

[OPENING COUNTDOWN]

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

STEVE BAKER: Hi, I'm Steve Baker. And welcome to *TV Montrose*. Usually, Susan Anderson and Kim Savir open this show. However, this week our show is a bit different, and both Kim and Suzanne we'll be back next week.

In a few moments, we'll show you most of the documentary we produced in 1994 and re-released in 1997, entitled *Always My Kid, a family guide to understanding homosexuality*. More about why we're showing it in a few minutes.

Since going on the air on March 2nd, TV Montrose has produced 26-weekly episodes, interviewed about 500 persons in their community, and presented 96 stories about people, places, and events in the Montrose area. I am very proud of such an accomplishment and I'm equally proud of all the people on the TV Montrose staff.

It is the people in any organization that make or break an organization. Its reputation, how good or bad an organization is, totally depends upon the people, and I think we have some very good people working here on staff. I might also add, that everyone involved with TV Montrose has a real full-time day job.

And so working with TV Montrose is something on the side, but they give it 100% when they're here. I want to thank all of you out there, past and present, that have had something to do with TV Montrose because the show is where it is today because of all of you in part.

There are several positive elements in the works right now concerning the show. First of all, I'm very pleased to announce that Baba Yega restaurant is the newest advertiser on TV Montrose. And look for their commercials to be coming out in the next few weeks.

We'll also be announcing our first major corporate sponsor and Hollywood video is in negotiations with us right now about carrying each episode of TV Montrose for a very low rental rate. This will make it easy for you our viewer out there to catch up on episodes that you've missed in the past.

And if you don't have Warner Cable, it'll make it easier for you to catch it in the future. We've also asked a few nightclubs such as Jr's to begin airing TV Montrose in their many monitors, that will also make it easier for you to see the show. And hopefully, that will become reality in the very near future.

We have several new segments planned for you coming out in September that involve new types of events to cover and also new personalities. Those are all still in development, but we hope to be announcing those in the next few weeks as well. So things are happening with TV Montrose.

Since going on the air, I've strived to keep our show out of controversial subject matter. But in light of the recent Christian Coalition ad campaign against homosexuality, and the most recent Methodist Church decision to bar its ministers from performing commitment ceremonies even off the Church property, I feel it necessary that TV Montrose kind of stray off the path tonight and present something a little different.

Showing *Always My Kid*, is our first official response to those in our society that want to find weapons within the Bible to use against homosexual equality. Those in our society that do so, use the Bible against homosexuals for financial gain.

And those that have the most to gain or people like Pat Robertson, are scaring people into Church donations. And Trent Lott into scaring people into the ballot boxes for votes. And let's not forget our own, Rob Todd, City Councilman Houston, he's doing exactly the same thing.

Those that twist the words of the Bible, such as those people mentioned, are not interested in God's word at all. All they're interested in is using the Bible for their own gain, their own personal and political gains.

Always My Kid was made in 1994 as an act of love for our very own families, who were having a very hard time dealing with our own homosexuality. It went on to be distributed in all 50 states and was seen by thousands of individuals.

As well as many more thousands saw it in group meetings such as organizations and also Church meetings, and some companies bought it for employee sensitivity training. Education is the key to understanding homosexuality.

And when people understand, a lot of the problems that they grew up having or the society taught them tend to melt away when they know the truth. It's just the truth that they need to know. Education is a weapon that TV Montrose chooses to use to fight the homophobia, that the Christian Coalition is trying to generate through myths, outright lies, and really, some dirty ad campaigns.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

PATRICIA RICKEY: And when I am on marches or go to gay events and people who claim to be religious are the ones with signs telling us that we're not OK. It makes me really angry because they have no idea the long road that I have traveled, how much praying I've done about that.

How much Bible reading I've done about that. How many different ministers I've talked to. And I doubt that they have undergone that type of self-examination. And for them to say what my relationship is with God, or that I have done anything wrong in the eyes of God, I think is really horrible. And makes me very angry.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: My name is Don Sinclair. And I have a history of 43 years in the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. My present appointment is that Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.

And before coming to this congregation, eight years ago, I knew nothing really specific about homosexuality.

RABBI BARRY BLOCK: I'm Barry Block. I'm the assistant rabbi here at Temple Beth-El in San Antonio. I've been here in San Antonio since the summer of 1992. I was ordained a year earlier at the Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion in New York.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: My name is Doug Ensminger I'm a Presbyterian minister. I've been in the Ministry for over 20 years. During that span of time, I first served a Church in Cicero, Illinois.

I was in campus ministry in Southern California at the Claremont colleges for a few years. Then was associate pastor at a congregation in Beloit, Wisconsin. And then a pastor at a Church in Madison, Wisconsin. We moved down to Houston in 1982. And for 10 years, was pastor at the Central Presbyterian Church, here in Houston.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

RABBI BARRY BLOCK: God created many different people with many different characteristics and proclivities. And in my view, God created some people as homosexuals or at least God created the world in such a way that some people would have a natural inclination to be attracted to persons of the same sex.

Therefore, in my view, persons who do have that natural inclination are not acting sinfully when they carry out that inclination.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: Homosexuality is not bad. It's not evil. Sex is not bad. It's not evil. It is called evil by a lot of religious persons, a lot of religious professional persons, but it's a natural part of the creation of God. We must allow and find a way for ourselves to let this be what it really is.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: If there's inhumanity and sin in this sexual orientation question, it's the inhumanity and sin of that leads straight people to abandon gay children.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: I'm 63-years old. And in my lifetime I'm not surprised to see the anger and the use of judgment proclaimed from the pulpit of the Church, against persons who have this virus or who have developed AIDS.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: If God wanted to punish men who were gay, I think God could manage to think of some way to do it, that wouldn't also involve infecting people who are straight. I mean, after all, most of the folks worldwide who are infected with AIDS are straight.

There are many people who are infected with AIDS who have not, quote, "Done anything wrong," according to the framework of people who say that being a gay man is sinful and therefore, God should--

I can't conceive of God being that sloppy. That if God wanted to single out a particular group to punish them, God can do a better job of aiming.

RABBI BARRY BLOCK: To say that AIDS is a punishment for homosexuality is as offensive as to say that the Holocaust was a punishment for being Jewish, sent by God.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: Jesus never mentioned a word about homosexuality, which suggests that while you can't argue from silence that something is of no importance, it clearly wasn't a major issue for him.

He did talk a lot about other things, particularly things like greed. And self-righteousness and judgment of others, which I think are texts that folks who were sure that they can bring God's judgment upon homosexuals, need to be willing to wrestle with.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: People use the Bible so liberally, and so strangely to attack homosexuals, when the Bible has just almost nothing to say about this.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: It was true. During the period of slavery, the people who would find evidence in the scriptures to support slavery and why it was God's will that white people should enslave Black people.

It's been true that people have used the scriptures to explain why women ought not to be the equals of men, why they ought not to be able to vote, why they ought not to be able to have leadership and Church positions.

By and large, we've grown out of both of those abuses of scripture. We still have people who are using scripture or abusing scripture to justify preexisting attitudes in opposition to gay and lesbian people.

[UPBEAT MUSIC PLAYING]

There are people who feel fairly comfortable saying that the scriptures prove that homosexuality is contrary to God's will. And there's a series of relatively small number of texts that they sometimes cite.

One of the ones that gets hauled out with great regularity is really one of the easiest ones to deal with, which is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. People say, well, the sin of Sodom was homosexuality, and that's why God destroyed those two cities.

A couple of things get in the way of that reading of the story. One is it seems highly unlikely that the entire population of the city was homosexual. The text says that all the men in the city without exception gathered around.

It seems clear that what was on their minds was not sexual gratification, it was the same kind of homosexual rape to intimidate and humiliate a stranger, as happens in prisons. It still happens today in military situations.

You will have straight people who will engage in homosexual rape of victims, prisoners, to victimize and oppress and dominate them. It was sort of the extreme opposite of what the Hebrew scriptures call for towards strangers which is hospitality.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: But that Sodom and Gomorrah story is not about homosexuality, but it's made to be about homosexuality. Now that's why people want to take something and use it against somebody else.

And, of course, that's always somebody that's not like me. That's the one that I tend to want to go after with my deadly instruments. And the Bible is used as this. The holiness coach out of Leviticus to pick one of these and to make such an enormous thing out of it, when it has many far more important things in there that are said that we don't take seriously.

And the people who want to take that one verse seriously, do not want to take the others the same. So everybody is just as liberal as they can be with the scriptures and they won't let the scripture be the scripture.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: It's only one place where Jesus sort of tangentially refers to the Sodom and Gomorrah. And it's when he's sending his disciples out and says, if any city doesn't receive you, shake the dust off of your feet. It will be worse for that city than it was for Sodom and Gomorrah. A failure to receive a messenger of God.

There are a couple of places in the Old Testament where the prophets talk about Sodom and Gomorrah and refer to the sin of Sodom. And when they talk about the sin of Sodom, they talk about things like greed.

They talk about having wealth and not sharing it with those in need. They talk about the oppression of the poor within the cities. They never once mentioned anything, sexual.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: Those who, what we call the scholars, who spend their lives studying these parts and these times and these passages, do not understand them to be about homosexuality.

It's about a very important issue among the Jewish, in the tradition of Israel is that you must never allow a stranger to be in your midst and not be cared for, it's called hospitality.

STEVE BAKER: I hope that you got something of value out of what you just saw about *Always My Kid*. And in a moment, we'll pick back up where we just left off. But first, it's time to hear from those besides viewers that keep a show on the air and that's our advertisers.

And once again, I do want to welcome Baba Yega to our advertiser lineup and look for their commercial next few weeks. We'll be right back.

MAYOR LEE P. BROWN: I'm Mayor Lee Brown, and you're watching TV Montrose.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

SUZANNE ANDERSON: Don't even think about buying or selling a home without hiring a professional. A home is the biggest financial investment that you will ever make, and I am always amazed at how casually people select a realtor. They'll call the name of a sign or take the name of a friend of a friend.

To be a good realtor, you have to be a good listener. And I've listened to my clients and I customize my services to fit your needs. We listen, present creative solutions, and help you make decisions in buying or selling a home.

COMMENTATOR: The *Texas Triangle* is a free weekly newspaper, reaching over 60,000 readers every week. Available every Thursday throughout Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, and 20 other Texas cities. The *Triangle* offers the best in news, features, and entertainment.

A six-time award winner, it's the only gay newspaper to receive an outstanding journalism award from the National Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association. The Houston Press writes, "for gay and lesbian news, by far the best is the *Texas Triangle*. So pick up the *Triangle* every week. Quality makes a difference.

[MYSTERY MUSIC]

COMMENTATOR: Celebrating 15 years, it's Houston's premiere alternative dance club. Rich's, has a hottest music hits, the largest dance floor, four huge bars, and the wildest theme parties. Rich's is a place to be for fun and action.

The only New York-style dance club for the gay and lesbian scene. Rich's, where the real world ends and your imagination begins. Be a part of the fun at Rich's this week. Rich's, where you can always be yourself.

BETTY DEGENERES: Hello, my name is Betty DeGeneres. And my kid is the greatest. You know her, she's Ellen and she's gay. For too long, gay Americans have suffered discrimination. As long as our sons and daughters are excluded from the basic protection of law, we must share that burden as a family.

[CHANT]

(GROUP CHANTING)

So let's not waste one child. And let them all reach for the stars.

DAYNA STEELE: Hi, I'm Dayna Steele from 97 Talk, and you are watching TV Montrose.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

STEVE BAKER: Welcome back. I think that Suzanne, Kim, and Dan, probably do a lot better job hosting the show that I've been doing here tonight. I hope it hasn't been too bad. Anyway, they will all be back next week, as well as our regular TV Montrose show lineup.

Let's get back to *Always My Kid*, where we left off a moment ago. If nothing else tonight, in showing *Always My Kid*, I hope that at least if you had some problems with homosexuality, that maybe this program has helped you understand some things better.

But if you are gay and you've never really had the ammunition you needed to defend yourself in political or religious debate, maybe at least, you're a little bit better armed to defend yourself in the future. Anyway, let's get back to *Always My Kid*.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: I long for the day when it's possible to do a marriage for a gay couple or a lesbian couple, but until society gets a lot more open-minded, we can't do that.

But we can do is within those places where there is a religious community that recognizes the legitimacy of a relationship between a gay couple or a lesbian couple, gather that community of faith around those people and support them with prayer and witness their commitments to one another.

It is less than what I and others would like to be possible. But it's a whole lot more than nothing.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: We need, especially in an AIDS crisis to encourage people to a monogamous relationship. The homosexual people have nowhere to go. They have no way to be acknowledged as in love or in union or wanting a serious commitment.

So I wish the Church would find its way to look more reasonably at this and allow this kind of thing. My understanding is that it is necessary. It is a natural thing, and it's something the Church needs to develop services for.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: I think there's no question, but that a gay couple can find happiness and live a life that God would approve of. I also think there's no question, but that our society makes it very difficult for a gay couple to do that.

There are people who question whether or not a gay couple can be stable and happy by pointing to studies that will say there's a high rate of promiscuity in the gay community or there aren't very many long-lived gay relationships.

It seems to me, you have to look at the difference between what society will do to support a straight couple and what it does to oppose a gay couple. And even with all the religious and social supports, I certainly wouldn't want to brag on the success rate of heterosexual relationships.

[UPBEAT MUSIC]

I think our sexuality comes to us through far before we have any capacity to make any judgment about it. I think the jury's still out on what the mix is of what kinds of genetic factors and perhaps some very, very, early environmental factors. But I suspect it's set well before somebody's one or two years old.

It's certainly nothing anybody chooses or is forced on someone. It seems to me that the evidence that almost all of us are some mixture of homosexual and heterosexual and orientation, it's pretty overwhelming.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: That's the first debate. How does anyone get their sexual orientation? My conviction is through the scientific information. People's sexual orientation is formed very early in the embryo and it is a natural part of life to have a sexual orientation.

It is not something that you can go fix. It is not something you can even operate on a brain and fix. It is established and it is permanent. And it is not changeable.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: Can you see this 11 or 12-year-old, who wakes up one day and says, you know, I think it would be really fun to be hated and persecuted all my life, to have my parents think about rejecting me, to not be welcome in the Church and to be afraid of losing my job if I'm exposed. I think I'll be gay. I mean, can you imagine anybody making that kind of a choice?

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: The profession of the faith, the devotion to God. I've never seen anything superior in the heterosexual world or what I've seen in the homosexual world. I've seen people in both that were not very devout. And I've seen some rather strange people in both the sexual orientation. [LAUGHTER] But somehow, the world, and especially the religious world, is after the homosexual.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: If your sexual orientation is not a matter of choice, then it can't be a matter of moral judgment that the morality for sexuality, whether you're gay or straight, is the same. It has to do with the quality of the relationships and the way in which you conduct yourself as a sexual person.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: My surprise is sometimes is how great and how good homosexual persons are by nature. I'm impressed with that. In every sexual orientation, in every community, and every sex, they are strange people.

And the world picks up on the homosexuals that are what many of my friends call acting out and showing out. And that's the picture that they portray. And that's the one they understand to be when that's not the real homosexual community.

RABBI BARRY BLOCK: Each and every one of us is created in God's image. We're all God's children. We're all God's creations. And to me, it's blasphemy to suggest that God loves a person any less because he or she is homosexual.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: We have to get a lot of information out to correct misinformation. And I owe it to all of my colleagues out there to share with them, what I think is the greater truth that I did not know eight years ago.

REVEREND DOUG ENSMINGER: God, the creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and keep you. The Lord graciously with favor look upon you. And so fill you with all spiritual benediction and love that you may live together in this life, that in the world to come, you may have life everlasting.

REVEREND DON SINCLAIR: I present to you Stephen and Ross, united in a holy union as one. May the peace of the Lord, be with them always and all present said, Amen.

- (CONGREGATION) Amen.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

STEVE BAKER: I hope the showing *Always My Kid* tonight has helped some of you in some way. I also want to offer copies of *Always My Kid*, free of charge to any Church or non-profit organization that would like to add it to its library.

I hope that TV Montrose has been a show that you look forward to watching every single week and tuning in and finding out what's happening in the Montrose area. I strive every week to produce stories of interest, that are informational, educational, and entertaining.

What you think about the show matters to me. So please take the time, give me a call, email, write, whatever, and I'll do my best to respond to you as quickly as possible. And I do promise that next week, our regular hosts will be back, as well as our regular show lineup.

Thank you very much for tuning in tonight. I'm Steve Baker. And we'll see you next week.

- (PARTICIPANTS) You're watching TV Montrose.

[CHEERING]

[UPBEAT MUSIC]