

Relief Society Seal History



History of the Relief Society Seal

In 1913, Emmeline B. Wells, then general president of the Relief Society, and her counselors, Clarissa S. Williams and Julina L. Smith, established a motto for Relief Society: “Charity never faileth” (1 Corinthians 13:8). This scriptural declaration hearkened back to the Prophet Joseph Smith’s instructions to the members of the Relief Society in Nauvoo to “relieve the poor” and to “save souls” (in Relief Society Minute Book, Nauvoo, Illinois, June 9, 1842, Church History Library, 63). This motto was incorporated into the original Relief Society seal, which also included a hand-drawn RS monogram and was first used in 1913.



In 1917 wheat was adopted as a symbol of Relief Society. In the late 1800s, Brigham Young had encouraged Relief Society sisters to store grain, and they responded faithfully. The Relief Society was able to use the wheat sisters had stored to help others throughout the world, including victims of drought, fire, and famine. They also sold 200,000 bushels to the United States government during World War I. (See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 52–54.)

In March 1931 the Relief Society General Board decided to adopt blue and gold as the official Relief Society colors. This decision was announced in the Relief Society handbook later that year, and the colors would later be used for the Relief Society seal.

In 1941 art students in Utah were invited to submit designs for a seal commemorating the centennial of Relief Society, March 17, 1942. Elements from the submitted designs, along with the original design, were used in

creating the final design, which included the motto; an image of wheat; an image of a torch, symbolizing the century of light that had come to women since the organization of Relief Society; the RS monogram, and the years 1842 and 1942.



Another seal was also created in 1942. It was identical to the centennial seal except that it did not include the year 1942. This design was used as the official Relief Society seal for many years.



The seal was modified in the 1980s using new technology to provide a cleaner, more reproducible image. The new version retained the same basic elements as the 1942 version.



In 2000 a new seal was created that incorporated the words *Relief Society* into the design. This seal was designed in English only and was used on a few Church products in the 2000s.



A New Seal Is Developed

During 2011 the Church's Visual Identity Office, Intellectual Property Office, and Relief Society presidency discussed options for redesigning the Relief Society seal so it related more closely to the Church. The 1980s version of the seal contained the RS monogram but did not include the words *Relief Society*. The seal created in 2000 illustrated the need to include the words, but a formal modification and approval was not obtained at that time.

The Visual Identity Office (VIO) reviewed the existing seal with the Correlation Intellectual Property Office and concluded that a permanent modification that included the words would add clarity to the mark and bring it a step closer to being an identifiable mark and organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The proposal for the change was submitted to the Relief Society presidency, and Sister Julie B. Beck presented the proposal to the Priesthood Executive Committee. In September 2011, the committee approved a recommendation to trademark the Relief Society seal in the USA and Canada in order to protect it from misuse. The trademarked version of the seal would incorporate previous modifications into a simplified design.

The simplified design was to retain much of the existing design; however, the new design would eliminate the date (1842) from the circle to make room for the phrase "Charity Never Faleth" at the bottom of the circle. Moving the phrase to the bottom allowed space to place "Relief Society" at the top of the circle.

Various elements that had previously been a part of the seal were refined and kept in place. Tracy Sabin, an illustrator from California, was commissioned by the VIO to redesign the wheat detail, while in-house designers refined the torch and light rays emanating from the torch. Some minor refinement was done to align the circles and their weights. A color board was presented to the Relief Society presidency to determine the

exact blue and gold colors. Final colors were chosen and implemented into the design.

Since the seal was to be used internationally, a suggestion was made to remove the monogram in the center and replace it with an element that could be universal. An illustration of a grouping of wheat was placed for a visual, but it was quickly determined to redesign each monogram to be unique to each language. The standard translation proofing cycle was used, and each country had an opportunity to review and approve each monogram. A total of 84 international Relief Society seals would be created and used for various Relief Society materials.

A style guide was created to provide parameters for properly using the Relief Society seal. The guide included spacing, color, font use, and other guidelines to help create consistency throughout the various Relief Society materials and presentations.



Creative Team:

David Vandivere / VIO Manager and
Lead Designer
Patric Gerber / Senior Designer
Alan Klay / Senior Designer
Linda Ferre / Designer
Rich Poulsen / Designer
Susan Fielden / Electronic Specialist
Jordan Blaser / Intern

Contracted Creative:

Richter 7 / Salt Lake City, UT
Sabingrafik / San Diego, CA

Relief Society Seals

1913 to Present



1913



1942



1942



1980s



2000s



2012

Relief Society Seals

From the 1980s



Albanian 101



Bulgarian 112



Cambodian 258



Cebuano 853



Chinese 265



Chinese Simplified
266



Croatian 119



Czech 121



Danish 110



Dutch 10



English 000



Estonian 124



Fijian 858



Finnish 130



French 140



German 150



Greek 133



Hungarian 135



Ilokano 864



Indonesian 299



Italian 160



Japanese 300



Korean 320



Latvian 153



Lithuanian 156



Malagasy 654



Mongolian 363



Norwegian 170



Polish 166



Portuguese 059



Romanian 171



Russian 173



Samoan 890



Spanish 002



Swahili 743



Swedish 180



Tagalog 893



Tahitian 895



Thai 425



Tongan 900



Ukrainian 182



Vietnamese 435

Relief Society Seals

As of February 2012



Albanian 101



Bulgarian 112



Cambodian 258



Cebuano 853



Chinese 265



Chinese Simplified
266



Croatian 119



Czech 121



Danish 110



Dutch 10



English 000



Estonian 124



Fijian 858



Finnish 130



French 140



German 150



Greek 133



Hungarian 135



Ilokano 864



Indonesian 299



Italian 160



Japanese 300



Korean 320



Latvian 153



Lithuanian 156



Malagasy 654



Mongolian 363



Norwegian 170



Polish 166



Portuguese 059



Romanian 171



Russian 173



Samoan 890



Spanish 002



Swahili 743



Swedish 180



Tagalog 893



Tahitian 895



Thai 425



Tongan 900



Ukrainian 182



Vietnamese 435

THE CHURCH OF
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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS