

- That there's something missing if the spiritual is not there. We have many names for that creative power, that creative source. In my spiritual life, I call that source God. Other people talk about higher power. Others talk about goddess or mother or father. There's many, many names, but there is a deep yearning, I believe, in each one of us to be in touch with a power that is greater than ourselves.

A power that, in these days of a cloud of virus of AIDS hanging over our community, can give some order to this chaos that we call life. In the Christian church, we're celebrating today the beginning of the advent season, a four-week season of, if you will, mentally and spiritually cleaning house and preparing ourselves for a special day. The day that we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

And for each of those four Sundays in the advent season, there is a theme. And the theme of the first Sunday of Advent, is hope. And I've been thinking a lot about hope in the past days and weeks. There are those who would tell us that AIDS is a hopeless condition. And there's never going to be a cure.

And there are some who even go so far as to say AIDS isn't a disease, but AIDS itself is the cure. My spiritual life tells me that there is no way that a loving, caring God, creative force, substitute the word that you need in your life, would create that kind of a disease that is anything but life-affirming. AIDS is not a cure, but it's a disease for which, praise God, a cure will be found.

We need, all of us, in this crisis time, to stop and to celebrate the life that we have. We don't know how long it's going to last. For some of us, it may be a shorter time than others. But there's a big difference between living and existing. And I believe that we're called to live each day of our lives, however long or short those lives may be, to live to the fullest. And we're here tonight celebrating that life.

We all have needs on many different levels. We have physical needs. We have emotional needs. We have intellectual needs. We need to be hugged and touched and loved and able to love others. We also, I believe, have deep spiritual needs. And my hope today, this first Sunday of Advent, for our community is that we will get in touch with that spiritual part that resides in each one of us.

And if we are fortunate, it is enough to find a religion that allows us to develop our spirituality, then that is wonderful, but don't let organized religion keep you from developing that spiritual part of yourself. We all have the need, and let's develop it. My hope for all of us is that we will be able to live as fully as we are called to live to become the whole people that we were created to be. Whole in body, mind, and in spirit. Amen.

[APPLAUSE]

- Reverend Gloria Root from the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection. You're listening to a live broadcast from the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston tonight, where we're celebrating life. And you're invited to come down and join us or stay tuned to KPFT.

I've been asked to make an announcement. My telephone number is-- no wait a minute. If you listen to *After Hours*, I always get in trouble for saying the wrong thing. So I won't do that tonight. There's a red Corvette with the lights on. The license plate number is 888 queen, I like that word queen, queen, George, X-ray. 888QGX, somewhere to the left of the stage. So you need to check your lights.

Tonight we celebrate the life, love, and memory of Harvey Milk. And I want to introduce a man to you that's very important to me. He's been a good friend. And he's going to share some words with you that he's written. He reads a poem that we play a lot on our show called *Praises of Pride*, and he will share that with you later, he's the director of the Group Theater Workshop. Please welcome, Mr. Joe Watts.

[APPLAUSE]

- Hi, if my voice quivers, I'm really not nervous. I'm just chilled. So I'd like about 25 volunteers to come up and huddle around me so that I won't quiver while I speak. No, it's all right. I'll try to get through it.

Harvey, born a little Jewish boy with quite memorable ears, Harvey Bernard Milk came into this world a Gemini screaming and kicking seemingly without fears. After College, the Navy, and producing on the Great White Way, Harvey felt a calling west to San Francisco. He wanted to be part of a movement of the proud and gay.

From a little camera shop, he began to create his vision of the oneness of man. Dubbed the mayor of Castro, on human rights, he took a passionate, powerful stand. Never one to hold back his tongue, after four attempts at public office, a seat on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, he finally won.

The young, the old, the gay, the straight rallied at Harvey's side. They shared his vision. They became his fate.

Harvey's time as a board supervisor was sadly cut very short, but the passing of a gay rights amendment and the defeat of proposition six were largely due to his unfailing support. 10 years ago this week, Harvey Milk's ashes were scattered out over the Pacific, but with us, he left a legion of goals and dreams that were very specific.

Harvey once said, and this is a quote, "without hope, life is not worth living." With courage and guts, he fought for our lives and lost his own in the giving. But ash to ash or dust to dust, we must continue with hope forever hence. Dear Harvey, in the hearts of us all, you will always be our sweet prince.

[APPLAUSE]

- Thank you, Joe.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- I don't know how she sang that well.

- This is incredible

- Because it was so cold. We're listening to the Celebration of Life rally, which was broadcast live on KPFT, on Sunday, November 27th, 1988 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the killing of Harvey Milk.

- Yeah.

- And not really to commemorate, but we didn't want to forget what happened that day.

- That's the whole idea.

- And we keep m come down to City Hall, but please don't come down to City Hall because this isn't live. This is on tape. And we're here at the station. If you're out riding around and you feel like the urge to go somewhere, come by here, but don't go to City Hall, please. We're going back to the program now. Hang on, we've got quite a lot of singers and poets and speakers. And it's all going to be great.

- And it gets better and better.

- Yeah, this is KPFT Houston.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Thanks, [? Annie ?] and thanks to Joe Watts. Joe Watts will be back later on to read *Praises of Pride* to you. I have to let Joe read that because we have a lot of young people who listen to the gay and lesbian programming on KPFT. And they're kind of fond of Joe Watts. And there are a few of you out there tonight that would like to see him. If you're listening, you can come on down to City Hall. We're going to be here until we get through speaking. And once Ray Hill gets up here, that could be a while. No, I've been picking on Ray all night.

We couldn't have done this rally-- well, we almost didn't do this rally because there wasn't a lot of support in the beginning, but there was a lot of support near the end. Most of that came from young people. Young people from the Gay and Lesbian Students Association at the University of Houston.

[APPLAUSE]

They were out last night in the streets of Montrose and beyond passing out 10,000 flyers and I hope some of you got plastered on your cars. And right now we're going to hear from John. John is the President of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Houston. And John, I'm going to butcher your name, so come up here and tell them who you are Johnny boy. He's also very cute.

[APPLAUSE]

Is it French?

- Yes. Is it Virgo?

- Virgo.

- Virgo. John Virgo. My lover is studying French, so he told me to pronounce it about 10 different ways.

- When Harvey Milk was assassinated, I was nine years old just beginning to deal with my own emerging sexuality unaware of what had happened in California. Unaware of the terrible loss the gay community had suffered, but while I may have been ignorant of Harvey Milk at the time, still his life and death have affected me a great deal.

For my entire generation has been the recipient of the work that Harvey Milk and so many others have carried on since Stonewall. So today I am here to say thank you. Thank you to Harvey Milk and to Harry Britt. Thank you to the Ray Hills, the Marion Colemans, the Buddy Johnstons. All the lesbian and gay people who have worked so hard to ensure that the lives of the younger members of our community would be better than theirs were.

That we could live with just a little more pride a little more hope. The changes that have come in our society didn't happen by themselves. And I want to thank the people who made them happen. Thank you for making it possible for there to be a Gay Lesbian Students Association at the University of Houston and for making it possible for me to be an openly-gay student with little fear of violence or harassment.

Thank you for creating a climate where we can elect openly lesbian or gay public officials, people like Harry Britt, Jerry Studds, and Barney Frank. Thank you for our houses of worship where we can engage in religious activities without hiding without fear. Thank you to the lobbyists and the lawyers who fight every day in the courtroom in the state house to protect our rights.

Thank you to the men and women of the lesbian and gay media, who work so hard to inform and unite our community. Thank you to the people who organize our rallies, our parades, our protests to draw us together and show society what it means to be gay or lesbian.

But most of all, thank you for ensuring that the lesbian and gay people of my generation, did not have to go through the same feelings of isolation that so many others have in the past. Because of your work and your willingness to be open, to be out of the closet, we could look at the world around us and see that we were not alone in our feelings. That we were part of a community. And that for us there was hope.

Your willingness to commit your time and energy towards these ends and to risk your jobs, your families, even your lives moves, motivates, and inspires me. You have given much to my generation. And we owe you a great debt. I doubt it can ever be repaid in full.

But let me promise you that we will see to it that all of your work will not have been in vain. Thanks to you, we have the confidence, the respect, and the love for ourselves to carry on the struggle. We will not be the last generation to benefit from all that you have gained. We will not be content to rest on your accomplishments, but rather we will move forward in the fight for civil rights in the struggle to bring true freedom to this society.

Always, always keeping in mind the young children who are out there everywhere, who so desperately need for us to be there for us to give them hope. We will do for them what you have done for us. In this way, we will repay the debt we owe you. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

- That's the light of our movement. It only took me about 15 years to get here, and I'm grateful to see the involvement of the young people. It's going to make a difference. Right now I want to introduce to you someone that's very, very special to me. He means a lot. In May, on Mother's Day, we had a quilt down at the George R. Brown Convention Center. It was beautiful.

I'm trying to get them to change the name of their group. Instead of PWA Coalition, I would like them to change it to the People Living With AIDS Coalition. Bruce Cook was the 1988 Grand Marshal of our Houston and Lesbian Gay Pride Week parade. He's former coordinator of the Stone Soup Pantry and now serves as president for the Houston chapter of the People with AIDS Coalition. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Bruce Cook.

- One thing before I start, it's cold as hell up here, but I want you to see this. It's my favorite t-shirt.

- T-shirt said, Louis, don't shoot.

[APPLAUSE]

- Oh, I remember that.

- Especially important now because I am both. I'm still gay. I'm proud, and I'm now a PWA also, which is the way I'd like to address you tonight is from the PWA Coalition. And I definitely do believe it is People Living with AIDS.

This past May, as I was at home, recuperating from PCP pneumonia, I experienced some of the love that helps us to celebrate life. The love from the friends I'd made during the NAMES Project Tour, the love of my friends in the Gay Lesbian Parade Week '88. That may have partly been because I'd been threatened with my life if I wasn't well enough to participate as co-Grand Marshal, but it still counts, still counts. And the love from all the people I've met during my time when I was involved with Stone Soup.

That was all love born of crisis. Those times when our emotions are highest, and we feel the need to express love now or never. But we soon seem to fall back into our safe, regulated lives of normalcy. Lulled into a sense that everything is all right, once again. That the world is going along as it should. That's where we are wrong.

That's where you end the celebration and pack it away like so many Christmas ornaments, until the next crisis requires that we dig into the back of our closets to retrieve our pride and strength as gays and lesbians. We must celebrate our lives as gay men, faggots, [BLEEP], cocksuckers, lesbians, and muff divers every day we're alive.

Not just when our friends deaths cover us as a smothering shroud, not just on a sunny Sunday during the Gay Pride Parade, not just when the right political activity comes along. but every day that we pay our gay income taxes to the government, every day that we pay our gay insurance premiums to companies like Prudential, every day we spend our gay incomes to travel, buy homes, and new automobiles. And every time we have the chance to elect our governmental representatives.

If you even want to be allowed to celebrate your life as gay or lesbian, you must proudly and openly do so. To let those moralists, Republicans, bigots, and Homophiles know that we indeed, are everywhere working, shopping, living, and even praying side-by-side with them every day. And that every bit of anti-gay legislature that they support, every mouthful of anti-gay hate that they spew out is not going to get rid of us.

My hope is that all of their united efforts will only unite us more to join together and fight them back as never before empowering us to fight for our rights as loving human beings. To celebrate life, we must not do it through silence, indifference, and inactivity. To celebrate life, we cannot depend on our dead heroes Harvey Milk, Fred Paez, or the 40,000 dead PWAs across America to do it for us.

To celebrate life, we must participate in that great celebration of being openly gay and saying it proudly. I am gay. Shout it with me. I am gay. I am gay. Before I relinquish the stand, I'd like to speak to my fellow PWAs. We oftentimes fear the double stigma of being gay and having AIDS. Just as AIDS is not a social disease, just as gay is not a physical disease.

It's very hard for us PWAs to face rejection, fear, and prejudice from our very own gay brothers. Part of this is our own faults. We must empower ourselves to live with AIDS and not to assume that this is a death sentence. We must take an active part in life as much as we are physically able to. We must all loudly insist on the best in social service and medical care and fight to get access to promising new treatments now, not in four or five years.

We must also take responsibility to ourselves, as well as to our partners, in our quest for fulfilling sexual lives. I believe that we are living with AIDS. That we don't come home from our doctor's offices with diagnoses in hand to lay down and die. I know that there's no cure yet, but I know that there are a lot of promising treatments coming up.

And unless we make noise, demand more access to them, and speedier approval of them, then a large number of us here today will surely die from neglect and red tape.

[APPLAUSE]

Red tape. Our Voices must be heard loud, long, and clear. And our voice must be every PWA and PWR who gives a damn about their treatment and lack thereof. I'd like to read a brief paraphrase of Harvey Milk's and have everyone affected by AIDS follow.

"As difficult as it is, you must tell your relatives. You must tell your friends if indeed they are your friends. You must tell your neighbors. You must tell the people in the stores you shop in. And once they realize that we are indeed their children, and that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all. And once you do, you will feel so much better."

[APPLAUSE]

Just as I loudly declared myself to be gay earlier, I just as loudly can shout I have AIDS, and I am not ashamed. Now I ask that every PWA and PWR join with me and shout the same. I have AIDS, and I am not ashamed. Thank you. I wish you love and life.

[APPLAUSE]

- I remember thinking, I'm the only one. I'm the only one who feels this way. There's got to be more to life than this.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

As a small child, growing up in Arkansas, I thought I was the only one that felt this way. And today, 30 years later, I hear the same thing from young people all across the Houston area. I'm the only one. I'm the only one that feels this way.

We're gay and lesbian people, and we'll show you a better way to feel about yourself every Saturday night at midnight on *After Hours*. Tune in.

- Rebecca and I went camping. We made camp. We spent some time eating. We were laying down by a stream, and all of a sudden there were shots. My arm exploded. Rebecca was hit twice and started to bleed to death. attempted to carry her, but I was unsuccessful. The entire walk out of the woods, I believed myself to be hunted.

My name is Claudia Brenner. We were identified as lesbians by a stranger with whom we had no connection. He will spend the rest of his life in prison, but Rebecca, who was 28 years old, is gone.

- Homophobia can kill. Education is the only lasting weapon against bigotry, which is why the Lesbian and Gay Public Awareness Project wanted you to hear and think about this message.

- For more information, write us at post office box 65603, Los Angeles, California, 90065.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Wow, that's scary. Hearing Bruce's voice after all these years because Bruce has since died of AIDS-related, whatever the hell it is they say when somebody dies. Of course, Magic Johnson's a hero because he ran around screwing every hooker and whore and-

-

- Yeah, and he comes out of the closet with it and he's a hero. I don't understand that quite.

- I don't understand it either. I read a letter in *The Houston Post* this week from a woman who had had breast cancer.

- Yes, I read that.

- And had her breast removed, and she was very angry about the Magic Johnson thing. Anyway, we're listening to the Celebration of Life rally that was broadcast live over KPFT in 1988, on the steps of Houston City Hall. And we're going to go back to those tapes. And I certainly hope you're enjoying it.

- Oh, I am.

- This is KPFT, Houston, 90.1 FM.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[APPLAUSE]

- Thank you.

- For our listening audience, you are listening to KPFT, Houston, 90.1 community radio. Come join us downtown on the steps of City Hall, under the stars, to celebrate life and the empowerment of our human spirit. Joining us now, is Bruce Reeves. He's the immediate past co-chair of the Lesbian Gay Pride Week. And he's currently co-chair of the Houston Effort for the March on Austin for Lesbian, Gay Equal Rights. Please welcome Bruce Reeves.

[APPLAUSE]

- Thanks, Cindy. Since Cindy didn't say it, and it was written down on my little card, I'll say it. I am a self-proclaimed faggot. I got into a lot of trouble this year with that but such is life. You know, so many people in our community don't even know who Harvey Milk was. And it's our duty to educate them.

To let them know about the first elected openly-gay official in the United States. To let them know about his life, his death, and the things that he stood for. I guess I first learned about Harvey shortly after coming out five years ago in Baton Rouge. Friends kept me updated on the newest television shows and movies, which I ingested like the starving child I was. And I grew.

When I first saw *The Times of Harvey Milk*, I was impressed because knowing that someday I would like to run for public office. I was intrigued. Unfortunately, after taping and watching the movie, I put it on a shelf. Shortly after that, I had the opportunity of meeting Harry Britt at a statewide conference for Lesbian and Gay people. In New Orleans. I had no idea before I saw him or heard him who he was, but I listened. Again, I was intrigued, and again, I forgot.

When I first met Buddy Johnston, this past spring, he invited me to come on *After Hours* to talk about Pride Week. But even before going on the show, he handed me two tapes. One of Dr. Martin Luther King jr. And the other Harvey Milk. I listened and I listened again. Both contained messages equally valid. Equally as valid if not more so now than when those early soundbites were taped.

We must all come out of the closets, and by doing so, we shall overcome. Like Dr. King, like Harvey Milk I have a dream. That one day, when I walk hand-in-hand with a friend or a lover or kiss another man in public, that it will no longer be a rebellious activist action but will be accepted as easily as the actions of my non-gay friends who walk down the street that way now.

I was asked the other day, where would we be today if Harvey had not been killed? And I think my answer surprised them. Because I said, we probably wouldn't have come as far as we have. Would the Black community be where they are today if Dr. King had not been killed? I doubt it.

Every movement needs a martyr. Someone that movement believes in so much and that they believe so much can change the world, but one person can't change the world. It's something that we all have to do together. When Dr. King was killed, every Black person in this country felt the loss and no doubt, was inspired that his work must continue so too with Harvey,

Would Harvey's words have inspired me if he were still alive today? Maybe, but would I've heard them? Probably not. But the anger I felt, and I'm sure you felt too, when you learned he was killed and killed by a fellow supervisor, that anger gives those words more meaning more impact.

A defense based on Twinkies made me madder. The jury buying that story made me madder still. If it had just been Harvey, and not Mayor Moscone, as well, would Dan White have even gone to jail? The anger, and when Dan White was released after serving only five years, the anger grew and how almost jubilant I felt when he took his own life.

Was justice served? No. When the anger continues to grow But that anger makes it easier to stand up in front of the rest of the world, and say, we're mad as hell, and we're not going to take it anymore.

[APPLAUSE]

To step a little further from our closets, to stop that revolving door, and shout to the world that we shall overcome. We all have a dream. It's great to see those of you that are here today, but in Harvey's words, it's never enough. The problems that affect this city are the problems that affect us all. Racism, sexism, and homophobia affect us all.

We can win this battle, and we will win this battle. We will remember Dr. King. We will remember Harvey Milk. And we will look to the leaders of our community, both locally and nationally to help give us the vision that we need and we know can help us march out of our closets and make this world a better place.

And finally, to paraphrase Harvey, we do have a choice. We can all move to California or we can stay in Houston and fight. For our rights are only won by those who make their voices heard. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

- My friend, Bruce Reeves. I just wish he wasn't so tall because he's got a nice hairy chest. Bring on the men. Here comes the Montrose Singers, ladies and gentlemen, coming to entertain you now. We're broadcasting live from the steps of City Hall. Coming up, of course, District C City Councilman Vince Ryan, someone by the name of Ray Hill, and Supervisor Harry Britt from the city of San Francisco.

You're listening to the Celebration of Life rally live from the steps of City Hall in downtown Houston on Pacifica station KPFT, Houston 90.1 FM. Ladies and gentlemen, the Montrose Singers under the direction of Mr. Bo Cain.

[APPLAUSE]

- Our soloist on that number was Bill Keller, one of our PWAs.

[APPLAUSE]

Definitely a person living with AIDS. And now, if we can get our cameraman, Mike Stubblefield up here to sing with us. We're a little short in the baritone section. Come on, Mike. [LAUGHS]

- Never mind.

- Walter Donaldson wrote beautiful music for lyrics written by Gus Kahn, one of the most famous songwriters in American history. And they have collaborated to produce a song that all of you are at least a little familiar with. And it is definitely a celebration of life because it is a celebration of love. We sing this song for absent friends.

One last song. This we feel should become, perhaps, the Gay Men's national anthem. It's beautiful. The text is by the American poet Walt Whitman. The music is by Stuart Raleigh. Walt Whitman celebrated love and celebrated life in everything that he wrote. And perhaps no more eloquently in his poem, *When I Heard at the Close of the Day*.

- Ladies and gentlemen, the Montrose Singers under the direction of Mr Bo Cain. They've got a tremendous schedule coming up in addition to this performance tonight. You're going to be singing where? Can you tell us right quick before you get away?

- Everywhere we can,

- Everywhere we can. They're selling their records right now, come here. Where are you going to be singing, seriously?

- We are scheduled to do Christmas performances with the Houston Symphony, and we are also scheduled to sing at Independence Hall. And where else, guys?

- They're going to be busy.

- Where?

- The Alley.

- Not yet, we haven't heard back from them. They want to do The Alley real bad again. We've done it every year for several years now.

- Every queen in Houston wants to do The Alley.

- Yeah, that's right. We're also singing for Body Positive, which is a PWA support group. We're going to be singing for the PWA Coalition.

- Rich's

- At Rich's, they're having a Christmas pageant at Rich's. We'll be singing there. And where? I already said that. I don't remember. I've got it all written down. I never trust my own memory. I write it all down, Buddy.

- Thanks for coming, Bo. The Montrose Singers, ladies and gentlemen. You're listening to a live broadcast the Celebration of Life from the steps of City Hall in beautiful downtown Houston. I think it's beautiful.

Our next speaker is a very dear friend of mine. Without his help, we wouldn't have got the 10,000 fliers out last evening because he helped organize the Gay and Lesbian Students Association from U of H. He's used to sticking things on cars to promote a lot of things.

He's the co-founder, along with Dominique Florio, back in 1983, of the American Gay Atheists. He established the first dial-a-gay-atheist number now in its ninth year right here in Houston. And if you want to hear a hot message, call in about Christmas time. I can guarantee you it'll be there.

He's currently in a legal battle against Harris County, due to him taking a Bible-- due to its illegal Bible monument at the civil courts building. That was in the papers. Unfortunately, you don't hear a lot about this in the gay press, but we're trying to change that. His name for you that do not know, is Mr. Don Sanders, President of the American Gay Atheists, Don.

[APPLAUSE]

- Thank you. Well, I just won't use it. Anyway, it's very good to be here tonight. When I was asked to speak at tonight's rally, which commemorates the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Harvey Milk, I was wondering just what I might say, since I did not know Harvey personally. So I began to read and do research and realized that he was quite an extraordinary person.

Being an openly and an avowed atheist, I was interested if Harvey prescribed to any particular religious notions. One's religious ascriptions can determine how one thinks and can tell a lot about the motives behind one's actions. I found out that Harvey described himself as ultra-progressive politically, and philosophically, he described himself as a concerned humanist. Well, I was ecstatic. A humanist is just a step or two to the right of an atheist.

I further found out that Harvey Milk, not long before he was shot, told a number of his good friends and associates that when he died, that he did not wish for any religious songs or ceremony. Now, I realize that this revelation has probably disappointed some of you here tonight for some Christians will try to steal the memories of anyone, especially those of notoriety, after they are dead. And swear that they were full-fledged practitioners of their religion, even when in fact, they were not.

But this has always been a common practice of the religious and will continue to persist until more of us stand up against it. Actually, Harvey hailed from a Jewish family, but like a lot of us later in life, realized that Judeo-Christianity is not and never has been our friend, but instead is our greatest enemy.

Harvey Milk also realized that if gays and lesbians are ever to attain equality of civil rights, as outlined in our Constitution, we must be willing to abandon our closets and elect our own to public offices of public trust in city, county, state, and federal positions.

[APPLAUSE]

But because he saw the gay community so fragmented politically, he recognized there was little chance for us to combat the forces of the right wing. Gay people, he complained, are too unwilling to part with even \$1 to fight the forces and to advance their own civil rights. They would, instead, think nothing of spending any amounts of money for the pursuit of pleasure, but when asked to give to a gay and lesbian civil rights organization, there was little, if anything offered.

Harvey pointed out that Jews comprise only around 3% of the total US population and that Blacks comprise around 10%, about the same percentage as we gays. But look at the power politically and economically these two groups wield compared to that of gays and lesbians.

10 years after the death of Harvey Milk, we are still, basically, where we were in 1978 simply because of our functioning, our closetedness, and our unwillingness to fund our own organizations and candidates.

Of course, Harvey died before the AIDS epidemic lashed out at us. I think he would have been proud that more gays and lesbians have become active as a result of this disease because of the extra burden of discrimination it has fostered. However, we are still about where we were in regards to matters of equality of civil rights before the AIDS epidemic. If we were to direct as much effort in demanding our equality as we direct toward matters of AIDS, no doubt, we would begin to see a difference.

Most gays, I would dare say, do not even know that there has been a House Bill, HR 709 known as the Gay Bill of Rights, which has been stalled in the House of Representatives for nearly four years. It was introduced on January the third, 1985, by Congressman Ted Weiss Democrat of New York, together with 49 co-sponsors. A bill that has been stalled this long, is not going anywhere.

Yet, within the last couple of months, the Christian Family Renewal group has picked up on it and is flooding the nation with mailings begging for funding to stop the bill. The bill is dead, anyway. The mailings are replete with scare tactics and other hysterical and often hysterical in tone, with the ultimate bottom line of send money.

But we, by our own complacency, are allowing our enemy to use this dead bill to collect millions of dollars off the homophobia of nimble-brained Christians to further their own goals of hatred and discrimination. Incidentally, it should be noted that Congressman Robert Dornan, homophobic Republican of California, is on the advisory board of Christian Family Renewal.

Harvey Milk was right. Even in the face of clear-cut discrimination, gays will not mobilize ourselves, recognize our enemy, and fund the battle. We have seen our government refuse funding for AIDS Research for years while thousands of our friends have died. We continue to be harassed, harangued, and arrested by homophobic cops every day.

We continue to have laws on the books, which make us illegal in many states, including this one. We should be ashamed that we are the only minority left in this country, which has laws against us as a group. And we should start right now to change those laws.

[APPLAUSE]

Like Harvey said, if every gay person would simply give a \$1 toward electing our own to positions of public trust in city, state, and federal government or to our own educational and civil rights organizations, what a difference we could make. In my opinion, Harvey Milk was a man who was right on target, but like many who are on target with their words and actions, he became the target of a homophobic bigot like Dan White.

We must keep the memory of Harvey Milk fresh in our minds every day. He was an ordinary man who set out to show us that one person can make a difference. He left a legacy of reason for us to follow. The man who called himself a concerned humanist, knew that the greatest impediment in our way to equality of civil and human rights, was first ourselves, and second, Judeo-Christian tradition, which has been the stifler of free thought, research, and scientific inquiry for almost 20 centuries and remains the torturer and killer of lesbians and gay men to this very day.

Harvey Milk realized that before freedom can be realized by us, there first must be a revolution between our ears. Remember these words that Harvey said of the right-wing Christian forces. "Equality is a dirty word to them. They're afraid we're going to do unto them what they have done unto us." And Harvey continued, "funding is the key to gay politics, to any politics. In this country, money doesn't just talk, it commands." Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

- Thanks very much.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- It's 2:00 AM in the morning, 90.1 FM KPFT Houston. *After Hours* radio celebrating life from the heart of Montrose. We're here.
- And we're queer.
- And we're listening to the Celebration of Life rally broadcast live back in November of 1988.
- Yeah and you just heard Don Sanders, President of the American Gay Atheists.
- So every time we say, come on down to City Hall, don't go down to City Hall because nobody's down there.
- That was one of the best speeches from Don I've heard.
- Yeah, well, he was talking about giving money. And he's right.
- He's absolutely right.
- If we could get every queen in Houston to send us \$1--