



Relief Society initiated the Gospel Literacy Effort to teach basic literacy skills to Church members who could not read or write.

Relief Society collected 350,000 quilts in response to a need for 30,000 quilts for Kosovo refugees.



New release of history of Relief Society announced in the October 2010 general conference by General President Julie B. Beck.

General President Linda K. Burton invited Church members worldwide to come to the aid of refugees (see IWasAStranger.lds.org).

 <p>1992 150th anniversary of Relief Society.</p> <p>Relief Society General President Elaine L. Jack asked Relief Societies around the world to celebrate through community service and other projects.</p> <p>PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON SWENSEN, DESERET NEWS</p> <p>ELAINE L. JACK 1990</p>	 <p>1999 General President Mary Ellen W. Smoot spoke at the second World Congress of Families, in Rome, Italy.</p> <p>MARY ELLEN W. SMOOT 1997</p>	 <p>2004 First world-wide leadership training meeting for women's auxiliaries.</p> <p>BONNIE D. PARKIN 2002</p>	 <p>2007 "Studying and applying the history of Relief Society gives definition and expression to who we are as . . . followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ."¹² —Julie B. Beck</p> <p>PHOTOGRAPH OF MARY ELLEN W. SMOOT BY STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS</p>	 <p>2010 Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society released by the Church.</p>	 <p>2012 General President Linda K. Burton invited Church members worldwide to come to the aid of refugees (see IWasAStranger.lds.org).</p>	 <p>2016 175th anniversary of Relief Society.</p>	 <p>2020 For more Relief Society history, go to history.lds.org/women.</p>
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Today, thanks to the leadership of faithful Relief Society sisters over the past 175 years, Relief Societies throughout the world help those in need. For instance, Relief Society leaders in Caracas, Venezuela, wanted to find ways for the sisters to serve. They visited a facility for the elderly and were shown to a room of women who were lying curled up on the floor and not wearing any clothing. The Relief Society sisters wept as they bathed, dressed, and fed the women and cut their hair.

people"—both men and women—can be "armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory." This is the divine destiny for all of God's children who are covenant keepers.

Sister Stephens: Understanding the reach of our divine destiny is found in the answers to two questions: (1) Do you know who you are? (2) Do you know what you have? If we understood what we have, we'd understand that we have all that we need. Through the ordinances and covenants we make in the temple, we have the blessings, the power, and the authority of all things pertaining to priesthood. We're not ordained. We don't know why. Being ordained to the priesthood from father to son has been the order of God since the days of Adam and Eve.

Sister Reeves: I have a testimony that covenant-keeping women recognize that our Father has given us all we need to return to His presence through making and keeping covenants.

8. What is the most important thing you would like Relief Society sisters to remember?

Sister Burton: In Doctrine and Covenants 45:3 it says: "Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him."

"Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren [and sisters] that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life" (verse 5). I love Christ's tenderness toward us. He is pleading our cause because He loves us! He wants us to come unto Him! Let us love and increase our faith in Jesus Christ and in our Heavenly Father.

As covenant daughters of God scattered upon all the face of the earth today, we are armed in great glory with righteousness and with the power of God. As we remember our purpose, rejoice in and keep our covenants, we will be seen as "distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world," and we can help prepare the world for the return of our Savior Jesus Christ. ■



NOTES

1. Emma Smith, in Relief Society Minute Book, Mar. 17, 1842, 13, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. Joseph Smith, in Relief Society Minute Book, June 9, 1842, 63.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.1.1.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 223.
5. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 27.
6. *Teachings of Presidents: Spencer W. Kimball*, 223.
7. See Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (1992), 138.
8. Zina D. H. Young, "First General Conference of the Relief Society," *Women's Exponent*, Apr. 15, 1889, 172.
9. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 96, 97.
10. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 3.
11. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
12. Julie B. Beck, "'Daughters in My Kingdom': The History and Work of Relief Society," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 114.

This interview was conducted by LaRene Porter Gaunt, Church Magazines. Time line and sidebar information by Kate Holbrook, Church History Department.

PURPOSE OF RELIEF SOCIETY

Relief Society helps prepare women for the blessings of eternal life as they

- increase faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement;
- strengthen individuals, families, and homes through ordinances and covenants; and
- work in unity to help those in need.