

Radio Is More Fun – Part II

by **Jim Newell**

Last month I wrote about being a radio announcer and what listeners don't know is happening in the studio while they listen. This month, I'll tell you how different being in front of the camera on TV is from working in radio.

Doing TV means you can't cough, because you can't turn off your own microphone. You can't scratch your nose when it itches, either.

In 1983-84, I taped a series of short television interviews for the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. This involved conversations with various missionaries, groups of pastors, and other church people to circulate among the Convention's churches.

At the time, my home was a three-hour drive from the studio in Toronto so we did the work on Saturdays. Once I had a particularly uncooperative missionary as the second interview of the day.

30 minutes in five hours & plenty of mileage

He didn't see why we couldn't just face the camera, talk to each other and get it over with. He didn't realize how boring that would be to watch for a half hour. We only had one camera instead of the two we needed. To get the effect of two cameras, the producer would decide when he wanted us to stop filming and change the position of the camera.

Sometimes the camera was behind me, and the focus would be on the interviewee from over my shoulder. At other times, the view would be just the reverse, and sometimes straight on both of us. To accomplish that, I would ask the man a question, the producer would call, "Cut," and he would hold his reply until the camera was moved, or the producer would stop filming and I would hold my next question for a camera move.

The man I was interviewing thought all that was a waste of time and his protests and complaints slowed things down to the point where we ran out of time for studio use. Altogether with the two interviews, we completed 28 minutes of usable filming in three hours.

We still had to tape my closing remarks for the second one. That meant I had to return to Toronto to do that final bit of taping. I had an engagement for the following Saturday so we decided I would drive to Toronto on Friday after school, have supper and then record the last two minutes.

I carefully remembered what I was wearing so I could wear the same jacket, shirt and tie the next week. What I forgot was that in those days I wore a hairpiece. I had two of them, one longer than the other, so that it would appear as though I had had a haircut when I changed them. When I walked into the studio, the producer took one look at me and said, "Jim, you have the wrong hairpiece." He was right. That had been my "haircut" week.

"Well," he said, "that means no close ups. We'll have to do distance shots." To get two minutes of usable tape to splice to the rest, it took two hours before the producer was satisfied, but those watching the tape at various churches never realized. For all they knew we had two cameras and took a half hour to make the tape.

No siree. Radio is a lot more fun to do as far as I'm concerned.

