

WORLDnews

CANADA

The Justice Ministry will appeal the Ontario Superior Court ruling that the federal ban on same-sex marriage violates the nation's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



Martin Cauchon

"There is no consensus, either from the courts or among Canadians, on whether or how the laws require change," Justice Minister Martin Cauchon said. "The government believes it is the responsible course to seek further clarity on these issues."

The July 12 ruling came in the case of two couples who were married at the gay Metropolitan Community Church via the process of reading banns—asking in church on three Sundays if anyone objects to the marriage, which is a legal way to marry in Ontario. Pastor Brent Hawkes gave them ordinary marriage certificates, but provincial officials later refused to register the documents.

The court's ruling will become law July 12, 2004, if the federal Parliament has not legalized same-sex marriage by then.

About 80 people marched in the Gay Pride parade July 22 in St. John's, Newfoundland. Organizers blamed the low turnout on cold weather. "You can almost be sure that every time we have this it's going to be a cold day," said Derrick Bishop of the organizing committee.

"There were no feathers and fishnets to be seen," noted the local newspaper, the *Telegram*. The parade wrapped up a week of Pride events.



Alan Duncan is the first Tory to come out while still in Parliament

UNITED KINGDOM

Leading British Conservative Member of Parliament Alan Duncan told London's *Times* that he is gay July 29, the first time a Tory has come out while still in office.

"Living in disguise as a politician in the modern world simply isn't an option," he told the newspaper. "I think the only realistic way to behave these days, particularly if you are a politician, is to be absolutely honest and upfront, however inconvenient that may be at first."

The newly appointed head of the Church of England is very gay-friendly.

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams "for over 20 years...has eloquently advocated that Christianity and homosexuality should be viewed as wholly consistent with each other," the Rev. Richard Kirker, general secretary of the United Kingdom's Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, told the British Broadcasting Corp. "His close personal friendships with gay people over 30 years marks him out as the first archbishop of Canterbury who is entirely at ease, publicly

and privately, with a section of society that the church has often either tried, at best, to ignore or patronize and, at worst, to openly discriminate against. Under his leadership homophobia will be challenged and intolerance rooted out."

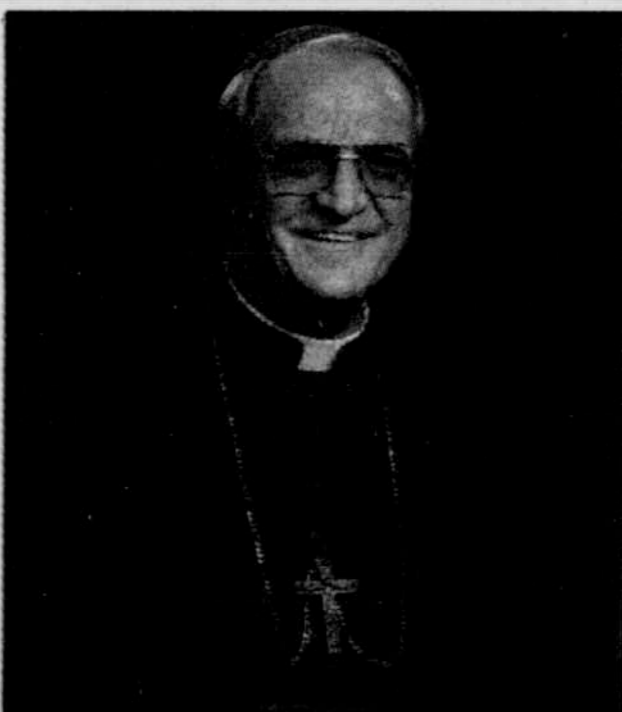
Conservative Anglicans and Episcopalians have denounced Williams' "liberal," "left-wing," "pro-homosexual" positions. "We do have problems with his radical agenda...so we are arranging an early meeting hopefully to clarify some of these fundamental concerns," Frank Naggs, a member of the church's evangelical caucus, told the *Guardian*.

Bruce Mason, spokesman for the conservative American Anglican Council, told The Associated Press, "Some of his past views on issues of human sexuality are things we don't support."

SOUTH AFRICA

A full bench of South Africa's Constitutional Court ruled July 25 that gay couples must receive the same workplace benefits as married couples.

The decision, which came in a case filed by a lesbian judge whose partner was denied spousal benefits, cited the nation's constitution, which bans all discrimination based on sexual orientation. Another lawsuit is pending that activists predict will open up ordinary marriage to South African same-sex couples.



Reginald Cawcutt got caught in cyberspace with his pants down

Auxiliary Roman Catholic Bishop of Cape Town Reginald Cawcutt resigned July 17 amid allegations that he outed himself as gay and horny on a sometimes sexually charged Web site set up for gay priests. He blamed the scandal on the conservative U.S. organization Roman Catholic Faithful, which infiltrated the now-offline St. Sebastian's Angels and traced posting addresses.

Cawcutt claimed that he participated in the discussions only because he ministered to Catholics who are gay and who have AIDS and that he always promoted celibacy in his postings on the site. He resigned, he said, to prevent division in the church.

Sesame Street South Africa will add an HIV-positive Muppet in September.

The program airs on the South African Broadcasting Corp. One in five South African adults is HIV-positive.

"Women are often stigmatized about HIV, and we are providing a good role model as to how to deal with one's situation and how to interact with the community," Joel Schneider, *Sesame Street* Workshop vice president, told Reuters. The program's target audience is kids ages 3 to 7. [E]

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.



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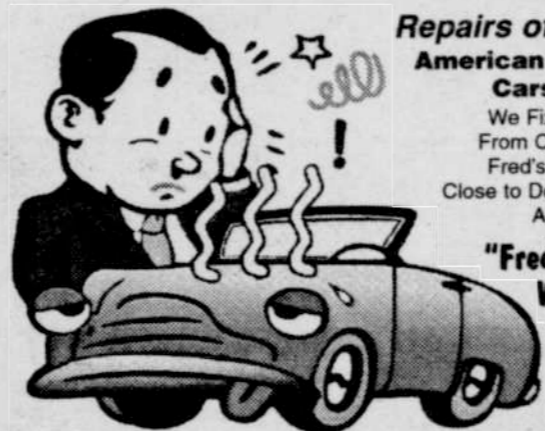
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