

THE SPIRITUAL MUSIC WHICH MOTHER EVER JEAN IVEY ENJOYED:

A Family History Preserved for Grandchildren

and

A Church History Preserved for the Saints in all the Churches

by

Rev. Roderick Andrew Lee Ford, D.D.



Mother Ever Jean Ivey (1939 - 2025)

Special Dedication

Gospel Great Shirley Caesar
Mount Calvary Word of Faith Church
Raleigh, North Carolina

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Mother Ever Jean Ivey (1939 – 2025)

For the benefit of my daughters — Ashley and Makayla Ford — I thought it important to preserve something of local Church history in the form of Mother Ever Jean’s deep love for Christian music, which coincidentally reinforces our extraordinary experience together during a college-tour and family trip to Raleigh, North Carolina, several years ago.

In the “Friends of Christian Women’s Network” Facebook group page, I have frequently posted several Gospel songs, with the following preface: *"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. -- Psalm 100: 1-2"*). This Scripture both succinctly and accurately describes how Mother Ever Jean daily cultivated and expressed her Christian faith — with both gladness and singing.

In 2019, I took my two daughters, Ashley and Makayla, to Raliegh-Durham, North Carolina to visit the research triangle — i.e., Duke

University; North Carolina State University; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and several other renowned HBCUs, including St. Augustine's University, Shaw University, and North Carolina Central University.

However, our most exhilarating moment was our intimate and personal audience which we received – as a miracle from God's own hand – with the great Gospel singer, Shirley Caesar! It was then difficult for me to explain to Ashley and Makayla just how important Shirley Caesar is in Gospel Music anthology, and, for that matter, in the long history of the Black Church. It was also difficult for me to explain how Shirley Caesar's music greatly influenced the spiritual re-awakening of their grandmother, Mother Ever Jean, as well as myself, during the early 1980s.

MT. CALVARY WORD OF FAITH CHURCH (RALEIGH, NC)



Here, I am with my spiritual Godmother, Gospel Great Shirley Caesar, in 2019.

Nevertheless, I then told my two daughters – Ashley and Makayla – to look carefully at Shirley Caesar's face; and then I said, *"Doesn't she look just like Grandma Jean?"* And they both nodded in agreement.

Actually, though, I was not only referring to the physical resemblance of the great Shirley Caesar and Mother Ever Jean – but what I was actually referring to was their "Holy Ghost" flare or persona! What I was then getting at – but which my two daughters perhaps did not fully understand – was that I saw a deep, spiritual resemblance between these

two great Christian women, who were both only about 1 year apart in age. Their “spiritual” resemblance, at least in my mind, radiated through their pores and reflected long lives of deep and spiritual prayer – talks with the Lord.

I then shared with the great Shirley Caesar and my two daughters all of the great and tremendous spiritual blessings which Pastor Caesar’s life’s work and music had had upon my mom, Mother Ever Jean.

In 1980, my mom, Mother Ever Jean, was only 41 years old!

It was during that period in her life when I witnessed, firsthand, Mother Ever Jean’s spiritual re-awakening.

As best that I can recall, Mother Ever Jean received this great spiritual regeneration from the Holy Ghost, while attending an old-school, traditional revival meeting – in the great North American tradition of First and Second Great Awakenings – at a small, rural church in McAlpin, Florida.¹

At this revival service, a visiting revivalist, a white pastor named Harvey Menice – then rumored to be a prophet from the Lord – presided. And there, as I can very vividly recall, a local pianist and Gospel singer named Gloria Ford, sang the song, “*He Touched Me*” in a very melodious, soulful rhythm typical of the Black Gospel tradition.

Although I have not been able to find a “black gospel” version of this song, the following version, which is performed and sung by the song’s original writer, is a very excellent representation:

- [Gaither Vocal Band - He Touched Me \[Live\] ft. Gaither Vocal Band - YouTube](#)

¹ This church would have been Mt Siani Baptist Church or Bethlehem A.M.E. Church. I cannot remember.



I was 11 years old at the time. And, being close to my mother, I too was influenced and touched by her religious re-awakening, which would later have a great impact upon my religious and moral development. This re-awakening was most influential, because it resulted in Mother Ever Jean's daily Bible readings, daily prayers, and daily singing and playing various Gospel songs, which I also listened to.

The two most impactful music albums [or cassette tapes] that Mother Ever Jean played quite frequently were:

- *Every Cloud* (1977) by the Mighty Clouds of Joy



And

- *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar



Now, Mother Ever Jean certainly had her own personal favorite songs from each of these albums. But, through listening to this music, I also eventually attained my own personal favorites, which I have listed below, as follows:

Mighty Clouds of Joy

- “I Came to Jesus” *Every Cloud* (1977) by the Mighty Clouds of Joy

[I came to jesus mighty clouds of joy - Google Search](#)

Shirley Caesar

- “Whisper A Prayer,” *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar
[shirley caesar 1980 rejoice songs wiki - - Video Search Results](#)
- “He’s Got It All in Control,” *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar
[shirley caesar 1980 rejoice songs wiki - - Video Search Results](#)
- “Satan, You’re A Liar,” *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar
[shirley caesar 1980 rejoice songs wiki - - Video Search Results](#)
- “Gotta Serve Somebody,” *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar
[shirley caesar 1980 rejoice songs wiki - - Video Search Results](#)

- “It’s in the Book,” *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar
[shirley caesar 1980 rejoice songs wiki - - Video Search Results](#)
- “I love You, Mama” *Rejoice* (1980) by Shirley Caesar
[shirley caesar 1980 rejoice songs wiki - - Video Search Results](#)

During the last two or three years of Mother Ever Jean’s life, she also frequently requested that I play the following Gospel artists:

- Rev. James Clevend – no particular song.

Aretha Franklin

- Aretha Franklin’s 1972 *Amazing Grace* Album



Fortunately, as we were listening to Aretha Franklin's *Amazing Grace* album, I kept saying, "Mama, do you mind if I play that again," and she would always politely and enthusiastically nod with approval.

In addition to these beautiful songs, during the last two or three years of Mother Ever Jean's life, I often and always played the assorted Gospel songs on the following 3-Hours of Gospel Tract:

- [Over 3 Hours Of Old School Church Songs Volume XVIII \(West Angeles COGIC Edition\)! - YouTube](#)



On many occasions, whenever I went into the cafeteria to take business calls or to do work, I would leave Mother Ever Jean with this 3-Hours of Gospel music playing, and she thoroughly enjoyed it. There were two or three songs on this track, which she would always ask me to "rewind and replay" two or three times, before going on to the next song.

This brief commemoration of Mother Ever Jean's great love for Gospel music – not just songs sung in church but sung daily in the heart in order to get through difficult and challenging times – is the story of a true servant of Christ.

“They that walked in darkness sang songs in the olden days – Sorrow Songs – for they were weary at heart,” wrote Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).² For Mother Ever Jean, as I can vividly recall, sang those Sorrow Songs (particularly the old Negro Baptist hymns), too!

But Mother Ever Jean also sang with joy the Triumphant Songs – songs about the Glory and the Victory of the Lord, as well, such as previously mentioned, “*He Touched Me*” and “*I Came to Jesus*.”

And so, may this brief summation of Mother Ever Jean Ivey’s spiritual essence and love for Christian music be somewhat of a brief *Church history* and a brief Christian testimonial of the life of an African American, a woman, and a saint who lived in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Amen.

Faithfully Submitted:


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August 10, 2025



² W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Souls of Black Folk,” *Writings* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1986), p. 536.