

**Report for the Anamed Seminar (Action for natural medicine) held in Kumbo
from Monday, the 7th of May to Saturday, the 12th of May 2007**

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Introduction

The African continent has been blessed by God because there are so many natural resources found here which can be used for treating various illnesses. Africans are unaware of the extent of wealth with which they are in such close proximity yet still they remain great consumers of pharmaceutical products from the modern world while all the time, these products are exported from the African continent, transformed and in turn sold back to them at high, unattainable prices.

In a spirit of changing mentality and learning, the AfricAvenir Foundation hopes to gain experience and knowledge by participating in this seminar for which the aim is to demonstrate this report and sound the alarm so that Africans become aware of the immense prosperity that nature offers us.

Africa is overflowing with natural resources. Plant resources are of great importance for the whole of humanity. Nature, a gift from God, courteously provides essential substance for our life and survival. The seminar tried to get those attending to be able to contribute to the health care of their communities, to be able to identify medicinal or healing plants in their environment and to use the plants for making effective products for treating illnesses, particularly the more common ones. It was also an occasion for informing people on how to take preventative measures against illness.

The aim of this fascinating seminar was to steer those attending into action, with the vision for creating, knowing, gaining 'savoir-faire', making and evolving the environment that immediately surrounds us and the rest of the world.

The aim is to dive into persistent work to convince others through our efforts and accomplishments without over-publicising it.

I. Why natural medicine?

Anamed hopes to become an international organization that works for the development of medicinal plants throughout the whole world. The group is also

politically active, defending ecological interests. This group defines natural medicine as being a medicine which combines the advantages of modern medicine with that of traditional medicine. The first type has the advantage of having been tested in laboratories, the dosage is clear, the side effects are known, it is more hygienic, manufactured, easily conserved, industrialised and independent as it has no cultural link. The second medicine has certain ecological advantages. The cultivation of plants can serve as ornamental or decorative; plants reduce the greenhouse effect, plants can also be used as food, there is a very large reconciliation between caring for sick people, spirituality and culture, which have as a consequence very rapid and visible effects; plants are also non-toxic as they do not contain chemical substances etc. The aim of natural medicine is to therefore combine all the aspects of both types of medicine. Natural medicine seems therefore like a completely new terminology whose aim is to end the conflict between modern and traditional medicines. It hopes to be a medicine that is close to nature, cheaper, more available and accessible to everyone.

II. Medicinal Plants and Spirituality.

a. Medicinal plants, the Bible and Environmental Protection

The seminar was the occasion for those participating to understand that God created all substances that exist on earth. The base of a durable health is in the harmony with all the substances that surround human beings. It is for this reason that every morning prayers were said, verses of the Bible were read and talked about, and songs of glory were sung and danced to. An example of great importance is an extract from the Evangelists from the New Testament (John 9:1-7). In this extract, it clearly mentions that Christ always made use of all of nature's elements for treating sick people. It is the case of the blind man who regained vision thanks to the mixing of saliva with earth. King Ezekias in the book Esaie 38 was cured thanks to a plant (the fig) from an illness that was classed as incurable.

It is for this reason that Christ was qualified as a pharmacist. His treatments were always made by combining local resources with a part of his body. This is why emphasis has been placed on the spiritual side of natural medicine, to know the spirit of sacrifice, courage and passion for work. Giving our saliva, our blood or our sweat

to help a person regain their health is a sign of sacrifice that we make for the person. A good healer or doctor must cultivate within himself this spirit of sacrifice to establish the well being of those around her/him.

The seminar allowed us to understand that the three main factors that govern human life in community. These are: religion, medicine and money. Everyone should learn to share some of the resources that they have with those who are in need in order to gain blessing. People should spread their religion (their knowledge), their money (their possessions) and their medicine. The Bible recommends the use of plants to cure people (Ez. 47), just as it recommends the protection of the environment and elements of nature (see Ez. 34:3 & Rev. 22:1-2). It is a grave mistake to categorize this as sorcery.

b. Medicinal plants, the Bible, Africa and Development

Africans seem to be the best equipped for the handling of plants according to biblical writings. Contrary to the offensive conception, Africans are greatly present in the Bible and their presence demonstrates the immensity of their knowledge for treating illnesses with the help of elements from nature. The African, such as she/he is represented in the Bible is a synonym to strength and power. Africans have wisdom, they manage the forces of nature and interpret natural phenomena. It is important to note that Africans played a role of benefactors, people who doted a great moral spirit. In biblical writings, it is clearly demonstrated that Christ spent most of his life in Africa, more precisely in Egypt, a tendency picked up since childhood, (see Exile to Mathew 2). One of the wise men who came to adore baby Jesus was originally from the African continent, in Jeremy 38:7. The goodness of the Ethiopian demonstrated this. Black people saved several Western people thanks to their mercy. Africans know better than anyone the value of life. That is why the Ethiopians opposed when prophet Jeremy was put to death.

According to those conducting the seminar, Africa is a rich continent; the reason for its lagging behind could be explained by Jesus' intentions held in Mark 4:24-25 ("Be careful of what you hear! God measures His gifts towards you with the same measure that you apply your self and He will add even more. For he who has something will receive more; but he who has nothing, even the small amount that he has will be taken

from him”). With their biblical sermons, the hold back of Africa comes from the fact that Africans live as consumers of foreign instruction and thought. They assimilate everything, without distinction. It is time for Africans to become aware of the wealth that is inside them (their culture, their moral principles, their spirit of sharing and life in community) and that is with them (the environment and natural wealth), in other words it will be taken from them. Africa suffers from a profound spiritual blindness of which it must liberate itself as soon as possible such as the epistle of Jean describes in 9:1-7. But Africa is in the midst of waking up because “we only see the light when it is dark”. It is because Africa is currently badly placed that Africans must search for the truth towards happiness.

Africans must become aware of the fact that development is much more aligned with the work on the land (getting their hands dirty according to Dr. Hirt). This work requires perseverance, patience and a relentless love of work. True development is progressive; it is like stepping through water such as is described in the Ezechiel’s book, chapter 47.

III. Lessons of the Seminar

1. Day to day life

a. House hold waste

To be healthy, it is important to live in cleanness. It is for this reason that managing household waste from day to day is of great importance. At home or at work we need three buckets with lids that are used for waste.

The first bucket is for natural or biodegradable waste; the second for papers, and the third is for metals and nylon materials. Biodegradable waste should be thrown as compost into a hole dug up in the garden. Papers should be burnt in a big hole and metals and plastic materials can be recycled.

Such management of house hold waste can make life easier, make the environment cleaner on both a local and global scale and can also be a source of income, particularly by recycling waste, industries look for certain types of waste to make new products.

b. Water Purification



Illnesses caused by dirty water are widespread over the world but particularly in Africa. To prevent these illnesses it is important, indeed necessary, to consume clean water which is becoming a rare commodity in a country like Cameroon. The seminar showed us how to make a filter at minimum cost. It simply requires two plastic buckets and two candle-shaped filters. In the

first bucket, perforate two holes in the bottom; this bucket should be placed on top of the second bucket's lid. The lower bucket will collect the filtered water. The dimensions of the holes to place the filters must be scrupulously adhered to. Once the filters have been fixed in place, pour in the water to be filtered. It is important to know that the water drips by the second. Every week, the filters should be removed in order to be washed.

c. Making Black Stone

We do not often come across illnesses, insect bites or snakebites. But it is important to always carry one's "black stone"¹. What a surprise when we realised that black stone is not actually a type of rock but in fact a bone from either a cow or a bull! In fact, to make black stone, you just need the femur of a cow on which you sample for spongy zones (the two



lumps at either end). Next you need to boil the femur to take out all of the fatty parts which are found inside the bone and round the edges. Then it needs to be boiled again but this time in detergent, cut the bone to the size that you require, wrap it in aluminium foil and place it on the embers for a few minutes, assure that there is no air in the foil before you place it. Take of the foil, allow to cool, open and take out the black stone.

¹ Black stone is a traditional method of treating snake and insect bites. If placed over the wound, it has the effect of absorbing the venom/poison from the surrounding tissue.

2. Preventing and Treating Illnesses

a. Preventing Illness

The most important part of human life is to do all we can to stay healthy. In order to achieve this, we must be meticulously aware of the rules of hygiene. We need to be careful of the water that we drink, even if it comes from a spring, it is important to know that this spring is not surrounded by a dwelling 500 metres round the corner. We must also know that we find trees along the river because these trees purify the water.

To prevent illness, it is also important to drink lots of water. Water hydrates the body; it aerates the nervous cells and improves the body's natural ability to get rid of toxins through processes of purification (i.e. through sweating, the kidneys etc.)

It is also advised to watch what we eat. We should eat lots of different types of food. Above all, we should eat a diet rich in fibre (germinating maize grains or green beans for example are very nourishing and very good for the health).

It is advisable to cultivate such products ourselves to assure that what we are consuming is not the result of chemical products.

If what we eat takes up an important place, the quality of drinking material is also to be closely examined. There are many drinks sold over the world which contain harmful products. This is the case for all "diet" drinks which are made with artificial sugars that are extremely dangerous. These sugars can cause illnesses such as cancer. They can cause allergies, irritation etc. Drinks such as Coca-Cola or Fanta also contain products that can be harmful for our health. The artificial colours and sugars that are used in these drinks create dental problems and can cause an excess of weight gain which can cause diabetes.

Exercise and Sport are equally important if we want to stay in good health. "The richer we are, the more we should go by bicycle", cycling is a good activity; it accelerates the heartbeat, tones the muscles and cultivates a spirit of constant effort.

To avoid irritation, skin diseases, fungi and other such afflictions, it is important to take care in our personal hygiene. We should bathe regularly and take care to pay attention to the type of clothing we wear. We should be careful of what sort of fabrics we put on our body. Clothing made from nylon is not advised as it does not allow the skin to breath. This can cause several skin diseases such as dry skin and other fungal infections.

Clothing that fades when washed is also not advisable as when we sweat, there can be a mix of sweat with chemical substances that can be absorbed through the pores.

We must be meticulous in the choice of soap and moisturising creams. Some soaps can destroy melanin which can cause cancer later on in life. Soaps made with certain chemical substances such as mercury, corticoids, betamethosone, hydroquinon and above all trichorocarbonite (TCC) are all extremely dangerous.

Soaps that contain mercury such as “Mekako” are harmful to the skin and to the health. Mercury destroys organic substances in the skin, mouth and pores. It blocks the purification process of the kidneys, destroys the ovaries and the ovules. It causes depigmentation of the skin, problems with the nerves, sexual problems and is the first cause of certain infertility problems in both men and women. Mercury also destroys the intelligence of the embryo and reduces powers of the immune system of the individual.

It is important to check the ingredients of the beauty products that we use. Products containing chorine (chloro) should be avoided, they can cause serious diseases of the liver.

Mobile phone use can also have repercussions on the heath of an individual. Mobile phones function through the use of X rays which kill organic substances particularly when it is on vibrate mode in the pocket. The X rays can cause sterility as the X rays destroy the ovaries, ovules and the mobility of sperm. People who are affected may often give birth to babies who are unwell, handicapped, or mentally ill.

b. Curing illness through the use of medicinal plants

It is important to learn how to cure illness through the use of medicinal plants for several reasons: most of these plants are known and grow near most of the population. What is usually missing is the knowledge of how these plants can be used. There are almost 45, 000 types of medicinal plants. Africans have



accumulated over time a great experience in how to use these plants. However, this knowledge has depended on oral transmission and has become more and more undervalued especially with the amount of pharmaceutical products. It is time for men and women all over the world to become aware of the different virtues of these plants and learn how to use them.

During our stay in Kumbo, we organised some excursions out on the terrain to try and identify some of these plants that we come across everyday without knowing that they could save our lives. It is impossible to mention all the plants that we had the opportunity to study in this report. Many people do not know that basil leaves that have been boiled in water can heal fever and gastric problems; dried leaves from the passion fruit tree can relieve asthma when they are smoked, these same leaves when boiled from fresh can help fight insomnia, anxiety and nervousness; the boiled leaves from the avocado tree can cure severe diarrhoea; crushed garlic mixed with sugar can help a cough, mix in some vegetable oil and it can cure spots, add some boiling water and it can help amibiene dysentery, mixed with citronella it treat malaria etc.

Most plants that we see everyday have certain virtues, the seminar allowed us know and learn how to use and grow them.

It is important to know that Anamed is the only NGO in the world to possess artemisia seeds. This plant is actually the most common of the organisation, which has more than 245 biomedical substances. We have learnt how to plant this plant which unfortunately does not grow easily in tropical climates. Its growth is quite

difficult and complex. We have received the necessary advice on how to grow these plants in Africa and in high-temperature zones.

The plant can cure many illnesses among which we can mention the biggest killer in Africa: malaria. The contents of the plant can totally cure malaria in a maximum of 3 days. It is also an effective treatment of haemorrhoids since it is an intestinal disinfectant, fever, chronic dysentery, eye infections, common colds, bilharzias and various forms of thrush.

The seminar showed those involved how to make their own household and personal soaps, moisturizing cream, ointment and medicine.

To make these medicines for ourselves, we must be hygienic, work cleanly to give value to the medicine. Everyone should have a botanical garden where they should



sow different healing plants that they have learnt about.

Plants such as lemon grass, papaya, artemisia, *Datura stramonium*, garlic, beans etc. should be present in our garden.

We also got the chance to offer those involved to make a sun oven because medicines cannot stand the humidity. We must therefore create a dry environment to conserve our plants and medicines. It is important to insure that the products are well dried before storing them.

Conclusion

Everyone should attend an Anamed presentation. It is a seminar that liberates many types of ignorance. Africans are influenced by many external factors and it is truly a shame because they do not worry about whether or not their knowledge is in the right place. In fact, this seminar allowed us to understand that the majority of pharmaceutical products produced in Western countries are made using medicinal plants that come from tropical zones. Consuming these plants in their natural states is even more efficient than their transformation into manufactured products.

It is time for Africans to take inspiration from the Chinese and try to popularise their knowledge of medicine even further than the African borders.

Every country, every African nation should start by taking stock of their country's various natural resources and study their therapeutic, economic and ecological virtues. It is clear that declining mortality is a step towards development and taking charge of sick people, access to medication and knowledge of the virtues of medicines are all a big steps towards reducing mortality. The Anamed seminar above all has allowed us to understand the ways of life and of existence that can bring us towards living in good health.