

## **Corresponding Chaplains Guidelines - March 2017**

The following guidelines are designed to protect both the church member and inmate/patient/Adult in Custody (AIC), and are in accord with prison policies and Chaplain experience. In this guideline, the term "Chaplain" refers to the church member that is writing. It is a way of keeping the relationship professional, not personal. "Committee" refers to the Institutional Services Executive Committee.

A branch church representative should notify the Committee that an AIC has been in contact and inquire whether a CS Chaplain is available in the AIC's facility. If there is a CS Chaplain available, the Committee will forward the contact information to the Chaplain.

If no CS Chaplain is available, having a church member act as a Corresponding Chaplain is a preference. If the church has no qualified (i.e., class-taught) person available to correspond, the Committee will assign someone.

When corresponding, these guidelines will assist in keeping the relationship professional instead of personal, and be a blessing for both AIC and their correspondent.

- Think of yourself as a Corresponding Chaplain. As a class-taught Christian Scientist, you are a professional healer.
- Practitioner-patient confidentiality always applies to Chaplain-AIC relationships
- The greeting the Corresponding Chaplain should use the AIC's last name to keep it professional (Mr. Smith).
- For protection, Corresponding Chaplains should refer to themselves by title and first name or pseudonym, e.g., Chaplain Sophia.
- Always use the church address or a PO Box as the one where the AIC can reach you and as your return address on the letterhead and envelope.
- Corresponding Chaplains should always turn AICs to the Pastor for answers; this encourages study and prevents misstatements of the Truth.
- Check the Chaplain guidelines to see what literature you may offer to have sent to the AIC. Science and Health is always available, if they need a copy. Consult the institution staff Chaplain about the institution's rules regarding mailing books and literature.

## Corresponding Chaplain Guidelines as of March 2017

- If you need help contacting the staff Chaplain, contact the Committee.
- Corresponding Chaplains should read their letters over carefully for correct metaphysics, as they may be studied by an AIC and misconceptions cannot be easily addressed. Another Christian Scientist may be used to proofread for correct metaphysics, as long as the Chaplain takes particular care to protect the privacy of the AIC.
- Be aware that all correspondence to and from the AIC will be read by prison staff.
- Because letters to and from institutions have been lost in the past, Corresponding Chaplains should reassure AICs that they will **always** reply, and if the AIC doesn't get a timely response from the Corresponding CS Chaplain, they should write again.
- Communication should be initiated by the AIC, but if the AIC hasn't written for a while, the Corresponding Chaplain may write a short letter of inquiry, in case the AIC has lost the address and wants to continue corresponding. If you think the AIC may have been moved, contact the Committee for assistance.
- If an AIC moves facilities the Corresponding Chaplain should contact the Committee to be sure there isn't a Chaplain at the facility before continuing to write.
- Remember that the AIC, having never seen you, will form their own opinion of you. In order to help prevent the AIC from forming inappropriate images of the Corresponding Chaplain, communication should be kept warm but professional in tone. Refer to yourself as "Chaplain."
- Never give out any personal information such as marital status, family status, address, phone number, and so on.
- If an institution receives a visiting CS Chaplain, the Corresponding Chaplain should stop written communication with a short, final letter to the AIC stating the reason for halting the correspondence, and notifying that all further correspondence will be forwarded to the new visiting CS Chaplain.
- If you have an AIC who would like to join The Mother Church, please consult the Chaplain Guidelines.