

# VOICE



Full Gospel Business Men's VOICE International

No : 01/2009



## *Love Messengers*

Richard & Vangie Shakarian



## WE WELCOME YOU TO THE INAUGURAL EDITION OF THE FGBMFI INTERNATIONAL VOICE MAGAZINE

*by Richard Shakarian*  
**FGBMFI International President**

This magazine is given in the hope that these success stories of business men from various continents will be an inspiration to you.

FGBMFI is a global organization founded in 1953 by my father, Demos Shakarian. He had a Vision of men released from the chains of bondage and communicating with each other in the freedom and joy that only God can give.

Since those humble beginnings, we have grown to 157 nations. Every culture, almost every language, and every status of life is represented by FGBMFI men and women who have found a better life.

8,000 chapters are meeting every week.

These chapter meetings are characterized by ordinary laymen

conducting the meetings and telling how they achieved a better life, a happier family, and a better business.

It is the power of the story of ordinary men, who have become extraordinary through their connection with one another and the power of faith.

Now you know the secret. Why men from all religious backgrounds, and some who have despised religion can come together. Here we find help, mentoring, encouragement, and answers to life's most difficult questions.

We invite you to join with us.

You also can become one of "The Happiest People On Earth."

*Richard Shakarian*



## **The Teacher**

When my first son was born, he was born premature. His weight was only a little above one and half kilogram. Doctor said his chance to live is only 50%.

*Ken Tsukamoto, Japan*

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## **The Biggest Distance**

There were many years when I wasn't a nice guy. I ruled my employees and family with a heavy hand. It was very difficult for them, and my wife, especially, suffered greatly.

*Roland Benz, Germany*

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## **Love Messenger**

Richard and Vangie travelled in 70 nations even before he became FGBMFI International President. He never feels tired or bored to come to that many place.

*Richard Shakarian, FGBMFI International President*

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## **Then... You can't be my child**

I faced my father and told him that I was now a Christian. He said "then, you can't be my child and be a Christian, you are a 'kaferi'". He swore not to pay my school fees any more.

*Charles Aladewolu, Nigeria*

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## **Sweet Smell of Success**

When completely out of the will of God, not listening to the good advice of my parents and friends, I decided to get married. It only lasted 23 months with many problems and bitterness.

*Roberto Chihan, Paraguay*

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## **True Success**

When I accepted Jesus Christ into my life as my Lord and Savior, it completely changed my life. He took out the desire to do the things that I had thought would make me happy.

*Gilbert and Mary Ann Markarian*

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## **FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

THE LARGEST CHRISTIAN BUSINESS  
MEN'S ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD!

3 HOLLAND, IRVINE CALIFORNIA 92618, USA

Tel. +1 949 461-0100 : Fax. +1 949 609-0344

Office Manager and Controllor;

Dan Sanders (dsanders@fgbmfi.org)

TO RECEIVE EMAIL UPDATES; international@fgbmfi.org

FOR PRAYER NEEDS; prayer@international.org



**FOUNDER**

**Demos Shakarian**

**OFFICERS**

International President :

**Richard Shakarian**

International Executive Vice President :

**John Carrete**

International Secretary :

**Danny Easmon Mawuenyega**

International Treasurer :

**Gideon Esurua**

**PUBLICATIONS**

International Voice Editor :

**Ferry S. Winailan**

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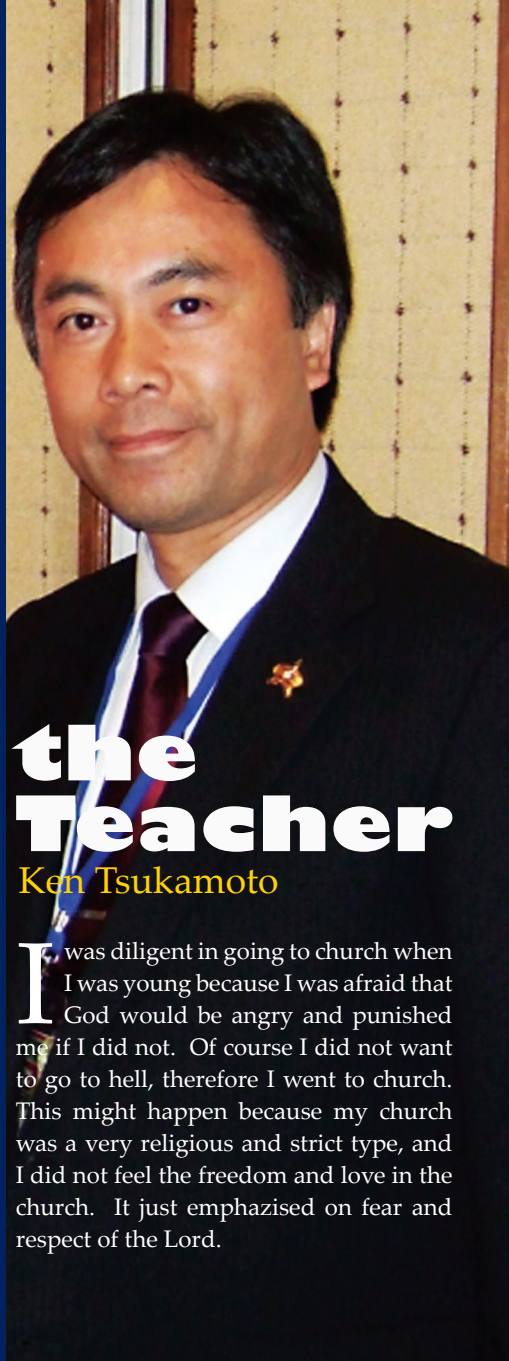
Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International consist of businessmen on every continent working in every aspect of the marketplace. Our Vision is that the light of Jesus shall shine forth from each of our men into every culture, nation, race, language, and creed. That vision is becoming a reality through the Fellowship's ministries, now touching 150 nations and transcending denominational, racial and cultural barriers. Men interested in participating in this exciting end-time ministry are invited to write to the address below.

**TO OUR MEMBERS AND PARTNERS**

If experiencing difficulty in receiving Voice, or if there is variance in the way your name appears, please return an undesired label. If you are getting ready to move, send a label with your new address sixty days in advance to the International Headquarters. If you have a testimony that will glorify GOD and bring others to JESUS through Voice, we would like to invite you to request submit your story to the International Headquarters, as well.

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FGBMFI Indonesia



# the Teacher

**Ken Tsukamoto**

I was diligent in going to church when I was young because I was afraid that God would be angry and punished me if I did not. Of course I did not want to go to hell, therefore I went to church. This might happen because my church was a very religious and strict type, and I did not feel the freedom and love in the church. It just emphasised on fear and respect of the Lord.



One day, a pastor from Korea came and I listened to him. I was surprised to see him so free and joyful and his testimony was powerful. He said that he was not always like that. He used to be a nominal Christian, who was very legalistic, strict, and without joy. But when he received the Holy Spirit, he was changed. He experienced joy, miracle and the power of the Lord in his daily life.

That evening I prayed, "Lord, I don't want to change denomination (because my church said that other denomination is not good, or somehow "crazy"), but, I want to be like that person, full of joy, freedom and power." That night nothing happened to me yet.

However, when I moved to Nagoya to study at a university, I joined a Christian students' fellowship. In that fellowship, I came to know the love of the Lord, and understood that God is Love. So, I don't have to be worried whether I would go to hell, or that God would be angry with me.

At about that same time, I also had a chance to visit pastor Yonggi Cho's church in Korea. I was so moved when I saw that they worshipped almost every night, sometimes all night, and in every service there were healings, deliverances and miracles. I understand that the key is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I continue to pray, "God give me the Holy Spirit, give me the Holy Spirit." And God answered my prayer that time and baptized me with the Holy Spirit. Since then

I experienced changes in my life. I can feel God's presence, and I can understand the Word of God.

After I graduated from university, I became a teacher for high school in Kobe. After 3 years of teaching there, an FGBMFI group from America came to my church and gave their testimonies. My pastor asked me to be the interpreter. That was my first encounter with FGBMFI.

When I interpreted for them, I was so excited, because I saw that they were just common people (businessmen and professionals), but they gave their testimonies with power. Their spirituality is so alive, real, and beyond the four wall of the churches. They preached Christ, even prayed for the sick. I thought that these were the assignments of the missionaries and pastors. I was so amazed to see that the common people (lay people) could do those things.

So I joined Full Gospel in 1986. That time there were no FGBMFI in Japan. When airlift from Seattle, Washington went to Osaka, Kobe, they started a small fellowship there. Then an airlift from Canada also started a group in Tokyo area. Few years after that, these two groups joined to become FGBMFI Japan.

In this fellowship, we, lay people or common people (businessmen, workers & professionals) do the ministries like the clergy (religious people). In this ministry we experience miracles, healings, the deaf can hear, the deliverance from evil spirit, and

many other miracles that happens.

Before I joined Full Gospel, I prayed to God that I wanted to go around the world. At that time, I was just a poor college student. Just to survive daily was hard, how could I go overseas. But now with FGBMFI, I have visited over 20 countries. FGBMFI has become a blessing for me, my job, and my family.

When my first son was born, he

saw two men in white robes were standing in front and back of my son's incubator, and looking at him. I believed they were the angels of the Lord that were sent to guard and to keep my son. When I saw this vision, I was relieved, and I said that my son would be alright. I went to see my wife, and she was crying. But when I told her what I saw in the vision, she believed and rejoiced. We believed

that God guarded and kept our son.

Because of the power of the Lord, now my son is in university, and he has no problem with what the doctor said regarding him. He is healthy and very smart, also he is a youth leader



was born premature. His weight was only a little above one and half kilogram. Doctor said his chance to live is only 50%. Although he might survive, he will possibly have some disability.

So in the hospital, in front of the place where they treated my "tiny" son, I prayed, "Lord, he is my first son, help me, what should I do?"

Suddenly, I received a vision. I

in his church.

My second child is a daughter, and she had the same problem. My wife was in pain to deliver her although it was not the time to be born yet. So I rushed her to the clinic, but it was a holiday and no doctor available there. The substitute doctor was caught in traffic. The head nurse came to me and said, "Sorry, Mr. Tsukamoto, we gave up, we cannot rescue your

baby.”

At that time, I was carrying my son, and my wife was in pain. I was so panicked and did not know what to do. God reminded me to give thanks in everything, and at that moment I gave thanks and praise to the Lord. “God, thanks for all the things that You have done in my life. She is the baby that You have given us. If you want to take her back, take it Lord, but if you want her to stay, heal her, and I surrender all of this **unto** Your hands.”

My heart keep pounding, it was a chaotic situation, the nurses were running around, the sounds of the siren from the ambulance, and the hurting cry from my wife, all surrounded me. But suddenly, there was a presence that came over me. No sounds, no winds, but peace came all over me. When I felt that, I trusted that my daughter would be fine.

And now, because of God’s goodness, my daughter has grown up and she is in university, too. She has studied in America for one year and in Mexico for one year, and now she speaks Spanish as well as few other languages.

Then came our third child. Because we experienced premature birth twice, this time I prayed, “God help us this time, no premature birth.” So during the last trimester of my wife pregnancy, she started to feel the pain, although it was not 9 months yet. But this time I prayed and laid my hands on her belly and said,” In


Jesus name, stay, it is not your time to be born.” And my wife was fine.

Those things happened several times, but each time she was in pain, I prayed and laid my hands, and the pain was gone. Then it was at the ninth month, the baby was born in good health. Praise the Lord!

FGBMFI has changed my life. Japan is a country that pays respect to tradition. Therefore the churches’ life in Japan are similar, they hold the tradition strongly and very conventional. So the Christianity in Japan is very passive. However, through Full Gospel, we come to know the power of God, that the common people can demonstrate also what the servants of the Lord can do.

I can see when I lay hands in the name of Jesus, the lame can stand and walk. Satan is afraid of His name.

The deaf can hear, and many signs and wonders happen when we lay hands in the name of Jesus. I already experienced a lot, and I can tell you stories after stories of the miracles. You have to believe, although you are not a pastor or servant of God, but God can demonstrate His power through you.

In Jesus name, you can receive your miracles. God wants to use you to demonstrate His power, to those who need it and also to you. 

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**Ken Tsukamoto is a National President of FGBMFI Japan.**



# the BIGGEST distance

ROLAND BENZ - GERMANY

**“Y**ou are an arrogant dog!” Those words from my supervisor sliced like a dagger through my heart. How dare he even say that to me? He continued, “I just want to be very straightforward and open. I want to tell you what the people in the company call you.”

I was a very harsh man in business as well as with my family, but to think the people who worked with me at MTU Aero Engines, a subsidiary company of Daimler Benz (later Daimler Chrysler) called me arrogant, was difficult to hear.

I could be very authoritative, using harsh words like a fist. My life was totally my business and career; my family was maybe second.

After receiving my degree from engineering school, I worked my way up the ladder of success; I was a self

made man, I inherited my desire to be a mechanical engineer from my engineer father.

My childhood was protected by my parents. I didn't really lack anything growing up. Born in 1938, I was really too young to understand the war that was going on all around me. My family had good standards, but went to church only at Christmas and Easter. Quite frankly, church did not mean a thing for my life.

There were many years when I wasn't a nice guy. I ruled my employees and family with a heavy hand. It was very difficult for them, and my wife, especially, suffered greatly.

Behind my arrogance was a man full of fear. I was fearful of men, but I had to keep up a tremendous facade. I did not allow other people to get close to me because I thought if they really



knew me, they would not respect me anymore. I was trapped in this circle of harshness, though it wasn't what I really wanted.

All the "family work" (or raising the family) was left to my wife, because I thought the wife was supposed to be responsible for family and education. I thought of myself as a good person, although knew many things were not right in my life. Certainly God did not fit into any of my plans.

No Biblical principles were applied to raising my family, because I had no comprehension of them. I didn't know what a man should really be in front of God or in respect to his family and his business.

My wife, daughter, and son suffered because I was so intense. I could not relax, even on the weekends. I was longing for peace, but it never came. Even on weekends, I felt I had to 'manage' my family, like I was during the week at work. A weekend had to accomodate several kinds of sports; I was always on the move. Life was hectic, and not very pleasant for my family. I would order them around, "We are going to the lake to sail right now!"

That was the way I was - totally without peace. I wanted to control everything, from my business to my family. My marriage suffered greatly because of my controlling attitude.

My wife was searching for something more than the experience of a normal church. Especially because of me, she was reaching out

towards God. One day in 1979 my wife came home and announced, "Roland, just imagine, I've accepted Jesus Christ today!" My immediate reaction, "Are you crazy! What do we need Jesus Christ for?" My mind could not conceive of a personal relationship with a living God.

I always looked at Christians as weak people, people who did not really know what to do in life.

The tension between my wife and me escalated. A year after her salvation, my daughter and son also became Christians. Becoming a Christian was not something I could do. I even openly said to my family, "I am thinking about a divorce. I don't want to become a Christian. I am not going to make that decision." My words truly hurt my wife.

Thank God, my wife is very courageous, and she stuck with me. One day she came to me and said, "Roland, there is a fellowship called the FGBMFI; they are businessmen just like you. Why don't you just come and see? Then make up your mind." Just to please her, I went to their meetings in Munich on two occasions.

I was always sat on the last row at the meeting. I commented, "Forget it. I cannot do this worship and raising of hands. I am a serious man. I have great responsibilities in the company. Don't think for a moment that I am going to make a fool of myself." So that was that. The tension between my wife and me increased even more.

About a year later she suggested, "Roland, there is someone from America coming. Why don't you hear what this man has to say? Reluctantly, I went to this meeting of about 200 people crammed into a hotel meeting room in Munich. I looked for two seats in the last row, but there was nothing other than two seats right at the front. I told my wife we were not going to sit there. I barked, "If you



want to be there, you sit there!"

Then I looked at my wife and felt sorry for her. I had hurt her hundreds of times. Somehow, I suddenly felt sorry for her. As I sat down, I advised, "But when it is over, I am out!" I cannot remember one word spoken by Don Ostrom from Houston, Texas. I had closed my ears. However, I did recognize that he was a man

of authority. I liked that in a man. I believe God had to use a man just like that to reach me.

When the meeting was over, he asked, "Now, whoever was touched by God, close your eyes and stretch out your hands." I was sitting on the front row, and I was determined to see what kind of manipulation was going on. When he made that altar call, my eyes were wide open, so I could see the manipulation.

I even judged certain people who raised their hands, "Oh yeah. That man needs Jesus!" I was so full of pride and arrogance!

Then he said, "There is one man that God has called." I felt something move in my heart, but thought, "No way. I am not going to stand up, all emotional like that." With two hands on the chair, I held myself down. All of a sudden, though I cannot explain it, I stood up, as if someone was pulling me by my hair. I stood straight up.

I should have had the chair in my hands; I was holding myself down so hard. My wife collapsed in tears. She had been praying for me for years. Had I known that she had even asked her church to pray for me, I would have forbidden it.

Don Ostrom asked me, "What is your name? God wants to tell you something: "The biggest distance is between your brain and your heart."

When he said this, I knew it was from God. I told him, "There is no connection whatsoever." He led me in prayer. I later found out that a friend of my daughter, who was in the audience, ran to the phone and called my daughter, shouting, "Just imagine, your daddy accepted Christ today." My daughter could not speak for a moment. Out of my daughter's inner being came the response, "When my father can accept Jesus Christ, there is hope for everybody!"

It's true, if God can change me, He can change anybody. My salvation means that nothing is impossible for God. I was controlled by my own intellect. It used to be that I could only believe something when I had the facts in my hands. Like a typical engineer, I could only believe what I could analyze. However this experience was suddenly real for me. I realized then that though my heart had stretched out to God, my brain had just been turning it down.

The change in me was immediate. From a hectic controller to a man at peace, it happened instantly. When

I accepted Christ, the hectic pace and stress just fell away. For the first time, I could breathe; suddenly I had total peace. That was on a Saturday. The next day, I went with my wife to church. Just seeing me in church was a strange picture for the people who knew me. I was filled with a love for God, and this harsh businessman even started hugging people. God



also restored our broken marriage.

Business associates recognized an immediate change in me, although for some time, I walked the walk of a Christian, but never told anyone. For some strange reason, I thought that if they knew I had become a Christian, it would end my career. One day my superior drove me home and we spent some time in my garden. Somehow I

briefly explained my new found faith. His reaction was, "I don't mind what someone believes as long as he does his job." Instantly, that fear of sharing my faith disappeared. I felt a freedom and a release.

People around me began to notice that I was different. God showed me how to deal with managerial conflict; He would deal with it. God can speak softly with love, but He can also talk straight, with great authority. Peace within me is the answer. I now handle circumstances in a totally different manner. Through God's authority, we can also be very very bold.

When my superior informed me that my business associates thought of me as an "arrogant dog," it was just a few days after I received Christ into my heart. His announcement opened my eyes. My spontaneous reaction was, "Am I still like that?" God knows why he confronted me with this situation after I came to Jesus. It showed me that, although we accept Christ, and everything is new, it is a process to change our behaviour and character.

I don't need to speak harshly anymore; I can speak with His authority. He is reality and truth! The business world is looking for reality. In Jesus Christ, we have that! Later on my colleagues started calling me the 'peacemaker'. What a strange name

for a manager in today's competitive business arena!

From the very beginning of my Christian walk, the Lord has used the FGBMFI. I was able to apply the principles in my business right away. The Fellowship is a tool which God will use more and more because it brings the answer for all the challenges and problems within the family and in business. It is a total different way of handling difficulties in life.



God restored and healed our marriage, and our children got a changed father. ☐

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**Roland Benz is Outreach Director for FGBMFI/Germany and a member of the 'Global Outreach Task Force'. He is used greatly to help introducing FGBMFI in several new nations of the world. He is retired from Daimler Chrysler. Today he is also involved in biblical Management and Business teaching.**



A portrait of Richard Shakarian, a middle-aged man with dark hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a yellow tie with blue polka dots. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is a solid dark blue.

# Love Messenger

Richard Shakarian

Richard Shakarian has been working with his father and his grandfather since he was at a very young age. Since an early age, he was constantly in the company of great men and had witnessed Christ to many heads of states.



At the age of 15 he was invited to speak to the United States House of Representatives prayer meeting in Washington, DC.

At 1960 Oral Roberts asked him and his wife Vangie to head up the first world action team as speakers. The team was composed of five young people.

At the age of 25, he has already traveled to about 30 Nations around the world.

God really blessed him as a leader of many Nations. Richard Shakarian always feels happy and comfortable anywhere-anyplace over the world. He and Vangie have traveled in 70 nations even before he became FGBMFI International President. He never feels tired or bored with

traveling to so many places. He does all the traveling with joy!

At the age of 25, he had a formal visit with the (future) Chancellor of Germany, Dr. Willy Brandt. Their engaging conversation in Dr. Brandt's office included a full discussion of the spiritual needs of the German people. Six years later, Dr. Brandt was the Chancellor of Germany.

Since those days, Mr. Shakarian has spoken and counseled with Presidents, or future Presidents, such as Ronald Reagan, Daniel Ortega, Kurt Waldheim, Ariel Sharon, Fidel Ramos, Mobutu Sese Seko, and almost a score of heads of state, as well as Pope John Paul II.

Richard was promoted to be the International President on July 1993.

Our founder, Demos Shakarian pointed Richard Shakarian to follow him as International President largely because of the tremendous amount of work that Richard had done throughout the world in bringing many people to Christ. Demos knew that his son, Richard, had great vision. The appointment by Demos Shakarian, was to finish an unexpired term and thereafter stand for election. Since that time, he has been elected as President, by the International Board of Directors, five times.

At that time there were 3700 chapters in 112 countries. Richard has expanded the work of The Fellowship, encouraging ordinary men to go beyond the walls of their meeting and extend themselves as messengers of love. FGBMFI are now reaching seven times more people for Christ than were in 1993. Part of this increase has come about because of our teams giving their testimonies in universities, factories, offices, corporations, military and government establishments.

Today, we have 8000 chapters in 157 nations! Millions of people are helped each year through the anointed stories of FGBMFI men and women.

Richard met his wife Evangeline (Vangie) while they were attending Southern California College. They have been happily married since 1955 and have four beautiful daughters: Denice, Cynthia, Brenda and Suzanne. They are also proud as grandparents now.

Vangie was born in Minnesota to wonderful pioneer pastors, Oscar and Elizabeth Klingsheim. Her mother, as a girl, was filled with the Holy Spirit



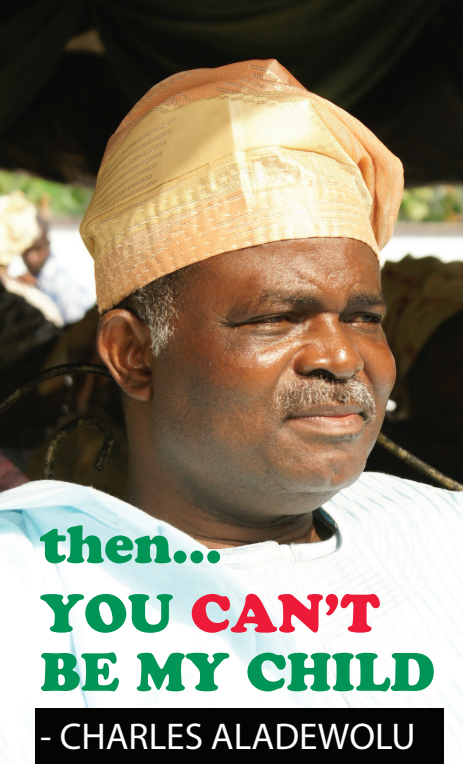
in Norway and went as a missionary from her home in Norway to China in 1924.

Last but not least, Richard Shakarian welcomes you to be part of this growing network of business people throughout the world. ■

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**Dr. Richard Shakarian now is International President of FGBMFI, and still traveling all around the world to share HIS love.**





I was born as Moslem. My father spent 26 years in an Arabic School. His father was one of those who brought Islam to our town. Naturally, I was sent to an Arabic School where I spent 14 years.

Up to the time I went to Secondary School, I had not touched a Bible nor heard about Christ; all I knew was Islam.

By the time I went to college, I was well known in the Arabic circle because I was young and enthusiastic about the things of that religion. I became second to the Chief Imam of the College, so I was exempted from Bible Religious Knowledge (BRK) as a subject at College. Each time that subject was being taken, I would go to the Library.

One day, when other students were writing the BRK exam, I decided to sit under a tree to read my notes for the next subject. That same day, the Principal decided to go home for

breakfast after the assembly. He saw me under a tree, walked up to me and asked "Young man, why are you sitting outside here?" "Sir, they are writing BRK and I am exempted" I replied. He asked why, and I replied that I was a Muslim. Then he said, "you study English, are you British?" I said "No" "You study Latin, are you Greek?" I said "No" then he said, "You don't have to be a Christian to study BRK". He took me to the class, and insisted that I write the BRK examination with other students. The first question was 'write short notes on these names:



Pharaoh, Abraham,...'. Not having ever gone to church nor touched the Bible, I knew nothing about Pharaoh. The name sounded like a river. In the dormitory, I often heard students talking about a man who was attacked by robbers while traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. Those were the things that occurred to me so I wrote: 'Pharaoh is a river that flowed from Jerusalem to Jericho'. Then Abraham, I remembered Ibrahim of the Koran and I wrote about him and his son Ishmael and submitted my answer script.

When the result was released, I scored 58%; that was the day I made up my mind to study BRK because I considered it easy. I reasoned that it would help me consolidate my first position in class if I could study BRK and score above 90% on the subject. So I bought my first Bible and began to read from St. John's Gospel. I became fascinated by such sayings as "I am the way the truth and the life; no one comes to the father except by me". As a Muslim, I prayed five times a day, reciting the same verses each time; I had studied the Quran for 14 years but couldn't translate it into my language; I didn't even understand it. I just knew that 'X' is for prayer and 'Y' is for cursing and so on. At times, as I read the Bible tears flowed from my eyes. Gradually, I started absenting myself from the mosque while stealing into the school chapel. That was how I came in contact with the Gospel.

When my father heard that I was going to Church, he invited me home immediately. Before I met him, my mother had advised me against telling him the truth until I was out of college. But when I met my father, the spirit in me did not allow me to tell him that lie. I faced my father and told him that I was now a Christian. He said "then, you can't be my child and be a Christian, you are a 'kaferi'". He swore not to pay my school fees any more. For failing to pay my school fees, the school authorities decided to send me out of the boarding house, so I went to my father. His question was, "have you changed your mind?" I answered 'No'. He also replied that he hadn't changed his either. So I went back to school, but on the day I was asked to pack out of school, it dawned on me that I had no place to pack to; I couldn't go back to my father's house because of the conflict. At that very point of my dilemma, the Principal's secretary came and said that the Principal wanted to see me. My first reaction was "he got me into this problem, what again does he want from me?" When I got there, I met two other students. The Principal announced that he was very happy to inform us that the three of us had won the Western Government Scholarship because we came first, second and third in the entrance examination to the college. He announced further that the fee we had paid the previous year would be refunded and the Scholarship attracted a monthly

allowance of Two Pounds. That was how the Lord paid my school fees through college.

I became a member of the Student Christian Movement and in my final year, I was elected President of the Movement. I came in as almost the Imam of the School and, five years later, left as the President of the Student Christian Movement. When I encountered Jesus, my life never remained the same. I left college



with Grade One and sat the entrance examination for Higher School Certificate. My father again said he was sorry he couldn't sponsor me since I was not ready to return to Islam. I left for Lagos, got a job at the Federal Ministry of Trade and attended the evening programme of the Federal School of Arts and Science. My salary was Fifteen Pounds, Ten Shillings. Out of this, I would pay rent for my room at 32 Hawley Street,

Lagos. I would trek to the office in the morning, trek to the school after work at 3 p.m and at end of the lectures at 10 p.m., I would trek back home, because my salary couldn't pay the school fees, buy books, pay rent and also pay for transportation. I did that for two years and, thankfully, at the end of the programme, I passed my three papers: Applied Mathematics, Pure Mathematics and Physics. I took the result to University of Lagos where

I was given admission to study Mechanical Engineering because my result was one of the best. When I received my letter of admission, it occurred to me that I could not pay my school fees, so I took the letter to my Director, Mr. John Raleigh, who headed the Nigeria Stored Products Research Institute, a Department in the Ministry of Trade. He congratulated me on my admission, but I told him that I was not going to resign, since I needed the job to save for the school fees. The man said "No". He lent me fifty five Pounds, to cover my initial school fees, to be returned in six months when my father would be able to pay, because I had to him that my father was a cocoa farmer and cocoa harvest would be in six months.

By the end of that semester, I had to pay for the second semester and refund the loan to Mr. Raleigh. I went back to my father, and informed him that I was now in the University. He congratulated me and remarked that my religious faith was still

very important to him. (The chief Imam and many people in the town had pressurized my father against allowing me to become a Christian. They warned him that he would go to hell if he allowed his son to be a 'kaferi'. Today, the Chief Imam's first son is a Pastor). My father was scared and kept wondering how I could have let him down. So I went back to school praying, "Lord, you did it for me in the secondary school, you can do it again". One morning, I was informed that my name was on the notice board in the bursar's office, as one of those awarded the Federal Government Scholarship. The money I had paid was again refunded, because the scholarship took effect from my first day in the university. I immediately returned Mr. Raleigh's money. Again, God paid my fees through the university, from the scholarship. When I thought that I had reached a dead end God made a way for me.

I got my first graduate job with UAC (United Africa Company Ltd). After that I joined RT Briscoe and I was among those who were sent to Denmark for training. I was promoted above the other managers; a position I didn't apply for, so I prayed about

it. Then, the Lord reminded me of the revelation to set up my own company. I prayed "Lord, every man is made for a purpose. If it is my purpose in life to start my business, you must show it to me now, and provide me with the resources." That night, a question came to my mind "If you become the Managing Director of RT Briscoe, will that give you fulfillment?" Of course, I answered "No." It was quite clear that the Lord wanted me to start my own business, which meant I had to resign my appointment at RT



Briscoe, despite the promotion. When I gave the letter to my Managing Director, he asked if I had gone insane, but that was how I left RT Briscoe.

In UAC, I worked with a division called African Timber and Plywood Industry, Sapele. That Division closed down shortly after I left. So I testify that my leaving was by divine arrangement; the Lord led me out of that place before it collapsed. He is the one who's been leading me. With the little money I had, I rented a two-bedroom apartment at Ikeja, Lagos. I would sweep the place and clean it up myself in the morning, and in the

afternoon I would go to the post office to collect my mails. Despite leaving the luxury of RT Briscoe, I was enjoying myself and I felt fulfilled. Gradually, God helped me to move to an entire floor of a big business complex in Ikeja; I now have offices in Port Harcourt and Warri.

Later I built a six-bedroom bungalow for my father; I also gave him a Toyota Crown car. He later visited me in Lagos and prayed for me. He said even though I was the only child he didn't train, I didn't bear any grudge against him; I was the only one that built him a house, bought him a car and gave him monthly allowance. He took my hand, placed it on his head and asked me to pray for him too. I took my hand off as this was against our culture. He then replied that the hand was not mine but that of my God who paid my school fees when he refused to. The Holy Spirit asked me to lead him in a sinner's prayer, which he accepted. That was how we reconciled. Finally, he prayed that I would be home the day of his passage, so we would pray this prayer again on his death bed. One day, my wife and I were traveling to Ekiti, but decided to make a detour to our hometown, Owo, for the night. When we arrived, my mother told me that my father had been in excellent health and was even preparing for the coming Muslim Ramadan. He went to bed healthy but could not get out of his room the following morning. On seeing me, he smiled, but couldn't

talk. I asked if I should call a doctor, but he shook his head on the negative. We surrounded him, prayed for him and, I anointed him with olive oil. That night, I had a dream in which I saw a man wearing white and shining clothes leading my father to see many mansions. I remembered that Jesus said "in my father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you .. where I am, there you will be also" John 14 v 2-3 and with that I woke up. Later that morning, I got news that he passed on at 90.

While I was a Muslim, I had the notion of marrying four wives, as my father; However, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I have been married to my only wife and we are so used to each other that it may be hard to see one of us without the other. Though I met Christ quite early in the secondary school, I had no Holy Spirit experience, so I lacked power. I would make New Year resolutions and never be able to keep them, I would fear what others could do to me. When I traveled home, my mother would caution me against bringing home my car and I would obey and keep my car away from home. Now that I am baptized in the Holy Spirit, I know that He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world, so all fear is gone. ■

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**Engr. C. A. Aladewolu is the Chairman/ CEO of Teco Group of Companies, Lagos. He is a National Director of FGBMFI, Nigeria.**



# Sweet Smell of Success



**Roberto Chihan, Paraguay**

**T**his story begins in the country of Syria, before the 1900's, when my grandparents decided to leave the country, due to internal problems, and traveled to South America.

They came from a little village, now a little town called Moharde, which is approximately 3-1/2 hours from the city of Damascus.

When they came to Paraguay they were very poor, because they had to leave everything they had in their country. They started by selling things in the street. First, in the interior of Paraguay and then they moved to the capital city. With time, they became one of the most important economic groups of the country.

When I was born in 1956 my family already had a good position, a middle

class family. I had a very happy childhood. I went to the International School that was founded by Disciples of Christ church. I completed all my elementary and also high school.

Before I finished high school, I enrolled in an international program called Youth For Understanding. This program took young people from the entire world and brought them to the U.S. and Europe to live in a typical home. For six months to a year, you became part of the family and part of the community, learning the language, customs and everything they do.

I left my country in November of 1973 and went to Iowa, a place I had never heard about. I was told that I would meet my family there. When I

arrived I was real shocked with all the snow and cold weather. It took me three days to realize that I had gone to a farm. I had always been a city boy and now I'm on a farm.

My host father told me, "I would like you to be like my kids." That sounded nice. He said, "I would like you to work like they do, so I will take you to town to buy the clothes you need to work outside."

So we went to town and bought everything I needed. I remember going out to work every day before school. I took care of 2,000 chickens by collecting the eggs every day. I also took care of the pigs. At the time of planting I went through the field picking up the rocks that were exposed after the snow was gone.

One night, looking at the sky, I said, "God." "I'm sure this time You made a mistake. This is not for me. This cannot be for me." But my problem was that I was so happy with the family. They were excellent moral people, with high standards. During the time I was in the U.S. someone invited me to a retreat called Teens Encounter Christ. This was not the same denomination I was going to. It was so different from everything I had every experienced. In that retreat, for the first time, I had the opportunity to

meet Christ.

I returned home after that experience with such a great feeling in my heart. But, I thought, "What now? What is the next step?" I wasn't sure what this all meant. Returning to Paraguay, I started working in the family business. It was so interesting to see how God was developing in me all the things that He would use in the future. Like this... I went to the University. I started the first two grades then I decided that I wanted to return to the United States to finish my degree. But, it turned out that I needed to stay in Paraguay for family reasons.

I got more and more involved in the family business. My involvement in communications, the media, in the business world, made me a TV producer and a radio producer. I was organizing fashion shows, art expositions and so many other things, since all these things related to my work – in advertising and promoting. In the middle of all this came one of the most difficult experiences of my life.

When completely out of the will of God, not listening to the good advice of my parents and friends, I decided to get married. It only lasted 23 months with many problems and bitterness.



My former wife married again, I saw my home being sold. I decided to stay single until my heart would heal.

I started having car accidents – very bad ones that affected my body. I needed back surgeries. I ended up at home for 4 months, unable to walk normally, wearing all kinds of things to keep my body straight. I thought to myself, “I’ve never been like this. Why did the whole world fall down on me?”. I opened the newspaper one day and read “Steven Spielberg seeks rights of novel from Spanish author.” The first thought that came to my mind was, what is Steven Spielberg looking for in a Spanish author, having so many talented people to write excellent scripts in the U.S. I found out that the novel he was searching for was about the last 4 days or the last week of Christ on earth. I decided to look for that novel but couldn’t find it in my country. So, I bought it from Argentina. I started reading the book and was unable to leave it. And for the first time I read the most detailed description of the life of Christ in those days – the description of Israel and the world at that time the apostles... everything. It was so marvelous that it really touched my heart. And for the first time I had a feeling in my heart saying, “I never knew this.” The book described the sacrifice of Christ in such detail that I could feel the nails piercing my hands.

Then, in January of 1985 I went into surgery again. I was felling miserable. The surgery was for

nothing. They could not solve my problem.

One day an employee of mine mentioned they overheard my family saying I would never walk again. She told me, “We have a group of people who get together in the parish, we read the Bible, sing and pray for each other. We would like to come and visit you.” I said, “Okay.” She was surprised at my response because she knew the life I had lived in the past. To speak religion to a person like that is not very becoming.

She brought an officer from the Navy, and he came to me bedside, sat down and for the first time he opened the Bible and told me about God from the beginning to the end. He explained to me the salvation plan of God through Jesus Christ. At the end, he asked me the question, “Would you like to find the Master of your heart?”

I said, “Yes!”

Then he said, “Can you understand that the actual Master of your heart is Satan and not Jesus?”

I replied, “Yes!”

“Would you like to change that?”

I replied again, “Yes!”

So, he prayed with me the sinner’s prayer and I accepted Jesus on the 4th of April 1985, at 4:15 in my bed.

My second prayer was, “Lord, I know I need to change my life but I really consider myself unable. I beg you to change it.” It was so marvelous the way God began a love relationship with me. He changed my entire life

without my exerting any effort, but just by following Him.

That was the beginning of my Christian life. I was gathering with the charismatic movement of the Catholic Church. In that movement I connected with a group of young people and we started a church that cared nothing about church denominations. For legal reasons we affiliated with the Assemblies of God, because it was not good to be an independent church in our country. This church grew to become the biggest evangelical church in the country.

One of the young fellows for our church told me, "I got this book from one of the pastors. Would you like to read it?" I responded, "Okay."

I traveled to the states and took the book along with me. When I finally was able to read it, something strange began to happen. Something similar to the never-ending story where you become part of the book and the book is talking to you, but you don't realize it. I started to cry because I was so impressed how God was affecting my life with this book. I felt I had to get in touch with the person in that book,

because I saw myself as in a mirror when reading about him. I felt so close to his feelings and everything he was saying. That book was *The Happiest People On Earth* and that person was Demos Shakarian.

When I returned to my country I told my pastor about it and said, "Do you think I should write him?" He said, "Yes, go ahead." By the way, my pastor received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at a Full Gospel meeting in the U.S. He was an Olympic swimmer from Indiana University.

I wrote a letter to Demos and explained my life to him. I don't know if he actually read the letter, but on April 2nd someone from Costa Mesa, California

sat down and answered my letter, with a copy to a person in Houston, Texas. The person in Houston, who received the copy, left Houston the same day the letter was written to go to South America to start chapters in the nations of Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile.

I received news from my pastor that the Full Gospel Business Men were coming to town. It was looking supernatural. I was surprised.



Three days later, I received the biggest envelope that I have every received in the mail. Inside was everything to start a chapter.

A week later a banquet took place with an attendance of 40-50 people. When I entered the restaurant the first person I saw was John Carrette. I sat down with him and told him my testimony – the whole story that led up to this moment. He was surprised. He was the one who explained to the crowd what this ministry was all about. In the middle of the meeting he stopped and said, “Robert, these are the trips that the Lord is showing you.” At that moment, as a confirmation of those words, I had another vision. God placed in front of me a wall of TV monitors and He showed me on every single screen my life, talents, and accomplishments. After I watched this, the Lord told me, I have prepared you all your life for this.

When the banquet ended they asked all those that would like further information to please, come forward. I stood up, pushed my chair underneath the table and stood there. Suddenly, the leading person from the delegation finally signaled to me by moving his finger to come and stand by him. He went to his briefcase, took out some papers that he didn't give to anyone else, then said, “Would you like to be the coordinator of the job in Paraguay?” Would could I say except, “Yes!”

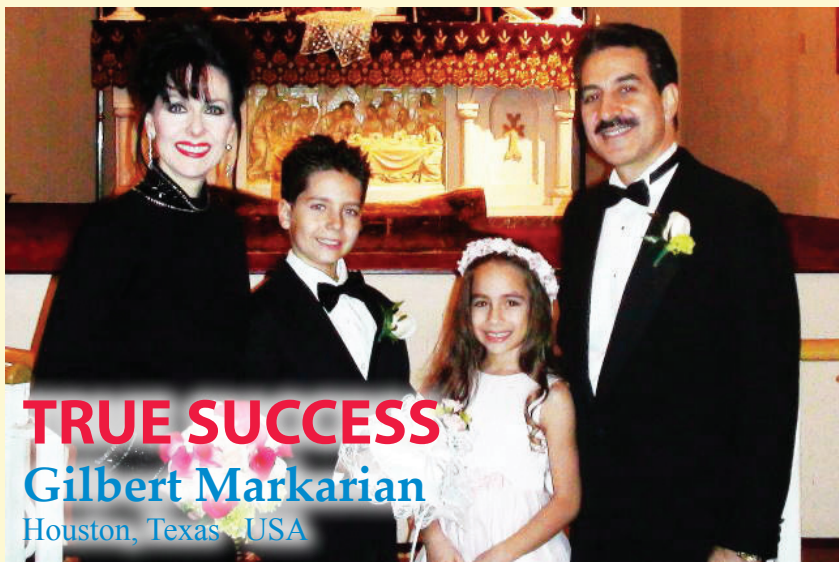
The next day they invited us out

for breakfast to talk longer. At the end of the meal he asked, “Have you received the Holy Spirit?” I told them my story. He said, “We are going to pray right now.” I had not received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at that time. So the Holy Spirit came upon me and I was able, for the first time, to speak in a heavenly language and I did the rest of that day without stopping. From that moment on we started a beautiful job with this organization, to touch not only our nation, but also the surrounding nations and other nations in the Americas and Europe. Prosperity was part of what God did for me since I came to Him. During the 14 years since I've been following Jesus, He always tested me on my level of loyalty and fidelity and integrity according to the different amounts of income that He was giving me. So, when He knows that He can trust you then He can make you an administrator of bigger amounts. ■

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**Today, Roberto Chihan is the Vice President of El Sena S.A.C., a distributor of French and American perfumes, cosmetics, toiletries and body treatment products serving the Paraguayan and Uruguayan markets. He is also a International Director at large, Regional Vice-President of South America and National Paraguayan President for Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International.**





**N**o matter how wealthy I became, or how much I enjoyed to party, I was always seeking for fulfillment! I loved the liquor, ladies and fast cars! Every night I went to the bars to have a good time with my friends, and I thought that I was just enjoying life! I never realized all of the effects that this partying lifestyle had on myself and others!

I certainly did not consider that God Himself would be what I needed, because I grew up in the American Armenian church, and was very proud to say that “We were the first Christian nation”. I also attended St. John’s, an all boy Catholic High

School, and graduated from Bentley College with honors! As far as I was concerned, I had been a good person and had fulfilled my necessary “Duties” to my family and to God.

After graduation, I moved to New York City and worked off Wall Street for an international public accounting firm. Now that I was making money, I began to party even more, and the carnage of relationships followed me everywhere that I went. My background condoned drinking, and in my mind there was no conflict with my actions!

A family friend suggested that I could maximize my abilities and talents to make even more money in

sales. Having aspirations to become wealthy, I started my first sales position with Moore Business Forms in Rhode Island. I achieved "Rookie of the Year" and finally had found my business niche!

Later, I had a job offer in Houston, Texas working for Uarco Business Forms. They gave me the opportunity to make even more money and handle the world's largest corporation - Exxon. Much to my surprise, Uarco had not done business with Exxon previously, but within 6 months of my arrival, I put together a \$1,000,000 contract with them! I was excited because now I was making more money than ever before!

The success that I was experiencing gave me the impetus to get into my own business, so I purchased a service company in the restaurant industry. My business more than doubled the first year, and I started to live in the fast lane. I enjoyed all of the privileges of being single and financially successful. I bought a new BMW and partied with my friends, enjoying the wild lifestyle, but deep down on the inside, I knew that something was missing.

Some friends of mine told me that a prophet from Arkansas was going to be teaching a Bible study and asked me if I wanted to go. I asked, "What's a prophet? I thought that they all died in the Old Testament"! They

responded, "Prophets are people that hear from God and there are many of them alive today"! I said, "Oh yeah, if they hear from God, then my name is John Wayne"!

I believed in God and even prayed to Him, especially when I had a need, but I never heard from God. I did not believe that God spoke to people, however, I did believe in the psychics and tarot card readers and enjoyed what they told me. I always wanted to find out what was going to happen tomorrow, so that I could be one step ahead of the game. My friends said, "Gil, this Bible study will change your life"! Something touched me inside my heart, so I decided to attend.

The night started out with "Praise and Worship" music, and the people raised their hands as they sang. I was very uncomfortable in this atmosphere and wanted to leave, but I couldn't because I had come with my friends. I started to pray, "Oh Lord, don't let this be a cult - my mother will kill me"! They finally stopped singing and we all sat down. The prophet had a word from God and prayed for everyone present. When he got to me, he said, "Okay young man, it's your turn". I looked at him, thinking to myself, "Let's see what you've got big guy"!

As soon as the prophet began praying for me, he started to "read my mail". He talked about my family, my

background, past relationships, work and many other personal situations. I was totally overwhelmed. He mentioned things that were only known between God and me. I became convinced that this prophet was hearing from God, because he talked specifically about personal and confidential subjects with an inside knowledge only God could give. When he began sharing the things that the Lord had for me in the future, it really captured my attention and I became even more excited.

That night, when I went home, I was not sure how to process everything that had happened. My friends told me that Jesus Christ was the son of God, and that He died for my sins, so that I could live eternally with Him in heaven. I had attended church and believed in God, but I had never had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

To me, Jesus Christ was a historical, traditional person who died 2000 years ago. I had no understanding how He could help me today. As I got on my knees, I said, "Jesus, if you are real and the Son of God, then forgive me for my sins, come into my heart, and be my Lord and Savior". That's the moment that my life changed!! When I woke up the next morning I felt like all of the weight of the world was off my shoulders. I was very happy, so I called my friends and

asked when the next Bible study was. The next night I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

When I accepted Jesus Christ into my life as my Lord and Savior, it completely changed my life. He took out the desire to do the things that I had thought would make me happy. I stopped partying and going to places that were ungodly. God changed me for the better. I dedicated my business to the Lord when I became born again, and experienced peace in all areas of my life. I was now sure that when I died, I would spend eternity in heaven with Christ.

The years that I had spent going to church, but not really experiencing the power and presence of God were gone. Knowing about God was replaced with knowing God Himself. I had finally found true spiritual nourishment and Godly contentment. I began to realize that God not only saves people from their sins and fills them with the Holy Spirit, but also speaks to people, heals bodies and mends broken lives!

My thirst and hunger to know more about my new found faith led me to another Armenian man named Demos Shakarian, founder of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. I quickly became involved in the organization. I remember vividly sharing my personal testimony for the first time

during a Houston meeting because my father got saved as a result. Later, I had the honor of serving as a National Director of FGBMFI.

I had been single for 43 years, yet I had an intense desire to be married and have children. God used Evangelist Tim Storey to introduce me to my wife, Mary Ann. She is a professional singer who had ministered with the two men of God who had greatly


I host Christian television and have had such great guests as Evander Holyfield, T.D. Jakes, Richard Shakarian, Marilyn Hickey, Rod Parsely, Tim Storey, Hilton Sutton, Charles & Francis Hunter and many others, dealing with important issues that effect everyone's lives.

My wife, Mary Ann writes and sings music, and has just released her latest CD entitled "BECAUSE OF

YOU"! Many people are instantaneously healed by the power of God when she sings! Mary Ann has traveled to many different countries such as the Philippines, Singapore, Israel, Panama, Mexico, and China. She was even invited to sing at the Great Hall in Beijing before the



impacted my spiritual walk - Benny Hinn and Tim Storey. It never ceases to amaze me how far God has brought me from my earlier years. We are now married and have 2 children, Matthew and Elizabeth. We reside in Houston, Texas where I am the President of a successful business consulting firm, helping business owners develop strategic alliances with other companies. Mary Ann and

leadership of that nation, and sang their National Anthem in Mandarin. She has also sung at the World Convention for FGBMFI for the last 12 years! You can hear Mary Ann for yourself by visiting her website at: [www.MaryAnnMarkarian.com](http://www.MaryAnnMarkarian.com). 

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**Gilbert Markarian is a leading member of FGBMFI and an International Director.**

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Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International



**INTERNATIONAL OFFICE :**

3 HOLLAND

IRVINE CALIFORNIA 92618 USA

Tel. +1 949 461-0100 Fax. +1 949 609-0344

<http://www.fgbmfi.org/>

E-mail address :

[international@fgbmfi.org](mailto:international@fgbmfi.org)