

NOTES FOR CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PRISON CHAPLAINS

Provided by the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee (UK & Republic of Ireland)

1 Purpose

The purpose of these notes is to:

- State the qualifications normally possessed by a Christian Science Prison Chaplain.
- explain the working relationship between the Chaplain and the prison authorities.
- explain the appointment process of a Christian Science Prison Chaplain (the Chaplain).
- explain the working relationship between the Chaplain and the prisoners.
- provide other relevant information to assist Chaplains in the performance of their duties.

2 Qualifications

- Chaplains shall be members of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts and normally be class taught students.
- Chaplains should be active participants in the Manual-required activities of their branch churches, both before and during their service in the Prison Ministry
- Chaplains should be sufficiently experienced and spiritually mature not to be influenced erroneously by conditions in the prisons.
- Chaplains need to possess the courage and integrity to meet opposition where it may impede them in carrying out their mission.
- Chaplains should manifest sufficient humility, patience and fairness to enable them to work easily and lovingly with those of diverse and unfamiliar cultural, moral, educational and economic backgrounds. They should be free from mere curiosity as to the reason for a prisoner's incarceration.

3 Appointment of Chaplains

The Secretary of the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee can advise which prisons are in need of chaplains.

A Christian Science branch church or society, the executive board of the branch church or society may nominate an individual for appointment as a Christian Science prison chaplain.

A member of The Mother Church who feels so led may apply to the Committee for appointment as a Christian Science prison chaplain.

Where a vacancy exists for a Chaplain at a particular prison, the Secretary of the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee may contact the Branch Church or Society nearest the prison seeking the nomination of a suitable member willing to undertake the work.

The Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee will provide encouragement, endorsement and open door advice. It will consider all recommendations and, if approved, will contact the prospective Chaplain explaining the next steps to be taken in the appointment process.

The Secretary of the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee will supply a letter of endorsement which the prospective Chaplain should show to the Chaplain of the Prison.

The prospective Chaplain will then need to apply to the Chaplain of the Prison seeking appointment as the Christian Science Chaplain for that prison.

The Chaplain of the Prison will require the prospective Christian Science Chaplain to complete various documents, including those to obtain security clearance, following which the appointment will be confirmed by the Chaplain of the Prison and Governor of the Prison.

It should be noted that the authority for appointing Chaplains has been devolved by the Home Office to individual prisons and consequently the appointment procedures may differ slightly between prisons.

4 Resignation of Chaplains

When a Chaplain wishes to relinquish his office, he should:

- notify the Secretary of the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee.
- inform the Executive Board of the branch church which sponsored him.
- advise the Head of Chaplaincy of the Prison concerned.

5 Change of personal details

Any change of name, address, telephone number, email address should be notified to the Secretary of the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee, and also to the Prison Chaplain.

6 Relationship with the Prison

6.1 Head of Chaplaincy

The principal liaison point for any Christian Science Prison Chaplain is the Head Chaplain of the Prison.

Every effort should be made to establish an easy and friendly relationship with the Head Chaplain of the Prison who can provide valuable guidance on the running of the prison and its procedures. When the Head Chaplain changes relationships will need to be reaffirmed.

Chaplains should discuss with the Head Chaplain of the Prison:

- arrangements for obtaining the names of all prisoners whose religion is registered as 'Christian Science' (C.Sci), plus any other prisoners who may request contact with a Christian Scientist.
- how to contact these prisoners.
- arrangements for meeting individual prisoners in privacy.

Christian Science Chaplains are generally accepted as members of the Chaplaincy Team.

6.2 Security / Statutory prison rules

Chaplains should make themselves aware of the security procedures for entering and moving around the prison.

Chaplains must observe the regulations and rules printed as official notes for guidance of visiting chaplains. The latest version of the Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners (PSI 51/2011) may be viewed on the prison service website at www.justice.gov.uk under the guidance tab, or downloaded as a PDF from www.christianscienceprisonchaplains.com/downloads.

Chaplains must never act as a link between a prisoner and individuals outside. On no account must a Chaplain pass money to a prisoner for whatever reason. Private address and telephone numbers should not be disclosed.

6.3 Prison library

Books

Science and Health with key to the Scriptures should be placed in the library. This provision will enable any prisoner, irrespective of his religion, to become aware of Christian Science.

The following books have been placed successfully in prison libraries:-

- King James Bible
- *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*
- *Healing Spiritually*
- *A Century of Christian Science Healing*
- *The Christian Science Way of Life*
- *Christian Science and its Discoverer*
- *Christian Science Hymnal* (Words only)

Permission to provide books, periodicals and the Monitor should be sought from the Librarian and/or Chaplain of the Prison, as appropriate. (There may be more than one library in a prison.)

Chaplains should check periodically that the books are still available and in good condition.

The Christian Science Monitor

- Many prisons readily accept a gift subscription to the Monitor. This is usually donated by the local branch church.
- When setting up a new subscription it is necessary to clear this with the Librarian or Chaplain of the Prison.
- It is usually found most effective to have the subscription directed to the library or education department to enable the widest possible availability to prisoners.
- Particular attention to ensuring subscriptions are renewed (or discontinued) in a timely fashion is important.

7 Relationship with Prisoners

It is important that the prisoner should understand, from the outset, that the Chaplain is there to help him gain an understanding of Christian Science.

The Chaplain should endeavour to restore a prisoner's sense of self-respect, showing him that he has never lost his human dignity.

The Chaplain should respect the prisoner and accord him the courtesy and consideration due to an equal.

The Chaplain should visit the prisoner on a regular basis, ideally about once a week.

Visits should be timed to avoid clashing with a prisoner's other activities.

Reading the Weekly Bible Lessons together helps to strengthen the prisoner's resolve to learn more about Christian Science and to apply what he has learned to his daily experience.

It is preferable to meet the prisoner in a place where the interview can be private and if difficulties arise in finding such a place help should be sought.

The Chaplain should check that the prisoner has his own copy of the King James Bible, Science & Health and the current Christian Science Quarterly to enable him to study the Weekly Bible Lessons for himself.

Periodicals can usually be left with the prisoner, but permission should be obtained from the Chaplain if books are to be left.

The Christian Science Journal should not be taken into the prison.

Chaplains should not become involved in welfare work for a prisoner nor in the conveying of personal messages or articles to and from a prisoner. A breach of this stipulation can lead to prosecution.

A Chaplain is not officially allowed to discuss his religion with prisoners of other denominations unless they specifically request to see him.

In appropriate circumstances, Christian Science services may be arranged. These should follow as closely as possible the 'Order of Services' given in the Church Manual although certain adjustments may be necessary or advisable:

- no collection should be taken.
- music for hymns etc. may be recorded and the solo omitted.

8 After Care

After-care is the responsibility of the Probation and After-care Service.

There may be occasions when the Chaplain can give spiritual support working with these services but, as a general rule, requests for a continuing ministry should be refused by Chaplains.

9 Relationship with the Branch Church

Prisoners are not free to attend church, so the ministrations of church are brought to them.

The branch church sponsors and supports the Chaplain in his work.

In turn, the Chaplain keeps the branch church informed of the work being done including arranging to read or bring to the attention of the branch church the Committee's annual report to members.

A branch church may also provide books and/or gift subscriptions to the periodicals, as appropriate.

Talks on the prison ministry may be arranged through the Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee.

10 The Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee

The Committee serves as a focal point to provide assistance to Chaplains.

The Committee supports nominations of prospective Chaplains and offers guidance on the process of application.

The Committee identifies those prisons already served by Chaplains and also encourages branch churches to recommend prospective Chaplains to serve those prisons requiring representation.

The Committee organises an annual conference for Chaplains, administers the funds, and prepares an annual report which is sent to all branch churches and societies.

The Committee also arranges talks by authorised speakers to branch churches and other interested parties.

11 Annual Conference

An annual conference of Chaplains is held, usually at a London church, on the first Saturday in November, which all Chaplains are encouraged to attend.

The Committee is able to help individual Chaplains with travel and out of pocket expenses.

The programme contains inspiring addresses, reports, experiences and remarks that uplift and encourage Chaplains, and bring fresh insights into the work. There are also opportunities to have questions answered and for personal contact with fellow workers.

12 Website

Christian Science Prison Chaplains' Committee (UK & Republic of Ireland) website may be viewed at:

www.christianscienceprisonchaplains.com