirit of God with me, but it's similar to almost like or identical can we say what Elijah gave to Elisha. They didn't have the same ministry. But Elisha had a double portion of what Elijah had. With that being said, God is still moving. He is still healing. And He is still setting His people free. And we are still excited about the God that started the work and confident that He that had begun a good work in us shall complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

TB: And you were born April 5th, 1968.

PA: Yes, I was born on April the 5th of 1968.

TB: And you are the youngest of 6?

PA: I'm the youngest of 7.

TB: 7 children.

PA: 7 children. I had a brother named Charles Braziel. I have a brother named Bill Braziel. I had a brother named Samuel Braziel. I have a sister Debra Cook, had a sister Mary Braziel, have a brother Nathan Braziel, and then I myself, Pamela Braziel Allen.

TB: Today, Will Braziel has a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

PA: Oh, you know what? This is what I really like about it. Because when you are that anointed and when you work that much in the will of God and when you have been such a blessing, God will allow your anointed to still rule and reign in your family when they submit to it. And I can literally say that she is so proud of her grandkids that are working in the church, that are finding themselves in the will of God. And now they are seeing the blessings as well as the anointing that she started for us being passed down to them, which is awesome.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

TB: Today, we have musicians in the family.

PA: One grandson, Tyson Brazial. He plays the keyboard and the organ, horn, whatever you put in his hand. Theodore Brazial, I mean Cook, he is the praise and worship leader, can sing songs, create songs like my grandmother and my mom did. Her grandson, David Cook, works in the media ministry putting all that stuff together. She has a grandson Travis which is an awesome teacher of the Word of God. You know she has a granddaughter Ruby which sings and operates in the youth department with the praise team and the mime dancers. You know she has another grandson that plays the drum, that Darwin Allen, Jr. You know, a lot of the grandkids. Sebastian Brazial, he preaches. You know, you've just got so many of her grandkids and her kids that are doing things in the church that are still carrying on things that she has trained us up to do. But now we're not just doing it because she makes us go to church to do it. We're doing it because of the love we have for God.

TB: The love we have for God. So lastly, you said that her ministry was on almost the same caliber with the era, the preachers that came from the same era as she did in the 50s, Oral Roberts, John Hagee, John Olsteen who was also, who has a great church here in Houston. Talking about the healers, the faith healers.

PA: It was. It was, and believe it or not, a lot of the pastors wrote mama.

TB: Right.

PA: They listened to her on the radio.

TB: Even the pastor from California?

PA: Pastor Fred Price.

TB: Pastor Fred Price.

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial**Interview Date: March 25, 2013**

PA: So, a lot of them, even Joel Osteen, all of them, they knew about her. They knew about the magnitude of how God was moving in her life. They wrote her letters encouraging her believing the work that God was doing in her because it was a hard time. So they would, they had an understanding, and God used them to help encourage her and my dad to keep up the good work in the Lord.

TB: If there is one thing you can say that you learned from her one significant thing, the most important aspect from her life?

PA: The most important aspect that I have learned from my mom, I can say that my husband and myself have learned from my mom, hold onto God's unchanging hand. I don't care what the circumstances look like. I don't care what other people says. If God be for you, who can be against you? So I don't look at the circumstance because when God says enough is enough, He changes it. When He says it's time, He does something about it. So I hold on to what I know. Or we hold on to what we know that's going to help us get through, and guess what? If God don't change nothing, then He gives us strength to endure it. And we're okay with it.

TB: The title of this article is: "A paper bag of nails and a hammer in my hand."

PA: Oh, man!

TB: So what comes to mind when you think of that?

PA: I think of her testimony. When she was unsure, she knew God wanted her to build a church because she heard the voice of God speak to her and she had so many oppositions you know coming her way. "It just doesn't make no sense. A woman ain't ever built a church." You know, and blah blah this, and just so much negativity, and my mom gave this testimony where she said she got out in the middle of the street with a paper bag in one hand with nails in it and a hammer in the other hand. And she got in the middle of the street, and she bowed down

Interviewee: Allen, Pamela Brazial

Interview Date: March 25, 2013

her knees and she opened her arms and surrendered, and she said, “God, if you call me to do it I’m willing to go with you all the way.” And when she got up that was the process where she began to walk totally abundantly in faith.

End of interview

