When Will The Homophobic Pandemic Now Stalking The NBA End?

May 26, 2011 By Angel Mason

Only weeks ago one of NBA's most prominent and admired basketball players hurled a gay slur at a referee during an NBA game. Immediately after, repercussions reverberated around the world. The audience attending the event and millions of viewers gasped in utter disgust and amazement, not quite believing that Kobe Bryant (America's Star Player) would ever do such a foolish thing!

So outraged was the LGBT community, Human Rights organizations and community leaders that they insisted that the NBA Commissioners take appropriate disciplinary action to right this horrific discriminatory outburst. Kobe was immediately fined a whopping $100,000 dollars.

After Google's search engines revealed countless articles, blogs, video blogs and news articles written by angry and dismayed viewers regarding the incident, it wasn't long before Kobe Bryant's face was plastered on the covers of hundreds of publications. News programs replayed the event over and over, sickening viewers again and again as they were forced to relive the incident! Even though Kobe attempted to apologize and make amends by participating in a video encouraging others not to ever use gay slurs, still his actions are forever enshrined in the hearts and minds of millions of people all over the world. What's more, the Lakers Team and its owners paid a hefty price for his huge indiscretion. Now, in the aftermath of such an infamous event, one would think that every athlete in the world would be ever so careful not to utter another gay slur in life to anyone, not even in private! But oh no! Just a few days ago, Joakim Noah, of the famed Chicago Bulls called a heckler the exact same thing, a "F*@%king faggot!"

For both Kobe Bryant and Joakim Noah, saying such an inappropriate thing seems out of character. Both these men are known for taking deep pride in their diverse backgrounds and world views. But undeniably, it was indeed Kobe and Joakim who were caught by television cameras lashing out at a referee and a fan behind the Bulls' bench in the first quarter of Sunday's game.

Really, you didn't have to be much of a lip reader to understand what he was saying. He called the man "a [bleep]ing faggot,'' revealing the presence of the same sinister homophobic plague that unknowingly afflicts Kobe and millions of others. Interestingly, like a wounded puppy dog, Joakim immediately repeated almost verbatim the same apology Kobe offered. He stated that he didn't really mean to hurt anyone or offend any particular group.

But the truth of the matter is Joakim and Kobe did mean to hurt somebody! If not the masses, then

certainly the people who had provoked them to anger. It seemed as if the question in their minds was, “How do we hurt them? I mean really hurt them?” Well, Kobe showed us by disgustingly and foolishly reaching into his mental arsenal and pulling out the word which he felt would degrade his opponent the most--a word that in his heart and mind represented the worst thing he could ever call another man on the planet!

On both playground and professional basketball courts, calling someone a “faggot” appears to be considered the ultimate insult, the nuclear bomb that will totally demean and decimate the enemy. I got it, thought Kobe and Joakim, just call them a “F#@king faggot!”, that will do it!

Joakim was only fined $50,000 Monday, half of what Kobe was fined because, as stated previously, Kobe’s statement was directed at a referee and, supposedly, hurling an insult like this at a paying customer is less of an offense. But anyone in their right mind knows that customers are the ones who pay athletes’ salaries and the tickets they buy provide the green that lavishly lines the pockets of team owners as well, so to me (a paying customer) this was equally as bad and perhaps an even greater offense that clearly exposed the disconnect between the player and payer!

In my opinion, Commissioner David Stern should be all over this, considering that Kobe’s prior offense was so recent and grievous and promises were made to LGBT Human Rights organizations by the NBA that everything would be done to prevent these kinds of incidents from ever happening again.

Now, of course you know the NBA goes out of its way to make people believe they do not tolerate these types of outbursts and homophobia is not something that is prevalent within the NBA. This same sentiment was expressed the other day when former b-ball superstar Charles Barkley, now a TNT analyst, said that if an NBA player were to announce he was gay, it wouldn’t be an issue for teammates. It’s a league filled with open-minded people, he said.

After I heard this statement, I almost fell out of my seat! Sorry Charles, no way could you ever convince me that the NBA is open-minded toward same-gender-loving people--not when two of its most renowned athletes blurt out gay slurs like Burger King and McDonalds pump out burgers and milkshakes!

Let’s be clear. No one is asserting that Joakim or Kobe is homophobic. But if "[bleep]ing faggot’’ were the first words in the line of defense for Joakim and Bryant, then it is evident to me, and to millions around the world, that the sports world has a long way to go before it fully embraces the LGBT community and is truly inclusive and respectful of all people.

Regretfully, just one month ago I penned a similar article about Kobe Bryant. One of the things I emphasized in that article is the fact that what we contemplate and constantly consider is a form of meditation (with unlimited ability to shape our thinking). This is why rap music is so powerful!

Psychologically speaking, eventually what we think about (or meditate on) for an extended period of time shapes our thinking and behavior. One of the greatest spiritual truths of all time is

“Thoughts are things and words have creative power!”

Moreover, thoughts and behavior reveal what is truly in our hearts and minds long before we put them into words. As I previously stated, this prevailing homophobic attitude is not an aberration that only plagues African countries such as Uganda. These anti-gay beliefs are also expressed in America’s overt refusal to grant same-gender-loving people equal rights. What’s more, it’s becoming more and more evident every day that the people living in the “hood” aren’t the only ones brainwashed by relentless, subliminal homophobic slurs spewed out by popular rap artists, such as 19-year-old Tyler The Creator of Odd Future. Like other rappers, he’s also camouflaged his homophobia by using softer terms in his songs, such as “No homos!” And he’s also spouted some not-so-soft lyrics, such as--and I quote--“Come take a stab at it faggot, I pre-ordered your casket” or “You silly rabbit faggot, tricks are for kids so we go abracadabra...”

These subliminal messages bombard our children, youth and young adults every day, poisoning their thinking, infecting their souls, and warping their attitudes. Unfortunately, this subsequently manifests outwardly in both verbal and physical abusive and intolerant behavior!

But don’t think rappers are the only ones who are guilty. These same expressions can frequently be heard from pulpits across America just as often, only they’re packaged differently in order to be palatable to the religious ear.

Just the other day I was completely taken aback as I listened to a politician in New York. After he mounted a platform, without any hesitation, he began to enthusiastically encourage the crowd to vote against marriage equality to prevent same-gender-loving people from acquiring equal marital rights. The crowds cheered him on in the same way that thousands of youth show support for homophobic rappers by purchasing their CDs and dancing to the beat of their tunes. Every day, popular lyrics encourage young people, through subliminal messages, to beat up gay people and/or murder them. The politician called on religious leaders of all denominations to do everything in their power to block the legislation and to remove all persons from office who support equal rights. Again the crowds cheered, showing their approval, much like they do at basketball games, religious services or at rap concerts, where listeners and onlookers cheer, bump and grind or shout Amen!--while nodding their heads in agreement to whatever viewpoint is espoused.

So should anyone really be shocked when our children, teens, young adults, even seniors, jump off bridges and give up on life because they feel rejected and demeaned by society. Many heterosexual people say to themselves, “Well, this will never happen to us because we don’t have anyone in our family who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.” But the truth of the matter is you may not know of anyone in your family who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender because they will never disclose it to you!

What you should know, though, is this: When you find yourself peering into your loved one’s casket (you know the one you thought was straight) because a homophobic abuser thought nothing of shooting him or her in the head or hanging their dismembered body on a fence, leaving

that person to die because the song says, “No mo’ Homos,” and didn’t we just hear Kobe and Joakim call them a “F@#king faggot,” it won’t be a laughing matter any longer!

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