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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services

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ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OFFICE
425 Eye Street N.W.
BCIS, AAO, 20 Mass, 3/F
Washington, DC 20536



File: [Redacted]

Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER

Date: SEP 10 2003

IN RE:- Petitioner:
Beneficiary:



Petition: Immigrant Petition for Special Immigrant Religious Worker Pursuant to Section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(4), as described at Section 101(a)(27)(C) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(C)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER: SELF-REPRESENTED

PUBLIC COPY

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (Bureau) where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. *Id.*

Any motion must be filed with the office that originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. § 103.7.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The employment-based immigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, Vermont Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The decision of the director will be withdrawn and the petition will be remanded for further action and consideration.

The petitioner is a church. It seeks to classify the beneficiary as a special immigrant religious worker pursuant to section 203(b)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(4), to perform services as a minister. The director determined that the petitioner had not established that it had made a qualifying job offer to the beneficiary. The director also stated that the beneficiary had not submitted sufficient evidence of its ability to pay the beneficiary's proffered wage.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(v)(B)(1) states "[a]n appeal which is not filed within the time allowed must be rejected as improperly filed. In such a case, any filing fee the Service has accepted will not be refunded." The petition was denied on June 19, 2002. The petitioner was allowed 30 days to file an appeal, plus three additional days for mailing, pursuant to regulations at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2) and 8 C.F.R. § 103.5a(b). The was received on August 14, 2002, 57 days after the denial was issued. Therefore, the appeal has not been timely filed, and must be rejected. The petitioner claims that the "decision was not mailed until the 18th of July" but submits no evidence (such as the postmarked envelope) to support this claim.

8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(v)(B)(2) states that, if an untimely appeal meets the requirements of a motion to reopen as described in 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(2), or the requirements of a motion to reconsider as described in 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(3), the appeal must be treated as a motion, and a decision must be made on the merits of the case. 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(2) requires that a motion to reopen state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding; and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Review of the record indicates that the appeal meets this requirement.

According to 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(ii), jurisdiction over a motion resides in the official who made the latest decision in the proceeding. Because, in this case, the disputed decision was rendered by the director, the AAO has no jurisdiction over this motion and the case must be remanded to the director for a decision pursuant to the regulations governing motions to reopen.

ORDER: The petition is remanded to the director for further action in accordance with the foregoing. In the event that a new decision is rendered which is adverse to the petitioner, the decision is to be certified to the Associate Commissioner for Examinations for review.