

Other same-sex couples can now co-adopt their partner's children or be considered stepparents in the exact same way as opposite-sex couples."

SOUTH AFRICA

An HIV-positive Muppet was unveiled Sept. 30 on *Sesame Street South Africa*.

Kami is yellow and likes being outdoors, collecting things and telling stories. One in nine South Africans is HIV-positive.



Kami, an HIV-positive Muppet, is on the air in South Africa

South Africa's Constitutional Court ruled Sept. 10 that gay couples have the right to adopt children.

The ruling cited the nation's post-apartheid constitution, which bans outright all discrimination based on sexual orientation. Lesbian judges Anne-Marie de Vos and Suzanne du Toit, who have been together for 13 years, filed suit after du Toit was prevented from adopting Vos' two kids.

"Family life as contemplated in the constitution can be lived in different ways," Judge Lewis Skweyiya wrote. "The stability, support and affection envisaged by the Child Care Act can be provided by people in permanent same-sex relationships."

Activists believe South African courts soon might legalize gay marriage—allowing same-sex couples to marry under the same laws as straight couples. Although numerous nations have special partnership laws that grant most rights of marriage to registered same-sex couples, only the Netherlands lets gays actually marry exactly like straight people do.

ISRAEL

Several dozen gay and lesbian couples staged a kiss-in Sept. 5 outside Jerusalem police headquarters. They were protesting the arrest earlier in the week of two gay teens for reportedly kissing outside the Old City walls, local newspapers said.

Police, however, said the couple were not merely kissing but were caught "with their pants down committing oral sex." The Association for Civil Rights in Israel has asked the Justice Ministry to investigate.

EGYPT

Fifty of the 52 men nabbed for alleged homosexuality last year in the most infamous of several recent anti-gay sweeps are back in court. They are being tried in regular court this time rather than in the Emergency State Security Court, which was set up to deal with terrorism.

A total of 29 of the men had been acquitted and 23 convicted, including two who faced more serious charges and were not granted a new trial. In May, President Hosni Mubarak canceled the verdicts—convictions and acquittals—for the 50 men who had been prosecuted for "habitual practice of debauchery."

Several international human rights organizations have denounced Egypt's ongoing anti-gay sweeps and have accused police of torture, entrapment and fabricating charges.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Anglican church could implode because of gays, outgoing Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said Sept. 17.

He called the strong disagreement on sexual orientation issues, such as blessing gay unions, "a crisis." The Anglican bishop in Vancouver, British Columbia, recently OK'd church gay union ceremonies.

"My concern is that our communion is being steadily undermined by the decisions of national bishops taking unilateral action...usually in matters to do with sexuality and, as a result, steadily driving us towards serious fragmentation

and the real possibility of two, or more likely many, more distinct Anglican bodies emerging," Carey said. "This erosion of communion through the adoption of 'local options'...is reaching crisis proportions today."

Europe's first fertility clinic for lesbians and single women opened Sept. 16 in London, according to the British Broadcasting Corp.

Founders of the Women's New Life Center say lesbians are treated insensitively at other fertility clinics. For now, only donor insemination will be provided, as opposed to in vitro fertilization and other high-tech methods.



Apparently, Edina (Jennifer Saunders, left, with Joanna Lumley) and her long-lost son are both *Fabulous*

Edina will discover that her long-lost son is gay in the new *Absolutely Fabulous* Christmas special. Stars Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley taped some scenes Sept. 22 at New York Fashion Week.

Jamaican reggae star Beenie Man says he's not a homophobe, *WorldPop.com* reported Sept. 10. The British activist group OutRage! called for a boycott of his new single, "Feel It Boy," a duet with Janet Jack-

son, charging that his earlier tunes advocated murdering homosexuals.

"My single has nothing to do with gay people," Beenie said. "It's not killing no gay people, it's not looking out against gay people. I have nothing to say against gay people. The more guys that are gay means more girls for me. I don't know why they're against my single."

Beenie said accusations that his earlier songs advocated killing "chi chi men," Jamaican slang for gays, are incorrect.

"They come and say we say chi chi man and we cuss gays as chi chi men. Chi chi man is the name of a person—it's the prime minister," he told *WorldPop*. "We wanna cuss the Jamaican prime minister, but we cannot say the prime minister's name on record because you be going to jail. You call him a chi chi man. It's not like we cussing nobody else; we cussing the prime minister. We have nothing to say about gay people; everybody's just getting the wrong idea." □

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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