

I Found Peace and Hope in the Gospel

By Bryan Chatima

I was born the youngest of six children in a small town called Bindura, Zimbabwe, Africa. My parents divorced a few years after my birth, and my good, loving mother had to raise us—four girls and two boys—by herself.

Life was tough for us. I had to walk four or five kilometers (3 miles) to school, and I would go without shoes or anything to eat. Each year I could never complete the term because we could not pay the school fees. There was no place in the world to get money to pay the fees on time. Whenever we did get money, I tried to trace how we got it, but it was untraceable. It's miraculous to consider how well we were raised. It's all because of the love and will of our Father in Heaven.

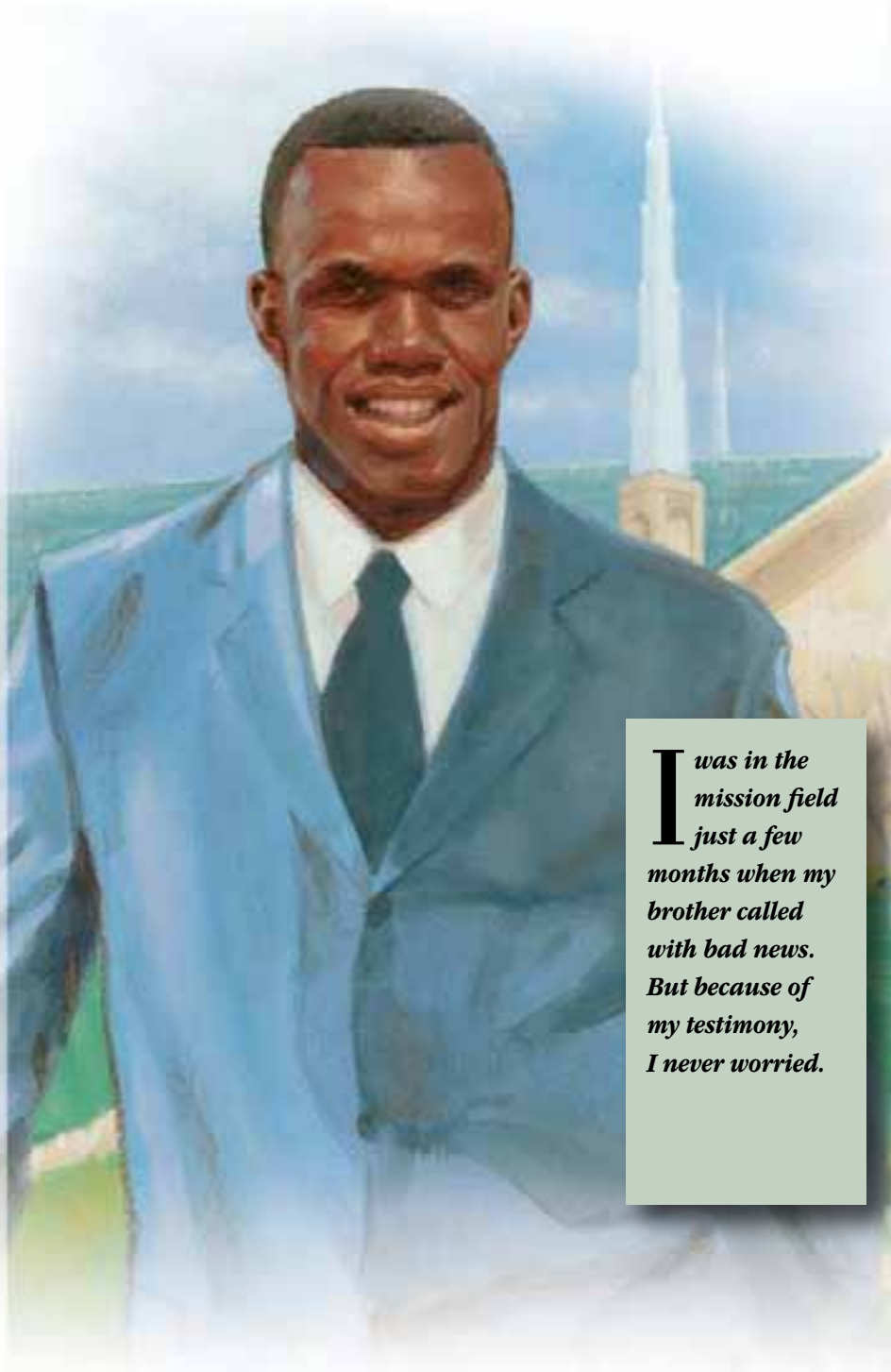
My mother liked going to church, and because I was the youngest, I would go with her. In 1998, when I was 13 years old, two Latter-day Saint missionaries came to my neighborhood to visit less-active members. I was playing soccer with my friend when the missionaries passed through. We spoke with them, and the missionaries asked if they could visit us the following week. They taught us, and

we accepted the invitation to be baptized.

Four years later, in 2002, my father and one of my sisters died just a week apart. I carried on, serving as a district

missionary until I received my full-time mission call in July 2004 to serve in the South Africa Durban Mission. I was in the mission field just a few months when my brother called my

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mission president, informing him that my mother had died and had already been buried. Can you picture how it feels to lose such a mother? Four months later another sister died.

As a missionary, I had been teaching people about the restored gospel. Because of my testimony, I never worried about my losses. I had peace of mind and hope that in due time I would see my parents and sisters again. On the way home from my mission in July 2006, I went to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple and was baptized on behalf of my male family members who had passed on, and I had baptisms performed for my sisters who had died.

Conditions in Zimbabwe remain difficult, but I have a tremendous testimony of the good that can come through following Church leaders and programs. Despite all our challenges, we can find peace and hope in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. God be thanked that He watches and guides His Church and His children. I thank Him for the temple, which gives us peace and hope that we will meet with our families again.

The Lord said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Despite life’s challenges, may we keep hoping for good, never doubting and never questioning the Lord’s will. ■

Exactly What I Needed

By Sarah Cutler

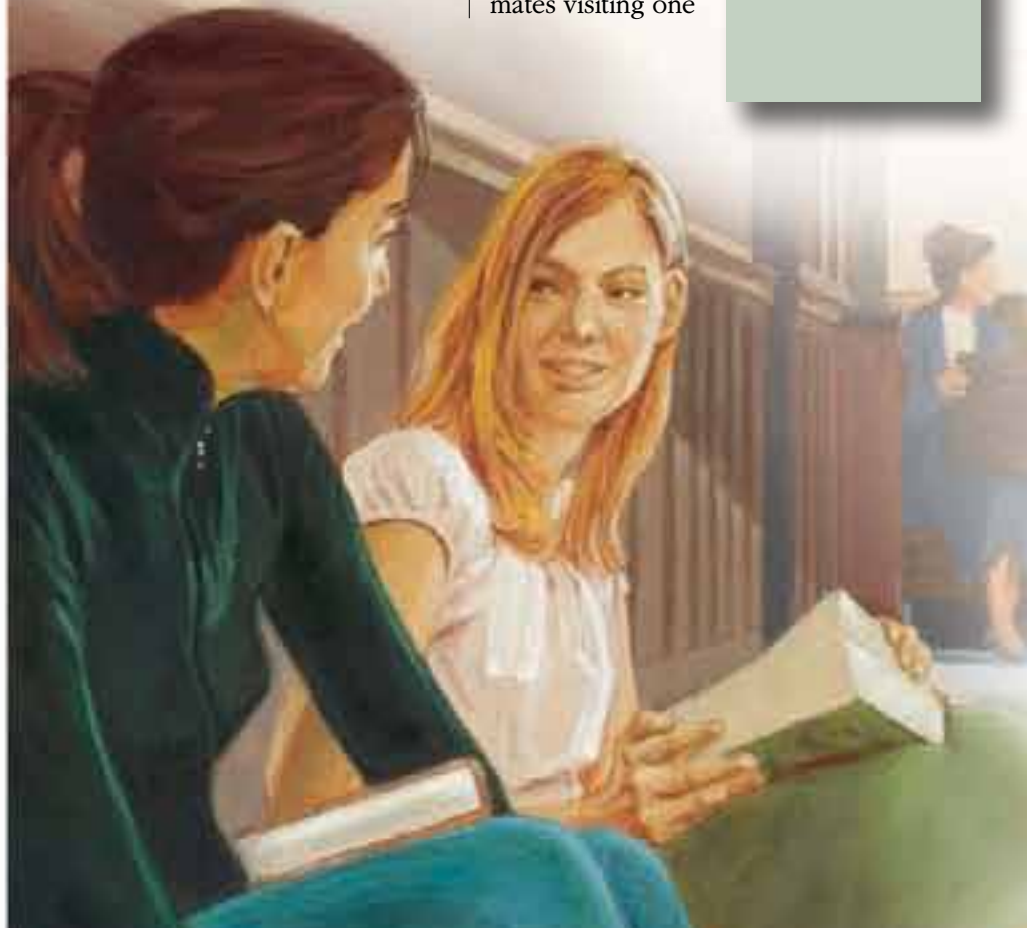
With a full schedule ahead of me, I dashed out the door early, my backpack full to bursting with the textbooks, self-defense uniform, dance shoes, sack lunch, and sack dinner I would need to survive yet another busy college day. I had two tests I didn’t feel prepared for, reading I hadn’t finished, and not enough time to get everywhere I needed to go that day.

Wearing the skirt I would need for my dance test, I felt ridiculous

with my huge backpack and desperate that I wouldn’t be on time to my first class. When I tripped and fell in the middle of a busy intersection in front of dozens of students and cars, my embarrassment and frustration, along with the hole in my new nylons, pushed me to tears. Seven o’clock in the morning, and I was already crying.

As I picked myself up and hobbled to school, I prayed fervently for the Lord to send someone to cheer me up. It would have been nice to see my mom, but she was two states away. Maybe the Lord could answer my prayer through one of my roommates visiting one

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of my classes. Or maybe He would send that boy in the ward whom I liked so much.

I looked around expectantly as I hurried to my first class but didn't see anyone I knew. I took my first test, still in tears, and rushed to my second class, arriving late. I was still upset as I ran to my third class and as I hurried to get ready for my next test. I did better on my test than I had expected and was calming down a little when I found a quiet hallway where I could eat my lunch while studying. I was bent over my books when I heard someone call my name.

I looked up to see my visiting teacher, whom I had never before seen on campus. She sat down next to me, and we talked for almost an hour—not about my frustrations that day but about things that were going well for me, our plans, and things that worried her.

It wasn't until she left that I remembered my pleading prayer that morning. *Of course* the Lord would answer my prayer through the woman called to watch over me. I had wanted someone to cheer me up early that morning, but He knew I'd be ready to see a friend later in the day—when I had calmed down enough to be able to receive the comfort I needed and to extend comfort to another who had her own challenges.

The Lord knew me and sent me exactly what I needed exactly when I needed it. ■



My Prayer in a Stockyard

By Connie Crookston Forsgren

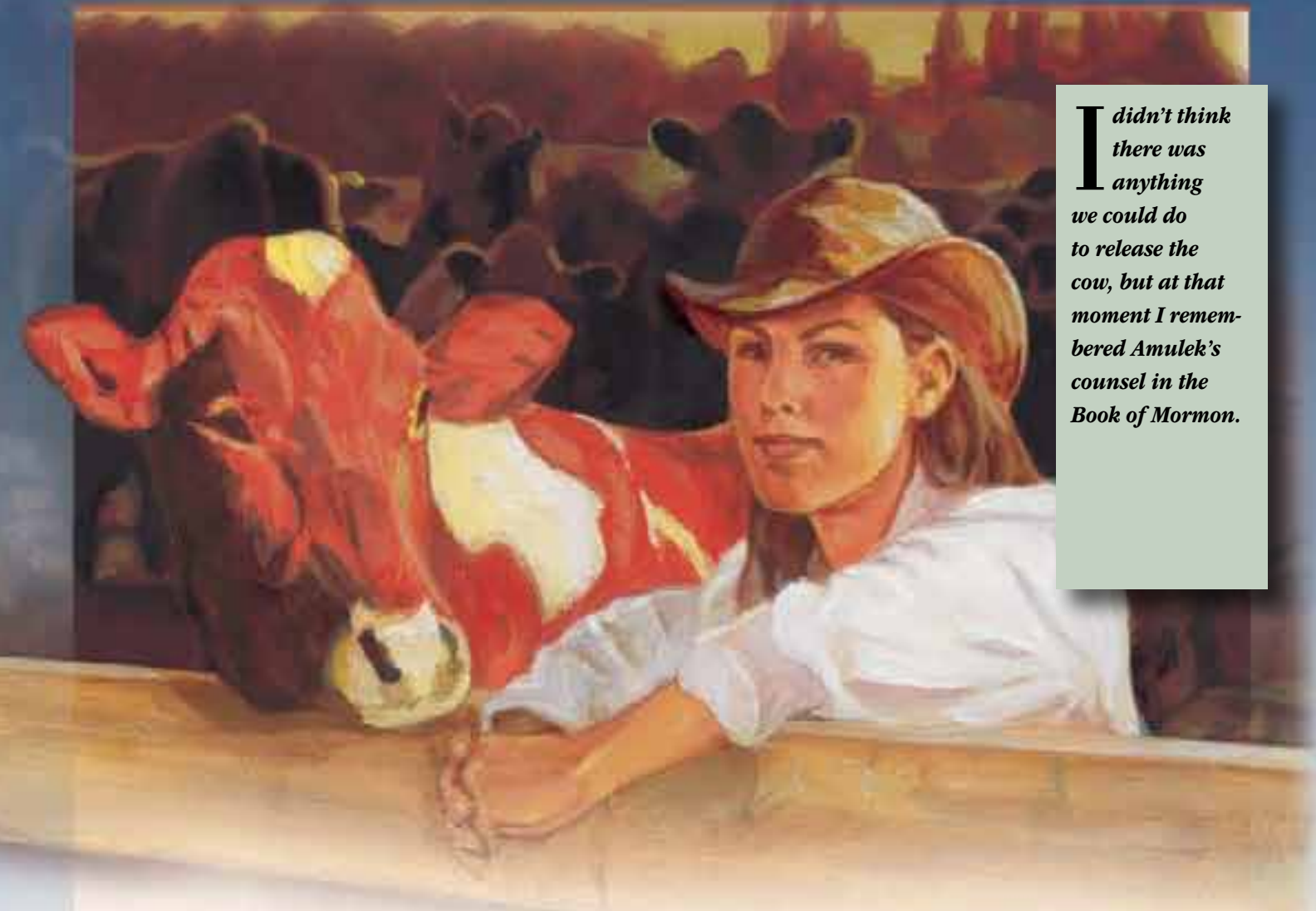
Because of a drought, my husband, John, and I had to either sell our beef cattle at a loss or move them from the Melba Valley, in southwestern Idaho, USA. Fortunately, John found summer range at a cousin's family farm, located in the Preston area, about 300 miles (480 km) away.

We arranged for a trucker to take all 40 cattle in one load, but he didn't like the looks of a rough ranch road that led to the

cattle pasture, still 20 miles (32 km) away. To our disappointment, he unloaded them at nearby stockyards. There we were, late in the day with 40 head of cattle to transport and no way to do it.

John stopped a local farmer, explained our plight, and asked for help. Minutes later Bishop Steve Meeks and his young son followed us to the stockyards to see what could be done.

The cattle had become unsettled. Seeing a broken section of fence at the stockyard, they ran toward it, seeking freedom. All the cattle hurdled the fence into another enclosure—except for one cow. She managed to get most of the way over, but one hind leg



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slipped between two fence planks. She ended up hanging precariously on the fence, one front foot barely touching the ground. She kicked her other hind leg furiously in an effort to free herself.

Releasing the cow would require hoisting equipment. If she broke a leg, we would have to put her down. To lose a cow would put considerable financial strain on us.

The cow weighed more than 1,000 pounds (455 kg), and we could not get near her, nor help her if we did. The havoc on the fence made the rest of the cattle nervous.

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I remembered Amulek's counsel in the Book of Mormon: "Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks" (Alma 34:20). I withdrew myself from the others, knelt down, and prayed with all the sincerity of my heart. Concluding my supplication, I pleaded, "Heavenly Father, please help the cow."

I returned to the corral, the prayer still lingering on my lips. By now the cattle had quieted somewhat, including the one on the fence.

Suddenly, the largest of the milling animals broke away from the herd. Resisting our efforts to turn her back, she moved toward the dangling cow. Lowering her head, she dropped to

her knees, forced her way under the stranded cow, and staggered slowly to her feet. She lifted the tangled cow into the air and then lowered her. The cow was free! A hoist could not have done as well.

As the two cows ran back to the herd, Bishop Meeks stared in disbelief at what he had just witnessed. My tears flowed as I whispered, "Thank You, Heavenly Father."

Anyone who knows cattle will tell you that cows do not reason things out in their minds. But there is an explanation for this incident. Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers. He answered mine—at a stockyard in Preston, Idaho. ■

Stacking Wood in Kuopio

By Briant Jenson

In late summer of 1968 my missionary companion, Elder Ken Heaton, and I visited a part-member family in Kuopio, Finland. The mother and daughter were members of the Church, but the father was not.

At the wife's request, we taught her and her daughter the discussions—loudly enough for the husband to hear from where he was in an adjacent room. When we tried to get him to join us, he said he didn't have time. On one occasion his excuse was that he had a pile of lumber in the backyard that needed to be cut and stacked for winter.

"If the lumber were all cut and stacked, would you let us teach you?" we asked.


"Yes," he replied. But there was so much wood, he added, that it would take him a long time before he could complete the job.

Several days later, after waiting for the father to leave for work, my companion and I returned to the home. With the wife's permission, we spent the entire day cutting and stacking wood. We finished at 5:00 p.m., just before he returned home.

We couldn't wait to see his face, but we scurried away before he caught us. After riding our bicycles home and cleaning up, we pedaled back to the home at about 7:00 p.m.

"OK, the wood is cut!" we proclaimed. "Now will you let us teach you?"

He could only smile, nod his head, and join us in the front room. Several weeks later, after hearing the missionary discussions, this good brother was baptized and confirmed. ■



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