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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mustard Seed International meets the needs of the hopeless in war-torn South Sudan

Relief ministry brings medical, spiritual care to world's forgotten

CHARLESTON, S.C., March 22, 2010 – Sudan's April 2010 elections – the nation's first general election in more than two decades – will provide a voice to a people desperately in need of stability and peace following years of civil war, famine, religious persecution and genocide that has killed millions. Since 2006, relief ministry [Mustard Seed International](#) (MSI) has had presence in the devastated region of South Sudan, working to heal the physical and spiritual wounds of its people.

MSI established and operates the [Akot Medical Mission](#), one of the largest and best medical facilities in South Sudan. Its staff, made up of expatriate and indigenous doctors and nurses, provide a full range of medical services, such as administering immunizations for common, yet deadly, diseases like meningitis, and health education to the native Dinka people who live in the surrounding regions. On average, there is only one doctor per 100,000 people in South Sudan.

“Our MSI partners in the field are on the front lines every day. Some of them are in harm's way,” said Bill Deans, MSI president. “Right now, South Sudan is on the verge of a general election that will be followed next year with a vote on whether or not it will become its own nation. As a result of what is happening politically, certain factions are instigating unrest and people in the local villages are being affected, with homes and subsistence crops being destroyed and people being killed.

“Through medicine, MSI desires to be God's instrument of love and care to the lost and hurting people of South Sudan,” Deans continued. “We seek to give the Sudanese, and all of the people whose lives we are privileged to touch, a renewed sense of hope for the future and an understanding of God's love for them.”

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Because the infant mortality rate in South Sudan is approximately 15 percent and statistics show that one in nine women die in pregnancy or childbirth, the Akot Medical Mission set up a weekly clinic day just for women. This allows the medical staff to track the health of expectant mothers and their unborn babies and to provide them with prenatal vitamins and regular exams. In addition, the Akot Medical Mission staff regularly goes to remote villages in South Sudan to hold off-site clinics and to vaccinate thousands of men, women and children.

Sudan is not the only place in need of help. MSI is also working to transform lives of the suffering in India and across Southeast Asia. In [India](#), where numerous children are not able to attend or finish school – or ever become fully literate – MSI is helping to provide children with a quality education. Through ministry partners, MSI sponsors eight schools, two homes for orphaned and abandoned children and two mobile schools for children living on the street. The mobile schools provide transportation to and from a MSI supported educational facility, along with food, clothing and other necessities for homeless children in Kolkata, India. Currently, over 3,000 children in India are impacted each day by the ministry of MSI.

Across [Southeast Asia](#), one of the world's poorest regions, MSI is working to dig wells in remote villages that will provide the impoverished with clean water. Throughout the region, MSI is building new schools, recruiting teachers and providing care for orphaned and abandoned children and teenagers in special MSI homes and youth centers.

Moreover, MSI is helping to train indigenous leaders in the regions in which it operates, equipping them to serve in their own communities and combat the issues local people face. This, in turn, allows them to train and teach more indigenous leaders, helping to sustain entire communities.

“It takes a considerable amount of funding to keep this organization going,” said Deans. “But it’s a cause we are honored and blessed to be associated with because each life is precious, whether they live on Main Street USA, the middle of a jungle in Southeast Asia, the desperate streets of India or in war-torn Sudan.”

Founded after World War II by missionary Lillian Dickson, MSI is headquartered in Charleston, S.C., and serves those in Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Taiwan and Hungary. In a commitment to send 100 percent of all contributions directly to MSI mission locations, the leadership and administrative staff of MSI are all volunteers. MSI goes to the places where they believe there is the greatest need, following Dickson’s example to “present Christ to all we meet, to heal disease and all manner of suffering and to love sincerely and deeply those whose lives we are privileged to touch.” For more information, visit <http://www.mustardseed.org>.