



# CAN'T WIN 'EM ALL

*This past year has been a time of transition for defensive tackle Corey Simon, a six-year NFL veteran from Florida State University. After signing a five-year contract, Simon, 28, joined the Indianapolis Colts as an unrestricted free agent from the Philadelphia Eagles just before the start of the 2005 season.*

*Since joining the Colts, Simon (a 2003 Pro Bowl selection with Philadelphia after recording 64 tackles and 7.5 sacks) has helped Indianapolis' defense become one of the NFL's most improved units.*

*Simon was the Eagles' first-round pick and the sixth overall selection in the 2000 draft. He set the Eagles' rookie record for sacks with 9.5 in 2000, including one on Dallas' Troy Aikman on his first career play.*

*Eric Tiansay, a freelance writer for Today's Pentecostal Evangel, talked to Simon during this past season about faith, family, football, hard work and being a role model.*

CONVERSATION WITH

# COREY

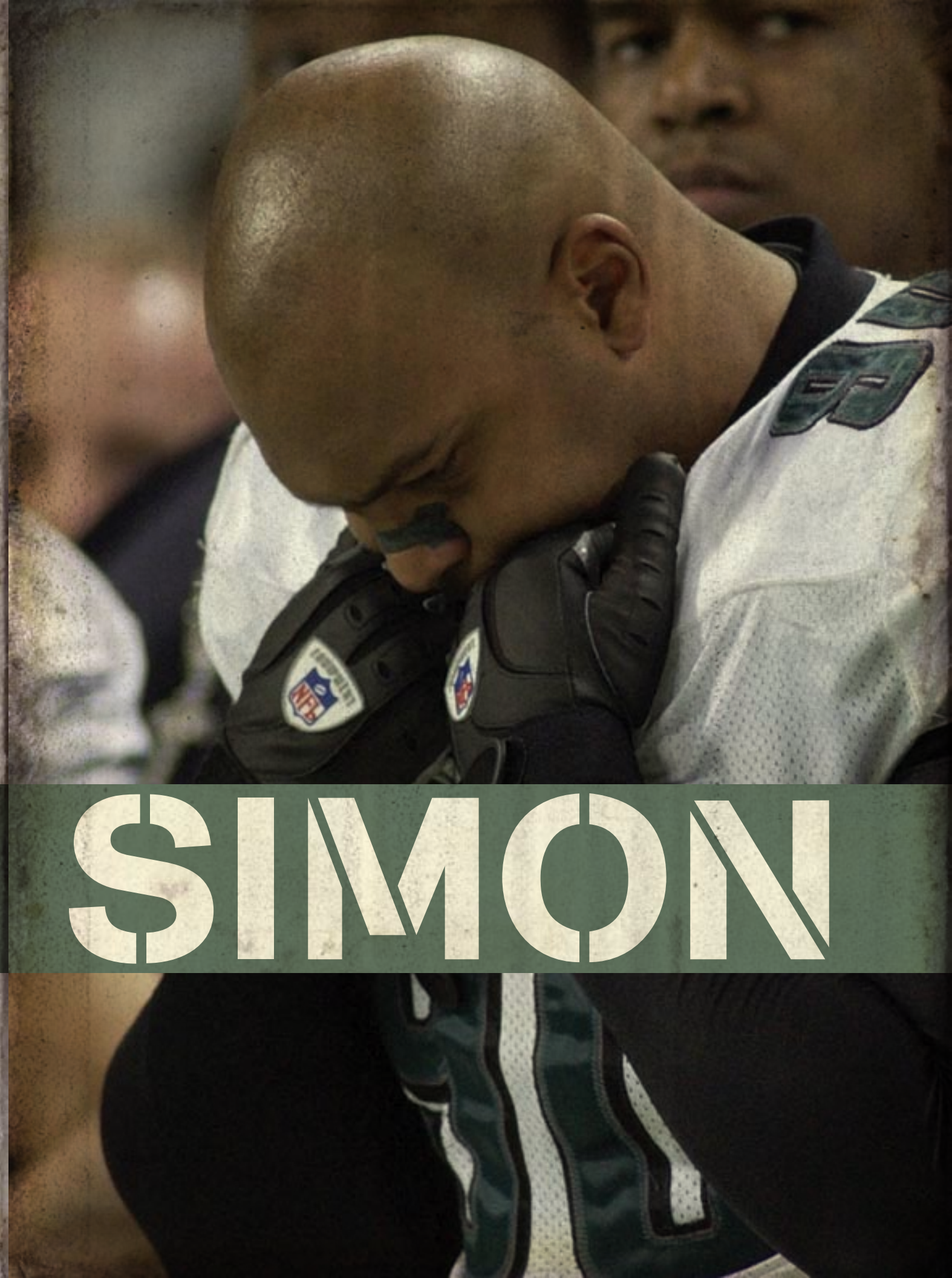
BY ERIC TIANSAY

**TPE: When and how did you accept Christ as Savior?**

**SIMON:** It happened in college at FSU. It was during my red-shirt junior year. I had some issues going on in my life. I couldn't put a finger on it. There were some teammates who were Christians who had a peace and joy in their lives that were not

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# SIMON



## CORREY SIMON

contingent on outside circumstance. I wanted what they had. I attended a Bible study with them, and that's when my journey with Christ began. The Bible study was led by Ron Miller, who is now my pastor. He taught me about having a spiritual family and the purpose and plan that God has for my life.

**TPE: You've said, "You get an opportunity to preach a sermon every time you play this game." What do you mean by that?**

**SIMON:** The NFL is the No. 1 sport in the country. What I say and what I do is automatically going to be seen. When I step on the field, my representation of Christ, whether good or bad, is going to be seen in how I carry myself. I'm not a dirty player. I play the game extremely hard and don't intentionally hurt anyone. At the end of the game, I give God the glory. My attitude has to be consistent with who I represent.

**TPE: Have you ever fallen away from your faith?**

**SIMON:** Never. That never crosses my mind. Even when I sin, I always know who my Master and Father is. There's never a doubt in my mind who I serve. The biggest mistake some Christians make is, when they sin, they think God doesn't love them anymore. That's not true. I understand that God's

grace is sufficient. My God is always the same God who created this world and He loves me.

**TPE: You have everything people strive for — why do you need Jesus?**

**SIMON:** Because money and fame are not everything. I've had success in college and the NFL. Today, I was watching [New England Patriots quarterback] Tom Brady on *60 Minutes*. He said, "I won three Super Bowls. I just feel like there's something more out there." Money and fame can't be everything because they're going to leave you empty at the end of the day. Only Christ can fill you up.

**TPE: Are you an old-school or new-school player?**

**SIMON:** I guess I'm a little bit of both. I'm familiar with the game with how it's been played the last 20 years. I'd like to think that I understand the old-school type of game. But there's a part of me that's a new-school player who wants to take the game to the next level. For me, I want to go out and play this game the way it's meant to be played. At the same time, I want to leave this game in better shape than when I first got here.

**TPE: What's the Bible verse that keeps you centered?**

**SIMON:** Psalm 68:5,



which says, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling" (NIV). Even though my earthly father hasn't been there for the majority of my life, my Heavenly Father has always been there. For me to be a Christian, that's how I had to come to know God — as a Father.

**TPE: Ten years from now you'll be doing what?**

**SIMON:** I definitely don't think I'll still be playing. I'll walk away from this game while I still have my health. This game has been great to me. But football is not who I am. When I'm done playing, I'll move on.

Hopefully, I'll be working with teenagers and adolescents. They're my passion. I just enjoy talking to young people, especially the inner-city youth. It's a territory I'm very familiar with because I grew up in a single-parent home. I know God has a plan for their lives. I see so much potential in young people.

I want to go back to the inner city and help kids who are in a very similar situation as I was when I was growing up. I want to help them make a better life for themselves.

**TPE: How is the Corey Simon Success Center in Tallahassee, Fla., changing people's lives?**

**SIMON:** Right now

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## COREY SIMON

we're trying to raise money for it. We have a 40,000-square-foot building, but it's not open yet. We hope to start renovation and open it this coming off-season. We're spreading the word to let people know what we're trying to do. [The Corey Simon Success Center] will involve young people in athletics, academics and mentoring from a biblical standpoint. Right now I'm visiting local middle and high schools and I role model what we want to do with the center.

**TPE: What are some temptations you've faced while in the NFL, and how did you avoid falling for them?**

**SIMON:** There are always women in every city. Some of the guys in the NFL like to go out. Those temptations are always there. Some things that keep me from giving in to temptations are my relationship with my wife, my relationship with my son and my relationships with friends. If you're trying to walk the Christian journey on your own, it's impossible. You need people to keep you accountable. I choose to surround myself with men of God in the NFL such as Paul Grasmanis and Peter Boulware who encourage me and hold me accountable.

**TPE: After a great career in Philadelphia,**

**they let you go. What did that teach you?**

**SIMON:** That business is business. But whether I'm a Colt or an Eagle, the relationships I've had will last. It was a business decision for the Philadelphia Eagles. It worked out well for me. I'm with a great team and a great coaching staff. I feel like my leadership skills are being utilized. There are no hard feelings toward the Eagles whatsoever.

**TPE: There are a lot of setbacks, challenges and hard times when making a name for yourself in the NFL. What can some of our young readers learn from your trek to and through the NFL?**

**SIMON:** For me, every day is an adventure in this league. It's a privilege to play this game. I don't count it as something that was owed to me. I truly respect and love this game for what it's given me and what it's taught me. I don't look at anything that's happened to me in the NFL as a negative situation.

**TPE: What's the spiritual climate in the NFL?**

**SIMON:** I think it's on the rise. I believe there are a lot more believers, — not only players but also coaches. You hear so much negativity about all that's bad about NFL players, but there's

also a lot of good. I look at Troy Vincent, the president of the NFL players' union, who is a great man of God, a strong believer and a family man. I think when you have a man like that in that position, the spiritual climate of this league is going to get better.

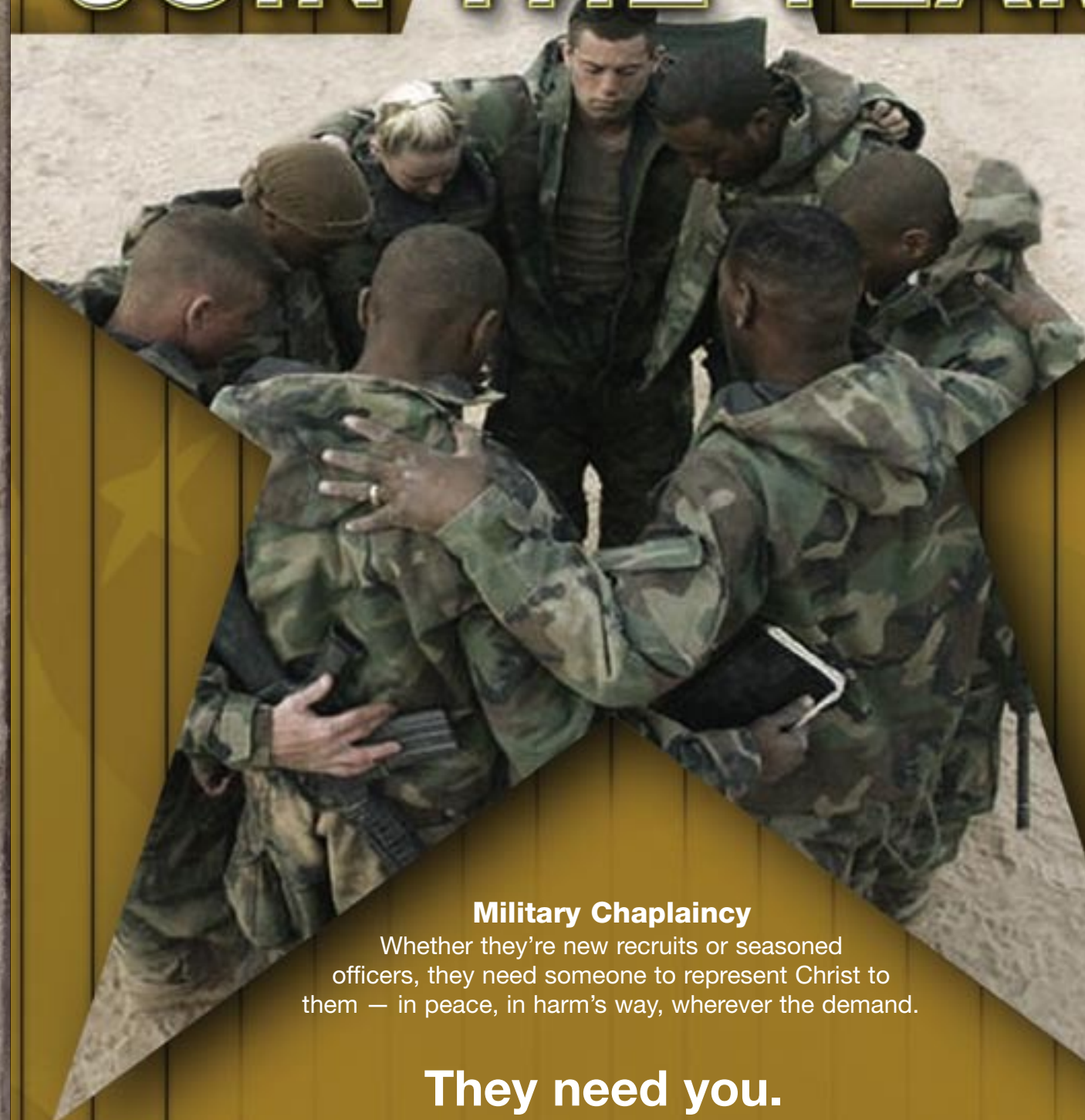
**TPE: You've had Christian football coaches, including Bobby Bowden and Tony Dungy. How have they helped your faith?**

**SIMON:** It's encouraging to see that men in their position take a stand for Christ. Coaching is a very tough profession. There is no job security for coaches. But for Bowden and Dungy to be family men and still really focus on Christ, that's encouraging to me as a young man. They are role models.

**TPE: How devastating was losing Super Bowl XXXIX?**

**SIMON:** You don't win them all. We came up 3 points short. It was a great experience. There are going to be wins and losses in this game. You live with it and try to get better. This is just a game. It's three hours. I don't trouble God about petty questions about this game. God is not rooting for one team over another. God is more concerned about our salvation and our sanctification. **tpe**  
E-mail your comments to [tpe@ag.org](mailto:tpe@ag.org).

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