

SECTION E: MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD THROUGH FAITH AND LOVE

SUB THEME ONE: MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD

The word "Quest" means to search for something with the intention of understanding it better. In this respect the term quest for God is meant to refer to man's continuous effort to find out the truth and also obtain knowledge about God. Man by nature realizes that behind his life, there is a supreme being upon which is dependent.

This realization gives man the desire to make a free response which he does through religious beliefs. This quest can be expressed through spoken words i.e. prayers, actions, music and lifestyles.

MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD IN THE PRESENT SITUATION

There is a search for God today and people are seeking for meaningful life beyond themselves for reality, truth and basically for God. This search is often more felt than is spoken.

How man searches for God today;

1. Through prayer which are recited individually or collectively. Apart from Sunday, they dedicate some special time for prayer, communicating to God.
2. Christians repent their sins to be right with God for God is holy. Repentance involves regretting the sins committed and turning away from them.
3. The Christians baptize the new believers. Baptism is an expression of joining God's family and at the same time cleanses one of the sin inherited from Adam and Eve.
4. They preach the gospel following Jesus' command of taking the gospel to all nations. The gospel is preached in the churches, market places, along the streets, on radio and televisions among others.
5. They read and study God's word (bible study) to understand the truth which reveals God's will and get strengthened in faith.

6. They organize and attend fellowships where they share the word of God so as to be strengthened. In these fellowships, Christians praise and worship, give testimonies and preach the word of God.
7. By composing Christian songs and hymns. These express their faith and extend their appreciation for the good things God has done and still doing in their lives.
8. By fasting where Christians deny themselves the worldly pleasures like food, sex for a given period of time and engage in meditation.
9. By sharing the holy Eucharist or holy communion. They eat the bread (which symbolizes the body of Christ) and take wine (which symbolizes the blood of Christ).
10. By going for pilgrimages. Here Christians pay visits to holy places for example in Uganda, every 3rd June Christians go to Namugongo to remember the boldness of African Christians who were burnt in 1886 for their faith.
11. Through engaging in charitable works where Christians give assistance to the needy by giving them basic needs like food, clothes, medical care among others.
12. Through writing Christian literature to explain their knowledge about God and His mighty works for example the Catholic Church releases the Munno newspaper every Sunday and the leadership magazine every month.
13. Through constructing churches to bring Christians together for prayer, praise, worship among others for example Rubaga miracle Centre which is under Pastor Robert Kayanja.
14. By giving offerings in the church in form of money, foodstuffs, clothes to help in the running of the church affairs.
15. By living a self-denial life. Christians deny themselves the worldly pleasures in order to serve God for example the Nuns and Priests of the Catholic Church who practice poverty in order to serve God.

16. People have attached themselves to church work as pastors, reverends, priests, nuns for example Pr. Robert Kayanja of Rubaga miracle Centre has involved himself in church work.

FACTORS THAT PROMPT MAN TO SEARCH FOR GOD (THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD)

1. **God is the creator.** He created and Has powers over heavens and the earth. All things happen as He wills. Man therefore prays to God for his needs.
2. **God is omnipotent.** He is all powerful and the almighty. Man therefore seeks protection from Him against all problems.
3. **God is omniscient.** He is all wise and all knowing. People seek God for His wisdom because He is wiser than all wise men in the world.
4. **God is omnipresent.** God is present everywhere at the same time. He is in full control of the world. They seek His guidance wherever they are.
5. **God is all seeing.** He sees everything in the world at the same time. He is the 'big eye' watching over the world and man cannot hide from Him. He therefore has knowledge of all things existing anywhere.
6. **God is transcendent.** He is extremely great. He is beyond the limits of human knowledge and experience. He is above all things and people always seek to understand His greatness through worship.
7. **God is immanent.** He is very close to man. He is very near to His people especially in times of problems. Man is always conscious of God's presence and therefore involves God in his affairs.
8. **God is holy.** He is pure and that's why man has to approach him in that state. He therefore asks God for forgiveness through repentance whenever he feels he has committed a sin.
9. **God is loving.** He treats His creatures with affection through His unconditional love. They also seek his love through worship.

- 10. God is eternal.** He is immortal, has no beginning and no end (He is the Alpha and Omega). People seek God to have that eternity with Him after death.
- 11. God is all hearing.** That God hears and understands all languages, so understands even the secret thoughts and the unsaid words. He is therefore accessible to all people who seek Him.
- 12. God is all perfect.** Man believes God is perfect in everything i.e. He is perfectly good, perfectly beautiful, just among others. So people seek God to correct their imperfections.
- 13. God is impartial.** He does not discriminate people who seek Him. He treats all people equally regardless of race, sex, status or rank. All people need His salvation.
- 14. God is the Alpha and Omega.** I.e. He has no beginning and has no end and many people search for Him because of this reason.
- 15. God is a provider and sustainer of life.** Whoever prays to God gets what he or she wants for example when the Israelites were thirsty and hungry, God provided food and water to the Israelites while they were in Israel.

WAYS HOW GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TODAY

- 1.** God has revealed Himself through His son Jesus Christ who says he is the way to the father for those who believe in Him. This explains why Christians pray through Jesus Christ as their interceder/mediator.
- 2.** God has revealed himself through the Holy Scriptures like the bible and other religious literature books which people read and understand more about God.
- 3.** Through the power of the Holy Spirit as it empowers religious leaders to perform miracles of healing, casting out of demons for example pastor Kyanja Robert of Lubaga miracle Centre has performed miracles.
- 4.** God has revealed Himself through religious sacraments that Christians receive for example the sacrament of Holy Communion, baptism.

5. Through answering the believers' prayers and also providing their needs like the blind have received back their sight, barren women have been blessed with children.
6. God has revealed himself through the good morals of the good people like being humble, loving, kind, prayerful, merciful, etc.
7. God has revealed through dreams and visions as He reveals messages for the religious leaders to tell/preach to the Christians.
8. God has revealed Himself through His creative nature as He continues to create things like stars, moon, sky, plants, and trees among others.
9. God has revealed Himself through religious historical events as they celebrate the achievements of God like the birth of Jesus (Christmas day), resurrection of Jesus (Easter day).
10. God has revealed through personalities like the bishops, priests, pastors, catechists who do God's work of preaching the gospel and other religious activities.

PROBLEMS FACED BY CHRISTIANS IN THEIR SEARCH FOR GOD

1. They face poverty/lack of money for transport, assisting the poor and the needy.
2. They face persecution which involves insults, mockery by fellow Christians and government.
3. They face conflicts/divisions between churches/religious denominations and opposition.
4. Lack of time since everyone is involved in work and leisure activities.
5. Misinterpretation of scriptures and poor preaching where sometimes the preachers are boring.

6. Cults some of which have led to death for example the restoration of the Ten Commandments cult led by Joseph Kibwetere led to the death of thousands of people on 17th march 2000 in Kanungu district.
7. Many people are looking at religion as a source of finance and wealth.
8. Bad examples from the church leaders as they engage in a number of evil activities.
9. Discrimination among the people based on race, tribe, sex among others.
10. Political instabilities in some areas make people be on the run and fail to go to church.
11. The church is becoming too commercialized which has chased the poor since they cannot pay in order to for the church leaders to render services to them
12. Divided loyalties as Christianity and African traditional religion have different demands.
13. The development of science and technology which has caused a lot of doubt in man's mind about God's existence.
14. The unseen nature of God makes man doubt God's existence because no man on earth has ever seen God instead people just imagine how God looks like.
15. The unanswered prayers were man continues to pray to God but never gets it. As a result of this people are totally discouraged from praying.

MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD IN THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

Africans are great seekers of God. Professor John Mbiti refers to them as being, 'Notoriously religious'. An African did not do anything without God. In their search for God, African did the following;

1. Africans used to consult the spirits in their search for God. Spirits were invisible beings and Africans believed that they were nearer God.

2. Africans searched for God through prayer. These prayers were individual or communal were Africans expressed their faith and trust in God.
3. The Africans praised and worshipped God. Here songs were sung which expressed deep faith in their God. They did not have a fixed day of worship.
4. Africans also built shrines in showing their faith in God. These places were for religious functions and Africans respected them for they were holy for example the Baganda built shrines where cleansing of people with bad omen was done.
5. They made sacrifices to spiritual beings. This was done by giving material things in order to seek for blessings or avert curses for example the Basoga and Baganda offered sacrifices to God in request for good harvest and other blessings.
6. They believed in the existence of a supreme being and they named it God. A number of African societies gave different names to God to explain who He was for example the creator (Katonda in Buganda, Ruhanga among the Banyoro/Batooro).
7. They believed in divinities who were believed to have direct contact with God for example among the Baganda had Mukasa as the god of rain, Kibuka as the god of war and in Tooro, Irungu is the god of the jungle.
8. They consulted religious specialists like priests, diviners, fortune tellers among others. These played a number of roles like healed the sick, lead the rituals, invoke the spirits to remove misfortunes.
9. They respected certain places which were considered to be holy for example big tree, hills, mountains among others. It was believed that the spirits used to reside in those places for example among the Baganda, they respected Nakayima tree in Mubende because they regarded it as holy.
10. Africans also respected spiritual objects such as the spears, drums, beads among others. These were owned by individuals, families, clan for spiritual work. They could be kept in bags or put in houses.

11. They believed in ancestors who were believed to be dead people and they were nearer to the supreme God. They were considered to be stronger than the living.
12. They believed in magic and witchcraft for the Africans believed that such power was granted by the supreme God.
13. Africans searched for God through moral living i.e. they lived morally upright lives because even the God they worshipped was holy.

DIVINITIES IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

In their search for God, Africans believed in divinities. These were also regarded as lesser gods since they were directly below the supreme God.

Each of these divinities was responsible for a particular life experience for example in Buganda, Mukasa was the god of rain, Kibuka as the god of war.

They were believed to be mediators between God and the living. They were regarded as having absolute existence of their own. Africans addressed God through them.

They were created by God just like the human beings though God gave them greater powers than that of the human beings.

Africans would pray to God through the divinities who in turn would present people's needs to the supreme God.

Children were named after the divinities to recognize their work, presence and as a sign of respect for example Kyomya, Ndahura in Tooro and Bunyoro respectively.

Sometimes the divinities would possess human beings. This made the possessed people to do extra ordinary things like becoming too strong, speaking in tongues among others.

They showed their presence in a number of ways for example through human beings, insects, and animals among others.

In extreme cases, they would act independently i.e. they could do things on their own without seeking for permission from God.

Africans believed that the Supreme Being was involved in the affairs of human beings through the divinities since they were below the supreme God.

Because of having qualities of human beings and God, they were regarded by Africans as semi-human and semi-spiritual.

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYERS IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY

Prayers in traditional African society had the following importance.

1. It was through prayers that Africans would make their requests to God. Some of the requests would be long life, protection, children among others.
2. Prayers brought about unity in the community as people would gather together as a family or a clan or community and pray.
3. Through prayers, Africans can express their gratitude to God for any achievement acquired like child birth, victory in a war among others.
4. Prayer introduced an individual to a new understanding of God. People got to understand who and what God was after answering their prayers.
5. It was one way of expressing faith in God. Africans believe in the existence of God and believed that God could do them wonders.
6. Africans gained courage when life appeared to be threatened and difficult. They would always call on God to lend a hand.
7. Prayer helped Africans to surrender themselves to God. Here they would express their deep feelings to the supreme God.
8. Prayer could help Africans to search for a meaningful life as one opened and surrendered to the supreme God.

9. Prayer was a way through one would live in communion with God. It reflected the social relationship between God and the human being.
10. It was a way of approaching and communicating with God. Africans would approach and communicate to God for different purposes.
11. Through prayer, Africans would gain the courage of doing daily activities like digging, hunting, among others. This was because they knew God was on their side.
12. Prayer enabled one to interpret his relationship with God and experiences in the light of the ancestors.
13. It led to the observance of morality in the society and could keep the cultural candle burning.
14. Through prayer, one was able to grow in his awareness of God and the ancestors.
15. Through prayer, one could learn the ideals of patience and tolerance.

SACRIFICES IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA

Sacrifices were material things that were given to God and other spiritual beings during situations like death, child birth failure, drought, wars among others. Some of the items included foodstuffs, animals and sometimes human beings.

ROLES OF SACRIFICES IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SOCIETY

1. It was a way of giving respect to God and other spiritual beings like divinities, ancestors. This is why it formed the basis of social life.
2. Sacrifices helped to please the ancestors and they would divert any curses of any form from the society they were intended for.
3. It was one way of cleansing people of their sins for example people who had sex with relatives or who had murdered.

4. It was the basis of worshipping the supreme God and other spiritual beings. People recognized their superiority by sacrificing to them.
5. They could remove sadness and then they bring happy moments in people's lives. In the event of death, people feasted to regain happiness.
6. It formed a way of expressing joy and gratitude to the supreme God and other spiritual beings for any achievement got like victory in a war, child birth among others.
7. In case of broken relationships, sacrifices would be used to reconcile such people in order for peace and harmony to prevail in the society.
8. Through giving sacrifices, Africans were able to get blessings from God which were in form of victories in war, child birth, good harvest among others.
9. Africans would fellowship with the departed members of the family through sacrificing to them. They would give them food, libations among others.
10. In some societies, sacrifices acted as food for the community members for example the Karamojong could eat the blood of the sacrificed animal.
11. Sacrifices helped Africans to remember the important occasions in their lives like marriage, child birth, victory in war among others.

COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY WAYS OF SEARCHING FOR GOD.

Similarities

1. In both religions there is offering sacrifices to their spiritual beings like God among others.
2. Both believe in the oneness of God i.e. they both believe in the existence of a supreme God.

3. In both religions there is a belief in the life after death. At death, the spirit leaves the body and goes to the next world.
4. In both, the believers engage in prayers as a way of communicating to God.
5. In both, there is giving names to God which shows Him as powerful, creator, the controller of the universe.
6. In both, there are places where they go to worship God i.e. Christians go to church and the traditionalists go to the shrines.
7. Both of them believe in morality as an important aspect in keeping a good relationship between the human beings and God.
8. Both religions believe in sacred objects i.e. traditionalists have drums, spears and the rosary, bible for the Christians.
9. They both have priests who act as mediators to link people to God. These have a divine calling to do the work of God.
10. Both have the concept of helping the underprivileged group with basic needs of life like food, medical care.

Differences

1. African traditional societies paid constant paid loyalty to culture and its demands whereas Christianity invites people to go beyond the demands of culture.
2. Christians accept the Holy Spirit to guide their lives while the Africans believed in the ancestral spirits to guide them.
3. Christians give their children saints' names after baptism while Africans name their children names of ancestors.
4. Christians pray to God through Jesus Christ while Africans prayed through divinites, medicine men who would deliver their prayers to God.

5. Christians have special days for worship like Sunday and Saturday while Africans worship was done anytime there was need.
6. Christians have formally accepted prayers like the creed, the Lord's prayer while Africans pray according to the moments' needs.
7. The Christians build churches as places of worship while Africans build shrines as places of worship.
8. Christians preach the gospel while Africans preserved their cultural beliefs, customs, religious rituals and pass on to the next generation.
9. Christians study/read the bible to know more about God while Africans have only oral literature.
10. Christians give offerings since Christ has been sacrificed for all while in African tradition they offer sacrifices.
11. In Christianity, baptism is a symbol of initiating one into the church while in traditional Africa, its initiation rites like circumcision among the Bagishu is a way of searching for God.
12. Christians use scientific methods like microphones, speakers to search for God while Africans used traditional methods like drums.

MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD IN CHURCH HISTORY

Ways how the early Christians searched for God.

1. They preached the gospel in order to fulfill the commission that was given by Jesus, "Go into the world and preach the good news to all mankind" Mark 16:15.
2. The disciples carried out charitable works. They gave basic needs like food to the needy like the poor, widows, orphans.

3. They engaged in prayers on regular basis. Christians would communicate God since it was believed that faith in God depended much on times he spent in prayer.
4. They performed miracles in Jesus' name for example Peter and John healed a lame man at the Jerusalem temple gate.
5. They wrote epistles to individuals and various communities for example Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans among others.
6. They gave testimonies as they proclaimed the message of the Lord. They would speak the good things Jesus had done for them after getting converted.
7. They founded churches in various communities for example Paul founded the Corinthian, Galatians, Roman churches. He travelled to these places and preached to them.
8. They shared the Holy Communion which was done in memory of the last super and the blood of Jesus which was poured for the sinners.
9. They organized fellowships for the believers. These were regular meetings of brethren where they observed oneness and shared the word of God.
10. They fasted by denying themselves food or drinks for a day or any other specified period in order to devote themselves to God.
11. They laid hands on the new converts so that they would receive the Holy Spirit and blessings from God.
12. They baptized new converts. Whoever believed in Jesus Christ and was baptised became a member of God's family for example Peter baptised over 3000 converts in Samaria.
13. They trained others to help with the work of preaching the gospel for example St. Paul trained Titus, Timothy among others.

14. They shared material and financial resources with others. The rich Christians would sell off their property and the proceeds would be shared with the poor. **EXAMPLES**

OF GOD'S SEEKERS IN CHURCH HISTORY

a) CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

1. He was born in Athens around AD 150.
2. His parents were pagans but he got converted to Christianity and was baptized.
3. After conversion, his search for God started and did not end.
4. He went in search for the best Christian teachings to S. Italy, Syria and Egypt. In all these places, he found very remarkable teachers who impressed him especially Pantaenus, the chief Christian leader in Alexandria.
5. He made many writings on the Christian life showing that even if he took rest to travel, he remained a seeker of true knowledge about God.
6. Clement later succeeded Pantaenus as a chief Christian leader.
7. He searched for God by humbling himself and learning from communities where went.
8. He searched for God by undertaking a study in philosophy at the university of Athens.

b) ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

1. He was born in AD 354 in Namibia in N. Africa.
2. Though born of a Christian mother (St. Monica), Augustine was not a Christian.
3. For a long time he searched for an answer to the meaning of life without much success.
4. His search took him to Milan in N. Italy where Ambrose was the bishop.

5. Ambrose's teaching impressed him and he began to understand the meaning of scriptures.
6. He later came to realize that in order to find God he had to change his life.
7. He got baptized and this marked the beginning of his search for a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.
8. He made every effort to defend the Christian faith against wrong teachings.
9. His search continued and he became to realize that man's heart is restless until it rests in God.
10. He wrote much Christian literature that helped to inspire many of his followers for example he wrote, 'The confession', 'The city of God' among others.
11. He corrected some of the false teachings that had been developed for example the pre-destination doctrine advanced by John Calvin of Switzerland.

MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

How did the people in the Old Testament search for God?

1. Through monotheism i.e. belief in the existence of only one God –Yahweh for example Abraham left worshiping the gods of the sun and the moon to worship only one GodYahweh.
2. They frequently prayed to Yahweh as an expression of their search for God for example Abraham prayed for God's intervention during the Exodus.
3. They also remained obedient to and follow the covenant laws as a way of searching for God. They had to study, internalize and memorize the law so as to keep God's presence in their daily lives.
4. By giving sacrifices and offerings as a way of searching for God for example the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Abraham was ready to offer his son as a sacrifice to God.

5. They built altars for God to signify His revelation to them for example Abraham was instructed to build altars for God from where he gave offerings and sacrifices.
6. They further built places of worshipping God like synagogues and temples for example King Solomon built the Jerusalem temple in honour of Yahweh.
7. By observing the wonders of the world like the sun, stars, mountains among others as God's creations.
8. They made annual pilgrimages to the holy temple in Jerusalem to re-dedicate themselves to God and give thanks to him for His continued support in their lives.
9. They observed the Sabbath day of rest. Every seventh day of the week was a day of rest from work during which they would pray and worship God.
10. By listening to God's messengers i.e. priests, judges and prophets like Moses, Ezekiel, Jeremiah among others.
11. By praising and worshiping God for example King David led the Israelites in praising God through singing and dancing as they transferred the covenant box back to Jerusalem.
12. The Israelites repented to God when they sinned for example King David repented after committing the double sins of adultery and murder.
13. They entered in a covenant with God at the foot of Mount Sinai and they promised to obey and worship God alone.
14. They renewed their earlier covenant with God as they settled down in the Promised Land. This took place at Shechem and they promised to serve God alone and obey all his laws.

HOW GOD REVEALED HIMSELF TO MAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Through personalities like prophets such as Amos, Isaiah, Samuel. These were God's spokesmen and God would always send them to His people.

2. Through the Patriarchs i.e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He called out Abraham out of Haran into the promised land.
3. Through natural phenomenon like clouds, thunder for example the clouds directed the Israelites to the Promised Land and it also re-appeared at the foot of Mt. Sinai.
4. Through dreams and visions for example Abraham and Samuel experienced this as recorded in Genesis 15:1ff and Samuel 3:1ff respectively.
5. Through calamities for example famine in the wilderness faced by the Israelites, the plagues and floods faced by the Egyptians because of enslaving the Israelites.
6. The Israelites felt God's presence through His laws – Ten Commandments which were kept in the covenant box.
7. God revealed to man through provisions. He gave the Israelites food, water, quails and even kings who led the Israelites.
8. Through leading them and winning for them victory over their political enemies for example the war they won against the Philistines.
9. Through the covenant box (ark) which was carried to war grounds and the Israelites won the wars.
10. God revealed Himself to man through a voice for example during the call of Abraham, Moses and Samuel.
11. Through some reforms carried out by kings to bring the people to normal for example the reforms of King Josiah.
12. By sending those (Israelites) in exile during the prophetic times, He was showing that He was powerful.

13. Through miracles for example He made a path across the Red sea to enable the Israelites cross as the Egyptians were pursuing them. **ABRAHAM AND MOSES AS SEEKERS OF**

GOD A) ABRAHAM'S SEARCH FOR GOD.

1. Abraham was a son of Terah, and the grandson of Nahor. He used to worship the gods of nature i.e. the sun, moon, etc.
2. As a true seeker of God, he responded with faith to Yahweh's call and began worshipping only one God – Yahweh.
3. He accepted to move from Haran to the land of Canaan as instructed by God (Genesis 12: 1-10).
4. Abraham built altars from where he worshipped God and offered sacrifices to Him (Genesis 22:9).
5. He further offered sacrifices to Yahweh (Genesis 15:9-10). He even accepted to offer his son as a sacrifice to God (Genesis 22: 10-14).
6. He had faith and believed in the God he could not see. His faith, obedience made him to be the grandfather of all believers.
7. He constantly relied on God's guidance and support in all his endeavours i.e. he did not divorce his wife even when fulfillment of God's promises appeared impossible.

B) MOSES AS A SEEKER OF GOD

1. Moses was born a Jew and raised by the Egyptian royal family.
2. He realized that his own effort to liberate his people was not enough (exodus 2: 11-15).
3. His search for God began when he came face to face with God during the burning bush incidence.

4. From that experience, he realized he was in a holy ground confronting a holy God.
5. He learnt that God was not new but had since been worshipped by his ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Exodus 3:6.
6. Moses realised that God's revelation to him was for a purpose. His task was to liberate God's people from the Egyptian slavery.
7. Through his call, Moses was able to know the name of God, I AM WHO I AM (Exodus 3:14)
8. He further learnt that Yahweh was a powerful God signified by the following, the stick which became a miracle stick, the 10 plagues, the Passover and eventual deliverance from Egypt.
9. He accepted the task of leading his people out of slavery to freedom with God's guidance.
10. He always prayed to God for help especially when the Israelites had problems, Exod 15:25, 17:4.
11. He was always obedient to God's commands for example at the burning bush, the Passover, the crossing of the Red sea, at Mount Sinai among others.
12. He became a mediator between God and His people. He accepted to become God's spokesman (prophet) giving the will of God to the people.
13. He was a law giver. He brought the Ten Commandments from God to the Israelites (Exod 20:1-17). He also gave them other laws to guide their relationships.
14. He put complete trust in God which enabled him to serve Yahweh and other people effectively.
15. His faith and trust in God made him to become the leader of the people, the liberator, miracle worker, chief priest, law giver, God's spokesman, etc.

THE NATURE OR CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. God is a worker. He was able to get soil and formed the man during the creation activity.
2. God is holy. When God appeared in the burning bush. He told Moses that the ground he was holy.
3. God is the provider. He provided to the Israelites food in form of quails and manna, water as they were going to the Promised Land.
4. God is invisible. During the call of Abraham, Moses, Samuel among others. God is only heard and not seen physically.
5. God is omnipotent (powerful). He is mighty and powerful for example He defended the Egyptian gods during the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of slavery.
6. God is omnipresent. God is everywhere for example He was with Moses during His call, when he was receiving the Ten Commandments and during the Passover event.
7. God is omniscient. God is all-knowing for example He was aware of the plight of His people in Egypt. He knew when people sinned and sent prophets to them for example He sent prophet Nathan to king David, prophet Elijah to king Ahab among others.
8. God is the creator. God reveals himself as the creator of the world and the universe plus all that is in it according to Gen 1 and 2.
9. God is loving. He expressed His love to the people of Israel by using Moses to set them free from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.
10. God is transcendent. He is above human knowledge and understanding for example Job and his friends failed to understand God and when Job suffered much as he was righteous.
11. God is spirit. He was invisible and therefore no one can make His image. The spirit of God was present at creation according to Gen 1.

12. God is universal. He reveals himself as the God of all people for example He pronounced judgement and punishment on Israel's neighbours like Tyre. Philistia, Edom among others.

MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus taught the following on man's quest for God;

1. Jesus taught that God is a loving father and man should respond to him with love and trust.
2. He confirmed that He had come for the salvation of all mankind and therefore people were to be open to His message in order to get the truth.
3. He encouraged forgiveness and reconciliation among his followers. This is why himself forgave the woman who was caught in adultery and those who crucified him.
4. He identified himself as a way, the truth and the life and no one reaches the father except through Him (John 14:16).
5. He encourages His followers to be merciful to each other as its the only way to the father in Heaven would be merciful to them (Mathew 5:7)
6. He refers to Himself as the good shepherd who knows his sheep by their names and was willing to die for them (John 10:1ff).
7. He encourages love for each other as brings harmony here on earth and also in heaven where we shall go after this earthly life.
8. He called upon his followers to help the needy like the widows, orphans, poor in order to receive rewards from His father.
9. He advised His followers to pray in order for the heavenly father to respond to their needs. He went further and taught the Lord's Prayer.

10. He advised His followers to love God with all their strength, soul and mind in their search for Him.
11. He encouraged the believers to ask so that they are given, knock at the door to be opened and seek so that they could find.
12. He encouraged the believers to endure the suffering they were going through. As believers in Christ, they were bound to go through such for the sake of the gospel.
13. He encouraged the followers to be born again in order to attain everlasting life for example He told Nicodemus in the evening to be born again in order to attain everlasting life.
14. He advised the followers to repent their sins. This would enable them to be pure and holy like the father in heaven.

COMMON REVISION QUESTIONS ON MAN'S QUEST FOR GOD

1a) In which ways did the Uganda martyrs prove their belief in God?

b) Why does a modern Christian find the search for God very difficult today?

2a) Show how

i) Clement of Alexandria ii) Augustine

of Hippo searched for God

b) Explain the ways in which modern Christians search for God today.

3a) Explain the role of prayer in African Traditional Society.

b) Show how God revealed Himself in the Old Testament.

4a) Give evidence to show that traditional Africans believed in God.

b) Explain the role of prayers in the daily life of a Christian.

5a) Mention the ways used by the traditional Africans to communicate with God.

b) Explain the attributes of God as found in the Old Testament.

6a) Show how traditional Africans searched for God.

b) How did the people of the old testament search for God?

c) Give reasons why Jesus often opposed some of the ways in which the Jews searched for God.

7a) Explain the;

i) Similarities, and

ii) Differences between the ways in which people searched for God in traditional African society and in the present situation.

8a) Explain how people seek for God through the church today.

b) What is Jesus' teaching about people's search for God?

9a) How did the religious rituals in the African traditional societies demonstrate the people's search for God?

b) What is the importance of Baptism to Christians?

10a) Describe the ways in which people search for God in Uganda today.

b) How did the early Christians search for God?