Copy

The Right Hon. Colborne, B.D.
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

My dear Bishop -

Your letter of March 14th has been received and duly considered. I shall have to ask you to be more explicit as to just what is implied by the terms "spiritual direction" and "sole authority." Do they mean a renewal of the charge you gave me a few years ago? If they have for you no more meaning now than has been attached to them in the past, I fear I may not be able to accept the charge.

You claim I am "misinformed," you refer to my "supposed difficulties." Fearlessly write that what I see and know might really be the incredible nightmare that it seems! No one could be happier than I, if I could convince myself that my own senses lie. But there are things, Bishop, that cry to heaven, and keep me, blest man, night after night.
Eliminate exaggeration, exaggeration, distortion, misunderstanding, because of the language, give all the excuses and explanations possible, and there will remain cold facts to deal with that cannot be ignored.

Perhaps you think I am witness with solemnness and unconcern the destruction of what cost more than anything material could ever repay. Perhaps you see nothing amiss. I see a policy unjust, heartless, un-Christian, and destructive. More so than I ever dreamed could exist on a Mission field.

These people are poor and ignorant, but they know how to discriminate better than you think, and they have bad little to learn from the example set before them. I cannot blame them if they feel outraged and betrayed.

As for the native workers, it is not their fault that they have not had
the opportunities others have had. For all their deficiencies, they are better adapted for this work than you or I would be. Anyone with a sense of proportion can understand this. Without the help of the natives, I never could have carried on the work I did, and I shall never fail to give them credit for it. And, aside from every other consideration, their fidelity, through thick and thin, entitles them to different treatment than that they have received.

You criticize my action in writing to Dr. Good. I consider him the only authority to whom I could appeal in this case. I could not go to you as judge, being a party to the taking down of the article I consider an affront to me and my office. Even the sincerest courtesy would demand that, owing to my
faction as Suffragan, the Episcopal jurisdiction you gave me of Nebraska 
Limon and Branch Stations, and the recognition due to the whole past 
history of the work here, a thing like this (which is the climax of a series) 
should not have been permitted without asking my consent or 
opinion.

Before it was done, if it had been 
proposed to me, I might have appealed 
to you; but after it was an accom-
plished fact, and when, on the two 
occasions you were in Nebraska 
Limon and talked with me, you 
neither made any apology, explana-
tion or even mention of it. I have a 
right to conclude it was done with 
your consent, if not by your orders. 

Your supreme authority may be 
alleged, but if the Canons are 
silent, common sense and right 
feeling cry aloud in my defense. 
I should like to know what you.
Taylor, or any of the other missionaries on the Island, would say, if in his absence (even if he were in the State — much more on the Island) and without his knowledge or consent, anything should be altered in the Church he built, with infinitely less effort and difficulty than the Church here has cost.

And why was the order not given openly, instead of making use, behind my back, of a man who had already taken passage to leave the Island?

Hence, it is evident why I could not go to the Bishop as his Suffragan, as his friend, or as a plaintiff for his judgement.

Even your letter makes me feel that, were it not for the steps I have taken you would have done nothing.

Besides, I had to appeal to Dr. Good on account of his position. Morally,
I considered that the property belonged to the Board of Missions, because we acted in perfect good faith, but there were still legal transactions to be carried out, before the Board of Trustees of the Church of Jesus could be relieved of their charge. Meanwhile, the use of the property by the Board of Missions involved a responsibility as to its upkeep, but did not imply the power to destroy or alter, without consent.

Your letters of repairs having been made, I maintain that none have been made to keep up the value of the property. The only things done, as far as I can see, have been for the personal comfort of the incumbents (which of course is perfectly all right, and does not amount to anything) while no attempt has been made to repair the leaks in the roof of the Church, or in the tower-room where the Rev. H. Malden-dale lives. The rain pours in on them every time there is
a shower. It is coming down in torrents as I write, and I wonder how they are managing. These repairs could have been attended to willingly, and with almost no expense, long ago. Had not the access to the roof been closed to the natives?

Rooms formerly used for school and Church purposes are used for farm purposes. The School benches have been allowed to be broken to pieces beyond repair, etc., etc. The whole place shows neglect.

As to the way we were treated personally on our arrival, and many other things, I do not care to discuss them, but one would have to be either blind or a fool not to understand that our presence was not only unwelcome but disturbing. That is why I have left everything as far as possible in status quo, until my position is clearly defined. We are still living in the house which fore-seeing what has happened I built.
Again built, with the hope that we might use it, and to allow us that at least some of those we have benefitted will always be ready to receive us, and count it a privilege.

God knows what sincerity and good-will, and what high hopes for the future I offered you my hearty co-operation, and He alone knows the pain and bitter disappointment in which I write this letter.

Committing my cause to Him.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Manuel Fernandez
Bishop Suff.