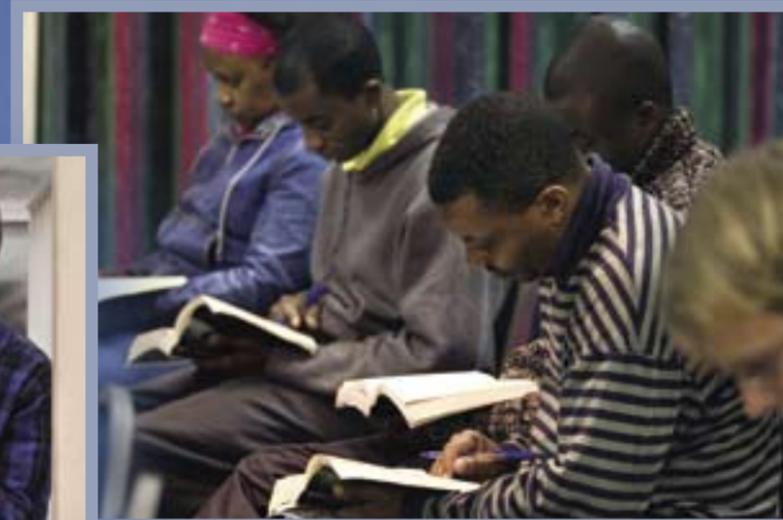




R E A C H I N G



T E A C H I N G



E Q U I P P I N G

Calvary Chapel

Cape Town

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photos by Geraldine Wilkins*

*D*emitri Nikiforos opened his Bible to teach at the homeless shelter on the poor side of Cape Town, South Africa. After graduating from Calvary Chapel Bible College in Murrieta, CA, in 1998, he and his wife Karen returned to their homeland and introduced Jesus to many down-and-out people of Cape Town. They started a weekly Bible study at the homeless shelter in Woodstock and led about 10 new believers through the New Testament.



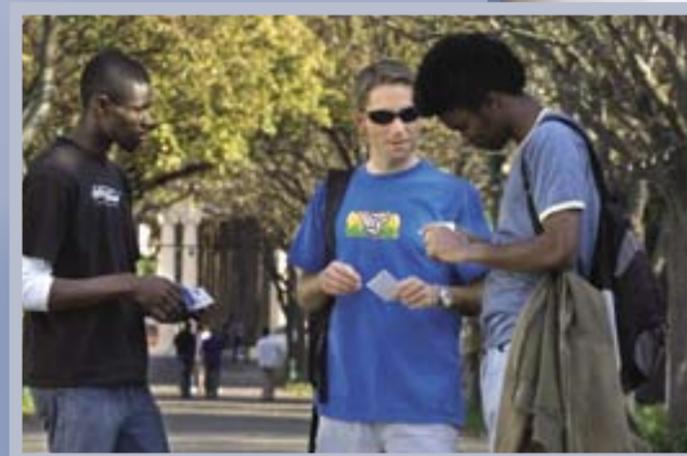
Pastor Demitri Nikiforos started teaching the Word of God in Cape Town in 1999.

A view of False Bay and cascading mountains from Cape Point.

AT FIRST, DEMITRI REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO START OR WHAT TO DO. HE BEGAN WITH STREET MINISTRY, AND SHARED THE GOSPEL WITH REFUGEES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

As Demitri began to teach, he noticed a newcomer to the study—a hardened 50-year-old woman who often fought violently with other shelter residents or interrupted the study by standing outside and loudly using her customary foul language. For the first time, she walked into the meeting and sat down quietly. As he taught from Revelation about the Great Tribulation, she listened intently. After the study was over, she lingered and then finally approached Demitri and Karen.

“I don’t want all that stuff to happen to me,” she said. Demitri asked what she meant. “All that stuff about the plagues and the tribulation,” she said soberly. He told her that having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ would not only save her from her sins but would also keep her from judgment. Demitri recalled, “As I shared Christ with her, I noticed another side of her—a side I had never seen before, a much softer side. Right then and there, her hard spirit broke, and she was suddenly open to the Gospel.” She insisted on receiving Jesus Christ that night, and together the three of them bowed their heads as she prayed. “In one moment, all her sins of the past 50 years were forgiven, and she was com-



Yorik, Demitri and Stephane, left to right, prepare for weekly outreach in the Company Gardens Park.

Demitri shares the Gospel message in Company Gardens Park, where families picnic and photographers take wedding pictures.

“AND WHOEVER WILL NOT RECEIVE YOU, WHEN YOU GO OUT OF THAT CITY, SHAKE OFF THE VERY DUST FROM YOUR FEET AS A TESTIMONY AGAINST THEM.” SO THEY DEPARTED AND WENT THROUGH THE TOWNS, PREACHING THE GOSPEL AND HEALING EVERYWHERE. Luke 9:5-6



Yorik, a believer originally from Gabon, listens as Demitri shares the Gospel.

pletely cleansed like a leper of his leprosy,” Demitri said. The woman wept with joy and repentance, and Demitri and Karen rejoiced and cried with her. “Overnight, we saw changes take place in her, and slowly God began His work of sanctification in her.” Her transformation greatly encouraged Demitri: “My faith began to grow and so did my confidence in the power of the Gospel to save lost souls.”

An Unexpected Call

Raised in Christian homes, Demitri and Karen attended the same church and served God in Christian Surfers South Africa. Engaged in 1996, they knew they wanted to serve God together full-time but needed better Bible training. Earlier that year, Demitri had gone to visit a friend in the States who invited him to the Pastors’ Conference in Murrieta. Demitri didn’t know anything about Calvary Chapel, but he listened. At the end, there was an invitation for pastors to come forward for prayer. Unbeknownst to Demitri, his friend had asked some senior pastors to pray for Demitri’s calling to plant a Calvary Chapel in South Africa. Assuming Demitri shared this desire, the pastors gathered around Demitri and began to pray.

CCCT FIRST MET AS A CHURCH IN 2001 WITH 20 PEOPLE, AND HAS GROWN TO 100.



Nicci Fourie passes out communion elements.

“All the time I had no idea what was going on, and it was really confusing for me. There I was on the stage with a bunch of senior pastors around me, laying their hands on me, praying and prophesying over me for the Calvary Chapel I was about to plant in South Africa,” Demitri remembered, amused. “All the time, I wanted to stop them and say: ‘Guys, this is all a terrible mistake; I’m really sorry. You’ve got the wrong guy, and I have absolutely no intention of running your Calvary Chapel in South Africa.’ Quite frankly, I thought we had enough good churches in South Africa.” He never said a word, but he left the meeting bewildered. “God’s plans prevailed, and here I am 10 years later, pastoring a Calvary Chapel in South Africa exactly as was prophesied,” Demitri said. “God sure has a sense of humor.” He cited Isaiah 42:9—“And new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Getting Equipped

Later that year, the couple felt God nudging them to attend Calvary Chapel Bible College in California. They married in January of 1997, and began courses in Murrieta. “We knew we would be returning to Cape Town, but we didn’t know when or how, or what we were to do,” Karen said. “During Bible College, the Lord did a lot of changing in both



Hands are raised in adoration and worship during the Sunday morning service.

AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP, IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD, AND IN PRAYERS. Acts 2:42

of us, and our theology was being deeply grounded on God’s Word.” One day, while they were working separately, each felt God tell them they were to return home and plant a Calvary Chapel. Karen crossed the campus to where Demitri was, walked in, and stated, “You do know that we have to go back home and start a church.” He replied, “Yes, I know.” Their focus at school shifted, and they dove into learning as much as they could. “Suddenly all the classes that used to be so much work became our food and delight,” she said. “It was almost like basic training before heading into battle.” While in the States, Demitri and Karen formed a close bond with those serving at CC Fort Lauderdale, receiving further training, encouragement and counsel about serving God.

Bringing the Word Home

Returning to South Africa, Demitri and Karen wanted to plant a church right away. “We thought we could round up all our old friends who would be excited about our vision, start a home Bible study, and—within a couple of months—we could declare ourselves a full-grown, thriving church,” Karen said. “So we thought! We didn’t receive much encouragement—mostly questions about why we thought our city needed another church. True, we didn’t need another church; we needed a church that would boldly preach God’s Word.”

The couple prayed earnestly about how to minister. A few months later, the answer came when they were driving through Green Point, the city’s red light district, and noticed many prostitutes standing outside in the cold. They prayed and felt God’s compassion rise up in them. Bringing food



Men meet in a small prayer group.

CC CAPE TOWN IS FILLED WITH BELIEVERS FROM KENYA, BOTSWANA, GABON, CONGO, BURUNDI, ETHIOPIA, ZAMBIA, NAMIBIA, NIGERIA AND ZIMBABWE.

and tracts, they returned a few nights later. “There we were, walking into a dangerous area at night in the middle of winter with two cooler boxes of food and coffee, and we were so excited,” Karen said. “We knew we were right where the Lord wanted us to be.” They did this for several months, sharing Jesus’ love and His Gospel with many men and women on the street and visiting some in their homes. A few months later, another Christian group offered their coffee shop in Green Point to Demitri for a Sunday evening Bible study. Many came who wanted to change their lives and follow Jesus.

A year later, they started a Sunday afternoon service in a Presbyterian church hall in Green Point, to which many homeless people came. With the intense South African heat in the middle of the day, many fell asleep during the services, and some seemed only interested in the free meals afterward. “But through all this, the Lord was at work in our hearts—changing us, molding us, shaping us and certainly breaking us,” Karen said.

Fellowship & Discipleship

After moving into a conference facility in the center of town, CC Cape Town grew to about 100 people. “The church never doubled overnight, but slowly the Lord has added those that are being saved, even several of the men and women we met in the Green Point outreach,” Karen said,

In a country where differences often divide, CC Cape Town enjoys a rare unity. “We are as mixed as you could imagine—with believers from South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Gabon, Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia,



Jodie Jacobsen, ministry assistant at Calvary Kids, teaches a new worship song to Apiwe, Joy, Megan and Patience, left to right.



CC Cape Town

James Gacchogi looks at crafts his daughters, Hannah and Nolita, made in Calvary Kids.

Zambia, Namibia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe—however, there is no sign of fragmentation. Everyone is warm and accepting of one another. There is a real love that is tangible and draws visitors into the fellowship to be part of what God is doing,” Demitri added. He attributed this to the unity of the Spirit mentioned in Ephesians: Paul encouraged believers to walk in love, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

Since 2003, the church has steadily grown, adding children’s and youth ministries. Within the church, many dedicated young men and women from all over Africa have a strong vision for ministry and share Christ’s heart for the nations. In 2004, a Discipleship Training School (DTS) was established for those committed to serving



Joy joins other Calvary Kids in prayer.

BEHOLD, CHILDREN ARE A HERITAGE FROM THE LORD, THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB IS A REWARD. Psalm 127:3



Jodie Jacobsen and Sam Akinyi greet each other after service.

the Lord. Nearly 30 students are enrolled in the 18-month program that meets once a month and requires weekly homework and study. The program focuses on Christ's teachings to His disciples, including prayer, evangelism, faith, the Holy Spirit, leadership, servanthood and end times. "DTS has been amazing," Demitri said. "Most of the graduates are involved in ministry or are now teaching DTS classes."

Karen added, "By His Holy Spirit, God is giving them the same passion and vision that He has given to us—to proclaim His Word in our city and to pray for revival in Cape Town. Our city is dead and dying. We need an awakening of His Spirit; we need His Word to be held in high esteem again." Demitri, Karen and the believers at Calvary Chapel Cape Town believe they will see such a revival in their city. ☞



Pastor Demitri's father, Niki, chats after service with Bijorn and Nadia De Kock.

PEOPLE ARE AMAZED TO SEE THE LARGE NUMBER OF NATIONALITIES AT CC CAPE TOWN. THERE ARE SEVERAL LANGUAGES PRESENT IN THE CHURCH; NEVERTHELESS, ALL IN THE FELLOWSHIP UNDERSTAND ENGLISH.



Karen Nikiforos, wife of Pastor Demitri, chats with Eleanor Petersen, left, and Moira Harris.



Worshippers congregate outside sharing laughter, encouraging one another in the Word and prayer.

THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK, THERE IS NEITHER SLAVE NOR FREE, THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE; FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. Galatians 3:28



Cape Town is on the southern tip of the African continent.

Calvary Chapel Africa Conference

October 16-19, 2006
 First ever Calvary Chapel Africa conference in Cape Town, South Africa. All Calvary Chapel ministries in Africa, or with outreaches to Africa, are invited to attend.
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