

Voice of Prophecy News

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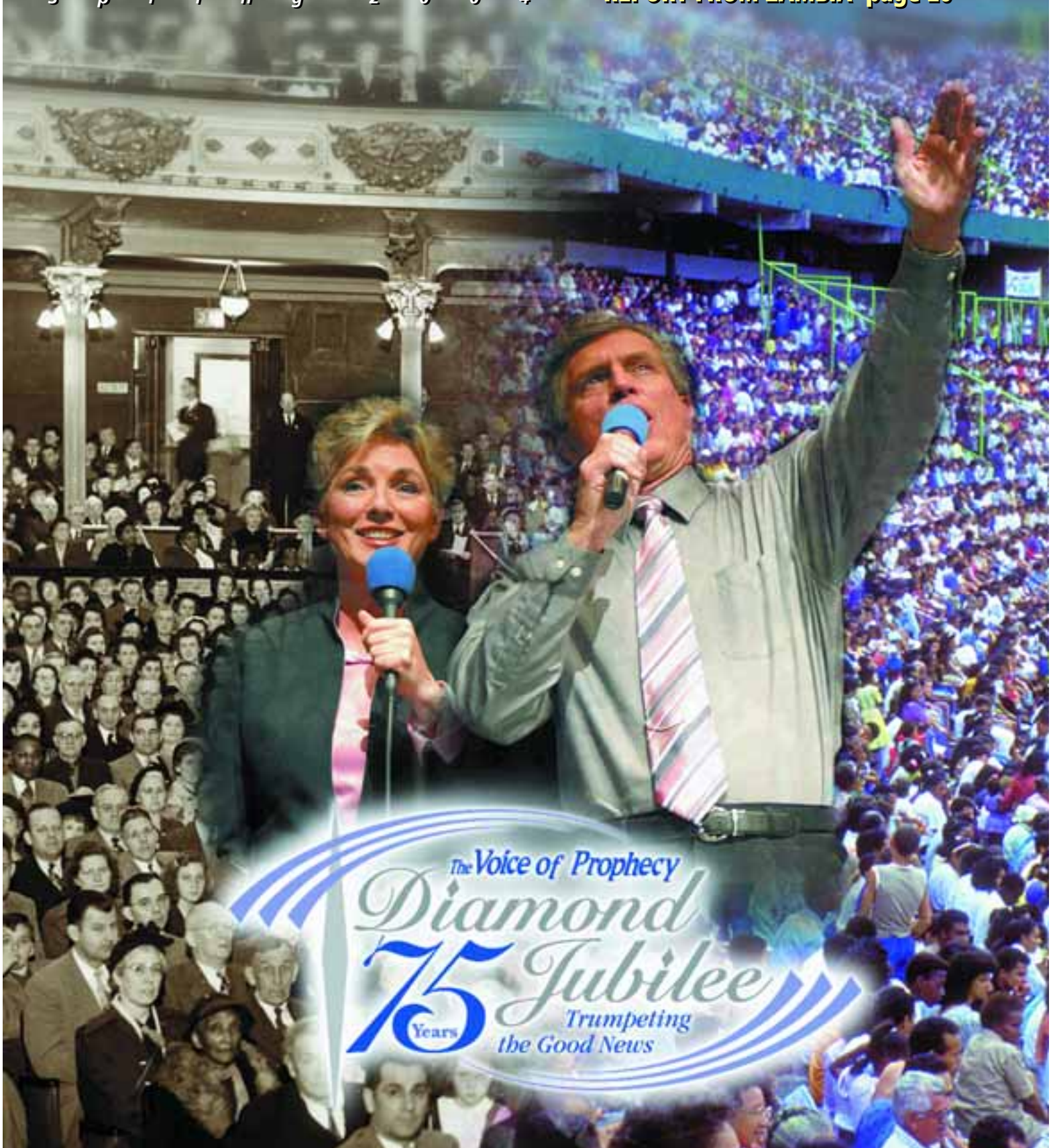
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The Voice of Prophecy
Diamond
75 *Jubilee*
Years *Trumpeting
the Good News*

From Tents to Internet: Building on Evangelistic Heritage

Voice of Prophecy founder H. M. S. Richards decided as a young boy that he would follow in the footsteps of his father and paternal grandfather by devoting his life to preaching the gospel.

He could not have dreamed that he would be among the pioneers of preaching not to hundreds, or perhaps a few thousand, at a time—but to hundreds of thousands. Not to a visible congregation, but to a mass audience he could only imagine.

Born at the Right Time

Richards was born in 1894, the same year that Guglielmo Marconi began trying to send messages through the air without wires. Marconi's work focused on creating a "wireless telegraph." But his first transatlantic message from England to Newfoundland in 1901—three dots for the letter S—set the stage for others to explore ways of using electromagnetic waves to carry voices over long distances.

Following his graduation from Campion Academy in Colorado in 1914, Richards held gospel meetings far up the side of Pike's Peak. He continued to conduct evangelistic series while studying at Columbia Union College in Maryland. After receiving his degree in 1919, he accepted a ministerial assignment to Ottawa, Ontario. A year later, he married Mabel Annabel Eastman.

His introduction to "radio" came in 1920 when then U.S. Senator Warren G. Harding invited him to attend a dramatic demonstration along the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Richards and the other observers were provided headphones. Soon three airplanes flew overhead, and the young preacher-evangelist marveled as each

plane went off in a new direction after the pilots received instructions from a man giving directions through a "microphone."

Later that year, KDKA went on the air in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as the first commercial radio station. By 1926, when H. M. S. and Mabel Richards moved to California, radio was a dynamic communication tool.

Pastor Richards waged gigantic evangelistic campaigns throughout California—especially in the San Joaquin Valley from Bakersfield to Sacramento. He often preached seven nights a week for six months in a single location.

As Richards looked out over the crowds that packed his meetings in tents and wooden tabernacles, he thought, "If only I were on radio, so many more would hear the gospel."

Persistent Dream

In 1929, Los Angeles radio station KNX offered him free time for a daily devotional program. He went on the air October 19, just 10 days before the stock market crash.

He enjoyed giving short talks on radio, but he still wanted to use the new medium for preaching. Those who "knew all about" such things scoffed. It would cost too much. Who would listen? Besides, radio was "the Devil's workshop."

Richards persisted with his dream, though it took a few friends to prod him into taking up the first collection for radio time at his evangelistic meeting in Long Beach a couple of years later. The collection—of old watches, wedding rings, bracelets, even gold teeth—brought \$200, a lot of money at the peak of the Great Depression!

The radio ministry grew, first up the West Coast, then in 1942 across the continent and a year later

into Latin America and Australia. After World War II, expansion was rapid, as high-power stations in Africa, Asia, and Europe were added to the Voice of Prophecy lineup.

Evangelism by radio reached across mountains and deserts, through the barricades that kept missionaries out of many countries, and into hearts and minds.

Never one to believe that the best had already been developed, Richards dreamed of the day when satellites would deliver the gospel directly to homes.

Looking to Future

Richards died in 1980, before the Internet was launched and became yet another way to reach millions—with the advantage that each user can choose when to listen, view, or read the gospel message.

Advances in technology have brought unparalleled potential for global evangelism, but not without a downside.

When Pastor Richards pitched three-pole evangelistic tents, his was the big event in town. With the advent of radio, listeners had dozens of choices. Today, millions of websites compete for an audience. The gospel message has not changed, but more than ever, its presentation must be compelling.

As the Voice of Prophecy moves into its fourth quarter-century, the ministry continues to build on its heritage of evangelism, using present tools while anticipating yet-to-be-developed technology of the future.



Diamond Jubilee Launched

The Voice of Prophecy marks 75 years of radio broadcasting this year with nine Diamond Jubilee celebrations across North America. Most will be held at college and university churches.

Participating with Lonnie and Jeannie Melashenko in the programs of praise are Del Delker, Walter Arties, Kurt Johnson, the Melashenko Family Singers, Connie Vandeman Jeffery, and Adrian Westney.

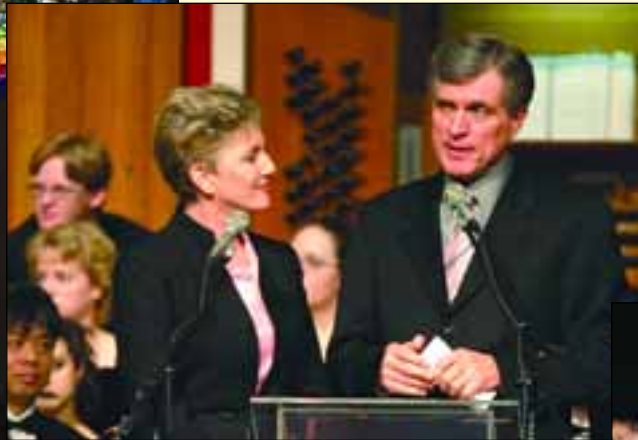
Host campuses are providing

music by choirs, orchestras, and small ensembles. Most locations will also have a children's choir.

Wayne Hooper, who joined the VOP in 1944 as baritone in the King's Heralds, is the emcee for all the events and directs the musicians and congregation on two numbers: the VOP theme, "Lift Up the Trumpet," and his own composition, "We Have This Hope."

For locations and dates, visit www.vop.com/75 on the Internet.

The College View Church on the Union College campus in Lincoln, Nebraska welcomed the VOP's first Diamond Jubilee celebration. The sanctuary is enhanced by large expanses of stained glass, with the vivid colors seen only from inside.



The VOP music team for the Jubilee events includes (clockwise from top) Del Delker, Wayne Hooper, the Melashenko Family Singers, and Walter Arties.



Musicians from the Lincoln area were the Unionnaires, a children's choir, and the Union College Orchestra.



PHOTOS BY STEVE NAZARIO AND HANS OLSON

in Nebraska and Washington



Wayne Hooper and Del Delker share early memories of the Voice of Prophecy. Hooper joined the staff 60 years ago; Del is in her 57th year.



Lonnie Melashenko presents the sermon as well as his vision for the future of the VOP ministry. Kurt Johnson (left) reports on the Discover Bible School's global impact.



Connie Vandeman Jeffery and Adrian Westney are also featured at the programs. Local musicians at the Walla Walla, Washington celebration included the Walla Walla College Choral Union, String Ensemble, and Wind Ensemble, as well as an academy handbell choir.



PHOTOS BY AMANDA GIBSON



RICHARDS LIBRARY MOVES TO LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

H. M. S. Richards, who began the Voice of Prophecy in 1929, loved books. He read voraciously on a wide range of topics—not only theology and homiletics, but also history, biography, literature, poetry, science, geography, politics, archaeology, and art.

He didn't generally borrow books from libraries. He bought his own copies—largely from used book stores—and they became his own personal library, eventually totalling more than 8,000 books.

The library now has a new home at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, where the grand opening ribbon-cutting took place during Alumni Weekend in February. The School of Religion will oversee the collection, which is housed on the lower level of the Commons Building.

"While the library is a valuable heritage of the past," says Dr. John Jones, dean of the School of Religion, "at the same time, it helps us look to the future. The Richards family is to be commended for their vision of the potential resource the library could be in education."

Plans call for a computerized cataloging system. The library will be open many Saturday afternoons for persons who are not part of the university community.

Focus Always on Bible

Following the ribbon-cutting for the library, one of Richards' sons, Kenneth, presented the first annual Richards Lectureship as part of the La Sierra Alumni Weekend. Entitled "Communicate Effectively! Secrets From H. M. S. Richards," the talk focused on his fathers' love for the Bible and its emphasis on the gospel.

"He read the writings of great Christians," said Kenneth Richards, "but his main focus in reading was the Bible. It was the authority for what he preached. In fact it was his only rule of faith and practice . . . , the only basis for establishing his spiritual beliefs and religious practices.

"This is one of the fundamental reasons why his preaching carried

such weight—such power with his listeners. He was skillfully using the Word of God, which is the "sword of the Spirit"—the Book God especially blesses and uses to cut through to not only the intellect, but the conscience and the emotions."

But by also reading widely from books, magazines, and newspapers, Richards could include a variety of quotes, facts, and stories that helped his listeners remember his sermon points. The lecture at La Sierra recalled his preaching style and how he handled the Bible physically. It was a prop to hold people's attention, but it was far more than that to him—it was the Book par excellence.

"In the earlier days of his



Kenneth Richards spoke for the first annual Richards Lectureship.

preaching—in the big-tent and sawdust-trail-days—he was somewhat like a caged lion, pacing back and forth on the platform," said his son. "He would preach with Bible in hand, point at it, hold it up, open it, close it, set it on the pulpit, pick it up again. . . .

"He gestured freely. He would speak in a loud voice, then a little more softly. Sometimes he would speed up his delivery. At other times he'd speak more slowly and emphasize each word. His voice range varied. All in the same sermon."

Kenneth Richards noted that



H. M. S. Richards' daughter, Virginia Cason, cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the new location for his personal library. Also in the front row are Dr. Ella S. Simmons, provost and vice president for academic administration at La Sierra University, and Art Klein, who graduated with H. M. S. Richards Jr. in 1952 at La Sierra. The Class of 1952 made the library project part of their 50th anniversary gift to their alma mater.

his father considered doctrine to be worthless, dead, "and ultimately a waste of a person's time if it's communicated and taught apart from the gospel." Only in that context did even the most important and respected pillars of faith matter.

Quoting From Memory

H. M. S. Richards often quoted lengthy passages of Scripture from memory. His son recalled him preaching a sermon on the loving father and his two sons, in which he recited the 22-verse story in Luke 15, word for word from the King James Version. "Then he proceeded to explain the parable—its special application to the scribes and Pharisees and its revelation of the grace and love of God toward all sinners down through the ages—toward himself and his audience."

Kenneth Richards concluded with a personal note: "When I'm dying I want to hear the voices of those I love, but I also want to hear from the great Book, the ancient Book that is never out-of-date, the Book that forms the foundation of the most meaningful, useful, and effective communication. I want to hear its central message—that Jesus loves me, died for me, forgives me, prepared a place for me, will come again for me.

"I want to be reminded that 'there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing'" (2 Timothy 4:8, NIV).



Celebrating 75 Years of Radio Evangelism



H. M. S. Richards began the Voice of Prophecy broadcast in 1929. H. M. S. Richards Jr. joined his father in 1960 and a few years later added a daily program.

Today, Lonnie Melashenko presents the Third Angel's Message on hundreds of stations and the Internet – sharing the gospel with listeners worldwide every day, everywhere. Bible courses and evangelistic meetings complement the programs.

Plan now to participate in a Diamond Jubilee Rally. Discover the Voice of Prophecy's bold new vision for taking the end-time message to millions across North America and beyond. You'll enjoy:

- Inspiring music
- Thrilling reports of lives changed
- Dynamic preaching by Lonnie Melashenko

Further information: www.vop.com/75



Del Delker



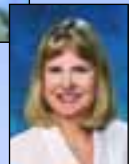
Walter Arties



Adrian Westney



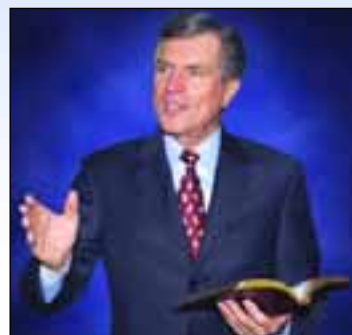
Melashenko Family Singers



Connie Vandeman Jeffery



Orchestras, choirs, and ensembles



Lonnie Melashenko



Jeannie Melashenko



Kurt Johnson

Aug. 14	Carmichael Adventist Church, Sacramento, California
Aug. 21	Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee
Oct. 9	Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, California
Oct. 23	Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan
Nov. 13	Takoma Park Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland
TBA	Kingsway College, Oshawa, Ontario