

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Good, Better, Best

By Elder Meliula Fata

Area Seventy



Elder Meliula Fata

Wilbur and Orville Wright are generally credited with inventing the world's first practical fixed-wing aircraft when their plane made a controlled, powered and sustained flight in the air of 12 seconds on 17 December 1903. The airplane covered 120 feet (37 m), about half the length of a 747 jumbo jet. By today's standard, that was a very short flight, but at the time it was an accomplishment few believed would ever be possible.

Wilbur and Orville's parents taught the importance of good education, religion, hard work and family values. Both brothers had their share of serious illnesses. They went through times of trouble, and even despair, and wondered if they would ever succeed in inventing the first airplane. They tried different vocations as printers, bicycle repairmen, bicycle manufacturers and eventually aircraft inventors.

Whenever they picked a project to work on, they were committed and worked as a team; they also did their homework. They were humble and smart enough to appreciate and learn about the work done by inventors who had gone before them. And they tackled problems line upon line, precept upon precept.

The brothers realized there were three main requirements for a practical flying machine:

1. The pilot had to be able to control the aircraft.
2. The wings had to produce lift.
3. It had to be powered by an engine to stay in the air.

Wilbur and Orville took these principles as their guidelines to control and discipline themselves in everything they did to accomplish their goals.

Similar principles and requirements apply to our own journey through life and toward the destination of eternal life. Divine principles need to be learnt, practiced and lived as you prepare to rise and produce a "lift" in your own

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life. It isn't until you come to a spiritual understanding of who you are that you can begin to take control of yourself. As you learn to control yourself, you will be able to better control your own life. If you want to move the world, you first need to move yourself.

The Wright brothers had confidence there could be a better plane than the one they invented, and they believed it would stay in the air longer than 12 seconds!

The changes from the Wrights' first airplane to the super jets of today is inspiring. The Airbus A380 superjumbo jet was first flown in April 2005—it has room for as many as 800 passengers and has the ability to fly nonstop for almost 18 hours.

Many times, when we feel comfortable and content, we remain in the same situation without trying to do better by improving and perfecting (developing) ourselves. Jesus warned Peter when He said, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).

As we work to perfect ourselves, we may need to change our habits. If we cannot change our habits, they become part of our nature and part of our lives. The Lord already saw the

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potential in Peter—but unless Peter changed himself, he could not help others become converted.

What have we learnt so far this year from our own life’s journey? What changes do we wish to make to show we are progressing both temporally and spiritually—from good to better to best? What are some old beliefs and traditions we do not avoid or will not change?

One day I was driving in Samoa, and along the way I stopped and picked up a man who was carrying

a huge load on his shoulders. He hopped into the back of the pickup truck with his load and I drove off. A while later I looked in the rearview mirror, and to my surprise I saw the man standing in the back of the truck, still carrying the huge load on his shoulders. I had assumed he would put his load down in the truck, then sit down and rest his shoulders until I dropped him off at his village.

Sometimes the “putting away” of customs and traditions that conflict with the principles of the gospel is a

great challenge for people who join the Church.

There are some customs and traditions which can stop us from improving and progressing from good to better, or from better to best. The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us the *best* principles to help us change our lives.

Getting into the back of my truck, the man never thought that putting his load on the floor and sitting down would be the best thing to do.

Think about some gospel principles that can help to produce a

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spiritual lift in our lives: faith, humility, service, repentance, love, prayer, forgiveness—to name just a few. They can help us to make firm changes from good to better to best.

These are the principles of salvation; they are celestial laws. If we are not able to abide these laws, we cannot abide a celestial glory (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:22).

The Wright brothers' flight journey started in a very humble way. While they experienced many challenges in their lives, they believed it wasn't where they started that counted but where they were headed.

Attention to the small and simple things in life will take you on to greater things. Many great men and women came from small and humble beginnings. They didn't stop at being just good people; they tried their utmost to become the best.

Our Lord Jesus Christ started His earthly life from humble beginnings. He atoned for our sins and opened the door for us to be exalted if we will keep His commandments.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ will never be a substitute for our responsibility to keep the commandments, so we can be exalted. Our Saviour has shown us the *best* way for us to return to live with Him and our Father in Heaven. May each of us do our homework and commit to becoming the best son or daughter of God we can become. ■

Missionary Hero Died Saving Five Children

By Gayle Ryan

Missionary Elder Aaron Ahkau Matapa Patiole is still remembered as a hero in the island of Samoa.

Aaron Ahkau Matapa Patiole, from Sydney, Australia, had been on his mission in Apia, Samoa, for eleven months before he was struck by a car and killed.

The 21-year-old was walking along a street with his companion, helping

five children return home on a Sunday afternoon last November.

Elder Patiole pushed the children to safety over a fence to his companion, to avoid a swerving car. On this day, Elder Patiole returned to his Father in Heaven.

A week later, the five children and their family were baptised by Elder Patiole's companion, Elder Timoteo from California.

Aaron's love of life and the Lord, his generosity of time and spirit were impressed upon us as we shared a Sabbath afternoon in his family home.

Born in New Zealand to Samoan parents, Aaron was the fourth of six



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Sister Patiole with some of Aaron's artwork

siblings. The family moved to Australia when he was three months old. His happy demeanour and good humour affected all those around him. His only sister, Tagi, said he liked to joke and loved family time, especially spending time with his nieces and nephews.

Aaron had a missionary attitude well before he went on his mission, his family said.

In his youth, Aaron enjoyed rugby and basketball, supported the Wallabies (even when they played New Zealand) and was a big fan of Liverpool Football Club. Aaron displayed talent in his creative ability, producing outstanding artwork while at St. Gregory's High School. He completed his studies in 2015, and there's no doubt he was a much revered student. Aaron worked for a year at several jobs to save for his mission.

Prior to his mission, Aaron attended seminary and institute and participated

in pioneer treks. He loved the gospel and lived his life accordingly.

Sister Patiole, Aaron's mother, had arrived in Samoa the Tuesday before Aaron's accident, to visit her relatives. The following week she brought her son back to lay to rest in Cawdor cemetery.

The service for Elder Patiole was conducted by the Pacific Area President Elder O. Vincent Haleck. Over a thousand people attended the funeral, spilling into the corridors to

pay their respects. The Patiole family have been overwhelmed by the love and support they received and continue to feel. They received letters from the First Presidency and the mission presidency, and the mother of Aaron's companion rings Sister Patiole each week.

Each day, Sister Patiole travels to Cawdor before sunset to visit the resting place of her son. This sweet woman waits for the sunset to fall over where he is laid—a poignant and beautiful reminder that, as Sister Patiole commented, "he is in a better place. And we'll see him again, as we understand the plan of salvation."

Aaron's family were delighted to find that the missionary had saved his testimony on his computer.

In his own words, Aaron stated, "I know that everyone is different . . . the Lord has provided a way for us to be united and feel His love and find that peace and unity we all long for." ■

Olympic Star Wins Medals in Swimming and Golf

By Craig Raeside

Despite being born with an intellectual disability, Brian Clarke has maintained a zest for life and a passion for sport.

The 37-year-old member of the Adelaide Australia Firlle Stake has won medals in two different sports at the Special Olympics Australia.



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Brian began swimming with Special Olympics Australia at the age of five and won his first medal at 10. He continued swimming and winning competitions, mainly in freestyle and backstroke.

In 2006 Brian attended the World Special Olympics in Ireland, where he won a gold medal in the 200m freestyle and silver medal in the 4x200m freestyle relay.

He recalls, "I never swam the medals for myself, but I swam the gold for my Auntie Ady and the silver for my

grandma," both of whom died shortly before the Olympics.

Five years ago Brian retired from swimming, stating, "I got to the top and found there was nothing there."

Brian's mother, Christine, states that Brian first got into swimming because it was something that did not involve competitions on Sunday, so he was free to attend church regularly. After he stopped swimming he looked for another sport that did not conflict with his Sundays. Golf seemed the perfect choice, with practice during the week and competition on Saturdays.

"I just loved the swing," says Brian.

He gathered some leftover clubs and, even though he is left-handed, began playing right-handed. He started practicing every day after work at Bedford Industries, where he is mostly involved in gardening.

Since Brian does not have a driver's license, his mother picks him up from work and drives to one of his two favourite courses, where she caddies for him and fills in his scorecard.

Brian simply states, "I got better and better," so much so that he normally gets even par 72 on a full 18-hole course. He has never had a coach and is self-taught.

Every four years in Australia there is a Special Olympics competition. In April 2018 the games were held in Adelaide, where Brian won a bronze medal in golf. He was the only South Australian in golf and understands

he was the only Latter-day Saint in the Special Olympics. He is hopeful of attending the next World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi in 2019.

"I hate golf," explains Christine, but despite that sentiment, she has found a way to spend time with her son every day.

Brian agrees that "the most important things in my life are my family and golf."

Last year he raised all the money to take himself and his mother to Texas, USA, for a competition by collecting thousands of bottles and cans.

Mum says, "I love my kids and I love to see them enjoy themselves. Winning medals just goes with the territory."

Both Brian and his mother exemplify how dedication to each other, their faith and sport can make winners of us all. ■

Rugby Stars Put Career on Hold for Mission

By Emily Kwok and Thomas Swain

Like any passionate young men, Rugby stars Young Tonumaipea and Richard Kennar dreamed of working in a career they love. But when it comes to your career or your faith, which one would you choose?

Young and Richard made national headlines when they announced they

would leave their respective rugby clubs to serve a mission. Young will leave his club, the Melbourne Storm, and Richard will leave South Sydney Rabbitohs.

Richard Kennar, age 23, said, “Playing in front of 50,000 to 60,000 people is the best feeling ever, but it only lasts a couple of hours. The

gospel lasts forever, and the joy goes deep down in your soul.”

Richard shared that the decision for him to serve a mission came when he attended a Latter-day Saint young single adult convention in early 2018 and heard a young woman express her feelings that she wished her father held the priesthood. Richard reflected on the times his own father gave him priesthood blessings when he needed surgeries for rugby, and he desired for more families to have fathers who hold the priesthood.

Richard said, “The priesthood is a gift you cannot buy no matter how much money you have. I want to honour the priesthood that I hold by serving a mission and I want families to be blessed by it.”

Richard admitted he felt anxious to tell his coach when he received his mission call in May. He recounted that he prayed, fasted and visited the temple for a few weeks before he shared the news with his club. To his surprise, his coach responded, “I know how much your faith means to you and . . . I’m glad you’re standing up for what you believe in.” Richard added that the club, its CEO and his teammates were all supportive of his decision.

Richard said that rugby has exposed him to a “high-class life” that can be tempting for a young person, and the physical and emotional intensity of the sport are unseen by the



✦ *Richard Kennar knew he needed to serve a mission after hearing a young woman express her desire for her dad to hold the priesthood.*

✦ *Young Tonumaipea said it is a priesthood holder's duty to serve a mission.*



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public. He said that he has learned to rely on his faith in Jesus Christ to manage the challenges that come with the sport.

Richard will continue to represent his team until he leaves for a Scotland/Ireland mission this month.

Young, age 25, from the Melbourne Australia Craigieburn Stake, transitioned to professional rugby league straight from high school, where he played virtually every sport on offer.

“I played anything at school—volleyball, table tennis, soccer, AFL and rugby. I’ve always been blessed at sports.”

Even though some of Young’s fans have been skeptical of his decision, the club has been remarkably understanding. “It’s actually amazed me how unbelievably supportive the club has been; I feel very blessed.”

In 2011, fellow rugby mate Lagi Setu left the Broncos to serve a mission in Birmingham, England.

“Lagi is a great example to me. Even though I was living my dream playing rugby, I . . . could see all the blessings in Lagi’s life that came from his mission.”

“Even though I didn’t fully commit until last year, a mission has always been in the back of my mind, even before rugby.”

For what appears to be a tremendous sacrifice in the peak of his career, Young said serving a mission is the right thing to do.

“I was so nervous telling the club, I fasted and prayed before going to see Coach. Being in the prime of my career, I knew this wouldn’t be easy, but the day I decided to go and talk with him he happened to be walking towards me down the corridor. I knew that was no coincidence.”

“I feel I don’t deserve all the congratulations I’m getting for choosing to go on a mission; as priesthood holders it’s a duty we have to fulfill as young men.”

“My advice to any of the youth or YSA is to stay true to what you know. The hardest times in my career have

been when I’ve been away from the teachings of Heavenly Father. When I was doing the right thing, I was doing well at sport.”

Melbourne Storm CEO Dave Donaghy is sure that if Young wants to come back after his two-year mission, “he has plenty of footy left in him.”

Young said, “If there was ever a regret in my life, it would have been to serve a mission earlier [in my life].”

Young is not sure what the future holds when he returns from Germany in two years, “but I have faith that things will work out.” ■

Then and Now—40th Anniversary Celebration of Chapel

By Sandra Kelly

More than 40 years ago today, the Gympie chapel first began being used by Church members in the local area. On Saturday, 26 May 2018, approximately 200 current and past members and friends of the Gympie Ward gathered to commemorate the opening of their first chapel in Gympie, Queensland.

Former Gympie mayor Mick Venardos, who was present at the original groundbreaking for this chapel in October 1977 and the official building opening on 13 May 1978, attended with his wife and spoke of

how the Church benefits the Gympie community.

Rich Tramacchi, second generation of a four-generation family in Gympie, said, “It was great to see Mick Venardos and his wife, Tina, there. They attended our original dedication service and also again after extensions in 1986, where Mr Venardos spoke at our Sunday service. They have truly been friends of the Church.”

Fifteen local leaders have served the community since the Church was formally established in Gympie in 1967.



Past Gympie council mayor Mick Venardos participated in the groundbreaking in 1977 and reenacted the groundbreaking 41 years later.



Six of eight surviving bishops and branch presidents were present to cut the cake.

Six of the eight surviving bishops or branch presidents were present. These past leaders were honored by being asked to cut the cake.

The 40th anniversary event also included a display of the history

of the Church in the Gympie area, movie clips, guest-book signing, short speeches and time for old friends and families to catch up. Guests travelled from across Queensland to attend this memorable event. ■

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