

# One Simple Declaration: 'We Believe'

Standing on the shores of the Dead Sea last Sunday evening for the opening event of the 2015 Feast of Tabernacles, it was inspiring to witness the most diverse annual assembly of Christians anywhere in the world.

Over 4,500 pilgrims from nearly half the world's nations assembled in colorful national array for a desert meal at the Ein Gedi oasis and then a dynamic worship experience to launch the annual Sukkot gathering of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.

But for a film crew with a mainstream news channel, the same scene was not making much sense. Earlier in the day, members of the crew had visited the Church of Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem, the first morning of their first trip to Israel. It was so quiet and somber there, but this was so loud and joyous. It was dark there and filled with tension, but color and light filled the desert.

The film crew took in the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem's (ICEJ) Feast of Tabernacles celebration through the eyes of secular people with little understanding of today's evangelical Christianity. Thousands of Christians from dozens of countries across the globe thronged before them, singing, dancing and worshipping Jesus. There were no ethnic or cultural barriers. No inhibitions.

Yet, their questions were intriguing. Who brings all this together? How do you keep everyone on the same page?

"We don't!" came the simple, yet honest response. "We simply invite them to come and each year for 36 years, they've come!"

Suddenly, the music swelled again as the worship team led the

gathering in a contemporary version of a very ancient creed: "We believe in the crucifixion; we believe in the virgin birth; we believe in the resurrection, and that He is coming back to earth!"

What holds all these people together, the camera team asked again? And as they did, the question was being answered before our eyes:

*"We believe!"*

There were many tribes, many tongues and many nations. One Lord. One God. One Bible. One Creed. And, there was a shared love for Israel and the Jewish people.

This is how the 36th annual Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles began, with one simple declaration that in Jesus we all become one. In His presence, all barriers of ethnicity fade away.

As the evening ended and the crowds streamed to the buses that would take them up the steep, mountainous climb to Jerusalem, the worship team kept singing: "Make me a house of prayer." These were the same words that Jesus cried out upon his final, triumphant entry to Jerusalem: "For my house will be called a house of prayer for *all nations*," (Isaiah 56:7).

The first night in En Gedi, thousands glimpsed just that: The gathering of the nations together in Christ, with one purpose and in one accord. A few in the crowd just stood there on the outside looking in. But no one left untouched by the sight. And even the most ardent skeptic was struck by the simple declaration that has brought us all together: *We believe!*

The ICEJ's Feast gathering has now moved up to Jerusalem for the rest of the week of Sukkot, with the diverse array of Christian pilgrims partaking in communion together in the Garden Tomb on Monday morning, ahead of the Opening Gala in the city's massive new Arena on Monday evening.

Over the coming days, the Christian visitors will be welcomed by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, hear messages by prominent Christian speakers, and then march through the streets of Jerusalem to express their love and support for Israel.

And, they will keep singing and lifting worship to the God who has united them as one people.

To keep up with the Feast 2015, follow the live streaming at .