

Help to Heal

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

During World War II, I was ordained an elder—one week before I departed for active duty with the navy. A member of my bishopric was at the train station to bid me farewell. Just before train time, he placed in my hand a book: *The Missionary's Hand Book*. I laughed and commented, "I'll be in the navy—not on a mission." He answered, "Take it anyway. It may come in handy."

It did. During basic training our company commander instructed us how we might best pack our clothing in a large seabag. He then advised, "If you have a hard, rectangular object you can place in the bottom of the bag, your clothes will stay more firm." I thought, "Where am I going to find a hard, rectangular object?" Suddenly I remembered *The Missionary's Hand Book*. And thus it served for 12 weeks at the bottom of that seabag.

The night preceding our Christmas leave, the barracks were quiet. Suddenly I became aware that my buddy in the adjoining bunk—a member of the Church, Leland Merrill—was moaning in pain. I asked, "What's the matter, Merrill?"

He replied, "I'm sick. I'm really sick."

The hours lengthened; his groans grew louder. Then, in desperation, he whispered, "Monson, aren't you an elder?" I acknowledged this to be so, whereupon he pleaded, "Give me a blessing."

I became very much aware that I had never given a blessing. My prayer to God was a plea for help. The answer came: "Look in the bottom of the seabag." Thus, at 2:00 a.m. I emptied the bag. I then took to the



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night-light *The Missionary's Hand Book* and read how one blesses the sick. With about 120 curious sailors looking on, I proceeded with the blessing. Before I could again stow my gear, Leland Merrill was sleeping.

The next morning, Merrill smilingly turned to me and said, "Monson, I'm glad you hold the priesthood!" His gladness was only surpassed by my gratitude—gratitude not only for the priesthood but for being worthy to receive the help I required in a time of desperate need.

If we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. His help has come

to me on countless occasions throughout my life. ●

From an April 2007 general conference address.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. At first President Monson thought he wouldn't need *The Missionary's Hand Book* because he was going in the navy, but he found out he needed to know the things that were in it. How can knowing what is in the scriptures help you in different times and places?

2. Leland Merrill showed his faith in God and in the power of the priesthood by asking for a blessing. How can you show your faith?

3. How do you think President Monson felt, knowing that 120 other sailors were watching him give his first priesthood blessing? How can you have the courage to do what Heavenly Father wants, even when other people watching you may not understand?

