

What He Is To Me

Rev. Coffey came into Inner Light Community Gospel Choir in 1999, and almost immediately permeated all aspects of my life. He was a friend, a soloist, a mentor, a councilor, a supporter, a personal shopper, a singer and much more.

He encouraged me to step up, step out, and do more than I ever thought I could. With his support I became president of the Beacon of Light Foundation, the non-profit umbrella Inner Light is under; with his encouragement I accepted the directorship of Inner Light. He showed me the importance of ‘dressing the part,’ and took me shopping to do so. Suit up, show up and s@#\$ up; let God do the rest.

Mama showed me by example unconditional love. Rev. Coffey showed me how to apply that love. He never judged – you are who you are, and he did not have any problems with that. He could talk to anyone – children, teens, 20 something’s up to and including his elders, drawing out your very best. Yet he could and would say the hard things, the right things to make sure you were on the up and up, at the same time never compromising on the important things - Love, Compassion, Sharing, Caring, Giving, Understanding, Spirit.

Music was a very important, integral part of his life and ministry. Music creates a special bond, and he, Mama, all of Inner Light really, had that bond, that connection with God through music that surpassed all human understanding. He loved all kinds of music, and many different styles of music, all of which expressed God’s understanding of us. His bass voice quickly became a signature Inner Light sound, and he loved to exercise the gift God had given him. He loved crossing genre’s, often bringing an upbeat tune to 7th Day Adventist Church from Inner Light, quietly modifying it for a soloist, enriching his church family with the richness, quality and depth of sound true Gospel music can bring.

He went to the Gospel Music Workshop of America’s yearly National Convention every chance he got, eventually becoming the Chapter Representative of the Tri-Counties area, and he and I would “run together” as he put it. Singing, praising, shopping, eating – whether we had \$5 to our name or an unlimited credit card, we would enjoy ourselves and meet everyone and anyone we could.

He did not have a prejudiced bone in his body, and it sometimes physically hurt him when he saw injustices done. More than once he counseled me on how to handle the senseless and needless prejudices that cropped up - it was especially heartening and encouraging to see him in action, fighting for me and supporting me, never anything less than loving and caring. Even when others discouraged him, he never wavered.

Whether with his music, his words, or his sheer presence, Rev. Coffey showed us all what it is to be a true man of God in this world; Compassionate, loving, accepting, giving.