



What's Next Roundtable – Networking

Ron Glosser: *The Genealogy of Friendship* – Preface Excerpt

“During recent years many of my friends have commented that I seem to have one of the world’s greatest networks, but the truth is that I have some of the world’s greatest friends. Through the generosity of these individuals, I have come to meet and know so many people that a large network is a natural result. However great my network may seem, though, it is really only a testament to the quality of my friends. They have shared from their abundance and have given me the opportunity to discover new individuals I cherish and – in turn – share with others. I am so blessed.

Friendships are a gift from God, and as such, can be expanded and deepened by sharing them with others. One of the greatest joys I have is sharing my friends with new friends, and watching where God takes their relationship. When I do this, I’m always reminded that while I happy to be of use to friends and to share my life with them, these relationships are not what make me happy. It is God who makes me happy, and in turn, enhances these friendships. How great is that!

If I could give you any advice, it would be to take every opportunity to step up and be helpful to others. As a very wise person said, “Try giving yourself away.” ... If we can master this process of losing ourselves in helping others, we may very well have found one of life’s greatest secrets.

I now see how important it was that others shared their friends with me – I would not be where I am without their thoughtfulness.”

From Ron Glosser's book *The Genealogy of Friendship*

Chapter 21: *Fred Smith*

I often tell people that Fred Smith is the wisest man I have ever known. He had a high school diploma but was a lifelong learner. He took every opportunity to deepen his understanding on any topic he was called upon to discuss.

Fred's background is most unusual. He served as director of human resources for Genesco in Nashville, Tennessee, a company with over 150,000 employees. He moved on to become vice president of Gruen Watch Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. Later Fred formed his own management consulting company specializing in labor relations, general management and marketing. He served on President Johnson's Medical Manpower Board, was a member of the National Labor Relations Mediation Board, and performed a host of other services for our country. He was especially interested in Christian causes and chaired International Youth for Christ and *Christianity Today* to name just a few.

Fred's speaking career covered over 60 years. He spoke in all 50 states and many foreign countries to both business and Christian audiences. People learned a long time ago that an hour with Fred was a cherished experience not to be missed. He was a mentor to some high powered people including Zig Ziglar, Steve Brown, Bill Glass, John Maxwell, and Ramesh Richard. People constantly sought his advice and counsel.

His articles and speeches impacted people around the world. He was the recipient of the Life Worth Living Award from the Crystal Cathedral, the Roaring Lambs Award in Dallas, the Norman Vincent and Ruth Stafford Peale Humanitarian Award and scores of others. He was a worthy recipient. Fred's greatest joy came not from awards but in helping people.

My friendship with Fred is another good example of the genealogy of friendship. Our relationship began thanks to a Labor Management Prayer Breakfast I helped establish in Akron. This experience is outlined in a previous chapter of this book. The prayer breakfasts continued after my move to Hershey in March 1989. One day I had a call from my good friend, John Rasnick, who continued the prayer breakfasts following my move. He told me about the latest breakfast and the outstanding speaker, Fred Smith of Dallas, Texas. He also sent me a book by Fred, *You and Your Network*.

I was so inspired by what I read and heard that I invited Fred to Hershey for our annual prayer breakfast. In the letter of invitation I wrote, "Next September will mark the 100th anniversary of the first chocolate bar by Milton Hershey. We are planning a series of events in our community, including a Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, September 17, 1994. I hope very much that your schedule will permit you to come and be our featured speaker. We would also be grateful if you would speak to the students at Milton Hershey School at the Sunday morning worship service." Fred accepted our invitation and spent three days with Lily and me at our home. We enjoyed every moment of our time together. I didn't fully realize then just how important his counsel would be. Late in 1995 I decided to take an early retirement from Hershey Trust. There was no one I counseled with more than Fred. I am convinced that God brought Fred Smith into my life at exactly the right time for a very special reason. To have been in his presence on numerous occasions has been one of God's greatest gifts to me.

Fred was always ready to offer me advice, but only when I asked for it. In a letter after our visit, he recommended several individuals whom I should contact for their counsel. These individuals had faced similar moments of uncertainty, and Fred felt they would be good advisors. And they really were. Fred's

encouragement created in me a desire to be a better man and to become all that God intended me to be.

In between personal visits Fred was constantly stretching me by sending wonderful articles. "I'm sending you a copy of my latest article in *Leadership*. You don't need to read about critics for you don't have any," he said in his accompanying note. At that time I had many critics, and I learned much from Fred's experiences. In his article Fred states: "Having been the head of several organizations, I've had my share of critics. So when *Leadership* asked me to write about the care and feeding of critics, one word came to mind: arsenic." After this witty banter, he added, "Then, I remembered three occasions when I had three friends who cared enough to confront me. At the moment their criticism stung, but it has been a blessing for a lifetime. Criticism properly given and properly received accounts for much of the progress in a person or an organization." Fred was a man of wisdom but also with a great sense of humor. He always encouraged me to ride loose in the saddle.

Some years earlier Fred had received the Lawrence A. Appley Award from the American Management Association, an honor he treasured very much. Based on my friendship with both men, I forwarded Larry's book *Personal Enrichment* to Fred. He was very appreciative of the book, and impressed by Larry's insights. For me to have both Larry Appley and Fred Smith in my life is one of God's greatest gifts and ample evidence of the genealogy of friendship. Before I ever knew Fred, this relationship had been established by God.

Fred often referred to me as the man with the best network. I ran a distant second to Fred. He always focused on the significance of networks and sharing one's friends. Fred gave me an incredible gift by letting me become part of his network. It is my pleasure to know those most involved in his network including: Dr. Ramesh Richard, a global proclamation leader; Zig Ziglar, an internationally known motivator; Seth Macon, an insurance executive from Greensboro; Ed Yates, a Dallas lawyer and businessman; Steve Brown, a professor, author, radio teacher, and great communicator; and Charles "Tremendous" Jones, a well-known author and speaker. Fred's sharing of his friends with me is a gift that continues to give me great joy.

Fred's Family

Fred's friendship was a double blessing, since through him I became acquainted with his daughter, Brenda. We exchanged several e-mails during the course of building a website for BreakfastWithFred.com. This site features the thoughts and wisdom of Fred. I cherish Brenda's ideas, optimism, and encouragement at all times.

Fred developed serious health problems and was hospitalized numerous times and the doctors gave him little chance of surviving. In April 2004, Brenda informed me of his current situation. "Our family is asking that you pray for his comfort and peace. We know that his time is truly in God's hands and we are asking for a peaceful step from earth to heaven." So positive even in the face of such pain!

During that time, Fred had been in a coma for several days. I was home one afternoon and the phone rang; it was Brenda calling from his hospital room. She said, "Dad wants to talk with you." It was an unbelievable moment for me for I thought that I would never have the opportunity to speak with him again. This made me so aware of what a great God we have. The doctors were wrong for Fred recovered and lived another three years.

The prayers of the righteous around the world were answered. Jack Dodge, a dear friend of many of us, came from Canada to be with Brenda and to assist the family.

When you think about Fred you need also to think about his wife, Mary Alice. Brenda, in a note of August 21, 2004-, wrote, "Sometimes it is easy to lose sight there are two running this race. Mom has been Dad's 67-year-marathon partner. If they awarded medals for endurance, Mom would surely take the gold." It was such an accurate observation. Mary Alice had serious health problems, but was a constant support for Fred through all his activities.

I had the opportunity to visit Fred and Mary Alice on several occasions at their home. They lived with their daughter, Brenda. During each visit Brenda, a very accomplished pianist, and I would do several songs for Fred and Mary Alice. They loved the old hymns and many others, including "The Holy City" and "I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked." On one visit both Fred and Mary Alice were in hospital beds side by side being lovingly cared for by Brenda and a caregiver. On one occasion Fred shared with me the 7C's of a good marriage including: Constant compromise, Commitment, and Courtship. This is a good way to think about what constitutes a good marriage.

God bless Brenda for reaching out to her parents and bringing them into her home. You would greatly benefit from reading about this experience in Brenda's book *Divine Confinement*. On another occasion Brenda arranged for a number of us, including Charlie "Tremendous" Jones, Jack Dodge, and Gary Kinder to come to their home. After supper we gathered in the living room and Fred joined us in his wheelchair and participated fully in an hour of wonderful fellowship. He lived every day of his life to the fullest.

Treasured Memories

As you have learned by now, I enjoy sharing my friends with other friends. Thanks to our friendship, I introduced Fred to the leadership of *Guideposts*. His insights sharpened their mission.

For many years, I attended the Men's Conference at the Crystal Cathedral and suggested to Bob Cavinder, director of Men's Ministry, that Fred would be a marvelous speaker. Fred spoke at the Crystal Cathedral in April 2000 on the topic, "A Life Worth Living." My good friend, Higgins Bailey, who was with me had this to say about Fred: "If wisdom can be perceived as a barren plain, Fred is a mountain; a gem on an otherwise bleak desert. I had known him only for three short days but joined him as a brother in Christ's family as if from the beginning of our lives." What a tribute from Hig, and a view shared by men all over the world who were inspired by Fred's insights and wisdom.

Still later Fred and his son, Fred Jr., returned to the Crystal Cathedral. One of the stories Fred shared that evening concerned his son, Fred Jr. Several years earlier his son came to him and suggested they go to London. Fred inquired, "Why do you want to do that?" and Fred Jr. replied "I will tell you when we get there." Fred Sr. jokingly asked, "And who will pay for this?" Fred Jr. replied "That will be determined later based on value received." Father and son went to London and after they were squared away in their hotel room Fred said, "Now what is this all about?" To which Fred Jr. replied, "I have decided that I can't fully know myself until I know you. What I would like you to do, Dad, during these next several days is to share with me all the important friendships you have had. I want to know the lessons learned from these men and women." That was quite a request, but Fred Sr. did just that, sometimes taking an entire day to discuss an individual such as Maxey Jarman. Fred Jr. always closed each session by asking, "Dad, how did they finish?"

This approach would do much to improve relationships among all families. The same could be said for knowing more about our Heavenly Father. When we know God better we know ourselves better. What an impact both father and son had on several young men at the conference including Bob Cavinder, Dan Williams, Cliff Shiepe.

Fred Smith Jr. lives a very interesting and productive life. He has been president and CEO for the last twenty years of The Gathering, an international association of individuals, families, and Foundations researching and giving to Christian causes around the world.

During this period I was active with *Guideposts*, and served as vice chairman of the board and chairman of the National Advisory Committee. Fred spoke at a number of our conference in Dallas, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Naples, Florida, and New York City. In the fall of 1994, Fred, Zig Ziglar, Charlie “Tremendous” Jones, and Peter Daniels joined us in Dallas for the Peale Conference. This was several months after the death of Dr. Peale. At the opening session I asked each man to share experiences they had with Norman and to tell how Dr. Peale’s life had impacted theirs. It was an inspiring evening. After each presentation Richard Farmer sang an original song that he had composed as each of the four was speaking. An evening I will never forget.

Later, Eric Fellman, president of the Peale Center for Christian Living, and I spent a day with Fred in Dallas. Our discussions were on ways of making *Guideposts* an even more significant force for good. Later in the year, Fred and I convened a meeting in Dallas with John Temple, CEO of *Guideposts*, Harold Myra, president and CEO of *Christianity Today*, Jack Modesett, chairman of the board of *Christianity Today* and Zig Ziglar. What fire power in one room, and the ideas really flowed.

No matter what was happening in Fred’s life, he constantly came to events willing to give his all. During one such visit to La Quinta Fred met with thirty of my friends to share insights on several important topics. The day was a mountain top experience for all of us. After a morning of animated remarks and discussion with the group, Fred asked me to take him back to our residence so that he could self-administer his kidney dialysis treatment. After two hours Fred returned to the meeting and gave even more of himself. Afterward I felt I had asked too much, and expressed this to him. Fred’s reply, “I needed to come even more than you needed me.” I have never seen anyone pour himself out more.

For most of the years I knew Fred, he was undergoing kidney dialysis treatments. In the midst of this he was always cheerful and never once did I hear him complain or ask, “Why, God have I been afflicted, and why haven’t I been healed?”

Breakfast With Fred

In September 2002 I received a memo from Fred. “One of the hallmarks of our friendship is stimulating conversation. In the iron-sharpens-iron process, we set off many growth—producing sparks. Before I took a three months missionary journey through three of the finest medical institutions in Dallas, I had an interesting experience. A group of CEOs invited me to have lunch with them with only one item on the agenda, only one question on the table, framed this way: “You are 87 and we are in our 50’s. What do you know today that would be helpful for us as we plan the next 30 years? That intrigued me. They asked a question that I wanted to answer.”

The outgrowth of this question and many other similar questions provided the impetus for the website *BreakfastWithFred.com* (BWF). For several years Fred and his daughter, Brenda, had given thought to

creating a website that would perpetuate the writings of Fred. While Fred's ability to travel decreased based on his health, his desire to use his mind to bless mankind increased.

The official kick off for Breakfast With Fred website took place in Dallas, Texas on September 3, 2003, just two days after his 88th birthday. It was a great evening at the home of Tandy and Lee Roy Mitchell, longtime friends of Fred. Lee Roy was the chairman and CEO of Cinemark Movie Theaters and a great Christian layman. It was a night none of us will ever forget. Those attending included: Fred, Mary Alice, daughters, Brenda and Mary Helen, Fred Jr., Jeff Horch, Jeff Buford, Milt McKenzie, Higgins Bailey, Bob and Sidge Peacock, John McStay, Bob Deffinbaugh, Zig and Ileana Zigar, Bob Cavinder, Dan Williams and several others.

The Mitchell's were gracious hosts and after a reception and fine meal in their beautiful home we adjourned to their home theater. Lee Roy welcomed the guests and short presentations followed from Jack Modesett, Jack Dodge, Peter McNally, and Dan Williams. I made remarks asking the group for their financial support of this new endeavor. I quoted from Fred's book *You and Your Network*, where he told a story about his friend Maxey Jarman.

"Money to Maxey was a means, not an end. It's hard to think of Maxey without thinking of money because he handled so much of it. He was afraid of accumulating personal wealth. He talked about money's deception and the evils it brought to those obsessed by it. He proved his conviction by giving millions to Christian causes.

There were three facets of his giving that stand out to me. First, he gave currently. He didn't save up or wait for occasions. Second, he gave a very large percentage of his income. Tithing was much too little for him to give. Therefore, his personal fortune was always much less than it could have been. He gave it away. Third, Maxey believed in giving anonymously. He didn't want any earthly shrines named for him.

As close as we were, he never told me of a single gift he ever made, even though I know he offered as much as a million dollars to start a Bible school. He combined the wealth of the rich and the spirit of the widow's mite – but there were no trumpets blowing or the left hand telling the right hand what a great giver they belonged to.

Even when Maxey was at his lowest personal fortune, he gave a check for thirteen thousand dollars to help Youth for Christ with a project we were undertaking. It was the last of his mother's estate which he had completely given away, just as he had his inheritance from his father's estate to start the Jarman Foundation for Christian causes. During the darkest days of his temporary financial crunch, which he didn't try to hide or exploit, I asked him if he had ever thought of the millions he had given away. His answer was pure Jarmanese. "Of course I have, but remember I didn't lose a penny I gave away. I only lost what I kept."

The vision for BWF was: 1) Mine a living commentary, 2) Create and organize a robust archive, 3) Deliver content in useable, relevant manner, 4) Establish a time legacy, and 5) Fully develop content within a two-year period. By God's grace, great progress had been made on this project.

Both Brenda and Fred made good use of the network God had given them. They were constantly reaching out to their friends for input in regard to the website, always asking us to keep in mind our purpose of helping others. Early in 2003 I had a request from Brenda. On the website there is a section called Q and A. She asked me to answer some questions designed especially for me by Fred. I've enclosed the questions and answers as they seem relevant to my own Genealogy of Friendship:

Question 1: What has been helpful in developing your networking skills?

I cherish the network that God has given me and have to confess that I have no magic formula. All of us have people coming into our lives that want to help us. I stand amazed at what people have done for me over the years. It has been said that if you want to be successful, find a need and fill it.

Years ago while serving as president of the Goodyear Bank, I felt the need to help our community during very difficult economic times. After much thought and prayer I felt led to invite Dr. Robert Schuller and then Dr. Norman Vincent Peale to come to Akron to share uplifting messages for our community. At the time, I had no idea how far-reaching this would be nor the many blessings that would flow from these encounters, including the privilege of serving on both of their boards.

Networking opportunities can flow from introductions, often as a result of reading articles and acting upon them. A good example of this would be a letter I wrote to then chairman of Hershey Foods, William E. Dearden. This led to an invitation to visit Hershey and then years later to have the privilege of serving as president of Hershey Trust and M.S. Hershey Foundation. Sincere appreciation for what an individual has contributed to our life has its own reward. W. Clement Stone once said that the three most important words in the English language are DO IT NOW. I have found this to be true. The need to promptly follow through once God has given us a good idea cannot be overstated. It is very clear to me that many of my finest friendships and opportunities have come as a result of acting promptly after God has brought a good idea into my consciousness.

Question 2: How do you decide which friends of yours could profitable meet?

In recent years I have given much thought to the friends that God has brought into my life. We all think about our family tree and some spend much thought tracing their family roots. I have been taking great delight in focusing on the genealogy of friendship. Most of my most cherished friendships are a result of a friend being willing to introduce me to their friends.

To have a friend is not enough for I believe that God wants us to share all that we have and that includes friends. God gives me great delight when I can share one of my friends with another friend. We only keep what we give away. Trying to decide how to do this without attempting to intrude into another's life is a real challenge. I find it helpful to think about what my friend most needs, and then to carefully consider who is the best person capable of meeting that need. I always find it helpful to approach my friend before introducing a new friend into their lives. It is very important to determine that the request is being led by God and not a form of human manipulation.

I can trace virtually every significant relationship in my life because another friend was willing to share me with their friends. This is not to say that perhaps I could not have met some of these people in a different way, but I do know that the willingness to share a friend has been one of God's greatest blessings for me.

Question 3: What has been your experience with an accountability group?

I have been part of two significant accountability groups and have been richly blessed by both experiences. Several lessons come to mind. It is very important to be equally yoked with people with whom you can be completely honest and transparent. This requires a high level of mutual trust and respect. Each session is like major surgery if the maximum benefits are to be achieved. We only place ourselves in the hands of those we completely trust. The makeup of the group is so essential. We should

feel led by God rather than human preferences when deciding to expand the group. It takes time to be completely open and thus confidentially is critically important. I would rather be a member of a smaller group than a large group. I know some groups that have been together for over 25 years and their help to each other grows each year. It is important to have a regularly scheduled time to meet rather than on call. Participants need to place a priority on this and make every effort to attend.

I was in Dallas on November 6, 2004 when Fred and Truett Cathy were honored With the Roaring Lamb Award. This dinner was held in a big hotel ballroom in downtown Dallas with eleven hundred people present.

Earlier in the afternoon we visited Fred in his hotel room. When it was time to go to the dinner, all-pro football player Bill Glass lifted Fred gently from his bed and placed him in a wheelchair. We then went to the ballroom where Fred was seated at the head table. When it was time for him to speak, a Barton Chair brought Fred to a standing position. He gave a memorable talk and everyone was greatly moved. It was as though God gave him extra strength to deliver a message of hope and encouragement. He was convicting with a voice clear and powerful. Still later in the evening I saw Bill Glass wheeling him out of the hotel and gently placing him in the waiting van that would take him home. Just three days after this event Mary Alice went home to be with the Lord. I have always thought that she held on for just a few extra days so that Fred could experience the love of the huge gathering.

When Lily and I received the Norman Vincent and Ruth Stafford Peale Humanitarian Award, we received numerous messages but none pleased me more than this from Fred: "Hi Ron! I wish I could have been there. Brenda gave me all the details on the glamorous event. All those who came claimed friendship with the celebrities Ron and Lily. I am certainly honored to be among them. The honor was really more on the organization than on you. When they honor you they are honoring themselves by selecting you. Remember how Fenelon said, 'Accept a compliment from a worthy source as the comfort of God.' Ron, I agree with you that God is definitely using you. Brenda said your handling of Friday night was simply genius. She thought it was the best conference that she had attended with *Guideposts*." Fred's constant encouragement made any recognition we received worth so much more.

Fred never failed to express his thanks even for the smallest kindness. Over the years I received numerous notes for a variety of things he wanted to acknowledge. One note is especially meaningful. Fred had severe arthritis in both hands and writing was very difficult. In his own handwriting – a great gift in and of itself, he wrote the following: "Jesus speaking to God: I have manifested your name to Ron, whom you have given me out of the world. He was yours. You gave him to me and he has kept your word. Now, he has known that all things which you have given me are his, for I have given him the words which you have given me and he has received them and has known surely that I came forth from you, and he has believed that you sent me. I pray for him. I do not pray for the world but for Ron whom you have given me for he is yours."

I was completely overwhelmed when I received the note. Fred made manifest to me Christ's love, and by personalizing his message, Fred was able to speak directly to my heart. It was a great blessing that I treasure.

Over the years we had many telephone conversations. I could ask him anything and he always provided helpful insights. Fred was so good in sharing his friends with me and I treasure these relationships. Fred spent his lifetime giving himself away, and I am so enriched because he came into my life. One morning I was having breakfast with Fred at a Dallas hotel and he remarked, "I hope you don't mind, but I have

invited a friend of mine to have breakfast with us.” The friend was Zig Ziglar, one of the top motivational speakers in the world. Fred was always thinking of ways in which his friends could help each other.

Fred loved music and often led the music at Christian Layman Institutes held throughout America. Often he led worship and his good friend, Howard Butt, preached. A favorite story of mine concerns Fred’s love of music. Very late one night Fred needed to drive from Dallas to Tyler Texas which was a three hour trip. To keep awake he started singing hymns, and continued singing for three hours, never once repeating a hymn. His mind was so keen and his love for Christ so real that he rejoiced in this opportunity to praise the Creator.

With this story as my inspiration, as Fred’s 90th birthday approached, I asked him if he would join me in producing a CD featuring many of his favorite hymns. We decided that I would sing some of the old hymns and Fred would share how they had impacted his life, especially during times of greatest need. His grandson, Jeff Horch, was so helpful in coordinating the project, Fred in Dallas and me in Akron. My good friend, Walter Watson, was the accompanist. The selections included: “Holy, Holy, Holy,” “Abide With Me,” “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” “Everything,” “In The Garden,” “There’s Something About That Name,” “He Leadeth Me,” “Blessed Assurance,” “This Is My Father’s World,” “On Christ The Solid Rock I Stand,” “Amazing Grace,” “Take The Name of Jesus With You,” “Majesty,” “How Great Thou Art,” “As The Deer,” “Make Me A Blessing,” and “God Be With You Till We Meet Again.”

One night while working on the CD, I called Fred and asked if there was anything I could do. His reply is a classic, “Yes there is Ron, practice, practice, practice.” Another time, shortly after sending him a book of favorite hymns, I received this note: ‘Tm late, but not ungrateful. Your book brings back memories of my youth as song leader in evangelistic meetings. As I read/sing in my head – since my voice is cracked with age – blessed memories.” Even when he couldn’t sing, music still resonated in his heart and mind.

What a rare privilege to work with Fred on this project in his 90th year. We shared the album *Come before His Presence* with Fred’s friends who came from around the country to celebrate his birthday. We gathered at his home for a night of rich fellowship. To have the privilege of being with both Fred and Norman Vincent Peale on their 90th birthdays was a special gift from God.

There were many things that I admired about Fred, but what I will always remember is the advice he gave to his children and me: “Make me a blessing,” and his mantra, “He Stretched Us.” It is impossible for me to quantify the blessings I have received by knowing Fred, but to say that he stretched me would be an understatement.

Fred has written hundreds of articles and they can be found on the website *BreakfastWithFred.com*. A person could receive quite an education just by reading what this one man wrote. I highly recommend that you do just that.

The last major project that Fred and Brenda worked on was a new book, *Breakfast With Fred*. He asked fifty two of his friends to respond, and we did so joyfully. It was a privilege to work with Fred on any project, and in the process to find myself stretched. To be included in this group was a special gift.

Saying Goodbye

On the day Fred passed away, August 17, 2007, I had a call early in the morning from Brenda telling me that her father had passed. I had many of the same feelings that I had the day Norman Vincent Peale died; feeling great human loss but filled with confidence that he was in the presence of His Lord. A

couple of days later I was listening to music and was drawn to “We Shall Behold Him” and “Finally Home.” The words of the latter are particularly poignant: “And stepping on shore and finding it heaven.” I contacted Brenda and shared this thought with her. Brenda responded, “You are exactly right; you know he is probably leading the band, don’t you?” And then she added, “As I fell asleep, I saw his face and he was smiling.”

I journeyed to Dallas one last time for his memorial service on September 7, 2007. The service was so well done with beautiful piano music by Stephen Nielson. Russell Newport, his longtime friend, sang “The Holy City” and “The Lord’s Prayer.” After the music tributes from Ben Haden, Steve Brown, Bill Glass, Brenda, Mary Helen and Fred Jr., the eulogy was given by Bob Deffinbaugh on the topic “Delightfully Dependent.” It truly summed up Fred’s life for he was always dependent on his Heavenly Father. Toward the end of the service a video was shown that had been prepared by Fred some months prior. At the very end of the video Fred asked those present to make a decision for Christ if they hadn’t done so already. He told us he wanted to spend eternity with us.

I feel his presence today and the love he had for me and so many more. The world is better for Fred having spent time with us. When he passed away, Ron Keener in *Church Executive* described Fred Smith as “a commoner honored by kings and queens.” I honor him for his great wisdom, but most of all I treasure him as my dear friend. How grateful I am that God brought him into my life.

Shortly after Fred’s passing, Brenda was reviewing her father’s files and this gave her the inspiration to start a new program, Fred Smith Symposium (Breakfast With Fred Leadership Institute). Brenda shared with me her thoughts:

“In the 1940’s, 50’s and early 60’s, teams of business leaders dedicated themselves to campuses throughout America, bringing their experiences, talents, and Christian testimonies to student bodies, faculty, and administrators for a week. These events were known as Focus Weeks or Religious Emphasis Weeks. Fred Smith Sr. participated in several each year, preparing diligently and giving himself 100% to the work. He loved these weeks. In 2007, while reading through files, I found copies of letters written to him recounting Focus Week experiences. “It sparked a flame then, why not now?” I questioned. And thus began the (BWFLI) program to provide an all-day symposium on leadership, mentoring, and networking. The first program was held at Houston Baptist University, followed by Dallas Baptist University in March 2010. The leadership symposiums are designed to bring men and women who demonstrate Christ-centered principles of leadership to campus. It was my joy to participate in the Dallas symposium. In April, 2011, I joined eight men and women visiting two colleges in Kentucky. The first symposium was held at Lindsey Wilson College, in Columbia, Kentucky and the other at Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, Kentucky. In the fall of 2011 I joined eighteen other men and women for two days at LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas. It is a thrill to interact with students and faculty and I always return home renewed. Fred’s work goes forward and thousands have been inspired to lead better lives. I continue to feel his presence and it is with great gratitude to God that I express my love and appreciation for this remarkable man.