

# Religion

1-246-0853



The Rev. Frank Julian prays with an African AIDS victim on a recent trip to distribute liquid nutritional supplements. Below, he is shown with some of the local volunteers who distribute the supplements and minister to the sick.

## Nutrition program brings hope

*Effort helps AIDS victims gain strength*

BY DONNA ABRAMCZYK  
THE NEWS-HERALD

The Rev. Frank Julian has accompanied two shipments of liquid nutritional supplements, now, to the African countries of Botswana and South Africa.

After the latest visit this fall, he's feeling more excited and hopeful for the future of the project of his creation, called Fighting AIDS with Nutrition, or "FAWN."

"After last year's trip, I really didn't want to go back," he said, citing the emotional toll of seeing so many people afflicted with the AIDS virus and dying of its effects. "You just don't know the depth of their despair."

During this fall's trip, Julian, an associate pastor at Faith Christian Assembly in Melvindale, as well as a home care registered nurse, saw the distribution of 6,000 pounds of the supplements, which include both the

Ensure and Boost brands.

Last fall, he met people who had been receiving the supplement and had gained enough strength to even work some. The area is just now beginning to receive some of the antiretroviral drugs to fight AIDS, he said.

"This trip was about strengthening and solidifying our relations with the church and community," he said.

While in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, Julian appeared before the city council to plead his case for the need to do something to help the AIDS victims. The city is home to the Rev. Quinton Aiyer's Cornerstone Ministries, which is responsible for distributing the supplements.

A visiting nurse took Julian around to the homes of some of the afflicted in the area where people still don't admit they have the disease.

"The people are very appreciative," he said, "and

being taken into the inner sanctum like that is encouraging."

In the city of 3 million, Julian estimates that 50,000 people are infected with the virus, 10,000 of them at end stage.

"It's very hard to keep the protocol," he said. "A lot are Muslim, even Hindu, a few Christian. There's a real crossing over of faiths. When we pray with the people, we always ask permission."

What started out as a mission trip for him four years ago, has resulted in a new life's work, Julian said.

That first visit to South Africa and Botswana opened his eyes to the AIDS pandemic there. Too poor to buy the life-giving AIDS drugs, people there die by the hundreds every day, he said. The sight of newly dug graves shook him to the core.

When he asked what he could do, he was told to send the liquid supplements. At



home, the minister has been relentless in his quest for the cans and funds to send them to Africa.

To date, more than 20 tons have been shipped there, and Julian and a volunteer board of directors for FAWN are seeking grants that would give them greater independence as a freestanding non-profit organization.

"If we could get some real money, we could spread the aid to other countries, such as Tanzania," he said. "And, we would be less dependent

on the cycles of giving. That is my hope and prayer."

Julian said a doctor there told him that they were bringing hope to the people, and that helps.

"I think as we develop partnerships with communities and churches, we'll make it happen," he said. "We really have something to give in addition to the Gospel."

More information about FAWN and how to help is available by calling Julian at 1-313-928-8305.