



Dear Friend,

An email entitled "The 1-Step Success Plan" piqued my curiosity last week. Toward the end of the article, LiveStrong fitness writer Adam Bornstein writes: "We want to make 2012 the year of success. This is the year where you become *unstoppable*. But change doesn't start with making a list of resolutions, finding a great workout, or finally settling on a diet. It begins with a hard look in the mirror and a determination that your health is worth fighting for."

It compelled me to consider what I will fight for. What about you? What do you *fight* for? For what things did you inconvenience yourself today? And for what things did you drive across town through rush hour traffic to purchase? For what goal will you subject yourself to physical pain? God has made each of us differently, with different things that constrain us to get up early, stay up late, or work with extra zeal.

What will you fight for? What is your vision for 2012? I pray that the love of our Father God moves you to respond in faith, generously sharing your time, your resources, your skills, and your prayers with the lost and the unlovely.

Happy New Year!

Liz Crusey
MEBO Regional Development Officer



MEBO Newsletter
January, 2012

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MEBO Newsletter

MEBO exists to support the ministries of the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD), including the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS), Beirut Baptist School (BBS), Baptist Children and Youth Ministries (BCYM), Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences (SKILD and SKILS Camps), the Vulnerable Children Project, and Dar Manhal Al Hayat Publishing (DMAH).

Our Own Ebenezer

Remembering our beginnings and looking forward

In 1 Samuel 7, after God had delivered his people from their enemies, Samuel set up a stone of remembrance and called it Ebenezer saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." The Ebenezer served as a reminder of God's faithfulness and renewed the hope of his people. For many of us, the New Year is like that Ebenezer. It is a time to reflect on God's faithfulness and find renewed hope for his work that is yet to come. For over sixty years, God has helped the Baptist work in Lebanon and since 1999, he has given us a fruitful partnership with Chuck and Sam Moore.

Our story began in 1994 when Nabil Costa, Executive Director of the Lebanese Baptist Society,(1) met Chuck Moore at a Gideons' conference in Lebanon. Nabil, Chuck, and Chuck's brother Sam were members of the Gideons, an international organization dedicated to getting the Bible into as many hands as possible. Chuck introduced Nabil to his brother, who was CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers – the largest Christian publishing company in the world. These men dreamed together about how to further the struggling Evangelical Christian work in Lebanon and work to make Christ known throughout the Middle East/North Africa region.

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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Baptist work in Lebanon was begun in 1948 by Dr. Finlay Graham and his wife Julia, the first missionaries sent by the Southern Baptist Convention.(2) As they supported local churches in planting new churches in Lebanon, Dr. Graham baptized a young man with a fire in his eyes and dreams of a far away land. That young man's name was Salim Ziady, who would soon move to America and come to be known as Sam Moore.(3)

Sam came to the US in 1950 with \$600 in his pocket, some broken English, and all the wonder of youthful optimism in a new world. Would he become a doctor, as he had dreamed of before his conversion? Or would he become a businessman? Or even a missionary? He wasn't sure, but he took a leap of faith and enrolled at Columbia Bible College.(4) He spent his summer breaks selling Bibles door-to-door across South Carolina, which allowed him to pay his tuition and even buy a car and a suit.

This experience, a "pep talk" from his father, and encouragement from Chuck, then a junior at Vanderbilt University, would lead Sam to open his own book company in 1957. The National Book Company began that summer in Nashville, Tennessee. Sam bought Bibles wholesale and hired college students from around the Nashville area to sell the Bibles door-to-door.

After five years, during which he met and married Peggy Poe of Johnson City, Tennessee, Sam decided to venture into publishing his own books under the name Royal Publishers. He set about immediately to produce a Bible with pictures, illustrations, textual notes on the original languages, and a translation that was accessible and brought clarity to the biblical text.

Another five years passed, and Royal Publishers continued to grow. At the end of 1967, a struggling Thomas Nelson and Sons approached Sam and asked him to purchase the company. Thomas Nelson was founded by their namesake in 1798 in Edinburgh, Scotland. They had published classics like Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest, were the original publishers of the Strong's Concordance, and were a world leader in Bible publishing. Royal Publishers bought Thomas Nelson and continued to publish their books and Bibles under the Thomas Nelson name.

The company continued to grow and thrive and among the many new hires, Sam brought in his brother Chuck to run the Bible department. Chuck had a PhD in chemistry, had been a teacher, and worked for Bristol Myers before entering publishing. Under Sam and Chuck's leadership, Thomas Nelson Publishers would grow into the world's largest Christian publishing company, continually expanding into new markets.

In the midst of all their successful business endeavors, Sam and Chuck continued to be burdened for their homeland and the original vision of giving people access to the Scriptures and making them accessible.

Meanwhile, the Lord was working in Lebanon, orchestrating the events that would give birth to MEBO. In 1997, Nabil Costa, the Marketing

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Development Manager for the Gulf Region of Eastman Kodak, was asked by the local churches in Lebanon to commit to working for LSESD, which had been formed in the early 1990's as the Southern Baptist Mission turned over ownership and operation of all their mission work to the nationals.

Nabil was looking for men with a vision who were prepared to invest deeply in the work the Lord was doing in Lebanon. The Moore brothers were God's provision, as Nabil was seeking someone to open doors beyond Lebanon. And so it was in 2001 that MEBO was registered as a 501c3 in Atlanta, Georgia with the goal of connecting with believers in the U.S. who would catch the vision, supporting and contributing to the work of the Lebanese Baptist Society.



Seven years ago Sam Moore sold The Thomas Nelson Company; it was the largest publisher of Bibles, Christian and inspirational books in the world. He has been putting his efforts and support toward the Baptist work in Lebanon.

Today in Lebanon, the Baptist Academy in Beirut has over 1300 students – over 90% from non-Christian homes – and the Seminary in Lebanon has over 50 students from various parts of the Arab World and its ministry is being complemented by its local sister publishing house, also established by the founding missionaries, producing

much needed Christian resources that communicate the Gospel message and build up the church. This, in addition to other ministry avenues that Lebanese Baptists founded over the past five years including working with children with special needs and other vulnerable communities. God is blessing the work. Glory to His Name!

As we pause to reflect on our past, it is imperative that we do so with a vision for the future. Faithful men like Sam and Chuck Moore have supported this work for a decade, giving of themselves and their finances in order to see Christ made known in Lebanon and throughout the surrounding region. But the Moore brothers have retired from publishing and the days are approaching when a new generation must rise up and follow their lead. MEBO is praying for brothers and sisters who yearn to see the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ shining from the mountains of Lebanon, down into the Nile valley, around the Mediterranean, up to Damascus and the street called "Straight", and to the ruins of Babylon and Ephesus and Galatia. If this is your vision, we'd like to talk to you.

(1) The Lebanese Baptist Society is formally registered in Lebanon as the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD). Nabil was still with Kodak Eastman at the time.

(2) Dr. Graham was originally from Oban, Scotland, and his mother was a devout Scottish Presbyterian, but he received his seminary training at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas. Dr. Graham felt a call to mission work after he was captured in World War II by the Germans when his plane was shot down over North Africa.

(3) Ziady is the Arabic word for “more.”

(4) Now known as Columbia International University.

***Wanna catch the vision? Look for more on
Vision Trips coming in our next edition!***

MIDDLE EAST BIBLE OUTREACH