

# Dick And Sherley Bott

## Humble Beginnings of Bott Radio Network

By Patricia Partney Dascher



**D**ick Bott has been behind a microphone since he was a boy singing for Child Evangelism in churches throughout Minneapolis, Minnesota. His career in sales began at the age of nine when he sold apples out of a wagon to the neighbors. “We had three apple trees in the back yard and my mom let me have all the ones that fell on the ground. I earned ten cents a bag and usually sold three bags a day. When I needed money I always found a way to earn it.” Bott said. As a boy he ordered items out of the Spore Catalog at discount rates and sold them door to door. He later worked as a Bell Hop at the Curtis Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota. “I hid my tips in a little box in the basement of the hotel so I won’t spend them. Then when I wanted to take Sherley out I had the money.”

His career in radio began after marrying his lovely wife Sherley Patterson at the age of nineteen. Her father owned a Radio Station in San Francisco that aired shows for China Town, the Black, Italian, Hispanic and Greek communities. Bott was hired to sell advertising for 20% commission plus room and board at his in-laws home. He made friends with ethnic groups throughout San Francisco as well as the national and local advertisers.

After becoming successful at selling advertising for his father-in-law’s radio station, Bott told Sherley he wanted to buy his own station. They sold their home to buy a station and moved back in with Sherley’s parents where she had their third child. Friends wondered how they could give up their home and furniture. “When the vision is big, the sacrifice seems small,” said Bott. They bought a station in Salinas/Monterey, California putting \$5000 down and taking on three mortgages. He hired an announcer who played Big Band music, mixed with the weather and a little news. “I already had the contacts so selling ads was not difficult,” Bott recalls. “We never missed a payment and were able to pay off the loan on the station in 3 1/2 years.” After the station was paid for, Bott began to think there had to be a greater purpose for his life. He wanted to make a difference. “The radio station we were running was profitable, but it wasn’t satisfying. It wasn’t making a difference in the lives of people. I told Sherley that I wanted to have a Christian radio station.”

There were stations for the Black, Hispanic, Chinese and Italian communities. Why not have a radio station for the Christian community? In the 50’s and early 60’s there were a few Christian radio stations, but none that were fully commercial and offered only Christian programming. “Whatever we do,” Bott told his wife Shirley, “the programs on our station must be totally trustworthy and have financial integrity.”

After they sold the station in Salinas/Monterey, California at a good profit, Bott looked for a market that had at least a million people to start a Christian station. There had to be a million people to make it worthwhile with at least 50,000 listeners. He wasn’t concerned where it was as long as there was a market of a million people. A Country/Western station was for sale in Independence, MO which covered the whole Kansas City metropolitan area. The owner had died and Bott purchased it from the estate. The station was at the Blue Ridge Mall so the family stayed at the U-smile Inn on 40 Highway until they could find a home to rent that would take four children.

Bott hired Bill Freeman as the announcer and on November 12, 1962 there was one minute of silence. Then Bill Freeman announced, “**Ladies and Gentlemen, this is KCCV 1510, Kansas City’s Christian Voice.**” The Billy Graham Crusade Choir sang, “**Oh For A Thousand Tongues to Sing.**” Then the song, “**We Have a Story to Tell to the Nations,**” was played. Tears welled up in Dick Bott’s eyes as he recalled that miraculous day in 1962 when Bott Radio Network first began.

Today Dick Bott, with his son Rich Bott, II along with all the BOTT staff are fulfilling the great commission by doing what Jesus said, “*Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” Matthew 28:16



**This story first appeared in Soul Magazine in spring 2007 and since then the Bott Radio Network has gone from 39 to 81 stations in 14 states. THANK YOU Dick Bott for providing us with inspiration and the greatest Bible teachers in the World today.**