

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

***HISTORY OF THE COBB COUNTY BRANCH OF THE NAACP AND CIVIL RIGHTS
ACTIVITIES IN COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA***

**AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE HIST 4425 (ORAL HISTORY) CLASS AT
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY, FALL SEMESTER 2009**

INTERVIEW WITH REVEREND A. L. ZOLLICOFFER

COBB NAACP/CIVIL RIGHTS SERIES, NO. 31

**CONDUCTED BY ROBYN GAGNE
TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2009**

AND

**THOMAS A. SCOTT AND IDA BELLE MINNIE
FRIDAY, 1 MAY 2009**

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb NAACP/Civil Rights Series, No. 31
Interview with Reverend A. L. Zollicoffer
Conducted by Robyn Gagne
Tuesday, 10 November 2009
Location: New Friendship Baptist Church

RG: Why don't you begin by telling me where you were born, when you were born and about the community you grew up in?

AZ: I was originally born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, born in the inner-city. I was raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Went to school there, stayed there until I turned 34, and then I came to Georgia. The city, I guess, was more or less a small town when I first was born, not a whole lot of blacks there at the particular time. It was being changed because there was a lot of blacks leaving the South and coming to the North during that period of time back in the 50s, the late 50s. And I had a fairly good, quiet childhood life in Milwaukee.

RG: Did you have any siblings?

AZ: Yes, it was thirteen of us. Fourteen of us were born, but one passed at the age of two in Mississippi, but there were thirteen of us when I came along.

RG: And what number were you?

AZ: In the middle. Number seven. Ten sisters and three brothers—two brothers with myself.

RG: Did you have more than one bathroom?

AZ: No, at first we only had one bathroom until we moved into a larger house.

RG: Where did you go to school?

AZ: I went to school—I went to several schools because we lived in five different houses until I was grown, until I became of age. All of it was in the city. When we stayed on Brown Street, that was at 20th and Brown, I went to Brown Street School. When we were at 13th and Lloyd, that's one of my earlier childhood years, I went to Lloyd Street School. Then my father bought his first house, we lived on 24th and Hadley and there I went to Clark Street School. And then I went to, I believe it was Peckham Junior High. Then Jackie Robinson in my junior high years. And then in high school, I went to West Division, where right now they call it a school of arts, and then North Division where I graduated from. I left there at the age of 18. I enlisted in the service, in the United States Army. I did two years of service in the United States Army. And then after that, I came back home and stayed a few years; and then after getting married, I moved down to Georgia in 1989.

RG: Was there any pull for you here down in Georgia? Or did you and your wife just kind of pick it?

AZ: I guess I was led at the time by the Spirit to move here. I originally started out to leave and go to California because I had an older sister staying there. And I remember when I was staying in service I was here at Fort Gordon, GA, down in Augusta. And I also did some time at military police training school, Fort McClellan. I liked it in the South, so I said, "I think I'll go to the South, I want to raise my children there." And that's how I ended up here. When I got here, we started attending a church. The first church that I went to was Elizabeth Baptist Church that was in Atlanta. That was for the first 30 days until I could find my roots, where I was going to get a house and bring my family. And then I came to Marietta, and then I started going to Big Bethel down on Powder Springs Road. And then I stayed there; I accepted my calling there at Big Bethel to be a preacher. And then the current Preacher resigned and I became the Interim Pastor for a year and a half. And after that, they called a Pastor and I stayed with him as the Assistant Pastor for three years and then I was called here to New Friendship and I've been here for fifteen years.

RG: Wow. When you started here at New Friendship, Deacon Cumberlander said that attendance was pretty low, but you've managed to grow it a lot.

AZ: With the help of the Lord. When I came here, to the small church across the street, they had maybe thirty to fifty people on roll. Not many youth, at that particular time. When I joined, it was my four kids we brought to youth, along with a couple more families that had daughters as well. All in all, there were about ten youth, with my children. We had a meditation hour where all the youth would come up front and Deacon Cumberlander would teach meditation hour during that particular time. And it was a good growing experience for me. Most of the people here were elderly people. And I guess the children of the elderly people moved on—went to a different church, but then the church began to grow little bit by little bit each year to where it's at now. We outgrew the church across the street, and we bought some land down the street, but the Lord said, "No, this is where you need to be at for right now." But we have ten acres of land and many classrooms. Our membership stands right now at about 400-425.

RG: Wow, that's a really huge jump. When you were in the service, were you stationed anywhere other than Georgia?

AZ: Yes, I was in Fort Gordon and in Alabama and Missouri—just those three places, Alabama, Georgia and Missouri.

RG: And what was the time period that you were in the service?

AZ: Right after the Vietnam War, about '77. 1976 to 1979.

RG: Did you experience any racial tensions that weren't in Milwaukee?

AZ: No, in fact, I would have to say that there was more racial tension in Wisconsin than there was in Georgia. It's because, in the North, more of the Caucasian people wouldn't tell you that they didn't like you. They would smile in your face, but they would do things to hurt you behind your back. But in Georgia, if someone didn't like you, they would let you know. And I think that's fair. You know, if you don't like a person, you express that you don't like them. I can deal with a person like that—that's going to be honest and true and straight to your face. But if you say, "Well, I like you, you're a really a good guy." But then you do everything you can to destroy me and hate me, that is a whole different flavor. So it was a new adjustment when it comes down to racial tensions from the North v. South. I liked it better. If there was a difference, it was very little in the South from the North. It may sound strange, but that was my experience.

RG: Right, usually, we're taught the opposite.

AZ: That's because the ones who moved from the South to the North and they didn't know how a lot of the Caucasian people operated in the North.

RG: So, they just thought everyone liked them.

AZ: Right, but really the Caucasians were holding them back from being successful. They did things behind the scenes versus in front of their face. It's a big difference.

RG: Did you go to a school to become a pastor?

AZ: Well, like I said, I accepted my calling at Big Bethel as an Assistant and Interim Pastor for about three and a half years. And during that time, I was taking some classes at Carver Bible Institute in Atlanta. My family was real small, so I'd take two or three classes at night. And then when they became older and more grown up, I then enrolled at Beulah Heights University where I finished my Associate's Degree and also my Bachelor's Degree. Right now, I'm looking at going into Morehouse where I will get my Master's at ITC [Interdenominational Theological Center].

RG: Where have all your siblings gone to in the country? You said that you had a sister in California, but are most of them still in Milwaukee?

AZ: Yes, my older sister is in California still. One of my sisters, not next to me, but a couple years older than me, she moved to Georgia. She stays right here in Powder Springs and she attends the church as well. The rest of them... Let me see, my younger brother, he was at college in Washington, D. C. and he had an accident where he got crushed by a truck while he was still in college working on his doctorate degree. That was back in 1995. Since then, I've had two sisters pass; they were in Milwaukee as well. And the rest of them are still in Milwaukee.

RG: So, you're one of the rebels who moved away.

AZ: Yes. I've been here now over twenty years.

RG: About your parents, what did your dad do?

AZ: My dad was a steel worker. He worked in the foundries, chipping and grinding, pouring steel. And he was in the foundry work, mostly.

RG: And did your mother stay at home with all the children?

AZ: Off and on. She did custodial work at Marquette University. When there weren't any babies being birthed, she would be at the school doing the custodian work.

RG: When the children reached a certain age, did anybody have to get a job to help out a bit?

AZ: We always have worked. I received my first job at the age of six or seven, maybe a little earlier, helping with newspaper routes. And then I sold candy for Youth Achievement, and they would give you fifty cents off of the money that you made. Like, the boxes of chocolate turtles were \$1.50, so I would get fifty cents and Youth Achievement would get the dollar, mixed nuts were the same thing. And so, that was pretty good. Most of my siblings found a job when they reached teenager age worked at the veteran's hospital at thirteen and clothing stores and so on and so on. After I got out of the service, I did some work as well; I even went into the foundry and worked for a while. And then into a tannery, I did that also. Color matching, I always was a mixer for most of my adult career after the service experience. During the service, I served as military police and worked as a short wave radio repairman out of Augusta, Georgia.

RG: That's amazing that you had your first job at six or seven.

AZ: Yes, I started early.

RG: When you were in the military, was there a lot of tension while you served?

AZ: Yes, I experienced a lot of racism in the service. Even passing rank, there were things like we would do phase tests when we were in AIT, out training periods, like in military police. We had 300 black soldiers come in to train to be military policeman, but when the training was over, only about twenty of us, maybe less, graduated. If they failed the phase test, they sent the black soldiers to infantry, but a lot of the white soldiers were able to retake the test again and pass. So, it was that type of thing. Even in the ranks, getting promoted, from private first class, just a regular private, they would get ranks faster in enlisted men. Favoritism for who would be in charge of the squad, the platoon leaders, who would call the cadences, most of those men were the Caucasian men. That's why I got out of the military police after I finished my training. It just wasn't for me. So, I went to the signal core and that's where I got a different MOS as a shortwave radio repairman.

RG: When you went over to be a radio repairman, was there less racism there?

AZ: Well, you would find a lot of black soldiers were transferred to things of that magnitude or to Fort Benning's infantry. They were more or less geared to being front line soldiers.

Not the soldiers that they encouraged to go to officer school or go back to college and get degrees so they could come back to the military and be officers. They had more or less, I guess you could call it, degrading positions, but they were positions whereby they were considered as soldiers who were fighters and killers on the front line.

RG: After you got out of the service, you went back to Milwaukee and worked in the steel mill, right?

AZ: Yes, I worked in the steel mill for about three years. I poured steel, made molds for about two or three years. Then I went to a tannery where I began to take the trade up of chemical mixing and I would be a color matcher, making colors for different types of leather and then I would spray it on four or five different coats that would go on the leather. I did that for about seven and a half years, until I married. When I got married, I came here to Georgia. When I got here I worked at a box company. I was at the box company when I got my calling and started going to school part time. From there, I left and went to the school board. I was delivering text books to different schools. That's where I experienced my heart attack. I had a triple bypass surgery. That was in '92. And in '94, they called me here to be the Pastor of New Friendship.

RG: Where did you meet your wife?

AZ: In Milwaukee.

RG: Did you know each other from school?

AZ: No, Stephanie's five years younger than me, so when I was a child growing up, I was in the same proximity that she was reared up in, but we never did know each other. I knew her aunt, but I never knew her. I think she turned twenty-three, and I met her on her birthday. And we were out and we started talking, talking, talking, and we found out that I knew a lot of her people. From there, it was history.

RG: Did you get married right away? I mean, was one of those situations where you just knew, so you went ahead and married? Or did you wait a little bit?

AZ: It was three years before we got married.

RG: So, you got married and then moved to Georgia, and then started having children? Or did you have children before you came down here?

AZ: She had two already. And I had adopted one from a previous relationship. But all of them came together, blended together. And then we had one when we got together; he was four months old when we moved here.

RG: So, you have four children, is it one boy and three girls?

AZ: No, the opposite, one girl and three boys.

RG: Oh, I know exactly how your daughter feels. It's the exact same with my family. I'm the only girl with three brothers. [laughter]

AZ: Right now, I have seven grandchildren. Four girls and three boys.

RG: Oh, wow. Are you a big, proud grandpa?

AZ: Yes. [laughter] They were all with me last Saturday. We were getting family portraits, so that was really nice.

RG: What do your kids do now?

AZ: All of them are working and raising their families. The youngest one is still at Perimeter College, and he goes there part time. My oldest son is 30. He's a supervisor at one of those car places, where you get your car fixed. He does that and goes to meetings in and out of town. My daughter was a supervisor at MUST ministry, but now she is doing telephone communications. My middle boy, Alex, works at Car Max up here on Barrett Parkway at the general office. He is one of the lead people there in his department. So, all of them are working.

RG: Do all of them have children? Or are the kids just from a couple of them?

AZ: All except one has kids. And that's the one that works at Car Max. He's next to the youngest.

RG: So, he's the only one who doesn't have kids, yet. Are you still hoping for some grandkids from him, too?

AZ: [laughter] Yes.

RG: You said that you have one sister who lives in Powder Springs who comes to the church? Does she think it's great that her brother is up there every Sunday?

AZ: Yes. She enjoys it, she comes regularly. A lot of time her job may take her out of town because she does paralegal work for the federal government law firm here in Atlanta, but when she's in town, she's here. But she travels and things like that and does some things for the attorneys.

RG: I think that's all I have for you. Is there anything else you would like to say?

AZ: Yes, I would just like to thank God for all He is doing here at New Friendship. He continues to grow the church by leaps and bounds as the community grows. I've seen this church grow from one mindset to another and now they are reaching out beyond the four walls of the church. Reaching out and advancing out in the community to win lives for Christ and that's basically what we are all about. This has been an experience for me. I think this is the best job that I've ever had. It's better than all the other jobs I've had and

I wouldn't trade it for anything. You know, you can see the prosperity that comes from seeing lives change, and they are reforming. Some came as alcoholics, drug addictions and they changed their lives, and now they're living positive lives for Christ, so it's been a good experience. We have some future plans to expand the church, even to build a larger facility because right now the eleven o'clock service is packed. It's been that way three years and it's still growing. So, we're looking forward to things in the future.

RG: All right, well, thank you so much for letting me interview you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb NAACP/Civil Rights Series, No. 31
Interview with Rev. A. L. Zollicoffer
Conducted by Thomas A. Scott and Ida Belle Minnie
Friday, 1 May 2009

Location: New Friendship Baptist Church (old church building), Powder Springs, Georgia

THOMAS SCOTT: We're in the old building of New Friendship, just down Villa Rica Road from the current building. We're talking today to Reverend A.L. Zollicoffer. Deacon Donald Gary Brown and Ms. Ida Belle Minnie are here, as well as Mr. Matthew C. Jones, who is doing an internship at KSU this semester. Why don't we just begin with you telling where you were born and where you grew up and a few things about your background?

REV. A. L. ZOLLICOFFER: Okay. I was originally born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1958. I was the seventh child out of fourteen children. We lived in the inner city, and we played around in the city and things like that. I spent most of my life in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, up until the age of eighteen when I went into the service. After the service I went back home, and I stayed there until about thirty-two until I moved here to Georgia.

TS: I was trying to do my math, so you would have graduated from high school and gone into the military about '76, I guess, post-Vietnam.

AZ: That's correct.

TS: How many years did you stay in the military?

AZ: Just two. I did two. I did my basic training on Missouri.

TS: That was post-draft, so you had to volunteer.

AZ: That's right, at Ft. Leonard Wood. After basic training they sent me to AIT [Advanced Individual Training] to Ft. McClellan in Anniston, Alabama where I did some military training for military police.

TS: Is that your first time in the South?

AZ: No, no, no. I'd been in the South practically all of my life. When I was twelve, my brother-in-law right now was dating my sister. He was born in Mississippi, and so every summer, sometimes two times a year, we would travel back and forth going to Mississippi or Ohio, different places like that, visiting. So I fell in love with the South during that particular time.

IDA BELLE MINNIE: When you said, "We," who are you referring to?

AZ: My brother-in-law, my sister, which is John Dills.

TS: John Dills is the brother-in-law?

AZ: That's right. He's a member here at the church. We traveled back and forth ever since I was a young man, age of twelve.

TS: There's a lot of literature now about African Americans who have come back to the South, not that they came back to the South, but maybe their ancestors were from the South and then they returned. What was it that attracted you back to the South?

AZ: I guess the people, the atmosphere, the hospitality that was given here, the warm climate, all of those things, and then the freedom to just do different things that we couldn't do in the city. We would go swimming down at the Big Black Lake, dive off into the river, swim, those types of things we couldn't do in the inner city. They had open pastures where you could run wild and mess with the animals and things of that magnitude.

IM: Wasn't your mother or father or someone from the South?

AZ: Yes, my mother was from Mississippi. She was from Vernon, Mississippi.

TS: What was her name?

AZ: Her name is Georgia Zollicoffer.

TS: Is she still living?

AZ: She's still living. Her maiden name was Stevenson. She was born and raised also in the South until 1957 when they came to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

TS: I see. So they had just moved there when you were born.

AZ: My brother was born there first. He was born in June of '57, and I was born in '58, the following year. My father is from Kosciusko, Mississippi. That's up in the hills. Vernon is in the Delta, and so they met at a very early age.

TS: Maybe we ought to spell the names of where your mother came from in the Delta.

AZ: Well, just say around Greenwood, Sunflower County.

TS: Okay, that's kind of notorious in that civil rights era, Sunflower County. There's a great book by Connie Curry entitled *Silver Rights* about a sharecropper family that took advantage of freedom of choice, despite harassment. It's a wonderful book about Sunflower County and that struggle. It was probably a good time to get out of Mississippi in the '50s from the Delta. Your father, now, where was he from?

AZ: He was from Leake County. That's up in the hill area over by Sallis, Mississippi. He was raised there as a boy; they were sharecroppers. When they got married they were sharecroppers and they stayed on another person's land and worked the field.

TS: Oh, after your mother and father got married they were sharecropping?

AZ: That's right. He had a lot of siblings as well. They were from that part of the South as well. He had fifteen brothers and sisters.

TS: What did your father do once they moved to Milwaukee?

AZ: He worked in a steel mill, basically doing that type of work, ironworker, pouring steel or making molds and things of that magnitude, working in the various foundries. My grandfather moved there also. His name was Lloyd Zollicoffer.

IM: You can remember your grandfather?

AZ: Yes, I was a young man and he was in a house and we didn't stay too far from each other and so . . .

TS: And he was Lloyd?

AZ: That's right.

TS: And your father's name was . . . ?

AZ: L.J. Initials.

TS: What were they for?

AZ: Well, some say . . . [laughter]

TS: Okay, not sure!

AZ: He was Rufus Zollicoffer, but he changed his name. A lot of people had a tendency to change their first names when they moved from one place to another.

IM: Yes, you're right.

AZ: And so he changed it to L.J.

IM: A lot of people do that. So you have the same background as I do. My mother and father were sharecroppers, and they moved to south of Pittsburgh, and my father was a steel worker.

AZ: Yes. See, my grandfather was a chemical mixer, and he worked at Wonderbread. He retired from there.

IM: Your grandfather shouldn't be too much from slavery. I mean, we're going back in the 1800s, are we not?

AZ: It's close to the 1800s.

TS: That's a good question. When were your parents born?

AZ: My father was born in July of 1927, and he died at the age of fifty-five, I believe, heart trouble.

TS: In 1983, thereabouts?

AZ: Right, he died in '82. My mother is still alive. She was born in 1930. She's seventy-nine.

IM: And she looks well.

TS: She's still in Milwaukee?

AZ: Yes.

TS: Were they involved in the church in Milwaukee?

AZ: Yes, my mother is still involved in the church. Usher, things like that. My father, he didn't too much attend churches, but my mother went to church religiously. Every Sunday we had to get up and make ready to go to church.

TS: You didn't have any choice then.

AZ: No, no choice. They drug us to church.

IM: Where did you go to school?

AZ: I graduated from North Division High School in Milwaukee. Then I went to the service, like I said, military police. I did my basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood and Ft. McClellan in Alabama. It was an experience. I never experienced a high volume of racism until I went to the service.

TS: Really? In the service?

AZ: In the service. I was military police. I went through the military training, AIT, and we started out, it was about 300 soldiers that went in for military police. When we were ready to graduate, only about ten to twelve of us black soldiers graduated. I was one of

the twelve. And I believe the reason why I graduated may be because my name was Zollicoffer. [laughter]

TS: They assumed you were white when they read the papers, is that what you're saying?

AZ: That's a possibility! I'm just calling it the way I see it! But all of the Caucasian soldiers, all of them graduated, even if they failed the test. I had the privilege to see when they failed the test they were able to take the test over again, and so for those reasons alone I decided to get out of military police. I went to Augusta, Georgia where I went to Signal Corps—telephone, communications, short-wave radio repair, things of that magnitude. I did my two years, and I got out. It was during peace time, and there were things that were going on. The higher ranking soldiers would sometimes take advantage of the lower ranking soldiers—make them do all types of different types of jobs that were not clean and things of that magnitude. So it was more or less like a game during peace time. It was not my cup of tea. I thought it was something I would probably advance in and take up different trades, but even in that they would sometimes change your orders in the service and say, “Well, we don't have that available so you have to take this.” A lot of the black soldiers ended up down at Ft. Benning, Georgia, jump school and infantry, where they ended up on the front lines if they had to go to war. They were not given a whole lot of opportunity to get education there because they were foot soldiers.

IM: I want to ask a question about when you were younger. Did your parents ever come from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and come back to visit in Mississippi and did you notice the change, because remember Emmett Till [a young man from Chicago who was brutally murdered in Mississippi 1955]. Did you notice any change as to the relationships in the North and being a northern child and coming back South?

TS: Or had the South changed any?

IM: Changed, yes.

AZ: I never experienced a lot of racism as I did in the North. They had racism in the North, but it was a different type of racism than in the South. If a white man didn't like you he'd just say the “N” word, or say, “I just don't like you,” or they'd show you that they didn't like you. Up North they'll say that they like you, and they'll smile in your face, but they'll cut you.

IM: Remember back in the time of Jim Crow when they were saying no colored, you know the Jim Crow law?

AZ: Well, Jim Crow law was coming to an end.

TS: The Civil Rights Act of '64, I mean, it didn't all go away obviously, but at least legally it went away in '64, so you'd have been six by that time.

AZ: Yes, it was the early 1970s when I started coming to the South.

TS: You had to hear stories from your parents about what it was like in the South so maybe a good question was did they perceive a change?

AZ: They didn't like the South at all. In fact, they encouraged us not to come to the South because my mother experienced the killing of Emmett Till because she was in the South, and she talked about how he went to the corner store and there was a white lady who said that he whistled at her. She said that wasn't true, she was upset because he didn't speak back to her. So they came that night and they drug him out of his father's house and they beat that boy mercilessly and they drug him and they threw him in the river.

IM: Yes, he appeared in all the newspapers.

AZ: She was in the South during that time, and so she never liked the South. She always talked about horror stories that she experienced as a young girl coming up in the South. Her brother, I think he cut a white man and he had to leave at night because he was going to kill him. All of her family went to California except one brother who moved to Milwaukee where she was at, but all of her family is in California. All of my father's family moved to Milwaukee when they left Mississippi.

TS: She didn't want to ever come back, but you must have seen something in the South that she didn't see.

AZ: There was a change. People, I think they were more receiving of blacks in the '70s and they were more friendly in the '70s. It was not like they were more or less going around with white sheets and lynching people much back in the '70s when I came down.

IM: And maybe your mother didn't want you to come back down anyway because even during the '60s and '70s when they were integrating schools in the North, they were still segregated here in the South. They didn't integrate all the schools at one time in the South.

TS: No, it took awhile although by the '70s practically everybody was at least under a court order.

AZ: Then it was just in the summertime . . .

iM: Now, Mr. Brown, Brown, when you came through you graduated McEachern but did you go to all black school growing up?

DEACON DONALD BROWN: I went to Lemon Street High School and in elementary school they bused us all the way down to Austell on Washington Street.

TS: Yes.

DB: Joe Jerkins. [Editor's note: The City of Austell has changed the name of Washington Street to Joe Jerkins Blvd., after the current mayor].

TS: That school stayed open until about 1969, I think. So you went there for elementary and then went to Lemon Street for one year and I guess it was 1966 where the city of Marietta said we're not taking people from the county any more. Is that right, it would have been '66 that you went to McEachern?

DB: '66, '67, '68, I graduated in '69, three years I was there at McEachern High School.

IM: Yes, they had integrated then, right.

DB: Yes, I was very impressed.

TS: Well, you're definitely one we want to interview in our project as one of the first . . .

IM: That's what I'm saying because we did interview him and he's excellent. He played in the band at McEachern, we have him.

TS: But I mean, when the students start doing their projects.

IM: Right, I think you would like that.

TS: So you get out of the military in the late '70s and then did you go to college right after you got out?

AZ: No. I stayed in Milwaukee up until the time that I got married to the wife I'm with now, Stephanie.

IM: When did you get married?

AZ: I got married in 1989.

TS: So you took awhile to get married.

AZ: No, that's my second wife.

TS: Oh.

AZ: My first wife, I got married right after I got out of the service. [But later] the Lord led me this way. I was headed to California, I had a sister out in California and I was going to move to California initially, but then when I went my wife I'm with now, who already had two children—she's got kids, I've got one—I'm not going to raise a child in that type of city, and so I decided to come this way. I had been to Georgia . . .

IM: Now, you say city, what kind of city are you talking about?

AZ: Well, California was a twenty-four hour place. Los Angeles was just fast, upbeat. There were a lot of gangs, even back then, in California, and so I didn't want to raise my children in that type of environment. I felt the environment was conducive to raising a child better in the South. I remember coming to Atlanta when I was in the service on a weekend pass, and I liked Atlanta, Georgia, so I said, I'm going to go over here. That's how I ended up here, moving here, for raising children.

TS: What did you do when you came down here?

AZ: When I came down here I worked at a box company. When I came, I joined—first of all I found a church after we got married. We got married in June of 1989. I came down for a honeymoon.

IM: Were you a minister then? You weren't a minister then, were you?

AZ: No, I was a deacon at the other church where I lived in Milwaukee. I served as chairman of the trustee board, chairman of the deacon board, and then when I got married I came down for our honeymoon, and I told my wife, I'm staying, you go back.

IM: Was that your mother's church?

AZ: No. My mother came out of a pretty nice church. The church I was raised in was a large congregation, but at the age of twelve I left that church where my mother was at, and I joined another church, and so she had no problems with that. That particular church, Reverend Taylor, he trained me and nurtured me up in different areas of the church.

TS: What was the name of the church?

AZ: Macedonia Baptist Church. See, we came out of Metropolitan.

IM: Okay, that's a big church.

AZ: Yes, that's about 1,200 or 1,300 people. We were raised in that particular church, and at the age of twelve I left that church. I was baptized up under Reverend King which was a storefront church on Green Bay Avenue in Milwaukee. That's where I began to learn how to sing. I got in quartet groups and things of that magnitude. I was in the choir at the age of twelve, baptized at the age of twelve, and a lot of my training was there until that pastor closed the church down. Then I went back to my mother's church, and I stayed there until I got about eighteen, before I went to the service. When I got out of the service, that's when I started going to. . .

IM: So you stayed in the church all your life.

AZ: All my life.

TS: But after you got out of service, that's when you go to Macedonia Baptist?

AZ: That's right. I nurtured there in leadership, different capacities like trustee, deacon, things of that magnitude. He taught me how to negotiate, go to banks and deal with different banks, things of that magnitude.

TS: Where was Stephanie from?

AZ: Stephanie was originally born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We were both born out at County Hospital.

IM: So did you meet Stephanie while you were at Macedonia?

AZ: Yes, I was still at Macedonia.

IM: You were not a minister at that time.

AZ: I was chairman of the deacon board. You would like to know how I met her?

TS: Yes, sure.

IM: I think you told me once.

AZ: My sister was getting married that weekend, and so me and my brother were out. We went to shoot some pool, and I went to a bar, and there was her birthday, and she was there. So I happened to see her sitting by herself, drinking her little wine, and I walked up to her. I started talking to her, and I put that lover's man kind of thing on, and it was history ever since.

IM: She was sipping; she didn't know any better!

TS: So why did you come South for your honeymoon?

AZ: I came because I wanted to see if it was a place I would like to stay. So I came, and I liked it. I said, "This is where we're going to raise our children."

TS: Where did you go exactly?

AZ: Atlanta. We did our honeymoon in Atlanta, four days. Stephanie made some reacquaintances with some of her people who she hadn't seen since she was a child.

TS: Oh, so she had relatives from Atlanta?

AZ: Her family tree is from Douglas, south Georgia. That's where her mother and them were born, in Douglas, Georgia.

IM: Okay, so she has some southern roots.

AZ: Yes, all her family came from Georgia. On her mother and father's side.

TS: So she reestablished some contacts then, so she wasn't opposed to moving to Atlanta.

AZ: No, she didn't care; wherever I went she was going to go.

IM: She was in love.

AZ: If I'd said I was going to move to Africa, she would have come.

IM: There's something about Atlanta, even though it's in the South, and what year is this now?

AZ In '89

IM: In '89.

TS: Twenty years ago.

IM: So the South was on the move, Atlanta was on the move at that time. Black people were coming.

AZ: All of this out here on [Highway] 278 was just trees. East-West connector was not developed; Powder Springs Road was a two-lane highway; all of that was not developed. In fact, out in Smyrna, there were not even sidewalks or streetlights in a lot of areas. It was dark in Smyrna when I moved down there.

IM: Is that right, Brother Brown?

DB: Yes.

IM: You can remember all that?

DB: Absolutely.

AZ: Jones Shaw was Windy Hill. That was a two-lane.

TS: Windy Hill has changed a lot. Okay, so when you came to Atlanta, you actually came to Smyrna, is that what you're saying?

AZ: Well, I was in Atlanta. I stayed on Fulton Industrial; that's where I stayed for one month until I got a job. I worked at odd jobs such as Circuit City loading trucks and then when I landed the job with the box company, I forget the name of the box company . . .

IM: Now, you're saying down in Atlanta.

AZ: The city.

IM: The city. Wasn't it predominately white at that time?

AZ: No.

TS: No.

AZ: It was black. Fulton Industrial, all of that was black. Atlanta has always been a predominately black city as far as I know.

TS: Since the '60s.

IM: What?

DB: Yes. See, the people that were living in the county, they found refuge in the city of Atlanta. I had an uncle and aunt that lived in Macon, and she got so scared of the Ku Klux Klan that they moved into Atlanta.

TS: This is Mr. Brown talking.

DB: Yes. They just lived there the rest of their lives. They found refuge in a city. But the blacks that didn't, she actually found refuge in the inner city. But the time they were older, my uncle lived next door to Martin Luther King, Sr.

IM: They felt well protected in the city rather than out by themselves.

DB: In the city—in the part of Macon that they lived, they were the only black people in that immediate area, and she was scared, so they moved into the city of Atlanta.

AZ: Another thing I liked about Atlanta, a lot of blacks were aggressive, progressive; they were achieving things. I would go downtown, and I would see them in suits and ties.

IM: Black barber shops, black stores, yes.

AZ: Entrepreneurship was strong. So all of that was something that moved me.

IM: They had their own businesses, that's right, like in Pittsburgh.

AZ: Yes. They had their restaurants and things like that; Paschal's was up and moving.

DB: That was Hunter Street back then, Paschal's.

AZ: Then you have your five major black colleges here, and so they were doing things versus in up North they had some productivity, but it was not on a large scale like in the South. That was a motive why also to decide to choose the South as well.

TS: When did you go to college?

AZ: I went to college after I got here. The first time I went to college was in 1990. After I received my call at Big Bethel . . .

IM: Why don't we start when you got the call?

TS: That makes perfect sense. Which Big Bethel are you talking about? In downtown Atlanta?

AZ: No, in Marietta.

TS: The one on Powder Springs Road?

AZ: Yes. I found a place for us out here in Smyrna before I brought my family back, and then I found a church to attend. I attended Big Bethel Baptist Church on Powder Springs Road. At the time, Reverend Arnold was the pastor for two years after Reverend Hamm retired. During that time he called me out of the audience, and he says, "The Lord has something for you to do." I said, "Well, yes," because I knew the Lord was dealing with me back in Milwaukee with different visions and dreams that I was having about preaching. So when I got here I thought I had escaped all of that and just ran right into the preacher who called me out of the audience and said, "The Lord has something for you to do."

TS: He called you out of the audience by name?

AZ: No, he just said, "Young man." After service was over, I was going to leave. He said, "Young man, come here." I said, "Yes?" He says, "The Lord got something for you to do, is that right?" "I was going to say no, but I said yes because I was in the church. He said, "Okay, what you want to do about it." I said, "Well, I guess I received my calling." So he said, "Okay. You come here every Sunday. You sit here on the front seat. I'm going to introduce you to the church." He did, and I did that for maybe three weeks, and then he licensed me. I said, "Oh, Lord, I finally got it over." Because it was like a load on me.

IM: How did he license you?

AZ: He licensed me—in other words, he let me come forth and preach the Word. At the time, they weren't training preachers to preach; if you were called you get up and you do what you do.

TS: Did you go by yourself on those three Sundays?

AZ: Yes.

TS: So Stephanie wasn't going with you, all the way out here to Powder Springs Road?

AZ: Well, we didn't stay too far because we were right there in Smyrna. We lived in Smyrna.

IM: So you left the hotel and you lived in Smyrna?

TS: Whereabouts in Smyrna did you live?

AZ: On Pat Mell Road.

TS: I lived on Pat Mell Road at one time. Forty-something years ago.

IM: You missed out on each other!

AZ: But she was not really involved in church a lot at that particular time. She was baptized and joined a Holiness Church originally.

IM: In Georgia?

AZ: No, in Milwaukee, when she was a young girl.

IM: Pentecost-like.

AZ: Right. But she was not involved in church a lot. Her father and mother were studying Jehovah Witnesses; he's an elder at a Jehovah Witness faith. So she would attend that every now and then, but she was not really serious about it. She never joined the Jehovah Witnesses, but she would come to church periodically every now and then. But I was attended Bethel about three weeks, and then the preacher licensed me. Okay, I said, that was over, I'm licensed, I'll preach the Gospel. I told the pastor I'd help him do anything he wanted to be done.

IM: Have you always been a Baptist.

AZ: All of my life. A Missionary Baptist. I ended up getting licensed, then about three weeks later, the pastor resigned, you know.

TS: This is Arnold?

AZ: Arnold. Yes. There was some confrontation between his wife and the church, and he just resigned. He came in one Monday and said they had a church meeting. He said, "Since I have resigned and there is no preacher at the church, you are the only preacher."

MATTHEW JONES: You were planning ahead!

AZ: I said, "How can this happen?" I ended up being the interim pastor in 1991. I flew home, and Reverend Taylor ordained me as a preacher.

IM: You flew home to Milwaukee?

AZ: Yes, and he ordained me as a preacher.

TS: From where you had been deacon before.

AZ: Macedonia.

IM: You have papers on that, don't you?

AZ: Yes.

IM: He has papers that say that.

AZ: They lay on hands. They had a council, and they set me before the church and asked me a series of questions. The council was the body of the whole body, and the church asked me a lot of questions and things of that magnitude. It's not like we do it now.

IM: They put you in the hot seat.

TS: It's not like you do it now?

AZ: No. The way we do it now, we have more or less a council behind closed doors. We bring in ordained ministers, and we ask them several questions about the Bible, theology questions, things of that magnitude, to make sure that they are aware and know what's going on with the Word of God. I did that, and I came back, and I served as interim pastor for over a year. During that time I enrolled in school. I went to Carver Bible College down on Nelson Street in Atlanta. I commuted back and forth in the evening because I was working at the box company and raising three children. The church asked me would I pastor them? I told them no, I will not pastor you. I can't pastor you. I'm too busy.

IM: That's at Bethel?

AZ: At Big Bethel. That's what I told them, I said no. So they said, "Okay." Now, Jesse Broadnax was the chairman at the time.

TS: So you preached on Sunday but you were busy the rest of the week.

AZ: Sometimes I would do funerals and things like that. I had Reverend Hamm to help coach me, teach me, how to bring in a body.

TS: So Reverend Hamm is still around even though he's retired.

AZ: He's retired. He's up in his nineties.

TS: I mean, back then, he was around still to help out.

AZ: Yes.

IM: And he never took another church?

AZ: Never took another church. He went back to Zion up under Reverend Robert Johnson. But he would come back every so often when they had funerals and things because he knew all the people.

IM: The same congregation he left he still came back.

AZ: Came back to visit, preach every now and then. So that was a plus on the ministry side for me because I was not trained in the ministry as a pastor because my pastor taught me deaconship, but I've seen how churches ran from inside out. I served there for a year, a little over a year until they decided they would call someone. They finally called Reverend C.L. Bryant, and he became the pastor at that time. I served as his assistant approximately about two or three more years.

TS: And you're still going to Carver Bible.

AZ: No, after that year I stopped because it was just so much. I served with him, learning the congregation and things like that.

IM: They weren't paying too much money back then; how much did you get a Sunday to preach?

AZ: They gave \$50.00 a Sunday, and then when he became pastor he changed the dynamics of the pay scale because he put me as assistant pastor on payroll, so they would pay me \$250.00.

IM: Per Sunday.

AZ: No, per month. As assistant pastor that was not heard of out in this area on payroll, but he started out with \$700.00 per month as pastor. So he ended up somewhere around like maybe \$1,500.00 by the time he left the church. That's another long story. They called me to come visit this church, the gospel choir.

IM: This church?

AZ: This church right here. New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church asked me to come and preach for their choir anniversary, and so I came and preached for the choir anniversary, and I left.

IM: Was Brother Brown here?

DB: No, I wasn't here.

AZ: His father was here.

TS: So what year would this have been?

AZ: That was about 1993.

TS: What was the anniversary?

AZ: Choir anniversary.

IM: They have gospel chorus, the singers.

TS: Oh, once a year they have a big singing?

IM: Yes, in most churches, yes.

AZ: I was preaching that. But I didn't know at the time that Reverend Brown was planning on retiring, and so there was a musician here, Betty Lollar . . .

IM: Excuse me, you said, Brown, was that the one related to you?

AZ: No, no, he was the pastor.

DM: You said Brown, right?

AZ: Yes, Marvin Brown, Sr. He was the pastor. He pastored here twenty-seven years.

IM: Here at New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

AZ: He was getting ready to retire, and I didn't know it at the time. I just came and preached, left and went back to the church where I was at at Big Bethel. Betty Lollar came and told me that he was planning on retiring. I said, "Okay, good." I didn't think anything of it. She said, "They're looking for a pastor, and some of them asked me for you to put your resume in." So I wrote up a resume, and I gave it to them. They put it on file. So when they started hearing various preachers, they asked me to come back and preach. I preached. They asked to come back and preach again. I preached again. I wasn't concerned; I was all right. I was doing ministry, I was assistant pastor. I didn't have all the headaches.

IM: While you were doing this preaching how did your wife get involved? Were you preaching in Atlanta or did your wife come onboard and you were still doing it by yourself?

AZ: She was still tending to the kids and things like that. She's still loving me, you know, and things of that magnitude.

IM: Okay, so you were on your own.

AZ: I was just—me and God. I would have loved for her to have been there, but she just wasn't ready.

IM: I understand.

AZ: I did that for about maybe three or four months, and then finally one of the deacons came to me. I think it was Cumberlander. He asked me if I would come and be interim pastor.

MJ: That was who?

AZ: Deacon Aubrey Cumberlander.

TS: Okay.

AZ: I told him, no, I would not be interim pastor because I've got a position already. I wasn't even thinking about pastoring too much. Well, my wife says, "Let's go to church." She said, "You want to go to church with me?" I said, "Oh great! Let's go over here." It was evening time, and homecoming was here in September. So I came over here during their homecoming in August, the second Sunday in August, to visit; and so I came in, and everybody was amazed to see my wife with me.

IM: She was probably amazed to be there! [laughter]

AZ: Somebody took her from me, and they brought her all in here and showing the people, and I didn't know what was going on.

IM: Was Brother Brown around then?

AZ: No. He came after I came to the church.

IM: Okay, go on.

AZ: Came back.

IM: Where was he at?

AZ: He was raised in the church. He was doing truck driving and stuff like that.

IM: Okay, we'll go over that later.

AZ: He was on the road doing truck-driving. But we came in, and so I did the service with my wife, and we left. Well, a week or two later one of the Mother's came by the church and says, "They called you, but then they're rescinding the call."

IM: What Mother?

AZ: Mother DeLay. She came and told me.

TS: They called you but rescinded the call?

AZ: Yes. [laughter] But the Lord—He's in control. "Mother y'all need to pray!" That's what I told her. "You need to pray!" I wasn't trying to play no politics by doing anything that had magnitude. "Go back and tell your church they need to pray!" [laughter] So the next week they called me and said, "Okay, they did a revote, and I won again."

IM: Did they tell you what you won by?

AZ: Yes. His father told me. He said, "Reverend, you won by one vote! One vote got you in; one vote can get you out!" You know, kind of humorous like. Maybe two or three votes, you know. Actually I think it was like maybe twelve to fifteen.

IM: Was that considered the deacons because deacons are generally the ones who bring in the list of the whole congregation.

AZ: The whole congregation by fifteen to twelve. They had about maybe, I don't know forty people.

TS: Pretty small at that time.

AZ: Right. And so I said, "Well, let me pray." They asked me, "What do you take us for?" I said, "Well, let the Lord lead you. You be fair to me as the church grows; I want to grow." They started me off at \$500 per month. [laughter]

MJ: I don't want your salary.

TS: And you're still working at the box company at that time?

AZ: I was still working at the box company.

TS: You had to.

AZ: Before I accepted my calling here I had just recently had a heart attack. I had a triple bypass. That was in '92 I believe. During that time I had just left the box company and started working for the public school system delivering textbooks. It was a better paying job. I went to open one of the doors during the summertime, and, man, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I ended up having surgery, got out, and I did some of the small end jobs in-between. I went to the unemployment office, and I was talking to a guy that was working. He came out of Alabama. He was doing this, more or less, setting up security places here, and he was going to start off at about \$2.00 an hour at a security place. I said, "Okay, let me go there; maybe I can get a job there," after I had my heart attack, something light.

IM: You're still preaching, right.

AZ: Yes, I'm still preaching at Big Bethel. The guy says to me, "I don't know why I'm here but" He was just made to come here and do interviews. So he started talking about his church. I said, "I didn't come here to hear about no church. I'm here to look for a job!" I said, "I'm a preacher." I told him I was called to the ministry. He said, "Oh, tell me about your calling," and I told him. He told me everything about how his church was structured, how to run a church, things you need to do when you get into a church and how to cause a church to grow. This guy was a deacon. So I'm listening and I say, okay.

IM: Was this a white gentleman?

AZ: A white gentleman. He gave me his number and everything.

IM: Do you remember, do you recall?

AZ: I've got his name written down somewhere in some papers and all. So he says, "You need to do what the Lord says to do. I'm not going to hire you." [laughter] I said, "What?!" This guy is crazy!

IM: You thought just a reason for him not wanting to hire you as a black man?

AZ: No, he just said, "God's got something else for you to do, and you don't need to be doing this kind of work. You need to be doing what God called you to do."

IM: Okay.

AZ: I said, "Okay. " I left. I was so distraught. I've got three little kids at home, a heart attack, you know, trying to get some work. I'm going out cutting lawns, you know, with a lawn mower, trying to feed my family. So I ended up working at Synergy about two years. They hired me to work at Synergy, and I left and went to [various other companies]. Then I went to Beulah Heights Bible University, and there I got my bachelor's degree. I did the three and half years and finished that and got my bachelor's degree while I was serving as pastor here.

TS: So you're working other jobs for seven years, Monday through Friday . . .

IM: Still pastoring every Sunday.

TS: Pastoring and going to school and recover from a heart attack.

IM: And three children, five children, four children.

TS: Four children then?

AZ: Teaching classes.

TS: Okay, so did it reach a point that where the church had grown enough that you didn't have to work these day jobs any more?

AZ: I guess I asked the Lord, "I want to be full time." And I said, "I don't know if the church will be willing to receive me full time." He says, "Right now, what do you think you need?" So I wrote down a fee. I said, "Give it to the deacons. If they approve it that means I can come off the job." So I gave it to the deacons. He was here. The deacons said . . .

TS: You're saying Mr. Brown was here.

AZ: Right. Timothy Simpson was a chairman at the time. I said, "Here goes the figure I need."

IM: What year was this?

AZ: I guess it was 2003. I gave them the papers that said I need \$58,000 per year to be full time. In 2003 they said, "We can't pay that, but we will work toward that." I said, "Good." So they brought it to the board. . .

IM: Let's come back, stop right there. Brother Brown, you came aboard, you are now in the church and you are now a deacon, right?

TS: In 2003?

AZ: Somewhere around there.

IM: Now, you're around enough on the board to influence to bring Reverend into this church, am I correct?

AZ: I was already here.

DB: He was already here.

IM: He was already here?

DB: See, he'd been here for fifteen years.

AZ: Part-time.

IM: Did you have to vote on to bring Reverend in?

TS: I mean, the first fifteen years you're preaching on Sundays, but you're working during the week.

AZ: I worked during the day, yes, but in the evenings I was doing ministry.

IM: I'm trying to get to the point where Brother Brown was involved in the full time ministry, you know, pays you and all.

DB: Well, he was full time all that time but he just . . .

AZ: I had to work. I was full time but . . .

TS: But you weren't being paid enough to . . .

MJ: You were being paid part-time.

AZ: The pay was not there, but the workload was there because it was a small church. I was able to do that.

IM: Right here, right?

AZ: Yes. The Lord wanted this church to grow and, man, it just took off.

IM: He has these visions.

TS: So the deacons decide we can't afford \$58,000, but we'll get there, is that right?

DB: Yes.

AZ: Yes, that's okay.

TS: So something less than that, but certainly a lot better than what you were making.

AZ: A whole lot less than that. They went to work and said as the church grows then they'll do it. So I said, "Okay, let's move. Every year do something; get me where I need to be." That was just flat pay. There was no package. That included housing, you know, but. . .

IM: Did all the deacons agree with this?

AZ: Yes.

TS: Okay, so at that point in 2003 you said I'm going to devote my full time to this church, to the ministry, and not worry about salaries from anything else.

AZ: That's right. Whenever there was giving—my wife, she had just finished her schooling, and so she was here with me as well.

IM: What type of schooling did she have?

AZ: She went to computer technology, learning computers and things of that magnitude.

TS: Was she working?

AZ: Yes, she started working at a CPA firm in 2007, and she's been there ever since.

TS: So the family didn't have to rely entirely on what you were making here at the church.

AZ: Right. I went to school. As soon as I quit the job, that same year I enrolled in school. January 1 I was at Beulah Heights University.

IM: Meanwhile your children are growing up.

AZ: They started growing. High school, I was involve with their football and practices and things of that magnitude, so being a father, you know, pastoring,

TS: Which high school were they in?

AZ: They went to Campbell. They left there. They went to Osborne and South Cobb. One graduated from Osborne, two graduated from South Cobb. Alex graduated from Madison up in Wisconsin.

IM: And you're all members of this church?

AZ: Yes.

TS: So Alex was with his mother.

AZ: He would come down in the summer and be with me every summer, so when he graduated he came right here.

TS: How much was the church growing in terms of members?

- AZ: I think after the third year of me pastoring, that's when it started growing maybe 25 members more, double the capacity, finally to about 100, then about 150 people. At that time it had grown to where this church [building] could not hold its members. It was at full capacity, so we started an eight o'clock service in 2003, and that allowed us to go to about 250. That was a lot because sometimes maybe about 80 came to the eight o'clock service, and then about 160 would come to the 11:00 worship. The church would only hold about 150 people. It was just packed. We had to do something. We searched for some land, and we bought some land up the street up on Friendship Church Road. We bought that, but we couldn't stay here until we were able to build, so this [new] church [building] came open.
- IM: Because I think you put a television in here, and I remember by the time we had joined, you had people sitting out here [in the fellowship hall].
- TS: Now, you say, did you buy a church that was already in operation up the road here on Villa Rica Road?
- AZ: We were trying to buy land. There was no church available by location. So we looked at the church where we are now, and it came open for sale. I said, "This church is too small," because I looked at it and went back out. At the time it was a Southern Baptist. Morningview bought it from up under us; that's what happened to us. They bought it from up under us, and they bought the church because they're the same affiliation, the same denomination.
- IM: And we would like, if you have time, professor, for you to go across and look at the new church.
- TS: Okay.
- AZ: So we ended up buying land to make a long story short. We bought land up the street, and we were planning on building there when the congregation began to grow so fast, and we had to get out of here. So that church came back open for sale.
- IM: What added to the growth of the church, Reverend? Were they the same people in the community or were these people coming from the North like myself?
- AZ: They were coming from everywhere, all walks of life. People were just coming, and they were building subdivision and things of that magnitude out in this area. So they didn't have a lot of churches.
- IM: So this was during the progress when many people were going back South. The migration—now we're migrating back, because a lot of people like me would come from California, Michigan; they were coming from Chicago; so you had a lot of us coming back home.

TS: So African Americans coming back and moving straight to the suburbs when they came back.

IM: Is this considered a suburb?

AZ: Yes.

IM: Okay, I didn't know.

AZ: Yes, the county. It just grew by leaps and bounds. It just took off. We had a nice quality worship service, nice choirs, nice deacons, devotion; they did it the way the old deacons did it; they sang hymns.

IM: It was a lovely church.

AZ: Yes, it was a lovely church. So it was just good.

TS: Did the newcomers and the old timers blend well together?

AZ: They love it, they loved it. They loved the atmosphere because it's such an atmosphere of loving folks speaking to you. They hug you; they embrace you; they shake your hand; they greet you when you come in. So they just fell in love with that type of atmosphere. And they had good singing; you had dynamic preaching, charismatic preaching; that's why my voice is so raspy because I'm from the school of hoopology, you know. And the Lord, yes, that kind of thing.

TS: So that's the way you preach?

AZ: Yes. It's good.

IM: I think many of us coming back were very reserved. We were dormant like. Because I tell you I was very careful. I try to be very careful. I think many of us, because we didn't want the older congregation to feel that we were going to try to come in and take over.

AZ: But they were in such a way that they had their position, so there were now ministries being developed.

TS: Well, let's stop at this point. Thank you very much.

INDEX

- Arnold (Reverend), 20-21
- Beulah Heights Bible University, 3, 27
- Big Bethel Baptist Church (Powder Springs, Georgia), 2, 20-21
- Broadnax, Jesse, 22
- Brown, Donald (Deacon)
 Childhood education of, 14
- Brown, Marvin Sr., 24
- Bryant, C.L. (Reverend), 23
- Carver Bible College, 3, 22-23
- Cumberlander, Aubrey (Deacon), 25
- Delay, Laurine (Mother), 26
- Dills, John, 9
- Elizabeth Baptist Church, Atlanta, 2
- Fort McClellan, Alabama, 9
- Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, 9
- Hamm, (Reverend), 20, 22-23
- Johnson, Robert (Reverend), 23
- Lemon Street High School, 14
- Macedonian Baptist Church (Milwaukee, WI), 16
- McEachern High School, 15
- New Friendship Baptist Church (Dallas, Georgia), 2, 24-26, 28, 31-32
- Simpson, Timothy, 28
- Till, Emmett, 13
- Washington Street Elementary School, 14
- Zion Baptist Church (Marietta, Georgia), 23
- Zollicoffer, A.L. (Reverend)
 Background, 1, 9
 Siblings, 1, 3, 6
 Education, 1, 3, 12
 U.S. Army service, 1, 2, 12-13

- Move from Milwaukee to Atlanta, 2
- On growing the congregation of New Friendship Baptist Church, 2, 4, 31-32
- Race relations in Milwaukee WI, 3
- Father of (Rufus or L.J. Zollicoffer), 4, 10-11, 14
- Mother of (Georgia Zollicoffer), 4, 10, 14, 16
- Raising money as a child, 4
- On racism in the U.S. Army, 4-5, 13
- Professional career of, 5
- Becoming a pastor, 5
- Meeting Stephanie and marriage, 5, 15, 17
- Children of, 5, 6, 30
- Grandchildren of, 6
- On visiting the south as a child, 9
- On living in the south, 10
- Grandfather of (Lloyd Zollicoffer), 11-12
- On the hypocrisy in northern racism, 13
- On his mother's memory of the Emmett Till murder, 13
- On deciding to move to Georgia, 15-17
- As a deacon in Wisconsin, 16
- On Macedonian Baptist Church in WI, 16
- On Cobb County in 1989, 18
- Finding work in Atlanta, 18-19
- On the racial composition of Atlanta, 19
- Atlanta as "progressive," 19
- On joining Big Bethel and being licensed to preach, 20-21
- Becoming interim pastor at Big Bethel, 22
 - Salary, 23
- Moving to New Friendship Baptist Church, 24-26
- On Marvin Brown Sr., 24-25
- Earning his B.S., 27
- On being hired full-time at New Friendship, 28-30
- Acquiring land for new church building, 31-32
- Demographics of new members of New Friendship, 32
- New members' relationship with existing members, 32
- Zollicoffer, Georgia, 4, 10, 14, 16
- Zollicoffer, Lloyd, 11-12
- Zollicoffer, Rufus (or L.J.), 4, 10-11, 14
- Zollicoffer, Stephanie, 5, 15, 17-18, 21, 25, 30

This item is part of the following collection:
Thomas Allan Scott, 1943-
Kennesaw State University Oral history project, 1978-
KSU/45/05/001

The collection is held by:
Kennesaw State University
Dept. of Archives, Special Collections, & Records Management
1000 Chastain Rd
Sturgis Library Rooms 215-226
Kennesaw, Georgia 30144
(770) 423-6289
archives@kennesaw.edu

To request permission to publish, reproduce, publicly display, broadcast, or distribute this material in any format, you must contact the Dept. of Archives, Special Collections, and Records Management.