

GPF 2008 Brazil Report



Brasilia, Brazil - With more than 20,000 noisy Brazilians of all ages filling the Nelson Nilson stadium with noise and enthusiasm, Bishop Manoel Ferreira, the tireless chairman and promoter of the Global Peace Festival (GPF) held in Brasilia last weekend could perhaps at last afford himself a quiet smile of satisfaction.

“This is a very important time for Brazil,” he told reporters. “We are one of the fastest growing nations in the world, and it is time for us to show the world what we can do.” Al-



▲ Bishop Ferreira introducing leaders from different countries attending GPF



though Brazil has its full share of social and economic problems, the most urgent problems facing its 180 million people are not primarily material or economic, but moral and spiritual, Ferreira said.

Ferreira, who not only serves as a Federal Deputy in the Brazilian Congress but is also life President of the nine-million member Assemblies of God fellowship in Brazil, might be one of the busiest men in Latin America. But in the past five months the task of preparing the Global Peace Festival in Brazil has been one of his main preoccupations, with several hundred volunteers coordinating a vast array of programs across the nation.



▲ Brazil's National Assembly is presenting official awards for the GPF movement's contributions for world peace



▲ GPF awards ceremony held at the Brazil National Assembly building



▲ Opening ceremony of ILC

these problems alone,” Ferreira said. “We have to empower our nation’s youth and heal our families. We need to restore our traditional values.” In fact, Brazil has been a leader in faith-based programs with churches tackling problems as substance abuse, alcoholism, family breakdown, and abuse with notable success.

The celebration in the nation’s capital December 7th was a fitting conclusion to those long months of effort. The representatives of 50 nations, all 26 of Brazil’s states, and hundreds of churches, mosques, synagogues, schools, and communities were treated to a festive gala that included traditional Indian dances, a father and son horse parade, and performances by many of Brazil’s top Christian and country entertainers, including crossover multi-platinum singer and artist Frank Aguiar.

On December 5, the GPF convened a special invitational program in the National Congress to consider ways in which faith and community leaders could help bring fresh perspectives to the nation’s political leaders. Intrigued by the rare opportunity to participate directly, representatives from the diplomatic missions based in the Brazilian capital, NGOs, and other community swelled the attendance to more than 400.

Dr. Hyun Jin Moon, international president of the Global Peace Festival, explained that the GPF had three main objectives: interfaith cooperation, strengthening the family, and creating a culture of service. He urged the assembled deputies and guests to urgently



▲ Cheering ‘One Family under God’ together



▲ The Nilson Nelson Stadium, a popular sporting venue, was filled past its 16,000 seat capacity.

consider the creation of a “Global Peace Corps” that would give young Brazilians an opportunity to serve the region and the world.

“Imagine young people from enemy nations and from different faiths working side by side in service,” he said. “Any initial misunderstandings and suspicions would fade away as they sweat, cry and laugh together with a common purpose and cause. Serving others can be one of the fastest ways to a world of peace.”

Earlier in the day, the idea became a local reality when 150 trees were planted and band shelters and playgrounds painted in GPF’s recognition of the United Nations International Volunteer Day in the nearby city of Gama. The young people who came out to volunteer were delighted to find themselves joined by an enthusiastic group of elderly people more than ready to help with the planting and to dispense gardening and other advice!

“This program has been very well supported by our community,” said Donizete Andrade, Mayor of Gama. “Together with our police and fire departments, community health agents, and schools, it’s good to see federal agencies represented here to help.” Several NGOs in attendance were coordinated by Mr. John Breyer, director of the Brazilian Chapter of the International Relief Friendship Foundation. The event was covered by many local TV stations and the newspaper, *Tribuna do Brasil*.

From Brasilia, the GPF moves on to Manila, Philippines, and Haifa, Israel. The 20 festivals held in 2008 have already attracted over a million people committed to the vision of peace and “One Family Under God.”