

The Black Church

Where You found me.

Macedonia Baptist Church By: Floyd Smith / Floyd Stewart

Compton California's Willowbrook Junior High School, 1978-79, when My Mother got married to a man named Rev. VERNON Eugene Stewart. My Mother is GERTRUDE "Trudi" STEWART, my stepfather, Rev. Stewart was an associate pastor at the time at Macedonia Baptist Church, where the Rev. Floyd Massey Jr. was Pastor.

The streets of Compton, Watts and Los Angeles, was super gang related dangerous, and Church was the last place I wanted to be, or be seen by any of my homies.

But one thing made me want to go to Macedonia, no, it wasn't being mentored by the legendary Baseball giant Roy Campanella, or trips to Dodger Stadium where we knew each Dodger player, as if Steve and Cindy Garvey was our Big Brother and Sister, Ron Cey, Dusty Baker, and even meeting my own personal Super Hero Sugar Ray Robinson at the stadium, no, not me, great, but, no.

What made me want to be at Church was when my Mom sat us in the second row near the piano, and although the organ was on the other side of the church, I could feel the Bass sub in my body as the organ player got into the intro of a song titled "Through It All"

Now I heard this song before, but the intro alone made me drift, And when we all saw Sister Sylv's get up and walk over to the microphone to sing this solo everybody would applaud and I noticed my Mom looking at me like she was glad that I liked something about church, but she also knew that my interest in Sister Sylv's voice reminded my Mother of a look she ~~has~~ seen in the eyes of my biological father, Jazz Guitar Legend Floyd Smith, whom she still hates, to this day, and whom I've never seen face to face.

But I didn't care, all I wanted was to hear my Sylvie say those first words, yes, I said, say, because Sylvie's singing voice was so strong, smooth, sweet, right, and powerful, it was as if she was speaking and singing at the same time, right directly onto my 13 year old soul.

"I've been shot of places,
and I've seen a million faces
oh but there was times
when I just

I didn't know right from wrong
oh but in my lonely hours
those precious lonely hours
Jesus let me know
that I was his own
and oh through it all
through it all

(Chorus)
I've learned to trust in Jesus
I've learned to trust in God
through it all, through it all
I've learned to depend upon His Word."

Sylvia's version of this song would be
Stuck on my head, even to this day
I can truly say that I love me
Some Sister Sylvia and I'm writing
this message into circa 2018, From California
Death Row at San Quentin State Prison. (Yes Loud)

Where You lost Me.

One day, My Mom heard me beating on
a bucket in the back yard, and singing
"Through it all" (Sylvia mode), and
She went nuts, Rev. Stewart told her
that.

"Baby, Now Baby, Theres That Boy
In The Church That Sings "Ave Maria"
And he's not a sissy, oh, yeah,
he might be one, but let me
talk to him first"; "God dont like no sissies!"

So, Rev. Stewart ask me,

"Yo Mama thinks you're a sissy,
So do you like girls or boys?"

I told Rev. Stewart that "I liked The Song
"Through it all" better than I liked girls or
boys, and I liked boys better than I
liked girls, but all of the boys are in
gangs and, what's a sissy?"

Rev. Stewart said

"A sissy boy is an abomination of God"

And in my mind, it dawned on me that, whatever
an abomination was, is was not good, and God
didn't like it, and God doesn't like me.

Rev. Stewart told my Mother what I said, and she beat me with an electric' extension cord, and kicked me out of the house. So, there I am, naked, bleeding, and crying at 13 years old, sitting on the steps of 1707 E. 122nd Street right behind Martin Luther King Hospital, or (Killin King), it's the light green house.

And old lady who lived directly across the street from us, walked a blanket out to me, wrapped me in it, and walked me into her home, she called the police, and made me some hot chocolate! She asked me what was going on, and I told her that my mom and Rev. Stewart told me that God don't like Sissies, and I hated that church. (she was my Angel).

So, I never set foot into that house again, never went back to Macedonia Baptist Church, and although I didn't know what a sissy was, I had always knew what I was, myself!

Rev. Stewart was one of the greatest black men I've ever known, I loved him dearly, and admired him for everything he did for us, yet, I spent my entire life looking for myself in the black church, the black community, and what I've found was us hiding from each other, shaming each other and pretending to not exist, there, but not really there.

The Black Church Choir, what would you sound like without me? would Sister Sylvia even know that she made God real to a 13 year old LGBTQ boy that could never find her when Church Service was over?

I was afraid to find Her because I thought She would look down on me if She saw me as a lil sissy, so I found myself hiding from Love.

The Choir Director at Willowbrook Jr. High School named Mr. CanBla, who made me believe in myself, to step out in front of my sister's entire graduation class and help sing lead vocals to the song "Be Greatful" by asking me:

"Who is your favorite singer?"

I said "Sister Sylvia", "Sylvia, from My Church".

He said:

"Well pretend that Sister Sylvia
~~is~~ in the audience and sing to
Her, let Her see what She has
taught you, You have a gift
Son, now get out there and give
that gift to Sister Sylvia."

You see, the black church not only lost little black boys to street gangs and drugs, prisons, and murder, but you can't claim to lose something that you've pushed away and on behalf of all of the young LGBTQ kids of my generation, I say to you, WOW, I'm not a lost soul, I'm an abandoned soul.

You taught my own Mother to hate what I am to the point where She and Her Rev. Husband kicked me out of the home and into The System, the streets and into a community that loves to march on unity, yet live divided, and to me, that makes all of you, fake ass Christians. In those moments, it was you, that rejected me.

So you can't be surprised that some little black boys don't like the black church, infact, the black church was the first place that I was touched by another male inappropriately, and outwardly teased and shamed for being a sissy.

The irony for me was that our church, Macedonia Baptist Church is located ~~spackdab~~ in the middle of some of the most dangerous, violent, killing environments in the United States, and most of the violence is caused by children, or family members of church goers.

To pastor Floyd Messay III, I was also one of those children that your father told children stories to every Sunday service, and perhaps you still follow that tradition, I ask you to ask yourself to look onto those little faces and convince each of them that the God of your Father loves them, and cares about them, and that He knows what's going on at school, at home and on the streets, and loves them for who they are, and will become. That's what I needed to know from the black church when I was there.

And if Sister Sylvia's family is still in your church, please tell them that I said that Sister Sylvia, for most of my childhood was the only true voice of a real Angel that made this one little black boy from the hood believe that I was worthy of carrying a valuable note, in song, "Through It All".

I've learned a lot since then, but to this day, I still have no idea what a sissy is and please, stop teaching children to be what you want them to be; That's a job for the Holy Spirit.

"Go Ye therefore into all the world and preach the Good News"

All the world means to me that everybody should know about the Good News of God's mercy, if we can just start there, perhaps little black boys would engage this value.

I want to end this letter by saying to the young Brothers that sang the great classic's like Ave Maria on occasion at Macedonia Baptist Church in the late 1970's.

"You equally inspired me to invest in developing my own vocal skill set, at 13 years old, I saw you as an amazing vocalist and one of the best from our' hood, and although I don't know your name, I intentionally evaded knowing you because I didn't want for you to experience the stigma I was experiencing at the time. But I saw you, and I hope that your true genius is honored and respected."

I love all of you, and there is nothing you can do to stop my love. There is a New Generation Rising from the Streets of L.A., Compton and Watts, and I hope that I have said something in this Letter to encourage all of you to encourage our innercity youth to view the Macedonia family and church as the home of all of God's children, in real time.

Your Son, Floyd Smith #K-72700
(a.k.a) Floyd Stewart