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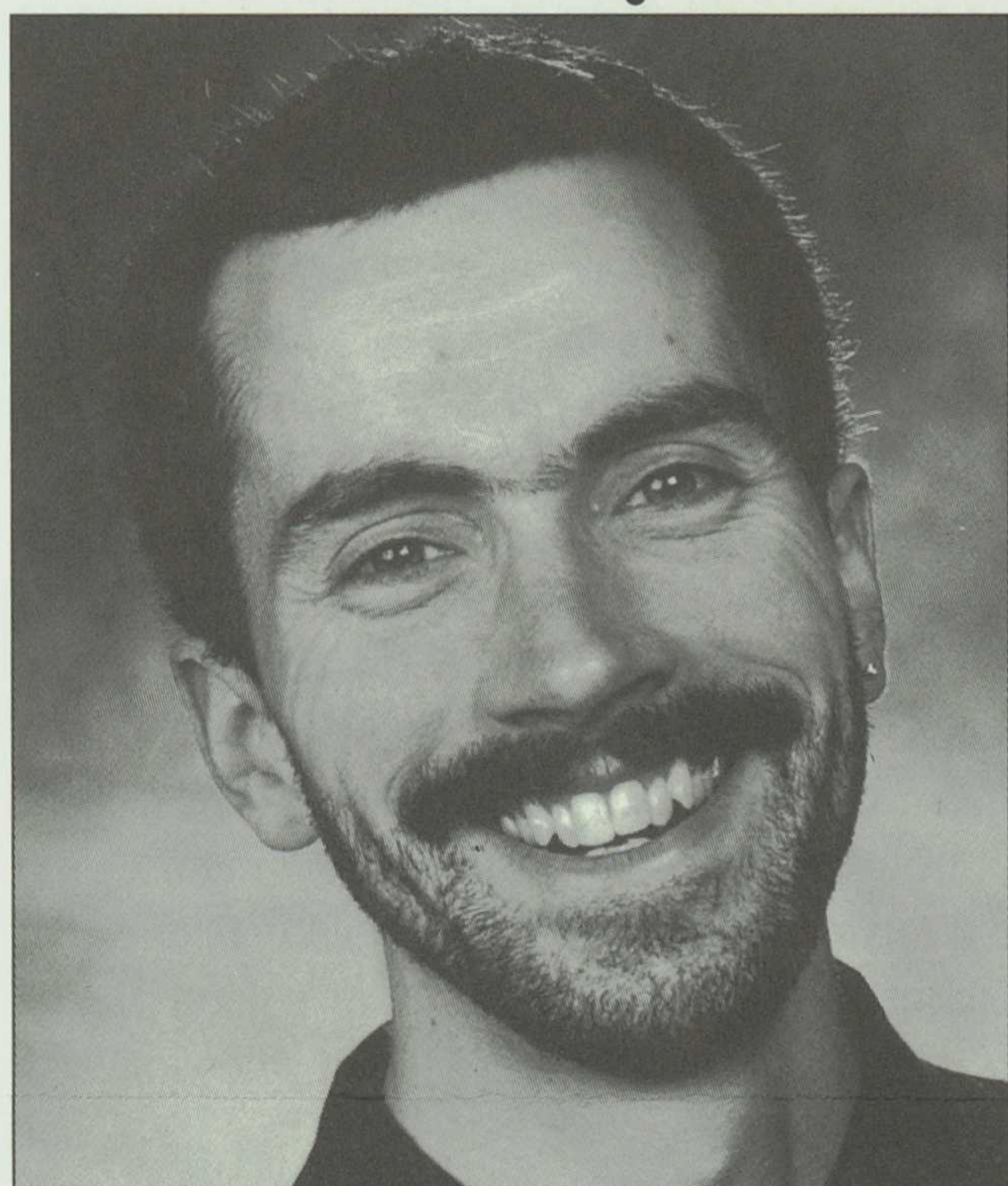
Freedom from
Homosexuality
Through the
Power of
Jesus Christ

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Knowing God's Love *By Rob Goetze*

My childhood sexual abuse left me feeling like discarded trash. I became afraid of men—and detached from my own masculinity.



OFF BROADWAY PHOTO/LONDON, ONTARIO

Rob Goetze is director of New Direction for Life Ministries in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

I did not choose to be gay, nor was I born gay. Instead, my attraction to other men was something that developed over a number of years, with many factors contributing to its development.

When I was a child, I didn't know that my father loved me. He was away at work a lot, and I didn't see that much of him, so my needs for same-sex love and affirmation were not met. Though my dad did not mean to hurt me, I felt rejected and began to shut him out emotionally.

When I was a child, I was usually on the sidelines of the boys' activities. From kindergarten to grade 12, I lived far away from school and from my classmates, which limited after-school friendships and activities. Even at school, my lack of interest and skill in sports meant I ended up playing outfield or similar positions

in gym class. Because of frequent moves, I changed schools five times, staying at three of them for a year or less. It was hard to make friends when all the other kids had already known each other for several years.

In other ways, living on the periphery of life was due to sexual abuse, which in my life ranged from being sexually fondled by an adult male "friend of the family" at age five to being raped by three male peers in my early teens.

The abuse taught me to be afraid of men. It destroyed my sense of personhood and what little there was of a sense of masculinity. The message I got was that I was dirt, something to be used by others.

The abuse also taught me that the way to be close to a man

is by being sexually involved with him. Puberty, when it happened in the middle of all of this, further sexualized my emotional need for love and affirmation. As far back as I can recall having sexual fantasies, they were only about men.

In earlier high school, a few of the boys—particularly one named Jimmy—often called me "fag." I understood it to be derogatory, but neither knew exactly what it meant nor that it could be used to actually describe my desires.

It was only a few months before my 19th birthday that I realized the word "homosexual" applied to my thoughts and desires. This was a great shock to me, and I became quite depressed. I was moody and slept a lot. I declined to answer when someone asked, "How are you?" On two occasions, I felt like killing myself.

In one sense I was still the same person. But in another sense, I now had this label stuck on me. I realized that the sexual thoughts in my head were different from most other men. I was no longer "just me."

I told my two closest friends what was happening. Mark replied that he already knew and that he, too, was gay. Richard and I were sitting in the kitchen when I told him, late one night, with my parents sleeping upstairs. It was a very difficult moment. I remember holding a glass clenched in my hand, shaking with fear and emotion. When I finally managed to speak, Richard wasn't surprised to hear that I was dealing with homosexuality, and was very supportive.