

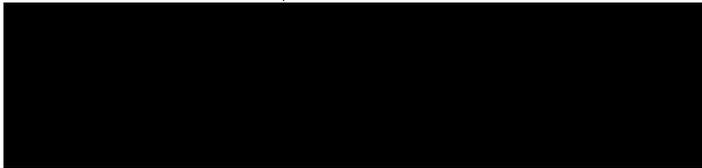
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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. A3042
Washington, DC 20529



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
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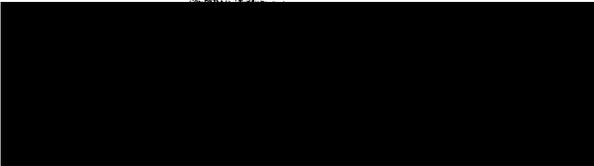
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FILE: [REDACTED] Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: **MAY 25 2005**
WAC 04 002 54129

IN RE: Petitioner: [REDACTED]
Beneficiary: [REDACTED]

PETITION: 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:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office 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.



Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The employment-based immigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, California Service Center. The petition is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be rejected as untimely filed.

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 (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(4), to perform services as an associate pastor. The director determined that the petitioner had not established that the beneficiary had been engaged continuously in a qualifying religious vocation or occupation for two full years immediately preceding the filing of the petition.

In order to properly file an appeal, the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(a)(2)(i) provides that the affected party must file the complete appeal within 30 days after service of the unfavorable decision. If the decision was mailed, the appeal must be filed within 33 days. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.5a(b).

The record indicates that the director issued the decision on February 15, 2005. The petitioner's appeal, dated April 1, 2005, was received by the service center on April 4, 2005, 48 days after the decision was issued. Accordingly, the appeal was untimely filed.

The petitioner stated that it did not receive the decision until February 28, 2005. Nonetheless, the regulation requires that the appeal must be filed within 30 days after service of the unfavorable decision. Service is complete upon mailing. 8 C.F.R. § 103.5a(b). Additionally, under current regulations, the filing date of an appeal, application, or petition is determined by the date of "actual receipt" by the service center. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(a)(7)(i).

The regulation at 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 or a motion to reconsider, the appeal must be treated as a motion, and a decision must be made on the merits of the case. The official having jurisdiction over a motion is the official who made the last decision in the proceeding, in this case the service center director. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(ii). The director declined to treat the late appeal as a motion and forwarded the matter to the AAO.

As the appeal was untimely filed, the appeal must be rejected.

ORDER: The appeal is rejected.