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Interview of Jaro Schubert

Jaro Schubert

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This is Joe Hacker speaking. I am in Nurnberg, Germany. This is June 14, 1970. I will be talking with Jaro Schubert who is now preaching for the church in Nurnberg.

Hacker: Brother Schubert, how long have you been a Christian?

Schubert: Since 1957.

Hacker: You were from Poland?

Schubert: From Czechoslovakia.

Hacker: What was your background there?

Schubert: I had studied Roman Catholic theology and then I was a Roman Catholic priest for nine years.

Hacker: How did you come in contact with the gospel?

Schubert: In part by studying the Bible, especially the New Testament. I got through reading the book of Acts, the idea about the church, like it should be, etc. From the other part through a meeting in Munich, Germany, in 1956 with Brother Fausto Salvonia from Italy. He was also a Roman Catholic priest and it was interesting to me to hear him. At that time I had many doubts concerning right or wrong in the different teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Hacker: You then were baptized by Brother Salvoni?

Schubert: No, it was the first time I had taken part in a non-Catholic religious assembly. It was not so easy to me. I then contacted Brother Jack Nadeau who was a missionary in Munich at the time, and I spoke as often with him. It took more than one years time for me before I was baptized. It was during the second meeting in Munich by Fausto Salvoni when I was baptized.

Hacker: After your baptism, what did you do?

Schubert: I took part in the Bible school in Frankfurt, Germany.

Hacker: How long were you there?

Schubert: Three months. Then I came to Berlin on the invitation of Richard Walker. I came there only to help in the campaign, the tent meeting, for a few weeks. But when I was here, Brother Walker asked me to stay there and help him. I remained in Berlin and worked with Richard Walker for twelve years.

Hacker: Is this where you met your wife?

Schubert: Yes, I got married in Berlin but I knew my wife already in Czechoslovakia.

Hacker: She also then is Czeckish?

Schubert: She was a teacher.

Hacker: You worked then for twelve years in Berlin with Brother Walker. Where did you go from there?

Schubert: After Berlin I came to Nurnberg. I have been here two and a half years.

Hacker: Can you give us then, from this experience, something of the history of the church in Nurnberg?

Schubert: The beginning here was a tent meeting, but we had no worker here. Following the tent meeting, a few persons came to the church. They had no preacher and they had no teacher, and I think this was a reason for many difficult problems that we have here in the church during the years. It was maybe twelve years ago that the first tent meeting was here. Then, two years later came Glem Olbricht from the States to work in Nurnberg. But, at this time, the congregation was a special congregation with many teachings. One thing that the brethren said to him, "We don't need a preacher. We can do it ourselves." It is interesting maybe that when I came here, I could hear the same: "We don't need a preacher." But these people left the congregation. I have spoken with them very openly, and they came no more. They left the church and only one family and one old sister remained in that congregation. This was the situation a year ago before the campaign. These were faithful and the campaign last year was a new beginning. The spirit in the congregation is now very good.

Hacker: How many members did you have last year before the campaign?

Schubert: It was our family and the other family, that's four, five.

Hacker: You have how many now?

Schubert: We have about ten. We have more but we have a special problem that I mentioned already. We have many members 50 and 80 kilometers from Nurnberg and this is not so easy for them to get to partake regularly in the services. We couldn't find, until now, a good way and a good possibility for these people. This is our special problem.

Hacker: They have the problem of transportation, getting to the building?

Schubert: Yes.

Hacker: Now, you have a nice building here and you live on the second floor. How was this arranged? Was it purchased by the brethren in the States, or was it rented?

Schubert: It was built especially by the brethren here, not only by Americans but also by Germans. We have borrowed the money and we pay regularly each month, 500 marks.

Hacker: You are supported personally by the church in Fort Worth?

Schubert: Yes, Rosemont.

Hacker: Were they also supporting you in Berlin?

Schubert: Yes. They are the reason I am here now because Olbricht was supported by Rosemont too.

Hacker: I see. So they asked you then to come here to keep this work going? You are planning a campaign again this summer in July?

Schubert: Yes.

Hacker: What is your feeling now about methods? I would like to ask you a number of questions about methods that have been used here. First, could you just tell me the methods which you have experienced that you consider in Germany to be most successful? The methods that you have experienced that have worked well.

Schubert: Personal contact. This is the most important and the best way. We must get in contact with the people. Then we can have a hope to bring them to conversion. These anonymous meetings help no more. It was possible in the past, maybe, but now it is no more possible. We have to work from one person to the other person.

Hacker: You think then that mass advertising and just announcing gospel meetings is not the best for Germany at this time?

Schubert: As I can see it this way, the gospel meetings, the kind we know in the past, are not good. It is sure we cannot in Germany win new people through this method. So we must try to get new interested people by special efforts like campaigns or so with larger advertisement and also with a group. This group method is a very good method. They can sing and they can speak to the people. Although they cannot speak German well, they can speak through their personality. This is the best way. I think we can get many contacts through such a campaign and then we can meet our large expenses to conduct a short meeting or more short meetings through the year. We don't need, for example, special posters because if, for example, we had 100 contacts through a campaign, we can work with these 100 in a concentrated effort. We had a short meeting with Gottfried Reichel in November after the campaign and we had here 15 visitors each night. It was only three sermons. Most of the visitors were our personal contacts from the campaign and from the radio.

Hacker: You feel that a good thing to do after a campaign is maybe to have a short gospel meeting?

Schubert: Yes, or more and more such meetings through the year. Our problem here, of course, is finances. We couldn't conduct more than this one because of financial problems and because we wanted to have a campaign this summer and we saved our money for it.

Hacker: In financing the campaigns, do you find that your money comes from the States mostly or from the Germans?

Schubert: Mostly from here. Until now, we have not yet one cent from the States or from our American congregation here.

Hacker: About how much does it take for you to finance the campaign from the church here?

Schubert: In the past year it was about 6000 marks. This year I feel we will need more. We will need 7000 because things are much expensive this year.

Hacker: So it is about \$2000 American dollars that would be a budget for the church here?

Schubert: Yes.

Hacker: The other methods that you have experienced then, you might consider not particularly workable now. In other words, what are some of the methods that you have tried, that you have seen tried that you feel for one reason or another shouldn't be tried right now? Can you think of any of these? Last summer you were mentioning some of the problems that you were having with gospel meetings, that just announcing the meetings the visitors wouldn't come.

Schubert: Most people in Germany have homes and television sets and they can see football, they can see cinema, and religious ceremonies and it is very difficult to get the people for such things. This is not only a problem for us but also for large churches and different cultural things. If we want to have people at our meetings it must be a special meeting. For example, the group, the choir, American students, etc.

Hacker: They come to hear them and also personal contact. Now, let me ask you some questions because of our time limitations here about your feelings if you can express these to us of relationship with American brethren. You are a Czeckish national and you are now living in Germany and you have had to work with Americans. What particular difficulties did you have in the beginning as you worked with Americans to raise your support? How did you come to receive the support in the beginning?

Schubert: Brother Jack Nadeau helped me. He was at that time in the States. It was very difficult. I began with 20 marks weekly (Hacker- that's only about \$5) but then we had 200 marks and now 500. It was not so easy but it was possible because we had much help, for example, through family workers and also through our brethren in Germany and through many brethren in the States.

Hacker: Did you go to the States at all? Have you been to the States?

Schubert: No.

Hacker: Would you recommend from your experience, your own experience and from what you have seen in other German and non-American preachers, would you recommend that they go to the States for their training or that they stay in Germany?

Schubert: You know about this effort in Heidelberg. I think it is a good idea. It is better if the young people can be taught here than in the States because they don't come back. They either stay in the States or they are no more a preacher. The problems that are here are always with the school order. I am convinced it must be a well organized school. There are many beginnings for such Bible schools for preachers in Germany, but it was not good and I think the main problem is that it must be connected with a real school.

Hacker: We are coming to the end of this. I would like for you to tell us what you are doing now with World Radio, and speaking behind the Iron Curtain.

Schubert: I am sure this is the greatest opportunity we have to preach the gospel at the present time, because the people behind the Iron Curtain are isolated from the world. This is bad for them in part, but also good in part. They can have their thoughts and ideas open for the gospel. I see it already in the responses from World Radio in Czechoslovakia, and I am sure it would be very good if this work could be continued and still better continued.

Hacker: If you had an opportunity to tell your American brethren how they might help you, what would you suggest they do?

Schubert: This is a difficult question. Surely they can help in financial ways. This is maybe the easiest way. We need also mission workers here. I see in the near future we will have not enough workers here. This is true in Germany and for Czechoslovakia and Italy and all of Europe. We need more missionaries, contrary to what some German preachers think, but good prepared missionaries. Then, I am sure we can grow much more.

Hacker: In the financial way, what do you feel the American brethren should do now?

Schubert: Give us a security to the work that we should do. For example, here we have not enough money to do different mission efforts because the American congregation here has only maybe 20 members and they saved already for our campaign (5500 Marks). That is a lot of money for them. Besides they pay loans for the building and a part of my support. The German congregation is the same. We cannot conduct more meetings through the year or such short meetings because we have no money for this. The problem is the devaluation of money. We get much less German money for the same in the past year.

Hacker: What would you say are your needs to continue and develop your work in Czechish on World Radio?

Schubert: As I can see it now, it would be the best for the work if I should work in the first line in the Czechoslovakian work, because I am the only person from the church who can speak the language and know the customs and habits of the people there. The opportunity is now here. I do it now in second or third line.

Hacker: Do you go to Munich and make your tapes?

Schubert: Yes.

Hacker: It would be helpful then if you had a good recording apparatus here, I suppose.

Schubert: Yes, it would be good. Maybe it is too expensive again. I don't know if it is necessary at the time. Maybe in two or three years we can see more what the results are. I know it is a large lot of money for a studio. Gottfried has a studio for World Radio Germany and we can use it.

Hacker: This takes how much of your time to go to Munich and back?

Schubert: One day. One time I made five sermons but this is not always possible because you can not concentrate for so long.

Hacker: In addition to these things you do on World Radio, how many gospel meetings do you hold a year? Campaigns?

Schubert: You mean here in Germany? We have our campaign here in Nurnberg and I will preach during the campaign in Cologne.

Hacker: Now, you preached last year in the campaign in Cologne and here. Did you preach in other campaigns last year?

Schubert: In two campaigns last year.

Hacker: Now, have you done any other meetings this year?

Schubert: This year also two campaigns.

Hacker: What other work do you do? This is enough for one person but I am sure you do other things in addition to your local work here and World Radio and campaigns.

Schubert: I write for the Firm Foundation in Czeck. This is much much work and it is difficult at times. I hope it will be good. I am convinced that it is necessary.

Hacker: So you are preaching regularly for the church here, you are engaged in personal work among the German people here, you are preaching in Czeckish on World Radio, you are editor of Firm Foundation in Czeckish and you preach some and work with the American congregation and now you are going this afternoon to Werzburg to preach to the Germans. These are at least five major responsibilities that you have. Are there others?

Schubert: It will be possible that one American brother from Vienna will move here.

Hacker: That will be a big help.

Schubert: That will be a great help. One of these brothers wants to work in Czechoslovakia and I can help him to speak the language and do other things and he can help me.

Hacker: I appreciate your taking this time today. I know that you and your family are very busy. This tape will be very valuable to our preparation of people to come to the mission field and I hope that it will serve to do good for your work here as well.