

Ensure for Africa sends nutrition for HIV/AIDS patients

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CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Imagine arriving on the rich soils of Botswana and South Africa only to find rows and rows of fresh graves surrounding you. Saddened, one thinks about the AIDS pandemic and witnesses firsthand how it is affecting the families, the children and the nation.

The Rev. Frank Julian, a registered nurse and pastor of Faith Christian Assembly in Melvindale, can relate. After experiencing this on a missions trip to Africa, he founded Ensure for Africa, an organization that sends the liquid nutrition Ensure to AIDS victims in the areas hardest hit by the worldwide HIV epidemic.

According to www.avert.org statistics, Botswana has a total population of 1.6 million and an estimated 260,000 are living with HIV. This gives the country a prevalence rate of 36.5 percent, the second highest in the world after Swaziland.

The Republic of South Africa, with an estimated population of about 40 million, has a suggested 20.1 percent of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This is an estimated 13 percent of the

world's total, according to www.avert.org. A survey published in March showed that South Africans spend more time at funerals than they do having their hair cut, shopping or having barbeques.

With these statistics, Ensure for Africa's mission is to help the dying AIDS victims and to educate Americans and bring them to a place of action.

These ideas have prompted Ensure for Africa to send a shipment out with the help of George Samson from World Medical Relief, Inc., which provides prescription medication to low- and moderate-income adults in Detroit, and ships medication and equipment to more than 120 countries.

"We have sent seven shipments (four to Botswana and three to South Africa), 28,000 pounds," Julian said. "We get e-mails of them seeing it (the Ensure) as a treat because the antiviral drugs are very complicated. Ensure strengthens the person's own nutritional status, thus strengthening their immune status. They (HIV/AIDS victims) call it "milk for life." They had a big ceremony when they got their first shipment."

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PASTOR QUINTON AIYER of a non-denominational church in Durban, South Africa that receives Ensure from Ensure for Africa, personally distributes the liquid nutrition to HIV/AIDS victims.

Ensure

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Julian is taking a team of 10 missionaries for two weeks with him on a second visit to the same two countries. They have sent one shipment to each country. The Ensure should arrive right before they get there so they can personally distribute it.

"They're really excited. They've set up high government meetings for us," Julian said. "I feel like the Lord is expanding us. We're talking about keeping parents alive. My heart really goes out to these people. You have to go believing you can

make a difference."

According to Samson, World Medical Relief, Inc. is sending more food supplements to African than ever before. Their initial 2000 cans have now tripled since they've been working with Ensure for Africa. He says his organization receives the liquid nutrition from churches and families who have an excess of the product.

"They deserve it," Samson said.

Julian is urging all Detroit Public Schools, community and

religious organizations to get involved with this effort. Donations may be sent to Faith Christian Assembly, 25051 Outer Dr., Melvindale, MI 48122. All donations sent to the church are tax deductible and must designate in the memo section, "Ensure for Africa." Julian is available to speak to groups. Organizations are encouraged to hold can drives or fundraisers for shipping and purchase of liquid nutrition. For more information, call Julian at (313) 928-8305, ext. 107, or e-mail him at pastorfrank@fcausa.org.