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Interviewer: This is the Oral Testimonies Project at the Jewish Holocaust Museum in Melbourne. I'm **Geri Kress** interviewing Daniel Wurm on the 22nd of November, 2005.

Daniel Wurm: Hi. My name's Daniel, and I wanted to tell the story of my grandfather because what happened during the Holocaust has profoundly influenced my family and my sense of history of my family and even who I am today. So let me begin by perhaps going back to 1920. That was the year that my grandfather was born in February. And he was born in the town of Wels in Austria. And as you can imagine, back then it was a lot of people were living in poverty in that part of Europe. And he lived during the Depression years, so he did have some very hard times as he was growing up.

And, in fact, his mother remarried. His father, his real father, was put into prison *[laughs]*. He was a criminal. And anyway, his stepfather treated him very badly; so much so that when he was 14 he left home, ran away from home and ended up on the streets, living on the streets. A man took him in, and a gentleman gave him a job as an apprentice boilermaker. And that's what he was doing up – at that time, of course, the Nazi party came to power and started to exert a heavy influence on Austria.

Interviewer: What year?

Daniel Wurm: Well, he was about 15 so that was around about 1935.

Interviewer: Can I ask your grandfather's name?

Daniel Wurm: *[Laughs]* Sorry, my grandfather's name was Ludwig, Ludwig Wurm, W-U-R-M.

Interviewer: So how many other children in the family?

Daniel Wurm: In his family he had one brother, who was mentally handicapped, and he never had any dealings with him, and no one knows what happened to him. Anyway, my grandfather being a young man and looking towards his future was really interested in the Nazi party's ideals and the things that they promised him. You can imagine a young man who doesn't have much and along they take him and put a uniform on him and say: "You're the man. You're a superman. You know, we're going to make a super race out of men just like you." Of course, it made him feel good, made him feel like he could be someone. And that's what I feel attracted him to

that ideology. Of course, he had no idea. Being so inexperienced, he had no idea of the repercussions of what Hitler was actually doing. So I think that many young men like him were really taken advantage of.

And so he was there at the famous rally in Nuremberg in Germany, and he actually met Hitler and shook Hitler's hand. And he went home that night, and he went to his mother and said: "My life will never be the same, and my life belongs to that man." And he said that Hitler looked at him in such a way that he felt – he couldn't really describe the feeling, but it was as if he was hypnotized.

And so, of course, when the war broke out, he was involved. He became a sergeant in the army, and he served in France. And I think he was injured while he was fighting in France, and he had to come back to Austria to recuperate. And it was at that time that he first started to think about: 'What are we actually doing here? What are we trying to accomplish?' because he'd been so busy, involved in the war and all the excitement that he hadn't really thought about what was happening in the world. And he'd also seen things, of course, that made him realize what war was really all about. And, anyway, then he was called to go to the Russian front. And he spent time there, and he was also injured there quite severely.

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Interviewer: Do you know how he was injured?

Daniel Wurm: He was shot through the back of the neck, and the tendons that basically hold your head up, they were severed. And he had shrapnel all through the brain or the fluid that surrounds the brain. And so he had to have all the fluid drained out of his head, and it took six months for that to regenerate, and he had to basically lie there six months. He couldn't barely move while he recovered. And, of course, a lot of the operations were carried out without anesthetic.

He was also involved in a train accident, and he was one of the few survivors from that train accident.

Interviewer: Where?

Daniel Wurm: In Austria.

Interviewer: In Austria.

Daniel Wurm: Yeah, and that also happened around about that time. So it's absolutely amazing that he survived all of these close encounters with death.

Interviewer: Do you know any more details about the train accident?

Daniel Wurm: From what he tells me, the train derailed, and most of the people died. And the reason why he survived is because he was actually in the bathroom at the time. And for some reason that sort of – it was like a capsule.

Interviewer: What year was it?

Daniel Wurm: I don't know the exact year that happened, but I can find out. So he also was – just before he was sent to the front in Russia, he spent some time at a concentration camp. And that was his first experience to spend time at a concentration camp, and he was not allowed to mix with the prisoners there. And there were actually two types of SS guards. A lot of people don't realize this. There were what they call the "death troopers," I think they were called.

Interviewer: Death ____.

Daniel Wurm: Death's Head. Storm troopers? And they were in charge of the concentration camps. My grandfather was not one of those, so he wasn't involved directly in torturing people. But, of course, although he never spoke to me about it, I've got no doubt that he must've known. How could you spend time at a concentration camp and not know what was happening?

Interviewer: What function did he perform?

Daniel Wurm: He was just a guard on the perimeter wall of the concentration camp, so he wasn't even allowed to associate with these Death's Head guards.

Interviewer: Lower caste.

Interviewer: What was the name of the concentration camp?

Daniel Wurm: I'll have to find out. I don't want to say without being accurate, but I'll find out for you.

Interviewer: And what period of time was he doing this work?

Daniel Wurm: That would've been around about 1942, 1943. That's what I would estimate. Anyway, it was at the –

Interviewer: Did he describe the function? Did he describe any other details about what he was doing and what he saw?

Daniel Wurm: Well, one thing that he noticed, of course, he knew why the Jews were there. But he also knew that there were other prisoners there such as what were called Bibelforscher, Bible Students, and they had a purple triangle. And he noticed that they were – they seemed to be unaffected by what was going on. For some reason, they had a different demeanor, and he inquired about who they were, what they were doing there.

And people said to him: "Well, these are people that don't agree with Nazi ideology. And the Bible Students, they're crazy. They're nutcases. They're something to do – they're Communist. They're labeled as being Communist and an American sect." And he also found out that they had the option of actually signing a piece of paper that would've allowed them to go free. In fact, many of them – most of them were Germans, German citizens, and they didn't have to be there. He thought that was unusual. But, of course, he didn't look into it because he'd been told that they were crazy.

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But after the war, when Hitler committed suicide and, of course, the Nazi regime fell apart, that meant that everything that he'd been working for, everything that he'd put his whole life into had now crumbled. All the – everything that he'd been trained to believe in, everything that he'd been told to believe in was now worthless. It meant nothing, and it really impacted on him mentally. He almost had a nervous breakdown. You can imagine someone that devotes their life to something. And then suddenly one day it's all gone. You think to yourself: 'What am I going to do with my life now? What does the future hold?'

And the Americans were looking for SS soldiers, any SS soldiers, SS guards because at that time they assumed that all the SS were involved directly in ...

Interviewer: Atrocities.

Daniel Wurm: ... the atrocities, exactly. And my grandmother—well, she later became my grandmother—hid my grandfather from the Americans and supplied him with food for a number of months.

Interviewer: Where?

Daniel Wurm: Not far from Linz in Austria.

Interviewer: Where was she living? In her family home?

Daniel Wurm: She was still living at home, and she hid him I think up in an attic. And while he was there, the Bibelforscher—the Bible Students—by this time had been liberated as well, of course. And they'd reformed, and they had started to go and talk to people and as they were accustomed to doing even before the war. So they now were doing the same thing after the war, and they'd go and knock on people's doors or they'd distribute literature.

My grandfather got hold of some of this literature, and he put two and two together and realized that these were the same people that he'd seen in the concentration camp. And when he read the literature and a lot of the literature spoke about the fact that Germany and the Nazi regime would not last, and it was very anti-Nazi ideology. It was totally against – in fact, it exposed what they were doing. It had diagrams of concentration camps to let the rest of the world know what was actually happening there. Of course, that's one of the reasons why they were banned under the Nazi regime.

So my grandfather got hold of some of this literature, and he realized that everything they were saying was true, and he could see that these people were different. But at the same time, he was very disillusioned with religion—any kind of religion—because during the war, he being a Lutheran, was actually encouraged by the churches that he was fighting in God's name. In fact, he used to talk about how his belt buckle said "*Gott mit uns*" which means "God is with us". So a lot of these young men just like my [grand]father thought that what they were doing was the right thing. They were – God was with them.

And, of course, he realized that that was no longer the case, definitely not the case. But that had put him off all religion, and he thought: 'What kind of God would allow this to happen? Obviously, everything that I've been taught even through my church is wrong.' But at the same time, he could see that these Bibelforscher were different. And that's what intrigued him, and he wanted to find out more about what they believed. And he had to undo all those years of prejudice that he'd been trained to believe in. He had to get rid of that, get it out of his system.

And I must admit he really did try. It would've been very hard for him to overcome prejudice that he felt because it had become so

ingrained in him. And I think even to the day he died, he would still say things about perhaps the Jewish people that showed to me that he still had not ...

[0:15:00] He definitely lost all of his hatred. But he still thought of them as being ... I don't know what the word is for it. He just couldn't get rid of this idea that they were ...

Interviewer: Inferior?

Daniel Wurm: Just human beings. They weren't inferior, yeah. And even though he tried very hard through his life to give all of that up and he knew he had to do it, it was very hard for him to admit that *[laughs]*, and he struggled with those feelings. I could definitely see that but –

Interviewer: Sorry, can you just clear up what was he actually struggling with?

Daniel Wurm: Obviously, he'd been taught that the Jewish race was inferior. They were subhuman. That's what they were taught, the German people, and I guess he believed that. And then once he studied the Bible and learned that God views everyone as being equal, he had to give up those ideas. But he would still speak about the Jewish people as – sometimes he'd just use words or phrases that I could tell he hadn't completely got it out of his mind.

And I hated that. Because growing up here in Australia, I've grown up in a different world where we like to view everyone as being equal. I mean, we all come from different backgrounds. And every single person in Australia—other than the Indigenous people—come from somewhere. And I grew up with people, you know, where we have to treat each other as all being equal. So every time I would hear him say something like that, it would really sting me. I hated hearing that.

Interviewer: Did you challenge him?

Daniel Wurm: In my later years I did. When I was going through my teens, I didn't feel I had the right to question him. He was the head of our house, and I wasn't going to start an argument with my grandfather even though I had different, you know, I didn't feel the same way he did. But that actually intrigued me. What would make someone think like this? And I used to think: 'Why? Why? How could he possibly have seen what he did and go along with it?' And so every chance I got at school to study about the Holocaust, I took it. And when I was 25, I finally got to go to Dachau in Germany and

go to a concentration camp and see it for myself what actually happened there. And I was – I bawled my eyes out, and so I could see –

Interviewer: What made you choose Dachau?

Daniel Wurm: Convenience [laughs]. Not that he was involved in that but, yeah, it was one that I happened to be traveling near. I went see that. And, of course, it's quite famous; a lot of stories that I'd read about that I went to see. And it's one of the ones that's still intact. I think most of it is still – a lot of it is still intact. So that really affected me. And growing up as what are now called Jehovah's Witnesses, the Bibelforscher—Bible Students—are known as Jehovah's Witnesses. And in German they're called "Jehovas Zeugen." And I've grown up in my grandfather's new religion, the religion that he took on after the war, so that's how I've grown up.

And that religion teaches you that God loves everyone. There is no room for prejudice. There is no room for hate of anyone. And that, for me, is extremely important. I think it's one of the few religions that teaches people that, and they're not just teachers but actually does it. And that's why my grandfather became one is because he could see it with his own eyes. He saw all that they stood up for what they believed, whereas a lot of the other religions sort of gave in.

[0:20:00] They might not have agreed with what was happening, but they didn't stand up. And those principles really have become very important in our family and very important to me, too. And so I've actually traveled a lot. I've traveled the world three times and I've – and part of the reason I think is because I want to understand other cultures. I want to understand why people are the way they are. And I guess it's partly because of what my family's history. I saw what misinformation, what propaganda, what brainwashing can do to people. I know my family are good people. I know my grandparents were good people, but they were misled, and I didn't want that to happen to me. And that's one of the reasons why I've done so much traveling is because I wanted to really broaden my mind.

And so right up until my grandfather's death, he would talk about his experiences every time we had a family get-together. I grew up with him and my other grandparents. And we would speak about – he would bring it up even if we didn't want to hear it. We'd heard the stories hundreds of times, hundreds of times. And it was in

some ways he lived in the past, particularly in the last few years of his life.

Interviewer: How long ago did he die?

Daniel Wurm: He died two years ago, and he was 83 years old.

Interviewer: How did he die?

Daniel Wurm: He died ... Basically in the end, it was in his sleep from a stroke. But it was at the end of – he'd battled with diabetes and he'd had heart surgery. And I think in the last few years of his life, he may have had the beginnings of Alzheimer's disease. He lived with our family or next door. And although I left home about 12 years ago, I would see him on a regular basis. And I had a lot of respect for him. And everybody that knew him loved him just because of his transformation that had occurred in his personality. In fact, he had his life story published, and it was called "My Hate Turned to Love." So he went from being someone that was aggressive to being someone that could show tremendous love. I experienced the love, of course, being related to him. And I could see that he tried very, very hard to change. He had tried very hard, and he'd succeeded to be a different person.

Interviewer: [Crosstalk] _____

Daniel Wurm: His life story published in 1995 in a journal called *Awake!* magazine, which is published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

Interviewer: How was your father brought up by your grandfather?

Daniel Wurm: It's a good question. My father – I think the disciplinarian style of discipline and of bringing children up was very much a part of my grandfather's attitude towards family life and so a lot of discipline, a lot of corporal punishment. I don't know whether that's part of being German or whether that's just my grandfather. But, yeah, he believed strongly in discipline, and I guess my father brought me up that way too, but not to the same extent.

My grandfather did battle with alcoholism in the 1960s, so this is after he came to Australia. And I guess one of the reasons why he fell into that trap, that addiction, was because alcohol was an escape for him. Here in Australia in the '50s and '60s people from Germany, if you spoke German, you weren't the most popular person, so you're never really accepted. People would talk about Germans in a derogatory way.

[0:25:00] So when they came to Australia, my father was not allowed to speak German outside the house. Like he had to learn English. My grandma made sure that he learned English quickly, and she would even speak English with him. My grandfather doesn't speak much German. My father, sorry, doesn't speak much German.

Interviewer: What did your grandfather do in Australia?

Daniel Wurm: He got a job as a boilermaker, which was what his trade was, what he'd learned years before. And at that time in Australia, there was heaps of that kind of work in industry. So he didn't have any problem getting work, but it was fairly low-paid work, I guess. My grandmother did a lot better. She got a job in a drafting office, and in the end she was actually looking after an engineering office. But they tried very hard to assimilate into Australian culture, which I'm very thankful for because it's made it easier for me. I can walk around, travel around Australia, and no one would ever suspect what my family history is and ... yeah.

Interviewer: Could you tell us about yourself? When were you born, childhood, school?

Daniel Wurm: I was born in 1973. At that time we were living in the western suburbs of Melbourne, and I was born in Essington. But when I was six, we moved to Frankston, southeastern suburbs of Melbourne and ... I don't know. What else would you like to know? *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: How did you see life?

Daniel Wurm: How did I see what?

Interviewer: As a child in Australia? You came from a different background. Did you feel completely Australian? How did you adapt yourself to the new country?

Daniel Wurm: *[Crosstalk]* Yeah, through right up until my teenage years, I never even thought of – I didn't really appreciate the impact of my family history, as most children do. They just think that that's normal. And then it wasn't until I was about 15 that I started realizing the significance of what my grandfather had been through. And you start thinking: 'Why is my family like this? Why do they have these attitudes?' You start questioning everything. Definitely.

Interviewer: Religion?

Daniel Wurm: Yeah, I went through a stage where I didn't even believe in God. I studied biology at school, and if you study biology, you're taught to question everything, of course. I was one of the best students in Australia in biology. And for me to make a career in biology, I would basically have to accept the theory that evolution happened and then basically reject everything that I'd been taught. So I really studied that carefully as to whether what I'd been taught through my childhood was, you know, whether I'd been brainwashed [laughs]. And I suppose that was another reason why I did a lot of traveling as well. And I still have an interest in learning about other religions. I read the Koran. Plus, I lived in Asia for a year.

Interviewer: In Asia? What country?

Daniel Wurm: I've lived in Japan, in Malaysia, and I've done work in Thailand. So, yeah, I had a real interest in other cultures. But from what I've seen, I don't think there's many other religions that really teach people to overcome their prejudice. And I think a lot – the thing about being a Jehovah's Witnesses is it's not something that you're born into. Even though I was – my family were, I was never baptized.

Interviewer: Your parents also?

Daniel Wurm: My parents are, but it's not something that you're born into. You have to make your own decision when you're old enough. And I didn't really want to make a decision until I'd seen enough of the world before I understood what I was doing. But I think that's one of the things that really appeals to me about Jehovah's Witnesses is that they are what a lot of people would call "pacifist."

[0:30:00] I mean, it's not the pure definition of pacifism. But when it comes to political affairs, they're completely neutral. I've got friends from all over the world that are Witnesses and those that aren't Witnesses as well. I can go anywhere in the world, and they'll treat me as brother. I think that's how the world should be. It'd be great if it becomes like that one day. I think it will. And that sort of is what inspires me to do what I do. And now I spend a lot of time as a Jehovah's Witness, an active Jehovah's Witness, talking to people about these things.

Interviewer: What do you think breaks the differences between nationalities?

Daniel Wurm: What makes the differences?

Interviewer: What breaks the differences?

Daniel Wurm: Breaks the differences? Understanding. If you understand why someone's history, the history of a nation, the history of a person, if you understand why they are the way they are, you realize that they're just like you.

Interviewer: You accept them?

Daniel Wurm: Definitely. You mightn't agree with what they believe in, but you still accept them. And I suppose it's a way of reconciling with them is by making an effort. I think the biggest problem is people don't make an effort to try and understand other cultures. They just think: 'Oh, they're different to us. I won't bother.'

Interviewer: [Crosstalk] _____

Daniel Wurm: 'Or they're crazy.' You hear even people say that today. You've got the situation where people think that Muslims are crazy. That's because they've never really made an effort to understand what makes a person a Muslim. What does it mean to be a Muslim? Why do they feel so strongly that they're willing to commit atrocities, which is what is happening now? What would make someone do that? Everyone just thinks: 'Well, it's wrong. We can't allow it to happen.' But they don't make an effort to understand why are they doing it. Why do people need to sacrifice their lives? There must be underlying reasons. And we'll never get peace in this world until people do that, until people realize that every person is equal, every person has the right to live irrespective of their background. Whether they like their background or not, whether you accept it, it doesn't matter.

Interviewer: This is logic. Are people always logical?

Daniel Wurm: Of course not. People get passionate about things. I'm passionate, and people get passionate about what they believe in. But what's important is that you try and understand others. I think that's the key.

Interviewer: Why did Holocaust occur?

Daniel Wurm: The Holocaust occurred because there was a nation of people who were desperate. Most of them were living in poverty. They were misled by people who had power, who fed them information that would influence their thinking. Hitler only showed the German people what he wanted them to see, what he wanted them to know,

and he did make their lives better to begin with. So if someone has something to cling to, if someone has a future, a way out from their predicament, they'll take it without thinking sometimes. And so millions of people went to war. Millions of people sacrificed their life because they'd never been given the opportunity to see something different to what they'd been taught, brainwashed. And, of course, we know what Hitler was teaching them. We know his ideology, and we know that it only led to hatred.

Interviewer: Where was God?

Daniel Wurm: Where was God when the Holocaust happened? Well, that's a great question, and this is a question that everybody struggles with.

[0:35:05] My personal feelings are based on what the Bible says about that question. Now, I'm not saying you have to accept this, but this is what I believe. The Bible teaches people that right from the beginning of human history God has basically allowed humans to rule themselves. The Holocaust was not the first genocide. The Holocaust was not the first example of people blindly killing others. It's not the first atrocity. There's been countless. All through history we see bloodshed. Human history is just filled with empire-building people trying to rule over others, human greed and selfishness. God hasn't stopped any of that. The Holocaust is only part of that history.

So the question really is, Why hasn't God stopped any of it from the beginning of human history, not just the Holocaust? Why didn't he stop it right – going right back to Roman times and pre-Roman times, the Egyptians? Why didn't God stop what they did to people? And the reason the Bible gives is that he's allowed humans to rule themselves for a time to prove that they can't. Human beings are not capable of ruling themselves. We've tried all kinds of things. We've tried Communism. We've tried Socialism. We've tried democracies. We've tried monarchies. None of it works. I mean, we live in a democracy, but there's still millions of people that aren't happy.

So I believe human beings aren't really capable of ruling themselves. As much as we'd like to think we are and we've got technology and whatever, we can't. And so very soon, according to the Bible, God's going to step in and – put an end to humans ruling themselves. That's what I believe. I know that might sound crazy to you or you might reject it. Or you think: 'Why would we want to be ruled by God?' That's what I believe, and I feel that that's what the Bible teaches.

I think if people actually looked at the Bible—forget religion. Most religions have not brought peace. They haven't taught people to love one another. But if people follow the Ten Commandments—just the Ten Commandments to love your neighbor and to love God—imagine if they actually did that. Imagine how different the world would be. It would solve all the problems if people thought of others instead of themselves all the time. You wouldn't have most of the problems. That's what I believe.

Interviewer: You gave up your career in biology?

Daniel Wurm: I didn't actually begin a career, but I had the opportunity to pursue a career in biology. I was offered a scholarship in New South Wales University to study biology, and I gave that up to become a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. So I've spent most of the time since I left school studying as a minister and actively talking to people about it.

Interviewer: Which sources do you use to study?

Daniel Wurm: Well, just studying to be a minister? Primarily the Bible, of course, but as I said before –

Interviewer: _____

Daniel Wurm: Yes. But also I look at, as I said before, I've made an effort to read literature from other religions. And I'm constantly meeting people from other faiths. And when I moved here to Caulfield, I'm meeting lots of Jewish people. So I've really made an effort to get to understand them, why they are the way they are, and understand them better. So, yeah, it's not just simply – I don't just simply read the Bible. I make an effort to really understand different viewpoints as well.

[0:40:00]

Interviewer: I see. To a very great extent, you talked about indoctrination _____. In every system, religious or political, exists the certain distortion of reality.

Daniel Wurm: True, true.

Interviewer: How do you feel that your ideas could be realized in this world without the interference of God?

Daniel Wurm: I think it would be great to think that it was possible. But from what I've seen in human history and even what I see today, people are just too selfish. Even people who are well-educated, people who have money, people who have what you would think is everything they need to be happy; they're never happy. They still want more and you think: 'Well, why? Why is it that people who have everything still want more? Why are they willing to put others down to achieve their goals?' And humans are just too selfish, unfortunately.

Interviewer: _____

Daniel Wurm: That's what I've seen, and that's why I don't think that we'll ever get peace simply through our own efforts. I mean, look at the moment. We know that the greenhouse effect is happening. We know the environment is being ruined. But do you see the governments being willing to make the sacrifices that are necessary to save the planet? They can only think short term. They're only thinking about getting into power for the next three years or whatever it is. So they're not willing to make the big sacrifices that this planet really needs to survive. I don't think human beings can survive the way they're living at the moment.

Interviewer: Do you see the Holocaust one of things which prove that man is bad and he eventually will be punished?

Daniel Wurm: It proves – it doesn't prove that man is bad because there were a lot of good things that happened, amazing things that people did that showed that it is – that they can overcome their greed. But I know that sounds contradictory to what I've just said, but no human beings are perfect. That's basically it. The most gentle person still does selfish deeds. So just getting back to your question about the Holocaust, does it prove ...

Interviewer: That man is bad.

Daniel Wurm: ... that man is bad.

Interviewer: Deserve punishment?

Daniel Wurm: It proves – it's one of the lines of evidence that proves that humans can't rule themselves. That's what I believe.

Interviewer: Was it preventable?

Daniel Wurm: I don't know. How can anyone say that it was preventable? Maybe if you were able to prevent the Depression, maybe if you were able to prevent Germany from losing World War I. It's impossible to say whether it was preventable or not. I don't believe it was destined to happen, but I think it was the culmination of, you know, you can't pin it down to one thing. It was the culmination of many different things that have happened in history. I don't even – you can't even just say it was Hitler. There were many people involved. You know, so many variables.

Interviewer: Hitler create[ed] his own religion?

Daniel Wurm: Yeah, in a way he did, true. From that, yeah, I guess if you were able to stop that from happening, you could say it was preventable. If you were able to stop Hitler from coming into power, I guess it may have altered history, but maybe there would've been someone else.

[0:45:00] I don't really see that much difference from the Holocaust from what Hitler did to what maybe Saddam Hussein did or, I mean, Pol Pot. There's been despots all through history that have done the same thing, so ...

Interviewer: The teaching of tolerance or acceptance could change the attitude of people.

Daniel Wurm: Yeah, and people have to be willing to change themselves. This is the thing. My granddad made the effort to change. I'm not perfect, but I try to be accepting; but I'm not perfect. Everybody tries to various degrees. But as you said before, because we're the product of our history, it's very hard to completely overcome prejudices that we have. It's natural for people to think that the way that they've been brought up is normal, that that's the way it should be. And, of course, this world is not perfect. So to have a perfect world you have to start with a perfect world, which you can't. So that's why I feel that you need something supernatural to happen. You see what I'm saying? *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: How big is your congregation?

Daniel Wurm: We've got in Elsternwick, which basically is Brighton, Elsternwick, and Balaclava, Elwood, and a little bit of Caulfield. We've got about 113 active members. And then, of course, there are quite a few—about 100 others—that don't participate actively, but they're associated with us. So in Melbourne there's around about 12,000 Witnesses, Jehovah's Witnesses. And worldwide

there's around about 6.6 million, and they're in almost every country in the world including Israel, Germany, Iraq perhaps. I don't know.

Interviewer: People don't change easily. They need **assistance from God** to change the world, right? He has to destroy it?

Daniel Wurm: I didn't say he'll destroy it.

Interviewer: _____ maybe not?

Daniel Wurm: He won't – I don't believe God will destroy the world, the actual Planet Earth. There's nothing wrong with Planet Earth. The planet's a beautiful place.

Interviewer: And the people?

Daniel Wurm: Life is incredible. Why would God destroy all of that if he's made it? It's people ruling over each other. That's the system. Why does anyone on this planet have the right to decide for someone else what they should do? None of us, none of us have the right to impose our laws on other people. So but at the same time, you can't have a completely lawless world. Otherwise, it's like having a road network without any rules. It'd just be traffic accidents all the time.

So this comes back to the question. While there are certain principles that we all believe. We all believe that murder is wrong. We all believe that, you know, basically the Ten Commandments. Stealing is wrong. Doesn't matter where you go in the world. People believe that. Where did they get that idea from? Who came up with those concepts?

I don't believe that it comes from human beings because if human beings are just animals, why would we make up those rules? If it's purely survival of the fittest, wouldn't it be easier for us to just say: 'OK, I'm going to take advantage of you because that's going to enable me to survive'? See, these principles that we accept are higher, higher principles. We do things that there's no logical reason for. Why would we want to help someone else? Why? What difference does it make to us?

[0:50:00] But we have a natural – we know that that's the right thing to do. Right from the time a baby's born, the parents teach it to love in most cases. And most people would agree that those principles are

correct. Now where do those laws come from? Well, I believe they come from God.

Interviewer: Another question: Do you people improve ethically? _____ the attitude to the world is not selfish? People change? Like take from the primitive time, the Roman times.

Daniel Wurm: Sorry? I don't understand.

Interviewer: Said ethics like we always follow – in the Western world many people follow the Ten Commandments in a different way.

Daniel Wurm: Right.

Interviewer: Like you said in the Bible people were very, very cruel in those times.

Daniel Wurm: Yeah.

Interviewer: Killing was a normal thing.

Daniel Wurm: Right.

Interviewer: Today we don't consider this as moral or ethical, so do ethics change?

Daniel Wurm: Oh, ethics, OK. It is interesting that people talk about ethics now and not morals. I think "morals" is a word that people don't like to use anymore, but what does "ethics" actually mean? Can you put a definition to what "ethics" are?

Interviewer: The difference between ethics and morality? Ethics is more related to justice, morals to accepted rules.

Daniel Wurm: But you can't have justice without rules. That's the thing. People think you can have justice without having rules.

Interviewer: Ethics is superior to morals. Ethics dictates what morals would be.

Daniel Wurm: OK, I see what you're saying. But you still can't have – like people talk about ethics. For example, they say about respect for life, so the principle is respect for life. But from that principle, if we believe that life is sacred, is special, that no one has the right to take life, then we get laws like murder is wrong, etc.

Interviewer: That's right.

Daniel Wurm: So you can't have one without the other. If you don't have the laws to back up the principle, then the principle is meaningless.

Interviewer: That's right.

Daniel Wurm: If you say that to take life is wrong but then you go and murder someone, then you don't believe anything, do you?

Interviewer: No, no. My question was: 'Do we change?' Does the human being improve as such ethically?

Daniel Wurm: Can they improve ethics?

Interviewer: Do they improve?

Daniel Wurm: Do they improve it? We like to think we do.

Interviewer: [Laughs] I see.

Daniel Wurm: But I don't think we do. I think people today show just as much – a lot of disrespect for life but in different ways. We've got different issues that we face today. And people like to ignore those principles or they mask it by calling it different things. I won't give any examples here because otherwise I might offend someone, you know, my personal viewpoints—things like abortion, etc. But, you know, people's interpretation of what is showing respect for life, you know, people have different ideas. But if the principle, if people observe that principle that life is special, can you really argue? [Laughs]

Interviewer: Please, have you got any questions?

Interviewer: Maybe one final question: Do you think that your grandfather achieved peace at the end of his life?

Daniel Wurm: Did he achieve peace? I think he achieved peace in that he gave our family a legacy of peace, wanting peace. That's one of the reasons why he came to Australia as well—his search for peace. Unfortunately, now even Australia is being tainted by prejudice and things like that.

[0:55:00] You know, one person can't achieve peace. But he did his bit, even if it was just me. The fact that I've been influenced by him means he's done something. And, yeah, everyone that met him realized that he was a special person. He could walk into a room and instantly people were drawn to him. He did have a real love of

people. I don't know whether he had that same love when he was young, when he was in the Nazi party. I don't know because I never saw him. But definitely the way, the type of person that he became he had a love of people and also he wanted to be accepted by others. I think he was also quite insecure right until the day he died. He always wanted assurance, reassurance that he was loved, so his core person didn't really change. I wish that he had the same opportunities that I have [laughs].

Interviewer: Your father still carry the guilt?

Daniel Wurm: My father?

Interviewer: Yes.

Daniel Wurm: My grandfather?

Interviewer: No, father.

Daniel Wurm: My father? I don't think so. My father's very different to me. He's probably not as idealistic as I am. My dad got married a lot younger than I am. I'm not even married yet. And he had children at the age of 26 and he spent – and he still does spend most of his time trying to look after his family, and that was his focus in life. He definitely has similar ideals, but I don't know. I'm not really that close to my father. We're just very different people [laughs].

Interviewer: I will tell you it's very interesting. In a few cases the grandparents affected their grandchildren more than their children.

Daniel Wurm: I would say in some cases that's true.

Interviewer: Yes.

Daniel Wurm: In some cases, I have a lot of respect for my grandfather. I mean, not that I don't have respect for my father.

Interviewer: No, but different type.

Daniel Wurm: I guess my dad's led a pretty average life, you know, a normal – what we'd consider a normal, run-of-the-mill life, you know, 2.3 kids and a house and whatever. Whereas my grandfather just – his life is amazing like it's just incredible, so yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Daniel.

Daniel Wurm: Thanks for listening *[laughs]*.

[End of Audio]