



APPENDIX A

B
PRESIDENT HINCKLEY'S REMARKS AT
JUÁREZ ACADEMY FIRESIDE

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 1997

My beloved brethren and sisters, what a great opportunity it is to be with you. You look wonderful to me. It's good to see so many of you and so many who are smiling and bright and happy. I want to thank this choir for their beautiful music. Maybe we will send you up to Salt Lake and send the Tabernacle Choir down here and see what you can do to improve them.

Now, my dear friends and associates, I am glad to be here on the occasion when you celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the academy. That occasion has provided an opportunity for me to be here. I have been traveling much across the world. I have met with our people in many places, hundreds of thousands of them, all through South America, all through Central America, in many parts of Europe, in Asia, and most recently, in New Zealand and Australia; and now I am glad for the opportunity to be here in the colonies in Mexico.

This place stands out in the history of our people. These little colonies in northern Mexico have made such a tremendous contribution to the Church over the more than a century that they have been established. Brother Call has told you of some of those who have gone forth from this place. I didn't know before that this place had furnished more mission presidents than any other stake in the Church. I guess that is true. It is

hard to believe. These little spots of green in Mexico where boys have been born and grown and become men of faith and have gone out across the world bearing testimony and witness of the truth of this great latter-day work.

I have been thinking as we have been coming down here of how hard our people have worked. We are commemorating this year the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley. They came from Nauvoo as outcasts, driven from that city which they had built from the swamps in a period of seven years, with brick homes, with beautiful buildings, with a magnificent temple. Oh, how they worked to create the beauty of Nauvoo, and then in the early spring of 1846 they were driven out. It took them 130 days to cross the state of Iowa through terrible weather, through deep mud, across bridgeless rivers to reach the Missouri River where they established a community at Kaneshville, now known as Council Bluffs, and at Winter Quarters in northern Omaha. Then the next year they came west, a journey of 111 days.

I stand in absolute awe of Brigham Young. He had to have seen that valley in a vision. Otherwise he never would have had the temerity to establish that as the stopping place. No white man had ever lived there before. No plow had ever broken that desert soil. They knew nothing of the seasons, of the weather, of the frost, and yet he said, "This is the place." Behind him were thousands who were following to come west. I don't know how he had the courage to be assured that they would be able to grow the food they needed in that vast outpost, uninhabited in the west. Oh, how they worked! They worked and worked and slaved to gain a foothold where Salt Lake City now stands, and then they spread east and west and north and south, up into the northern part of the United States and into Canada, down into Arizona and New Mexico, and then here where they worked and worked and worked. I stand in absolute awe of what they accomplished. And why did they do it? It was because of the conviction which they carried in their hearts. It wasn't because they revered Brigham Young. I believe it was because they had a testimony of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, and Brigham Young was the interpreter which gave voice to their testimony.

Now I marvel at what I see. I have been here twice before, but somehow it looks better now. The homes are better. There is more of lawn and shrubbery and flowers

and certainly more of apple trees and peaches. I have wondered how your forebears ever found this place. I am satisfied they must have been led here by the inspiration of the Almighty. I believe with all my heart that God was watching over them and that they planted here not only a colony but a future for the work of the Lord in these narrow valleys. I thank the Lord for the faith and the testimony and the conviction of the people of Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán. God bless you for your tremendous contribution, for your great faith, for your love of the Lord.

You ought to be the very best people in all the world because you are trying to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. You pray night and morning, you have family prayer in your homes, you live the Word of Wisdom, you send your sons and daughters on missions, you pay your tithing, you look to the Lord and rely upon Him in faith. God bless you, my beloved associates, in this great and divine work.

Now, the past is behind us, no more lumbering wagons moving down here from the states, no more of the great struggles of trying to establish a community or two or three or four or five here, no more revolutions to drive you out and cause you great concern. You have good titles to your lands, you have good homes, you have beautiful Church buildings, you have the academy here, and you have a good measure of prosperity in your lives. The Lord has been kind to you because of your faith and faithfulness, and I hope and pray that that will always be the case.

I marvel at the contributions that have come out of these colonies, not only mission presidents who have gone across the world, but bishops and stake presidents, Area Presidents, regional representatives, General Authorities of the Church, including counselors in the First Presidency. And with all of that great contribution you have gone forward with your lives here and built these strong wonderful communities. May the Lord continue to smile upon you. You have now become a part of a great, vast congregation of Latter-day Saints across the world. The few hundreds of you who are here are a part of the ten million Latter-day Saints throughout the world. Marvelous things are happening in the Church. The past is behind us, and, in my judgment, this is the greatest season in the history of this work. We are not persecuted very much anymore. We are listened to, we are talked about, we are written about.

Everywhere we went in New Zealand and Australia there were newspaper reporters, radio and television people. The one question they asked everywhere was this: "How is it that you are growing so fast when other churches are losing membership?" My answer: "People are looking for a solid anchor in a world that is coming apart. Families are falling apart, and we are retaining the strength of our families. Those are the reasons that this Church continues to go and grow and build."

We are doing marvelous things. We now maintain the largest private university in America—BYU, the alma mater of many of you. We have more than three hundred thousand seminary students across the world. We maintain the largest family history archives in the world. We have more missionaries in the field than any other organization of which I know. We will build, beginning this summer, what I think will be the largest religious hall of assembly that I know of anywhere. It will seat some twenty-two thousand people. It is all part of this great forward thrust of the Church.

I thank the Lord for this wonderful day in which you and I live. God is blessing His work. He is blessing His people. He is opening the windows of heaven down upon them.

We were in St. Louis this past Sunday and Monday, where we dedicated the fiftieth working temple of the Church. This is the greatest era in the history of the Church. This is the greatest era in the history of the world for temple building. I would like to see the time come when all of our people throughout the world could get to a temple without too much inconvenience. I think you are about as far away as anybody, and I don't know quite what to do about you. There aren't enough of you to justify a temple. Now, if you would multiply the membership here and get about twenty thousand members of the Church here, or thirty thousand, we would build a beautiful temple. That's a challenge for you. You may decide it easier to keep going to Mesa.

What wonderful things are happening in temple building. Who would have dreamed twenty-five years ago that we would have houses of the Lord in Germany, in Sweden, in parts of England where we haven't had them, in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, up and down South America. When we were recently in South America, we broke ground for a new temple in Recife and a new temple somewhere else I am not

going to tell you about. We will continue to build temples in the United States, but I think we will build more temples outside of the United States.

We now have more members outside the United States than we have in the United States, and that says something concerning the growth of this work. It took a hundred years, from 1830 to 1930, for the Church to reach a membership of one million; and now in 1997, before the close of the year, we will reach a membership of ten million. I cannot thank the people of this Church enough for your faith in paying your tithing which has made all of this possible, my brothers and sisters. Because of your faith the Church has no debt, and we are able to go forward with these great programs. How blessed we are as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And the future looks brighter than it has ever looked in the past. I have only one regret, and that is that I am so old. Later this month I will have my eighty-seventh birthday. I am almost as old as Loma Call Alder. Where is she? I was on the Sunday School General Board with her many, many years ago. You are only four years older than I am, isn't that right? I think so. Well, I think you have discovered as I have discovered that the golden years are laced with lead.

Now, my dear brothers and sisters, I just wanted to come down here and thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for what you have done, for the generations of Latter-day Saints who, in these little narrow valleys have kept the faith and lived the gospel and, generation after generation, all by yourselves down here, as it were, have gone on serving the Lord in truth and righteousness.

Tomorrow morning we will speak to the graduating class of the academy. What a remarkable thing that school is, that school which has been here for a full century. I am glad we have it. Most of you are the products of that school, as Brother Call has indicated he is. Great and wonderful have been the results of the education obtained there. From the days when Annie Romney, with one mathematics book and one literature book and two or three other little items, taught the children of these colonies until the present time there has been an unbroken line of love for education. God bless you. May He hold you in the palm of His hand and nurture you and guide you and bless you as you serve Him in faith.

Well, I never get over the great prophecy, as I regard it, of section 122 of the Doctrine and Covenants. After the Prophet Joseph had been in Liberty Jail for months through that terrible winter of 1838–39, he cried unto the Lord, “O God, where are thou?” (D&C 121:1). And among the words that came in response were these: “The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee; while the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand. And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors” (D&C 122:1–3). What a marvelous prophecy that is! You and I are living in the day of prophecy fulfilled. The ends of the earth are inquiring after the name of Joseph Smith, and fools speak of him in derision, and hell rages against him while “the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand. And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors.”

My dear friends, some people in the Church feel a little sorry for you. You seem to be so far away from everybody, but your very isolation has been your strength. You have been united together. You have been as a great family. You have shared your sacrifice. You have shared your sorrow. You have helped one another in times of trouble and distress. You had to, because you were here alone. You have become as one great family. Keep it up. Most of your young people will leave here and will probably never come back except to show their children where they grew up, but there will still be a strong congregation of Saints here. Stay that way. Live as you have lived in the past.

And now there are being added to your number these marvelous and wonderful Latter-day Saints who are of Mexican descent, who are natives of this nation and of the people of this land. Build them and strengthen them. They are a wonderful people. We have been with the Spanish-speaking Saints everywhere that they are found and have seen their marvelous faith and their great leadership. The shackles of darkness are falling from the eyes of the descendants of Laman, and they are becoming a pure and delightful people. It would thrill you to see the great crowds to whom we have spo-

ken in South America—thirty thousand in Santiago, fifty thousand in a great football stadium in Buenos Aires—faithful, wonderful Latter-day Saints.

Well, you don't need preaching to. You know the gospel is true. I know that God lives, and so do you. I know that Jesus is the Christ, and so do you. I know that Joseph was a prophet, and so do you. I know that the Book of Mormon is true, and so do you. I know that the priesthood is upon the earth, and so do you. Your testimony is of the same substance as is my testimony of this work.

I want to tell you how much I love you. I mean that. I love you. We pray for you, and we know that you pray for us, and we thank you for your prayers. May heaven smile upon you. I leave a blessing upon you that if you will continue faithful the Lord will bless you. You will have food on your tables, and clothing on your backs, and a shelter over your heads. Your crops will be prospered. The frosts will be stayed, and you will be prospered in the land and will stand here as an island of faith in this great world. God bless you. I repeat, we love you. May you go forward with faith in this great day of opportunity. Send your young men into the mission field. As they serve, you will be blessed. May the Lord smile upon you. I express my love, my testimony, and my blessing, in humility and with thanksgiving, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

(Typescript in Virginia Hatch Romney, *History of the Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Temple*, 1:48–51; manuscript in Virginia Romney's possession)