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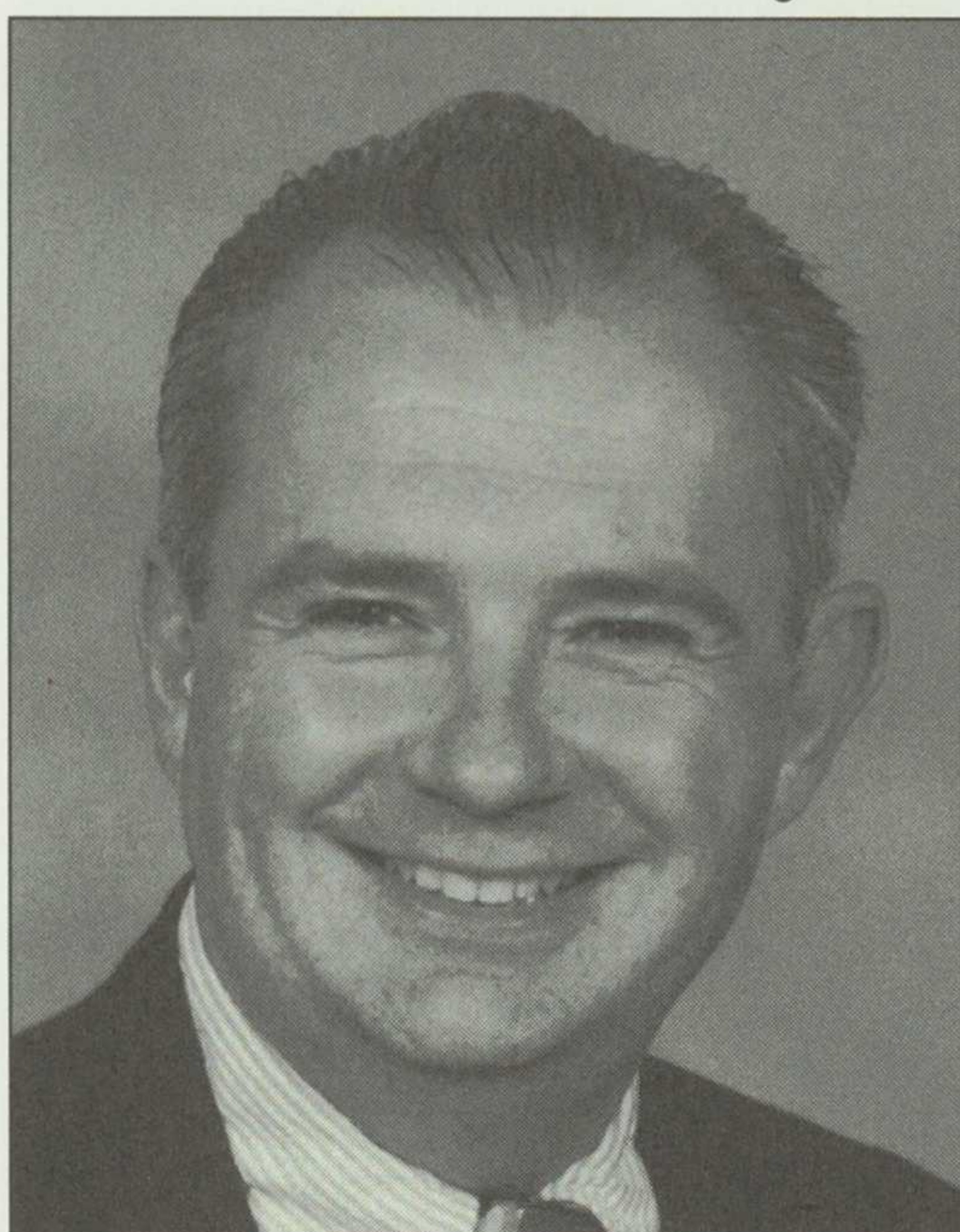
Freedom from
Homosexuality
Through the
Power of
Jesus Christ

EXODUS NORTH AMERICA

November 1998

Who Am I? *By Bob Ragan*

My growing attraction to men convinced me that I was gay. I dropped out of church and began looking for "Mr. Right," prepared to settle into a lifelong relationship.



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I did not become acquainted with the word "homosexual" until I was in high school. I knew, however, that it described the feelings I had experienced throughout my childhood.

Same-sex attractions and feelings had been around since I could remember. I assumed that this is how I was born and these feelings defined who I was as a person. I heard no discussions about homosexuality as a child and I chose not to discuss these feelings with anyone. This was the beginning of my sense of isolation and aloneness that would plague me for years to come.

A significant event took place when I was a sophomore in high school. During that year I was exposed to homosexual pornography. To this day I can see myself and feel the effect that those images had on me. I couldn't stop looking at those pictures. My body ached to be touched, held, to somehow be bonded with those men in the pictures. I could not take my eyes off of those images and that event seared one thought in my mind: *You are a homosexual.*

As I reflect on my life, I now see that every time the enemy was offering me counterfeit life, God was ever-present to show me the truth, the real. Just as I had same-sex attractions growing up, I also had an awareness of God as demonstrated through His creation around us. There was a hunger in me to know God just as there was a hunger to know men.

I knew *about* God, but I didn't know Him in a personal way. I remember as a 15-year-old, crying out to Him for help in a point of anguish and desperation with my addiction to masturbation and pornography. He heard my cry. The same year I was

introduced to pornography, a Franciscan priest took me to a Full Gospel Business Men's dinner where I was introduced to Jesus. My heart soared as His life and Spirit came into me. My heart recognized that this was what I was searching for. I asked Jesus to be my Savior, but I did not truly make Him Lord of my life at that time.

Dealing With God's Truth. For the next several years I was involved in the "Jesus movement" of the early '70s. In college I belonged to a Christian community house and I remember the precious fellowship, awesome times of praise and worship, and wonderful teaching. It was then that I became familiar with passages in Scripture which condemn sexual behaviors outside the context of heterosexual marriage.

In my conscience I agreed with God's truth regarding homosexual behavior. However, in order to cope with my strong feelings, I shut down my heart. By not dealing with my feelings, I placed myself in bondage to them. Knowing of no one who was walking in freedom from homosexuality, my feelings of aloneness and isolation deepened.

Because I had not made Jesus Lord of my life, willing to follow Him no matter what the cost, I walked away from Him. In 1976 I began dating a man that I knew. Having found my "Mr. Right," I was ready to settle down into a lifelong relationship. But that "lifelong" relationship lasted only six years.

Compromise. Since I couldn't have what I thought I wanted, I compromised my life. Now I was willing to become involved with men who did not want a committed relationship. I was willing to go out to the strip clubs and, in an