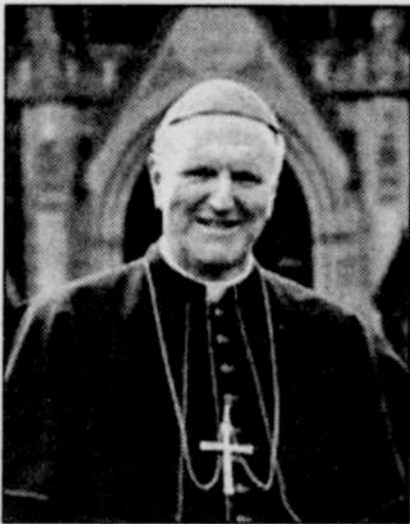


WORLD news

our present state of scientific knowledge we do not have any infallible ways of getting out of the condition," he said.

But Rudegear was more optimistic. A boy can turn gay, he said, if he has a bad relationship with his dad or is bad at sports. "The sooner these problems are addressed in therapy, the more hope there is for a full recovery," he claimed.



Melbourne Catholic Archbishop Denis Hart (left) upset gay activists by endorsing discredited U.S. psychologist Peter Rudegear (right)

POLAND

As it prepares to join the 15-nation European Union, Poland is seeking promises that "no EU treaties or annexes to those treaties would hamper the Polish government in regulating moral issues."

The International Lesbian & Gay Association is not amused. "This is a blatant attempt by the Catholic Church to exclude Poland's LGBT community from the anti-discrimination protections enshrined in EU law and from any future progress at the European level in recognizing same-sex partners," said Ailsa Spindler, ILGA-Europe executive director.

ILGA-Europe board member Tatjana Greif of Slovenia added: "If Poland is successful, other accession countries may try to follow this example. We call upon the [European] Commission, members of the European Parliament and member state governments to refuse any opt-out which would weaken the rights of Poland's LGBT community."

UNITED KINGDOM

Britain's Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association is urging the European Union to resist pressure from religious organizations to insert an exhortation to God and an acknowledgment of Europe's "religious heritage" in its new constitution.

The document will extend to the union's 15 member nations and, later, to those waiting to join, including several former East Bloc countries. A committee is under pressure from the Vatican and elsewhere to include in the first article an acknowledgment that God is central to Europe and that the union owes its success to religion.

"As far as homosexuals are concerned, the 'heritage' of religion in Europe throughout the centuries has been one of persecution," association secretary George Broadhead wrote in a letter to the committee. "The continued waning in observance of religion in Europe has resulted in increased secularization of morality and public life. This has been achieved by the will of the people through democratic means, and it is likely to continue for the foreseeable future."

THE NETHERLANDS

Gay Dutch Member of Parliament Boris Dittrich was elected leader of the small, leftist Democraten 1966 party in late January. It holds six of Parliament's 150 seats.

A total of 10 parties are represented in Parliament, the largest being the Christian Democratic Appeal (44 seats), Labor Party (42 seats) and People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (28 seats). The other parties have fewer than 10 seats each.

Two other Dutch political parties have elected openly gay



Boris Dittrich

leaders. Peter Lankhorst led the Green Left party in the late 1980s, and Pim Fortuyn led the Livable Netherlands party for four months beginning in November 2001. He later formed his own party, Pim Fortuyn's List, which he led until he was assassinated May 6, 2002.

SOUTH AFRICA

The U.S.-based AIDS Healthcare Foundation filed a grievance Jan. 28 against GlaxoSmithKline because of the prices it charges for HIV drugs. The complaint to South Africa's Competition Commission said the company has "a stranglehold on key AIDS drug patents" and engages in "unfettered monopoly pricing on these life-saving medications."

Because of this misbehavior, the foundation added, other drug makers should be allowed to produce generic versions of Glaxo's HIV pharmaceuticals. Among the AIDS drugs it owns are AZT, 3TC and abacavir.

Although costs vary internationally, a three-drug anti-HIV combo often exceeds \$12,000 a year in places such as the United States, where the government does not control pharmaceutical pricing. Around 20 percent of South African adults are HIV-positive.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. Health Secretary Tommy Thompson was elected Jan. 31 as chairman of the Geneva-based Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

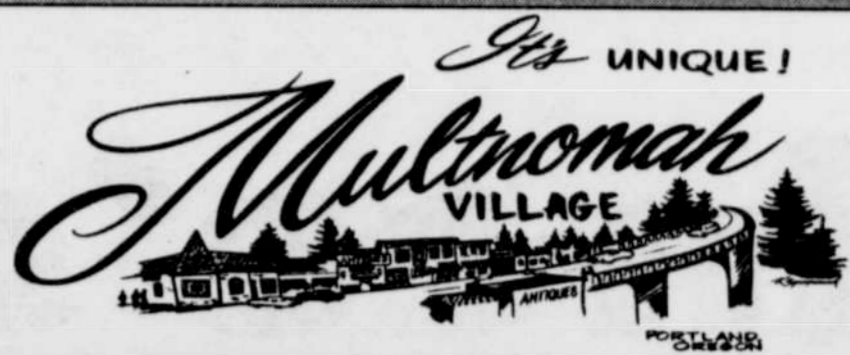
The surprise announcement followed President Bush's pledge in his State of the Union address to ask Congress for \$10 billion in new funding to fight AIDS overseas in the next five years, which is triple previous U.S. spending. "The United States is committed to the fight against global AIDS and proud to partner with the Global Fund, with our allies and with every man, woman and child on this planet as we seek to end this plague," Thompson said.



Tommy Thompson

The former Wisconsin governor was the target of aggressive protests at last summer's International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain, where raucous demonstrators chanted, blew whistles and shouted, completely drowning out his speech to delegates. They accused the Bush administration of failing to give its fair share to the Global Fund, shortchanging the U.S. AIDS Drug Assistance Program, blocking needle exchanges, attacking science-based prevention programs and overemphasizing the unrealistic promotion of abstinence. [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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