

Exercising Mustard-seed Faith

In one of the most populated nations in the world, where  thousands of children live on the street, Mustard Seed International (MSI) is relying on faith to feed and educate the vulnerable homeless children of Calcutta, India.

Today MSI is giving 3,000 impoverished children an education at the eight schools the missions group operates in the nation's cultural capital.

Bengali native Subir Roy and his wife, Eunok, oversee the schools. MSI workers have a shoestring budget of approximately \$6,000 a month to manage a staff of 60 full-time and 40 part-time teachers.

"Our schools meet the immediate physical needs of these poor, desperate children, while also providing them with hope for a more fulfilling and productive life through education," says Bill Deans, MSI's president. "We seek to provide Christ-like compassion, kindness and love to a people plagued by abject poverty."

MSI's Calcutta schools are based in church buildings; two are mobile operations aimed at children living on the streets. Often, the meals MSI serves will be the only ones the students receive that day. The ministry has also planted churches and built hospitals and children's homes.

In order to operate, MSI has to keep overhead costs down: All U.S. staffers are volunteers, including Deans.

"I wanted everything that came in to go to the ministry," says Deans, who retired from business in his early 50s. "We don't pay any salaries or payroll taxes. Things don't get done as quickly as a hard-charging businessman would like, but they get done."