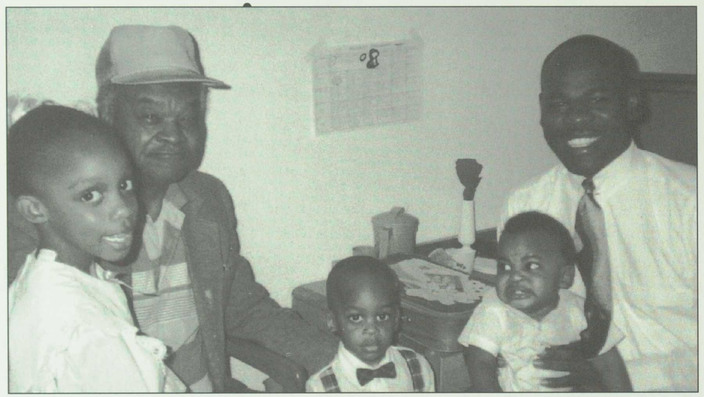
high school; he was three years older than me. My mother cleaned the church every week, and I went along to help. One Saturday after we were done, she left me there with instructions to check all doors to make sure they were locked.

I was surprised to discover Ray in the back of the church near a bedroom used to house visiting evangelists. "Darryl, can you come back here?" he said. When I did, he grabbed me, pushed me onto the bed and attempted to have intercourse with me. It seemed like hours, but it was over in a few minutes. I waited until night, then snuck home and threw all my clothes away so no one would find out what had happened. That night I knew all the past rumors about me were true: I was a homosexual.

Over the next three years, I was forced to bear Ray's relentless obsession with me. Thankfully, we never had sex. When I finally left the church in disgust, I left home and plunged headlong into the gay lifestyle. The sight of men dancing with each other and publicly kissing made me feel so good. I felt like I was finally in a place where I belonged.



Darryl (far right) with his father and children (l-r): Brittanie, Philip, Charles.

I was new on the gay scene; soon everyone was asking who I was and who I was dating. I went to house parties, orgies, got hooked on "poppers" and started drinking. I was like a kid in a candy store with no parents around!

In 1982, I hid my homosexuality so I could join the Army. I traveled all over the world; everywhere I could always find another man to sleep with. I went through periods of great depression, when I felt so lonely I wanted to die. When I came out of my depression, sex was the order of the day. I developed a hard attitude toward others, even my lovers. People existed to give me pleasure; when I was finished, I discarded them.

No one could stop me, not even God. "I don't care if I go to hell!" I told him. But I still was not happy. Thoughts tormented me that I now believe came from Satan: *You can find sex partners anytime you want, but none of them love you.* It was tragic, but true. After years of gay sex, I still felt unloved and worthless.

During Holy Week 1990, I began to despair of life itself. I couldn't shake my suicidal thoughts which had now passed into the planning stage. I slumped down in front of the TV and flipped it on. When the screen came into focus, I saw an amazing sight: a badly-beaten man dragging a heavy wooden cross through the streets of a city. Suddenly the man stopped, and looked up at me as blood trickled down his face. Then he said, "I did all this just for you." I began to weep uncontrollably as I realized Jesus had spoken to me.

"Lord," I prayed, "how could you love me after all the horrible things I've done?" And I started to tell him, but he stopped me and insisted, "But I love you." As I surrendered my life to him, the glory of the Lord fell upon me. From that moment, I knew the power of sin—including the hold of homosexuality—was broken in my life.

That was seven years ago. Of course, there were many issues to confront as I started down the road to total healing. God directed me to a church, where I stayed for five years, rising to become second assistant pastor.

My anger, hatred, and improper sexual passions were gone. Yet I still had many fears: Would I be accepted in a church? Would the men sense my homosexual past? Was I really free?

Over the next few years, God proved his faithfulness by allowing me to build friendships with godly men who loved me without prejudice. They didn't realize it but God was using them to heal me of feelings of self-worthlessness.

I met a woman at church and we became friends. Over the next year, God confirmed in many ways that we belonged together. I knew God had created me to love a woman; I had a deep desire for a lifelong companion. Before I proposed to Dee, I told her about my past. "Honey" she responded, "it doesn't matter, because I love you for who you are right now." Our wedding occurred on October 24, 1992.

God has greatly used my wife to work miracles in my healing process. She was instrumental in hearing his voice for me to take my testimony public so that others could hear and be set free.

Most of all, Jesus assured me that he would "never leave me nor forsake me" (Heb. 13:5). It hasn't been an easy journey but, because of God's love, power and faithfulness, I am and will continue to be a whole man. My deepest desires for love and belonging have been met, through Jesus Christ and his family, the Church. ◆

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BOARD MEETING

Board Plans Five-Year Goals...and Beyond

The North American Exodus board met in January for strategic planning (l–r): Anita Worthen, Bob Davies, Bob Ragan, John Paulk (vice-chair), Jeff Johnston, Mary Heathman (chair), Bud Searcy (secretary/treasurer).

SEATTLE—The North American board of Exodus International met in the Seattle area for four days in mid-January to discuss current concerns and make strategic plans for the next five years of ministry.

One major topic of discussion was trengthening the regional rep program launched two years ago. "Each time the board meets, we catch a little more of the vision and excitement about the Regional Rep Program," said Anita Worthen, who serves as board liaison for the reps, who each oversee ministries in their geographical region of North America (e.g., Northwest, Great Lakes, etc.).

The board also discussed strategies for strengthening the local boards overseeing each Exodus referral ministry, as well as strategizing for future outreach to youth.

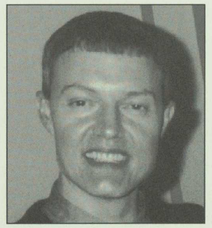
Executive director Bob Davies was asked to network with other Christian ministries in the Northwest to gain new ideas for fundraising, public relations, personnel management and other aspects of his job.

"It's always stimulating to get the board together and talk about the future of Exodus," said Bob Davies. "I feel that God is preparing to take Exodus 'up to the next level' of exposure and effectiveness. I'm very excited to see what the next year holds." •

INTERNATIONAL

Sy Moves to New Zealand

Exodus missionary Sy Rogers has announced an exciting new step for his life. He and his family are relocating to New Zealand this month, in preparation for Sy's new appointment with Steiger International, a worldwide evangelistic ministry to the "global youth culture."



Sy Rogers: missionary to youth culture

Steiger was birthed out of Youth With A Mission; their teams do evangelistic tours on numerous continents, playing in every imaginable venue and seeing thousands of young people come to know Christ. Steiger is planning an evangelistic world tour in 1998–1999. As a tour member, Sy will travel with the band No Longer Music, plus he will speak in the USA, Europe and Asia.

Sy is really excited about this new opportunity, which he says "is not a change in my ministry, but rather, an enlargement of my ministry and message."About one-quarter of his speaking will continue to be related to issues of sexual redemption.

Those wishing to support Sy financially in this new endeavor can make their checks out to "Steiger International," then mail them to: PO Box 1186, Northampton, MA 01060. All gifts are tax-deductible. Please include a note: "For Sy Rogers."

FINANCES

Matching Gifts Soar "Over the Top"

We are pleased to announce that our year-end matching grant was met in full, thanks to the generosity of our readers. As we go to press, we are still tallying donations mailed just prior to the January 31 deadline. However, the Exodus office has received donations totalling $44,344.53 as of January 30.

This means that we can keep our entire grant of $20,000, which was given to Exodus on the condition that it be matched dollar-for-dollar by Jan. 31.

We are delighted with your response—thanks so much! This generous outpouring of support means that Exodus can launch into 1998 with a solid financial foundation. God bless you! •

CALENDAR

- ***Mar. 6–7/Burnaby, B.C.*** "The Church and Homosexuality" Conference, featuring J.I. Packer, Joe Dallas, Marjorie Hopper and Bob Davies. Sponsored by Another Chance Ministries. Info: 604/434-9404.
- ***Mar. 13–15/Orlando.*** Exodus Southeast Regional Conference, hosted by Eleutheros. Info: 407/629-5770.
- ***Apr. 16–18/Lexington, KY.*** Exodus Regional Conference, featuring Clay & Mary McLean. Sponsored by CrossOver Ministries. Info: 606/277-4941.
- ***Apr. 25/New Hope, MN.*** "Understanding Homosexuality" seminar, sponsored by Eagles' Wings. Info: 612/522-2782.
- ***Apr. 25–27/Waikiki, Hawaii.*** Annual Hawaiian Islands Ministries conference, featuring Sy Rogers and others (not Exodus-sponsored). Info: 808/988-9777.
- ***Apr. 30–May 2/San Diego.*** Annual "Trauma & Sexuality Conference," featuring David Kyle Foster, Mike Newman, Donna Hopkins and others (not Exodus-sponsored). Info: 619/230-7965.
- ***June 27–July 2/Seattle.*** Exodus North American conference, featuring Jeffrey Satinover, Dan Allender, Les & Leslie Parrott, & over 60 workshops. Info: 206/784-7799. (Brochures are now available from the Exodus office.)