LGBTQ Youth Bullied & Murdered And No One Called A Prayer Meeting

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LAWRENCE, TYLER, COLLE, ASHER AND COUNTLESS OTHER LGBT YOUTH WERE MURDERED AND BULLIED TO DEATH
BUT THEY DIDN'T CALL A PRAYER MEETING AND NO ONE
SIGNED A PETITION!

It has only been a few days since I boldly marched into the KJLH radio station in Los Angeles, CA to be interviewed by Pastor Xavier Thompson, senior minister of Southern Missionary Baptist Church. This would prove to be one of the most talked about interviews on the internet since it was the result of an article that I wrote about this very charismatic minister's controversial City Wide Prayer Meeting to reverse SB 48, a bill recently signed into law by Governor Brown.

What prompted me to write the article was my complete dismay over the fact that several members of the Jordan/Rustin Coalition (an LGBTQ advocacy group) who attended the event to present an open letter to the pastor that had been written to all faith leaders in the black community regarding SB 48, were ousted from the meeting. Members of the coalition explained to the newscaster, while at the event, that they were told that if they did not leave voluntarily, they would physically be removed from the premises, if necessary.

As I sat quietly in my living room and listened to members of the coalition express their dismay about what had just happened to them, admittedly I became extremely angry. But what I did not know was that prior to the prayer meeting, the Los Angeles Sentinel had published an article announcing the prayer meeting, complete with a huge photo of Pastor Xavier Thompson splattered across the page with a headline that read: Southern Fights SB48 with City-wide Prayer Meeting, written by the Religion Editor. After learning of this, I thought to myself, "I cannot believe this! This is exactly what I was referring to in my last article entitled: The Tragic Consequences of Being an Anonymous Minority Statistic, when I wrote, "Black newspapers ignore and overlook the importance of pertinent issues that impact the lives of gay African-Americans, they tacitly approve and condone acts of hatred and homophobia. Black publications depend heavily on financial support from religious institutions, and indirectly these papers must shoulder some of the responsibility for the spread of the virus because an innumerable amount of anti-gay sermons have been preached from their pages."

Immediately after my article was published denouncing what appeared to me to be the ultimate

insult against the LGBTQ community, I was immediately contacted by Rev. Thompson via email to which I promptly replied. After speaking with him several times, we arranged a time to meet. During the meeting, Rev. Thompson stressed to me that he had nothing against the LGBTQ community and that he was totally unaware that the members of the Jordan/Rustin Coalition had been asked to leave since he was inside of the meeting conducting the prayer rally.

He further explained that the guards had been hired because once it was made known through the media that he was planning the event, he immediately began to receive death threats and was advised by the Los Angeles Police Department to hire security officers to prevent any violent attacks of any kind while the event was in progress. He admits that the security officers did not receive the proper orientation prior to the meeting and overreacted as a result of a heightened sensitivity in an effort to ward off any potential danger.

As I sat next to Pastor Thompson in the radio studio, he publicly apologized to the Jordan/Rustin Coalition and has since then reached out to them to coordinate a reconciliation meeting and he claims to also want to form alliances with other LGBTQ groups and organizations in the city. In attendance at the radio broadcast were his lovely wife and other enthusiastic members of his congregation. During the taping, Rev. Thompson expressed to the listening audience that both he and I were passionate and unrelenting about our positions, but were not at odds with one another personally and that we had simply agreed to disagree in spirit of respect and civility - and this is true! I do respect Rev. Thompson's constitutional right to disagree with my stance and I am not even going to call him a "HATER or BIGOT" for doing so! I even applaud him for the fact that he boldly stated to thousands if not millions of listeners that he didn't believe that all same-gender-loving people were hell bound - something most black evangelical ministers would never do!

But there is one question that came to mind as I glanced through the many photos posted on Rev. Thompson's Facebook page from the event. I would like to ask Rev. Thompson and every person that attended that meeting to repeal SB 48, why is it that no one called a citywide prayer meeting with the same passion and zeal when 15-year-old Lawrence King (a gay child) at E.O., Green School in Oxnard, California was killed in class by a fellow student? Newsweek has described the shooting as "the most prominent gay-bias crime since the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard", bringing attention to issues of gun violence as well as gender expression and sexual identity of teenagers.

Why is it that it did not weigh heavily on anyone's heart to call a citywide prayer meeting to express their outcry and outrage when a Cal State Long Beach transgender student, Colle Carpenter, was cornered in a campus restroom by an assailant who carved "It" on his chest or when Tyler Clementi's roommate illegally streamed a video of him being intimate with another male student, outing him for the entire world to see, and as a result, killed himself the next day? Where was the legislative passion necessary to guarantee the safety of our children? You know; the same children that the religious right (the opponents of SB 48) claim to be so concerned about protecting when Asher Brown, an eighth grader at Hamilton Middle School in Harris, TX was bullied and taunted by classmates on a daily basis so horribly and consistently until he decided to end his own life, just days after coming out to his parents.

Oh, but I get it. These children are not worthy of protection or any safe space because they are perceived by the local and national religious community as being demon possessed, mentally deranged, or bewitched by the white gay community because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Yes, Pastor Thompson, I looked at the hundreds of hands lifted heavenward in the photos of parishioners and community leaders from all over the county who were in attendance at the SB 48 City Wide Prayer Meeting. As I glanced through the photos, I could see how they were piously petitioning and invoking God's power to omit the contributions of the LGBTQ community from history books. But, I also know that what may appear to the naked eye to be just courageous community activists and spiritual leaders making an urgent heavenly petition, to me, is just another proposed Ugandan Gay Genocide, only cleverly disguised and dressed up in American religious legalism.

And, you can count on all the grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, church mothers, fathers, deacons, trustees, pastors, priests, bishops and evangelists who were in attendance to pray in agreement with you that the bill be overturned, that is at least until one of their grandchildren, or extended family members is brutally murdered at the hands of some desensitized homophobe who felt completely justified doing so because he reasoned that if we devalue the historical contributions of the LGBTQ community and consider them unworthy of even documenting historically -- then certainly, their human lives couldn't be of any value either!

What saddens me all the more is the hurtful and hypocritical attitude of the churches that is still prevalent today as mentioned in this article. When will they realize that God considers all of His children's lives precious and sacred including the aforementioned LGBTQ youth who were murdered, tortured, and even bullied to death? When will the church and its members realize that Christ's admonishment, "Whatever you do to the least of them, you also do unto me!" is a divine indictment against such uneven applied Christianity? Furthermore, when will they realize that the teachings of Christ exhorts us to demonstrate love and compassion to all of God's children, not apathy and indifference! Until they understand the consequences of their misdirected religious actions, then I guess they will continue to hold citywide public prayer meetings to advocate for their intolerance and ignorance, while Heaven awaits for more truly Christ-loving and Christ-centered churches to pray for and advocate for Lawrence, Tyler, Colle, Asher and the thousands of other LGBTQ youth who were murdered and bullied to death!

About Global Author Terry Angel Mason
Terry Angel Mason is an internationally renowned author, columnist, keynote speaker, poet, singer, songwriter, minister, and Civil Rights activist who currently resides is Southern California. He is the author of three popular titles, Love Won't Let Me Be Silent, They Say That I am Broken, and The Dream Keeper, set to be released in 2012. A revered leader and global change agent, Terry Angel Mason's mission is to inspire, educate and empower millions around the world, and promote love and acceptance for all people. A highly sought after author and activist, Mason has been featured in The East County Magazine, Five (5) Magazine, Whosoever Magazine, SGL Weekly Magazine, Outword Magazine, The NBJC Newsletter, The Advocate, Frontier Magazine, Broadway

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