

Project 4
A Curriculum
for the Matthäus Gemeinde
in Bremen/Germany

Contents

I.....	Church Profile	2
II.	Philosophy of Ministry with Adults	2
A.....	Theology Base	2
1.	Scriptural Basis	2
2.	Responsibilities	3
3.	Interpersonal relationships	3
4.	Equip for ministry	3
B.....	Who are Adults?	3
C.....	How do they learn?	3
III.	Goals	4
A.....	General	4
B.....	Specific	4
IV.	Two Year Curriculum Plan	4
A.....	Existing in Church	5
B.....	Planning Year One	8
C.....	Planning Year Two	9
D.....	Course Descriptions	9
1.	Fellowship or The Problem of Close Relationships	9
2.	Mature Decision Making	10
3.	Development of Spiritual Gifts for Ministry	10
4.	The Book of Daniel : Issues of Faith in Society	10
5.	The Will of God for ME	11

I. Church Profile

The Matthäus-Gemeinde in Bremen was founded in 1962 and is part of the nationwide Protestant church organization. As such it enjoys certain benefits from the state like collection of fees with the taxes and support for certain ministries.

The minister of this church Pastor Jochen Müller was educated in the specific education system for the Protestant church. He administered this church from the beginning in 1962. He really realized what Christianity was about around 1968 and was baptized. Since then the church has been growing steadily through evangelization all over Germany in the seventies and eighties.

The church made a great impact on the city of Bremen. Marches for Jesus were conducted in the seventies. Many Organizations outside of the supervising church organization were founded. For example a free Protestant school was founded and built by the unified members of believing churches in Bremen. The church is in opposition to the supervising Protestant state church, since the supervising organizations has been widely used to promote all kinds of other beliefs and there is no evangelism going on from there. The Matthäus-Gemeinde is criticized for its "extreme" views on the bible and salvation.

Currently there is an participation of the Sunday Morning Service of around 800 people. Many group activities are underway during the day reaching around 2000 people each week. A children's ministry has been established covering most of northern Germany. The church has send more than 60 missionary into different countries and continents. It is very difficult to get an overview about all the kind of groups which are going on.

The main body of adults which carries the duties of decision making came to Christ in the early seventies when they were in the twenties. They have accomplished many things but the current evangelism focus is mainly on the now older generation which did not take part in the revolutionary change of thought in the seventies. The church needs to adapt into being an effective witness to the younger generation also. A Dug-In mentality spreads more and more, ministry centers around a few gifted leaders and average church members have lost their zeal and dedication to spreading the Gospel. Offensive action with understanding of the actual things going on in society is necessary. Many members are irritated because the church has no answers to the challenges of the current issues of this time. They are not satisfied with dogmatic statements any more. Work has to be done to deepen the understanding of the current society and educate the members being able to constructively criticize and effectively challenge prevalent attitudes to make them effective again in witnessing. In many members black and white thinking is prevalent.

The church has had a strong emphasis on personal and group bible-study from the beginning. There is a lack though in applying the bible and interpreting it for every day situations.

II. Philosophy of Ministry with Adults

A. Theology Base

1. Scriptural Basis

Ephesians 4:11-15 *"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by*

every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."

It is God's intend to led everyone grow to the "*full stature of Christ*" meaning to personal maturity. The instrument for that are other believers who have special gifts to edify the body and help others to mature.

This is of central importance for the believers because this is the way the body grows numerically and in strength. The process of maturation enables believers to effectively witness to others and fulfill God's given plan for them.

Without maturation (adult formation) we will just be children "*tossed to and fro*" not able to resist the "*deceitful scheming*" of the world.

2. Responsibilities

The responsibility for adult formation is within the body of Christ (generally the local church). Its duty is to effectively stimulate personal growth and thereby the growth of the body by educating and connecting the members of the body.

Generally each Christian has a desire to be educated and mature. Too often this desire is not met and I have seen many people leave our church because they desired more. A believer might leave his church when he feels that his needs as a Christian are not met. These needs are basically the desire for adult formation, for spiritual development.

3. Interpersonal relationships

Adult formation and therefore spiritual maturation also involves development in the area of interpersonal relationships. Only through effective fellowship can the body of Christ act and release its powers for ministry. Problems in interpersonal relationships often lead to the failure of a ministry.

Education and maturation as a Christian must lead to an improvement of interpersonal relationships within the body. If this is not archived it is questionable if the kind of "adult formation" is a process for maturation as a Christian at all.

4. Equip for ministry

Adult Formation equips persons for ministry through training of various gifts and through enabling them to see their potential. Adult formation is a means to communicate the necessary knowledge to minister.

Effective ministry is only possible through continued development (formation) as one ministering. Elements of a body influence each other. Feedback from others is essential to develop a ministry.

B. Who are Adults?

This is a difficult question. Adults are usually identified by a certain age level. The illusion in the church nowadays is that adults do not need any education in being a Christian. They usually are the ones responsible for running the church and making the decisions. They usually represent the church in evangelism and witness to others, yet do lack an education for this. Often they feel the lack and search for a way to educate themselves.

Adult formation affects the whole church and is a means to lead a whole community to witness more effectively and to increase the spiritual power.

C. How do they learn?

Adults usually learn in a different way than children and teenagers. They can decide for themselves what they want to learn. They are motivated by **themselves**. Adults tend more to learn by example and by methods which require their interaction. They must see the sense of it and that it is actually working.

Adults are usually well taught in selective listening and are able to instantaneously forget what they think unnecessary for them. If something is taught it should be demonstrated or presented in a unique way to ease the memorization.

III. Goals

A. General

The biggest lack of the Matthäus-Church is the ineffective witness to the younger generation. The application of the Bible to daily life situations in personal life and society need to be taught. Connected with that how to communicate the Gospel in this time.

There is great hunger for maturation, this must be satisfied and the members should be equipped to use their gifts to the benefit of all. This also touches the issue of fellowship in the church. Many feel the lack of closeness.

It needs to be taught how to interpret and understand the Bible for daily life situations. How does a "Christian" behave? How are norms to be handled?

The members need to be more integrated into ministry and they need to be responsible and equipped for this ministry so that they feel competent in their ministries. The dominating inferiority complexes need to be healed.

The Christian life needs much more controlled zeal. The fear of the outside needs to be dealt with.

B. Specific

- Equipping each leader to feel competent in his field
- Equipping the laity to effectively witness to others
- Teach how to get involved in social opinion and decision making
- Teach how to be a Christian living in Reality and facing the issues of life.
- Understanding contemporary issues in the world
- Communicate the gospel in a contemporary way.
- Losing the fear of the "threat" of the outside world.
- Communicating with other generations
- Spirituality as a Christian
- Family Conflicts: How to enjoy them and solve them
- Fellowship: How to share with others
- Discerning personal gifts.
- Development of gifts with special training for each gift.
- Norms of Christianity.
- Being Mature as a Christian.
- Competency in Ministry
- Knowledge about tradition of the Bible
- How to debate based on the bible
- Unity in Christ: Different Views same Saviour
- Realizing what we are in Christ

IV. Two Year Curriculum Plan

A. Existing in Church

I could not participate in the church since mid 1990. Therefore I can only develop a plan according to the information accessible to me which is largely through only one church bulletin covering October till December 1991. I will insert fictitious events into it and events which are normally not mentioned in the bulletin. There exists no overall planning of the themes in each session and the publication of the topics is up to each group. Therefore this information is not accessible for me.

Meetings are usually held once a week unless otherwise noted.

Church Plan 1991

Format	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Individual:				
Home Groups (30-40grps)	Group choice	Group choice	Group choice	Group choice
Leaders:				
Visiting Ministry (monthly)	X	X	-	X
Preparation for Children's Sunday School	X	X	-	X
Children's Leaders (bi-weekly)	X	X	-	X
Homegroup and other Leaders Meeting (monthly)	X	X	-	X
Daily prayer meeting (full time ministers)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adults:				
Women's-Meeting	X	X	-	X
Trumpet-Choir	Rehearse	X	-	X
Blue-Cross	X	X	-	X
Mother & Child (Education issues)	X	X	-	X
Seniors	X	X	X	X
Bible-Study with Pastor	X	X	-	X
Saturday Worship (18:00) (Usually held by Co-Pastor)	X	X	X (might be reduced)	Youth organizes one Service.
Friday-Prayer-Night (monthly)	X	X	-	X
Women's-Prayer-Meeting (monthly)	X	X	-	X
Hour of the Community (Sharing time, Monthly)	X	X	-	X
Plenum (Administration, monthly)	X	X	-	X
Young Adults	X	X	-	X
Youth:				
Youth-Choir	X	X	-	X
Youth-Hospital-Singing	X	X	-	X
Youth-Group (over 14 years)	X	X	-	X
Teenclub (Girls over 12 years)	X	X	-	X
Boys-Meeting (12-14 years)	X	X	-	X
Boys-Meeting (8-12 years)	X	X	-	X
Kids:				
Children's-Meeting	X	X	-	X
Guitar-Class Advanced	X	X	-	X

Children's-Club (8-12 years)	X	X	-	X
Children's-playtime (1-3 years)	X	X	-	X
Kindergarten hour	X	X	-	X
Child's hour for foreign children	X	X	-	X
Sunday Children's- Services(6-10simultaneously according to age)	X	X	Reduced	X
Whole Church:				
Sunday Worship-Service (10:00 once a month)	Worship Service for Guests	Worship Service for Guest	Worship Service for Guests	Worship Service for Guests
Sunday Worship Service (10:00 Specials)	Worship Service by Prof. W. Smith (End of his class)	Baptize new believers. (Pentecost)	Introduction of new pupils for "Konfirmation"	Worship Service for Guests with Axel Kühner
Regular Services	The Lords Prayer	Ephesians	Preaching by Co- Pastor (Retreats)	No fixed topic.
Special Events:				
	Seminar with Prof Dr. W. Smith: " <i>The Science of Being</i> " Implications of newest research.	Missionary feast in Rehrßen. DIPM, VDM and others. Conference.	VDM-Feast (United German Missionary Aid)	Christmas Music. 5 Special Christmas Services with different emphasis.
	Bible-Week with South American Missionary. "Abraham"	May Confer. of Christian Youth 1991 (North Germany)		A. End of Year Service B. New Years Service
			Children's feast (4-7yr)	Church Bible- Week
	Work day at the School: "Interior Renovation".	LOGOS-Week. Ship "Logos" in Port of Bremen. OM Team visits.	Youth Evangelism in Saint Martini- Church	Seminar: Questions of Education
		Preparatory Meetings	Preparatory Meetings.	DOULOS (OM- Mission-Ship) Bazaar
	Basic Class in Christianity for new believers.	Dedication of our Retreat Center in the Harz.		Basic Class in Christianity for new believers.
Retreats:				
There is no overview about the retreats available to me. This is just a sketch from past years. Much is missing.	Men's Retreat "Hot issues in our Church"		2 Youth Camps in France.	Church retreat in Bentheim
	Youth Weekend Retreat		Family Retreat in Denmark.	Youth New- Years Retreat.
			Camping Ground- Ministry East-Sea.	
	Women's Weekend Ruth F.		Young Adults in Switzerland	

	Kid's Retreats		5 Kid's Camp diverse locations.	Children's Retreat.
	Mission Outreach to Celle (N. Germany)		Missionary Outreach to Austria	Volunteer Retreat for LOGOS.

B. Planning Year One

This plan does just show areas where planning was done by me. The overall topic for this year shall be *Competence in Ministry and Community*. Special focus is laid on building a basic knowledge base and people are encouraged to dare to discuss about taboo topics like involvement in politics and how to deal with modern issues in society. There is a basic necessity and desire for education, being equipped.

Church Plan 1992

Format	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Individual:				
Home Groups (30-40grps)	Group choice	Group choice	Group choice	Mature Decision Making as a Christian
Leaders:				
Visiting Ministry (monthly)	Evidence of God in Nature and Science	Teachings of Sects	-	Understanding the needs of the people visited
Homegroup and other Leaders Meeting (monthly)	Facing issues in Church and Society	Mature Decision Making as a Christian	-	How to balance different views in the same group
Adults:				
Women's-Meeting	Family Conflicts: The Necessity and the Solutions	Facing the challenges of women in society	-	Being mature every day?
Bible-Study with Pastor	The Book of Daniel: Issues of faith in society	The Will of God for ME	-	James and Paul: Different emphasis same faith
Special Events:				
	Seminar with Prof. X Y Z "Our Position in Christ" Ambassadors of the most High.	Seminar 5 Wks: Fellowship or The fear of Closeness		
Retreats:				
			Personal spiritual Life retreat. Prayer and Meditation	Development of spiritual gifts for ministry.

C. Planning Year Two

Planning is only done in the amount required by the class. The overall topic is a continuation of last year. 1992 put stress on knowledge and laid a new basis for ministry. This year is especially concerned about actual ministry and reaching out. Its mainly concerned about smaller issues that arise in ministry. Therefore the topic is *Serving Christ*.

Home Groups	Listening and Understanding Essential Tools for Fellowship and Evangelism	Communicating with other Generations Understanding the generations in your family	Getting involved in Society. Salting the World.	Living your faith before others, (not the image you want them to see)
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D. Course Descriptions

1. Fellowship or The Problem of Close Relationships

Special Class: Spring 1992 April-May 5 Sessions

The participants in this class will learn how to develop close relationships. How to acquire a balance between being open and being able to keep things for oneself.

The participants will have to work through different group experiences to develop this ability. The group experiences will mainly be reflections on topics presented to the class.

By the end of the course the participants will have begun to learn how to share and how to listen to others. The participants will learn the necessity of openness and learn how to converse on the basis of truth. How to be honest with themselves and towards others.

They will learn that to be true is to take the risk of being vulnerable and know that it is worth it. Therefore the fear of the "others" will be reduced.

And last but not least they will understand the necessity for working towards fellowship in our churches to fulfill Jesus's commandment:

John 13:34 *"A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this the world shall know that you are my disciples."*

Resources:

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich *Gemeinsames Leben* Chr. Kaiser Verlag München, 1986
 Dettoni, John M. *Open to Closeness* Victor Books, 1991.
 Föller, Oskar *Verbindliches Leben* Hänssler-Verlag Stuttgart, 1984
 Horie, Michiaki und Hildegard *Vom Reden und Schweigen* Brockhaus Verlag, 1988
 Horie, Michiaki und Hildegard *Stufen der Befreiung / Scheitern und Neubeginn* Brockhaus Verlag, 1985
 Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Intimacy Essays in Pastoral Psychology* Harper & Row, 1981
 Sell, Charles M. *Transitions through Adult Life* Zondervan Publishers, 1991
 Verwer, Georg *HUNGER for REALITY* STL Books, 1972

2. Mature Decision Making

This Class will be held in two different settings.

First in Spring the Group-Leaders will focus on this topic for 3 Sessions in their monthly meetings.

Second in the Fall each Fellowship-Group will focus on topics in this area.

Audience: All Fellowship-Groups

The aim of this class is to help the participants to find a healthy approach to responsible decision making. There is a tension between basically two propagated decision making models. One is to fully rationalize the decision and the other is to obtain divine advice on this matter (Whatever this means for a person).

These basic decision-making models are critically examined. The evidence for both of them in the Bible is shown. An attempt will be made to synthesize both of these methods. The participants will share about the way they themselves use them and their experiences with them.

This class then will analyze the different ways decisions were made by famous Christian leaders in our time. The life of Roy Hession (Revival Preacher), H. Kemmner (German Revival in 50s) and so on will be studied.

Resources:

Baden, Hans Jürgen *Frömmigkeit und Lebenskunst* Brockhaus Verlag Wuppertal, 1987

Fullam, Everett L. *Riding the Wind (Your life in the H. Spirit)* Creation House, Altamonte Springs, FL, 1986

Hark, Helmut *Religiöse Neurosen* Kreuz Verlag Stuttgart, 1984

Henrichsen, Walter A. *Disciples are made not born* Victor Books, 1981

Schaible, Günther *Weiterkommen Im Glauben wachsen* Aussaat Verlag, 1986

Scheible, Günther *Perspektiven gewinnen* Aussaat Verlag, 1988

Torrey D.D., R.A. *Die Macht des Gebetes* Herold Verlag, Frankfurt/Main

Watson, David *Discipleship* Hodder and Stoughton London, 1981

3. Development of Spiritual Gifts for Ministry

This is a Retreat in the Fall early November.

This retreat is designed for the laity to discern their spiritual gifts. Many people are questioning what are spiritual gifts and do they actually work. On this retreat there is a possibility to experiment with various techniques to find that out. It is designed as a retreat so that there is less danger of embarrassment and people feel free to experiment and reflect on their abilities.

Resources:

Wimber and Springer *Riding the third Wave* Marshall Pickering, 1987

Hession, Roy *BE filled NOW* Kingsway Publications Eastbourne, UK, 1967

Murray, Andrew *The Secret of Believing Prayer* Bethany House Publishers, 1980

MacDonald, Gordon *Zurück zur ersten Liebe* Projektion J Verlag, Hochheim, 1986

Stemme, Fritz + Karl-Walter Reinhardt *Supertraining* ECON Verlag, Düsseldorf, 1988

4. The Book of Daniel : Issues of Faith in Society

This is a series of Bible-Studies done by the Pastor in January - March

This Bible-Study focuses on Daniel living and serving in a foreign society. Daniel is used to illustrate how we as citizens of the kingdom of God can live in a rather hostile world. Yet we are the ones gifted by God to make a change here on Earth. The participants shall be motivated to take active part in society

and make a difference to the world. Daniel made a great difference although he was not able to model society in all respects according to his wishes. Are we able to have an influence on society, while we still see its corruptness and evil tendencies?

5. The Will of God for ME

This is a series of Bible-Studies done by the Pastor in April - June

In this Bible-Study different ways of discerning God's will for oneself are covered. Different Persons in the Bible are surveyed how they found out the will of God for themselves. Methods through prayer or rationalization or collective thinking or individual or group-inspiration are covered. Each session ends with the opportunity to pray in groups for specific important questions of individuals.

6. James and Paul: Same Faith different emphasis

This is a series of Bible-Studies done by the Pastor in September - November

This Bible Study show the possibility of different insights into faith and yet being of the same faith. This class intends to help the participants to accept Christians from other denominations as brothers and sisters and work together with them, despite differences in doctrine and teaching. Paul's concept of salvation by faith and James evidence for faith through works are used to illustrate this.