

I STILL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE

*As an elderly woman, I felt that my life
had little purpose—until the words of a song
reminded me otherwise.*

By Jual Daniels

As a member of the Church, I was taught that service was a way of life, and over the years I found many opportunities to serve. Some time each week might be spent preparing the lesson I would give the following Sunday. It was easy to make a large pot of soup so I could share with an older widow that lived across the street. Cookies and banana bread recipes were always doubled so I could pass them around to family and friends. I served my children by babysitting my grandchildren on busy days. We would go on nature walks, enjoy treats together, or wear out our little red wagon giving rides around the block.

Then (and it came about so quickly) I found myself in an elderly arthritic body. Now it was great-grandchildren who came and dragged out Grandma's toy box. How I wished I could get down on the floor and romp with them or pick them up and swing them around. I missed that warm feeling and the thank-yous and hugs that came with serving.

When I was younger, my father would sometimes say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." I missed that too. Now I didn't feel needed. It seemed as though my life had little purpose.

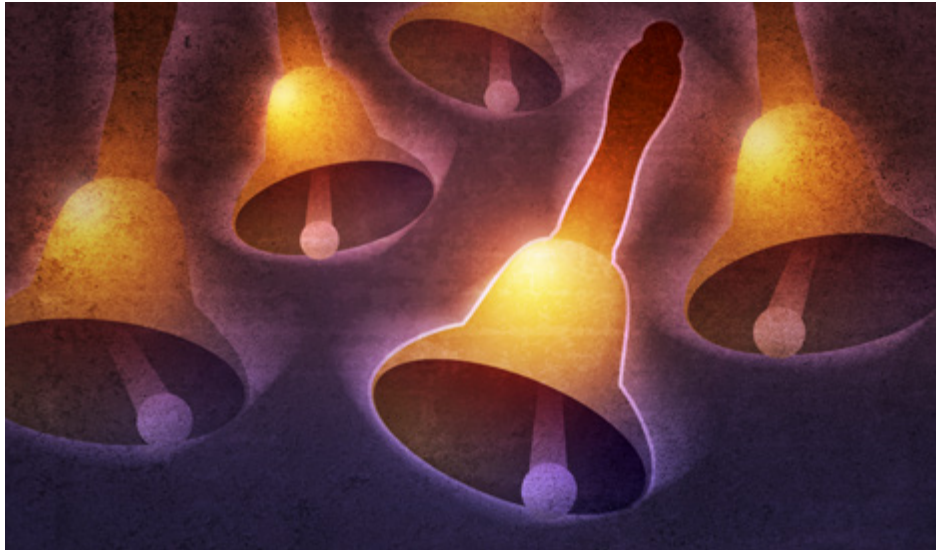
Then one day, while reading a novel, I came across these song lyrics:

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in¹



I read the words over and over again and then once more. I felt like someone had wrapped me in a warm blanket. I knew my Heavenly Father was telling me He loved me. He knew I couldn't serve the way I used to. It was as if He said to me, "Find some other way. Be a good example and do the best you can. Your offering may not be perfect, but it is enough. You are not a perfect being. My Only Begotten Son was the only perfect one. You have faults that make a crack in your armor. Study the scriptures more, be less judgmental, and be kind and caring. Be the best you can be, and one day the light from the Savior will shine through that crack and touch your heart and you will become perfect like Him."

Speaking at a Brigham Young University devotional in March 2001, President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: "Every sister who stands for truth and righteousness diminishes the influence of evil. Every sister who strengthens and protects her family is doing the work of God. Every sister who lives as a woman of God becomes a beacon for others to follow and plants seeds of righteous influence that will be harvested for decades to come."²

We all have bells to ring. We are children of God living among children of God. We are all needed. Some bells may be rusty, some out of tune, but to those we love and serve by our example, the music will be beautiful. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. From the song "Anthem" by Leonard Cohen (1992).
2. M. Russell Ballard, "Here Am I, Send Me" (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 13, 2001), 4, speeches.byu.edu.