

Christians Join Israelis in Observing Passover in Israel

✖ Many Christians living in Israel joined with Jewish families Monday evening to celebrate the Passover while others prepared their own seder dinners in honor of the holiday.

"We've been here 12 years now and almost every year we get invited to a seder with a Jewish family and we rarely turn it down. It's just a special time," David Parsons, spokesman for the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), told Travelujah, describing participation in an Israeli seder as a privilege.

Parsons first experienced Passover in Israel in 1983. He recalled walking around around Tiberias at 11 p.m. and noticing that all the children were awake. It was then he realized the significance of a 3,500-year-old tradition still being played out annually on a national level.

"It struck me as probably the most important Jewish family holiday of the year," he said.

The ICEJ makes sure that all of its volunteers from overseas has a seder to go to, whether at a congregation or someone's house, Parsons said.

"A lot of the Christians who move here are already interested in their Hebraic roots so [for them] it is a very natural thing," he said. "They realize there is a rich spiritual legacy in the seder meal for us to draw from."

Living in Israel enhances one's spiritual walk with the Lord according to many Christians who have spent time in the Holy Land. Andre Tischer, who is from Germany,

has

lived in Israel for about four years now and said since he's been here his own faith has leaped forward.

Tischer told

Travelujah that before he came to Israel he only celebrated Passover once. Now, he and his wife Hanna, from Finland, are conducting their own biblical seder, based on Leviticus 23:5-6, on Tuesday, which they believe is the biblical date for the festive meal.

Had he not moved

to Israel, "I cannot say I would have such a connection with my biblical roots, also with Christianity, the language, the origin, especially being rooted in Jerusalem," he said "To live here you are so close to God's people, you live prophecy. All around what you see is a living prophecy, a fulfilled prophecy."

For their seder,

Andre and Hanna, plus their weeks-old daughter Tziona Eden, will use a Messianic Hagadah and serve a biblical menu of lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread. After the seder they will pray then watch the movie *Prince of Egypt*.

"We don't

consider ourselves as [just] Christians, but as grafted in," Andre said, explaining that they follow Torah guidelines and identify with the nation in which they live. The family also clears the house of hametz, leaven and observes the Sabbath.

Parsons explains

that it is not strange for Christians to have such a strong connection to Passover, especially as it usually falls near the same date as Easter and to Christians the two events are connected. Many Christians believe that Jesus celebrated the Passover meal the night before he was crucified.

"Because of the

Last Supper, it is very important to Christians to capture in our faith

the Jewishness of Jesus at the seder," he said.