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Haddonfield, New Jersey 08033  
March 8, 1982

C. Everett Koop, M.D.  
Surgeon General  
Dept. of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. Koop:

This letter has two distinct sections. The first is professional and the second personal. I questioned the wisdom of combining them since I consider the latter portion to be of far greater significance. Thinking, however, that you might find the initial section to be informative, I included it, as well.

I am an actuary at the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Co. in Philadelphia. Our company makes a distinction in premium rates between insureds who smoke and those who do not. The nonsmoker pays a reduced premium. This differential, which was introduced several years ago, was based primarily on findings in the 1964 Surgeon General's report on Smoking and Health. Subsequent reports and insurance industry studies have led us to conclude that further recognition of the mortality differences between smokers and nonsmokers is necessary in our products. This will be accomplished by developing separate dividend scales for smokers and nonsmokers. The nonsmoker dividend scale will recognize the more favorable mortality experience of that class. The recent release of the 1982 report on The Health Consequences of Smoking: Cancer is of particular interest to us. The regional office of the Department of Health and Human Services told us that we should expect some delay in obtaining the report. We would like, however, to use its findings as a basis for the smoker-nonsmoker dividend distinction which is being researched currently. Are copies of the report available at this time? If so, we would like to have such a copy and would greatly appreciate knowing the proper procedure for obtaining it.

So much for section one. As I stated above, the remainder of this letter concerns items of a different nature. Like you, I am a Christian and a member at Tenth Presbyterian Church. I firmly believe in the Reformed doctrines as being faithful to Scripture and that among them, the absolute sovereignty of God is the indispensable key. This belief was tested in 1980 when my father died. His death, at age 50, was sudden, caused by a cerebral aneurysm rupture. The absence of warning prior to such an event and the utter helplessness and inability to do anything other than watch as the effects spread through each system of the body until it expires, point in a piercingly clear way to the sovereignty of God. Recklessness, abuse of the body, crime or the careless activity of "the other guy" aren't present to obscure the fact that it is God who is behind both our life and our death. It is this very fact - that God is in control, that there are no accidents with Him, that is the Christian's comfort.

A few months after my father's death, I heard of your book Sometimes Mountains Move. My feeling at the time was that many accounts of dealing with death and grief were

shallow and of little value. Yours was different. As I read it, I found myself relating repeatedly to the feelings, reactions and circumstances you described. In fact, similar to your experience, we were caught in city traffic and were late to my father's memorial service at Tenth. Most strengthening was the constant awareness of and trust in God's sovereignty throughout your family's ordeal.

About a week after I first read your book, my grandmother died, her death being the fourth loss of a close family member in a two year period. During a subsequent Sunday morning worship service, while I sat in the balcony, I noticed you and Mrs. Koop on the main level. It was comforting and encouraging to see two Christians who had accepted God's will in the matter and remained faithful to Him.

We loved my father and there has been a void in our family since our loss, but in taking those that are precious to us in this life to be with Him, God has sharpened our focus on the eternal life with Him and the reunion with my father that awaits us. While I may never fully see what God's plan was in all of this, I do know that He allows these events to affect us in such a way as to make us better servants. Armed with a new sense of God's sovereignty and a better understanding of grief, I have started assisting in the Sunday school program at Children's Hospital. I'm quite excited about this program and am looking forward to an increasing involvement in it.

You stated in your book that the purpose in writing was that it be helpful to others who might face a similar loss. The reason for this letter is to tell you that it has been, not only to me, but to other family members and friends to whom we have given copies. Some are not Christians and are encountering in your account a written testimony unlike any other which they have ever seen. Please accept and express to Mrs. Koop my gratitude for this book and your steadfast and faithful example.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda M. Springer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Linda M. Springer