

BROTHERHOOD BEACON

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4

RBC FEATURE

Marketing as Christ's Ambassadors
by Jesse Mast

6

CHOICE BOOKS

Sets New Sales Record
by E. Dale Mast

8

RMM FEATURE

Surveying All He Loves
compiled & edited by Chris Skinner

REGULAR FEATURES

<i>Heart & Home</i>	2
<i>Teen Talk</i>	3
<i>Probing</i>	12
<i>Uncommon Sense</i>	12
<i>Leadership Corner</i>	13
<i>News & Notes</i>	14
<i>Church Life</i>	15
<i>Editorial</i>	16
<i>Moderator's Desk</i>	16

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The Training Process

British children's author Anthony Horowitz has created quite a sensation with his series of novels based on the heroic adventures of a fictional 14-year-old super-spy named Alex Rider. There are currently nine books in the series with another paperback set to release in April this year. One of the earliest books, *Stormbreaker*, has even been turned into a movie. I've read excerpts of the books (which I did find interesting), but I'm not necessarily endorsing them as reading material for your children. The reason I even mention him now is because of the way Alex Rider became a super-spying hero.

According to the author, Alex lost his parents when he was an infant and was raised by his Uncle Ian and his uncle's housekeeper, Jack (a woman). He was well-provided for, but, like many teens, could only focus on the negative: he was an orphan, his uncle worked too much, Jack was over-protective, etc. When his uncle died, Alex was informed that Ian had actually worked for a secret intelligence agency called "The Bank" and not for a corporation as Alex had been told. Unbeknownst to Alex, the agency had been keeping an eye on him throughout his life because his uncle had been discreetly training him as a spy as well.

When Alex was asked to go on his first mission, he protested because he felt completely unprepared and inadequate for the task. "If you haven't noticed, I'm just a schoolboy!" he insisted. The boss pointed out to him that he was a black belt in martial arts—"It was my choice to take karate, not a training technique!" He could speak fluent French, German, and Japanese—"My uncle took me on holidays!" He was an expert at scuba-diving, mountain climbing, wind-surfing, white-water rafting, and rifle-shooting. "So, I have a lot of hobbies!" No matter what they said, he couldn't believe that he was capable of completing the mission at hand. He actually didn't even agree to try until they threatened to deport Jack, whose visa had expired, if he didn't cooperate.

So what, you may be wondering, does Alex Rider have to do with us? This is the connection I made: I would like to suggest that we are all being called to accomplish something for God—something that He planned in advance for us to do. He knew when He authored the story of our lives what our individual missions would be and He has taken the time to lead us into situations, give us certain hobbies, surround us with the right people, and provide learning opportunities that have prepared us to answer His call. We are equipped to do His work!

I think people are basically in three categories: 1) those who are in training but don't know what for, 2) those who are deliberately training for something they feel called to, and 3) those who are fulfilling a call that is actually training them for something else.

A good example of these three stages is found in the life of Joseph (Genesis 39-50). When he was a boy, God was training him to be familiar with dreams and hardship. When he was a slave, God gave him the opportunity to learn organizational skills in Potiphar's household. From there, he was "elevated" to organizing a whole prison, and then on to organizing an entire Kingdom. He didn't look for these opportunities for advancement, but he remained faithful to God and was being led all along.

Joseph was thirty when he entered Pharaoh's service, which made him at least thirty-seven when his brothers came to Egypt, and it was two years after that when he came to a full realization about what had been going on his whole life. "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God," he declared to his brothers. (Gen. 45:8) Imagine the peace and sense of purpose we could have if we were able to see that now!

Wherever you are at in the training process, may God give you the courage to fulfill the mission at hand. There are not so many workers in the kingdom that He cannot use those who are willing. **BB**

Heart & Home
WITH CHRISTA KEIM