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HE GAVE ME PEACE

My brother Brady was a presidential management intern working in naval intelligence at the US Pentagon when the attacks of September 11, 2001, occurred. I was working in Idaho, USA, at the time, and when I saw the news that morning about what had happened, I called my boss to let him know I would not be coming to work for several days.

A few members of my family gathered in Washington, D.C., at a hotel ballroom that government officials had designated as a briefing room, where they could update the families on the ongoing recovery efforts. We waited day after day to learn whether Brady had been among the victims. The feeling in that environment was one of insurmountable grief and hopelessness. Yet our family banded together and prayed that whatever happened, we would not lose our faith.

Nearly one week after the attacks, on September 17, we received confirmation that Brady had died.

I don't know that I ever asked, "Why me?" But I certainly asked, "Why *him*?" From the time I was a child, I had loved, admired, and wanted to be just like Brady. I also wondered, "Why *now*?" For several weeks, Brady had been planning a trip to Idaho to spend time with family. He was scheduled to come on Thursday, September 13, just two days after he had died.

The first evening back at work after returning to Idaho, I opened my professional e-mail account, which I hadn't done since September 10. There in my inbox was a message from Brady. He had sent it Tuesday morning, just before the attack. In it he talked about our getting together and all the fun things we had planned. When he signed off, he simply wrote, "Peace."

That wasn't how Brady usually ended his e-mails, but I count it as a tender mercy of the Lord that he did so. I don't think Brady knew what was going to happen, but I love that his last words—his last word—to me was *peace*.

Even now, more than a decade later, I occasionally reread that e-mail. Every time I do, I am reminded that it is through the gospel that we can find the peace the Savior promised: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Of course I still miss Brady, but because of the gospel, I have not lost my faith to this trial. Through the help of the Savior, I have been able to move forward with hope and with peace. ■
Carson Howell, Utah, USA

ASK THE MORMON

All young men over the age of 18 in Finland are required to serve in the military for 6 to 12 months. As I began my required service, I found that the opinions and attitudes of many of my army buddies conflicted with my principles. As a result, I took steps to stay close to the Spirit, praying at least twice a day and reading the scriptures.

At first I was nervous because I didn't know how my buddies would react, but they didn't seem to care, so I relaxed. After a while my bunk mates asked what I was reading. "The Book of Mormon," I told them directly. Their next question, of course, was whether I was a Latter-day Saint. I told them I was, and for a while, they let the matter drop.

In time a few of my army buddies began to ask about the Book of Mormon—its origin, contents, and so forth. Later their questions ranged from the purpose of life to principles of the Church. My religion became a natural part of our discussions, and it popped up in almost any situation.

One fellow in a neighboring bunk asked if he could read from my Book of Mormon. Of course I said yes. On another occasion, after a roommate had returned from attending a funeral for a friend, he told me that the funeral had raised many questions in his mind about life and its purpose. He asked me what the Church believed about those things. We had a

long discussion about the purpose of life, the Atonement, the Creation, and other gospel topics. Afterward, other roommates became interested in the Church's teachings and standards.

During the rest of our time together, we had many discussions that always seemed to turn to the Church's teachings. My roommates called these discussions "Ask the Mormon" sessions. Later, after we had graduated from our training, one roommate told me he had decided to quit swearing.

Throughout my time in the military, I noticed that the more open I was about my Church membership and

the more faithfully I followed gospel teachings, the more open others were toward me and the more opportunities I had to share the gospel.

I am thankful for the blessings and opportunities I had to talk about the gospel during my army service. I testify that if we are bold in standing up for our values, we will be blessed with opportunities to do missionary work. And if we let the light of the gospel shine freely in our lives, we can protect ourselves from darkness and have a positive influence on the world around us. ■

Kari Koponen, Uusimaa, Finland



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in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:17).

As I spoke, I felt the Spirit fill me with peace and power. I bore witness of God's great love for His children and of their divine nature, amazing potential, and eternal worth. I taught that God's commandments demonstrate His love because they provide the path to the greatest happiness. And I declared that Jesus Christ can heal wounds of both nature and nurture.

Before I knew it, my 30 minutes of allotted time had passed. I backed slowly away from the podium, gathered my papers, and looked up. A sacred stillness filled the room. Some people were smiling and others were crying. Teachers who held opposing views thanked me for my courage and conviction. One colleague confessed that she had been touched by a "special spirit" as I spoke. Others told me they had never heard such a sensitive and respectful articulation of such beliefs and that my words had helped them see that the school's curriculum needed to change.

The Master, who had calmed the raging tempest by commanding, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39) had done it again—this time for me!

Through this experience, I learned that we are never alone when we stand for truth. The Lord's help is ever near. As He promised, "I will go before your face. I will be on your

WOULD HE CALM MY STORMS?

As a fifth-grade teacher at a private school in Massachusetts, USA, I had been meeting with administrators to discuss the school's diversity curriculum, which opposed the principles in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." My efforts to stand for truths about marriage and family and to promote objectivity, respect, and understanding, however, resulted in a storm of misunderstanding, ridicule, and persecution.

At times I felt like the Apostles crossing the tempest-tossed Sea of Galilee while Jesus slept. I felt that my faith, like theirs, had begun to falter, and I too wondered, "Carest thou not that [I] perish?" (Mark 4:38).

I believed that Jesus had indeed rebuked the raging wind and waves long ago, but as my trials intensified, it became hard for me to trust that He would calm my storms.

One day a school administrator asked me to explain my concerns to the entire faculty and staff at a diversity-training meeting. As I prepared for this presentation, my personal prayers, scripture study, and temple attendance became increasingly sincere, and I felt the Spirit guiding me to know what to say.

When the time came to address my colleagues, I took courage from the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie

right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

With my whole soul, I testify that He is a God of deliverance. I know this truth because He rescued me. He calmed my storms. ■

Nick Gentile, Utah, USA

MY ANSWER CAME FROM CONFERENCE

In 2006 I was taking an anthropology class at a Catholic college. Our teacher assigned us to conduct research about a particular religion and present it to the rest of the class. I chose to make my presentation about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—after all, I had been a member for 21 years. I knew this would be a rare and marvelous opportunity to share what I believed with 40 colleagues and friends.

During the two months I had to prepare my presentation, I struggled to find a simple way to present the doctrines I hold dear in a way that my classmates would understand. I wasn't sure what points I should make or how I should make them. When my presentation was a week away, I still didn't know what to do. In desperation, I prayed and asked for the Lord's help.

My answer came in the form of general conference, which was held

that weekend. During the April 2006 conference, President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, gave a talk titled “The Restoration of All Things.”¹ I felt the Holy Ghost confirm that the truths President Faust shared—and the way he shared them—were a pattern I could follow in giving my presentation.

I downloaded a copy of the talk from the Internet following conference and used it as the basis for preparing a slideshow presentation, which I delivered the next week.

Because of all the questions my teacher and classmates posed, my presentation about the Church lasted 40 minutes.



I had been allotted 20 minutes, but because of all the questions my teacher and classmates posed, the presentation lasted 40 minutes—the entire duration of the class.

When I finished, our teacher pointed out that none of his students had ever made such a good presentation. He gave me a high grade and told me that the only reason I didn't get a perfect score on my presentation was because I hadn't shown impartiality to the theme.

I later shared with the teacher the *Liahona* web page, where he could find President Faust's talk and others he might find helpful. I also gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon and asked him to read it, inviting him to talk with me afterward.

I was grateful to learn that the presentation had influenced some of the students as well. Throughout the rest of the year, I saw evidence of the difference it had made in their lives. One of them even received the missionaries in his home, which gave us a great opportunity to continue our conversation about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to share my beliefs with my classmates. But more important, I am grateful that I came to learn that the Lord answers our heartfelt prayers through the words of modern prophets and apostles. ■

Sara Magnussen Fortes, São Paulo, Brazil

NOTE

1. See James E. Faust, “The Restoration of All Things,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 61–62, 67–68.