

# The Source of His Strength

Pete Samra Redondo Beach, California

**G**et a knife and gun. We're going to fight to the death."

Beady eyes glared back at me. I had a running feud with a fellow manager at the gym where I trained for bodybuilding contests. But I never dreamed it would go this far.

"I don't fight with knives and guns," I shot back.

"Get a knife and gun," he repeated, whipping out a stiletto and waving it in the air. Wham! I kicked him to the floor, then whirled to grab him from behind.

But I had moved too close to the counter. I bumped into it and couldn't turn sideways. He lunged at my stomach.

"Somebody call an ambulance!"

Glancing at the floor I saw blood. Mine.

Adrenaline rushing, at first I didn't feel anything. But lying in an ambulance blazing down the street at 90 miles an hour, my whole life flashed before me.

"Everything I've worked for, everything I've done, has come to an end," I agonized. "All because of this jerk."

Where had my dream gone so wrong?

Growing up in Johannesburg, South Africa, I was a Catholic altar boy and participant in soccer, rugby and track. Though very enthusiastic, my skinny frame often led to injuries on the field.

That changed when I began working out. In sixth grade I had seen Reg Park, the South African bodybuilder who inspired Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"That's how I want to look one day," I declared.

A few years later my uncle offered to pay the gym fees if I lifted weights for at least three months. Training faithfully, over four years I grew from a 127-pound weakling to a finely-sculpted 208 pounds.

At age 23 I came to Los Angeles, looking to become Mr. America. I worked out at a large gym and eked out a living as a bouncer and painter.

Later the gym offered me a job. Thanks to my studies in business and naturopathy, I was able to help introduce their new line of vitamins and food supplements.

Seeing they could trust me, the owners promoted me to manager. On my way-up the ladder I even landed a bit role in Schwarzenegger's movie, "Pumping Iron."

Trouble came when another manager wanted to control everything. A drug addict, he hoped to skim some cash to feed his habit. I stood in the way.

Of course, he wasn't the only drug abuser there. My sheltered background clashed with West Coast lifestyles. Many bodybuilders used steroids and other drugs, drank, and hustled homosexuals to make money or lived off their girlfriends.

## Healing Comes

Laying in the emergency ward, tubes up my nose and a hole in my stomach — where they looked for blood drainage — I cried out.

"God, I've been an athlete all my life," I said. "Please don't let me be crippled!"

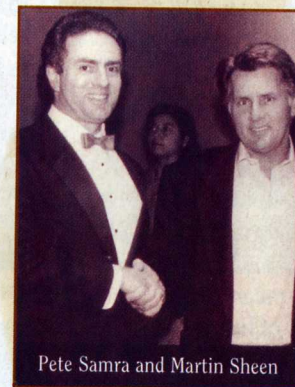
Instantly the harsh overhead lights dimmed. A thick cloud surrounded my body. I believe someone was praying for me at that moment.

"Everything's going to be okay," I soothed the medical assistants as they wheeled me into surgery. Their eyes opened wide.

I surprised the doctors by recovering from my wounds in four days. When I got out, though, the stress mounted. I faced \$6,000 in medical bills, lingering psychological problems from the knife fight and job problems.

None of that was a help to my new marriage. Bugged by our continuing ups and downs, a year after our wedding my wife had enough. We separated.

It was the last straw. In a year I battled three harsh setbacks: physical, spiritual and emotional. One afternoon I called Ray McCauley, who now pastors one of South Africa's largest churches. "Ray, my life's a mess," I



Pete Samra and Martin Sheen



said. "I went to Mass today and asked God to take control."

"Don't ask God to take control, ask Jesus to come into your life," he answered.

"Ray, I'm so broken and hurt I'll do anything," I said.

"God will never leave you or forsake you if you will follow Him," Ray promised. "If you ask Him to forgive you of your sins, then the past will be gone."

I don't remember the exact words. It was a simple prayer. I said I believed Jesus was the Son of God, had died on the cross for my sins and that He is the way to eternal life. Instantly strong, positive feelings about the future overwhelmed me. I knew everything would be all right.

I also received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I cherished the gift of tongues when it came. I pray daily in my prayer language and it helps me understand what God is doing in my life.

However, it doesn't mean I'm perfect. Difficulties are part of human existence. More than once they have driven me to my knees to cry out, "God, why? What causes these problems?"

## A New Vision

Before the Lord saved me and gave me eternal life, I knew what I wanted. At 16 I dreamed of becoming a bodybuilding champion. A year later I caught a vision of someday

owning a vitamin company.

But with my eyes opened, I said, "These things aren't important. If I never become a champion or have a vitamin company, it's not important. The most important thing is I have a relationship with Jesus."

Matthew 6:33 says if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all "these things" will be ours. When I gave up my worldly dreams, the Lord made them come true.

Not long after I invited Jesus into my heart He gave me an idea to start a business. Despite my medical debts I talked to a company. They agreed to supply me with a private-label line of vitamins. That's how Samra Nutrition got started.

Besides the reality of Matthew 6:33, I learned the truth of Jesus' words in Luke 14:25-33, that we must "count the cost" of becoming His disciple.

In my case it cost millions of dollars to turn my back on mainstream



Cliff Richards and Pete Samra

bodybuilding. It's a world of widespread steroid use, despite risky side effects, such as cancer, heart disease and high blood pressure.

Though I intended to forget bodybuilding to concentrate on business, a year later organizers invited me to the first Mr. Natural U.S.A. It was specifically for drug-free competitors.

I began training, yet wondered if it was the right thing. A week before the contest I prayed, "Lord, if this is something that's going to interfere with my walk with You, don't let me go."

Afterwards I walked outside the church. The pastor remarked, "Pete, you're in good shape."

"Yes, I have a bodybuilding contest coming up."

"You go and win it for the Lord," he encouraged. I felt that was my answer.

After winning the competition I gave the glory to God and a few months later captured the title of Natural Mid-America Bodybuilding Champion.

Though only competing for two more years, for a decade I promoted natural bodybuilding contests. They attracted national media coverage and we allowed Christian

winners to share their testimony at events.

At one of our contests we prayed and the Holy Spirit's anointing was so strong that a reporter for a secular magazine wrote, "The contest was a success. There was a high-held holiness that radiated over the auditorium."

## Ministry

While operating my business I also take time to share what God had done in my life. Besides speaking to Full Gospel Business Men's chapters in America and Australia, I've been on the "700 Club" and many local radio and TV programs.

On one of my many trips, this one to my native country, Ray McCauley invited me to visit him. I felt the time I had available was too short to accomplish much. On

the flight over I argued, "God, what do You want me to do in 13 days? I don't have enough time."

However, when I spoke at Ray's church, a woman from South African broadcasting was in the audience. Afterward she asked me to do an interview. It lasted 13 minutes.

When we finished the Lord spoke quietly.

"What it would take months to do, what were you so worried about



Ian Samwell receives a platinum award from Pete Samra for writing Britain's first rock hit "Move It".



trying to do in 13 days?" He asked. "We reached the whole nation in 13 minutes."

I also formed an anti-drug team of bodybuilders to speak in public schools. We gave students a positive message and invited them to attend evening crusades in churches.

Three years ago He gave me an idea to form a business to import British music.

"Lord, why would You give me an idea when it's not Christian-oriented?" I asked. I prayed for six months about it before the Lord led me to Proverbs 13:22, which says the wealth of the wicked is stored up for the righteous. I was also influenced by a song from Cliff Richard, an English rock-and-roll singer. It asked, "Why should the devil have all the good music?"

So I decided to join the music

industry. We import popular music by artists like Richard, Tom Jones and Englebert Humperdinck and some nostalgic tunes.

Thanks to this endeavor I have had the chance to share Christ with unsaved music people. God has opened doors in secular newspapers, radio and TV for the word of my testimony.

I also feel led to help start a new Full Gospel Business Men's chapter in my area. My ministry is to businessmen because I understand the pressures and problems they face.

I know. He is the source of my strength.

**Peter Samra is the president of Samra Nutrition and a music-import business called Best of the British. He is available for speaking engagements by calling 310-318-3949 or FAX 310-318-8455.**

# Voice

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WHO WE ARE: Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International was founded in 1952 by Demos Shakarian to reach men for Jesus. One year later, God gave him a vision of the people of every continent, revealing that the ministry of the Fellowship would result in people everywhere being brought to Jesus and linked in loving community. That vision is becoming a reality through the Fellowship's ministries, now touching 120 nations and transcending denominational, racial and cultural barriers. Men interested in participating in this exciting end-time ministry are invited to write: Chapter Department/FGBMFI, P.O. Box 5050/Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

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# Fellowship Events

## INLAND EMPIRE'S SPIRITUAL RALLY

JUN 16-17, 1995  
Templin's Resort Motel  
Post Falls, ID  
% R. J. Rehwalddt  
Rt. 2 Box 861  
Pullman, WA 99163-9650  
509-332-7732 (Home)

## INDONESIA NATIONAL CONVENTION

JUN 20-23, 1995  
% Joseph R. Chengberlin  
Indonesia  
62-21-601-8951 (Phone)  
62-21-601-8950 (Fax)

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS SEMINAR

JUN 22-24, 1995  
LaFont Inn, Pascagoula, MS  
% Gary Grayban  
2745 Briarwood  
Moss Point, MS 39563  
601-475-8760

## EMPIRE STATE REGIONAL AUG 4-5, 1995

Sheraton Inn Syracuse —  
Liverpool, NY  
% David Wiggins  
4415 Cindy Lane  
Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-469-7449

## ZAIRE (Kenge) REGIONAL CONVENTION

AUG 7-12, 1995  
% Marcel Malenso, ID, NP

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL AUG 10-12, 1995

Red Lion Hotel —  
Denver, Colorado  
% Elmer Lewis  
1413 Monroe Street  
P.O. Box 236  
Strasburg, CO 80136  
303-622-4450

## ZAIRE (Bukavu) REGIONAL CONVENTION

AUG 14-19, 1995  
% Marcel Mulumba, ID, NVP

## ZAIRE (Goma) REGIONAL CONVENTION

AUG 21-26, 1995  
% Marcel Malenso, ID, NP

## ZAIRE (Mbanza-Ngungu) REGIONAL CONVENTION

AUG 21-26, 1995  
% Bro. Mungoma, ID

## ZAIRE (Idiofa) REGIONAL CONVENTION

AUG 21-26, 1995  
% Michael Kayembe, IVP

## THE GLORY & ANointing of God PART III

AUG 25-26, 1995  
Holiday Inn West  
Oklahoma City, OK  
% Alan M. Schmook  
3555 N.W. 58th Street.  
405-947-7600 (Business)  
405-751-3529 (Home)

## FGBMFI NEBRASKA MEN'S ADVANCE

SEP 8-10, 1995  
Westminster Woods Camp  
Lexington, NE  
% John B. McIntosh  
Rt 3 Box 183  
Brockell Bow, NE 68822  
308-872-2638 (Office)  
308-872-2638 (Home)

## CENTRAL AMERICA XII CONVENCION

SEP 13-16, 1995  
Hotel Herradura — San  
Jose, Costa Rica  
% Francisco Fallas M.  
506-227-2418 (Phone/Fax)

## SWITZERLAND NATIONAL CONVENTION

SEP 15-16, 1995  
% Urs Kaesermann  
Residence "Lev Vignes"  
1122 Romanel sur Morges  
41-2180-699607 (Phone)

## IOWA CONVENTION SEP 15-16, 1995

% Gary Bortz  
515-682-7847

## JAPAN NATIONAL CONVENTION SEP 21-23, 1995

% Kenichiro Tsukamoto  
81-78-591-8572 (Phone)  
81-78-592-7964 (Fax)

## ALDERSGATE MEN'S ADVANCE SEP 22-24, 1995

Aldersgate Conference  
Center — Turner, OR  
% Peter Reding  
8990 S.W. Hazelvern Way  
Portland, OR 97223-7238  
503-292-2161

## ZAIRE (Kananga) REGIONAL OCT 9-14, 1995

% Marcel Malenso, NP, ID

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