

NEWSLETTER

Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas & Damian, Hong Kong

Winter 91

香港天主教醫生協會

c/o 10/F, Diocese Centre, 16 Caine Road, H.K.

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EDITORIAL

Coming late is this issue of Newsletter - the first after AGM 1991. The members of the Editorial Board would like to express our gratification for your support: in the past, at present and the future.

In this issue, we are going to report on our AGM and the speech by Mr. Rogers at the Annual Dinner. He has briefed us on the hot issue about 'Bills of Rights' and its place in the future of Hong Kong. I am sure you will find insightful ideas through his speech. Our theme for the present issue is 'spiritual dimension of psychological care'. Rev. Joshua Chan, an experienced chaplain of psychiatric service, has discussed about spiritual care for mentally ill patients. Dr. C.M. Leung also opined on the logical analysis of "odd experience" from the point of view of a psychiatrist.

Other invaluable pieces of personal contributions are also selected to satisfy your reading appetite. As you are sharing with their experience, we would hope for yours in the next issue!

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

(Frances Mok)

"Medical practice + Christianity = Guild of St. Luke" - A simplified equation to delineate the characteristics of our Guild. The first component of the Guild is easily justified because our members are exclusively medical doctors or "to be doctors" (medical students). However, the justification of the second part is not straight forward. The practice of Christianity can be individualized or as a group. Most of our members are devoted Catholics and have led faithful Christian lives. As a group, our Guild is expected to be a brain trust of our Church on medical matters, the conscience of our society on medical ethical issues and the guardian of Catholic moral principles in this modern world. For the recent years, we have been working very hard to promote cohesiveness among our members and refreshing the traditional activities of our Guild. We have also tried to respond to current events occurring in our society

by arranging specific seminars for our members and arousing their interest with articles in our Newsletter. However our image of being the spokesman for medical ethical issues in Hong Kong is still not outstanding enough and there is certainly much room for improvement. This is especially important in this era of drastic changes in the medical scene of Hong Kong. The poor, the weak and the deprived require our support and representation so that their situation won't be even worse after all these reforms. The call is deep and strong in our hearts but the path is not smooth and straight forward. Our human weakness of inertia and indifference is the first hurdle to surmount. Here, I appeal for your advice and participation so that our Guild is more worthy of existence in Hong Kong. May God bless us all!

THEME OF THE ISSUE: "THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF PSYCHIATRIC CARE"

(Rev. Joshua Chan)

It's true to say that the issue of mental illness has been widely discussed and concerned in certain levels in the last decade. The working teams, in hospital, including multi-disciplinary staffs, have been working endeavouredly to provide best treatment and genuine care to patients as much as they can. It's because the needs of mental ill patient have increasingly emerged that require high level treatment and therapy. Therefore, as the treatments proceed, we have to look at comprehensive dimension of patient needs both in physically and psychologically as well as spiritually and socially.

As we go further into the Spiritual dimension of the need of mental patient, I think one of the most important concepts we need to acknowledge is the "HOLISTIC health", the care of patients in a 'totality', including the spiritual aspect as well.

Firstly, we need to discern the spiritual issues which are always emerged on the mental ill patient.

A. The issue of GUILTY FEELING :

It's easy and common to see mental ill patients to blame on themselves as things happened are not in their ideal ways.

B. The sense of MEANING & PURPOSE in life :

Many patients feels depressed as they can't find any meanings or hopes in their lives that cause them tend to be suicidal.

C. The need of obtaining FORGIVENESS :

It's important for mental ill patients to obtain forgiveness before they really feel peaceful and calm down.

D. The source of LOVE & RELATEDNESS :

Although most mental ill patients have difficulty or poor social skill to build up relationship with others, their needs for closeness and unconditional acceptance are unchanged. That's why they exhibit a serious spiritual need.

Secondly, we need to take a look at their religious needs.

A. The meaningful RITUALS :

Different religions bring out their essential religious meaning through different kind of Rituals. (For example : Sunday Worship Gathering to Christian patient. "Mass" to Catholic patient).

B. Community of FAITH :

This relates to mental ill patient who has religious belief and belongs to different demoninations.

C. Religion DELUSION :

Religion delusion is a common symptom related to Schizophrenic patient. As we encounter with the above patient, we need to support the person but not the delusion through our careful listening.

D. Discerning the Possession Symptom :

A very few patients in mental hospital who come across with the experience of possessing demon in their personal background would exhibit some behaviors similar to that of mental patient.

Thirdly, we go on to see the crucial points in discerning the healthy & unhealthy belief. There are 12 points which asserted by Clinebell (1972) as follow :

- A. Does it build bridges or barriers between people?
- B. Does it strengthen or weaken a basic sense of trust and relatedness to the universe?
- C. Does it stimulate or hamper the growth of inner freedom & personal responsibility?
- D. Does it provide effective or faulty means of helping persons move from a sense of guilt or forgiveness?
- E. Does it increase or lessen the enjoyment of life?
- F. Does it handle the vital energies of sex and aggressive in constructive or repressive way?
- G. Does it encourage the acceptance or denial of reality?
- H. Does it emphasize love or fear?
- I. Does it give its adherents a "frame of orientation and object of devotion that is adequate in handling existential anxiety constructively?
- J. Does it encourage the individual to relate to its unconscious through living symbols?
- K. Does it accommodate itself to the neurotic pattern of society or endeavor to change them?
- L. Does it strengthen or weaken self-esteem.

As conclusion, we are proposing to look at the possible ways that we, can provide spiritual care to patient.

- A. Refine our assessing skill on patient spiritual component.
- B. Be present at times when patient need someone to talk with.
- C. Be a genuine and careful listener.

It's not necessary to give answer to all questions. But it is important to have a quiet listening to their hidden feelings.

- D. Reaffirm the value and worth of an individual patient by respecting their dignities.
- E. Encourage patient who has religious belief to join Weekly Religious Group Activities.
- F. Make a referral to Hospital Chaplain for further Spiritual support and legitimate assessment on spiritual components.

GOD'S VOICE OR MAN'S VOICE

- possessed by devil or possession syndrome

(C.M. Leung)

Christianity is a religion of revelation. God participated in history, gradually exposing Himself through the prophets and finally the Son. He spoke to man and worked miracles. These have caused no difficulty until the era of modern psychiatry. Is it God's voice or is it man's i.e. hallucination? Is she possessed or just dissociated or hysterical? The following passages may be illustrative.

Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary, where the sacred Covenant Box was. Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning, the Lord called Samuel. He answered, "Yes, sir!" and ran to Eli and said, "You called me, and here I am."

But Eli answered, "I didn't call you; go back to bed." So Samuel went back to bed.

The Lord called Samuel again. The boy did not know that it was the Lord, because the Lord had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am."

But Eli answered, "My son, I didn't call you; go back to bed."

The Lord called Samuel a third time; he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am."

Then Eli realized that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, so he said to him, "Go back to bed; and if he calls you again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed.

The Lord came and stood there, and called as he had before, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Samuel answered, "Speak; your servant is listening." (SA1 3:3-11)

A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, because he has an evil spirit in him and cannot talk. Whenever the spirit attacks him, it throws him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth, grits his teeth, and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not."

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a fit, so that he fell on the ground and rolled round, foaming at the mouth. "How long has he been like this?" Jesus asked the father.

"Ever since he was a child," he replied. "Many times the evil spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him in the fire and into water. Have pity on us and help us, if you possibly can!"

"Jesus noticed that crowd was closing in on them, so he gave a command to the evil spirit. "Deaf and dumb spirit," he said, "I order you to come out of the boy and never go into him again!"

"The spirit screamed, threw the boy into a bad fit and came out. The boy looked like a corpse, and every one said, "He is dead." But Jesus took the boy by the hand and helped him to rise and he stood up.

(MAR 9:17-18, 20-22, 24-27)

If these events occur in our time, how should we judge? And in fact it is not uncommon that people hearing God's voices (or devils for that matter) or felt being possessed are brought to pastors, priests or shaman before psychiatrists are consulted. Judgment depends much on one's belief system e.g. the meaning of miracles, the existence of devils, whether miracles occur nowadays and whether God allows devils to hang around.

Since the Ascension, Jesus left behind the Church as the greatest miracle on earth, that has continued to unfold the nature of God. The process of revelation has since taken a new form. Definitely God does not speak to us in the same way he spoke to Samuel. He speaks to us through the Church and many other different ways. Concerning miracles, the modern Church has been very careful in proclaiming the supernatural nature of many claims. Definitely, priests, even of great faith, are not experts in exorcism, which is neither encouraged nor publicized.

Even the supernatural nature of many miracles recorded in the Bible could be questioned. However, just as the fact that the universe was not created in seven days does not undermine the historical nature of the Bible, the investigation into the natural basis of the miracles should not be dispelled as sheer skepticism. The Bible is a book of history and also a book of faith. In fact, judging from a strictly psychiatric point of view, the possession by devil described in Mark 9:17-29 stuns one as a vivid picture of a long standing case of epilepsy with grand mal seizure in a deaf and dumb boy. The loss of consciousness, foaming mouth and post-ictal somnolence are classical.

Despite the above arguments that miracles and the face to face dialogue with God are extremely rare nowadays, still one could be puzzled and hesitant in making diagnosis when facing a religious man who claims seeing visions or hearing the message from God or feels possessed. The basic approach should be empathetic i.e. that he really sees or hears or feels what he claims. The second step is the attribution process or the aetiology. For this, a whole range of investigations into the bio-psycho-social aspect is mandatory. Other aspects of the mental state apart from the index allegation are important. Furthermore, opinions of the

clergy and fellow believers should be taken into account. The final judgment should be guided by Ockham's principle that the simplest solution is usually the best solution. If the claims could be explained with a psychological, physical, social or a combination model, a supernatural cause should be withheld. Treatment should be directed accordingly.

People may argue that the rare chance of direct message from God may be missed. And may I quote Gamaliel's saying "If what they have planned and done is of human origin, it will disappear, but if it comes from God, you cannot possibly defeat them. You could find yourselves fighting against God!" (Act 5:38-39) The truth will come out and even found fighting against God at the end, one will not be blamed for acting in good faith.

MEDJUGORJE-MEDICAL EVIDENCES ON THE APPARITION OF OUR LADY

(Sammy Sou)

It is reported that Our Lady has been appearing to six young people in Medjugorje, a village in Yugoslavia since June 24, 1981. For ten years Our Lady has appeared every day to them, praying with them, talking to them and sending messages to the world through them. She also communicates to them ten secrets concerning the future. Over 20 million people from all over the world have visited the place. And many of them are converted to a deep relation with God.

I joined a pilgrimage group of 28 from Hong Kong to Medjugorje in July this year. It is my pleasure to share with the members of the Guild some interesting medical evidences on the apparition. Just imagine, over the ten years, tests of all sorts from medical doctors, psychologists, and scientists should have been tried on these poor visionaries.

The Church is very prudent towards any reported issues of apparitions. It has delegated a commission formed by the bishops of Yugoslavia to investigate into the case. Since the abolition of Canon 1399 and 2318 of the former Code of Canon Law by Pope Paul VI in 1966, publications about new apparitions, miracles, etc., have been allowed to be distributed and read by the faithful without the express permission of the Church, providing that they contain nothing which contravenes faith and morals.

Fr. Rene Laurentin (a well known Marian theologian) brought some doctors to the Parish and repeated some medical tests on the visionaries. During the vision, the visionaries did not react to the strongest light. Once Vicka (visionary) was pricked but she did not react. The parish priest also tried seizing Jakov (visionary) by his hair, but he did not react either.

After the encephalogram, the doctors could state that it was not a case of epilepsy, or of hallucination or even of a dream. So they are in a state of wakefulness, but on the other hand do not react as they would normally if they are awake. The test on the eyes shows a simultaneous reaction, they all begin staring at something the doctors cannot see, at the same instant. A headset which generated 90 decibel level, which a normal head could not stand, was put on the visionaries. However, they did not hear anything during the apparition and the noise did not disturb them by any means.

Vicka had an operation under general anaesthesia in 1985. An hour after the operation she was still under the influence of the anaesthetic. Suddenly she awoke and began reacting as she usually did during the apparitions, praying to Our Lady as usual. After the apparition, she was again under the anaesthetic. This was witnessed by her companion and Vicka told the priest that Our Lady appeared to her for twelve minutes.

Many other signs also accompany the apparitions. For example, most of our pilgrimage group members could look directly into the sun without any discomfort and also saw the sun pulsating (commonly known as Dancing of the Sun, well witnessed in Fatima). The most interesting thing is that our Hong Kong tour guide, who is an unbeliever, also saw a figure hanging on a cross in the sky just above the sun. Many sick people are reported to be cured over the years. All such signs are only for the purpose of showing that God does exist.

'A sound tree produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit. You will be able to tell them by their fruits' (Mt. 7: 17, 20). The most relevant evidence of God's grace in Medjugorje is the conversion of the villagers and pilgrims. People for 30 years have not attended Mass are converted, teenagers and pilgrims. People for 30 years have not attended Mass are converted, teenagers who have never said any prayers in their life walk barefooted up the rocky hills with fervent prayers for the sake of penance Every day we joined the people in the church to say 15 decades of Rosary, attend Holy Mass, and some more prayers from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Our Lady usually appeared to the visionaries in a small room at 6:40 p.m. during the Rosary.

The villagers have all the temptations and distractions we have : colored TV and good programmes; the desire to possess more and more. Ten years ago they would say that they had no time for prayers or for God. Many families had put the television set in the centre of their home, and put God at the corner. It is that the television had become like a god in their homes, deciding how families spent their free time. With Our Lady's reminder, today they put the TV set in a corner and put God at the centre of their homes. Now they really believe in God's power rather than their own ability. A deep desire for God rather than materials. They are able to pray deep.

Our Lady asks us to mediate on the gospel Mt. 6:24-34 every Thursday. She has delivered many practical messages especially fit for our current situations. She often finishes her messages with a thank for our response to her invitation.

"If you want to be very happy, live a simple, humble life, pray a great deal, do not delve into your problems, but let yourselves be guided by God."

"I am with you and I am your Mother."

"If you know how much I love you, you would seep for joy."

"At this time, the Lord has granted you many graces... Give thanks."

"Pray, pray, pray."

"Pray with your hearts."

"I say to you : love."

"Remain in prayer and you will understand."

"I knock, but there are so many hearts that still do not open to Me."

"When you are humble, when you pray fervently and when you love, satan cannot even draw close."

"Every agitation comes from Satan."

"I tell all Christians that the most important thing is to enter into the depth of prayer, then you will be able to make the right choice."

Our Lady comes to us with the title Queen of Peace this time. The main messages are that God does exist, and we should go back to Him through deep prayer, monthly confession, fasting, Holy Mass, and the Bible. The Peace of God is the most important thing that the world and our hearts need.

(The author of this article is very pleased to provide further books or information about Queen of Peace and Medjugorje)

COUNCIL NEWS

REPORT ON ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1991

(Paul Ho)

In the evening of 26th July 1991, about 50 members of our Guild and invited guests gathered at the Royal Hong Kong Golf Club at Deep Water Bay for the 38th Annual General Meeting of the Guild. The meeting started at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of A.G.M. 1990 was adopted. The Hon. Secretary's and Hon. Treasurer's reports 1990-1991 were accepted. The Office-Bearers and Hon. posts 1991-1992 were elected.

The Buffet Dinner began at about 8:00 p.m. Four tables of members and invited guests enjoyed the delicious meal in a warm and friendly environment.

Mr. Anthony Regers, Q.C., Chairman of the Barristers Association enlightened us with his professional insight into the issue of "LAW OF HUMAN RIGHTS".

I am sure that those attended would enjoy the evening very much. Looking forward to seeing you and your family at the A.G.M. next year.

Summary of Speech by Mr. Rogers at Annual Dinner

Mr. Rogers talked about 'Bill of Rights', 'Why has the People's Republic expressed negative views on it?', and 'What is likely to happen to 'Bills of Rights' after 1997?' Firstly, he mentioned that 'Bills of Rights' is actually a statement considered by most as the minimum standards of legal rights on a social scale. The precepts today has not be changed when compared to centuries ago. When examined on our 'Bills of Rights', it actually expressed the same ideas upon provisions of basic freedom with the Internal Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It suggested that any law which is contrary to 'Bill of Rights' would be repealed.

The speaker also discussed about the opposition of 'Bill of Rights' from the People's Republic of China. He suggested that Marxism was basically incompatible with Christianity. Marxism maintained that some members of class or party could arrogate to themselves the exercise of absolute power. It led to the self interest of a class, group, party nation and a denial of fundamental human dignity. In the concept of 'Bill of Rights', the party concerned would lose control over the judicial interpretation, & ultimately the loss of ability to apply Marxist teaching & philosophy. What is going to happen after 1997? Mr. Rogers opined that the 'Bill of Rights' would not affect subsequent legislation except it is required to be read as far as possible consistently with the International Covenant. Provisions which prevent laws being made which would be inconsistent with the Covenant are in the Letters Patent & they will probably have ceased. At the time, Basic law will then take over. The speaker has expressed doubts about exact interpretation of Basic Laws at the time when compared to those implemented in Hong Kong before 1985.

REPORT ON MEDICAL SUNDAY MASS 1991

(Paul Ho)

Medical Sunday Mass used to be the first and one of the most important functions of the Guild during the year. Many Catholic doctors, nurses and all others connected with the care of the sick were invited to come together to pray to our Lord. The mass was again co-organised by our Guild and the Catholic Nurses' Guild this year. However, the place of celebration has changed this year from the Cathedral to Christ the King Chapel at Causeway Bay (just next to St. Paul Hospital). The 9:45 a.m. mass, the last Chinese mass of the day, was made use to celebrate the occasion. We chose the date of 27th October 1991 because the 150th Anniversary of the local diocese was scheduled to be celebrated in 20th October 1991.

Vicar General Rev. John B. Tsang has kindly accepted our invitation to act as the principal celebrant of the mass. Various associations and societies, including St. John Ambulance Association and Brigade, Auxiliary Medical Services, the Birthright Society, the Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care and the Comfort Care Concern, also came on that day. They actively participated the event by speaking the General Intercessions.

We were very delighted to see many of our senior as well as junior members attended the mass. Furthermore, Dr. S.H. Lee, Director of Health and Mr. Michael Ho, Legislative Councillor had also made their presence on that day.

An exhibition of Catholic pastoral care service in Hong Kong was held on the same day. The exhibition was co-organised by our Guild and the Catholic Nurses' Guild. Pastoral Care Units of various hospitals including Caritas Medical Centre, St. Paul Hospital, Ruttonjee Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital, Cannossa Hospital, Tuen Mun Hospital and Prince of Wales Hospital were actively participating in the exhibition. A total of 14 exhibition boards were placed just outside the chapel. They did attract a lot of attention. Vicar General Rev. Gabriel Lam has also come to the exhibition after the opening ceremony of the Caritas Bazaar. It was encouraging to learn from Fr. Lam that Cardinal had just approved the formation of the H.K. Diocesan Pastoral Care Committee.

The Council had the opinion that Christ the King Chapel was a very suitable place for the Medical Sunday Mass. It was our desire to use it to celebrate the mass in future. We do hope to see you at the mass in the coming year.

CONGRATULATIONS :

We are very happy to announce that Bosco Chung and Christine Chu has got married on the 9th November 1991 at St. Margaret's Church. We would like to wish them forever happiness in the days to come.



THE NEW COUNCIL

Spiritual Director : Rev. Fr. J. Russel

Master : Dr. Frances Mok Geri. TMH

Hon. Secretary : Dr. Paul Ho Surg. QEH

Hon. Treasurer : Dr. Bosco Chung Dental KCH

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Dr. Rebecca Yeung Miss Caroline Tsang
RT. QEH Med. Student

Dr. C.H. Choi Dr. Stephen Law
RT QEH RT. QEH

FROM OUR STUDENTS

Report on Student Liaison Subcommittee -
C.U. Section

(Med. Student)

Medical students of Chinese University are divided into 2 groups. Those premedical and pre-clinical classes students reside and study in the main campus of Chinese University whereas those clinical classes students reside and receive their clinical teaching at Prince of Wales Hospital.

Each class of medical students had regular cell group sharing. In October, they had a combined cell group sharing of the whole medical school at C.U. main campus. About 30 students attended, and majority of them were from the year 1 or 2. The purpose of creating this kind of combined classes gathering is to help the junior schoolmates to develop the habit of religious sharing. This kind of combined sharing will be held every 2-3 month. The next meeting will be held in December. Members of the Guild are welcomed. Those members wish to re-experience their university life may contact me for detail and arrangement.

For those clinical years medical students, they also attend the gathering of the P.W.H. Catholic Staff Association. Actually they are the principal participant of the gathering, together with a few doctors, nurses and paramedical staff. They gather on the 1st Monday of each month.

In the past 3 months, I had joined them twice. At 5-8-91, about 20 people attended the gathering. They played games to get familiarized with one another since there were some new faces including me.

At 7-10-91, their hospital chaplain, Rev. John F. Ahearn held a mass there. About 15 members came to the mass including one young male patient from neurosurgical ward. Father Ahearn explained the meaning of each section of the liturgy bit by bit while he was conducting the mass. After the mass, many of us shared dinner at City One Shatin.

FROM OUR NURSES :

A Reflection before our Medical Sunday

(Janet Li, CNG)

In the early years, our Guild had already fostered the idea of developing social consciousness and responsibilities by setting it up as one of the aims of our group. We have been promoting such spirits by participating in various activities such as visiting refugee camps and old-age home, attending health-check services and the like. Recently, we have established various links with other social centres and groups in offering more regular health-check and counselling services to the elderly residing in public housing. As a health worker, we see to our indispensable role in promoting primary health care which is quite underdeveloped in our health care system. Meanwhile we still continue to stand in the front line of health service besides involving in these voluntary work mostly pertaining to health care.

To devote ourselves to the spirit of charity in the care of the sick, we need a healthy body as well as a strong mind for such commitment. It will be most dangerous too, in fixing our gaze only at such services and in imposing such idealistic demands forcefully on ourselves. Without true faith and love, our efforts soon waste away.

Let us all who are called by God to be His humble servants and to be at the service of life gather together in the name of the Lord, give Him praise and remain in prayers. The spirit of God and the Spirit of Charity Continues to inspire courage and confidence in us. Let us ask Him to fill our hearts hot with euphoric energy for such services but with perseverance and compassion for life. Let us declare once and again our 'yes' to our vocation before our Lord, returning to our world of service with His loving heart then.

Finally let us bring back this spirit of prayer to our daily life too, so that each day can be a 'Medical Sunday' we celebrate in union in our hearts.

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

This address effective from

Month

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Spiritual Refreshment :

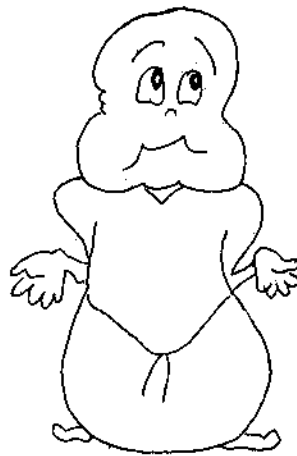
An Irishman's Philosophy :

"Why worry"

There are two things to worry about.
Either you one well or you are sick.
If you are well, there is nothing to worry about.
But if you are sick, there are 2 things to worry about.
Either you will get well or you will die.
If you get well, there is nothing to worry about.
But if you die, there are only 2 things to worry about.
Either you will go to heaven or you will go to hell.
If you go to heaven, there is nothing to worry about.
But if you go to hell, you see be so damn busy shaking
hands with friends.
You won't have time to worry.

NEWS ABOARD :

The 10th Congress of AFCMA will be held November 9-11, 1992 in Bangkok with the theme of "AIDS; Life & Love". The Secretariat of AFCMA has appealed for country reports on the AIDS situation in respective areas. Our Guild is invited to prepare a 15 minutes' talk on such topic. Any members interested are free to contact our Master for further information.



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