

A PERSONAL WORD FOR YOU from Mack McCarter
August 1999

“Moving Mountains”

On Sunday evening, August 15, 1999, a mountain was moved in Shreveport, Louisiana. That is huge news to a hope parched city so thirsty for a sign. Last Sunday evening thirty nine middle and high school youth came back to town. With help from Sunday School classes at Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport Community Renewal sent nineteen youth from our Highland Youth Club and twenty youth from our Cedar Grove Youth Club to the premier Christian sports camp in America.

Thirty nine inner city youngsters traveled to Branson, Missouri to participate in “Kids Across America” for one solid week. All year long they had been earning points through attendance, service projects, and participation through grades and good conduct in their schools to be able to go to “KAA” in Branson. It was our second straight year of participating.

The week at camp was absolutely transforming. Many of these kids were on the streets just one year ago. Most have been raising themselves, victims of a tragic role reversal with their parents. But for this one week they went to the Ozarks mountains and became so radiated with the love of God that they returned to Shreveport positively radioactive!

I will leave it to our great leaders Yul Taylor and Philip Williamson along with their wives Gwen and Prescola to fill in the details of that week, but I want each of you to know that when those thirty nine changed lives came back to our city, they came back as agents of change where they live.

On Sunday night, August 15th, 1999, Yul and Gwen pulled up the SCR van and its trailer into the front yard of the ICU Friendship House on East 78th Street. It was twilight. The twenty Cedar Grove kids unloaded. They then began to sing the songs of camp. They cheered the camp cheers. It was all wonderfully spontaneous. Parents gathered and the neighbors came out to see what was happening. From two blocks over they came. They came because those kids were setting themselves on fire with the passion of renewed hope tempered with committed love. They came to watch a new fire burning in Cedar Grove.

This was a pep rally the likes of which have simply not been seen on a city street in Shreveport in a long, long time. It is a signal that something old is dying and something new is being born. ***It is a sure sign that the mountains are being moved!***

It has taken many years for me to know about the mountains which hem us in. It has taken most of my adult life to learn that the greatest heresy in the world is the heresy of small expectations. Real mountains can so threaten us that their very presence has a grinding effect on our once youthful hopes and dreams. But, it has taken washouts in the spring years and uphill and downhill to learn that we are most to be pitied if we make small what God has intended to make large. If mountains make us quit, then we are dead men walking.

It is not hard to see mountains all around us. They loom large. The mountains of racism and crime and ignorance and drugs and joblessness and hatred are all around us. They just sit there. But they are not still. They are like some noiseless file sawing slowly away on our very souls. These mountains around us, omnipresent, pressing against us are not difficult to see.

It is not hard to see the mountains all around us. *It is well nigh impossible to see that the mountains outside of us have birthed their progeny within us.* We have let the problem peaks of our society produce mountains within our own minds which paralyze us. These mountains within our minds not only have ***binding power*** to tie us down, they have ***blinding power*** so that we fail to see the signal fires which could lead us out of our valleys in to a new day of dwelling upon the heights.

Here I must tell you what I have learned. I have learned that mountains are real and they are truly treacherous. But I have learned that mountains can truly be removed!! I have seen it with my own eyes. (By the way, no cynic is a true realist. History has proved over and over that a true realist is one who embraces what can be truly realizable! And that, dear friends, always makes the sky the limit!!)

How do you remove mountains? First, the chain must be unwrapped from your own brain! It is impassioned people filled with the transcendent love of God who can move mountains. After all, we all in our own self-centered blindness, made these oppressive mountains to begin with. If we made them without

God's help, then surely with God's power at work within us, we can tear them down. I saw thirty nine youthful brains awakened to the possibilities of LIFE!

How do you remove mountains? Know that the vital will triumph over the massive! Never look at mountains as the winners. Look at the vital forces which will wear them away! I've seen blades of grass, so tender and fragile at first, grow and grow until they cracked a concrete street. So the tender shoots of just thirty nine young people filled with hope and dedicated to a new discipline of serving, studying, and working can begin to rebuild the caring infrastructure of their entire neighborhoods. The vital will defeat the massive every single time. History tells us so.

How do you remove mountains? Never quit. Paul reminds us that love never fails. He reminds us that love will never end. So I **know** that the unseen hand of God is guiding all of history through the source and the stream of divine love. I think now of those kids, singing and cheering, and I think of Kipling when he wrote in his poem, *The Explorer*:

Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges--

Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!

Mountains are moving!! Come and join with us. We are in the moving business here at SCR!!