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W.M.U. PROGRAMMES

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THEME: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

WRITTEN BY
MRS. ONA JONES

Baptist Mission of Rhodesia

(Note: At the end of each programme is PRAY ALSO FOR:
Each country can make out its own prayer calendar
and insert it here.)

PROGRAMME 1

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: WHO IS TODAY'S CHRISTIAN?

MEMORY VERSE:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
1 John 1:9

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The Bible tells us that a Christian is a child of God. He has accepted Jesus as his Saviour and as Lord of his life. He has been born again by the spirit of Christ. His life has been changed so much that he is a new person.

The Scriptures tell us many things about the early Christians. It strengthens us in our Christian lives today to study those things which happened to them. The early Christians were often scorned. Unbelievers made bad jokes about them. Yet these Christians remained faithful. They were persecuted in many ways. Some were stoned. Some were put to death because they were faithful in declaring God's message to the people. It was not easy for them. The important fact was that they remained faithful to their God.

Now, let us think about the Christian of today. It is not popular to be a Christian in today's world. Many people claim there is not a God. Others believe that God exists, but they do not want him in their lives. Some people make gods out of money, possessions, and even their jobs. The Christian today does not have an easy path to follow. Will we who are Christians today remain faithful as the early Christians did?

PART ONE:

The Christian is filled with love for God and for all people. He is more aware of the needs of others than of his own need. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God did not give us a spirit

of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control."
(Read also 1 John 3:17, 18.)

(Read 1 John 4:12, 16-21. Discuss together the meaning of this Scripture. After your discussion of the meaning of the Scripture, answer this question: Can a person love God and do harmful things to someone else at the same time?)

PART TWO:

The life of the Christian is filled with the spirit of Christ. Jesus spoke to his disciples as recorded in Mark 13:11 and said "...do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."

(Read to the group Luke 11:13; Luke 12:12; Acts 4:8; and 1 Corinthians 3:16.) We see from these verses that Christ does dwell in the lives and hearts of believers. (Discuss together these questions:

- (1) Will a Christian be guilty of gossiping
- (2) Will a Christian be quiet and listen to gossip?)

(Read Leviticus 19:18 and Acts 24:16.)

PART THREE:

The Christian accepts the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He will study it day by day. He will use it naturally in conversation with friends and neighbours because the Scriptures are an important part of his life.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 says, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Mark 13:31 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."

Many people in the world today scorn the Bible. They say it is old, out-of-date and unsuitable for today's living. The Christian knows the Bible is the true word of God. It has answers from God for all of our problems.

A missionary lady and some W.M.U. members were visiting from house to house during an evangelistic campaign. A well-educated, well-dressed African man stopped them on the street. He said to the missionary, "The Bible is the white man's book. It was brought here from England and America to confuse my people."

(Discuss together this question: What do you think about the Bible? Was the man right in his thinking?)

PART FOUR:

The Christian witnesses and serves faithfully. He witnesses in his daily living. (Study together Ephesians 5:15-20.) The Christian tries to live so that unbelievers can find no fault with what he does. He is careful and tries not to do anything which appears evil to the neighbours.

A woman member of the church is unfaithful in attending church services. Her husband goes to work early every day. In the middle of the morning during each of her husband's working days, a man comes to visit her house. He stays one or two hours. Then he goes away. She never mentions this man in conversation with her neighbours. They do not know that she is doing anything immoral; but it looks as if she is. There is much gossip among the non-Christians. The pastor has been asked to talk to this member. This is not an easy job for him. How do you think God wants Christian women to act? (Ask the women to discuss this story.)

PROGRAMME LEADER:

It is important that we conduct ourselves according to God's commands. It is important that we avoid the appearance

of evil in our lives. During these three months we shall study about ourselves as Christians. We shall try to see our responsibilities to God in the way we talk, the way we act, and the way we live.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that each of us here today will confess her sins to God right now. Pray that each of us will begin to live a new, rich, and more complete life with him.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 2

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN LIVING IN TODAY'S WORLD

MEMORY VERSE:

"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

James 1:27

PROGRAMME LEADER:

It has become customary for people to behave in ways which are not pleasing to God. Evil actions are all around us. This makes it more necessary than ever for Christians to stand firm and true to Christ's teachings. It is easy to act in an evil way, giving no thought to Christ. God does not tell us the way of the Christian will be easy. He does tell us it is the best way. It offers better, more lasting rewards than the way of the world.

PART ONE:

Christians often find themselves in awkward positions. At such times, we should ask ourselves the question: "What would Jesus do if he were in my place?" Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flew the springs of life." (Read Proverbs 4:24-27.) The Scripture shows us that we must be careful in the things we do.

(Tell this story and discuss it together.) A woman known to you only casually asks you to go with her to a special meeting. It is to be held in a home of people unknown to you.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss school problems. You are interested in your children and their school. You agree to go with her. After you arrive, there is only a little profitable discussion. The meeting becomes a party with much drinking and bad behaviour. The woman with whom you came shows herself to be very questionable in her actions. Ask yourself: "What would Jesus do if he were here in my place?"

PART TWO:

The Christian must remember that what he does affects other people. Romans 14:7a says, "None of us lives to himself." We may selfishly say, "What I do is MY business. It is nobody but ME." This is not true. We bear the name of Christ. What we do affects our husbands, our children, our relatives, our friends, our neighbours, our church and even our God.

Two women members of a Baptist church lived in adjoining houses. They were good friends. They walked to W.M.U. together each week. They went to church together on Sundays. They went together to do their shopping. When you saw one, you also saw the other. One day their children argued very badly. The mothers became involved. Each would believe only that which her own children, said. The mothers said many unkind things to each other. Each one accused the other of putting an "evil spirit" upon her household. Every bad thing which happened blamed on the other woman.

The non-Christians living nearby laughed at them, saying, "These are Christians." When the pastor's wife and the missionary visited them, each of them said: "It is the fault of the other woman, not mine." These women hurt many people beside themselves. They hurt the cause of Christ.

PART THREE:

It is the Christian's responsibility to be a good example in her daily living. She should not knowingly break any law.

For example, she will not sell fruit and vegetables in a place where this is illegal. The Christian will not try to avoid paying taxes or the listener's license for the wireless. She will not pick fruit from someone else's tree unless the owner offers it to her. These may seem like unimportant things, but they are **never** unimportant. When our children see us disobeying rules, it becomes easy for them to follow our example even when they are adults.

(Discuss this story together.) You go to the grocery store to buy. You pay the cashier. She gives you more money for your change than you should receive. What do you do?

PART FOUR:

The Christian should always put the needs of others before her own needs. The Bible tells us to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us. Acts 20:35b says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." We should not do anything knowingly which will hurt someone else. (Read to the group: 1 Corinthians 8:13; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Micah 6:8.)

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Perhaps one of the most difficult Bible truths for us to accept is Mark 12:31a. It tells us, "...You shall love your neighbour as yourself." When we love our Lord deeply, he will give us the strength to put selfishness, covetousness, and evil jealousy out of our hearts. He will replace these evil things with love, kindness, and the desire to love our neighbours as ourselves.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that Christian women will be strong for Christ in their daily living.

PRAY ALSO FOR

PROGRAMME 3

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN'S HONESTY

MEMORY VERSE:

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."
Philipians 4;8

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Exodus 20:16 says, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." This is one of the ten commandments which God gave Moses for the children of Israel. They are God's rules for us. We can read many verses in the Bible which tell us that the Christian must be truthful at all times. Let us read only a few of them now:

Proverbs 12:22 "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight."

Proverbs 19:9 "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who utters lies will perish."

Leviticus 19:11 "You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another."

2 Corinthians 8:21 "...We aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of men."

PART ONE:

Honesty is required by God. This requires control of the tongue. James 1:26 says, "If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain."

James 3:10 says, "From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brethren, this ought not to be so."

Deceit may injure a person more than robbery. Telling a lie at any time is sin. Telling a lie is very evil when it is done under oath in a court of law. Giving a false witness also includes talebearing, slander and flattery. Other ways people give false witness are telling half truths and exaggerating. Other ways are hypocrisy, judging others, accusing others of wrong motives, and knowingly telling lies.

Any lie is against God's law. Any word said which injures a person, his character, or his property is against God's law. To know the truth and to withhold that truth so that a person is hurt in some way is also against God's law. Have we ever been guilty of any of these sins?

PART TWO:

There are many reasons why people tell lies. Some people lie to escape the results of the truth. Some people lie because it has become their nature to do so. Liars show weakness of character. Some people lie because of vanity. They seek to put themselves in the best possible light. Some people lie because of their pride. They are too proud to tell the real truth. Some people lie because it is the easiest way out of a bad situation. These are only a few reasons why people lie.

The one important reason why people tell lies is SIN. A person tells a lie to escape the temporary judgment of men; but in doing it, he has to face the judgment of the eternal God.

Acts 24:16 says, "So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men."

"Proverbs 24:28 says, "Be not a witness against your neighbour without cause, and do not deceive with your lips."

Proverbs 14:5, "A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies."

PART THREE:

Telling lies is very serious. It affects our relationship with our fellow-man. Lying stirs up slander. It is saying about others what one dares not say to them face to face.

Lying shows a spirit of evil in the heart and toward others. A lying person has no place for love in his heart. Lying affects our relationship with man and with God. (Read Revelation 21:8 to the group.)

Another way of being dishonest is to make a promise, not intending to keep it. This is a very common sin in our country today among individuals and business firms. The Christian must guard himself and never be guilty of this sin.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

1. A church member finds money on the floor of the church after the worship service is over. What should she do with it? From where does her strength come to withstand temptation? (Read Hebrews 2:18.)
2. A woman goes into the shower. Someone is inside another of the shower rooms. The woman in the other shower has left her handbag in the outer room. No one will see her if she takes the money from the handbag. She needs money badly. School fees for her children must soon be paid. What will a Christian woman do? (Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.)
3. The W.M.U. plans to take food to a needy home on a certain day. One woman agrees to go. She also agrees to take food. She knows in her heart that she will not go. Neither will she take food there. Is this being dishonest?
4. A man takes a job. He agrees to have that job finished in three days. He knows in his heart that he is leaving to go to his home. The job will not be finished

before his return in two weeks. Is it being honest for him to take the job and give this promise?

PROGRAMME LEADER:

There is not a place in the life of the Christian for dishonesty. Dishonesty leads people away from God. It separates us from God. The Christian can be happy and helpful to others. We are to speak the truth in a spirit of love.

Jesus said to us, "I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life." A Christian is one who is like Jesus. He is our example in ALL things. There is not one example of dishonesty in the life of Jesus. We are to be like him in all things.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that all of us will be honest in all things. Pray that we shall be good examples to our families, especially to our children, in fair dealing and honesty in all phases of our daily living.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 4

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS HOME

MEMORY VERSE:

"Choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Each of us knows Christian men and women who seem to be very devoted to Christ. Yet we also know men and women whose families are unhappy. The atmosphere in the home seems tense. When the Christian's home shows tension, it is because something is not right in the family. There is something wrong in the relationships with one another and with God. Let us think today on some things which should be true of the Christian in his home.

PART ONE:

(Read to the group Genesis 2:7, 15, 18, 22-24.) The opening chapters of our Bible show the origin and purpose of the family. God created man. God gave man a place to live. Man needed a life companion. God made woman to be man's wife. God meant for both man and wife to be faithful to each other. Both man and wife are meant to be faithful to God.

PART TWO:

The family was instituted by God for a purpose. One divine purpose was to bring children into the world. Genesis 1:28a says, "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'"

Another divine purpose of the family is to teach the children the truths of God. (Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7.) God has never changed his purpose for the family. Satan is real.

He challenges the family and tries to weaken it. The Christian must constantly be alert to the temptations of Satan. The Christian must, with God's help, keep Satan out of his life and out of his home.

PART THREE:

The relationships of the family members to each other should be according to God's principles. The husband is to love the wife. Colossians 3:19 says, "Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them."

The wife is to love her husband and recognise him as being the head of the family. Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

Ephesians 5:22-24 says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands."

The mother is to take care of her household. Proverbs 31:27 says, "She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness."

Children are to be trained (Proverbs 22:6). Children are to be disciplined by parents (Ephesians 6:4). Parents are to be a good example to children (2 Timothy 1:5, 2 Chronicles 26:4). Children are to honour and obey their parents (Proverbs 1:8; Ephesians 6:1).

Christian parents must remember that in order for children to honour their parents, the parents must be honourable. One famous soldier once said: "By profession I am a soldier and take pride in that fact. But I am prouder to be a father. My hope is that my son, when I am gone will remember me not from battle, but in the home, repeating with him one simple prayer,

'Our Father which art in heaven.'"

PART FOUR:

The relationship between parents and children is an ever-changing one. At first the baby must be carried. Later he learns to walk while holding on the mother's hand. Later, the child learns to walk alone. Up to about the age of ten, the child is sure his parents know everything. At about sixteen years, the child is not so sure about his parents. At about nineteen years, the child feels he has surpassed the parents in knowledge.

At about twenty-two, he completely outgrows the parents. But at thirty we remember that our parents were right about a lot of things. At forty, we decide that our parents were just about perfect. Christian parents must recognise that their relationships with their children will be changing ones. However, our children of any age should be able to look at Christian parents and see lives patterned according to Christian principles. They should see in our lives a close daily walk with the Saviour.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

As you visit in a home, you can easily feel the kind of relationships which exist among husband, wife and children. Discuss together these true accounts of relationships in homes where both parents are Christians.

1. The father is very harsh and strict with his wife and his children. He works long hours as a builder. He is very tired and cross when he comes home. The wife has the opposite nature. She is very gentle. She enforces no rules or discipline. The three children know the differences in their parents. They always wait until the father is at his job or asleep. Then they go to the mother with their wants. What is wrong in this

family?

2. A father and mother care for each other deeply. They discuss everything together. The family rules are made in discussion together. The children know that they receive the same kind of love and the same rules for behaviour from both parents. Occasionally, the man and his wife will disagree. However, they have promised each other and the Lord they will never go to sleep angry with each other. What do you think about this home?
3. In another home, the father works very hard, long, night hours. He seldom sees his children. He is at work when they come home from school. He is asleep when they go to school. The wife is very emotional and easily upset. The children go many places and do things without telling her. If she questions them, they tell her lies rather than upset her. What is wrong in this home?

PROGRAMME LEADER:

All of us want to show that Christ is real in our lives as we deal with our families. Let us promise God right now that we will come to him in prayer, asking his guidance, before we make decisions concerning our homes.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we will be gentle and kind wives and mothers.
Pray that we will be firm but kind when the situation requires it.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 5

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS JOB

MEMORY VERSE:

"But we exhort you, brethren, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we charged you."

1 Thessalonians 4:10b, 11

PROGRAMME LEADER:

A man once said, "I'll act like a Christian at church; but it is impossible to work by Christian principles on the job." As Christians we know that we are to live like Jesus. We cannot separate our lives into different parts. We are not to live like Christ only part of the time and live unChristian lives the other part. In today's study we shall see what the Scripture tells us about the Christian and his job.

PART ONE:

It is God's will that we should work. Genesis 2:15 tells us what Adam was to do in Eden. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and break it."

Jesus worked while he was on earth. Mark 6:2, 3 tells us that Jesus was teaching with wisdom in the synagogue. Many hearing him were astonished saying, "Is this not the carpenter?"

Paul was a hard-working man. Acts 18:2b, 3 says, "...And he (Paul) went to see them (Aquila and Priscilla); and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers."

God even tells us when we shall work. Exodus 34:21a says, "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest."

PART TWO:

Any work done by the Christian should be done to the very

best of his ability. His work should always be pleasing to the Lord. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Ecclesiastes 9:10a says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might."

1 Timothy 5 8 says, "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." The Christian should never be idle or lazy. (Read Colossians 3:22-24; Luke 16:10.)

PART THREE:

The relationship between the employer and employee is very important. Kindness, patience, love and understanding are essential for both. Hebrews 10:24a says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works..."

The employee must always be honest, never being guilty of taking something that does not belong to him. Ephesians 4:28 says, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need." The employee should work faithfully and do the best job possible.

Matthew 10:10b, says, "... the labourer deserves his food." Luke 10:7b says, "...for the labourer deserves his wages..." The Bible teaches us that the employee deserves to receive full wages if he works faithfully.

A young man works as a gardener. He is young, strong and capable of doing a good job. When the people of the house leave, he sits in the shade of a tree until he sees them returning. Then he jumps up and begins to work again. This reminds us of Proverbs 18:9, "He who is slack in his work is a

brother to him who destroys." This young man is not worthy of his hire. He is being disobedient. He is stealing time. He is taking wages for a job he does not do well.

An employer has a responsibility to God and to his workers. Leviticus 25:43 says, "You shall not rule over him with harshness, but shall fear your God." Wages should be fair and in accordance with the work done by the individual.

Colossians 4:1 says, "Master, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

PART FOUR:

The Christian needs to work to the best of his ability. Some people are lazy. They try to do only enough work to keep from being fired. Others are energetic and work happily. They do more than is required of them. The job done by any person to earn his livelihood should be very important to him. Remember the words of Colossians 3:17a, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus..."

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

1. A man has a good job. He does his job well. He is being sent on a business trip by his firm. He knows he can finish and return in only one day. But he tells his employer he will need three days away to complete the job. What kind of a person is he?
2. A woman goes out to work each day. She has a good job. Personal troubles arise at home. She needs to go to the home village. She goes weeping to her employer telling him that she has received a death message from home. No one is even ill in her family. But she thinks her employer will let her go if she tells the lie. What do you think of this woman?

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We are sometimes tempted to do less than our best. Sometimes we want to be paid much money when we do only a little work. This is not pleasing to God. Christians should not be guilty of this sin. The Scripture tells us that we receive according to the effort we put forth.

As a closing thought, let us read together Acts 20:33-35. (Ask the women to read these verses in unison from their Bibles.) God is concerned with our relationship with our fellowman. An urgent need today is that God's people be concerned with carrying out God's will in relation to their jobs.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we shall be honest, patient, and kind in dealing with the people with whom we work. Pray that we shall always do our very best in our jobs.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 6

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS CHURCH

MEMORY VERSE:

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:1, 2

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We cannot be undecided about Christ today. We are his children. We must make our lives count for Christ. Our church is his church. The church can only be as strong as its members. The strength of the church is determined by the spiritual depth of the members. In today's study we shall look at the attitudes and relationships that should characterise church members.

PART ONE:

(Read Romans 12:3-5 to the group.) A spirit of unity should be evident in the church. Paul, the apostle, challenges the church to look carefully at itself. The church is one body in Christ, but it is made up of individuals. Each individual has special talents and abilities given to him by God. Each member is to think modestly of himself. We must recognise that the other individual members of the church are members of the same body.

PART TWO:

(Read Romans 12:6-8 to the group.) Every church member should be willing to serve. There is a common problem among churches. Many members do not use their abilities in the work of the Lord through the church. Jesus taught that all people have talents, given to them by their Creator. The person with

few talents is under the same obligation to use his talents for Christ as is a person with far greater ability. It does not matter whether the task assigned to us is a big one or a small one.

1 Corinthians 10:31b tell us, "...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Christ is worthy of our best. Every Christian should remember this fact. In our own strength, we can do nothing. Christ, working through us, can accomplish his will.

PART THREE:

(Read Romans 12:9, 10 to the group.) Christians love one another. The members of one church love one another. Christian love makes it possible for members to be patient, kind and happy. Christian love makes it possible for us to be truthful free from jealousy and selfishness, and ready to forgive one another.

PART FOUR:

The power to make our lives count for Christ comes from the Holy Spirit. By faith, Christians can call upon the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will work deeply in our lives and in our church if we have a sincere desire for righteousness. (Read 1 John 1:6-10 to the group.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

1. One member has held a particular position in her church for several years. Now the church has elected someone else to that position. How should she feel about it? Should she get upset and leave the church altogether? Should she be willing to take a change of responsibility and do her best for the Lord?
Read again Romans 12:3, 4.)

2. One church member refuses to go to the church business meetings. She is very critical of the decision made. She complains to the pastor. She complains before her neighbours, many of whom are not Christians. What do you think she should do? (Romans 12:1, 2; Romans 12:16; Romans 14:13; Romans 15:5, 6.)

PROGRAMME LEADER:

It is necessary to every Christian to experience daily cleansing and submission to the will of God. If we do this, our individual spiritual lives will deepen in relationship to the Lord. Our church will be a more spiritual church when it has more deeply spiritual members.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we will confess our sins, accept God's forgiveness, and by faith accept the Holy Spirit in our personal lives as well as in the church.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 7

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS NEIGHBOURHOOD

MEMORY VERSE:

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Galatians 6:10

SCRIPTURE FOR ALL MEMBERS TO STUDY AT HOME BEFORE THE MEETING:

Matthew 25:34-46

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The neighbourhood in which we live gives us an opportunity to prove how much Christ means to us. Our neighbours see us every day. They know how we dress. They know how we talk. They even know what happens inside our houses, because our children do enjoy telling others all they know. We have no secrets from our neighbours. They may hear us say in church that we love, trust, and honour God. They see in our daily lives whether or not we are telling the truth.

1 Peter 2:21b, 23 tells us, "...Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps...When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly."

PART ONE:

Our relationship to people is important. Do you know by name all of the people who live near you? Do you make an effort to be friendly and kind to them. Do they know you sincerely care for them? Romans 14:7a says, "None of us lives to himself."

Friendships are precious to the Christian. It is wonderful to have friends with whom to share our joys and sorrows. Our friends believe what we say. Mark 5:19 says to us, "(Jesus said to him) Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." We love our friends. We must share Jesus with them.

PART TWO:

The Christian is given an opportunity to witness for the Lord through his contact with schools in his community. Many headmasters and teachers are not Christians. Parents can apply Christian principles in their relationships to the school, to teachers, and to the parent-teacher associations. One headmaster recently said to a Baptist minister, "I want you to know that I appreciate your kind of religion." Perhaps the Lord will be able to work deeply in his heart.

Good examples of Christian conduct are essential. We show Christ by being patient and understanding with the child and the teacher. We show concern by helping the child to see that his homework is completed each day. We show concern by letting the school know we will cooperate and help. We should pay school fees promptly. We should see that our children have good meals and a good night's sleep. We should see that our children are clean when they go to school.

Christian women have a special opportunity for witnessing as they participate in organizations and social functions in the community. In all we do, we should witness for Christ.

PART THREE:

Christian men and women have an opportunity to witness for Christ as they do their shopping and deal with business firms. Perhaps the most important Christian testimony is the prompt payment of debts. The Christian must be careful not to spend

more money than he makes. The Christian must be careful to be completely honest in his business dealings.

Discuss together:

1. Today I went to the butchery. I bought one pound of meat. When I arrived at my home and unwrapped the meat, there were two pounds of meat in the package. The butcher had made a mistake. What should I, a Christian, do about the extra meat?
2. Today I went to the butchery. I asked the butcher for two pounds of meat. I paid for two pounds of meat. When I arrived at my home and unwrapped the meat, there was only one pound of meat in the package. The butcher had made a mistake. What should I, a Christian, do about my other pound of meat?
3. As I paid my money in the store today, the cashier gave me too much money back as change. What should I, a Christian, do?

PART FOUR:

The neighbourhood gives us a special way or witnessing for Christ. It enables us to test ourselves to see what Christ really does mean to us. The home that is open to the neighbours is a blessing in God's work. It costs us something to have people in and out of our homes. It costs money. It costs time. But the Lord Jesus said, "You received without pay, give without pay" (Matthew 10:8b).

1 Peter 4:9 says, "Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another."

Hebrews 13:2 says, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

1. A Christian man is a butcher. He could make more money

by giving a short measure on each order. Many people are tempted in this way. Will a Christian do something as evil as this?

2. A school teacher has both Christian and non-Christian students. He finds that it easier to like some pupils than it is the others. Will a Christian teacher have "favourite" pupils? How should he treat all the pupils in his class?
3. Your children are always bringing their friends home to play. There seem to be children everywhere all day. There is no privacy. They bring dirt from the garden into the house. They eat up the family's bread. Will a Christian mother open her home to adults and close it to children? What should you do?

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Every Christian must be aware that others are watching her every move. When we show anger, impatience, jealousy, pride or covetousness, our testimony for the Lord is weakened. These things are SIN that creeps into our lives. If we ask him in faith, the Lord will help us to remove these evil forces from our lives.

There is a song with these words:

"Lord, help me live from day to day

In such a self-forgetful way

That even when I kneel to pray

My prayer shall be for others.

Others, Lord, yes, others. Let this my motto be,

Help me to live for others. That I may live like Thee."

This is the secret of the Christian life. We bear the name of Christ. He is our example. He lives in us. We cannot find any evidence that Jesus ever thought first of himself. We have no record of his ever saying, "I, I must have

MY way!" We do find that he said to God, his heavenly Father, "Not my will but THINE be done." The Life of Jesus Christ was lived and given for others. We should be more like him.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we may become more like Christ in our daily living.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 8

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN FACES SORROW

MEMORY VERSE:

"We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day;
night comes, when no one can work."

John 9:4

PROGRAMME LEADER:

I am sure all of us have known some sorrow or heartache in our lives. Some have experienced heartache through the actions of persons near and dear to us. Others have experienced sadness through the loss of our money or material possessions. Others have experienced sorrow through the death of a parent, husband, or even children.

Sorrow is not an easy experience. As Christians, we do not have to experience our sorrow and heartache alone. We want to see in today's study what God's word tells us about facing sad experiences in our lives.

PART ONE:

All parents experience some pain and heartache with their children. We are often disappointed in the things they do. When parents are deeply committed to Christ, they will bring up their children according to the Scriptures.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." When a child knows the Lord, he may stray from the teachings he has known. However, the Scriptures assure us of his return to the fold of God. If we have not taught our children the way of the Lord, we should begin today to correct our error.

PART TWO:

Some families experience the loss of their material posse-

ssions. It is very difficult for a family that has worked hard and then lose everything. Even this, Christians do not face alone. (Read Matthew 6:19-21 to the group.) This scripture tells us that heavenly treasures are the important ones. Do you believe this? Do your actions in time of trouble show that you believe this?

"Read to the group Matthew 7:7, 8.) To what do we turn in time of trouble? When we turn to God, believing through sincere faith in him, he will hear and answer.

PART THREE:

It is difficult for any of us when someone whom we love dies. Let us remember that the Bible speaks of two kinds of death, the natural death and the spiritual death. Natural death occurs when the breath of life passes away from a person. Spiritual death occurs when a person born in sin refuses to accept the breath of God's Spirit. People whose lives are full of wickedness and sin are spiritually dead. They do not have the life of Jesus Christ.

We are studying about natural death. Let us remember that the spiritual death of a loved one is more tragic than natural death. Christ triumphed over death. He arose from the dead. He is able to raise mankind from death to life everlasting. Do we believe this? Do we show it by our actions when one of our loved ones dies?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." We must seek to lead our loved ones who are spiritually dead to accept new life through Christ Jesus now.

PART FOUR:

When a Christian loved one dies, his spirit goes to be with the Lord. The sorrow we feel is our own sorrow at losing

the physical presence of a loved one here on earth. Our concern, as Christians, should not be selfish. The Christian loved one has returned to the presence of the Lord. The actions of those who mourn can be a glorious testimony to a living Lord.

When we weep and wail, we do not glorify God. Remember, the spirit of the loved one has gone to the glory and happiness of heaven. We weep selfishly, because we have not made the best use of our time on earth with that special loved one.

(Read these verses to the group: Psalm 23:4; Psalm 46:1; Psalm 62:8; Psalm 9:9.)

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We should remember to be busy for the Lord while we have time. Psalm 90:12 says, "So teach us to number our ways that we may get a heart of wisdom."

Romans 14:8 tells us, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

The death of a loved one is never easy for the ones left behind. But God says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Comfort can be found in the words of Paul, the apostle, "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17).

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that all of us will seek to win our loved ones to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Pray that we shall be good testimonies for our Lord in the times of sorrow on our lives.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 9

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE CHRISTIAN'S PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO
CITIZENSHIP

MEMORY VERSE:

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to
people."

Proverbs 14:34

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The Bible tells us that God is concerned about all of a person's life, not just part of it. We are responsible to God for all of our actions, not just our church life. The privileges and responsibilities of citizenship are often thought to be separate from the Christian experience. This is not true. Citizenship is a very important part of Christian living.

It is important that every Christian learn what God expects of him in citizenship. The Christian has responsibilities to God and to his country. We shall study verses from the Bible. We shall find Christian principles to be followed concerning citizenship.

PART ONE:

A Christian is a citizen of the kingdom of God and of his own country. (Read 1 Peter 2:9-17 to the group.) The Bible tells us that the Christian is subject to an earthly government. We must take our citizenship seriously. The Bible also tells us in John 15:19 that the Christian is "not of the world."

The Christian's obligation as a citizen of heaven is to "Seek...first his kingdom (of God) and his righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33a). Because the Christian is a citizen of heaven, he should be an exceptional citizen of his country. He should be very loyal to his country.

PART TWO:

A Christian should realise that God is the source of a government's authority. (Read to the group Romans 13:1-4.) God wants all things to be done according to law and order.

Some rules are necessary for people to live together in an orderly fashion. Government is God's means of meeting this need. God did not begin a certain form of government. But God does tell us in the Bible that government or rules are necessary.

PART THREE:

In matters of right and wrong, the Christian must obey God's law. In Acts, chapter 5 we find that Peter and the other apostles had been warned by the rulers not to preach the gospel message to the people. But God said to them, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all words of this life." These words are found in Acts 5:20.

Peter and the other apostles had a choice to make. Acts 5:29 tells us, "But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'"

In Acts 4:18-20 we find that Peter and John obeyed God rather than the rulers. (Read these verses to the group.)

PART FOUR:

A Christian should recognise that the church and the government should be separate. Government is primarily concerned with civil matters. The church is primarily concerned with spiritual matters.

The Christian is concerned with both his church and his government. No country will continue to prosper if the officials and rulers do not have strong religious ideals. Every country needs rulers and law makers who are dedicated, church-going Christians. Only Christian law-makers will work so that their country will help all of its people.

PART FIVE:

An informed and dedicated Christian is a help to his country. The inner qualities which make a person a good Christian also make a person a good citizen. (Read Matthew 5:13-16 to the group.) The Christian acts as salt in his country. He preserves it. He helps improve the moral life of his country.

The nation which pleases God has citizens whose lives are dedicated to principles of justice and acts of righteousness. (Read Proverbs 14:34.) Nations do die from moral decay.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

1. Some countries have laws which forbid citizens to meet together for worship. What should Christian citizens do? (Read Hebrews 10:25; Acts 5:29; Luke 4:8.)
2. John is a Christian. He loves God. He loves his church. He also loves his country. John has a good education. He wants to serve his people. John has been praying, seeking God's will for his life. He feels that God wants him to help in guiding his country as a law-maker. Friends shake their heads sorrowfully at John. Some say, "You cannot be a Christian and a politician at the same time." What do you think? Can John be both a Christian and politician? (Study Romans 12:6a; Romans 12:8-21; Romans 14:18, 19.)

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we will apply God's principles to our citizenship. Pray that we will teach our children to love God and to love their country.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 10

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

MEMORY VERSE:

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God. So each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Romans 14:11, 12

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We saw in last week's study that it is necessary to have rules. It is necessary to have the enforcement of the country's laws. Today, we want to find out some things we need to do in order to be Christian citizens of our country. The New Testament tells us some of these responsibilities. Each Christian should try to follow what the New Testament tells him to do.

PART ONE:

(Read to the group Romans 13:5; 1 Peter 2:13-16; and Titus 3:1.) Every Christian must obey the laws of his land. If every person respected the rights of others, there would be no crime.

A Christian citizen cannot tolerate crime. A person is not a good Christian or a good citizen if he encourages the breaking of any law. If a law is not a good law, the Christian citizen should try, through legal means, to get the bad law changed to a good one. Christians should always obey the laws of the land.

PART TWO:

(Read Romans 13:7.) A Christian should respect and honour the governing authorities. Our scripture says, "Pay all of them their dues...respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due."

Public officials are not just politicians. The New Testament tells us they are representatives of God. God will

hold them responsible for their actions while they are in public office. A Christian should speak of them and act toward them with respect and honour. Because of their position, the Christian should hold them in high esteem.

PART THREE:

(Read Matthew 22:21b and Romans 13:6, 7.) A Christian should pay his taxes. The Christian should never try to avoid paying taxes which are due. A Christian should pay his taxes promptly and honestly. It is a duty which God gives us all. The purpose of the government is to protect and serve the people. Taxes make this possible.

PART FOUR:

(Read 1 Timothy 2:1-3.) A Christian should pray for all public officials. We should pray for the chief. We should pray for the council officials in our areas. We should pray for the mayors of our cities. We should pray for the judges of our courts. We should pray for the members of Parliament. We should pray for the President and the Prime Minister of our country.

Some of these public officials are Christians. However, many of them do not know Christ as their personal Saviour. Prayer does change lives. Prayer can change important decisions. The Bible says in James 5:16b, "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." The purpose of such a prayer is that we may lead quiet, peaceful lives. Such prayer is good and acceptable in the sight of God.

PART FIVE:

The Christian should work for good government. The citizens who qualify as voters are responsible for the way in which the government operates. The officials elected can be no better than the people who elect them. Baptists believe that

Christians should accept voting and participation in politics as part of their Christian duty.

PART SIX:

It is part of good citizenship to make use of the responsibility and the right to vote. A Christian should do what he can to become qualified for the vote. He should study the issues. He should learn about the character, the ability and the political outlook of the candidates.

At election time, the Christian should vote. The Christian should vote for a candidate who is a Christian.

The Christian candidate for government office should look upon his position as having his authority from God. His personal life and his actions should always reflect Christ working in and through him.

As Christian, we should recognise that politics can be a Christian vocation. Christian young people can render a vital service to God and to their country when they turn to political life as a Christian vocation. For too long, politics has been thought of as a profession for unbelievers. Christians could change this way of thinking if they applied Christian principles to their citizenship.

PART SEVEN:

It is not the main job of the church to teach its members about political matters. The main job of the church and the pastor is to preach the gospel message of salvation. However, sometimes we need to be reminded that the will of God applies to our citizenship as well as to the other areas of our lives. Parents need to train their children in the duties of Christian citizenship.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

A Christian cannot separate his beliefs from his behaviour.

Witnessing is part of the Christian's responsibility to God. Citizenship is also part of the Christian's responsibility to Christ.

The Christian should always have an understanding of the purpose of government. He should always have an understanding of his own obligations to his country.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION TO BE LED BY THE PROGRAMME LEADER:

How can we help make our country a Christian country? (Study together Mark 12:13-17; Mark 12:33; James 5:16.)

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we shall be good Christian citizens. Pray that each woman will teach her children to follow Christ's teachings about their citizenship.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

PROGRAMME 11

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

THEME FOR THE WEEK: OUR ACTIONS SAY MORE THAN OUR WORDS

MEMORY VERSE:

"Let the words of my mouth and meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."
Psalm 19:14

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We have studied many verses from the Bible during our study about the Christian today. These verses have said many things about how we should live. Paul wrote these words to the Christians at Colosse "...we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9, 10). If this scripture is really true in our lives, we will live faithfully for Christ.

It is easy to SAY we love Christ and that we live for him. It is not as easy to PROVE our love for Christ by our daily living. One person once said, "I cannot hear what you are saying because of the things I see you doing." Is this true of us? It is true that our actions reveal more of the true condition of our hearts than our words do.

PART ONE:

How do you act toward people who are unlike you? How do you act toward people of another tribe and language, toward people of a different race? Many times we are guilty of laughing at the person who dresses or talks in a different way from ourselves.

Remember that we witness to these people by the way we

treat them on the streets, in shops, and wherever we come in contact with them. By the way we act we influence people either toward or away from Christianity. Christians must learn to accept all people as individuals loved by God. God created people of all languages, colours and cultures.

Jesus was kind to everyone. He went out of his way on his journey to befriend a Samaritan woman. She was a woman of another race and a known sinner also. The Jews hated Samaritans. Yet Jesus witnessed to her. She became a true follower of Christ.

We shall see two examples today. These are true happenings. We shall look at the actions of some young girls. They were members of the missionary organisation in their church. These young girls are not very different from you and me as we have contact with other people different from ourselves. Some of them were very good witnesses for Christ. As we see what these girls did, remember that they were visiting people of a race and a language different from theirs.

PART TWO:

Indian people live in both North and South America. They are very different from the Indian people whom we see in our country. Some of these Indians live in houses known as pueblos. They are made from unburnt bricks which have been dried in the sun. These Indians are talented in weaving, pottery and basketry. Many of them are skilled farmers.

Mission work is carried on among these Indians. Some of the missionary organisation members had been studying about the mission work among the Indians. Several groups together chartered a bus to make a mission tour.

The girls were delighted to see the Indian women bake bread in round ovens outdoors. Some of the Indian children put on their colourful costumes and did an Indian dance for them.

After a while, the young girls became dusty, tired and hot. They began to complain and ask for water.

The counselor led the girls back onto the bus. She said to them, "You were not good witnesses today."

One girl argued, saying, "It didn't make any difference. They don't speak our language anyway." The counselor explained that even if they didn't understand what the girls were saying, they could tell by their expressions and tone of voice that they were saying rude things. These girls were young, but most of them were Christian girls. Their actions said more than their words.

PART THREE:

Another group of young girls from the missionary organisation decided to be good witnesses. These girls lived in a city where there were many Latin-American children. The language of these children was Spanish. The girls, aged nine to twelve, wanted to help in the special meetings for children during the school holiday. They put up posters everywhere. The posters said, "Come to the Bible School. Everyone welcome."

Children saw the posters and came. They had brown-coloured skins and black, dancing eyes. They spoke English with an accent. Their parents could speak only Spanish.

The young girls were very busy. They made the Spanish children welcome. They sat beside them and played with them. They became good friends with the young Spanish children. The girls heard an older boy make a joke about a little child's Spanish accent. They stopped him by reminding him that these children could speak two languages while he could speak only one.

These young girls were good witnesses for Christ. Their actions said more than their words.

PART FOUR:

Christians should form friendships among people from all walks of life. Usually a friendship of depth and understanding has to be formed before you can ask a person about his relationship to God. Jesus told us to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength. Then he told us to love our neighbours as much as we love ourselves. It is a fact that if a person does not find God in his fellowman, he does not find God at all.

Sometimes we fail to reach out in friendship and love to people who are different from us. We enjoy the fellowship with those who are like us. We may enjoy it so much that we limit our friendships and contacts. God will forgive us for being guilty of this neglect, if we ask him. He will help us to overcome it.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

There is no doubt that our actions do say more than our words. By more Bible study and prayer time, our spiritual experience with the Lord will deepen. This deepening experience will be evident in our actions. Only in lives which are deeply committed to the Lord will we see actions which prove our sincere love for our neighbour.

Today's Christian has a challenge. Let it be the prayer of our hearts that we will meet the challenge offered to us in today's world.

As a closing thought, let us read together Philippians 4:4-9. (Read these verses. Take time to meditate upon them.)

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray that we will have a true love for all people. Pray that our love will be like the love of Christ which comes from the depths of our hearts. Pray that every day we shall accept

the challenge to dedicate our lives in faithful witness to
Christ.

PRAY ALSO FOR:

