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Connection SDMMI

ROOTED...GROWING...FRUITFUL

Instant Fruit

by Dr. Robert Broadbooks

Instant Fruit. It was an oxymoron that caught my attention—after all, “instant” and “fruit” seem incongruous. But there is a company in Vermont that advertises an “Instant Fruit Grove.” For \$250 you can buy an 8-foot-tall fruit tree with a 1-inch thick trunk, which the company claims will bear fruit after a year. After reading the disclaimers noted by asterisks, I realized their fruit wasn’t instant at all: *“Labor and materials can cost more if we encounter challenging digging or planting conditions.”*



I wish it were as easy as the word “instant” implies, but delicious and beautiful fruit is never quick or easy. Neither is making Christlike disciples. For both pastors and lay leaders, the following are good truths to remember:

- Quick programs never take the place of quality transformations. The best disciples, like the best fruit, grow slowly, with careful tending. It takes time and intentional care over years for disciples to mature. Like a young tree, a young disciple must grow deep into the habits of holiness before flourishing and growing “fruit that will last.”
- Kingdom fruit is more pleasing to our Father when we carefully and prayerfully wait on His timing. The best disciples are prepared and motivated by God’s call at God’s time. Kingdom fruit at its best is a partnership between our intentional preparation and the Holy Spirit’s calling.
- Biblical history reveals there is great hope and opportunity in adversity. Maybe today’s Kingdom fruit will last longer because it grows in the secularized wind and chill of the 21st century. Peaches from the Western Slope of Colorado taste sweeter than many other peaches because of the thin air, the chilly nights, and the sun-drenched days. Could it be the current harsh cultural climate will yield Kingdom fruit that is stronger and better than before?

Pastor and lay leader, take heart; you are doing better than you think if you are prayerfully planting seeds, adding water, and tending Kingdom fruit. Remember the words of the great disciple and disciplinemaker Paul in Galatians 6:9, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

There may be no instant fruit groves, but God has provided a tried and true path to fruitfulness – intentional and persistent discipling.

Pleased with the prospects,

Bob Broadbooks

Regional Director, USA/Canada Church of the Nazarene

A Lifelong Legacy: The Rewards of a Christ-Centered Marriage

by Dr. David and Lisa Frisbie

“Marriage should be honored by all...” advises the Scripture (Hebrews 13:4, NIV), and the lifelong commitment of a husband and a wife should be celebrated. When we witness a marriage that honors Christ – a union in which both parties love God and each other – we smile, and we find ourselves praising God for His goodness.

Some years ago we attended the 50th wedding anniversary of Fred and Verna Beffa of Rice Lake, Wisconsin – a second marriage for Verna. It was a blessing to help celebrate a remarriage that had “gone the distance” and established a legacy of love. With friends and family gathered near, both Fred and Verna gave powerful testimonies to the benefits of dedicating your life – and your marriage – to Jesus Christ.

Arthur and Mattie Uphaus of Spring Hill, Kansas, were a shining testimony to the lifelong blessings of a committed union. An original marriage, these two loved God and loved each other with contagious optimism and infectious joy. She sweetly called him her “sugar man” with a relaxed, unselfconscious joy. He held her with such tenderness that even a casual observer noticed his selfless, other-focused love. These two were a poster couple for the blessings of honoring God and staying together for life. They also anchored – as dedicated lay leaders – a small town Nazarene congregation that grew to become College Church of the Nazarene in Olathe, Kansas.

When you witness a marriage that honors God, you pay attention. Whether the couple in question serves in a missions or ministry setting or blesses the local church by teaching a Sunday School class or singing in the choir – the power of their example helps the entire congregation follow God’s pattern and design for marriage.



Ray and Wilma Bridges of Chattanooga, Tennessee were just such a couple. Ray served as pastor to a series of “troubled” congregations – brought in by district superintendents to bring peace, reconciliation, and health. When the conflict in the congregation had been changed to joy and celebration – Ray and Wilma moved on to the next difficult place, and began making peace in a new setting. Their powerful ministry of peace-making was enabled by their strong love for God and for each other. They laughed at each other’s jokes, finished each other’s stories, and always admired each other – genuinely and graciously. Everyone who knew them wanted a marriage like theirs – and countless young couples followed their example. These two modeled joyous, Christ-focused, unselfish love.

Well along in years and staying at a hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, the couple was surprised by a hotel and its employees. When the front desk staff at the Hyatt Regency discovered this was a 60th anniversary for these two “newlyweds,” the manager comped their stay – their entire time at the hotel was free of charge. It was hard to tell who was happier, the joyous guests or the staff who surprised them with this gift.

When you know a couple like these, you can’t help but realize the benefits of staying together, keeping Christ at the center of your marriage, and going the distance. Couples like these remind us that, indeed, “marriage should be honored by all.”

David and Lisa Frisbie serve as executive directors of The Center for Marriage & Family Studies. They are the authors of 26 books and more than 200 published articles on topics of marriage, parenting, and family life. Their recent titles from NPH include *Right from the Start*, a handbook for dating and engaged couples, plus a large-format companion book for pastors and counselors.

A Lifetime of Growing in Prayer by Tim Truesdale

“Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away” (Genesis 5:24, NIV).

One of the greatest opportunities we have through maturity in Christ is to grow into deeper and richer places in a lifestyle of prayer. As we age, doors to some ministries become less accessible – and perhaps even less appealing. Living in constant communion with God through prayer is one of the great rewards available to us; and it seems to grow sweeter as our relationship with Him ages.

When world famous cellist Pablo Casals (then age 93) was asked why he continued to practice his instrument three hours a day, he replied, “I’m beginning to notice some improvement.” One would hope that he was motivated by something far beyond “performance” but was simply drawn to the beauty inherent in the music.

Oh, to live beyond growing in prayer as a means to an end. To recognize that the greatest joy in the life of the disciple is the hot pursuit of the Master – through the deserts, storms, crowds, and especially into the secret places of prayerful solitude.

Here’s a challenging question: How are you investing in growing your prayer life? You are rooted in Christ. You have had great coaching and mentoring in the faith. Your hands-on involvement in vocational or lay ministry may be growing, steady, or winding down. Regardless the roles you handle in your church and family, your position in God’s presence through prayer is always open for promotion.

The joy of present togetherness with God doesn’t take away from any fruit in the lives of others that grows out of our time sitting before Him. My great-grandmother was a poor Mennonite immigrant farm girl in South Dakota. Katherine Thomas Jantz never really learned English, and her most important job as a child was keeping the goats off the roof of their “soddie”—a family shelter dug out of a hillside.

But Great-Grandmother Jantz was a prayer warrior. In a very public way, she prayed for God to send missionaries to Africa, starting with her children. And diaries of friends show that she

prayed through the traditional Mennonite services, out loud, pretty much the whole time.

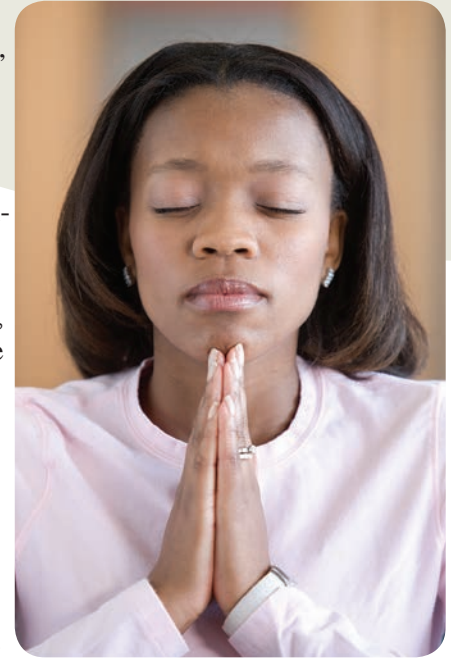
As a young mother of six, she was struck with debilitating arthritis in her 40’s. This prevented her from working, first on the farm, and then in the house. She ultimately had to move to a nursing home for constant care.

If the enemy was trying to use this disease to shut her up, this was a terrible miscalculation. Because the very arthritis that took her out of the farm and routine family life put her right into a personal 24/7 prayer sanctuary at the nursing home! Her suffering was great. But her prayer life was greater.

As fruit of her life, she saw five of her six children in full-time Christian service. Four of them served for years in Africa. And grandchildren and great-grandchildren and their families have directly touched hundreds of thousands of lives in dozens of nations around the world.

Christ says that when we abide in the vine, we will bear much fruit. In a fallen world, this “abiding” requires daily maintenance in prayer. Jesus spent vast amounts of precious time sitting with the Father just staying in “sync,” and He was fully God in addition to being fully man. How much more would we benefit from a commitment to growing in prayer until the very last day that God sees fit for us to be on the earth—whether or not He chooses to snatch us up like Enoch.

Tim Truesdale is a husband, father of four, and nationally recognized leader of Men’s Ministry.



SDMI Connection Is Going Online!

This is your last printed edition!

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The newsletter will still be available on our website. You will be notified when it is ready to view.

A Tribute to a Faithful and Fruitful Servant

by Rev. Larry R. Morris

If Annabelle Ward Phillips were a tree, she would be a giant sequoia. Her branches reach across many generations, and the fruit of her ministry has helped transform hundreds of lives.

Annabelle made the most of her life by giving herself to Christ when she was only eight years old. Her passion for the Lord led her to teaching Sunday School by age eighteen, a ministry she's continued for more than 70 years. Now 90 years old, she reflects on teaching Sunday School as one of her greatest joys.

Teaching, for Annabelle, has been both a gift and a passion that was recognized by many educational and professional institutions, including "Personalities of the South - America's Leaders" in 1970, Who's Who of Women in 1973 and 1977-78, and Alumna of the Year at Trevecca Nazarene University. She served as a public school teacher and principal while continuing to care for family and ministering as a pastor's wife.



Annabelle's life has always been guided by her love for the Lord. That love guided her to marrying Reverend Ed Phillips on January 7, 1949. She and Rev. Phillips became missionaries to Hawaii, serving at the Kamakei Church of the Nazarene while she taught school at Kamakei Elementary School.

One of Annabelle's greatest joys is as a mother and grandmother. She is the mother of one daughter, Twyla Phillips Johnson, and she has two granddaughters and four great-grandchildren. One of her granddaughters, Rachel Purvis, writes:

"My grandmother has impacted my life in several ways. First was her desire and love for teaching. I have wanted to be a teacher since I was a little girl, and she began telling me early about love and patience with children. Another way is her prayer life. She is truly an example of a praying mother, wife, and grandmother. Her patience, unconditional love, and selfless attitude are examples to live by. I love and appreciate her so much, and I am truly grateful for such an amazing woman to be my Nana!"

Annabelle's godly influence extended to her neighborhood. One neighbor writes:

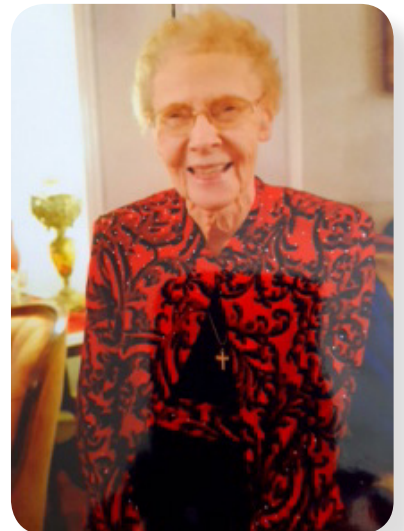
"I moved next to Annabelle and Ed in 1997. They were wonderful neighbors; but more than that, they were friends in the truest sense of the word. Annabelle showed me how someone lives the way God expects us to. She is one of the best friends I have ever been blessed to have, and I thank God for the opportunity to know her and Ed. They both touched my life in a way very few people have. I love both more than words can express."

Age has not slowed down Annabelle's passion for serving God and the Church. Her former pastor, H. Lamar Smith, writes:

"Annabelle Phillips has been a faithful servant of Christ and the Church for all of her adult life. I knew her for almost ten years as her pastor at Mobile First Church of the Nazarene. She was a treasured friend and a faithful supporter of the church and her pastor. She was faithful in every assignment. Her (Sunday School) lessons were well prepared. Her sweetness and demeanor have endeared her to hundreds of friends across the years."

What is Annabelle's secret, her advice to the next generation? She advises, "Be willing to do whatever God asks you to do – including teaching Sunday School! Befriend others, get to know them, and win them to the Lord."

In every forest there is a tree that stands taller than the rest. It is a landmark for all travelers, giving perspective and guiding them to their destination. Annabelle Ward Phillips is that tree. May God bless her life and her legacy.



Larry Morris is the SDMI USA/Canada Regional Coordinator.

The Fruit of Slavery

by Rodney Kilgore

Costco can't be making any money on their fruit. I've worked out the numbers and they just don't add up. I routinely check the prices between Costco and other local grocery stores on produce items. It's not even close. Even the bargain grocery stores - they're just not playing in the same league.

For instance, I can pay \$3 for a handful of about 13 shriveled, anemic blueberries at ...we'll call it "Fare-4-Fewer"; or, I can pay \$3.50 for a 50-gallon drum of the most plump, juicy, so-that's-what-Joshua-and-Caleb-found-in-Canaan blueberries at Costco. I'm certain that Costco's fruit sales are a front for some sort of illegal mob activity. It's the only way they can offer these kind of deals!

"... born out in practice, too often our fruit looks like the bargain grocery store variety: shriveled, anemic, and too few to satisfy. Our love looks like favoritism. Our joy looks like moodiness."

I'm reminded of Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Standing in contrast to the preceding works of the flesh, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control" offer a beautiful and refreshing picture of the life of the Spirit-led believer - a picture which all of us should be seeking to cultivate.

However, born out in practice, too often our fruit looks like the bargain grocery store variety: shriveled, anemic, and too few to satisfy. Our love looks like favoritism. Our joy looks like moodiness. Further, we seem prone to waffle back and forth between fruit of the Spirit and works of the flesh. Why is this? What keeps us from living victorious lives full of spiritual fruit? Perhaps Romans 6 can give us a little perspective.

"For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life" (Romans 6:20-22, NASB).

At first glance, this doesn't seem to have much in common with Galatians 5. One speaks of the fruit of the Spirit, the other of choosing slavery to God or the world. However, noting the Greek, we find that what is translated as "benefit" in Romans 6 is the same word Paul uses for "fruit" in Galatians 5: καρπός (karpos). There appears to be a connection between our slavery to God and our ability to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Today we tend to have a strong aversion to using slavery terms to describe the Christian life. Even the Greek term for slave is almost never translated as "slave" in most English Bibles, but rather as "servant" or "bond-servant." This is certainly understandable. Western society has a long, sordid history with race-based slavery. Its enduring assault on both individual and corporate identity, dignity, and livelihood has been especially appalling.

For the Apostle Paul, however, slavery was not only a regular part of life (scholars estimate slaves made up 10% - 30% of the population in the Roman empire in the first century A.D.), but he used slavery terminology liberally to describe both himself and the rightly-lived Christian life. He regularly labels himself a slave of Christ Jesus and often calls believers to live in "slavery" to Christ. And it is this slavery which aids our understanding of allowing the Spirit to produce His fruit.

First, slaves had virtually no rights. Whether they were captured in battle, born into slavery, or voluntarily sold themselves into it, slaves were generally regarded as property. Their will was permanently superseded by the will of their Masters. In like manner, we who live in a society predicated upon the rights of the individual must always remember that, as Christians, any "rights" to freedom, comfort, dignity, security, or even life must always be subordinate to our Master's call.

Second, the purpose of the slave was to do the bidding of the master. To know the master's intent and execute it to the best of one's ability was the slave's highest calling. The same is true for us. While knowledge, physical prowess, business savvy, or artistic creativity can be tremendous tools for God's use, they are largely powerless unless we are constantly in tune with the mind of Christ. If I am called to wash the feet of my enemy or give a kind word to a stranger, no amount of teaching, leading, fundraising, or singing will ever replace that.

When I have subsumed my identity in God - when I have vacated any claim to rights or reputation - when I have allowed my will to be bent to the will of my Master, I am in the perfect position to bear the fruit of His Spirit. And, that fruit will be attractive, delicious, and nourishing to everyone who comes in contact. It will be the true fruit of the Spirit.

Rodney Kilgore is the *Communication Assistant, Southern California District.*



Making Peace with Tough Scripture

by Dr. Don Walter

There are some passages of scripture I have struggled with over the years. Age and maturity (not always the same thing) as well as continued study have helped me make peace with most of them.

But the truth of one of those scriptures was recently provided some new light. A personal experience with a family member opened my eyes and reinforced the importance of early childhood and adolescent discipleship.

Some months ago a member of my family was facing declining health. The hospitalization which followed left physicians challenged for solutions. We were forced to face the reality that medical resources had been exhausted.

My sister, who was especially close to this family member, found time to be alone with her and inquire about her spiritual condition. Though in recent years evidence of faith had reemerged, there had been periods of life that appeared to be a departure from faith. As the two of them shared in that most significant conversation, our relative confessed to a strong faith. In particular, she pointed to the early teachings she'd had as a child in the church and in a Christian home. She credited the renewal of her faith late in life to the foundations laid in those early years. And she was at peace.

I have to admit that I have struggled at times with the passage from Proverbs 22:6, which reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." I have seen evidence in life which appears to be contrary to that testimony. But on that day in a hospital waiting room, as I listened to the testimony of my sister, I found new insight.

I was reminded that the verse didn't say that a child trained in the faith will never depart from the faith. It simply reminds us of the

power of early training when the last moments of life are being faced in old age.

The early training can become the connection point for the loving Father who is at the threshold of life, beckoning us to come home.

That experience also helped me understand something a friend of mine has often shared. She ministers to senior adults in nursing facilities, and part of her ministry includes playing the piano for them. The song most requested by those she is visiting is "Jesus Loves Me." She has noted that even those in the room who often appear least aware of their surroundings respond with gestures and facial cues to the words and music of this beloved children's song.

We must, therefore, never underestimate the influence of ministry to children and early adolescents. And we shouldn't become discouraged when every step of their lives doesn't follow our teaching. Seeds have been planted. In all likelihood, we may never live long enough to see the full fruit of our work with the Christian formation of children. But God is faithful. His truth remains when all else fades. Keep teaching, loving, praying, and modeling the faith for those who follow. It will bear fruit.

Don Walter is Director of Pensions and Benefits USA.



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Producing Good Fruit by Kathy Lewis



Fruitful (adj.): “producing good results...”

Is there any greater example of fruitfulness than that of watching another person grow into a meaningful relationship with Christ? Of watching that person blossom under the truth of Jesus’ love?

In 2014 (the latest year for which national statistics are available), there were 415,129 children in foster care. Thirty-nine percent were 5 years old and younger. Another 45% were between the ages of 6 and 15. Fifty-two percent were male, and 48% (199,262) were female.* While foster care statistics are alarming, most of us know at least one foster parent making a difference in a child’s spiritual growth. Here’s the story of one of those 199,262 little girls...

Barbara, a foster mom from Florida, began fostering Sarah (*name changed*) when she was just eight years old. The first eight years of Sarah’s life had been a heartbreaking and spirit-damaging journey. Barbara prayed that God would help her find a church where Sarah would leave each week feeling loved, happy, and thirsty to learn more about Jesus. Barbara, who is 71 years old, also prayed that God would help her find other Christian role models who would take an interest in Sarah. Enter Mr. Sam and Ms. Betty from a nearby Church of the Nazarene in her city.

Over the two years that Barbara fostered Sarah, Sam and Betty became “live angels” who loved and cared for this little girl, taking her to their church for children’s services each week and for participation in Christmas plays and other children’s activities. When Sarah left Barbara’s home two years ago to live with her father, Sam helped find a church where Sarah’s father lives and a pastor who would volunteer to pick her up for church each week. Even now Barbara’s church family continues to nurture this child’s Christian growth. They provide funds to fly her back to Barbara’s each summer so she can spend a few weeks under her loving care, attend summer camp, and receive the transforming message of God’s unconditional love.

When asked what she wants for Sarah, who is now 12, Barbara replied, “I want her to be blessed. I want her to have a higher education to bless others. I want her to not lose her faith. I want her to be valued.”

What does Sarah want? She recently told Barbara that she wants to be a missionary teacher. And that, dear friends, is how you help lead a child to Jesus, producing not just “good” results but life-changing ones.

* Latest statistics from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Children’s Bureau, an office of the Administration for Children and Families

Kathy Lewis is the SDMI USA/Canada Region Communications Coordinator.

UPCOMING EVENTS...



Engage the Word, *Nazarene Essentials*, Sept.-Dec, 2016
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PrimeTime Ministries, primetimeusacanada.org
PrimeTime Minot, September 27-29, Minot, North Dakota
Jubilee in the Sun, Western Caribbean Cruise, January 9-14, 2017
Jamaica Journey 3, Work and Witness Trip, February 8-22, 2017



SDMI General Convention, Indianapolis (Indiana) Convention Center
June 21-23, 2017
ga2017.com/sdmi

Children Becoming Fruitful by Rev. Leslie Hart



As the 2015-2016 Bible Quizzing season was coming to a close, I asked our district directors to invite families to share how the Lord has helped them grow through the benefits of this Bible study. Here are two awesome stories from sisters, Anna and Katie, that illustrate the fruit of being rooted in God's Word and growing through Children's Bible Quizzing.

Quizzing Testimony from Anna

Six-year-old Anna was in her first year of Children's Bible Quizzing, and the study was on Joshua-Judges-Ruth. Anna loved Bible quizzing and learning the memory verses. One Saturday Anna, her older sister Katie, their parents, and a family friend were hiking in the Arizona desert heading toward Native American ruins. Anna was excited and had been anticipating the adventure. As the hike began Katie, felt tentative about the adventure. She reluctantly crossed through a horse pasture on her dad's shoulders. Once through the pasture, our story turns toward Bible quizzing. Katie, still feeling tentative, asked the question "Are there wild animals out here?" The family friend, being a man of God, felt the truth was the best option. He answered, "Yes, do you want to see the tracks?"

Katie stopped walking and refused to go any further, Anna, knowing that her adventure to the Native American ruins was on the verge of being cancelled, decided to take the matter into her own hands. With all her six-year-old might, Anna turned around, looked her sister directly in the eye, and quoted Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

This did the trick. Katie could not combat the Word of God, so she continued on the journey. They made it to the ruins and found an aquatic turtle walking in a dry desert wash. Anna, to this day six years later, still cares for the aquatic turtle, remembering the day when the Word of God led her on a great adventure.

Quizzing Testimony from Katie (presently a teenager)

When Katie was eight years old, she began children's Bible quizzing. After her first year, the quizzing program was beginning to grow; it was time to recruit new volunteers. One of the volunteers was Mr. H. At the time Mr. H was 80 years old and had never worked with children. His wife was the one who told him, you can do this. During the next three years, Mr. H coached Katie each week in her lessons and attended Bible quiz invitational competitions with her and the rest of the church team.

Katie has now moved up to teen Bible quizzing. However the relationship she built with Mr. H is still in place. Each Sunday he comes to the teen area to find Katie. He checks in with her and discusses how she is doing in life and in Bible quizzing. He is a huge supporter of Katie and all she does. This relationship has fostered in both Mr. H and Katie a sense of community and a bond that transcends age. This would not have happened had Bible quizzing not been a part of both of their lives.

The Lord is using the study of His Word through Children's Bible Quizzing to change the lives of children and adults alike. Faithful parents, coaches, and teachers are working together and building the kingdom. With God's help your efforts are bearing fruit in the lives of our children!

Leslie Hart is the USA/Canada Children's Ministries Coordinator.

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17001 Prairie Star Pkwy
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FAX: 913-577-0866
Email: sdmi@nazarene.org
Website: sdmiusacanada.org