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HOW FAR OUT OF THE CLOSET ARE YOU?

Since Stonewall gay men have increasingly chosen to live their lives openly even though they may face disapproval and discrimination from others. Yet even men who at first appear to have completely slammed the closet door behind them can harbor concern that a particular relative or perhaps a "boss" might discover their actual identity. Others may only be out to a few straight people.

The decision of how out to be is very personal and there is no rule that works for everyone. Sadly some gay men will live their entire lives under the tyranny of fear and shame. Even the most out may have skeletons still lurking in the closet they thought they had left behind. These skeletons prevent them from being whole in spite of being openly gay.

Jesus taught that the pure in heart are blessed but how can anyone be truly pure in heart and hide the essential truth of his being? Such secrecy carries with it a heavy burden of despair which can only be relieved by living authentically, no matter what the consequences. Every gay man faces the lifelong task of growing into wholeness. Created gay by a loving God we are a gift to ourselves and to the world when we walk the path of authenticity.

A message from the Anawim Community—a group of gay men committed to following Jesus through a life of prayer and service to our brothers.

world briefs

ARGENTINA

In a first for Argentina, longtime gay activist and high-school teacher Rafael Freda has won domestic-partner health care benefits for his lover of 10 years, Eduardo Vazquez.

When Vazquez lost his job, the couple turned to the teachers' social security provider, known as OSPLAD, which, it turned out, offered coverage to spouses, children and "any person/s living with the affiliate and being overtly subjected to the same treatment as the primary family members."

Freda and Vazquez obtained a cohabitation certificate from a civil court, got a required signature from the principal of Freda's school, then presented their papers. A few days later, OSPLAD said Vazquez was covered.

AUSTRALIA

Starting in July, the state of New South Wales will teach grade- and high-school students about gay men and lesbians.

The program will be test-run in six primary and two secondary schools in the Sydney area, in hopes of reducing anti-gay vilification. If it succeeds, it may be expanded statewide.

Students will be taught that gay sexuality, attitudes and lifestyles are normal. They will study gay-positive theater and literature, role play, and learn that anti-gay discrimination is illegal.

Some conservative politicians are predicting an outcry from parents who believe homosexuality is sinful.

BRAZIL

Brazil's Superior Military Tribunal in May recommended legalizing homosexuality in the military.

At present, military personnel who engage in gay sex can be sentenced to from six months to one year in prison.

The proposal advances to the Ministry of Justice, then to Congress, according to the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*.



BRITAIN

Britain's MI5 spy agency lifted its ban on homosexuals at the end of May.

In a communiqué sent to London's *Pink Paper*, the agency urged gay men and lesbians to apply during the present recruitment drive.

At the same time, MI5 staff received a memo announcing that discrimination against homosexuals would no longer be tolerated.

MI5 had fired all known homosexuals since the 1950s, when gay traitors Guy Burgess and Sir Anthony Blunt were caught and the KGB successfully blackmailed gay Admiralty clerk John Vassall.

CANADA

In the weeks prior to the June 2 elections, Canada's Reform Party came out against same-gender marriage.

Marriage is about procreation and child-rearing and should not be available to homosexual couples, party leader Preston Manning told French-language media in Quebec.

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The U.S. package-shipping company United Parcel Service is refusing to transport the new gay sex magazine *Canadian Male*.

The Nova Scotia gay newspaper *Wayves* said three boxes of the third issue sent to U.S. stores were returned to the publisher, Toronto's Pink Triangle Press, which also publishes the Xtra! gay newspapers in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

According to *Wayves*, UPS has a policy against shipping pornography across international borders.

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Edmonton, Alberta, Mayor Bill Smith is refusing to proclaim gay pride day in that city because sexual minorities are a "special interest" group.

Smith signs over 150 proclamations a year, including, recently, one for "Teddy Bear Day."

The previous mayor proclaimed gay pride day for six years in a row.

COLOMBIA

Lesbian kissing on the soap opera *The Perfume of Agony* led the Inextra corporation (part of Procter & Gamble Co.) to cancel its advertising on the show, *El Tiempo* reported May 15.

The move will cost the producers \$47,259 (U.S.) a month, *El Tiempo* said.

The lesbian story line is between Helen and Elvira, played by actresses Alejandra Borrero and Marcel Gallego. The program airs nightly at 10 pm.



DENMARK

Denmark's state Lutheran Church will soon offer wedding-like ceremonies for gay men and lesbians.

A church commission in May presented bishops with three options ranging from a brief prayer to a gay-specific service that mirrors the traditional wedding.

Denmark is one of four nations where gay and lesbian couples can register their partnerships with city officials and obtain all the rights of matrimony except access to adoption, state-funded artificial-conception services and church weddings. The others are Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Denmark is more than 87 percent Lutheran, but less than 10 percent of the population goes to church.

ESTONIA

Linnar Priimaegi, "one of Estonia's leading personalities in the field of culture," has come out of the closet via a photographic exhibition at Tallinn's Deco Gallery in which he appears nude with his male lover, according to local media.

It is the first homoerotic exhibition in Estonia and only the second time a celebrity has come out of the closet.

Author Emil Tode is "fairly" openly gay, according to local activists.

EUROPE

Here's a partial list of European Pride celebrations.

June 21: Edinburgh, Scotland; Oslo, Norway.
June 28: EuroPride (in Paris); Berlin, Germany; Lisbon, Portugal; Rome, Italy; Vienna, Austria; Dublin, Ireland. July 5: London, England. July 7-13: Valetta, Malta. July 12: Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. July 18-19: Zurich, Switzerland. July 26: Stockholm, Sweden. Aug. 2: Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Aug. 8-10: Oulu, Finland.

FRANCE

Attendance was down at the annual AIDS marches in several French cities in late May, most likely because protease inhibitors have made the disease seem less horrible.

About 10,000 people walked in Paris' "March for Life"—half of last year's number.

Smaller gatherings took place in five other cities.

IRELAND

Ireland will soon have national gay civil-rights protections, activists report.

Two bills are expected to pass parliament (the Dail) in coming weeks, the Employment Equality Bill and the Equal Status Bill.

Together, the measures will ban discrimina-