

THE RISE OF THE BOMBAY AFRICANS

Bombay is one of the most respected urban centers in India. India is a sub-continent that was colonized by the British but got its independence in 1947.

Bombay Africans were ex-slaves who were rehabilitated in Bombay by the Church Missionary Society. They were later brought back to East Africa and served with Rebmann at Rabai Mpya, while others worked among Freed Slaves in Frere town.

Prominent Bombay Africans who returned to the coast were David George, William Jones and Ismael Semler.

The rise of the Community of African Christians or the Bombay Africans, greatly helped in the expansion of the Church in East Africa, as the people of East Africa easily associated with them and believed in them more than the missionaries.

ROLE PLAYED BY THE BOMBAY AFRICANS IN THE SPREAD OF THE CHURCH

Bombay Africans preached Christianity among fellow Africans, presenting the Church as a liberating institution. Their conversion was an inspiration to many Africans who also joined Christianity.

They conducted missionary journeys to the Coastal and some interior communities of East Africa. For example, William Jones spread the gospel in Taita areas.

They engaged in the rehabilitation of ex-slaves especially at the rehabilitation camp at Rabai, thereby converting many of them into the Christian faith.

They encouraged the ex-slaves to live a Christian lifestyle of repentance, prayer, Christian baptism and monogamy, among others.

Being Africans, the Bombay Africans were easily accepted and listened to by the fellow Africans, thus spreading the church among them. For example, David George was accepted by the Taita (Wataita) who had rejected the church under the Church Missionary Society.

Bombay Africans served as interpreters of the gospel to the Africans at Rabai. This made communication easy between the European missionaries and the Africans.

They worked with the European missionaries to translate the gospel into some local languages which made it easy for the Africans to understand and follow the gospel message. For example, it was with their guidance that the first Kiswahili Bible was written.

They knew some areas in the interior of East Africa, a factor that enabled them easily penetrate the interior where they spread the gospel message.

They knew some African local languages which also enabled them to easily penetrate and pass on the gospel to the Africans.

They condemned slave trade and slavery and in a way made it real to the fellow Africans that the missionaries were against slave trade. They therefore became friendly and they were accepted together with their Christian message.

They boosted the missionary manpower in East Africa, thus keeping the missionary goals and aims of spreading Christianity among Africans.

They guided European missionaries into the interior of East Africa to spread Christianity. For example, William Jones escorted bishop Hannington in 1885, only to return at Rabai after Hannington had been murdered in Busoga.

They provided charity services to the needy African ex-slaves and promoted Western Education among them.

Some Bombay Africans served as church leaders. For example, David George was a catechist at Rabai Mpya, while William Jones served as a pastor and a deacon and used their positions to influence other Africans into Christianity.

The Bombay Africans worked among the freed slaves at Frere town and to these, they preached the message of hope and salvation in Jesus Christ.

Being employed and paid by the missionaries, Bombay Africans were admired by fellow Africans who joined the church in the hope of being employed too.

They established some church stations in the interior of East Africa such as the Sangula Mission and Stevesta station which served as evangelical centers.

They encouraged the formation of Christian Education Centers in East Africa which also helped in the spread of the gospel. For example, they were the forerunners of St. Paul

Theological College in Limuru- Kenya, from where Africans accessed Christian Religious Education.

The Bombay Africans trained fellow Africans in evangelical work and these helped to spread the gospel into different areas of the interior.

They condemned and opposed the harsh missionary approach towards the Africans thereby standing for the African good welfare, which attracted more into the rehabilitation camps and into Christianity.

The Bombay Africans had respect for some African culture such as circumcision among the Kikuyu, thus giving them confidence of joining the church.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE BOMBAY AFRICANS

Those who volunteered to serve with the missionaries were few in number and therefore were overworked.

Bombay Africans faced hostility from the coastal Africans and Arab slave raiders who opposed their activity in the region.

The Muslims had dominated the areas of Mombasa and Zanzibar and were not easy to penetrate with the Christian gospel.

They faced racial discrimination from the Europeans still regarded them as inferior since they were ex-slaves and Africans, a thing that demoralized them.

They were denied important responsibility in the church as European missionaries despised their work. This behavior was however condemned by William Prince of the Church Missionary Society after realizing the good work done by David George in the 15 years he served at Rabai Mpya.

They were unhappy with the missionary treatment of the Africans at Frere town which caused dissatisfaction between the two races with one doubting the other.

Missionaries were against the African cultures yet these cultures were valued by the Bombay Africans and this affected the church negatively.

The missionaries mistrusted the Bombay Africans and those who had responsibility had to remain under close supervision, a factor that reduced the spirit of service among the Bombay Africans.

Some African communities did not welcome the Bombay Africans' missionary work as they were looked at as collaborators to the colonialists. For example the Nandi people chased them out of their country.

The Bombay Africans were affected by poor transport and communication network which limited their evangelical movement.

They faced the problem of wild animals like lions and this hindered their work of spreading the gospel.

They were also faced with the problem of language barrier since they did not know all the languages in East Africa which limited communication and the spread of Christianity.

Tropical diseases such as Malaria were a threat to the lives and health of the Bombay Africans and this also interfered with their evangelical work.

Geographical barriers such as lakes, mountains, forests and rivers also reduced on their movement, thus negatively impacting on the activity of Bombay Africans in East Africa.

Their suffered scarcity of funds to facilitate their work and this limited their ability to spread the gospel widely.

They lacked accommodation in the areas where they went to spread the gospel and this became a great challenge in their evangelical work.

They were under paid by the missionaries despite the great work they did for the church amidst many challenges and this demoralized them.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MISSIONARIES AND THE BOMBAY AFRICANS

The moving of the Bombay Africans to Africa was an attempt taken with the main aim of reinforcing missionaries at Rabai Mpya in East Africa. Unfortunately as time passed by, the relationship between the two started deteriorating, such that by the end of the 1870s, the two races were in poor relations.

REASONS FOR THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BOMBAY AFRICANS AND THE MISSIONARIES

Missionaries undermined Africans as incapable of doing certain jobs like church leadership which they were denied. This was however condemned by William Prince of the Church Missionary Society, who credited the Bombay Africans for their good work.

Africans were segregated basing on race and this denied them free interaction with the missionaries. They were seen as unequal to the missionaries and so unworthy to challenge them on certain issues.

Bombay Africans were overworked. They were assigned difficult tasks of spreading the gospel in hostile African communities where the missionaries feared.

Bombay Africans were unhappy with the harsh missionary approach on the Africans especially at Frere town. For example, the ex-slaves suffered caning, imprisonment and small rations of food as punishment for simple mistakes.

There was limited financial and material support by the missionaries to the Bombay Africans who were sent on missionary journeys. This was interpreted as little appreciation or recognition of their work which was discouraging.

Ex- slaves were overworked in missionary farms, which was displeasing to the Bombay Africans. They were made to dig for long hours yet they were given little wages and this was a form of exploitation.

Missionaries disregarded some of the African cultures which the Bombay Africans believed did not contradict Christianity. For example the teaching against polygamy and Female Genital Mutilation among the Kikuyu was not welcomed by the Africans and this caused disagreement.

Delayed promotion of the Bombay Africans in the Church service also annoyed them. They were retained at the low level of church service even they had received the necessary training and worked tirelessly for the spread of the church. For example David George worked for over 20 years but he was not promoted till death.

The death of Bishop Hannington in 1885 in Busoga aroused suspicion and mistrust among the missionaries. The Bishop was killed alone, yet he had travelled with William Jones a Bombay African and this made the missionaries to harshly treat the Bombay Africans.

The missionaries imposed strict rules and regulations to regulate the behavior of the freed slaves in their communities which annoyed the Bombay Africans.

The Missionaries also collaborated with the European colonialists to colonize East Africa thus leading to conflicts between the two.

The conflicts also arose because the Missionaries wanted to use freed slaves as agents of colonization yet the Bombay Africans did not want to be colonized by such harsh people.

Some Africans wanted independence and to be allowed to go back to their former communities which the European Missionaries refused. This therefore annoyed the Bombay Africans hence the conflict.

The Westernization of education and the gospel also annoyed the Bombay Africans. The gospel and education were taught in European languages such as English and French yet Africans preferred using their local languages.

EFFORTS TO RECONCILE THE BOMBAY AFRICANS AND THE MISSIONARIES

Sir Bartle Frere- a British official called on the Church Missionary Society Missionaries to respect the plight of the Bombay Africans. He encouraged reconciliation and emphasized the Christian virtue of forgiveness.

William Prince of the Church Missionary Society called condemned racial prejudice practiced by the missionaries and asked them to give the Bombay Africans in responsibilities in the church. He credited the Bombay Africans of being intelligent and working hard and so they deserved respect.

Bombay Africans were given important positions in the church for example William George became a pastor of Rabai Mpya and later he was made an Archdeacon.

The Bombay Africans were paid fair remuneration for their good service to the church. This made them feel appreciated.

Ex- slaves were fairly and humanly treated by the missionaries which made them feel loved. For example they received good food rations and human response to misconduct.

Missionaries Africanized the church and tolerated some African cultures such as African names and even circumcision of men.

Africans were trained as catechists and priests, they were allowed to establish churches and even run them on missionary principle. This led to the establishment of Sangula and Stevesta Churches.

There was increased African access to medical services and this pleased Bombay Africans hence improved relations between the two races.

There was increased funding for the work of the Bombay Africans. They were given allowances to facilitate their movement during evangelization.

Missionaries encouraged peasant farming to boost African income. For example, Kenneth Borup distributed cotton seedlings and fertilizers to the Africans.

Missionaries put pressure on colonial authorities to value African interests, a credit to the services of Dr. Arthur who was the African representative to the legislative assembly from 1923.

The Church Missionary Society appealed for more missionaries to come into East Africa and co-work with the Bombay Africans and this relieved them of the heavy burden.

Some mature members in the ex-slave settlements were given land for settlement and practicing private farming for personal welfare. After selling the cash crops and other agricultural products, ex-slaves were able to earn some income.

The missionaries reduced on the strictness with which they handled the ex-slaves. For example they allowed them one hour of interaction everyday without interference.

Missionaries offered literacy and practical education to the Africans in the settlements preparing them for independent lives, which pleased the Bombay Africans.

CAUSES OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIANS TODAY

Some conflicts in the church today arise from the methods of preaching and conduct of church service. Some preachers are boring in the way they preach and so some Christians evade them.

Some conflicts between church leaders and Christians come from their involvement in immoral practices such as adultery and homosexuality which has made many Christians to doubt their positions in the church.

Some church leaders misallocate church funds and when they are asked for accountability, the conflict arises.

Some church leaders may be opposed because of giving false prophesy. For example during the presidential campaigns of 2001, pastor Kayanja of miracle center prophesied that one presidential candidate would die before the end of the campaign, but up to today, none of the said candidates has died.

The conflicts may also arise due to wrong preaching. For example, Bishop Ssenyonjo of the Anglican Church was defrocked for supporting homosexuality.

Some conflicts arise in churches due to unfair promotion of some church leaders. For example, a new ordained priest to be promoted to the rank of the parish priest to lead those who have been in service for a long period of time raises conflicts.

They may be as a result of differences in political ideologies. For example, some religious leaders may go against their followers for not supporting their political parties.

Some conflicts arise from the background of the preacher. For example, some pastors are married to more than one wife and others are not married which creates mistrust and suspicion in as far as their sexual life is concerned.

Some conflicts arise from some church leaders overstaying in one place which creates natural hatred leading to conflicts.

They are as a result of immature church leaders who fuel misunderstandings in the church and sometimes these misunderstandings catches them too.

They are also as a result of tribal and racial differences. For example, a church leader may be rejected in a given church because of his or her tribe.

Some church leaders may be rejected because of use of rude languages due to failure of being selective and improper command of communication skills.

Poor education background or lack of qualification by some church leaders may lead them to be undermined by the Christians hence the conflicts.

THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE INTERIOR OF EAST AFRICA

Christianity in East Africa was first spread in the 19th century by members of the Church Missionary Society. These were led by Ludwig Krapf, who arrived at Zanzibar in 1844. They were later joined by other missionary societies such as the Holy Ghost Fathers, White Fathers and Mill Hill Fathers among others.

By 1944, Christianity had spread in various parts of East Africa except Karamoja and Turkana land where the religion reached in the 1930s.

Reasons For The Fast Spread of Christianity in East Africa

Missionaries co-operated with African leaders and this made it easy to extend the gospel to the masses. For example, they were welcomed by Kabaka Mutesa 1 of Buganda who convinced his subjects to accept Christianity.

Missionaries condemned slave trade and slavery which made them very appealing to the Africans. Thus they believed that their intentions were good and so they followed their gospel message.

The building of communication lines and railways made transport easy for the teachers to reach different communities. Thus, many people could easily be converted to Christianity.

The role played by the Bombay Africans also led to the spread of the church in the interior. They convinced hostile tribes like the Nandi to welcome missionaries in their communities and accept Christianity.

There was increased missionary funding from Europe and this facilitated operations of the missionaries in the interior of East Africa. For example, the increase in funding led to an improvement in the pay of the Bombay Africans which raised their morale in spreading the gospel.

Linguistic studies that were introduced by the missionaries aided the spread of the church. This made communication between the Africans and the missionaries easy and created interpreters who helped their fellow Africans to understand the gospel.

Increased geographical awareness of the missionaries also led to the spread of the gospel in the interior of East Africa. This was made possible by the maps drawn by the first missionaries and explorers such as Jacob Erhadit.

The role of Africans evangelists is also a factor to consider in the spread of Christianity in East Africa. For example, Brother Toby Kizza and Apollo Kivebulaya helped in spreading the gospel to different parts of Uganda.

Missionaries supplied evangelical items to the converts which made it easy for them to understand Christianity. Such items included Bibles and other Christian literature, which enabled the African converts to read and understand the gospel message.

Missionaries provided charitable services to the Africans which attracted many them into the church. Such services included helping the needy like the orphans and giving homes to the homeless.

Missionaries introduced formal education to the interior through which they civilized the Africans thus attracting them to the church.

Competition for converts between the missionaries and the Muslims also led to the quick spread of the gospel in the interior. It was the intention of the missionaries that East Africa becomes predominantly Christian.

There was also competition between the different missionary societies, which also led the rapid spread of the gospel. For example, the White Fathers worked tirelessly to convert many people to Catholicism while the Church Missionary Society was also working hard to turn many into Protestantism.

The influence of religious wars in Buganda was also a factor in the spread of Christianity in East Africa. This caused urge for religious leaders to extend Christianity outside of Buganda.

The death of the Uganda Martyrs was another motivation for others to join Christianity, as many yearned to know more about the God that people could willingly die for. It is for this reason that the saying that “the blood of the Martyrs was a seed for Christianity.”

Missionary teachings against Islam made some Africans who had accepted the Islamic religion to convert to Christianity and this also increased the Christian population.

Missionaries condemned some African cultural practices like polygamy and Female Genital Mutilation which were considered as violation of human rights. This attracted more Africans into the Church.

CHRISTIANITY IN BUGANDA

In Buganda, Christian Missionaries were invited by Kabaka Mutesa 1. Through Stanley's letter to the Daily Telegram in London in 1875, it was clear that the king of Buganda was ready to welcome the missionaries in his kingdom as he wanted them to teach his people.

Following Stanley's invitation, the Church Missionary Society assembled a band of eight teachers into Buganda. Two of these arrived in Rubaga the then capital of Buganda in June 1877 and these were Lieut. Smith and Rev. C.T Willson.

Alexander Mackey also arrived in 1878 but the rest of the group members had been hit by diseases and death.

Shortly after in Feb. 1879, the Anglicans were joined by the White Fathers who were Catholics and these were father Lourdel and brother Amans.

They conducted Christian lessons in kabaka's palace to both, the kabaka, his pages, his chiefs and ministers.

Mackey with a few Baganda helpers began work on a Luganda translation of the Bible, hymns, prayers and baptismal service for adults.

In 1881, Mutesa 1 allowed the Church Missionary Society into Natete, giving them two houses. In March 1882, five boys were baptized here and these were Mackey's learners.

Christian community at the court also grew rapidly as more people presented themselves for baptism. By 1884, the CMS had baptized about 88 people, and catholics had somewhat a bigger number.

In 1882, Kabaka Mutesa 1 chased the missionaries out of Buganda. Some of them moved back to the coast of East Africa, while others went to different Islands on Lake Victoria.

In 1884, Kabaka Mutesa 1 died and was succeeded by his son Mwanga, who therefore became the Kabaka. Mwanga re-invited the missionaries to Buganda and they swiftly returned into the kingdom.

In 1885, the relationship between Mwanga and the missionaries deteriorated over a number of issues including failure to supply him with guns.

In 1885, Kabaka Mwanga ordered for the murder of Bishop James Hannington, who was speared to death in Busoga.

In 1886, Kabaka Mwanga ordered for the killing of the Christian converts popularly known as the Uganda Martyrs and about 33 men were put to death because of their belief in Christianity.

Threatened by the activities of the missionaries, Kabaka Mwanga planned to chase them out of the kingdom in 1887.

In 1888, the Catholics, Protestants and Muslims formed an unholy alliance that fought and overthrew Kabaka Mwanga. When Mwanga was overthrown, he was replaced with his brother Kiwewa.

When Kiwewa was made the Kabaka of Buganda, the Muslims put pressure on him to convert to Islam and be circumcised.

The Muslims went ahead to fight Christians out of Buganda kingdom affairs thereby breaking the alliance that had overthrown Kabaka Mwanga.

Refusing to convert to Islam, Kabaka Kiwewa is believed to have been killed by the Muslims and they replaced him with his brother Kalema. Kalema embraced Islam and he was given the title of Sheikh.

In 1889, the Muslims took up Islamisation of Buganda in which Christians were harassed, imprisoned, exiled, killed, Bibles and Churches burnt.

These activities of the Muslims united the Catholics and Protestants who got into contact with Kabaka Mwanga and waged war against the Muslims.

In 1890, Mwanga and the Christians were once again in power after defeating the Muslims with ease.

Unfortunately, the artificial unity between the Catholics and the Protestants did not last long. It led to conflicts between the two Christian groups in what came to be known as the Wafaransa - Wangereza wars.

With the support of captain Lugard and his Imperial British East African Company, the Protestants defeated the Catholics in 1892.

However, the Protestants created a condition for the Catholics to stay in Buganda and continue with their activities while the Anglicans held political power.

The Church Missionary Society also rushed and called upon Britain to declare Uganda a protectorate before the French could launch a counter attack on the Anglicans. Thus Uganda was declared a British protectorate in 1894.

BISHOP JAMES HANNINGTON (1847-1885)

James Hannington was an Anglican missionary who was born on the 3rd of September 1847. He was ordained a deacon in 1874 and was given responsibility to take charge of a small parish in his land.

Around 1882, Hannington had about the murder of two missionaries on the shores of Lake Victoria in Nyanza Province. This made him offer himself to the Church Missionary Society and heading a team of six missionaries, he came to East Africa and first settled at the coast.

At the coast of East Africa, he was attacked by fever and dysentery, which forced him to return to England in 1883.

In June 1884, having recovered, he was ordained bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, which included Uganda, Kenya and Northern areas of Tanganyika. In January 1885, he again departed for Africa.

After arriving at Frere town near Mombasa in Kenya, he decided to open a new route to Uganda. Thus, he proceeded to Buganda using the Eastern route through Busoga.

Together with his team, he safely reached a spot near Victoria Nyanza on 21st October, but his arrival had not gone unnoticed.

An old Kiganda prophesy had foretold of a stranger entering Buganda through Busoga to conquer the kingdom. When Mwanga learnt of the Bishop's coming through the Eastern route, he sent his men to assassinate him before reaching Buganda.

After eight days of arrest and imprisonment in Busoga, by order of King Mwanga, Hannington's men were killed and on 29th October 1885, Hannington himself was stabbed to death.

His last words to the soldiers who killed him were: "Go, tell Mwanga, I have purchased the road to Uganda with my blood."

William Jones, a Bombay African who had escorted the bishop from the coast escaped Mwanga's cruelty. He returned to the coast and reported the death of bishop to the missionaries at Rabai Mpya.

Joseph Mukasa Balikudembe, a Roman Catholic priest and an official at Mwanga's court rebuked the king for his actions, but unfortunately this earned him his death by beheading.

Hannington and his companions were among the first Martyrs of Uganda and his feast day in the Church of England is October 29th.

REASONS FOR HIS DEATH

Bishop Hannington approached Buganda from a politically sensitive route. There had been a prophecy that a foreigner entering through this route would overthrow Buganda's independence and so the Baganda mistook the bishop to be their enemy.

The strong belief in the traditional culture by the Baganda is also a factor responsible for Hannington's death. It is because of this strong belief that they upheld the prophecy about a foreigner entering from the East.

It is also possible that he was a victim of the already insecure position of the Christian Community in Buganda as they were no longer in the good terms with the Kabaka.

Autocracy of Buganda kingdom in which the king had absolute and unquestionable powers is also to blame for the death of the bishop. Because of the kabaka's powers over life and death, when he ordered for Hannington's death, no one could, no one had a right to question him.

It also believed that the kabaka was ill advised by some members of the Lukiiko. It is said that before ordering for Hannington's death, Mwanga asked for advice from members of the Lukiiko who included his friendly chief Kalungi and Prime Minister Mukasa but these members wrongly advised him.

The Anglican missionaries increased the fear and mistrust of Mwanga as they referred to Hannington as a great man who was coming to bring new changes. All these changes

were going to be in the evangelization process, but Mwanga thought that the bishop was going to bring political changes that would cause destruction in his kingdom.

Bishop Hannington lacked adequate protection by the Church Missionary Society missionaries who were in Uganda. They were unaware of the traditionalists' motives and the Kabaka's intention, so they did not provide the bishop with adequate protection as they thought that he would not face any challenges.

Bishop Hannington was killed because by 1885, Busoga was a vassal state of Buganda and so chief Luba of Busoga could not defy Kabaka Mwanga's orders, thus killing the bishop as ordered by the kabaka.

Mwanga ordered the killing of Bishop Hannington in an attempt to stop foreigners from continuing to come into his kingdom. By 1885, European foreigners especially missionaries were entering Buganda in overwhelming numbers and this scared the kabaka.

Mwanga's desire to identify himself with the Catholics whom he accorded a great welcome back into the Buganda could also explain the death of the protestant bishop. It is believed that the kabaka was religiously more close to the Catholics than the Protestants and so he could have killed the bishop out of this bias.

More so, Buganda suspected the Church Missionary Society missionaries who were Protestants to be collaborating with General Gordon, who threatened Buganda's independence and this suspicion, could explain the killing of the Protestant bishop.

The uncompromising character of kabaka Mwanga could also be blamed for the death of bishop Hannington. It is said that some of his pages such as Joseph Mukasa Balikudembe pleaded with him to spare the bishop but he refused to change his mind and even killed Balikudembe for challenging him.

The Arab and Swahili traders influenced Mwanga by intensifying his fears and hatred for the missionaries. They kept warning him a lot about the dangers of the presence of the missionaries in his kingdom, which could have resulted into his action of killing the bishop.

The selfish nature of Mukasa who was the prime minister in Mwanga's reign also contributed to the death of the bishop. Mukasa always advised Mwanga against the missionaries and even told him that the bishop had refused to use the Southern route to

enter Buganda. This seemed to confirm Mwanga's fears that Bishop Hannington was his enemy.

Given his young age, kabaka Mwanga lacked experience in handling challenging situations and so he found himself at crossroads and in total confusion. He was overwhelmed by the influence of the Europeans in his kingdom, coupled with the growing arrogance of the European missionaries and in that confusion, he ordered for the death of bishop Hannington.

It is also believed that it was due to language barrier that Hannington was killed. After the Bishop had been arrested in Busoga, information was sent to kabaka Mwanga who responded in Luganda that, "bamute agende", meaning "they should set him free and he goes" but this was unfortunately misinterpreted for "bamutte agende" which means "kill him". Thus chief Luba ordered for his killing.

EFFECTS OF HANNINGTON'S DEATH TO THE CHURCH

Positively, his death made Christianity more known to the rest of Buganda and so it rapidly and so it rapidly spread. It made people question the value of a religion that would lead to the death of the Bishop, thus joining it.

His killing was a basis for the death of Uganda Martyrs, whose blood became a seed for the spread of the church.

It led to the unpopularity of Mwanga before his pages, officials, chiefs and all the people of Buganda which was an advantage to the missionaries.

Indeed, the blood of Bishop Hannington purchased the road for Christianity into Uganda as many missionaries used the same route to enter Buganda.

His death attracted more missionary groups into Buganda, making Buganda a center of missionary enterprise, which facilitated the spread of the church.

It strengthened Christians, making them ready to experience every pain for the good of the church.

It led to increased funding of the missionary activities in Buganda as an alternative means of spreading the Christianity.

His death attracted increased missionary protection from home countries, which was an opportunity for the spread of the church.

The Traditional Religion was undermined as a brutal religion and this helped the missionaries to receive more converts who were running away from the Traditional Religion of Buganda.

It led to the final overthrow of Mwanga from power which gave Christianity an opportunity to grow faster.

It led to increased determination of the missionaries in East Africa as it showed that the spread of Christ's gospel was a challenging task that required faith and endurance. Thus, they became ready to withstand all hardships to ensure its spread.

It was a confirmation that Christianity had taken root in Buganda making it an optional faith to take-up.

Negatively, it led to the loss of Uganda's independence in 1894 when it was declared a British protectorate.

The Bishop lost his life and this marked the end of his service to the church.

It scared some missionaries from coming to East Africa for safety of their dear lives, which interfered with the rapid spread of Christianity.

Some missionaries who came to Uganda thereafter had to use distant routes which delayed their influence and activities in spreading the church.

It led to the death of other Christians such as Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe, who was killed for questioning the kabaka about the death of Bishop Hannington.

It scared some people from being converted to Christianity since it clearly indicated that the kingdom was not in good terms with the Christian faith.

It led to increased misunderstanding and rivalry between the Christians and the kabaka, partly resulting into the death of the Uganda Martyrs, which reduced the church's congregation.

It scared some Christians from practicing Christian faith. For example they could fear to go to Church for prayers, worship and more religious study which undermined the spread of Christianity.

It resulted into poor relations between the kabaka and the missionaries which was unhealthy for the spread of the church.

The death of the bishop was partly a basis for the religious wars in Buganda that caused insecurity, thereby interfering with the missionary work.

His death was negative publicity to the church and missionary work in Buganda as some people wondered why the power of God could not save the bishop.

Revision Question:

- (a) Analyze the circumstances under which Bishop Hannington was killed.
- (b) What impact did this have on the spread of the church in East Africa?

THE UGANDA MARTYRS

These were Christian converts who were killed in 1885-1886, under the orders of kabaka Mwanga of Buganda. Majority of the martyrs were pages or young boys who served in the palace of the king.

REASONS FOR THE KILLING OF THE UGANDA MARTYRS

Reasons for their death can be understood looking at Buganda tradition on one hand and the influence of foreign religions on the other.

The traditional belief that Buganda's independence would be eroded by foreigners from the East led to the death of Bishop Hannington, which eventually resulted into the killing of Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe. Thus Balikuddembe became the first Uganda Martyr.

The martyrs died because of the autocratic rule in Buganda kingdom where the kabaka had unquestionable and final powers. Under this customary practice, the orders of the king had to be respected at all times.

The killing could have been part of the annual traditional norm of sacrificing to the ancestors and the gods, a practice that was locally known as "kiwendo".

Also, the martyrs could have been victims of the kingdom's fight against the spreading European cultural imperialism into Buganda, which had become a threat to kingdom's culture.

The death of kabaka Mutesa 1 left a power vacuum that resulted into the persecution of the Christian converts. Mutesa had managed to peacefully and mutually control religious conflicts in his kingdom which Mwanga failed to do.

Kabaka Mwanga rose to power when he was still young and inexperienced in leadership. Thus he mishandled the kingdoms affairs as he turned to brutal rule, leading to the killing of his pages.

It is believed that the pages had become disobedient to the kabaka. For example, they had started denouncing kabaka's orders of serving and worshiping in shrines and eating meat offered to the gods because their new faith did not allow it.

It is also alleged that the pages denounced kabaka Mwanga's homosexual advances and this threw him into conflict with them hence their killing.

Mwanga's desire to assert authority over all elements of people in his kingdom, made him take irrational orders against those who attempted to oppose him.

Christian teachings of equality made converts lose respect for the king. This explains the questioning of the kabaka by Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe about his decision to kill bishop Hannington.

The Uganda martyrs died because of their strong belief in Jesus Christ and in Christianity which they refused to denounce. Kabaka Mwanga had fallen out with the missionaries yet his pages continued to support missionary activities, which forced him to kill them.

They hoped for resurrection after death since Jesus Christ had also resurrected, thus they did not fear death but died happily.

The martyrs were proud to die like Jesus Christ who died as a sacrificial lamb. They wanted to take his example and die for the church.

Some of the martyrs are believed to have been victims of simple grudges with their seniors, being feared to take over their offices if they were left to survive.

There was also influence of the Arab Muslims at the court of the king, who increasingly denounced Christians as agents of European imperialism in Buganda kingdom.

There was also suspicion within Buganda that the Church Missionary Society had links with General Gordon who acted as an agent of the Egyptians in the Sudan which was a threat to Buganda's autonomy. Thus, kabaka Mwanga wanted to protect Buganda's independence.

The influence of Buganda's then Prime Minister Mukasa also led to the death of the martyrs. He always condemned and criticized Christians over disrespect which annoyed Mwanga.

It has also been pointed out that the martyrs were killed due to the influence of drugs. It is said that Mwanga used to smoke Bangi/Cocaine, which influenced his actions.

The growing suspicion of Alexander Mackey's activities in Buganda also led to the persecution of the Christian converts. For example in 1885, Mackey refused body guards that the kabaka had given him.

There was also unexplained fire in the kingdom that gutted the kabaka's palace and this was blamed on the Christian hence their persecution.

EFFECTS OF THE DEATH OF THE UGANDA MARTYRS

Martyrdom in Uganda affected the church both positively and negatively. For example:

Positively, many people increasingly sought to know what the Christian Religion was about and as such, many of them turned to Christianity in search for the strong power that gave courage to the Uganda Martyrs.

Their death popularized Christianity in Buganda and Uganda at large. It confirmed that Christianity had taken root in region amidst other religions.

The blood of the martyrs served as seeds for the spread of the church. Onlookers and those receiving the news of the martyrdom were influenced by the Heroic examples of the martyrs, thus joining Christianity.

Other Christians were strengthened in their Christian faith after the death of the Uganda martyrs. They defended their death on grounds that they had not died but joined Jesus.

It inspired more missionaries to come to Uganda to support their counterparts in the spread of Christianity. This increased their manpower.

The martyrs attracted sympathy from those who remained alive and so they worked hard to protect the church in Uganda, no matter the circumstance. It is this sympathy that brought in people like Apollo Kivebulaya and Yohana Kiteganda, who became great African evangelists.

Mwanga apologetically befriended some of the Christians such as Apolo Kagwa and appointed them into important posts in the kingdom, thus putting Christianity in a better position to spread.

It resulted into increased protection of the missionaries in Uganda by the British Government and this in turn facilitated the spread of Christianity.

It resulted into increased financial support to the missionaries in Uganda which enabled them to spread the church far and wide.

The death of the martyrs increased the determination of the missionaries to stay and spread the church in the region at whatever cost.

It united the Catholics and the Protestants against kabaka Mwanga and also promoted the spread of the church in and out of Buganda.

The killings won the church sympathizers, the friends and relatives of the deceased who easily joined the church.

The martyrdom led to the establishment of worship centers like Namugongo shrine and Munyonyo Martyrs church which have become centers of Christian worship leading to the continued spread of the Christian faith.

It also led to the establishment of educational institutions like Uganda Martyrs Namugongo Primary and Secondary schools which remind Christians of the need to commit and witness to Jesus Christ.

It also resulted into conflicts between Christians and traditionalist, which forced many people to scatter in different parts of the country and wherever they went, the new converts spread Christianity.

By accepting to die, the martyrs convinced Mwanga that he could not stop the spread of Christianity by persecution. He therefore started befriending some Christians and even supported them, which created a good atmosphere for the spread of the church.

The killing of the Uganda martyrs gave birth to future celebrations such as the 3rd June celebrations at Namugongo which attracts more people into the church year after year. This has helped to spread the church even outside of Uganda.

On the other hand, the killing of the martyrs reduced on the church congregation for some time, as many Christians shunned praying and preaching for fear of being killed as well.

Some people became scared of joining Christianity because they could not be sure of their fate their after.

Some Christian missionaries feared operating in Buganda for safety of their lives. This limited the spread of the church in the kingdom.

Some Africans who patiently waited for the resurrection of the martyrs got discouraged as this was not realized and therefore shunned Christianity.

Some sections of the Baganda preferred Islam that had less conflicts with the kingdom, hence limiting the spread of Christianity.

Some Baganda traditionalists defended the killing on grounds that Christianity was against Buganda kingship and culture. This negatively publicized the church.

The death of the martyrs scared some mission groups from sending their agents into Uganda, which also negatively impacted on the spread of the church.

Revision Questions

1. (a) Account for the persecution of Christians in Buganda towards the end of the 19th Century.
(b) Examine the lessons Christians draw from the persecution.
2. (a) Examine the circumstances that led to the death of the Uganda Martyrs.
(b) What is the significance of this martyrdom on the growth of the Church in Uganda?
3. (a) Account for the killing of the Uganda Martyrs in 1885.
(b) What is the impact of the death of the Uganda Martyrs on the missionary work in Uganda?
4. (a) Examine the ways through which the church remembers the Uganda Martyrs today.
(b) Assess the importance of 3rd June Uganda Martyrs celebrations.