

200 Christian prison chaplains to convene in Bangkok for ‘A living hope’ in 2020

The International Prison Chaplains’ Association is preparing its eighth Worldwide Quinquennial Conference, to be held in Thailand

Bangkok, August 16, 2019

Everyone in today’s world is in need of hope – and prisoners across the globe are no exception. To address this need, the International Prison Chaplains’ Association, founded in 1985 at the World Council of Churches’ ecumenical institute in Bossey, Switzerland, has made hope the theme of its eighth Quinquennial Worldwide Conference, for which preparations are now underway in Thailand.

In mid-August, members of IPCA’s Worldwide Steering Committee met in Bangkok to continue planning for the Conference, to be held at the headquarters of the Church of Christ in Thailand, Ratchatewi District, Bangkok, from November 5-10, 2020. During their three-day session, the team met with the Board and staff of CCT, local church leaders, Christian broadcasters CGNTV, and representatives of various church organisations who will be providing practical support and volunteers for the event.

IPCA VIII will be an opportunity for prison chaplains to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations, hear about conditions in prisons across the world, benefit from talks by leading experts in justice, rehabilitation, and pastoral care, and learn about IPCA’s ongoing work as a recognised United Nations NGO. While IPCA is a Christian organisation, its conferences are open to chaplains of other faiths; government and judicial officials are invited to attend a formal opening ceremony.

“Several factors led to us choosing to come to Bangkok for IPCA VIII”, explains Rod Moore, IPCA’s Worldwide President. “We have had a warm welcome from the Board of CCT and are very impressed by the excellent conference facilities at their headquarters. We are also keen to hold a conference in Asia to encourage Christian prison chaplains in the region.”

Sirirat Pusurinkham, one of the two Asia representatives on the IPCA Worldwide Steering Committee, adds: “we’re delighted to welcome IPCA to Thailand, introduce chaplains from all over the world to local churches, and offer them a chance to visit a prison here.”

Some 200 delegates from across IPCA’s six worldwide regions are expected to attend the 2020 conference, focusing on the theme of “A living hope” – a phrase from the Bible book of 1 Peter 1:3. “As chaplains, we seek to bring the Gospel message of hope to prisoners, many of whom have lost hope; in addition, we can tell stories full of hope from inside prison walls to encourage others,” concludes Rod Moore.

About IPCA

Founded in 1985 in Bossey, Switzerland, the International Prison Chaplains’ Association seeks to unite, encourage, and equip a global network of prison chaplains as they share God’s love and restore justice. In addition to a worldwide conference held every five years, IPCA organises local and regional conferences in its six regions (Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, Latin America / Caribbean, and Oceania). In 2014, IPCA received consultative status with ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council. As such, it organises and participates in side events at UN conferences and engages in advocacy in areas such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the Mandela Rules. IPCA’s twin strengths are its fully independent status and its grassroots expertise in the world of prison chaplaincy.