

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DAN DELEON: Hi, I'm Dan DeLeon.

SUZANNE And I'm Suzanne Anderson and you're watching TV Montrose.

ANDERSON:

DAN DELEON: Well, it's springtime and with the beautiful weather, there are a lot of events for TV Montrose to cover during March.

SUZANNE That's right. And starting in next week's show, we're going to give you a complete preview of all that's happening

ANDERSON: during March and April in our community.

DAN DELEON: Also, next week, some of the stories we are airing will be about the model search by Tom Bianchi and a look at the Louis weekend and some hilarious skits, various organizations performed.

SUZANNE Tonight, we're going to show clips from a documentary that we produced in 1994 and it's entitled, always my kid,

ANDERSON: a family guide to understanding homosexuality.

DAN DELEON: Made for parents of gay children, the portion of AMK that you are about to see is about the religious conflict that surrounds the Bible and homosexuality.

SUZANNE TV Montrose feels that showing AMK a few times a year gives us the information that we need to respond when

ANDERSON: religion is used as a weapon against us.

DAN DELEON: So let's roll the first segment of always my kid, a family guide to understanding homosexuality.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PATRICIA And when I am on marches or go to gay events and people who claim to be religious are the ones with signs

RICKY: 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.

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 at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, and before coming to this congregation eight years ago, knew nothing really specific about homosexuality. I had just some general impressions that most people in society have.

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.

DOUG ENSMINGER: My name is Doug Ensminger. I'm a Presbyterian minister. I've been in the ministry for over 20 years, moved down to Houston in 1982 and for 10 years was pastor at the Central Presbyterian Church.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

There are a lot of people who will say that homosexuality is a sin, and they'll point to a particular biblical passages. But I think, well, most of them are sincere. I think they're sincerely wrong. I think they have misunderstood the biblical passages that they quote and that the weight of the rest of the scriptural evidence in terms of God's attitude towards humanity just is overwhelmingly on the other side. So no, I do not believe homosexuality is a sin.

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.

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.

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

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DON SINCLAIR: I'm not surprised to see the anger and the use of judgment proclaimed from the pulpits of the church against persons who have this virus or who have developed AIDS.

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 couldn't do a better job of aiming.

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.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

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, particular things like greed and self-righteousness and judgment of others.

DON SINCLAIR: The Bible has just almost nothing to say about this.

DOUG ENSMINGER: It was true during the period of slavery of 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 in 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. ,

[MUSIC PLAYING]

It seems highly unlikely that the entire population of the city was homosexual. The city says-- 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, as still happens today in military situations.

DON SINCLAIR: It's not about homosexuality, but it's made to be about homosexuality.

DOUG ENSMINGER: There'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.

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.

SUZANNE ANDERSON: We hope that you gained some knowledge from "Always My Kid."

DAN DELEON: Let's take a short sponsor break and we will pick up where we left off.

MARIA TODD: Hi. I'm Maria Todd from 104 KRBE, and you're watching *TV Montrose*.

[KISS]

ROB SCHMERLER: Are you still using your parents' insurance agent? How good is your insurance if you're not comfortable talking to your agent? At the smaller Insurance Agency we, understand the special needs that special couples have.

JEFFREY BULES: We ensure the autos homes and businesses of people just like you all over the Houston area. We also handle health insurance, life insurance, renters insurance, and any other insurance things you may have. I'm Jeffrey Bules.

ROB SCHMERLER: And I'm Rob Schmerler. Give us a call and let us help with your insurance needs. The Schmerler Insurance Agency is here for you.

ANNOUNCER: Celebrating 15 years, it's Houston's premiere alternative dance club. Rich's has the 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 and Rich's this week. Rich's, where you can always be yourself.

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.

ANNOUNCER: Lobo Bookshop and Cafe, Houston's only exclusively gay and lesbian bookstore, serving the gay and lesbian community for 25 years. Lobo carries a full spectrum of fiction and non-fiction books, including the largest selection of used books in Houston, and also the largest selection of theatrical movies and other videos of interest to gays and lesbians. Lobo offers a wide selection of cards for any occasion and plenty of merchandise to select gifts for others or yourself.

And there's nothing better than a cup of fresh brewed coffee at the Lobo Cafe. Select from 40 flavors and a menu of specialty coffees. The Lobo Cafe also carries fresh made sandwiches and a wide assortment of desserts, including cheesecakes and cookies. For videos, magazines, and merchandise exclusively of interest to the gay and lesbian community, there is no other place like Lobo Bookshop and Cafe.

ALL: You are watching *TV Montrose*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DAN DELEON: Welcome back.

SUZANNE ANDERSON: And let's get back into "Always My Kid," a family guide to understanding homosexuality.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DOUG ENSMINGER: The Levitical Code is dealing with things that the Hebrews we're told would be defiling in some ritual sense. A violation of the Holiness Code is something that makes you unfit to appear in worship. And part of the same passages in scripture with the same sort of rationale and the same language as the prohibition against-- I think the actual language is a man lying with a man as with a woman, and interestingly enough, a lesbian relationship is not mentioned because apparently women weren't important enough to be concerned about-- say that it's unclean a woman is unclean during her menstrual period, that you're prohibited from eating shellfish, that you're prohibited from eating meat that still has the blood in it-- in other words, a medium rare steak would be out-- that you're prohibited from wearing clothing that combines two different kinds of stuff, such as a cotton wool blend.

Most of the things that are dealt with in a Holiness Code are issues that we have come to recognize don't apply. So if somebody tells me they're going to pull two verses out of the midst of this and say, oh, yes, these are still binding morally for me, I want to know how they made that selection.

BARRY BLOCK: One rarely sees Christians adhering as strictly to the Levitical provisions that prohibit the eating of pork and shellfish as one sees them adhering strictly to the prohibition of homosexuality or insisting that others adhere strictly to the prohibition of homosexuality.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DON SINCLAIR: I wish the church would tackle this, but we haven't even begun to face the issue of homosexuality enough to look at it reasonably and without all a lot of heat and anger. Until we do, the church would not allow any such thing.

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. What 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.

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 serious commitments. So I wish the church would find its way to look more reasonably at this and allow this kind of thing.

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. 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.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I think our sexuality comes to us 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.

DON SINCLAIR: 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.

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 choice?

SUZANNE ANDERSON: Dan, "Always My Kid" was distributed in 47 states and four countries when it was released in 1994.

DAN DELEON: And over the years, we have received many letters and calls from people that were helped in some way by "AMK."

SUZANNE Well, let's take a sponsor break, and we'll be back in two minutes.

ANDERSON:

ALL: We're the cast of *End Of the World Party*, and you're watching *TV Montrose*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ANNOUNCER: Baba Yega, a Montrose tradition. Two lush patios with a spectacular waterfall make dining at Baba Yega a peaceful experience. The only thing better than the atmosphere is the food. With a wide variety of fine entrees, there's something for everyone's taste, including a veggie menu.

The Jasmine Room is perfect for business or social meetings. Also visit the Wild Earth Herb Shop next door. Excellent food, superb staff, tranquil surroundings, and moderate prices make Baba Yega the complete dining experience.

MAN 1: So what we got is--

WOMAN: Free checking at Bank United.

MAN 2: Beyond the year 2000.

MAN 1: And we want to--

WOMAN: Make it sing.

MAN 2: Give it some sizzle.

MAN 1: But don't forget the steak.

WOMAN: Right. How about unbelievably free checking?

MAN 1: Free check-o-rama.

WOMAN: Hot ch-ch-checking.

MAN 1: OK, let's review.

WOMAN: No monthly service charges.

MAN 1: Good.

MAN 2: No minimum balance.

MAN 1: Excellent.

WOMAN: Beyond the year 2000.

MAN 1: Swell.

MAN 2: Monstrously free checking.

WOMAN: Check-zilla.

MAN 2: Free check-osaurs.

MAN 1: With toys?

WOMAN: Nah.

MAN 1: I got it. Super free checking.

WOMAN: We could do that song.

[MUSIC PLAYING - MC HAMMER, "CAN'T TOUCH THIS"]

ANNOUNCER: Get free checking beyond the year 2000 at Bank United.

MAN 1: Thank you thank you.

ANNOUNCER: *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.

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. So let not waste one child and let them all reach for the stars.

ANNOUNCER: Some of them will be three times more likely to commit suicide than their friends. There's also a greater chance that someday some of them will be assaulted, beaten, threatened, harassed, or even murdered just because they may be lesbian or gay. But look at them. They deserve it, don't they? Message brought to you by the parents, families, and friends of lesbians and gays.

Hi this is John Palmer, Mr. Gay Houston 1999, and you're watching *TV Montrose*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DAN DELEON: Welcome back.

SUZANNE ANDERSON: And let's get back to our presentation of "Always My Kid-- a Family Guide to Understanding Homosexuality."

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

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.

DON SINCLAIR: My surprise sometimes it's how great and how good homosexual persons are by nature. I'm impressed with that. In every sexual orientation, in every community, in every sex, there 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.

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.

DON SINCLAIR: I have seen homosexual persons who are exceptional and their religious devotion, in their desire to serve God, and their following of Jesus Christ as their savior, in doing the things that the Bible talks about as a Christian would be interested in doing. That's looking to the neighbors needs.

DOUG ENSMINGER: I think people who would suggest that accepting a gay child is, quote, giving up on the child, abandoning them to some evil or destructive lifestyle, are perhaps confused as to who, in fact, is giving up on their children. It seems to me that if you love your children, if you care about them and want what is good for them, you won't bring some preconceived notion and drop it on your child. You'll spend the time and the pain and the struggle to try to understand your child, listen to what they say, what they have to tell you about their feelings and their experience, to be open to a wide range of inputs, rather than to assume that if you love your child, that means you have to reject them.

DON SINCLAIR: I remember a man saying in a lecture, in my own time, we made Blacks sit at the back of the bus because of the color of their skin. And the reason that struck me so hard is that's in my own time. That's the way it was most of my life, and now it's gone. Forever, it's gone.

I think the homosexual issue will come to that. I hope so, but we haven't made much headway. We need to. God help us do that. I do believe the Lord will bring us to that moment over this issue of homosexuality.

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.

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.

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

ANNOUNCER: Amen.

[MUSIC PLAYING - "WEDDING MARCH"]

DAN DELEON: We hope that some of you out there were helped by tonight's special presentation of "Always My Kid."

SUZANNE And next week we have lots of news stories about what's going on in Montrose.

ANDERSON:

DAN DELEON: March looks like a busy month in Montrose, and we hope to show you as many of these events that we can, starting with next week's show.

SUZANNE Well, for *TV Montrose*, I'm Suzanne Anderson.

ANDERSON:

DAN DELEON: And I'm Dan de Leon. Good night.

ANNOUNCER: You are watching *TV Montrose*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]