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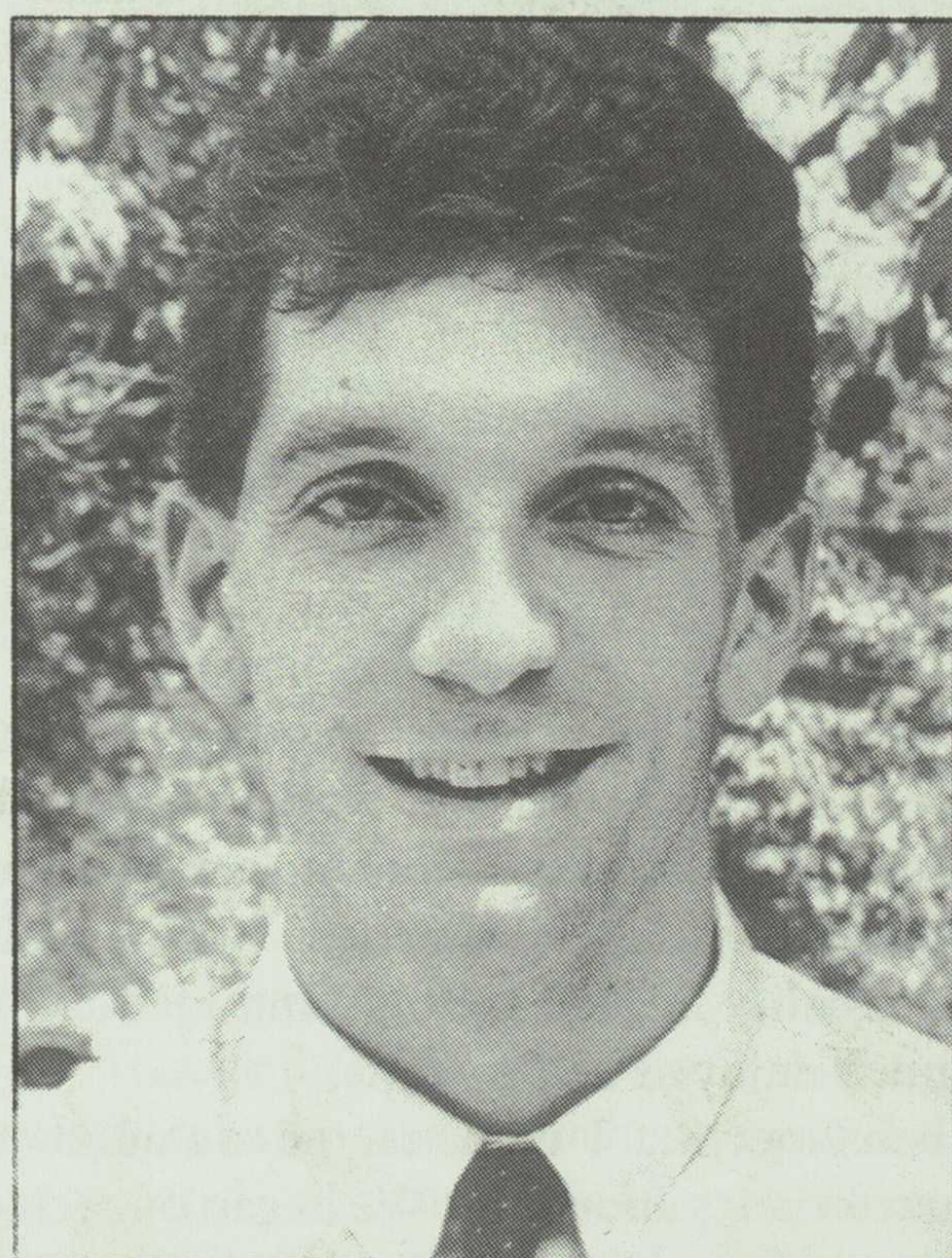
Freedom from
Homosexuality
Through the
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Measuring Up as a Man

By Jerry A. Armelli



Jerry Armelli is the director of Prodigal Ministries, an Exodus referral agency in Cincinnati, Ohio.

From an early age, I sensed a great lack of confidence in my masculinity. Even Dad couldn't relate to me. So I rejected other men—but envied their qualities I lacked.

My feelings of being an outsider began very early. Mom and Dad had a stable marriage, and there was never a threat of a family break-up. But I had problems because my three older brothers were very athletic, just like my father.

One of my earliest memories that I know affected my gender identity and sense of adequacy goes back to when I was about eight years old. The huge bulletin board in our basement was full of my brothers' award ribbons, trophies, plaques and athletic team pictures. As I looked up at it in awe, I thought, *I can't do it. I don't have what it takes.*

I'm scared of all that stuff. I decided that I didn't like competition and I didn't want to be in athletics.

I was already coming to some conclusions about myself in relationship to other males in my life: I was not as adequate as other boys. I was different. *Something is wrong with me that I don't like these "men" things, I thought, and I'm not strong enough to do them anyway.*

My family had attended church all my life. So I had grown up learning about spiritual things. Could God help me? One day when I was ten, I sat on my bed crying and praying, "God, please change me into a girl." I felt I had everything it took to be a woman—and nothing to be a man.

My Dad and I tried to relate, but it was nearly

always frustrating. I would tell him about the things I liked, but he couldn't relate to them. So we would get frustrated and withdraw from one another. He tried approaching me with the thing that was familiar to him: sports. That worked for building a relationship with his other sons, but I couldn't relate.

These situations left me feeling little acceptance or validation of me as an adequate male. I began to hate men as a way of protecting myself from feelings of inadequacy, failure, intimidation and rejection. I told myself, *Hate men and then what they say or do won't mean anything.* I rejected them before they could reject me.

I had practically no place of identification with males (it was too painful), so my relationships with females flourished. Girls were non-threatening. Effeminacy grew within me, and I used it to further hurt my male adversaries by disgusting and embarrassing them with *who I was not.*

At the same time, I envied men as much as I despised them. I wanted to be like them—strong and athletic. I wanted the kind of friendships they had with one another. I wanted desperately for them to approve me as one of their own. *Please, I would say to myself, just a*