

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA IN THE 19th CENTURY

**Reasons** for the coming of Christian missionaries in South Africa

### **Introduction:**

They were representatives of Christ who came to Africa to spread Christianity. Some came as individuals and others came under different religious organizations.

Their coming into South Africa was a result of European evangelism during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Britain became the Centre of this religious movement later they spread to other parts of the world.

The individual missionaries who came to South Africa included; John Philip, Van der Kemp, Dr. David Livingstone, Moffat, etc.

These missionaries were sent by different societies like the LMS (London Missionary Society), the Paris evangelical mission (P.E.M), The Dutch Reform Church (D.R.C), the Monrovia missionaries (MM), the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), (CMS), and Verona Fathers.

Each of these groups operated in different areas and among different people as shown below;

The DRC operated among the Dutch .The L.M.S stationed at the cape and operated among the Bantu (Xhosa) and (Khoikhoi). The MM also worked among the Khoikhoi. The PEM was active among the Basuto. The British bible society (BBS) was based at the cape colony. The CMS operated at the Natal. The free church of Scotland operated in natal among the Zulu.

### ***The reasons for their coming:***

Missionaries wanted to spread Christianity among the people of South Africa.

Some came to civilize Africans whom they took to be backward and primitive.

They wanted to de-campaign and stop slavery that was oppressive and exploitative to Africans.

Some came to spread the idea of education, educate Africans whom they believed to be backward and illiterate.

Some came to fight for the freedom of Africans who were being mistreated by the Boers.

They wanted to provide medical services to Africans so as to improve on their health and living conditions.

Some came for commercial reasons i.e. they wanted to trade with Africans. For they were a product of industrial revolution

Some were invited by African leaders e.g. Mosheshe who wanted to be provided with guns and protection against the Boers.

Some came to reduce on the influence of Dutch Reformed Church and challenge the Boer teaching that Africans are an inferior race.

On the other hand, D R C came to preach that the Dutch\ Boers were a superior race than other races.

Others came to clear way for the colonialists i.e. forerunners of European imperialism in South Africa.

The missionaries also wanted to deliver Africans from poverty, diseases and illiteracy.

Others were encouraged to come to South Africa through the work of Dr. David Livingstone and desired to complete it.

They also came to fight for Africans rights like freedom of speech, movement, etc. which the Boers had prohibited.

Others wanted to promote European trade and commerce in South Africa.

Missionaries wanted to do away with backward African cultures like superstition and witchcraft so as to uplift the life of Africans.

***Related Qns:***

Why did European missionaries come to South Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

What made European Christian missionaries come to South Africa?

What were the motives behind the coming of the Christian missionaries in S.A?

***Activities or work of missionaries in South Africa***

***Introduction:*** Define or give background of missionaries in S.A.

Missionaries performed a great deal in the area of politics, economy and social development.

**Their activities or work was both positive and negative.**

They advocated or called for equality, liberty and freedom for Africans i.e. they wanted all people to be equal regardless of their color.

They fought against racial segregation of the Boers.

They campaigned against slavery and fought hard to see that the African slaves were released or set free by the Boer masters.

They advocated for the establishment of Black circuit courts (mobile courts) in order to uphold justice and the rights of the Africans.

They called for passing of the 50<sup>th</sup> ordinance that restored the rights of the Africans.

The missionaries preached against the Pass law that limits Africans movement in S.A.

They protected Africans from the mistreatment of the Boers e.g. Dr. Phillip protected the Khoikhoi against harsh Boer masters and even helped them to take them to court.

Some built stations that later became homes and shelter to run-away slaves e.g. Van der Kemp established stations among the Xhosa.

They translated the Bible into African languages and put many Bantu languages into writing.

They built a number of churches where the Gospel was preached and Christianity spread to the Africans.

They also built hospitals and health centers that improved on the Africans health conditions.

They built schools and taught reading and writing to the Africans.

They built technical schools that enabled Africans to acquire a number of skills like in agriculture, carpentry, shoe making and repair.

Others participated in African conflicts like the Paris Evangelical Mission (PEM) that involved in the conflict of Basuto land (Mosheshe's state).

They also acted as advisors to some African leaders and supplied guns like PEM that advised Mosheshe on how to deal with the Boers.

They taught Africans better methods of farming that later improved on their yields and soil.

They spread western cultures to the Africans and taught them new languages and ways of dressing.

They helped Africans like the Xhosa to regain their land which they had lost during the kaffir wars.

They also traded with the Africans and provided them with the western goods like glasses, clothes, wine etc.

They also built roads so as to improve on transport and communication in South Africa.

Some missionaries like Rev. Phillip encouraged Africans to buy land and look for better employment other than working for the Boers.

They established the first printing press by encouraging Africans to participate in constructive work; therefore fought laziness and idleness among Africans.

They discouraged some African cultures and traditions like polygamy and witchcraft.

Van der Kemp established a mission station that became a headquarter of the Africans in the fights for their rights.

Missionaries also fought against Apartheid; however other missionaries like DRC preached racial segregation and the superiority of whites over Africans.

Through their work, they created an African class of collaborators who worked side by side with the colonialists e.g. Chief Khama of Botswana.

***Related Qn: Explain the activities of missionaries in South Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.***

### ***Effects of the missionary activities in South Africa***

Missionaries divided Africans in different camps e.g. the educated and the un-educated, Christians against the non-Christians etc. through their preaching and teaching.

Many Africans adopted Christianity due to the preaching and influence of the Christian missionaries in South Africa.

African traditional religion was undermined and considered backward and primitive as a result of spread of Christianity.

Many Africans adopted western cultures like ways of dressing, languages, eating, marriage, etc.as a result of missionary teaching.

Some African chiefs lost their respect as most of their people put a lot of respect on the new religion and values preached by missionaries (undermined the traditional authorities).

Some Africans even became stubborn and refused to fight for their chiefs in the tribal wars as a result of missionaries preaching.

Slavery was abolished and Africans became free from their Boer masters as a result of missionaries pressure.

Africans started getting paid jobs since the missionaries encouraged them to run away from the Boers who offered them low wages.

The mission stations they established became homes for the runaway slaves from Boer farms.

Africans signed treaties with Europeans imperialists as a result of missionary activities.

Missionaries led to the establishment of Black circuit courts in 1812 that gave chance to the Africans to report their bad Boer masters.

Africans enjoyed some of their rights like freedom of movement after passing the 50<sup>th</sup> ordinance in 1828 as a result of pressure from missionaries.

They improved on the health conditions of the Africans through building of hospitals.

Missionaries educated Africans and equipped them with knowledge and skills to fight for their rights. For example a school built at Lovedale by missionaries in 1841.

The Africans acquired practical skills like brick laying, carpentry, shoe making, etc. that enabled them to sustain themselves through technical schools built by missionaries.

Many Bantu languages were put into writing by the missionaries as a result of printing presses established and that improved on their communication and status.

Some Africans like the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa regained some of their lands that had been taken by the Boers.

Missionaries created the feeling of independence among the Africans and prepared them for future independence.

Missionary activities led to the creation of independent African churches i.e. churches that broke away from the European missionary controlled churches like the Ethiopian church, messianic and Zionist church led by Africans.

They improved on transport and communication by building roads and bridges that made life better for the Africans.

Africans adopted new methods of farming and improved their yields as a result of missionary training.

The racial segregation reduced and encouraged mixed marriages through missionary preaching and some missionaries married Africans.

Missionaries also laid foundation for the colonization of parts of S.A. and hence led to loss of independence by some African states i.e. Forerunner of colonialism.

Missionaries led to the Barolong tribe to declare their independence from Mosheshe of Basuto hence undermining the African authority.

The Anglo-Boer relationship was spoilt by missionary activities that were in line with the British liberalism and that led to enmity between the British and the Boers.

The Boers always looked at the British missionaries with a lot of suspicion because of enmity between the Boers and the British. Hence the Boers decided to trek from the cape to the interior because they were not happy with the British missionaries.

The slavery was stopped and Africans given freedom and liberty as a result of missionary teachings.

The friction or conflict between the Boers and missionaries also led to the slaughter' Nek rebellion of 1815-1816 against the British rule.

The legitimate trade between the Africans and the Europeans was promoted by the missionaries.

Some mission groups like the DRC promoted the growth of Apartheid in which Africans were segregated.

***Conclusion:***

In conclusion the missionary activities affected the Africans politically, socially and economically and both negatively and positively as shown above.

***Related Qn; How did the missionary activities affect the Africans in South Africa?***

### ***Problems that were faced by missionaries in South Africa***

Missionaries were few compared to the wide area they had to cover i.e. had a problem of man power.

They had limited funds to carry out their activities i.e. inadequate funds.

They had inadequate material supplies to carry out their work for example medicine, gun powder, etc.

They faced a problem of poor transport in the interior of South Africa.

They moved into unknown lands which made them face geographical problems or barriers like mountains, forests etc.

They also faced a problem of language barrier and had to hire interpreters which was expensive and slowed down their work.

They also suffered from tropical diseases like malaria, small pox etc. that killed many of them.

They were opposed by the Boers who supported the separation or segregation of the races i.e. suffered rebellions from the Boers.

They were also hated by the fellow whites because of fighting for the rights of Africans like education, freedom, etc.

Some Europeans refused to co-operate with the missionaries who had married African women like Moffat and Van Der Kemp. They were considered outcast

Many lost their lives in the struggle to assist Africans who were suffering under the Boers particularly the Bantu and the Khoikhoi.

They were also hated by the African traditionalists who wanted to protect their traditional religion and cultures like polygamy.

They were also under constant threats of wild animals that killed and wounded them.

Some Africans whom they had used as their workers were unfaithful and sometimes stole their property.

They also suffered from the harsh climatic conditions which made them sick because they were not used to.

They got involved in conflicts with African chiefs and kings like the Xhosa chiefs and Mpande.

Some African leaders were unpredictable i.e. could welcome missionaries and dismiss them at a short notice.

Sometimes missionaries got involved in wars between blacks and whites through which some of them were killed.

They were frustrated by the Dutch farmers who always chased them from their land.

They lacked where to print their work during the spread of the gospel.

There was disunity among missionaries due to rivalry and competition for work.

They also faced hostile tribes like the Zulu with their numerous or many wars in the interior which caused insecurity and difficult in carrying out their whites.

Many missionaries lived on tension which was caused by the Dutch.

Coming from different cultural backgrounds always brought conflict between Africans and missionaries.

Missionaries faced opposition from African independent churches which had broken away from Mission churches.

**Related Qns:** What challenges were faced by the Christian missionaries in South Africa?

What hardships did they face during their work in South Africa?

What difficulties did they face in South Africa?

### ***Activities/contributions of different missionary groups/ personalities in South Africa***

#### ***The London Missionary Society (L.M.S)***

The L.M.S was one of the earliest missionary groups that operated in South Africa.

It was based at the Cape and operated among the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi.

The important personalities under that group included Van der Kemp and John Phillip.



## **THE ROLES OF VAN DER KEMP OF L.M.S.**

### **Introduction:**

He was among the first missionaries to arrive in South Africa and mainly worked among the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa.

He was a Dutch sent by the L.M.S and arrived at the cape colony in 1779.

He lived and worked among the Xhosa along the Eastern frontier.

### **Roles:**

He was motivated by a strong religious belief of equality of all races. He regarded the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa as human beings with full human rights.

It was because of the equality consideration that he spent two years working with the Xhosa chief and also dressed like the Khoikhoi and walked barefooted among the blacks.

Because of his belief that all people were equal, he married a colored woman whose mother had been a slave.

He encouraged the Africans to work hard especially in farming hence improving their productivity. (He instilled values of the hard work among the Africans).

However, the same reason made him to be hated by the Boers who accused him of encouraging laziness and idleness among Africans.

He established a mission station where African converts stayed.

At the same station, he encouraged Africans to read and write and acquire practical skills in carpentry, brick laying, hoe repair etc.

He is remembered for having encouraged equality among men and women (fought for the rights of women)

His station (Bethelsdorp) was used as a base (headquarters) for the Africans during their war against the whites.

He spread the gospel among the Africans and encouraged western values among them.

He encouraged Africans to go to school where they learnt reading and writing and other skills.

He opposed the Boers mistreatment of Africans and strongly fought for African rights.

He also fought for the abolition of slavery that had subjected Africans to a lot of misery and suffering.

He advocated for the formation of Black circuit courts in which Africans could report their bad Boer masters.

He was disliked by fellow Boers who accused him for the cooperation with the Africans and encouraging them to run away from Boer farms.

He involved himself in local wars between Africans and whites in support for the Africans.

At times, he preached about African cultures, traditions and values.

But the whole of his life and activities were centered on protecting Africans from their oppressing Boer masters.

He even married Sara Janse a freed slave and gave birth to four children. This caused him to be expelled from his area of operation but he was later recalled to the Cape where he later died in 1811.

**Qn.** What were the contributions/ roles of Dr. Van der Kemp in the history of South Africa?

### **The contribution of Dr. John Phillip**

#### **Introduction:**

He was also one of the important missionaries that operated in South Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the end of 1820, he was already operating among the Griqua, the Khoikhoi and the Bantu.

He was a very intelligent man with a very strong personality.

#### **Roles:**

When he arrived, he found Africans already placed in the class of slaves. He thus strongly condemned the Dutch mistreatment of Africans which was against religious principles.

He fought for the improvement of the welfare of the Africans who were being mistreated by the Boer masters.

He managed to get greater freedom for the Africans although that made him the most hated man by the Boers.

He campaigned against the system that denied Africans freedom to move freely.

He got into contact with humanitarian groups in Britain to campaign against Boers mistreatment of the Africans.

He was responsible for the passing of the 50<sup>th</sup> ordinance 1828 which gave back Africans their rights.

He helped some of the Africans to regain their land i.e. the Xhosa land that had been stolen by the Boers during their kaffir wars.

He supported the Xhosa against the Boers during the kaffir wars.

He encouraged Africans to buy land and often helped some Africans to pay for it.

Phillip also encouraged Africans to take their children to school in order to improve on their standards of living.

He spread Christianity among Africans and many adopted the new religion.

He also updated and always informed the British government against the evils the Boers were committing against the Africans and called on them to do something.

He spread western civilization to the Africans and many adopted European ways.

He was disliked by the Boers for over protecting and defending non-whites.

Dr. Phillip was not afraid of attacking Boers and urged them to stop exploiting Africans.

In 1828, Dr. Phillip visited London and won support from other evangelists.

In the same year, he published his famous book "Researchers in South Africa" in which he condemned (castigated) the white's attitudes towards Africans.

He encouraged more missionary societies to come and work in South Africa such as the Glasgow Missionary Society (GMS) which created a school for Africans and the American board.

He convinced the Cape government to pass a law which enables Africans to work for the whites for a defined period of time.

Phillip, just like Van der Kemp was also against some African practices e.g. polygamy and circumcision.

He retired from service in 1850 after undergoing a number of tragedies. He died on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1851 and was buried by the coloureds in the colored graveyard.

***Qn. What were the contributions/ roles of Dr. John Phillip to the history of South Africa?***

***NB.*** For the activities/contributions/roles of L.M.S use these general conditions of

Missionaries and use some of them on Phillip and Van der Kemp.

***The role of Christian missionaries in the colonization of South Africa***

The missionaries directly and indirectly sowed the seed of colonization in South Africa.

They carried out early administration for the colonialists in South Africa.

They learnt Africans languages and taught the elders which helped the colonialists to control the Africans easily.

Sometimes, they served as interpreters for the colonialists hence solving the problem of language barrier.

They created disunity among the Africans by getting a class of converts and non-converts that made colonialism easy.

And also the disunity created by the missionaries increased the African conflicts and weakened them so were easily colonized.

They softened the hearts of the Africans for colonialism through their preaching and giving Africans gifts, and encouraging them to welcome strangers.

Missionaries' education in South Africa created many collaborators who worked with the colonialist as clerks and many as messengers.

Stopped slavery and hence created a calm atmosphere for colonial work.

Missionaries learnt African social, political and economic life and designed suitable approaches to exploit them.

Cash crop growing became a source of forced labour that weakened the Africans for colonialism.

They encouraged the growing of crops that served as raw materials required for industries for the colonial powers.

They caused deculturalisation and the western practices made some Africans to refer to the whites as superior.

The missionaries faced resistance from Africans; they invited home countries to take over.

The missionaries tricked the Africans into signing treaties that were later used to take away their independence.

### ***Roles of missionaries in the fight against Apartheid***

**Qn.** Describe the activities of Christian churches in the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

#### **Introduction:**

Apartheid was a policy aimed at separating races.

It was characterized by separate developments like roads, hospitals, schools, etc.

The Christian churches had different attitudes towards Apartheid.

#### **Activities of Christian churches:**

The DRC officially supported Apartheid. It was against allowing Africans to relate with whites in political matters.

The DRC was part of the Afrikaner bond which strongly supported Apartheid.

Even some African members of the DRC accepted the racial segregation on earth and only believed in heavenly equality.

However, some moderates and liberals in the DRC were also against Apartheid.

The Methodist church in South Africa was opposed to Apartheid. In their activities, the Methodists elected Mokitimi who was strongly against Apartheid as the president.

The African churches that were in South Africa were also opposed to apartheid.

All churches that were against apartheid in South Africa agreed to form joint council to fight against Apartheid.

The joint council comprised of both the Europeans and some Africans who sympathized with Africans.

The Adams College which was a missionary school refused to operate under the new law of Apartheid.

Some religious leaders like Bishop Reeves and Mkescott and were strongly opposed to Apartheid policy.

Bishop Reeves even mobilized funds for ANC to fight Apartheid.

However, later the executive committee of the Christian council refused to support ANC.

But some religious leaders like Bishop Desmond Tutu of the Anglican church of Natal; confirmed with the struggle against Apartheid.

### **THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH (DRC)**

#### ***Aims or reasons for the formation of the DRC***

##### **Introduction**

The DRC was the first and earliest church in South Africa.

It was formed by the early Dutch settlers and operated mainly at the cape.

It drew most of its membership from the Dutch settlers only.

In 1806, when the British took over the cape the church was very powerful.

Its teachings were based on the Old Testament especially the story of Noah and his three sons, Ham, Shem and Safeth.

According to this church all Africans belonged to ham and so were doomed and cursed while the whites were born blessed and saved and superior compared to the African.

It was formed to promote white superiority and racial segregation in South Africa.

They wanted to fight against the freedom of Africans.

They wanted to get cheap labour from the Africans i.e. enslaving them.

The church believed that its aim was to promote white civilization.

It wanted to exploit and take African resources e.g. minerals.

They looked at South Africa as a promised land and the wanted to take it over from the Africans.

It was to spread Christianity through the Dutch and encourage separation among the races.

It aimed at providing elementary education to the Dutch children.

They wanted to promote Boer nationalism and preserve Dutch culture in South Africa.

They wanted to promote the belief that they were God's chosen race

They believed in the theory of survival for the fittest

They aimed at supporting the Dutch in political social and economic activities.

They wanted to encourage white discrimination of Africans i.e. that it was normal for a white to kill or hurt an African.

Qn. What were the reasons for the establishment of the DRC?

The roles or activities of the DRC.

Describe the role of the DRC in promoting Christianity in South Africa.

The DRC was the first or earliest church in South Africa.

It was formed by the early Dutch settlers in South Africa and operated mainly at the Cape.

It drew most of its members from the Dutch settlers.

By 1806, when the British took over the Cape the church was very powerful.

Its teachings were based on the Old Testament especially the story of Noah and his sons named Ham, Shem and Japheth.

According to this church, all Africans belonged to Ham and were doomed and cursed.

They believed that they were God's chosen race and Africans were cursed and inferior.

It promoted the superiority of the Dutch race over the Africans.

It promoted white civilization and believed that God had sent them to preserve white culture.

Its teachings made the Dutch hostile towards the Africans because to them killing an African was not a sin.

Indeed during its time it encouraged the killing of Africans and other natives by the whites.

The DRC also encouraged segregation that was based on races.

It acted as a tool of keeping the Boers together and was used to promote Boer nationalism and unity.

It encouraged Holy Communion once in a year at places like Swellen dam and Graaf Reinet

These were carried out thru annual holy spirits.

These visits encouraged unity among the Dutch.

It provided education to the followers because to belong to this church you had to be instructed first.

It also built schools for the Dutch children in South Africa.

It also made the religious foundation of the lives of the Dutch in South Africa.

It denied Africans land because according to its teachings, it was only the whites who were supposed to own land.

It promoted trade among the whites in South Africa especially during holy visits.

During Dutch visits, they carried out trade in cattle sheep, sugar etc.

Because of its teachings, the Boers developed a strong Anglo phobia (strong fear for the British)

This together with the Boer pride, greed and arrogance resulted into the great trek.

Its teachings of racial segregation encouraged and laid foundation for the apartheid policy in South Africa.

The church also provided a cultural link between South Africa and the outside world.

Because of the selfish teachings and arrogance, Africans were forced to form their own churches (black independent churches)



It promoted racial segregation and made it clear that Africans could not be allowed into the white churches. Its teachings gave religious justification (excuse for white struggle against whites)

It preached that the Dutch were the Israelites and the Transvaal was the promised land of Canaan.

It provided an administrative arm to the Dutch East India Company i.e. helped to administer the cape.

It was the only church in South Africa that never supported African natives.

**Qn.** Describe the activities of the DRC in South Africa.

### ***Effects of DRC on Africans***

NB The church had mainly negative effects on the Africans.

Its teachings forced Africans to form their own churches; Africans were able to get their own priests who could preach in churches basing on African cultures.

African Tradition Religions (ATR) were undermined by DRC.

African cultures and customs were also negatively affected by the activities of the church.

Many Africans lost their lives because they were hunted like animals by the Boers leading to depopulation of Africans.

Africans lost much of their land and were displaced because of the racist acts of the Boers.

There was increased enslavement of the Africans due to the racial preaching of the church.

The racist acts of the church annoyed the Africans and led to African rebellions and uprisings.

This made Africans develop strong hatred for the whites.

The activities of the DRC also led to increased African nationalism in South Africa.

Africans were made inferior to Boers and became second class citizens.

Africans were subjected to hard and harsh treatment by members of the DRC

Africans suffered from forced labour and low wages especially those who were working on Boer farms.

Africans also suffered heavy taxes and that were imposed on them because of the racist teachings of the church.

The development of the Africans was generally slowed down by the activities of the DRC.

Africans obtained Western civilization i.e. education but through their own efforts.

Later, they were able to build their own schools that led to the rise of African nationalism.

Africans became poor and poorer as their resources were exploited and taken by the Boers.

Africans developed an inferiority complex because the Dutch thought or believed that they were cursed and doomed.

The church encouraged the grabbing of the African animals by the Boers.

Africans suffered from high levels of illiteracy and ignorance because the church never wanted them educated.

There were many wars between Africans and Boers because of the teachings of the church e.g. kaffir wars.

**Qn.** How did the activities of the DRC affect the natives?

What effects did DRC have on the Africans?

### **The effects of DRC on the Whites**

The whites in this case were the Boers and most of its effects were good to them.

It preserved and promoted the Boer superiority culture over the Africans.

It made Boers proud, arrogant and characterized their nationalism.

Its activities made all the whites hated by Africans.

It provided social services that were enjoyed by the Dutch settlers.

It formed a strong cultural line between Boers of South Africa and those in Europe.

It enabled Boers to enjoy liberty, freedom and equality in South Africa to unite in other areas.

Due to the preaching of the church, the Boers grabbed more land from the Africans and exploited them the most.

The church promoted trade among the Dutch settlers hence improved their standard of living.

It promoted and preserved their culture and made it more conservative.

Its preaching brought it into conflict with the British leading to the great trek.

Later, more conflicts came up between the Dutch and the Africans.

It influenced the social, political and economic activities of the DEICO.

It conflicted with European missionaries, like the CMS, LMS over the treatment of nonwhites.

It also constructed hospitals that improved on health conditions of the Boers.

It also led to the Dutch colonization of South African politics.

It preached against liberal policies like the 50<sup>th</sup> ordinance in 1858, black circuit courts.

Many whites were baptized and converted to the church.

Whites became first class citizens as they built South Africa as their promised land. The church led to the introduction of Boer way like Afrikaner life style in South Africa.

### ***AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES.***

#### ***Reasons/ aims for the rise of these churches.***

**Qn.** What led to the rise of African independent churches (AIC) in South Africa?

Explain the factors that led to the formation of African churches in South Africa.

Why were African initiated churches established in South Africa?

#### ***Introduction***

Independent churches were churches that were formed by Africans and led by the Africans.

They were churches that broke away from the Europeans

They were churches that were established in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

They used different interpretations of the scriptures built in an African way.

They are also called the separatists, break away or African initiated churches.

These churches were very common among the Zulu and were used as a tool to fight for the African freedom.

There were mainly three types in South Africa like Ethiopian messianic and Zionist churches.

The messianic church was led by Isaiah Tshembe who called himself the Zulu messiah

Nathanile Tile led the Natal church.

Ingenious Lekhayana led the Zionist church.

Africans wanted to fight against political segregation of the whites.

There were also leadership conflicts between the Africans and the Europeans (Africans wanted positions in the church)

Africans wanted churches where they could take up senior positions in the leadership of the church.

European churches discriminated Africans forcing them to create their own.

The long period of training for one to become a priest in the white churches also forced the Africans to create their own churches.

Then, after becoming a priest, it took long for the Africans to be promoted to church leadership (failure to promote African priests and Bishops)

They wanted to spread Christianity among their fellow Africans because the whites were not considering them.

They wanted to spread Christianity among their fellow Africans because the whites were not considering them

They wanted to promote African cultures-that were being undermined by the Boers and the white missionaries.

The white missionaries were also reluctant to Africanize priesthood which annoyed Africans (train more African priests.)

There was also lack of consideration of the blacks in the white controlled churches. Africans wanted to use these churches to fight European colonialism that was being supported by the missionaries.

The black churches were formed against the whites. They wanted the churches to act as a platform from where Africans could air out their complaints.

They were also formed to solve the problems of poor living conditions of the Africans on white farms.

The suffering and the poor working conditions on the white farms forced them to create their own churches.

The spirit of Ethiopianism also influenced Africans to start their own churches i.e. the belief that Africa was for Africans.

The belief that Jesus was for the whites and not for the blacks led to African churches to be formed (expectation of the black Jesus).

The defeat of the Italians by the Ethiopians at the battle of Adowa in 1296 encouraged Africans to form their own churches.

The role of African nationalists like Isaiah, Tshembe and Nathanile Tile also contributed to the increase of those churches.

The role of educated Africans in outside countries was also critical in the rise of these churches.

The white churches demanded a lot of money in terms of church dues in order to baptize Africans.

The whites rejected African names for baptism calling them satanic and barbaric.

The long period of catechism training before baptism frustrated Africans forcing them to start their own churches.

Africans also wanted to restore the holiness of the African religious practices which the whites had eroded.

The policy of immersion (baptism by dipping in water) was restricted to specific areas leaving out many areas.

Africans wanted to promote cheap education to their African children and opposed to the white education that was expensive.

The introduction of boarding schools also worried the Africans because of first high fees and secondly what t children were doing in closed buildings.

The rise of independent churches also inspired Africans to start their own churches in S. Africa.

The Pan African movement that encouraged African nationalism led to the rise of African churches.

There was also lack of consideration between the white missionaries and the Africans forcing them to start own churches.

The desire to address the high levels of poverty among the Africans.

They were formed to end the evils of colonialism like loss of land, over taxation, forced labour etc.

The influence of American Religious leaders who encouraged Africans to be independent.

### ***Activities of IAC***

The churches condemned the enslavement of the Africans and other forms of exploitations.

They preached against and opposed the racial segregation of the whites.

They encouraged Africans to build pure African societies without the influence of the western cultures.

In these churches, Africans were given a sense of belonging and worthiness.

They protested against the whites using the Bible and the Christian teachings to exploit them.

They made Africans aware that the whites were thieves who wanted to exploit them.

They made the Africans hostile against colonialism and used the bible to condemn it.

They built day schools for themselves.

They gave a platform to the nationalists to campaign and reject white rule.

The churches led to the creation of African nationalists like Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Desmond Tutu, Albert Luthuli, etc.

They also showed that Africans were capable of managing their affairs.

They instilled a spirit of nationalism among the Africans and preached basing on the saying that Africa is for Africa. They united the Christians and prepared them for independence.

They openly opposed and fought against the Apartheid policies in S. Africa.

They sent many delegations to the outside countries to campaign for African independence e.g. USA, and Britain.

They also gave Africans self-belief, confidence, determination and value.

They preached African freedom and liberty.

They encouraged trade among the Africans.

They showed that Africans were able to select and adopt Christian teachings that were suitable for them and their culture.

They preached Christianity following African cultures).

They trained African clergy (priests) and created African leadership in church (many Africans became Bishops).

They created awareness that Africans could interpret the Bible.

They made Africans more politically conscious i.e. aware of their rights and liberties.

They constructed churches for Africans that challenged the teachings of the DRC.

### ***Effects of IAC***

**Qn.** What contributions did these churches make to the history of S. Africa?

What were the effects of these churches to the development of S. Africa?

The churches condemned the enslavement of the Africans and other forms of exploitations.

They opposed the racial segregation of the whites.

They led to the establishment of pure African societies without the influence of the western cultures.

Africans were given a sense of belonging and worthiness by IAC.

They protested against the whites using the Bible and the Christian teachings to exploit them.

The Africans became hostile against colonialism and used the Bible to condemn it.

They built day schools and many Africans became literate.

They gave a platform to the nationalists to campaign and reject white rule.

The churches led to the creation of African nationalists like Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Desmond Tutu, Albert Luthuli, etc.

They also showed that Africans were capable of managing their affairs.

They instilled a spirit of nationalism among the Africans and preached that Africa is for Africa. They united the Christians and prepared them for independence.

Their activities later influenced the Africans to rebel against European rule like in the Anglo-Zulu wars.

They openly opposed and fought against the Apartheid policies in S. Africa.

They sent many delegations to the outside countries to campaign for African independence e.g. USA, and Britain.

They led to African freedom, liberty, confidence, determination and value.

They encouraged trade among the Africans.

They showed that Africans were able to select and adopt Christian teachings that were suitable for them and their culture.

They preached Christianity following African cultures.



They trained African clergy (priests) and created African leadership in church (many Africans became Bishops).

Their churches challenged the teachings of the DRC.

Most of them looked outwardly religious but inwardly political, i.e. fought for independence.