

History Bytes - 40-day Family Workshop in Brazil - Jardim Family Training Center

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In 1998, True Father began to shift some of our activities to South America, then, set up a 40-day Family Workshop in Brazil - Jardim Family Training Center.

This workshop was held for families worldwide.

Entire families were coming from Asia, Europe, Africa, North America and all over South America to live together following the family schedule - morning prayer, breakfast, then Hoon Dok Hae for the entire morning. The morning reading was designed to be attended by husband and wife together, however, a son 12 years old or older could stand in for the husband if he was unable to attend. The afternoon schedule was set up as family time to visit the local animal zoo, go fishing together, do daily chores or to use the time in any way one would like unless, of course, one of a number of scheduled boat trips was happening that day.



I dreamed of being able to make this trip with our family. But, needless to say, the cost of six people travelling to Brazil would be a challenge for our limited family budget. That summer however by the grace of God, my mother gifted my sisters and me each a substantial amount of money to alleviate some of her tax burden. That money afforded us the opportunity to carry out the Jardim dream.

I was assured by a local church member that this trip to Jardim was a trip to the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth and he even provided me with a nature video highlighting the beauty of Brazil's amazon region - natural landscapes, trees, tropical birds and flowers etc. My husband Kerry could not get time off from work for a period of 40 days, and my eldest son Solomon was scheduled for a service project during the time of the 40-day workshop. So, we made arrangements for me to go to Jardim with our second son Sammy, who was 12 years old (representing his dad), and twins Zeke and Zack who were both 9 years old at the time. Then Kerry and Solomon were scheduled to join us for the last two weeks.

We were all quite excited - the children, because they were just happy to go anywhere new, especially out of the country. But I was excited because I was going to the "Kingdom of Heaven on Earth"! Well much to my surprise and disappointment it was not what I expected the Kingdom of Heaven to look like.

I arrived to what appeared to be barracks - row upon row of small private family apartments. Unfortunately, we arrived in the rainy season and the desolate dirt property presented itself not as the lush area I had so longed to see, but rather a bleak mudhole. I immediately began to pray, "Dear God, why did you bring me here? This is not what I was expecting, but You must have a reason. What do You want me to learn?" And an obscure but meaningful bible quote popped into my head:

Romans 8:21-23

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

If I were to rename my Jardim experience I would rename it "Dirt" because that's what I learned about. After I heard that bible quote, God continued to say to me, "Until now there has never been even a teaspoon of dirt that has belonged to God. At the time of the Fall everything, everything was taken away from God. Thus, my time in Jardim became 40 days of learning to understand and love dirt - a foundation to learn to love all of the creation.

Each family apartment was supplied with any number of needed bunk beds and a private toilet and shower. The cleaning and care for this room was the responsibility of each family. So, much of my free time, following the morning readings, was spent cleaning or rather controlling the dirt in that apartment. Jardim was covered by a red soil (red mud when it was wet), and this red mud or soil got everywhere - our socks were stained with it. It was in our shoes, in our hair, on our clothes, our food, our books, on every possible surface. You see, it's important to learn the nature of your object partner - that is the object you are trying to learn to love. I tried to wipe the dirt off with a wet rag but that just brought it more to life and spread it further. Be patient with it, I learned, allow it to dry, then brush it away with ease. It is important to learn the nature of your partner of love.

I spent countless hours at the outdoor laundry scrub boards. About 16-20 sinks were linked one to the other outside the barracks. After lunch individuals filled the sink with clothes and tried to scrub out the dirt, while the children played at our feet or somewhere else on the campus. Jardim was a nice break away from our New Jersey home since the children were in a closed and natural environment, and amongst "family" in the broader sense of the word. So, the children went out in the morning and played in nature for hours without parents having to really worry about what they were doing. The twins ventured together with a group of other children, splitting rocks in search of geodes. On rainy days, they managed to bath like pigs in mud giving both mom and the drain in the shower a formidable challenge.

The Jardim experience taught me to be mindful and appreciative of the different individual personalities of brothers and sisters from various cultures around the world. It also helped me to understand that couples and families have both a couple and a family personality.

I came to understand during the workshop that, when we are bound in love as a couple, all the strengths, abilities and talents of the individual partners are pooled together as a combined being. And even further, as a family expands in number, each individual family member brings their uniqueness to the family unit. It is important therefore to appreciate every unique personality of our individual family members, and also important to support each individual where there are weaknesses. Through the Jardim Family Workshop, Rev. Moon didn't simply teach concepts about the ideals of family love, but he helped us substantially experience the family ideal even if only for 40 days.