

# Bangkok Shelters Refugees Fleeing Religious Persecution



*Bangkok is the capital of Thailand, and it is one of the easiest cities for refugees to access.*

Many refugees facing religious persecution flee to Bangkok seeking shelter; however, they become trapped in their Bangkok dwellings due to the threat of deportation. A local church in Bangkok works with South Carolina Baptists and the International Mission Board (IMB) to sponsor ministry to refugees' practical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

## *Activating SCBaptist Churches*

"Two years ago, I went on a pastors' vision trip to Thailand," shared Larry Baldwin, Pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Williamston, SC. "We went to several cities, including Bangkok, and met with IMB missionaries there. We began to pray, 'God is this where you want us to go?'" Rob Merritt, Missions Pastor at Mt. Airy Baptist Church in Easley, SC, led that trip and formed a fast friendship with Baldwin. Together, they planned a return trip which took place in May 2024. Members of both congregations joined them on the trip, and the purpose was simple: minister to refugees in any way possible.

## *Meeting Practical Needs*

Trip participants were able to meet with refugees in their homes; most of which were rooms only as large as 10 square feet. Entire generations would be confined to one room. "They could go back to their normal way of life in their home country," Merritt shared. "But they won't renounce Jesus Christ. We served them, laid hands and prayed, and made sure they knew they weren't forgotten."

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