

Matthew W. Tallman, *Demos Shakarian: The Life, Legacy, and Vision of a Full Gospel Business Man* (Lexington, Kentucky: Emeth Press, 2010).

Demos Shakarian founded and provided leadership for the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) and was an important catalyst in the rise of the charismatic renewal of the mid twentieth century. The charismatic movement surged through the mainline denominations in the 1960s and 1970s bringing thousands, including numerous clergy, into the experience of Spirit baptism accompanied by charismatic gifts. Although the charismatic renewal's popular beginnings are often associated with the Episcopalian Dennis Bennett when he told his Van Nuys, CA congregation he was speaking in tongues, Shakarian's FGBMFI had already been plowing the ground for renewal for nearly a decade. Matthew Tallman's biography of Demos Shakarian provides a new and valuable lens through which to see the importance of Shakarian as a progenitor and key player in the charismatic renewal.

Tallman's biography is the first academic attempt at providing a nuanced, chronological narrative account of Shakarian's life and legacy. The book is more than a simple telling of Shakarian's story, and offers a critical analysis of his life, interacting with both his friends and critics. Although the book is geared to an academic audience, its narrative approach makes it accessible to any interested reader.

The first three chapters of the book trace Shakarian's family heritage in the Armenian Orthodox Church (and their conversion to Presbyterianism) in

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Karakala, Armenia. Of particular interest is Tallman's account of the influence of Russian Molakan Christian pneumatology on Shakarian's Armenian ancestors in the late 1800s. The book chronicles the story of Shakarian's grandfather's and father's immigration to the United States in the early twentieth century, at least in part, because of an apocalyptic prophecy given by a Molokan Christian boy prophet who called Molokan believers in Armenia to leave Transcaucasia ahead of a great crisis. Along with many Molokan believers, the Shakarians decided to leave too and their migration saved the family from the horrors of the Armenian genocide that began in 1915. Chapters 3 through 5 follow the Shakarian family's move and early life in Los Angeles, their involvement with the Armenian Pentecostal Church, and Demos Shakarian's life until 1940. The author also accounts for the family's success in the dairy business in California.

The most engaging part of the book are the six chapters (6-11) that narrate Shakarian's founding of FGBMFI and his journey leading the organization for nearly four decades until his death in 1993. Shakarian carried a deep passion for evangelism and a desire to reach men, particularly businessmen, with the gospel and the experience of Spirit baptism. Tallman's book roots this story in what he often terms "pneumatic Christianity," emphasizing that despite the many early disappointments Shakarian faced in establishing FGBMFI, it was a prophetic vision God gave him that sustained him through the difficulties over the years. The last two chapters explore Shakarian's legacy and

the continuing story of FGBMFI, suggesting some conclusions about its impact drawn from the narrative.

The strength of Tallman's biography is its attention to context and the attempt to consider the multiple influences that shape Shakarian's vision and leadership. For example, Tallman suggests FGBMFI's ecumenical character and its pneumatic emphasis reach back to Shakarian's Armenian Christian roots and the influence of the charismatic Russian Molokan Christians as well as his family's involvement with the Armenian Pentecostal Church in Los Angeles. Tallman also wisely situates the FGBMFI within the larger context of renewal Christianity globally. The book fairly narrates the growth and decline of the FGBMFI and controversies concerning Shakarian's leadership of the organization, while giving helpful insight regarding the reasons for FGBMFI's fading influence in the US at the same time that its influence grew globally.

Though the early chapters are at times overly detailed, as whole the book is a fascinating and readable account that fills in gaps and holes in Shakarian's story by collecting together an account that not only narrates his leadership of FGBMFI and its broader influence in the charismatic Christianity, but humanizes the man by detailing his family life and his love of the dairy business. The book highlights Shakarian's skill and acumen in business that brought him considerable wealth.

Some readers might wish for a more "interior" view of Shakarian that gives greater perspective on the man's self-understanding of his own life and spirituality, but perhaps Tallman's sources did not provide that view since Shakarian never kept a personal jour-

nal. Also, having spent many years personally studying and writing on the Shepherding movement and the controversy surrounding its teachings and knowing the significant part Shakarian and FGBMFI played in opposing the movement's perceived excesses, I was hoping to find more detail regarding the dispute from the perspective of FGBMFI. The book's account, however, did not provide any new insight on this heated controversy that shattered the ecumenical idealism of the charismatic renewal. Notwithstanding these minor concerns, this biography is a carefully researched and exemplifies the maturation and particularization of renewal studies.

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