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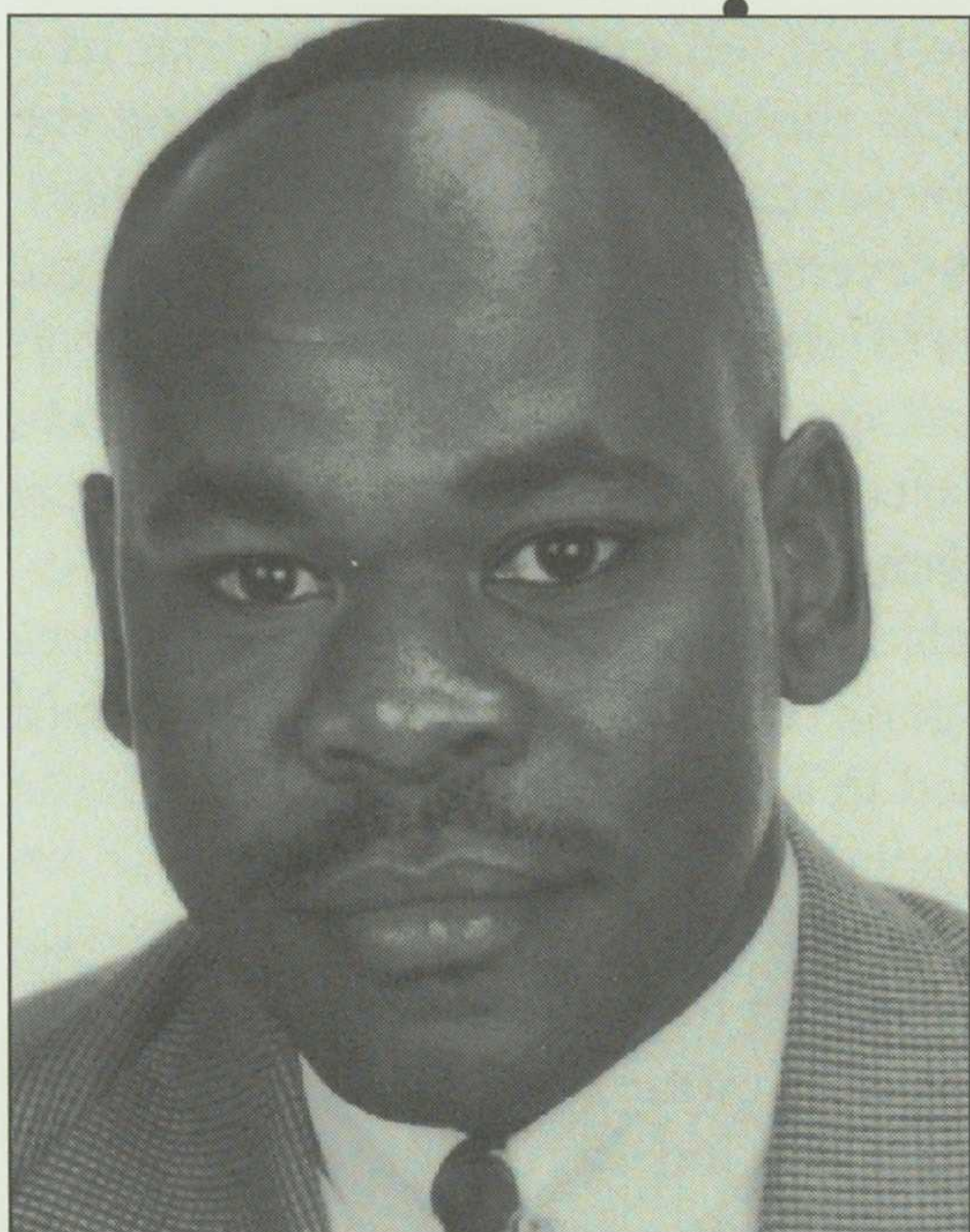
Freedom from
Homosexuality
Through the
Power of
Jesus Christ

EXODUS NORTH AMERICA

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My Deepest Desire *By Darryl L. Foster*

My father's absence left me longing for a man to hold me in his arms and tell me he loved me.



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When I looked at myself as a young boy in the mirror, all I could see was a weak sissy, full of fear, self-loathing and pain. I couldn't relate to other boys my age except in one way. And that was a deep dark secret I hoped no one would ever discover.

I was born into a church family. In the African American religious tradition, the generations of family involved in the church was a badge of honor. Church was a place where, in spite of the hardships faced by outside pressures—especially racism—blacks could feel special.

Unfortunately, I did not meet my father until I was seven years old. He gave me and my brother a few dollars and left again; I did not see him again for another six years. By this time, I was full of anger and hatred at his uncaring abandonment.

"Do we call him 'Daddy'?" my little brother asked.

"No, we'll just call him 'sir'," I replied. Even the word "sir" sounded distant to me. When we saw him this time, he rubbed our heads and offered us a few dollars. This time, I refused his money; I hated him so much that I couldn't have cared if he had offered us a thousand dollars.

The lack of having a father around or even a father figure took a heavy toll on me; I developed a deep longing for a man to hold me in his arms and tell me he loved me. Most of all, I wanted to hear someone say that the names people called me—like "sissy" and "girl"—were not true; I needed to know that I was a regular boy just like everyone else.

Instead, I received a barrage of rejection from

other boys. My brothers were all super athletes; on Saturdays, all the neighborhood boys would gather to play basketball. But I got left out.

"I want to play!" I cried one day.

One other boy shot back, "You big sissy. Only men can play this game!"

Then I heard my brother's voice: "We don't want no girls playing with us. Why don't you go home and play with the other girls?" They all burst out laughing as I retreated, crying bitterly. How I longed for a father to gather me in his arms and reassure me that I was his big strong boy! But I limped back to an empty cold house, knowing I would never be like the other boys.

Church was my only refuge. In church I could feel just like everyone else. No one called me names; in fact, my good singing voice even gained me some recognition.

But I struggled constantly with homosexual thoughts. Amid the exultant worship, I was suffering. Our church believed strongly in deliverance; whatever your problem, someone could lay hands on you and pray—and the problem would be solved. *Maybe the homosexual desires will just leave me one day*, I thought.

I was confused. While they said God could do anything, it didn't apply to homosexuality. Homosexuality in the black church could only be whispered about in private.

At this point in my life, I didn't consider myself homosexual; I just knew there was this attraction toward other men. What was I supposed to do? Who could I talk to?

Then came a traumatic experience with Ray (not his real name), a quiet man who attended my church. By this time, I was a freshman in

During February, BLACK HISTORY MONTH, we honor all men and women of color who are making the journey out of homosexuality.