

KNOWING & DOING

C · S · LEWIS INSTITUTE



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“The Wake Up Call”

Notes from the President

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10 Decade of DISCIPLESHIP

When I got the phone call at work, I immediately knew from my aunt's voice that something tragic had occurred. She said, “Kenny fell over dead in a theology class at Moody Bible Institute about an hour ago.” There was silence on the phone for a few seconds as we both took in the words that had just been spoken. We then talked briefly. After we hung up I could only utter a short repetitive prayer, “Oh, Dear Jesus, Sweet Jesus.” The following day, the coroner reported a brain aneurysm as the likely cause of death.

Kenny's love for the Lord was infectious. He was playful, yet earnest. He enjoyed deep theological discussions and card tricks. He liked to read, especially the Bible and the writings of C.S. Lewis. Kenny had matured in recent years and at 25, after much prayer and the input of others, was pursuing his calling to be a pastor. He had just taken a part-time job as a worship leader at a local church, was studying at Moody Bible Institute, working at Panera, and discipling younger believers in the faith.

Some may ask the question, “Why? Why would the Lord suddenly take a young, vibrant, joyful follower of Jesus to heaven?” I don't have a specific answer to that question, only God knows. Enoch did cross my mind as an example from Genesis 5 as someone who walked with God and was suddenly taken. I do, however, have a partial answer to the question that came to light as nearly a thousand people packed out the church to celebrate Kenny's life at the memorial service. In the words of the apostle Paul, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

While there were many tears shed (and there will be many more to come) over the loss of Kenny on this earth, a real, tangible Hope was present at the memorial service. C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*,

Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next... Aim at Heaven and you will get earth “thrown in”: aim at earth and you will get neither.

Kenny was aiming for Heaven and everyone knew it. His words and actions pointed to Jesus. His sudden death was a wake up call to many. As my cousin put it so well at the service, we are in one of three positions: Asleep in the Light (not living in the fullness of the Spirit); Walking in the Light (daily seeking to live a Spirit-filled life); or Asleep in the Dark (desperately in need of Jesus).

We are all only one heartbeat away from our eternal destiny. Are you aiming at Heaven? ■■

Joel



Joel S. Woodruff, President, C.S. Lewis Institute, has worked in higher education, “tent-making,” nonprofit administration, and pastoral ministries in Alaska, Israel, Hungary, France, and Northern Virginia. He served as Dean of Students, Chaplain, and Professor of Bible & Theology at European Bible Institute, where he helped train Europeans both for professional ministry and to be Christian leaders in the marketplace. Prior to joining the Institute, he was on the leadership team of Oakwood Services International, a nonprofit educational and humanitarian organization. He is a graduate of Wheaton College, earned his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and has a doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University.

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