ARCHDEACON THOMAS VINCENT OF MOOSONEE AND THE HANDICAP OF "METIS" RACIAL STATUS

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

Through its policy of Native Agency, the Church Missionary Society sought to further the rapid spreading of Christianity throughout the entire non-Christian world. The Society's European agents were supposed to be mere catalysts, who would soon be replaced by Native agents. Mission centres were intended to become self-supporting so that Society funds could be transferred elsewhere. The case of Archdeacon Thomas Vincent of Moosonee illustrates one of the difficulties of implementing these policies in the James Bay region, where men of mixed race were considered unfit to succeed their European tutors.

Au moyen de son principe de "Native Agency", la Church Missionary Society cherchait à favoriser la propagation rapide du message chrétien à travers le monde paien. Les agents européens de la Société devaient se limiter à un rôle de catalyseurs dans leur mission. En principe, ils devaient se faire remplacer bientôt après leur installation par des agents autochtones. Il était convenu aussi que les centres missionnaries de la Société deviendraient financièrement indépendants au plus tôt après leur fondation, afin que les ressources de la Société 'ainsi libérées puissent être appliquées ailleurs. Le cas de l'archidiacre Thomas Vincent de Moosonee illustre bien une des difficultés de réaliser cet idéal dans la région de la baie James, où la population métisse était jugée incapable de succéder à ses directeurs européens.

In 1863 twenty-eight year old Thomas Vincent III walked on snowshoes some eight hundred miles from Fort Albany on James Bay to Red River to be ordained a priest in the Church of England. When Vincent's bishop, British-born John Horden, died thirty years later the senior clergyman in the diocese was rejected as his successor. Biographers have advanced a number of reasons as to why Vincent did not become the next Bishop of Moosonee. His age, his preference, his education and training, his intelligence, his personality and his emotional state have all been considered. In addition to these factors, however, it must be recognized that Thomas Vincent was stigmatized by his mixed racial heritage. Bitterly disappointed at his rejection, Vincent wrote "It is a common saying 'That every dog has his day'. Shall I have mine?" The church's policy of promoting Native agency apparently had its limits. A Native clergyman could only rise so far in the church hierarchy controlled by Englishmen.

Vincent's contemporaries were very conscious of pedigrees. On departing England for Moose Factory, John Horden was told to expect a small resident population of Europeans "many of whom have married wiles[sic] of the mixed race." At this location, the largest Hudson's Bay Company post in James Bay, there were no European women except for the missonary's wife. Horden lived with nearly forty H.B.C. employees - Norwegians, Danes, Germans, Highlanders, "Scotch", Indians and "Half breeds". By mid-nineteenth century these Company servants were required to seek the approval of H.B.C. Governor George Simpson if they wished to marry. Births which were illegitimate in the eyes of Europeans had not been uncommon, and Horden blamed them on European bachelors. After nearly two centuries of contact, much racial mixing had taken place. Referring to this mixed population, Horden estimated there were "thousands in the country who had not European mothers."

In this setting the European clergy of the Church Missionary Society, an arm of the Church of England, were expected to develop a self-supporting Native clergy and church. Inevitably the racial composition of the region affected the implementation of this directive. The situation in James Bay differed little in this respect from Red River. There a seminary for Native students was being established by the C.M.S. A clergyman on the scene saw little likelihood of recruiting "pure natives", yet he noted a supply of "half-breed youths who speak the Indian tongue, who are inured to the climate, who inherit the Indian peculiarities very strongly, and who if soundly converted to God will make better Missionaries than the unmixed natives."⁴

C.M.S. historian Eugene Stock established Vincent's credentials in 1890 by referring to him as one of "mixed race." Thirty years later, biographers Andersons and Faries described him as "country-born" and "native-born." Faries himself was from a mixed racial background and undoubtedly considered this choice of vocabulary as the least offensive to his generation. Snyder, a recent biographer, found the Anderson-Faries terminology ambiguous and was hesitant to draw conclusions on Vincent's origins. Sas a result of this confusion in terminology and sparse information on Vincent's family background, the impact of racial prejudice on the clergyman's career has been avoided. This situation can now be remedied thanks to an expanding literature on fur trade

social history.

Vincent's father, John, was one of six children born to Chief Factor Thomas Vincent I whose career was spent in the Fort Albany and Moose Factory region. Thomas I, an Englishman, was among the senior H.B.C. officers during the final years of rivalry with the North West Company. Though charged with "partiality, intolerance, putting away his wife, and drunkenness" he was retained due to the manpower shortage. For a brief time he held the highest rank in the Southern Department while Governors George Simpson and William Williams were at York Factory. His children were borne by Jane Renton, a woman of mixed race. Thomas I retired from the fur trade and, unencumbered by a wife, returned to England. By 1832 his three daughters were married, and his sons James and Thomas II were both in England.

The remaining child, eldest son John, was employed by the H.B.C. and allied with another woman of mixed race, Charlotte Thomas of Moose Factory. John was miserably described as "A Half-breed, weak, timid and useless" and was demoted from clerk to post-master - increasingly the highest occupational rung to which men of mixed race could aspire. He was in charge of Osnaburgh post for five years before quitting the Company's service and moving to Middlechurch (St. Paul's parish) in 1840. It was at Osnaburgh that Thomas Vincent III was born on the first of March, 1835.

Thomas III attended the parish school at Middlechurch and also St. John's Collegiate School. He decided on a missionary career, and offered his services to Bishop David Anderson of Red River. In 1855, when Anderson made his next visit to James Bay, he took the twenty-year old Thomas, a "steady" and "devoted" young man, to be schoolmaster and later a catechist at Moose Factory. In 1860 Vincent was ordained a deacon and stationed at Fort Albany. It was hoped that Vincent would "effectually shut out the Romish priests", Oblates who visited Albany each summer. 9

Vincent married Eliza, mixed race daughter of Chief Factor Joseph Gladman of Ruppert House, in 1861. After the celebrated trek by snowshoe to Red River for ordination in 1863, Vincent was rewarded with recognition by Horden as first Archdeacon of Moosonee in 1883 and by St. John's College with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1893. As a new century dawned Vincent retired to Manitoba, near Stonewall, but soon returned to James Bay as enumerator for the 1901 census. When Horden's successor vacated the bishopric in 1904 Vincent, now sixty-nine years old, offered to fill the vacancy. Rejected, Vincent nevertheless consented to a temporary posting at Albany in 1906. He died there on the sixteenth of January 1907, and was buried at Moose Factory beside his wife Eliza who predeceased him sixteen years earlier. ¹⁰

Having clarified Vincent's background, it is possible to re-examine the clergyman's life-long experiences with racial prejudice. Vincent's career can be conveniently divided into four periods. The last of these ends with his death. The others are terminated by three occasions when the Native clergyman shouldered major responsibilities, twice assuming charge of the entire James Bay region when Horden was in England on furlough, and briefly superintending the diocese after Horden's unexpected death.

1855 - 67

Before Vincent's arrival in James Bay, the Church Missionary Society had experienced four years of experimentations and failure in meeting the challenge of developing a Native staff there. This string of bad luck was broken when Thomas Vincent arrived at Moose Factory in 1855. After spending two years with his new apprentice, Horden expressed the hope that in Vincent he had finally found a Native who would become a missionary "for his countrymen." Thomas proved himself capable of performing the duties of an itinerant teachercatechist by visiting Hannah Bay and Rupert House in the summer of 1857. When ice blocked the water passage to Albany the following spring, Vincent walked there in three days and then proceeded upriver to Martin Falls. In the summer of 1859 he became the first C.M.S. delegate to visit Mistasinni, upriver from Rupert House, crossing fifty-five portages and twenty-seven lakes each way. A few years later, travelling from Albany to Moose in winter, Vincent was forced to take refuge from a snowstorm. Safely ensconced in the populars, he boiled his tea and waited out the storm beneath his rabbitskin blanket for thirty-six hours. This was "simply a Nor' west experience." 11

While undergoing his five year apprenticeship with Horden, Vincent was engaged in a variety of duties which biographer Faries summarized. "The early hours of the morning were devoted to manual work..., three hours to teaching • . . two hours after lunch to systematic study with Horden . . . then a couple of hours of helping Horden in the printing room, or the study of the language, or in doing outside work..., and after supper the hours were devoted to study." No neat schedule could be maintained, however, for the seasons demanded flexibility. It is not surprising, then, to read that gardening or travel or building interrupted the understudy's training. When posted to Albany in 1860 Vincent had to build himself a house, and later a church and school. Stimulating Native agency, he allowed his Native congregation to elect one of their number, Archibald, to lead the congregation when he and Isaac Hardisty were absent. ¹²

When the opportunity for a furlough in England arose, Horden asked the C.M.S. to send him a "young English clergyman" a year in advance, to be groomed as his replacement. He doubted that a Native clergyman would have sufficient "influence" on the Europeans at Moose. He also sought to protect "a young native clergyman" from the temptations of life at headquarters• But no European agents were forthcoming. Horden had to leave the Moose mission in charge of a "tolerably experienced Native". Though he would have preferred a "tried European", Horden conceded that Vincent was "superior to the untried, inexperienced European." The leave of absence was deferred until Thomas was ordained at Red River. ¹³

When Vincent's younger brother returned with him from the ordination, the mission staff numbered just three. Plans for the furlough went ahead. Horden would leave. Thomas, by then thirty years old, married with two young children would take charge of headquarters. His brother would oversee Albany.

Until now, Horden had lavishly praised Thomas Vincent in his correspondence with the C.M.S. Vincent was full of zeal and willing to do anything.

Vincent operated the school satisfactorily. Vincent showed energy and prudence. Vincent was valuable in every way. Horden had great confidence in Vincent, perfect confidence. Bishop Anderson remarked that Vincent had proven his zeal and steadiness. When John Mackay*, another young Native, left the mission staff, Horden stated that Vincent was a better teacher and had more influence over the Indians. In later years, Horden would reverse this judgment and find Vincent inferior to Mackay, partly because the latter married a non-Native wife. ¹⁴ When Horden returned to Moose Factory after his absence in England a reassessment of Thomas Vincent began. It soon became apparent that for a clergyman of mixed race there were limits to the opportunities available in the mission field.

Horden praised Vincent's "diligent and painstaking" performance while in charge of Moose, but faulted him for lacking the "personal influence" and "weight of character which is needed for so important a position." The senior man concluded that "for some time" the Moose mission must be staffed by European clergy. This confirmed a belief he had expressed seven years earlier and would continue to hold until his death. It might be argued that Horden merely recognized the strong prejudices in Rupert's Land among fur trade officers, for he claimed on another occasion that "in an English pulpit" Vincent would be acceptable "without any allowance being made for his being a native of Hudson's Bay." It seems more likely, however, that Horden shared the fur traders' racial views since he made it clear that the fault lay solely with Vincent. It was conceivable that Natives might one day attain "the very highest positions in the management of the affairs of the Church in this country" - but only when "the native character has become more solidified." There is little to confirm one biographer's view that these remarks by Horden reflect a concern over Vincent's "financial naiveté". Nor is there any truth in the suggestion that Vincent's "enthusiasm for the goose hunt, for physical exertion, for the out-of-doors" was "unmissionary-like". Horden stated that a missionary "will be frequently obliged to hunt his own living" and "will be taught to do everything required to be done in the Mission, from building a house to the making [sic] a loaf of bread."16

Christopher Fenn, an influential figure in the Church Missionary Society, could not accept Horden's view that its European agents must inevitably superintend the Natives of James Bay. He recommended that Horden give Vincent more freedom, delegate more responsibility and let him learn from his mistakes: "The Native should feel that the European is rather with him than over him". Fenn felt that Horden ought to "insist" that Native Christians respect their Native clergy ¹⁷ - though it seems to have been the Europeans who were the problem.

Horden assured his superior that he understood this advice, yet he seems to have assumed that Natives could only serve as his "assistants". Fenn's philosophy was clear. The "Native Church must act as a Church if it is to thrive". The indigenous population must not remain dependent on European clergy. ¹⁸ But the policies formulated in London were not easily implemented

^{*}Mackay was ordained at Red River in 1865 and became an important figure in the church's development in the west.

in the mission field.

Vincent's personality was also a factor in Horden's critical reassessment. The Bishop of Ruperts Land expressed great satisfaction with Vincent's performance, but commented on tensions between the Native clergyman and the H.B.C. officer in charge. In fact, the Bishop considered transferring Vincent furthern west to Fort Alexander. The young clergyman would have agreed to the move, but Horden vetoed it. Biographers Anderson and Faries contrasted the personalities of Horden, who "loved his converts into the Christian life", and Vincent, who was "quick to speak and ready to condemn." They said of Vincent that "It was just like him to be outspoken, and he never learned that in this way he made bitter enemies. For the same reason he was not particularly popular among the white people in the country." It is impossible to determine whether Vincent's abrasive personality developed as a reaction to the discrimination he faced. But his mercurial tendencies, once formed, were surely tested by the racial attitudes of "white" H.B.C. officers and clergy.

The defection of his younger brother James to the fur trade did nothing to elevate Thomas in Horden's eyes. If anything this only confirmed the latter's theory of unsettled Native character. James II was born in the west, which may explain his lack of mastery over the Cree language. In 1863 he accompanied Thomas from Red River to James Bay, entering the mission field as a school teacher. James was in charge of Albany during Horden's furlough in England, assisted in summer by Isaac Hardisty and in winter by a man named Francis Heron. In January of 1866 James reported a successful partridge hunt - "got as many as I could comfortably carry home" - and was "studying the Indian language". Three months later, on Easter Sunday, he was unable to address the Indians from the pulpit. ²⁰

On his return, Horden judged that James had performed unsatisfactorily at Albany and at Moose, where he spent the summer of 1867. As James intended leaving the C.M.S. for what Horden considered the "easier life" and better renumeration of the H.B.C., no remedial action was taken. He was released from his obligation to the mission, 21 but for the remainder of Horden's life this former apprentice lived in close proximity. Even in the fur trade James could not escape a relationship with Horden, for the English officer William Broughton became the minister's son-in-law and rose to the rank of Chief Factor.

1868- 1882

Despite the disappointment of finding Vincent unfit to take charge of the Moose mission, Horden wrote confidently of developing a Native church using the resources at hand. Horden urged the appointment of a local Missionary-Bishop, who would eliminate the necessity of supervision from distant Red River. And he assured the Society that he desired no more European clergy. But after John Horden was appointed Bishop of Moosonee a few years later, he modified this view and additions were made to the mission's European staff, 22

In 1872 the James and Hudson Bay portions of Rupert's Land were constituted the Diocese of Moosonee and John Horden became its first bishop. For the next thirty years, headquarters of the diocese would be at Moose Factory. Horden was in his early forties at the time of his appointment, mid-way in his career. The new bishop took office at a time when the inevitable march of "civilization" was reaching the southern margin of his diocese. In 1871 Moose Factory was ten days travel from the transcontinental railway. Yet formerly isolated posts in the interior like Brunswick House, Flying Post, Matawakumma and Matachewan were at most a few miles away from it. Horden felt that Natives near the railway were disappearing as the "white" man approached with his logging, his taverns and his profanity. Interior posts were now more easily supplied by rail from Canada, and the importance of Moose Factory as a transportation centre would decline. Important social changes likewise reached mission headquarters. The status of Native women evidently declined. "There was formerly no society here," wrote Horden, "now we have some European or Canadian ladies." The Bishop's home became the social centre of the district for European men and women of the fur trade. 23

Horden's son, also named John, superintended the Moose mission in the summer of 1871. This was only a temporary arrangement, though Horden dreamed of his son taking charge of the Rupert House mission and perhaps succeeding him as bishop. The bureaucratic and social demands of headquarters prompted the newly-appointed bishop to request another European to assist him. The Native majority and the European minority constituted "two distinct congregations at Moose." Horden placed his order for a young unmarried man, devoted to mission work and linguistically talented. He warned that fluency in one or other of the Native languages was so crucial that he would never ordain a European who could not meet the requirement. ²⁴

It took the C.M.S. two years to meet the bishop's request. First a Mr. Lund seemed the hoped-for candidate. Horden planned to deploy him at Little Whale River on eastern Hudson Bay, but Lund lost interest in travelling to North America. Next a Mr. Reader raised Horden's hopes, but was instead sent to Touchwood Hills in the west. Finally, in 1875, the C.M.S. informed the bishop that one of the four graduates from their college at Islington, Rev. J.H. Keen, had consented to fill the position at Moose. Keen was a farmer's son from the south of England, "steady industrious dependable" with "plenty of common sense and a thoroughly devoted mind." Horden immediately judged his understudy to be "energetic" and "amiable", progressing "admirably in every way", "earnest", "prudent", "patient with stupidity" and gaining facility in the Cree language. Keen served as itinerant missionary at the posts inland from Rupert House. In him Horden had seemingly found a dependable lieutenant. 25

Keen must have gained some degree of fluency in the Cree language, for he was ordained priest by Horden in 1877. The topic of the bishop's ordination sermon was the importance of Native agency. Here Horden gave a revealing insight into the beliefs he had formed over more than two dozen years in the region. He began with the axiom that only a Native "labouring among his own countrymen" could understand "their ways, their mode of thought, their

language, their prejudices, their strong and weak points." Though the apostles had established for the early Christian church a missionary tradition of appointing elders to take charge of each community of converts, this principle was not easily implemented in the James Bay region. There, Native agency was frustrated by the low evolutionary level of the aborigines: illiteracy, only "the slightest elements of religious belief", "comparatively low intellectual faculties" and, consequently, "requiring patient instruction for a long season" before being "fit to be a teacher of others." Horden acknowledged the possibility that at some distant date the entire mission staff "from the Bishop to the most humble schoolmaster . . . shall have risen from the soil." But now was not the time: "Let us not look for the harvest as soon as we have sown the seed." 26

In private correspondence to the Church Missionary Society, Horden and Keen painted a very bleak portrait of the future. After two years in the diocese, Keen categorically stated that Native candidates for the ministry were "not to be found" in the "Indian race in its present state." The "pure" Native would not command the "weight & influence necessary to ensure him proper respect." It is not clear whether this purity referred to race or to the hunting tradition; it was probably a combination. Widespread poverty from living near the subsistence level, and the lack of social stratification were cited as cultural factors which ruled out most of these Natives. In theory, Keen expected that "those Indians who have lived some time amongst Europeans" might be a more promising reservoir of talent, but in practice there were none at hand. The solution to the manpower needs of the diocese seemed to lie in the "half-breed" sector, those "whose lighter skin is universally recognized as a claim to superiority." They were "somewhat numerous", yet Keen reported that even among them "no suitable person can at present be found." 27

At Fort Albany, Thomas Vincent superintended his immense district and travelled much of the length and breadth of the entire diocese. He visited Michipicoten, the Catholic centre on Lake Superior, Brunswick House, Osnaburgh, Long Lake, Rupert House and Mistassini in the 1870's. He travelled twice to Canada on personal business. In 1872 Vincent took his sons to Port Hope to live with their grandfather Joseph Gladman and attend school. This was an opportunity which most Native clergy could not hope for unless they had family connections. Thomas' son George attended St. John's College at Red River, his father's alma mater. In 1876 Vincent visited Canada to act as an executor of Gladman's estate. At Albany proper he was busy with parish duties, reconstructing a house and church, and hunting geese. Horden optimistically wrote of Vincent and his zeal. Vincent was "indefatigable as usual." Vincent was "doing well", to Horden's "entire satisfaction." Vicent "never looked better", was fit and full of energy. Vincent labored faithfully. When floodwaters threatened Albany in the spring of 1880, Thomas Vincent simply climbed a platform of brush and watched as five houses were swept away, all the fences were broken, the flagpole snapped, the porch of his own house was damaged, one side of the church was crushed and the steeple partly carried away. 28

As Horden's next furlough approached, the bishop had to select someone to take charge at Moose Factory in his absence. He had known Vincent more

than two decades, but rejected him for the newcomer Keen whom he had known for about half a dozen. Keen could do very little in the way of manual work, and needed the assistance of a Native servant. But Keen was an Englishman, and therefore the European minority would accept him. A John Mackay (see P. 99) might be adequate at a major post, but a Vincent would require additional training under Horden at Moose in order to qualify for the position - and even then, a Keen would be more dependable. ²⁹ This is what Horden's three decades of experience led him to believe, but events would prove him wrong.

Bishop Horden returned to Moose Factory in the summer of 1882. He had lost Keen, who abruptly abandoned his post during Horden's absence. The cause of the departure was probably nothing more than an urgent wish to marry, for Horden states "he would have found it easier to get the license" through C.M.S. headquarters. Keen wrote that the reason for his "sudden return home.., is infinitely sad." Horden had placed great hope in the young man, expecting him to become the next bishop. The burden was felt most heavily at Moose Factory. Wrote Horden: "For poor Keen's fall I have been the greatest sufferer; on me all the punishment has fallen." Twenty years later a J.H. Keen was listed serving the C.M.S. in British Columbia, suggesting that no serious scandal was involved.

The suddenly vacant headquarters at Moose had passed into the hands of Thomas Vincent for a few months. Horden reported that Vincent had been "indefatigable" in his work at Moose. The following year he appointed Vincent to the honorary position of Archdeacon in recognition of twenty-eight years of "arduous" and "faithful" work in his huge district. 31

1883 - 1893

Horden's senior Native clergyman carried on at Albany as usual. In 1885 there was such a shortage of European clergy that Horden considered posting Vincent to York Factory, second in importance after Moose. Vincent escorted Horden on a tour of the upper Albany River that year. The Archdeacon completed his translation of Pilgrim's Progress into Cree and travelled to England the following winter to see it published. We can only speculate on how this fifty year old Native, two generations removed from England, perceived the country. His financial arrangements probably did little to impress C.M.S. officials at Salisbury Square. Horden had arranged the trip on the premise that Vincent would meet his own expenses. On arriving in London, Vincent asked to be reimbursed for clothes lost en route; he received £25. He asked for contributions for his library at Albany; the Religious Tract Society provided £10. Thomas Vincent no doubt felt the disparity in aid given to European clergy who received a furlough every seven years. And so, he asked the C.M.S. to subsidize his travel costs; the Society granted him £30.³² He undoubtedly impressed church officials in other ways, but a man who would be bishop must engender more than sympathy and his seeming inability to manage finances.

On Horden's last trip to England in 1888-89, Vincent took charge of Moose Factory. Years earlier Horden had requested a salary increase for Vincent in

order to raise his status above that of a clerk in the H.B.C., stating "to three quarters of them he is much superior both in intellect and energy." Snyder cites this as evidence of Horden's respect for the Native. It probably is, but there is also an element of self-interest involved. If Vincent deserved another £,40 or £50, then Horden merited the £60 or £70 he sought. Horden had already passed his final verdict on Vincent in 188S after his long-time colleague served so "indefatigably" at Moose. Vincent was "not quite" fit to be his successor: "in his present position he does very well, but he is not qualified for a higher one; besides which, he is not much younger than myself, and would, in all probability remain in the Mission but a short time after I had left it." 33



While Vincent was in London he discussed the subject of "country born" agents with Christopher Fenn of the C.M.S. Sons of mixed race possessed three advantages over Europeans: they could "rough it" in primitive conditions, they could live on less salary and they would be regarded as "fellow countrymen" by the Indians. When Vincent returned to James Bay, Fenn wrote to ask his opinion on important questions facing the C.M.S. after thirty-five years involvement in the region. Fenn asked the Archdeacon's opinion on the "future of the Indians and the Metis in Moosonee" and whether Native Christians were "capable of being raised by education." He also asked for Thomas' reaction to the theory of intellectual degeneration among the offspring of "those of mixed descent." Vincent's lengthy reply left no doubt that he felt any Native agent

would be preferred to any European: 34

Q. How far is the distinction between Natives and foreigners applicable in Moosonee? Do the Indians regard the white Missionaries who come to them from England as foreigners?

- a. The Natives do regard as foreigners the white missionaries sent to them from England, and indeed all persons coming to them from other lands.
- Q. Does the mere fact of a man being born in the country make a great difference in this respect?
- a. It does make a difference, for instance, a man born in the country, though his parents be white, they will look upon as a countryman of their own.
- Q. Or the fact of his having been born and brought up amongst the Indians, so that he spoke their language from infancy, though he be of pure white blood?
- a. I do not think that this would make any difference; he would still be considered only as a fellow countryman . . . If, however, the party were of mixed descent, then there is a change at once, and he is in all respect considered a brother.
- Q. Would the Indians feel more sympathy with a man of their own tribe, than with one of mixed descent, however perfectly the latter spoke the language?
- In a case of difficulty or dispute they might, perhaps, do so, but not otherwise.
- Q. Would such a man have more influence with them, supposing his qualification to be equal in other respects to those of the pure white or of the mixed descent.
- a. No; I do not think that he would have so much influence.
- Q. Would such a man as Archdeacon J.A. McKay [sic] be more acceptable as Bishop to Indians of his own tribe than a European who spoke the language as well as Bishop Horden?
- a. Yes, I do think that a man like Archdeacon J.A. McKay would be as acceptable to Indians as Bishop, as a European, and indeed, it is my opinion that he would be more so. In this

matter many I know will not agree with me, but that in no way affects my belief.

- Q. Would a pure Indian, if such could be found equal in other qualifications to Archdeacon J.A. McKay, be more acceptable or less acceptable?
- a. I believe that he would be less acceptable. Such is the opinion of some that I have spoken to on this matter, and I quite agree with them, yet, much must always depend upon the character of the men themselves.

Vincent's own prejudices and his self-interest can be seen in the correspondence. Beyond this, however, is the conviction that a Native bishop, himself or Mackay, would be more acceptable to the Native congregations of James Bay. For the C.M.S., though the Natives constituted an overwhelming majority in James Bay, this was only one consideration. The view of the bishop also had to be weighed.

Horden reitterated his lament that there was not another Thomas Vincent nor a second John Mackay, and set out his own racial theories. He felt that in the mission field, as in the fur trade, there should be little difference in the salaries of Europeans and Natives "as all have to live alike." He claimed his Native staff were really as efficient as Europeans: "in some respects they are inferior, but their deficiencies are more than counterbalanced by other qualities not so well developed in Europeans." He objected to the Society's use of the term "Country Born." The distinction between Country Born clergy, like Vincent and his contemporary John Sanders, and seemingly purer Native clergy gave the impression that there was a caste feeling between the two. Sanders was "not a pure Indian" and Vincent was "not a pure white" but there was, even between them, a difference of "degree." Though Horden himself referred to Vincent's parents as "half caste", he recommended the terms Indian and Country Born be abolished in favor of the all-inclusive Native category. Horden revealed his racism most clearly in his theories of hybrid vigor and rigor morris. The "declension of the European intellect in the second or third generation" resulted from a Native's choice of mate. If he married a European woman, as Mackay did, Horden predicted children of "fair intellect" - hybrid vigor. Otherwise mental rigor mortis would set in as with Vincent, whose sons were "all stupid", or Sanders, whose sons were "equally so or worse." 35

The pressing problems of finding a successor and retiring were not Horden's only worries in his final decade. The C.M.S. threatened to start reducing support of the Indian missions in the 1880's, reserving their funds only for strictly missionary work among "heathens" like the Inuit. When the C.M.S. considered withdrawing from the York Factory district Horden predicted dire consequences: if left in the hands of Native clergy, the region would be flooded by the tide of Catholicism. More funds could scarcely be raised from the local population. Company officers contributed to the mission but their salaries

fluctuated with the trade, and were depressed in the 1880's. None of them planned to retire in the diocese. Europeans and "half caste" servants, though poor, contributed their meagre share. There were no "rich Europeans", and the H.B.C. directors in England were little help. The majority of the population was composed of Native hunters who supported the church more liberally than poor "people of their own class in England." The region's annexation by the province of Ontario would bring about an influx of Christian whites along the southern margin of the diocese at Chapleau, more pastoral work which the C.M.S. would not support. And the C.M.S. was "no longer alone in Moosonee", for an Oblate mission was permanently established at Albany in 1892. To meet the challenges of the 1880's and 1890's, Horden presided over his various trust funds amounting to over £12,000. ³⁶ The "character of the diocese" was changing rapidly, and its future bishops would be hard pressed to meet the challenges ahead. A first rate administrator was needed.

Until the need was providentially met in 1890, Horden was deeply concerned by the urgent problem of finding a successor. At Moose a European replacement was needed, or in an emergency a "first class" Native. The Bishop's heir and assistant must be the best in the diocese. Someone was required who could command the respect of the European minority. The Europeans contributed little to the mission, but they demanded a great deal and exercised an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. They wanted educated ministers, university graduates. The financial conditions of the diocese meant a man of "character and influence" was required, to engage in a massive fundraising campaign. Horden carefully considered Mackay for the position, but rejected him. He had lost Keen and other European clergymen. What he desperately sought was a "good English curate, a lover of work, with some ability for the acquisition of languages, with a tolerably firm back bone, and a genial disposition." The diocese required "real men", not half-hearted men who might turn their backs in battle. 37

Returning from England in 1889, Horden interviewed Reverend J.A. Newnham of Montreal. In September of 1890 the C.M.S. informed Horden that Newnham would fill the position. Even before Newnham reached James Bay, Horden was referring to him in C.M.S. correspondence as the "Bishop Expectant." He advised Newnham to make contacts in England, for the diocese would need to raise money in the "outer world." Horden predicted Newnham would become "one of the most valuable workers ever employed in Moosonee" though he realized his successor might never become a fluent Cree speaker. The linguistic deficiency was weighed against his qualities of understanding, energy and prudence. Most important of all were his social connections, an asset which Vincent lacked. Newnham was born in England, a clergyman's son. He graduated from McGill University and gained a dozen years of experience in Montreal churches. He later married Lettitia Henderson, daughter of the Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College. 38

When Newnham left Montreal his future father-in-law praised the "purity of motive and loftiness of ideal" of Newnham in leaving a "civilized mission" and going to James Bay. Others may have thought so. Newnham knew he would

benefit from the move. He hypocritically told his friends that he was leaving behind "society, luxuries and daily intercourse with many friends..., but . . . felt God would make it up to him in many ways." Horden asked the C.M.S. to arrange for Newnham's ordination in 1893. The bishop expected to retire that summer and see his Bible translation through the press in England. But he died at Moose Factory on January 12th 189S. Fur trader James Vincent, one of Horden's early hopefuls, brought the news to his brother Thomas at Albany. The death precipitated an embarrasing period for Newnham and a brief interregnum for Archdeacon Vincent.

The C.M.S. had asked the Archdeacon to give Newnham his support when the younger man reached James Bay in 1891. In reply, Vincent did not conceal his resentment towards Horden: "it is unfortunate . . . I know . . . [him] too well . . . I know what he has done.., and I know how it has been done." As for Newnham, the senior Native clergyman guaranteed nothing. The newcomer would have to earn his respect and friendship. Vincent undoubtedly suspected the plans being made to replace Horden. He pointed out that his Albany district was "greater in extent than the whole of England." And he reminded the Society, with an edge of bitterness that would understandably become more characteristic of Vincent, that he had served them "faithfully . . . for 36 years. This may be nothing." 40

From Horden's death in January until the twenty-third of June the diocese had two men in charge. Officially, one was Thomas Vincent, who wrote four letters to C.M.S. headquarters in London. Two of these were simply notifications of Horden's death and his temporary superintendency. The other two letters reveal, like the correspondence with Fenn on Native agency, something of Vincent that was always lacking in his formal letters and reports. He was free to express himself on subjects which had occupied his mind for decades. He attended to the administrative details of the diocese, but beyond these he alluded to many other matters. "There is much more I would like to say but cannot. Oh! for an hour with you in private!" Like a pressurized vessel suddenly uncorked, a dogged enthusiasm poured out. No matter how short his period in charge, Vincent vowed, "I shall leave my mark. The Diocese requires stirring up, and stirred up it shall be if I be only left alone for a time." He reminded the Society of the thoughts on Native agency he had shared with them a few years previously, opinions which were now "quite unchanged." 41 But his uncertain position constrained him from saying much more. He must have entertained the distant hope that he might be appointed bishop.

The unofficial leader was Jervois Newnham, who also wrote headquarters four times. Horden had planned to give Newnham a great deal of advice and training in the months before his expected retirement. His premature death left Newnham "without any information or instruction, as to the temporalities of the diocese and mission." Newnham had expected a retired Horden to serve the diocese as overseas ambassador. He recognized the immediate financial challenge that Horden's death would mean in declining donations from loyal admirers overseas or in Canada. Yet the sudden death gave the new man a free hand, facilitating change after forty years of virtual "independence & autocracy"

under Horden, Newnham found the Indian work at Moose difficult; the Indians were demanding and he has not fluent in Cree. He relied heavily on Vincent's advice in the months and years ahead. 42

From Montreal, Henderson wrote the C.M.S. asking whether his son-in-law would succeed as Bishop of Moosonee. At Red River, Machray the Bishop of Rupert's Land ended speculation by naming Newnham bishop elect, relying on the recommendations of Horden and C.M.S. Secretary Wigram. Newnham's home newspaper in England carried the story. On the sixth of August 1893 Jervois Newnham was consecrated second Bishop of Moosonee. Father-in-law Henderson delivered the sermon. Coincidentally, Archdeacon Thomas Vincent was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from St. John's College. 43

Vincent had been rejected again, and not for the last time, but at Moose Factory his own son-in-law, Allan Nicolson, spearheaded a drive to commemorate the pioneer bishop with a marble tablet. The Archdeacon of course resented Newnham's appointment, though cordial relations were maintained. He blamed his treatment on "the man", John Horden, and the C.M.S., which accepted Horden's prejudicial assessments of him. Newnham admitted that Horden and Vincent had been at odds, and an overbearing Horden had constrained the Native. The new bishop sympathized with Vincent, who seemed emotionally "unsettled" by the appointment and by the death of his wife two years earlier. Newnham judged Vincent as ideal for the Albany mission, but totally unsuited for an educated English-speaking congregation. 44

Thomas Vincent waited a full year after Newnham's appointment before resuming correspondence with Christopher Fenn. Fenn had politely, if hypocritically, expressed the hope that God would help Vincent with the responsibilities he assumed at Horden's death. God had helped indeed, wrote Vincent sarcastically, but the C.M.S. had helped even more "by removing that responsibility altogether." He pledged continuing loyalty to the Society, but asked them to consider that he had "feeling, and those feelings I would have considered." 45

Horden hoped that in Newnham he had found a man who could recruit Canadians for the north, though he knew from Machray at Red River that it was rare for clergymen to leave Canada for the west. A reservoir of talent was desperately needed once the C.M.S. stopped sending out men for the Indian missions. Canadians demanded the same pension, salary and furloughs given to C.M.S. men. Newnham was unable to attract a competent clergyman or school-teacher despite personal appeals to five theological colleges and several congregations. Those who volunteered were often unsatisfactory. A feeling existed that the C.M.S. sent easterners who were "not up to full standard." Among the Native population, Newnham saw no more Indians or "half-breeds" fit for ordination. This situation was "mortifying & humbling after such long & faithful teaching", but the Bishop blamed the "natural character of the Indian" and the poor example of "bad white men." At Moose Factory, Newnham needed at least one missionary who spoke Cree. He asked for a bachelor, one who could suffer loneliness and hardship, and was a handyman. ⁴⁶

When Vincent retired in 1900, Newnham was sorry to lose a man who was so experienced and proficient. The diocese felt the loss of one of its pillars. In 1902 Vincent appealed for a pension. He offered to assist in translating or other mission work. He felt he deserved a bonus for never having taken a furlough, and was granted six months salary.⁴⁷

When Newnham vacated his position in 1904, Thomas Vincent offered to replace him as bishop and was rejected for the last time. Bishop George Holmes, third Bishop of Moosonee, was so desperate for clergymen that he asked the C.M.S. for the names of "male candidates who have been rejected on health grounds." He called on Vincent to temporarily take charge of Albany, where Thomas Vincent III died at the age of 72 on the sixteenth of January 1907.

Assessment

Thomas Vincent has been faulted for his personality, though this must be weighed with evidence of racial discrimination and a long-standing conflict with Horden. He was probably as well educated as Horden, though he lacked the connections and upbringing of the Englishman. There is no evidence that he lacked ability or intelligence. Nothing confirms the view that he did not seek pastoral or episcopal responsibilities. He did not have Newnham's personal contacts in the church hierarchy on two continents. He did have a perfect command of the Cree language and, with it, an insight into Cree culture which Newnham would never possess. He was older than Newnham and recently widowed. The C.M.S. and the Canadian church would have required a leap of faith to appoint Thomas Vincent their bishop. Instead, they relied on the vertical top-down demands of the bureaucracy. Horden rejected Vincent and in the hierarchical structure his opinion was crucial.

The strongest argument levied against Vincent was that Europeans would not respect him because of his mixed race. Judging from one vehement critic of Horden's, the problem was second-rate clergy of any color. H.B.C. officer James Cotter complained bitterly: "We laity out here may be very wicked but we are no fools, and when we see men like Vincent Nevitt Sanders with not two ideas between the three exalted into the pulpit..., those of us who think at all, are driven to the conclusion that . . . [mission work] is - well - at all events a first rate trade. "51 The remark may be accurate enough concerning the Englishman Nevitt and the Native Sanders, but seems an overly harsh assessment of Vincent.

By late nineteenth century the Diocese of Moosonee required as its bishop one who had personal connections with church officials in Canada and England. In the end, these social and bureaucratic needs proved far more important than the fluency in Native languages Horden had expected of his missionaries. In all the praises written of Thomas Vincent, there is the unwritten assumption that his station in life was as a missionary to Native congregations, and his fate was predetermined by his racial background.

In advancing his ideas of racial mixture, Horden perpetuated a caste theory (Native vs. white) which set upper limits on the careers of Native men. Thomas

Vincent, John Mackay and Richard Faries rose only to the rank of Archdeacon. Newnham fit neatly into the bureaucratic machinery. But by late nineteenth century the machine itself seemed obsolete, incapable of supplying recruits for the mission field. In rejecting men of mixed race for its highest positions, the church made a bad situation worse and perpetuated a paternalistic outlook. Horden underlined the latter at the ordination of Indian William Dick at York Factory in 1889, when he declared it the duty of Europeans was "to consider themselves as the elder brother of the Indians." Nor would most nineteenth century Europeans have considered the church's treatment of men like Vincent cruel or unusual. The eminent scientist, Charles Darwin, wrote in his 1871 publication The Descent of Man that the "American aborigines, Negroes and Europeans" were "as different from each other in mind as any three races that can be named." Clergymen like Horden, Newnham and other British-born missionaries were simply products of their time.

Was Vincent a "Metis"? That term only once appears, in a letter from Christopher Fenn. Churchmen used a variety of racial terms with little precision. "Country born" was usually synonymous with "half breed", "mixed descent" or "half caste", though Fenn makes a reference to "the country born population, whether wholly or partly of Indian blood". To be "Indian" was to be a racially "pure" aborigine or simply a hunter. Vincent did not think of himself as an Indian. To be Indian was to admit one's pagan roots. He criticized the use of the drum at Rupert House as "the first step back to heathenism & conjuring." 53

Vincent was aware of the unrest at Red River in 1870, either through family, church or fur trade connections, and he met Big Bear at Stoney Mountain prison (John Norquay, who became Manitoba's premier in 1878, was related to him). But Vincent's missionary correspondence reveals no feeling of solidarity with any "Metis" cause. Horden worried that if he sent divinity students to Red River they might acquire "notions which I would rather young men working under me should not possess." Bishop Machray at Red River advised Christopher Fenn of the intense resentment felt by Native clergy in the west over the higher salaries paid to Europeans. He observed that "half-breeds" held positions of responsibility in the fur trade, whereas "they feel a sort of stigma [is] put on Natives of the Country in our Mission service." 54

Vincent often seemed like a European, writing his official letters and reports in the common style of his time. In this, as when he wrote of James Bay as "a cold & dreary country", Vincent reflected his training by Europeans, his audience in London and the literary models available in his library. Yet he prided himself on not being an Englishman: "It is good to be English, very good; but there is a possibility of being too English." Perhaps the best clue to Archdeacon Thomas Vincent's identity is his declaration to a friend after reflecting on his mistreatment by Horden: "I was free born, and I think I have the right to exercise my privilege as well as the best Englishman that ever lived.'55

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